

UNGA-DISEC STUDY GUIDE

NY MUN

**Agenda - Analysing the South China Sea Conflict Geopolitical Tension,
Militarisation and regional security implication.**

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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Congratulations on getting the opportunity to participate in NY MUN .To the veterans of MUN, I promise you a very enriching debate you've never experienced before and to the newcomers, I am excited to be a part of your maiden voyage.

What we desire from the delegates differs from how experienced or articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how she/he can respect disparities and differences of opinion, and work around these, while extending their foreign policy so that it encompasses more of the others without compromising their stand, thereby reaching a unanimously acceptable practical solution.

The following pages intend to guide you with the nuances of the agenda as well as the council.The Guide chronologically touches upon all the different aspects that are relevant and will lead to fruitful debate in the Council. It will provide you with a bird's eye view of the gist of the issue.

However, it has to be noted that the background guide only contains certain basic information which may form the basis for the debate and your research. You are the representative of your allotted

country and we hope that you put in wholehearted efforts to research and comprehensively grasp all important facets of the diverse agenda.

All the delegates should be prepared well to make the council's direction and debate productive. After all, only then will you truly be able to represent your country in the best possible way. We encourage you to go beyond this background guide and delve into the extremities of the agenda to further enhance your knowledge of a burning global issue.

Sincerely,

Darshan Kamat, Chairperson (darshankamat.workmail@gmail.com) Pranada Wani, Vice Chairperson (pranadawani2106@gmail.com)

How to Research?

Following is a suggested pattern for researching *(if required)*:

1. Researching and understanding the United Nations and the Committee/Council being simulated – Its Mandate, including understanding historical work done on the agenda.
2. Research on the allotted country. Understanding its polity, economy, culture, history etc.
3. Comprehending the Foreign Policy of the allotted country. It includes understanding the ideology and principles adopted by the country on the agenda. It further includes studying past actions taken by the country on the agenda and other related issues –specifically analyzing their causes and consequences.
4. Reading the background guide thoroughly.
5. Researching further upon the agenda using the footnotes and links given in the guide and from other sources such as academic papers, institutional reports, national reports, news articles, blogs etc.
6. Understanding policies adopted by different blocs of countries (example: NATO, EU etc.) and major countries involved in the agenda. Including their position, ideology and adopted past actions.
7. Characterizing the agenda into sub-topics and preparing speeches and statements on them. It is the same as preparing topics for the moderated caucuses and their content.
8. Preparing a list of possible solutions and actions the UNSC can adopt on the issue as per your country's policies.
9. Assemble proof/evidence for any important piece of information/allegation you are going to use in committee
10. Keeping your research updated using various news sources, especially news websites given in the proof/evidence section. Note: This is not by any means an exhaustive list. It is only indicative of what all can be done by delegates to refine their research.

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Proof/Evidence in the Committee:

Evidence or proof is from the following sources will be accepted as credible in the committee:

1. News Sources

a. REUTERS – Any Reuters' article which clearly makes mention of the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee. (<http://www.reuters.com/>)

b. State operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are

i. *RIA Novosti (Russia)* <http://en.rian.ru/>

ii. *IRNA (Iran)* <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>

iii. *Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China)* <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

2. Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Some examples are,

a. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America_ <http://www.state.gov/index.htm> or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation_ <http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>

i. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>) or People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>).

ii. *Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports* <http://www.un.org/en/members/> (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative.)

iii. *Multilateral Organisations* like the NATO (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC (http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/), etc.

3. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the UNGA – 1 (DISEC).

a. UN Bodies like the UNSC_ (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>) or UNGA_ (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>). b. UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency_ (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank_ (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund_ (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross_ (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.

c. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System_ (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>), the International Criminal Court_ (<http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC>).

NOTE: Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia_ (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), Amnesty International_ (<http://www.amnesty.org/>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/>) or newspapers

like the Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>), Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>), etc. be accepted as PROOF/EVIDENCE. But they can be used for better understanding of any issue or even be brought up in debate if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a Government.

