



Study Guide

**United Nations
Security Council**



Agenda:

**Addressing the South China
Sea Conflict**

Bureau:

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INDEX

TOPIC	PAGE NO.
1. LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU.....	3.
2. KEYWORDS.....	4.
3. INTRODUCTION.....	6.
4. TIMELINE.....	7.
5. GEOGRAPHY.....	10.
6. HISTORY.....	11.
7. PREVIOUS TREATIES.....	12.
7.1. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.....	12.
7.2. ASEAN's Declaration on Conduct of Parties.....	13.
7.3. NATO's Treaties.....	13.
7.4. EU's Treaties.....	14.
8. CHINA'S POLICY IN THE REGION.....	15.
8.1. Salami Slicing.....	15.
8.2. Cabbage Wrapping.....	15.
8.3. Use of Drones.....	15.
8.4. Annexation Over the Spratlys.....	16.
8.5. Building Artificial Islands.....	16.
9. IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH CHINA SEA.....	18.
10.FOREIGN STAKEHOLDER.....	19.
11.CURRENT SITUATION.....	22.
12.CONCLUSIONS AND EXPECTATIONS.....	23.
13.QUESTIONS A DIRECTIVE MUST ANSWER.....	24.
14.BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	25.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greeting Delegates,

As your Executive Board it is our honor to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council simulated in the Shishukunj International School North Campus Model United Nations Conference 2023 deliberating upon the agenda 'The South China Sea Conflict'. The Security Council is the most powerful committee in the entirety of the United Nations and is the only committee that has the power to command others, thus every one of the 25 delegates of the Council must understand the gravitas, honor, and responsibility you have been given of representing your respective countries in this session of the Security Council. The Security Council was established on October 24, 1945, with the establishment of the United Nations. The composition, functions, power, voting, and procedure of the UNSC have been listed under Chapter V Articles 23 to 32 of the UN Charter.

The Security Council investigates and takes action against all conflicts that can lead to international friction as stated by its mandate. Therefore discussing the South China Sea Conflict becomes a necessity of the highest order. The issue is set in the present with historic roots. As bureau members, we believe that this agenda will provide all delegates with a chance to show off their original thinking, decision-making skills, critical analysis, and most importantly diplomacy. The Bureau expects the delegates to ensure the originality of arguments as no plagiarism or use of Chat GPT will be tolerated. Utmost respect for decorum and diplomacy is expected. We look forward to having fruitful debates and directives filled with comprehensive solutions that have been created unanimously while taking into mind International law, the UN Charter, foreign policies, and the ideals of all countries.

We have made the guide as a starting point for your journey into the agenda and all delegates are urged to not limit their research to the guide, but rather research as much as possible on all aspects of the conflict be it political, economic, or trade. The research will serve as the foundation for your participation in the committee and will prepare you for the debates, boost your morale, and prepare you for all that comes ahead. Prepare well and work with conviction.

Hope to see you all in October!

Cogito Ergo Sum

Feel free to contact us in case of any doubts.

Dhruv Chaudhary, Chairperson

Parnika Budholiya, Vice Chairperson

KEYWORDS

South China Sea: A marginal sea of the Western Pacific Ocean that borders the South Asian Landmass. South China bounds it in the north, Taiwan and the Philippines in the east, Malaysia in the south and Vietnam in the west.

Marginal Sea: A sea which is the extension of an ocean and is partially surrounded by land.

ASEAN: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

EU: The European Union

UNCLOS: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

DOC: ASEAN's Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea

9 Dash Line: China's de facto line of control over the South China Sea

De Facto: Something that isn't formally recognized

EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone **PRC:** People's Republic of China **ROC:** Republic of China

Paracel Islands: A Group of disputed islands in the South China Sea that lie close to the coast of Vietnam.

Senkaku/Diaoyu islands: Group of islands lying in the East China Sea south of Japan.

Scarborough Shoal: A large rock, approximately 120 Nautical Miles south of the Philippines

Spratly Islands - Group of disputed islands in the South China Sea. Lies off the coast of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

FONOP - The Freedom of Navigation and Operation

Innocent passage - Passage is innocent so long as it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of the coastal State.



Territorial sea - the area of water over which a sovereign state has jurisdiction.
The 12-nautical mile territorial belt measured from the baseline of a coastal state.

