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CASE STUDY: THE SITUATION IN THE DRACO ARCHIPELAGO

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ICRC



THE DRACO ARCHIPELAGO



I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION¹

1. The Republic of Antlia, the Kingdom of Rho, the Union of Carina, and the Republic of Orion are island States in the **Draco Archipelago**, with Antlia and Rho sharing the largest island in the Archipelago – Aurora. The latter is renowned for its rich natural heritage and vast mineral resources, especially in the Taurus region located at the eastern part of Antlia at the border with Rho. The islands are connected via the **Great Sea**, which has historically served as the main linkage between the nations, fostering trade and inter-cultural exchange. Historically, all the peoples of the Archipelago prospered greatly and enjoyed friendly relations, however, colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries and subsequent exploitation brought numerous challenges, ushering an era of post-colonial conflicts for resources and influence, as well as for perceived historic rights.
2. **Antlia** – The Republic of Antlia stretches across 225.000 km² with a population of about 10.000.000 people. Amongst the population, approximately 80% are of Antlian ethnicity, while roughly 20% of people describe themselves as Rho. Those of Rho ethnicity mostly inhabit the borderline region of Taurus. The Union of Carina, a former colonial superpower, oversaw Aurora in the 19th and in much of the 20th century and, among other things, decided to artificially draw a border following the 40th meridian to optimise the exploitation and administration of the island. With this, the island was split into two administrations. When Antlia achieved independence in 1962, the former administrative border became the new State border between Antlia and the rest of Aurora still under Carinian administration. In the Taurus area, rich reserves of copper, cobalt, natural graphite, lithium, manganese, and nickel are located, all vital elements in the development of autonomous cars. The majoritarian Antlian population always respected their Rho counterparts, with many marriages happening between both ethnic groups. Currently, Margaret Walker acts as the country's Prime Minister.
3. **Rho** – The Kingdom of Rho changed status from a non-self-governing territory to a fully independent kingdom in 2010. In the past decades, the Union of Carina was reluctant to relinquish its administration of the territory for fears that it may lose access to Antlian natural resources as the main port in the region located in the capital of Rho – Betelgeuse – is used to ship the minerals to Carina, whose automotive industry strategically depends on them. Rho is a smaller nation, encompassing 65.000 km², with the majority of its 2.900.000 inhabitants living in the capital Betelgeuse. Next to the Taurus region, in which another 1.400.000 Rho live as Antlian citizens in Antlia, a vibrant trade centre was established, while the national stock exchange of Rho is also situated there.

¹ See also the attached map of the Draco Archipelago.

Rho built the first nuclear power plant of the Archipelago to facilitate the vast energy needs of the region. Besides the stock exchange, the majority of people live on a small income, mostly from farming or fishing. After the death of her father King Mercury, Queen Dua ascended the throne. The Rho armed forces are operating under the supervision of General Adam Shi.

4. **Carina** – The Union of Carina is the regional superpower, both economically and militarily. It was formed in the 12th century AD when incumbent King Stephen was defeated by Lady Elisabeth of Carina at the famous battle of Llewelyn Bush. As many nobles were still loyal to the defeated king, Lady Elisabeth proposed to create a federal-type union where constituent units would retain authority over internal affairs. The nobles agreed, giving rise to the Union of Carina. During the industrial revolution, rich coal and iron reserves were found on the island, which itself extends over 250.000 km². This enabled the Carinians, nowadays approximately 45.000.000 people, to expand their military influence abroad, while also engaging in the colonisation of nearby places. Since the 1960s, under the leadership of the Green party, Carina completely transformed its economy from coal-based heavy industry to industries of green economy, such as electric cars, solar panels, biofuels etc. In 2010, the Carinians voted to abolish the monarchy in favour of a republic. In its external relations, its Minister of foreign affairs Joseph Diaz mostly represents Carina abroad, while the chief commander of its armed forces is General James Howard.
5. **Orion** – The Republic of Orion is a high-tech heaven for start-ups, artificial intelligence (AI) companies and software designers. The Orioni government foresaw in the early 2000s that AI is the future and devoted a large part of its national strategies towards making Orion as friendly for AI developers as possible. In the small island nation of 3.000.000 people, inhabiting 54.000 km², all major global companies are registered – both those who pursue research and development for civilian purposes and those connected with the military field. Star-Hawk, a major Orion-funded company in the military branch, recently developed its new artificial intelligence-guided loitering munitions (LMs), supplying Air Forces around the world with what they call »next level air superiority«. These LMs are equipped with Anti-Radiation seekers, they endure hundreds of kilometres in range, and they attack at unbelievably steep angles in order to suppress and surprise enemy air defences. In this case, an image recognition system based on a deep neural network approach is relied on to define the targets.