Documents, Treaties etc. to understand

Following is the list of documents that need to be perused by all delegates before they come to the council. Please understand that you need to know the following aspects regarding each of the mentioned documents: The reason why this document exists (for e.g. the Geneva Conventions were enacted to lay down the rules of war and for the treatment of all parties concerned in the wars.) The nature of the document and the force it carries, i.e. whether it is a treaty, a convention, a doctrine, or a universally accepted custom or norm. The areas where the document can be applied or has jurisdiction on (for e.g. international humanitarian law applies only to situations of armed conflict, whereas the human rights laws applies at all times of war and peace alike.) The contents of the document at hand. You need not memorize any articles or rules of any convention or treaty, but should know what the document has to say in various situations that may arise in the council. The delegates must have the understanding of the following:

1. UN Charter:

The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945 at San Francisco by the nations represented at the United Nations Conference on International Organisation, most of them earlier allies in the Second World War. The allies began being referred to as the 'United Nations' towards the end of that war. The Charter came into force on October 24 1945. Since that time all members joining have had to declare themselves bound by both documents - though practice has demonstrated on too many occasions that that declaration has not been taken too seriously. Once again, a written constitution is one thing, actual behavior is another. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>
<http://research.un.org/en/docs/charter>

2. Geneva Conventions:

The Geneva Conventions comprise four treaties, and three additional protocols, that establish the standards of international law for the humanitarian treatment of war. The singular term Geneva Convention usually denotes the agreements of 1949, negotiated in the aftermath of the Second World War (1939–45), which updated the terms of the first three treaties (1864, 1906, 1929), and added a fourth treaty. The Geneva Conventions extensively defined the basic, wartime rights of prisoners (civil and military); established protections for the wounded; and established protections for the civilians in and around a war-zone. Moreover, the Geneva Convention also defines the rights and protections afforded to non-combatants, yet, because the Geneva Conventions are about people in war, the articles do not address warfare proper — the use of weapons of war — which is the subject of the Hague Conventions (First Hague Conference, 1899; Second Hague Conference 1907), and the bio-chemical warfare Geneva Protocol (Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, 1925).

3. Customary International Law / Customary International Humanitarian Law:

Customary international law consists of rules that come from "a general practice accepted as law" and exist independent of treaty law. Customary IHL is of crucial importance in today's armed conflicts because it fills gaps left by treaty law and so strengthens the protection offered to victims.

<https://www.icrc.org/en/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/customary-law>

<https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/Home>

http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/customary_international_law

4. The concept of 'jus cogens' or peremptory norms:

And so on...

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list! There are many more sources that you may find very useful as a delegate within committee proceedings. Feel free to research them and use them as part of your arguments in the committee.

Introduction to the Committee

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), formally known as the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, stands as one of the primary organs addressing global security challenges. Established at the inception of the United Nations, DISEC serves as the principal forum for deliberation on disarmament and related international security matters within the UN framework.

The committee operates on the fundamental principle that global peace requires concerted action toward arms control and conflict prevention. While the Security Council addresses immediate threats to peace, DISEC takes a broader, more deliberative approach to underlying security challenges. This complementary role enables the committee to advance long-term solutions to complex security issues that transcend immediate crises.

DISEC deals with disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; and promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The committee's composition reflects the universal membership principle of the General Assembly, with all 193 UN member states represented. This inclusive structure facilitates comprehensive debate that incorporates diverse security perspectives from across the global community. Decision-making typically proceeds through consensus-building, though formal voting mechanisms exist for contentious issues.

DISEC sessions follow a structured format that includes general debate, thematic discussions, and action on draft resolutions. The committee is distinct in being the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records pursuant to Rule 58(a) of the General Assembly's rules of procedure. This procedural

distinction underscores the importance attached to accurately preserving the formal positions of states on critical security matters.

Committee Structure and Functioning

The First Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. This collaborative approach allows for specialized technical input while maintaining the committee's role as the principal deliberative body on disarmament issues.