Itu Aba- Taiping Island, also known as Itu Aba, is the largest of the naturally occurring Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Low Tide Elevation - a naturally formed area of land that is above water and surrounded by water at low tide but submerged at high tide.

Shelf - the edge of a continent that lies under the ocean

Gulf of Tonkin - Gulf at the northwestern portion of the South China Sea.



INTRODUCTION

The South China Sea conflict also known as the Nan Hai conflict finds its beginnings in the early 1970s. At its roots, it is a territorial conflict with multiple countries in this region claiming the sea as a part of their territory and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). On December 1, 1947, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China introduced the 9-dash line exercising control over 90% of the Sea.

However, with the conflicts of interest, over the past few decades, this conflict has evolved into an economic, political as well as social one. The violation of human rights and war crimes in this region has also risen considerably. With the involvement of foreign stakeholders, tension and feelings of hostility are higher than ever and this conflict can be the tipping point of an all-out international war. As stated by the Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Security Council is responsible for investigating all disputes that may lead to international frictions, thus it is imperative to deliberate upon this agenda in the Security Council and maintain International Peace, Harmony, Dignity and promote Integrated Development.

TIMELINE

September 3, 1937: Japan expresses claims over islands of the South China Sea including Pratas, Spratlys, Paracels, and the Marco Polo Bridge.

December 1, 1947: Peoples's Republic of China and the Republic of China create the 11-dash line, claiming over 80% of the South China Sea

September 8, 1951: World War II ends and Japan removes all claims over the South China Sea

1952: The People's Republic of China signs a treaty with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and reduces 11 dash line to 9 dash line, removing claims over the Gulf of Tonkin

1969: The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East publishes a report finding substantial energy reserves in the South China Sea

June 17, 1971: PRC and ROC claim Senkaku/Diaoyu islands as part of Chinese territory

September 29, 1972: PRC and Japan sign a joint communique in Beijing re-establishing diplomatic ties

January 19, 1974: PRC troops occupy Paracel Islands forcing the Vietnamese garrison to flee and establish control over the Spratly Islands

July 2, 1976: Vietnam is unified and maintains claims over Paracel and Spratlys

March 11, 1976: Philippines find the first oil field in the South China Sea, the Nido oil field
February 1979: China wages war on Vietnam as the latter invades Cambodia a major Chinese ally
March 1979: China withdraws from Vietnam having failed to make it withdraw from Cambodia

December 10, 1982: UNCLOS is established

March 14, 1988: PRC takes place in its first armed conflict over the Spratlys with Vietnam. China sinks 3 Vietnamese Ships killing 74 sailors



February 1992: China passes Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Area, claiming the entire South China Sea as its territory due to historic claims

January 1996: China engages in an armed conflict with the Philippines over the Spratlys. 3 Chinese Vessels engage in a conflict with a Philippine Gunboat near the Mischief Reef

January 19, 1998: PRC and the USA sign the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement

1999: China illegally interfered with the resupply of the BRP Sierra Madre, a dilapidated Philippine warship that the Philippines purposely parked at the Second Thomas Shoal in 1999 to prevent China from occupying it.

November 4, 2002: ASEAN's Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea was signed. This was the first time Beijing accepted a multilateral approach to the issue.

May 2009: Malaysia and Vietnam file a joint submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limit of the Continental Shelf to extend their Continental Shelves causing China to claim that this went against its indisputable claims over the region, reigniting tensions over the region

July 2010: China becomes the globe's leading energy consumer causing it to strengthen efforts to gain sole right over the South China Sea

July 23, 2010: US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton affirms American interests in Asian Maritime Routes in Asian Regional Security Meeting held at Hanoi

September 7, 2010: Chinese fishing vessel collides with Japanese Coast Guard. Japanese Coast Guard arrests the crew causing Beijing to protest

June 1, 2010: The Philippines gravely concerned by increasing Chinese Control over the South China Sea called for a Chinese Envoy to establish diplomatic talks

November 17, 2011: In a speech to the Australian Parliament, President of the USA Barrack Obama states that the USA will be focusing attention on the Asia Pacific Region. Negotiations continue over the Trans-Pacific Partnership to increase US influence over the region. China is excluded from these talks.