II. BACKGROUND

1. On 10 November 2023, the Antlian government under the leadership of Margaret Walker announced that it intends to cease the production of copper, cobalt, and lithium in the largest open pit mine in the Taurus region. In her announcement she referred to the study published by the National Laboratory of Antlia, the main State laboratory in the country, in which scientists warned that the collapse of the mine was imminent if extraction continues. This would endanger around 10 villages with a total population of 13.450 people, mostly of Rho ethnicity.
2. On 15 November 2023, the Antlian Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a note verbale from the Foreign Office of Carina. In the note, the Carinian minister of foreign affairs Joseph Diaz reminded their Antlian counterparts of the Antlia – Carina Association Agreement, ratified in 2020, in which Article 5 states the following:

»The Republic of Antlia commits itself towards a steady supply of minerals to be delivered via Rho to Carina«.
3. Carina claimed that the Antlian decision to suspend mining amounted to a direct violation of the agreement and encouraged the Antlian government to revoke their decision of suspending the mining operations and to resume with the effectuation of the Antlia – Carina Association Agreement.
4. Upon receiving the note, Mrs. Walker invited Mr. Diaz to Polaris, the capital of Antlia, to discuss the situation. Mr. Diaz agreed to the proposal and on 23 November 2023, a joint press conference was held in the media centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Polaris. During the press conference, Mrs. Walker once more stressed that thousands of lives will be endangered if mining continues and explained that the protection of peoples' lives prevails over any other consideration in this case. Mr. Diaz disagreed and insisted that Antlia is obliged to deliver on its promises. One of the participants in the press conference, Antonia Principa, a member of the »Lives over profit« group, threw orange paint at Mr. Diaz, covering him completely in orange. Enraged, Mr. Diaz left Antlia.
5. On 1 December 2023, Queen Dua, was called into her office for a phone call from Carina. She picked up the phone and listened to a quiet, yet steady voice. Without giving a justification, the voice demanded of her to immediately suspend all trade relations with Antlia. The voice also indicated that if Rho should not comply, terrible things are about to unfold. Queen Dua dismissed the call as a prank, going on about her duties. The next day she was informed that several gunshots were heard at the border with Antlia, without, however,

any further information on who was involved. This evoked fears of the past as during the 1950s when Antlian independence movements were at their peak, the desire was expressed to turn the whole island of Aurora into one State – Antlia, with some politicians arguing that violence would be the only way to achieve this.