The committee's proceedings are guided by a chairperson, elected at the beginning of each session, who manages debate and oversees procedural matters. The chairperson works alongside a bureau comprised of vice-chairs and a rapporteur, representing different regional groups to ensure geographic balance in committee leadership.

The First Committee sessions are structured into three distinctive stages: general debate, thematic discussions, and action on drafts. This sequential approach allows for comprehensive consideration of issues, from broad conceptual debate to specific policy proposals.

Mandate of the UNGA-DISEC

The First Committee of the UN General Assembly holds a comprehensive mandate focused on disarmament, nonproliferation, arms control, and international security issues. It recommends resolutions and decisions for adoption by the plenary session of the UNGA. This mandate encompasses several critical dimensions that directly relate to maritime security challenges such as those present in the South China Sea.

Scope and Authority

DISEC's scope includes consideration of all disarmament and international security matters within the framework of the UN Charter. The committee examines general principles governing cooperation in maintaining international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and armaments regulation. Additionally, it promotes cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The committee's authority derives from its position within the UN General Assembly, empowering it to:

1. Deliberate on any questions related to international security within the scope of the UN Charter
2. Make recommendations to Member States and to the Security Council on such matters
3. Initiate studies and make recommendations for promoting international cooperation in maintaining peace
4. Consider principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments

While DISEC lacks binding enforcement powers, its resolutions carry significant normative weight. The committee's recommendations often establish international standards that inform national policies and multilateral agreements on security matters. This normative influence makes DISEC an essential forum for addressing complex security dilemmas like the South China Sea dispute.

Relationship with Other UN Bodies

DISEC maintains important institutional relationships with other UN entities to fulfill its mandate effectively. It works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. This coordinated approach enables technical expertise from specialized bodies to inform the committee's more broadly representative deliberations.

The committee's relationship with the Security Council is particularly significant. While the Security Council holds primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security with binding authority, DISEC provides a complementary function by developing normative frameworks and building international consensus on security principles.

In practice, DISEC serves as a vital platform for addressing security challenges that may not yet warrant Security Council action but require international attention and coordinated response. Its universal membership ensures that all states, including those not represented on the Security Council, can contribute to international security dialogue.

Introduction to the Agenda

The South China Sea conflict represents one of the most complex and consequential territorial disputes in the contemporary international system. Situated at the intersection of competing sovereignty claims, strategic security interests, and vital economic considerations, this regional flashpoint has significant implications for global peace and security.

Geographical Context

The South China Sea spans approximately 3.5 million square kilometers, bordered by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, and Indonesia. This semi-enclosed sea encompasses numerous island groups including the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Scarborough Shoal, and various boundaries in the Gulf of Tonkin. Additionally, the waters near the Indonesian Natuna Islands, which some regard as geographically part of the South China Sea, are also disputed.

The region is characterized by its complex maritime geography, featuring hundreds of small islands, reefs, atolls, and rocks. Many of these features are submerged at high tide, creating additional complications for territorial claims under international maritime law. The South China Sea's unique geography has contributed to overlapping maritime boundaries and jurisdictional disputes that have proven resistant to resolution.

Historical Context of the Disputes

The historical origins of the South China Sea dispute are multifaceted and contested. According to researchers, claims to any of the features were not seriously made until the 19th or early 20th century. However, each claimant state presents historical narratives to support their territorial assertions, with some dating back to ancient periods of maritime exploration and trade.

China bases its expansive claim on historical rights, asserting that Chinese navigators discovered and utilized the islands throughout centuries of maritime activity. Vietnam similarly points to historical records demonstrating administrative control over the Paracel and Spratly Islands during pre-colonial periods. The Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei generally ground their claims in proximity and the legal framework established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Contemporary Significance

The South China Sea has emerged as a crucial focal point in international relations due to its immense strategic and economic value. An estimated US\$3.36 trillion worth of global trade passes through the South China Sea annually, accounting for approximately one-third of global maritime trade. The region holds particular importance for China, with 80 percent of its energy imports and 40 percent of its total trade passing through these waters.