April 8, 2012: The Philippines dispatch a warship against Chinese boats fishing in the Scarborough Shoal. To protect its fisher boats, the PRC also dispatches its warship leading to a 2-month-long standoff

June 2012: Vietnam passes its Maritime Law expressing jurisdiction over the Spratlys and Paracels, demanding verification from all vessels passing through the region

September 10, 2012: Japan buys 3 of the 5 Senkaku/Diaoyu islands from a private landowner

September 12, 2012: PRC in response to the Japanese occupation of islands, establishes territorial sea baselines around the land, challenging Japanese control over the region.

September 25, 2012: To protect sovereignty in the region, the PRC launches its first Aircraft Carrier in the South China Sea

January 22, 2013: Following clashes in the South China Sea, the Philippines filed an international arbitration case against the PRC under the UNCLOS for control over the Spratlys and the Scarborough Shoal

April 28, 2014: The USA and the Philippines sign a 10-year military agreement, increasing American access to the South China Sea

May 4, 2014: Vietnam dispatches armed vessels to stop the PRC from establishing Oil Rigs in the Paracel Islands region. Multiple vessels collide and each side blames the other for the incident

October 26, 2015: US warships sail through the South China Sea, crossing various Chinese-built islands to assert their policy of freedom of navigation. The PRC viewed this as a serious provocation. However multiple such FONOPs continue to take place

February 14, 2016: China sets up a military base on Woody Island, the biggest of the Paracels. In attempts to militarize the region, China installs missiles in the region

July 12, 2016: The Permanent Court of Arbitration set in the Hague gives its ruling in support of the UNCLOS and the Philippines on the case filed in 2013

July 3, 2019: Chinese ships enter the EEZ of Vietnam and prevent Vietnam from drilling for oil. Multiple protests follow in the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi following this incident.

GEOGRAPHY

The South China Sea in the south of China is a part of the Pacific Ocean, which stretches from Singapore to the Strait of Taiwan. It is the largest sea body after the five oceans. It covers an area of about 1,423,000 square miles (3,685,000 square km) and has a depth of 3,478 feet (1,060 m). The China Sea consists of two parts, the South China Sea (Chinese: Nan Hai) and the East China Sea (Chinese: Dong Hai), which connect through the shallow Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and mainland China.

The sea stretches in a southwest to northeast direction, whose southern border is 3 degrees South latitude between South Sumatra and Kalimantan (Karimata Strait), and whose northern border is the Strait of Taiwan from the northern tip of Taiwan to the Fujian coast of mainland China. The Gulf of Thailand covers the western portion of the South China Sea. China, Macao, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam surround the sea.

Major rivers that drain into the South China Sea are the tributaries of the Pearl, Xi, Red River, Mekong, Pahang, and Pasig Rivers. Within the sea, there are over 200 identified islands and reefs, most of them within the Spratly Islands. The Spratly Islands spread over an 810 by 900 km area covering 175 identified conventional features, the largest being Taiping Island (Itu Aba) which is over 1.3 km long. Paracel Island is a group of 130 small coral islands and reefs in the South China Sea. They lie about 250 miles (400 km) east of central Vietnam and about 220 miles (350 km) southeast of Hainan Island, China. The Paracel Islands are surrounded by productive fishing grounds and potential oil and gas reserves.

The major topographic feature of the South China Sea is a deep, rhombus-shaped basin in the eastern portion, with reef-studded shoal areas rising steeply within the basin to the south and northwest. The deepest section, called the China Sea Basin, has a maximum depth of 16,457 feet (5,016 m). A broad, shallow shelf extends up to 150 miles (240 km) in width between the mainland and the northwestern side of the basin and includes the Gulf of Tonkin and Taiwan Strait. To the south, off southern Vietnam, the shelf narrows and connects with the Sunda Shelf, which is one of the largest sea shelves in the world.

The Sunda Shelf covers the area between Borneo, Sumatra, and Malaysia, including the southern portion of South China. Both seas are heavily fished; tuna, mackerel, croaker, anchovy, shrimp, and shellfish constitute the main catch. Fish from the South China Sea provide as much as 50 percent of the animal protein consumed along the densely populated coast of Southeast Asia. The sea also serves as a major shipping route. The South China Sea, with the Strait of Malacca, forms the main transport route between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

HISTORY

The South China Sea has been a region whose importance has been known and highlighted throughout history causing it to be ruled by various empires and having various conflicts to its name. The first rulers of the South China Sea date back to 206 BC, when the Han Dynasty of China ruled this territory. Even back then it was one of the most essential maritime trade routes for Silk trade. After the Han Empire, the second major ruler of the Sea was the Srivijaya Empire, a Buddhist empire that functioned under the India Chola dynasty, a powerful maritime empire with great trade relations around the globe. With the rise of the Ming dynasty in China, the control over the region went again into the hands of the Chinese. The coins of this dynasty can also be found in some of the reefs within the Sea. The Ming Dynasty was succeeded by the Qing Dynasty, also known as the Great Qing.