6. On 3 December 2023, cross-border violence originating from Rho against Antlian civilians and border guards in Antlia intensified, with a group called the »Wolves of Rho« claiming responsibility. Their leader, Jack »the Wolf«, was heavily affiliated with the Union of Carina, having studied at the Royal Military College of Carina and worked for high-ranking politicians known for their notorious colonialist sentiments. The Wolves of Rho stated on the platforms X and Telegram that it is unacceptable that the people of Rho barely get by, while Antlians enjoy the luxury of income generated by the mines. Additionally, Jack exclaimed that the Rho living in Antlia should follow their historic line of belonging and join the Kingdom of Rho, merging the Taurus region with Rho.
7. Mrs. Walker telephoned Queen Dua on 4 December and expressed her expectations that Rho will contain the situation. The Queen assured her that Rho is doing all in its power to maintain law and order and that the Rho armed forces were already engaging with the “Wolves” in Western Rho in military combat.
8. During the phone call, the Wolves of Rho launched a cross-border attack into Taurus, killing 20 border guards, as well as 112 civilians, and taking 13 Antlians blindfolded and stripped down to their underwear as hostages back into Rho. Between the 4 and 23 December, the incursions continued, while on 24 December 2023 the Wolves of Rho captured an Antlian border outpost and refused to leave what they called »sacred Rho territory«.
9. The Antlian government authorised a fully-fledged military campaign against the Wolves on 25 December 2023. On that day at 4.00 AM in the morning, a buzzing was heard in the air over the border outpost in Taurus where the Wolves of Rho were last detected the previous day. The buzzing came from the newly delivered AS-101 Drones from Orion, who were completely guided by artificial intelligence once deployed. The drones were famous for their deep neural network system, which enabled them to define legitimate targets with a 99.75% accuracy. The drones shot several missiles at the border facility as they identified 28 masked and armed individuals inside, killing all of them.
10. When Antlian officials arrived at the scene, they noticed that all 28 individuals were in fact Antlian civilians whose hands were tied and who had been dressed and equipped with military gear by the Wolves when they departed for Rho a

few hours before the attack. Hearing the news, Mrs. Walker appeared on national TV in Antlia on 26 December, stating:

» Yesterday, on 25 December 2023, the Wolves of Rho, an international terrorist organisation, caused the death of another 28 innocent Antlians. It is obvious that Rho is not capable of handling the situation, which is why Antlia must step up to the task to protect its people. I have ordered the Antlian military to engage with the Wolves in Rho, and our tanks are crossing the border as we speak. Together, joined in the unity of the Antlian people, we shall prevail over international terrorism financed by our former colonial oppressors!«

11. The Antlian army crossed the border of Taurus into the province of Western Rho that day. In search of the Wolves of Rho, they deployed the same AS-101 Drones, despite being aware of their failure in Taurus. The deployment of the drones led to thousands of predominantly civilian casualties in the first hour of combat, with other rocket strikes destroying entire neighbourhoods as Antlia was searching for the Wolves hiding – allegedly – in the basements of buildings, including hospitals and schools led by UNICEF.
12. Rho responded to the armed incursion into its territory by a formal notification of self-defence delivered to the Antlian government and to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The Rho armed forces clashed with Antlian troops shortly thereafter.
13. Mr. Diaz telephoned Queen Dua on 27 December 2023, offering the full military assistance of Carina to protect Rho. Despite being hesitant at first, Queen Dua agreed, and the official request for assistance was approved by the Rho Parliament the same day. In the meantime, intense fighting between the Wolves of Rho, the army of Antlia, and the army of Rho continued in Western Rho, already reaching a total death toll of 93.000, mostly women and children. On 1 March 2024, the military forces of Carina, consisting of 20 battalions, arrived in Betelgeuse under the command of General James Howard.
14. General Howard carefully analysed the situation and feared that even the joint forces of Rho and those of Carina present in Rho would not suffice for a conventional military victory over Antlia in Western Rho unless a strategic miracle occurs. He ordered all Carinian troops, as well as those Rho battalions assigned under his command by the Rho authorities, to fire at will, as well as to take no prisoners. He also ensured with the Rho and Carinian authorities to pardon all soldiers of Carina and Rho who were being charged and prosecuted for violations of military conduct before courts in Carina and Rho, e.g., for firing at Antlian soldiers being treated in field hospitals, targeting Antlian medical staff in the field, and liquidating Antlian prisoners.