Beyond shipping lanes, the sea contains significant proven and estimated reserves of oil and natural gas, along with valuable fishing grounds that contribute to regional food security. Claimant states are therefore interested in securing rights to fishing stocks, potential hydrocarbon exploitation, and strategic control of vital shipping lanes¹⁸.

The dispute has intensified in recent decades through several developments:

1. China's articulation and assertion of the "nine-dash line" claim encompassing approximately 90% of the South China Sea
2. Accelerated island-building and militarization activities

3. The 2016 arbitration case between the Philippines and China
4. Increased military presence from both regional states and external powers, particularly the United States

These developments have transformed what was once primarily a legal and diplomatic dispute into a significant security challenge with implications for regional stability and the broader international order.

Key Points to Address and know

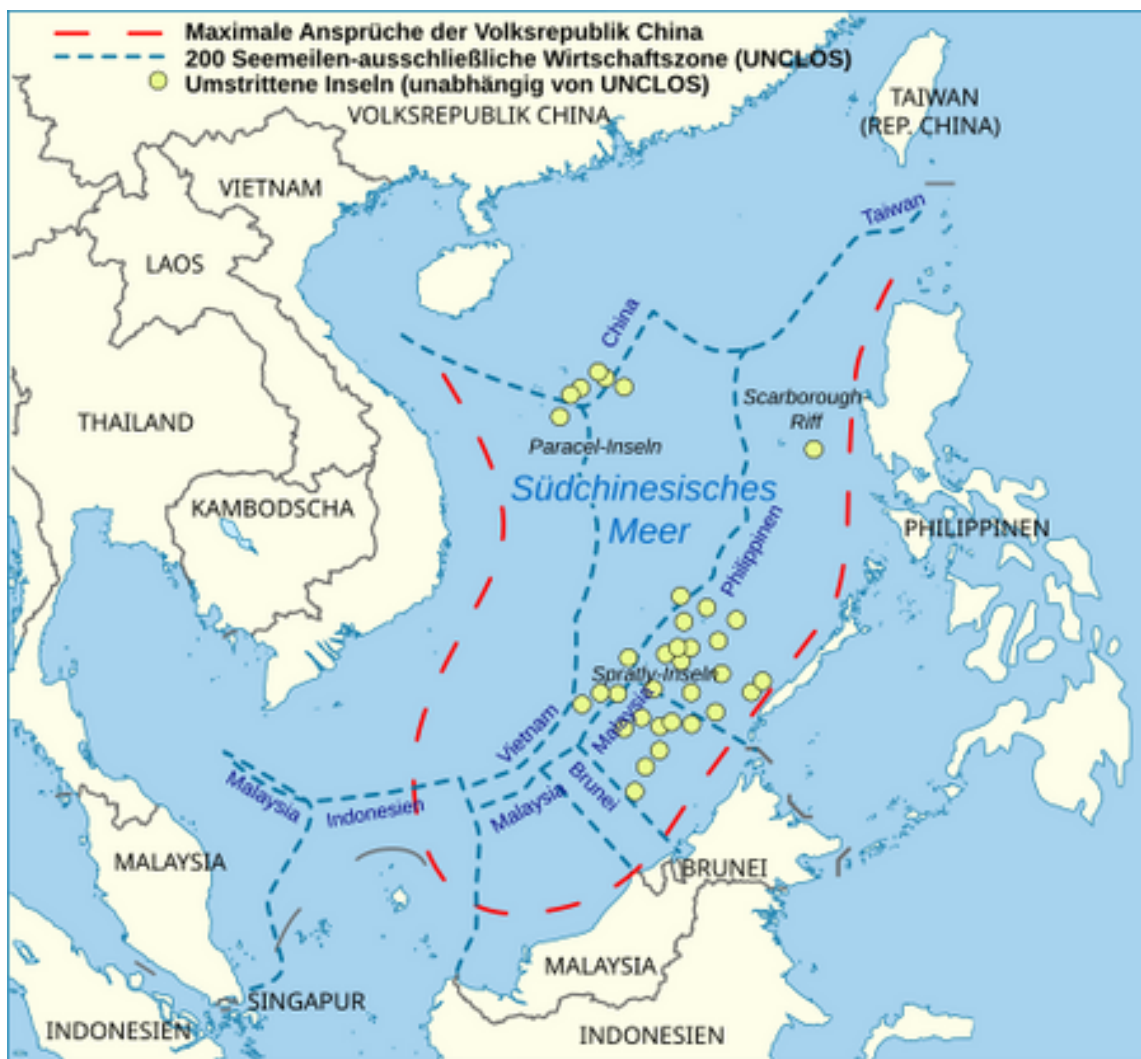
Territorial Claims and Disputes

The South China Sea encompasses multiple overlapping territorial claims that form the core of the ongoing dispute. The most expansive claim is China's "nine-dash line," which encompasses approximately 90% of the South China Sea. This demarcation, representing China's claim to historical rights, extends hundreds of miles south and east from its mainland to the coasts of Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam all maintain competing claims over various features in the South China Sea. These claims encompass several distinct geographic areas:

1. Spratly Islands: Claimed in whole or part by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. Vietnam occupies the greatest number of features, while Taiwan occupies the largest, Taiping Island.
2. Paracel Islands: Currently occupied by China but contested by Taiwan and Vietnam.
3. Scarborough Shoal: A dispute primarily between China and the Philippines that escalated significantly in 2012. This triangular chain of reefs and rocks lies approximately 120 nautical miles west of the Philippines and 472 nautical miles from China.
4. Reed Bank: An area of contention particularly between China and the Philippines, notable for its potential hydrocarbon resources.
5. Waters near Indonesian Natuna Islands: Though Indonesia does not consider itself a claimant in the broader South China Sea dispute, China's nine-dash line overlaps with Indonesia's exclusive economic zone near the Natuna Islands.

The complex nature of these overlapping claims is further complicated by the varying legal status of different maritime features under international law, particularly UNCLOS provisions regarding islands, rocks, and low-tide elevations.



The role and importance of Artificial Islands:

Artificial islands have become increasingly significant in the modern world, serving a variety of purposes beyond their initial creation. One area where these islands have proven particularly valuable is in infrastructure development. As nations strive to expand their transportation networks and accommodate growing populations, artificial islands offer a unique solution. These man-made land masses provide an opportunity to construct airports, seaports, and even entire cities in areas where space is limited. By reclaiming land from bodies of water, governments can create new hubs of economic activity and enhance connectivity.

The importance, relevance and significance of the Chapter 5 of the United Nations Charter in addressing the issue at hand:

Artificial islands have become increasingly significant in the modern world, serving a variety of purposes beyond their initial creation. One area where these islands have proven particularly valuable is in infrastructure development. As nations strive to expand their transportation networks and accommodate growing populations, artificial islands offer a unique solution. These man-made land masses provide an opportunity to construct airports, seaports, and even entire cities in areas where space is limited. By reclaiming land from bodies of water, governments can create new hubs of economic activity and enhance connectivity. The first step is to authorize maritime peacekeeping operations. In order to combat armed conflicts, piracy, and other threats to maritime security, the UNSC can approve peacekeeping operations at sea. In order to guarantee the safety and security of shipping routes and coastal areas, these operations may require the deployment of naval forces or international peacekeepers.

The UNSC has the power to impose penalties on people, organizations, or nations engaged in actions that jeopardize world peace when maritime activities cause conflicts or instability. These sanctions may include resource and arm embargoes, limiting mobility

The importance, relevance and significance of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in addressing the issue at hand:

The Global Courtroom (ICJ), frequently alluded to as the World Court, assumes a huge part in tending to sea security issues through its job as the essential legal organ of the Unified Countries. While the ICJ fundamentally manages lawful questions between states, its choices and warning feelings can considerably affect oceanic security. Here is an outline of the job of the ICJ in sea security:

1. *Setting Oceanic Limit Disputes:* One of the essential jobs of the ICJ is to arbitrate questions between states, including those connected with oceanic limits. At the point when states have disagreements regarding their sea borders, they can present their cases to the ICJ for a goal. The court analyzes lawful contentions and proof to lay out the limit lines, assisting with forestalling clashes connected with asset abuse in questioned regions.