Under the rule of this dynasty, the Chinese empire grew exponentially. China claimed sovereignty over Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and even the South China Sea, known as the Nan Hai in that period. Under the dynasty, all islands including the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, Spratlys, and the Paracels were considered Chinese Territories. The Chinese 9-dash line was also created with reference to Chinese territories of this period. During the period the Chinese claims over the region gained legitimacy, especially after the signing of the 1887 Chinese- Vietnamese Boundary Convention by France and the Qing Empire.

However, under the Qing Empire, China fought the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). Losing this war China ceded its territories including the South China Sea and Taiwan to Japan. Japan further gained control over territories such as Indonesia and the Philippines. In 1937 the Second Sino-Japanese War started, which coincided with World War II, thus China gained the support of the Allies against Japan. With the Axis powers facing defeat in 1945, Japan surrendered to China, withdrawing completely from the South China Sea.

The Republic of China grabbing this opportunity claimed sovereignty over the South China Sea. With the internal Civil War in China, which the Communist party won, the newly established People's Republic of China claimed the sole right over the South China Sea, including territories such as Taiwan, Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Patra Islands among others. These claims directly contradicted the claims of other nations such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Taiwan, creating tensions and feelings of hostility in the region. With the involvement of Foreign Stakeholders, the conflict has reached a global level.

PREVIOUS TREATIES

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea(UNCLOS) is the resultant treaty of the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, succeeding the 4 treaties agreed upon in 1958. It has been ratified by 168 parties(167 countries and the EU) and has been additionally signed by 16 countries. However, 15 UN members have yet to sign or ratify the treaty, the most significant of them being the United States of America. The UNCLOS serves as an international law and legal framework for all marine and maritime activities. The most important articles it states pertaining to the conflict are:

1. **Territorial Sea:** The area that lies within 12 nautical miles of the coastline. In this region, the state has complete sovereignty to set laws or conduct any form of action. Here the Coastal State enjoys sovereign rights.
2. **Contiguous Zone:** Beyond the territorial sea, an extra 12 nautical miles of area is considered the contiguous zone. Here the state is free to enforce any laws in 4 sectors namely - customs, taxation, immigration, and pollution
3. **Exclusive Economic Zone(EEZ):** The area of 200 nautical miles from the coastline is a state's EEZ. Here the state enjoys the sole right to exploit all natural resources within the area.
4. **Continental shelf:** The continental shelf is defined as the natural prolongation of the land territory to the continental margin's outer edge, or 200 nautical miles from the state's baseline, whichever is greater. Here states have the right to harvest mineral and non-living material in the subsoil of its continental shelf. Coastal states also have exclusive control over living resources "attached" to the continental shelf, but not to creatures living in the water column beyond the exclusive economic zone.
5. **International Waters:** Beyond these specified regions lie the international waters, an area where all states share equal rights and must work in cooperation. The International Maritime Law is followed in this region

Many parties of the South China Sea Conflict are also parties to the UNCLOS, however, the UNCLOS still sees multiple violations in the conflict.

9-Dash Line

The 9-dash line is the de facto line of Chinese control over the South China Sea. It was first conceptualized as the 11-dash line in the year 1946 and maps showcasing this line surfaced in 1947. This line was drawn by the Republic of China governed by the

Chinese nationalists. It was based on the territories of the Chinese empire under the Qing Dynasty. In 1949, after the Chinese Civil War, the nationalists were forced to move to Taiwan (Republic of China) where they continued to make the same claims. The Communist-governed Peoples Republic of China however signed a treaty with the Vietnamese government to exclude the Gulf of Tonkin from its claims reducing the 11-dash line to the 9-dash line. This line is a violation of the UNCLOS and extends China's territorial sea, contiguous zone, EEZ, and continental shelf to greater than the set limit. It goes around the Spratlys, Paracels, and Taiwan and claims these to be a part of Chinese territory.

