

**Committee:** United Nations Security Council

**Topic:** Territorial Disputes in South China Sea

**Country:** People's Republic of China

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The factors responsible for mounting tensions in the South China Sea issue include the territorial disputes on islands, reefs and overlapping claims on maritime rights and interests in waters of the South China Sea, which are caused by the illegal inhabitation of some islands and reefs of China's Nansha & Spratly Islands by some coastal countries. Formed in the long historic course, China's sovereignty and relevant rights in the South China Sea have solid historic and legal basis, and have been upheld by successive Chinese governments. People's Republic of China inalienable sovereignty within the nine-dotted line, which includes the Spratly islands, the Paracel islands, the Scarborough Shoal and their adjacent waters, is indisputable. However, surrounding nations of the South China Sea have failed to respect the territorial sovereignty of China, which have stirred up minor conflict and in turn has imposed a threat to economic partnership among nations.

China's basic guidelines for neighbouring diplomacy is to build good-neighborly relations and bringing harmony, security and prosperity to neighbouring countries, and concentrate on the concept of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. China has maintained strategic and cooperative relationship for peace and development with the relevant states parties of the current situation at the South China Sea. High-level exchanges have been frequent and economic cooperation has been fruitful. Yet, states parties involved have constantly acted provocatively towards China's economic exclusive zones (EEZ), maritime and land territories, which have resulted in escalating tension and armed clashes. The Sino-Vietnamese War, Mischief Reef Incident and the 1998 Johnson South Reef Skirmish all proved costly to the regional stability and the long-term partnership among the nations in the late-20th century. The consequences of the past incidents, however, have not ended their aggressive incursion into China's own EEZ, maritime and land territories. Earlier this year, Vietnam began an oil exploratory drilling with a foreign energy company within the economic exclusive zone of China. Tensions at the South China Sea escalate further with the involvement of the United States. China has routinely intercepted reconnaissance activities within its EEZ undertaken by the United States. Without the consent and notice of the administration, these activities not only infringe upon the China's domestic law and international law but also undermine the stability of the region.

China strictly abides by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In accordance with the aforementioned document, China has been continuously carrying out its work to safeguard the territorial integrity in respond to deliberate provocations, recalling President Xi Jinping's remark, "We are strongly committed to safeguarding the country's sovereignty and security, and defending our territorial integrity." In 2013, China established the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), which

exercises China's jurisdiction over the marine area. Besides defending our territorial waters and EEZ, the SOA is also for the environmental protection of our waters. With respect to oil drilling, since China has indisputable sovereignty over the Spratly islands Paracel islands and their adjacent waters, any planned activities by the Xi's administration fall completely within the Chinese internal affairs, China therefore continues its operation at the South China Sea.

China firmly believes that mutually beneficial cooperation could be reached with our partners of Southeast Asia. For such a purpose, China sponsors a two-phased plan for strengthening peace and stability at the South China Sea. During the first phase, China supports bilateral pact of mutual cooperation between relevant states parties. After years of cooperation in maritime development, the plan will then enter the second phase – a multilateral settlement on disarmament which will ultimately bring greater stability to the region. China believes confidence building among nations is critical in resolution towards the current situation. Thus, we will continually work towards a peaceful coexistence in coordination with relevant parties. China stands ready to actively pursue a harmonious maritime order at the South China Sea.