2. *Deciphering Global Agreements:* The ICJ can give definitive translations of peaceful accords connected with sea security, like the Assembled Countries Show on the Law of the Ocean (UNCLOS). States might look for the court's direction on the translation and utilization of explicit arrangements inside these arrangements, adding to legitimate clearness in sea matters.

3. *Giving Warning Opinions:* The ICJ can give warning feelings on lawful inquiries alluded to by UN organs and specific offices, including questions connected with oceanic security. These suppositions can give legitimate direction on complex oceanic issues, assisting states and global associations with settling on informed choices.

4. *Tending to Disagreements regarding State Responsibility:* At the point when debates emerge over the obligation of states for activities connected with oceanic security, for example, contamination of the marine climate or infringement of worldwide regulation, the ICJ can hear cases that include state liability. States or worldwide associations might bring claims against states answerable for sea security breaks.

5. *Adding to Legitimate Certainty:* The ICJ's choices and feelings add to legitimate sureness in the field of oceanic security. States can depend on the court's statute to grasp their privileges and commitments under worldwide regulation, lessening vulnerability and the gamble of struggles adrift.

While the ICJ's part in sea security is fundamentally legitimate and legal, its choices and warning conclusions add to the strength, consistency, and serene goal of oceanic questions, at last improving sea security on a worldwide scale. States frequently go to the ICJ to determine mind boggling and petulant sea issues, advancing law and order in the oceanic space.

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Militarization and Security Developments

The militarization of the South China Sea has significantly increased regional tensions and security challenges. By 2015, China had established 8 military outposts, Malaysia 5, the Philippines 8, Taiwan 1, and Vietnam 48. However, China's construction activity from 2014 to 2016 outpaced all other claimants, fundamentally altering the strategic landscape.

China's island-building efforts have transformed previously uninhabitable features into artificial islands capable of supporting military installations, including runways, hangars, radar systems, and defense structures. By 2023, China had reclaimed around five square miles of land in the Spratly Islands, creating what effectively functions as unsinkable aircraft carriers in disputed waters.

In response to China's growing military presence, the United States has conducted Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) to challenge what it considers excessive maritime claims inconsistent with international law. These operations involve U.S. naval vessels sailing through disputed areas to demonstrate the right to navigate freely through international waters. Recent incidents have heightened concerns about potential armed confrontation:

1. Chinese Coast Guard vessels have employed increasingly aggressive tactics against Philippine resupply missions to the BRP Sierra Madre, a vessel intentionally grounded at Second Thomas Shoal in 1999 to reinforce Philippine territorial claims.
2. Collisions have become increasingly common, with the Chinese Coast Guard using military-grade lasers and water cannons against Philippine ships. On June 17, 2024, a Chinese vessel and a Philippine supply ship collided near Second Thomas Shoal, with both sides blaming the other for the incident.
3. The United States has strengthened its defense relationship with the Philippines, with Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin confirming in March 2024 that the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty extends to both countries' armed forces, public vessels, and aircraft in the South China Sea.

Strategic Importance and Resource Competition

The South China Sea holds immense strategic value for both regional states and the broader international community. Key aspects include:

1. **Maritime Trade:** Approximately \$3.36 trillion in annual global trade transits through the South China Sea, representing one-third of global maritime commerce. For China specifically, 80% of its energy imports and 40% of its total trade pass through these waters.
2. **Energy Resources:** The seabed contains significant oil and natural gas deposits. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates the region contains approximately 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in proven and probable reserves.
3. **Fisheries:** The South China Sea accounts for approximately 12% of global fish catch, providing essential food security and economic livelihood for coastal communities throughout the region.
4. **Strategic Positioning:** Control over features in the South China Sea enables power projection capabilities and potential ability to monitor or disrupt maritime traffic in a crisis scenario.

The competition for these resources has intensified as regional populations and economies grow, placing additional pressure on fisheries and energy supplies. Incidents related to fishing activities and resource exploitation have frequently triggered confrontations between claimant states, particularly in areas of overlapping EEZ claims.