ASEAN's Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea

ASEAN, officially the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is a political and economic union of 10 member states in Southeast Asia which are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea was signed by China and the members of ASEAN in Phnom Penh in 2002. Some of the key provisions include:

- The Parties reaffirmed their respect for freedom of navigation and air travel over the South China Sea and accepted principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- It was agreed that countries would ensure a peaceful, friendly, and safe environment in the South China Sea between ASEAN and the involved nations to promote peace, stability, economic growth, and prosperity in the region.
- The countries involved in the conflict would take steps forward to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the use of force instead through friendly negotiations and

keeping in mind the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

NATO's Treaties

NATO's principles under its founding treaty, the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, provide a framework and a glimpse into the issue as follows: -



1. NATO's principle is that an armed attack against one member is considered an attack against all. While the South China Sea is geographically distant from the NATO member states, the alliance recognizes that regional conflicts can lead to instability and hinder the peace of the world.
2. NATO policies and ideals clearly state that NATO is an ardent supporter of ideals such as freedom of navigation and global trade.
3. NATO aims to address common security challenges to its allies and enhance maritime security.

Latest statements from NATO state that NATO will not get directly involved in the region until the situation further escalates, however in recent meetings it has hinted at increasing attention in the Asia-Pacific.

EU's Treaties

The EU states the following views regarding the South China Sea conflict:

The EU is committed to securing, free, and open maritime supply routes in the Indo-Pacific, in full compliance with international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The EU reiterates its strong opposition to any unilateral actions that could undermine regional stability, escalate tensions and the international rules-based order.

CHINA'S POLICIES IN THE REGION

Salami Slicing

Salami Slicing is a divide-and-conquer tactic in which the aggressor carries out small actions to gradually gain some territory or to gain a certain strategic advantage over another country. These actions are not large enough to wage a war or attract international diplomatic attention. China applies this policy over various land and maritime disputes to expand its territory and power. In the South China Sea, it is applied in the following way. Firstly China starts making claims to a certain territory on all occasions and on all platforms. This is carried out to such an extent that the territory in question is labeled as a disputed territory. China then uses its diplomatic and military might to find a 'solution' to the dispute. Usually, China negotiates and in the end, walks away with some territory that previously wasn't Chinese. This very strategy has been used over the Paracels, Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, and even regions such as Tibet and Aksai Chin.

Cabbage Wrapping

Cabbage Wrapping is another one of China's expansion policies. In this tactic, Chinese ships - Military ships of the Peoples Liberation Army, Chinese Coast Guard Ships and even fishing vessels - surround a certain island like the leaves of a cabbage. This completely isolates the island in question and cuts off all foreign support. This is also known as small stick diplomacy, as with the use of minimum force, China can establish its control over a certain island in this tactic often armed ships are not used. Rather lightly armed or unarmed ships such as fishing vessels are used to surround a region and establish Chinese claims over the region, such as in Scarborough Shoal. This strategy has also been implemented in the Spratlys, Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, and Ayun Gin Shoal among others.

Use of Drones

Drones are going to mark a new era, with their ability to sustain in terrains where life is difficult, provide data of high-definition images and videos in the present time, or keep an eye on an area as "SPY" drones; is something of a concern when it comes to the South China Sea conflict.

- China has deployed underwater drones in the strategic waterway for scientific purposes as stated by the Chinese officials, but the technology could soon be used as a political and military tool for underwater combat, patrol, mine-sweeping, and submarine detection operations.

- China is fielding a far-reaching reconnaissance system reliant on drones to strengthen its ability to conduct surveillance operations in hard-to-reach areas of the South China Sea.
- Beijing dropped a dozen underwater drones, also known as unmanned underwater vehicles (UUV), to carry out “scientific observations,”
- Taiwan has spotted Chinese drones circling the Taipei-controlled Pratas Islands in the South China Sea. The system relies on drones connected to mobile and fixed command-and-control centers by maritime information and communication networks. It stands to boost Chinese information, and surveillance capabilities over what was previously provided by satellites and regional monitoring stations.