15. The intense fighting in Western Rho, with detonations, strategic bombing, and firebombing occurring also in Eastern Rho, triggered a massive wave of displacement, with tens of thousands of men, women and children fleeing Rho by boat to the closest island in the region – the Orioni island of Stella. From Stella, the people fleeing would continue their journey to Leonis, the first smaller Carinian island in the Great Sea. Several Rho already reached Leonis when the local population protested and demanded of Carina to take action.
16. The government of Carina turned both to Rho and to Orion and concluded a Special Containment Agreement, which was centred on Article 2:

»The Union of Carina commits to establish a reception centre on Stella Island for all incoming Rho. The Republic of Orion commits itself to apply the legal fiction of non-entry to all illegally entering Rho, to transfer all Rho intercepted around Stella Island to the reception facility and to ensure the detention of all illegally arriving Rho on the premises of the reception centre. Carinian authorities shall carry out an eligibility procedure to determine the individuals allowed to continue their journey to Leonis. Orioni authorities shall promptly return all individuals denied entry to Leonis Island back to Rho«.
17. Once the reception centre became operational, all persons, including women, children, and persons with specific needs, were detained indefinitely upon arrival. They could always immediately return to Rho, however, those wishing to continue to Leonis had to wait until their case was processed favourably by Carinian officials. In the end, only about 5% of detainees were permitted to continue their journey to Leonis, with the remaining 95% put on out-of-service Orioni boats and sent towards Rho. In the process, 25.400 people drowned as many of those out-of-service boats sank along the return voyage.
18. The reception scheme contributed greatly to the rise in irregular crossings of the Great Sea via smugglers, who charged 10.000 USD per person to avoid Stella Island, offering a direct route from the shores of Rho to Leonis. The Carinian and Rho governments knew about the smugglers. Upon arresting them on Leonis, Carinian officials confiscated the money they made, while expelling all people on the boats back to Rho – even those who tried to claim asylum while on Leonis. Carinian officials were clear: as per Article 23 of the Carinian Criminal Code: “Illegal immigrants are not allowed to claim asylum in Carina”. Upon their return to Rho, many people were quickly recruited by the Rho government to be sent to the front as the Rho forces were heavily depleted.
19. For the selected 22.150 people who made it to Leonis island through the reception scheme, more challenges awaited. While some of them received refugee status, Carina offered every asylum seeker who would voluntarily leave Leonis a financial bonus of 15.000 USD. This was a tempting offer as otherwise

there were no means of income for Rho asylum seekers besides the black market on Leonis because Carina denied them work permits, assistance with housing, social security, and financial assistance. Many Rho opted for the bonus and returned to Rho only to embark on the voyage to Stella once more. It is reported that by the end of the conflict in Rho, only 8.212 Rho asylum seekers and 6.128 recognised refugees remained on Leonis.

20. On 10 March 2024, Antlia exercised control over almost the entire Western Rho region, including the area of the Rho nuclear power plant. Antlia stationed its military personnel at the power plant and held the scientists and employees of the plant hostage. The idea of Antlia was to take advantage of the strategic importance of the nuclear power plant to establish its long-range self-propelled howitzer regiments there.

21. In the rest of Western Rho under its control, Antlia refused to provide basic food and water, as well as hygiene supplies or electricity to the population. Antlian officials suspected that the Wolves of Rho or the regular units of Rho could confiscate the goods, which would enable them to continue with their resistance. In the words of Mrs. Walker, leaked from a general staff meeting in Western Rho:

»Those Rho animals do not deserve any better treatment for sheltering the Wolves of Rho. Antlia has long awaited its opportunity to unite Aurora under its flag, with or without the Rho people, their perish is of no concern to us. Aurora belongs to Antlia and the Rho will be forgotten by history«.

22. When the scientists at the nuclear power plant rebelled and opposed to work inside the reactor, citing the dangers of a possible nuclear core meltdown, Antlian officials were struck by fear. Thus, since they needed to know the condition of the core, they rallied 50 captured soldiers of Rho. In exchange for their release, they demanded of them to venture inside the reactor to check for a possible meltdown. Of the 50 soldiers, only 3 returned alive, with heavy burns and serious health issues, reporting that a meltdown was not in sight.

23. The 3 soldiers were transferred to the authorities of Rho on 13 March 2024 with the assistance of the ICRC. This was the first time during the entire duration of the conflict in which Antlia and Rho accepted the ICRC's help as otherwise both States systematically refused access to the ICRC to the region. It was later-on revealed that five members of the Rho Special Forces infiltrated the power plant and deliberately infested the computer system with a virus, which aimed to destabilise the nuclear core.