Annexation Over the Spratlys

Spratly Island holds strategic importance while being home to many resources. Spratly islands are a center of attraction if a nation were to control them, they have the potential to increase their EEZ and control the regions around them, the abundant hydrocarbon reserves have the potential to tackle the thirst for oil and fuel gas in many countries. They do hold a lot of significance although a major part is still to be explored. They have large reserves of oil and natural gas, it is a productive area for fishing and one of the busiest areas of commercial trade. China believes the islands to be its territory while Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines also claim the islands to be their territory. China has used some of its plans to get hold of these islands and has taken the following steps to ensure the same:-

- The reclaimed reefs and rocks house airfields, radar installations, and possibly missile silos.
- Aerial photos, buildings, and communication structures are seen on the China-built artificial island at Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands.
- Taiping islands in the Spratly were claimed by China for at least 130 years and were held for more than a half-century by Chinese forces to add to the history of Chinese records.

Building Artificial Islands

China, along with claiming the pre-existing islands of the South China Sea has also been making additions of its own by building artificial islands that act as its military bases. These include Cuarteron Reef, Subi Reef, Mischief Reef, Johnson Reef, Hughes Reef, Gaven Reef and Fiery Cross Reef. This process is carried out by Chinese Ships dumping sand and gravel in the ocean, resulting in the formation of small islands. Reports show that China dumps approximately 3.5 acres worth of sand and gravel per day. China further installs armed vessels, anti-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, airstrips,



lasers, jamming equipment, armed vessels, and fighter jets. on these islands. These military bases are a subtle way for China to re-enforce its claims to an extended EEZ. This tactic also increases the Chinese military presence in the area. Through this China carries out its other policies such as Cabbage Wrapping and Annexation of Spratlys. The building of these islands has been contested by various powers including the United States of America, who sailed their destroyer through the Sea. One of these destroyers sailed just 12 miles of the Subi Reef and was then chased by a Chinese destroyer and patrol ships.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

The South China Sea stands as one of the world's most important regions in geopolitical, strategic, and economic arenas. The region is filled to the brim with some of the most demanded resources such as hydrocarbons, is one of the most frequented maritime routes, and holds a rather large political stature.

Firstly looking at the economic importance of the region, this region is home to 10% of the world, the largest for any region, 11 billion barrels of oil, greater than any other maritime source, 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, largest singular reserve in the entire world, and the largest deposits of silicon thus making this region the largest producer of microchips. Along with this large deposits of rare earth elements are also seen.

Due to such a large economic potential and its geographical location, the region is one of the busiest trade routes on the entire globe, such that 30% of all trade routes pass through this region. 40 % of the world's liquified CNG passes through this sea, and 33% of all trade which is \$3.37 trillion passes through the South China Sea. This makes the waterway one of the most precious to almost all nations, specifically the larger economies. Almost all trade through the Pacific and Indian Oceans passes through the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea. Generally, oil and minerals move north, and food and manufactured goods move south. However, the recent hostility in the South China Sea especially in the centrally located Spratly Islands has disrupted the trade through the region.

As the South China Sea holds such immense economic importance, it in turn also holds large political importance. Whoever controls the region, gets to control a large portion of the freedom of navigation through maritime as well as areal routes. If a certain country gains complete control over the region, the sees an increase in its maritime strength, economic ranking, and political influence in the world. The nation that controls the South China Sea regulates the rights of other nations to trade through this region. various laws such as a need for identification and taxes can be implemented in the region, completely violating the freedom of navigation stated under the maritime laws. Control over the region can also lead to the increase of a nation's political stature and therefore it is in the political interest of numerous nations that the control of this region not be concentrated in the hands of a few but rather the entire international community and on the other hand, it is in the political interest of various nations that they have the sole claim over the region resulting in the conflicting situation.

FOREIGN STAKEHOLDERS

The United States of America

Even though the United States has no direct involvement in the South China Sea conflict, it has a lot at stake in the conflict. Some of the major parties in the conflict such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and even Taiwan are major USA allies and most of their actions and militaries are funded and supplied weapons by the United States. The USA is one of the largest supporters or propagators of the Freedom of Navigation and holds multiple demonstrations in various international waters. This policy of the States is under greater threat in no other region than the South China Sea. 14% of all USA trade passes through the Strait of Malacca. The South China Sea Waterway serves as the medium of US trade with the South and East Asian countries. 88% of the USA's Microchips come from this region and 100% of the advanced chips come from the South China Sea, thus making it an area of great economic interest for the USA, thus forcing the USA to great interest in maintaining the sovereignty of the region. The United States of America has also been one of Taiwan's major supporters in its fight for sovereignty against China further increasing their demand for China to follow the UNCLOS. Politically US interests lie with the Sea being classified as international waters as firstly the Sea is one of the major sources of revenue for some of the USA's biggest allies in the region. In addition to this, if China were to gain complete control over the region, it would undergo a large increase in its international influence which would not be something the USA wishes for.