24. Concerning the plant, General Adam Shi of Rho was convinced that the only way to win the war was to trigger a nuclear meltdown and an explosion. Queen

Dua strongly disagreed, as well as the Rho Parliament, with other officials from overseas, especially Orion, also voicing their concerns. Carina, however, endorsed the idea.

25. General Shi soon joined the soldiers on the frontline, and on 1 April 2024 a mysterious woman entered his office. It was Antonia Principa, the Antlian member of the »Lives over profit« group. She was appalled by the conflict, the staggering number of victims among Rho civilians, and the countless displaced. She advocated for the conflict to end as quickly as possible. Following the discussions with Antonia Principa, General Shi contacted Orioni officials. Rho quickly purchased a group of ES-90 Inter-continental ballistic missiles and equipped one of them with a small tactical nuclear warhead delivered by Carina.
26. Upon return to Antlia, Antonia Principa was quickly taken into custody and sentenced for high treason of the Republic, a crime punishable with 50 years imprisonment as per Article 235 of the Antlian Criminal Code, alongside other members of the »Lives over profit« group who attended the meeting in Rho. At the end of their prison terms, their Antlian nationality will be taken away, potentially rendering them stateless. They will also be expelled from Antlia indefinitely.
27. On 10 May 2024, in the wake of the recent advance of Antlian forces into Eastern Rho, Rho decided to threaten Antlia with the deployment of their nuclear missile over Polaris. At 12 AM on 11 May, Queen Dua was heard on radio across the entire Aurora Island – Orioni scientists ensured that all lines were used to transmit the message, civilian and military. The Queen was brief:

»In the face of Antlian aggression, which has caused hardship for all, Rho is considering resorting to its nuclear potential against Polaris. Let this be known to our enemies«.
28. According to a study published by the Rho Military Academy, the missile, if launched, would cause the imminent death of the local population in Polaris and destroy the flora surrounding the city, which is one of the most important UNESCO natural world heritage sites globally. Additionally, according to the Rho Ministry of the Environment, the area would stay uninhabitable for the next 230 years, while the radioactive material could pollute the Antlian environment for hundreds of years to come. The total cost of damage was evaluated at 12.000.000.000 USD. The nuclear fallout and radiation would engulf Antlia entirely in a few days via strong wind currents, leading to a great famine capable of causing the death of more than 1.000.000 people.
29. Despite the message delivered by Queen Dua, Antlian generals in Rho decided, without the knowledge of the central government, to decimate the Rho soldiers

and civilians in Antlian-controlled territories, which was later referred to as the »Red Spring«. Between 15 May and 10 June 2024, 145.890 people were killed in detention camps and camps for displaced persons in the parts of Western and Eastern Rho under Antlian control.

30. Following the threat of a nuclear attack, as well as considering the consequences of the »Red Spring«, the Antlian general command in Polaris was in disarray. While a portion of Antlian commanding officers and general staff argued for a continuation of the operation in Rho, the voices for peace grew louder by the day.
31. On 1 August 2024, reports reached Antlia that Jack »the Wolf« was killed in an airstrike by an AS-101 Drone. Until 31 August 2024, more than 750.000 people died, with millions more displaced on all sides.
32. On 1 September 2024, based on collected evidence, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court, following the request from the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, authorised an investigation into the situation in the Draco Archipelago since 4 December 2023.
33. Antlia, Rho, Orion, and Carina are members of the United Nations. Carina is also a permanent member of the UNSC, while Antlia has commenced its mandate as a non-permanent member of the UNSC in September 2024. All States are parties to the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as to all relevant international treaties and other agreements.

III. CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

1. Throughout the Case Study, the name “Eastern Rho” was replaced with “Western Rho” and vice-versa to reflect the geographical elements of the Case Study: **next to the Taurus region of Antlia lies Western Rho (not Eastern Rho as previously indicated).**
2. The map of the Draco Archipelago was adjusted to reflect the geographical elements of the Case Study: **next to the Taurus region of Antlia lies Western Rho (not Eastern Rho as previously indicated).**