Japan

The South China Sea holds massive economic importance for the Japanese. 42% of all Japanese trade passes through the region. The Strait of Malacca is traversed by Japanese vessels trading with the Middle East, Africa, and European Nations. 70% of Japanese energy imports from the Middle East pass through this strait. Japanese energy firms are also heavily invested in oil and gas exploration in this region in collaboration with Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The political status of the sea also gravely affects Japan as even Japan strives to be one of the major powers in Asia and if a certain country were to control the South China Sea, the Japanese ambitions would take a large hit. Japan thus has a stake in conflict to maintain its maritime power and influence over the Pacific. Japan also has a long-dated regional rivalry with the major claimant the People's Republic of China since the Sino-Japanese Wars over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and the Republic of China(Taiwan). Japan's political allegiance also lies with the United States of America and thus it often aids the USA's mission and ideals in the region.

India

The South China Sea does play an important role when it comes to India. Mainly because of the geographical position of India concerning China. Its economic prosperity in terms of trade and maritime security of India is also connected with the South China Sea in many ways. Fifty-five percent of India's trade within the Indo-Pacific region passes through the South China Sea accounting for nearly 200 billion dollars. India's interest is primarily to keep the region's trade routes safe and secure, thereby helping uphold regional stability and freedom of navigation. India has been cultivating its ties in the region as a part of the "act East" policy. Its major focus is on the ASEAN grouping. Keeping in mind its ties with China, India is also shaking hands with its friend countries such as the United States of America to ensure its safety in the South China Sea.

Indonesia

Indonesia remains a nation that avoids being dragged into the conflict directly, however, its interest lies in the sovereignty of the sea being maintained. China and Indonesia do not share a great relationship because of the Natuna Islands, the southernmost portion of the South China Sea. Indonesia also claims the waters to be a part of its region. Hence adding to the tensions and conflicts between the two countries. The waters do play an important role for Indonesia as well. The geographical location of Indonesia is such that the sea can prove to be highly beneficial for the country. The conflict does put Indonesia's interest at stake, therefore the country tries its best to secure its interest, and if achieved, the country could flourish in the future.

- Indonesia's major trade route is via the South China Sea. Indonesia's trade of about 104 billion dollars in 2008 has been recorded via these waters and the value has been surging each year, in 2015, 123 billion dollars of trade had been recorded, and it is still growing each year.
- Indonesia heavily depends on the resources from the North Natuna Sea (within the South China Sea)
- Indonesia's population of 280 million relies heavily on fish, the South China Sea being a big resource of Fish.

Singapore

Singapore is not involved in the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, it has an interest in the outcome of these disputes since they have implications for international law, freedom of navigation, and ASEAN unity. Singapore enjoys a free South China Sea without which the survival of the country would have been very difficult and their

present as well as future could have been at risk. The Southeast Asian nation depends heavily on free trade passing safely through their country and the adjacent waters.

Although Singapore is not a claimant to any South China Sea maritime features, it sits on the most critical sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) – the Singapore Strait, and the beginning of the Malacca Strait. The South China Sea is the primary sea link for markets in Europe, Asia, and America.

Singapore recorded trade of 208 billion dollars which has been increasing with each passing year. Hence the sea proves to be beneficial in a lot of ways indirectly if not directly.

EU

The European Union supports the ASEAN policies and wants to step up its naval visits and possibly engage in joint military training exercises to promote freedom of navigation and respect for international law in the disputed South China Sea as it fears that China's growing naval power and assertiveness may eventually compromise on the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. The EU is also dependent on the sea as most of its trade with Asia transits through this sea. The EU marked a trade worth 239 billion dollars via this sea. The EU believes that a meaningful European naval presence should be marked in this region. The EU openly states that the South China Sea conflict should be resolved too with secure free navigation. The EU would also gain a lot of benefits if done so.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has a deep-rooted political interest in the region of the South China Sea. China is a major opposition to NATO and thus all forms of Chinese expansion are against NATO's wishes. In recent years NATO has been taking an increasing interest in the Asia Pacific region and is ambitious to increase its influence in the region. Many of the NATO countries have major trade routes through the Pacific and the South China Sea and thus the organization is a supporter of the Freedom of Navigation. However, as per NATO's latest statements, NATO has refrained from intervention in the South China Sea until the situation further worsens. Along with this however, NATO released a statement on April 05, 2023, in a meeting in Brussels that NATO will be increasing actions in the Asia-Pacific and the Indo-Pacific, hinting at future involvement.

CURRENT SITUATION

The South China Sea is constantly under dispute. Tensions and conflicts still prevail in this region. The shortage of microchips in the world and the abundance of the same in this conflicted area adds to the desire of countries to have a command over the area. As per the latest updates, the US-Philippines have deepened their military ties as tensions grow. Two Philippines vessels had been involved with the Chinese navy in the disputed South China Sea. The 2 ships were just 10 meters apart from each other which could have even resulted in a clash between the 2 nations. Several Chinese militia ships were also spotted in a portion of the South-China Sea, the same area where a group of ASEAN and Indian warships were engaged in military drills. The EU recently released a new policy to increase its influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Tensions in the South China Sea, including the recent presence of large armed vessels at Whitsun Reef, put the peace and stability in the region at stake. Further Taiwan's government recently stated that it will not renounce its sovereignty or legal rights. NATO members such as the USA have in recent years increased support and attention towards Taiwan in its fight for independence. Taking into consideration the current situation, Vietnam stated that it has sufficient legal and historical evidence to prove its sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly, while NATO stated that it would establish cooperation with its partners in the Indo-Pacific region. In recent years maritime joint development zones have emerged as an important means to overcome the deadlock in relation to maritime jurisdictional claims.

The first significant development that took place was China's new coast guard law, which took effect on February 1, 2021. This new law authorizes China's Coast Guard to use firearms, cannons, or missiles, to protect China's resources within waters under its jurisdiction on ships of other states that conduct economic activities within China's jurisdictional waters. With various nations taking armed actions in the region, tensions are at their peak. From ASEAN-led countries to the USA and even the EU from all over the world are trying to resolve this issue of maritime territorial disputes as soon as possible. Different policies are being negotiated and a decision is still pending.

CONCLUSION AND EXPECTATIONS

The South China Sea Conflict has grown into a hostile and tricky situation with various international powers involved. Constantly steps are being taken by various countries to protect their interests, millions are being stripped of their rights, the economies of nations are taking large hits and the political dominance of nations is changing. The ideals of every nation contradict those of others and thus armed conflicts are constantly breaking out. However, to date international war has not been waged and this situation must be maintained.

To avert a war-like situation and war itself and maintain Peace, Harmony, Dignity, and Integrated development, the delegates must make well-measured and diplomatic decisions. Being a conflict that has numerous viewpoints all delegates are suggested to try and find common ground in such a way that consensus is reached through compromise while bearing in mind the ideals stated under the United Nations Charter.

Delegates have to keep in mind that the success of the committee and their own individual success depends completely on their preparations before the conference. All delegates are urged to be well-researched on the Agenda to be able to do the agenda justice. The study guide acts as only an introduction to the Agenda and should not be a delegate's entire research. Every delegate will have to be ready to face opposite ideals, adjust to them, and find common solutions. Plagiarism and the use of AI Chatbots such as Chat GPT will not be tolerated. Original solutions are the need of the hour to find peace.

At the end of the day, we as chairs will be looking for, your ability to cope with opposing beliefs and drive your country's ideals to their fulfillment using feasible, original, and grounded solutions.

Hope this guide gave you an insight into the problem at hand and helped you understand the gravity and urgency of the situation.

Looking forward to meeting you all!



QUESTION A DIRECTIVE MUST ANSWER

- Q1. What settlement can be made so that the interests of all the involved countries can be taken into account and international war is averted?
- Q2. Does the UNCLOS and Maritime Law need to be rewritten?
- Q3. What will happen to the 9-dash line?
- Q4. What will be the political status of Taiwan?
- Q5. Who will claim the economic resources of the South China Sea?
- Q6. Who will regulate the trade through the South China Sea?
- Q7. Will the victims of the War and Humanitarian crimes receive appropriate justice?

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