Past efforts and resolutions

1. S/RES/2634 - This resolution was on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea.
2. S/RES/2608 - renewed the anti-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia for three months
3. S/RES/2500 - resolution renewing the counter-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia for 12 months.

Legal Proceedings and Arbitration

The most significant legal development in the South China Sea dispute was the 2016 arbitration case initiated by the Philippines against China under Annex VII of UNCLOS. After a series of confrontations with China over the disputed Scarborough Shoal, Manila took their complaint to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2013.

The tribunal issued a landmark ruling on July 12, 2016, determining that:

1. China's claims based on "historic rights" within the nine-dash line had no legal basis under UNCLOS
2. None of the features in the Spratly Islands qualified as islands capable of generating an EEZ

3. China had violated the Philippines' sovereign rights in its EEZ by interfering with Philippine fishing and petroleum exploration activities
4. China's island-building activities had caused severe environmental harm and violated its obligations to preserve the marine environment

China rejected the tribunal's jurisdiction and refused to accept the ruling, maintaining its position that sovereignty disputes should be resolved through bilateral negotiations. Despite China's non-compliance, the ruling established important legal precedents regarding maritime entitlements and the application of UNCLOS in territorial disputes.

Security Initiatives and Military Developments

In response to growing tensions, various security initiatives have emerged:

1. **U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations:** The United States has conducted regular FONOPs to challenge what it considers excessive maritime claims and to assert navigational rights in accordance with international law. These operations have increased in frequency and visibility in recent years.
2. **Defense Cooperation Agreements:** Amid rising tensions with China, the Philippines has strengthened its defense partnerships. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed deals to increase base access, joint exercise training, and weapons transfers with the United States. This represents a significant shift from the more conciliatory stance toward China adopted by his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.
3. **Regional Security Assistance:** Japan has sold military ships and equipment to the Philippines and Vietnam to improve their maritime security capacity and to deter Chinese aggression. This reflects growing concern among regional powers about the changing security dynamics in the South China Sea.
4. **Confidence-Building Measures:** Various mechanisms have been established to prevent unintended escalation, including hotlines between military commands, protocols for unplanned encounters at sea, and joint maritime exercises. However, implementation has been inconsistent.

QARMA(Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

1. How can the international community ensure that overlapping claims over the resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Freedom of Navigation of Operations (FONOPS) within High Seas does not lead to conflicts?
2. Should there be an international convention/agreement/declaration over the intricacies, characteristics and definition over the term 'piracy'? Should a differentiation be made between traditional and modern forms of piracy? If yes, how? If no, why not?
3. How can the international community ensure that the realistic challenges associated with the enforcement and implementation of maritime law meets with the United Nations Convention of Law of Sea (UNCLOS)'s permission over hot pursuit of vessels? How can the international community ensure that certain member states may not use it arbitrarily to hegemonies and dominate a particular region?
4. How can the international community ensure the effective enforcement, implementation and compliance of the responsibilities of the Flag States as mentioned within Article 94 of the United Nations Convention of Law of Sea (UNCLOS) is fully and completely realized and met with practicality?

5. What is the role of regional organizations/bodies/ arrangements in dealing with traditional and non-traditional aspects of threat within a region? Should such organizations be given more autonomy in the decision making process? If yes, how are the member states going to prevent the role of extra regional powers in influencing the decision making process? If not, what other alternative can be undertaken for meeting such security threats?
6. What is the role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in facilitating oceanic debates and oceanic security from growing into brutality?
7. How can member states ensure that the definition of maritime zones, rights and responsibilities of states are clearly and unambiguously accepted and adhered to? If not, then, what dispute resolution mechanism must be adopted?
8. What is the role of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science (AIDS) in improving and enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) within a country's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ's)?
9. How can the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMP) ensure technical and operational guidelines for ships to deter piracy and armed robbery, particularly, in high-risk areas such as the Gulf of Aden?
10. How can the international community ensure the adoption of MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) wherein regulations to prevent marine pollution, oil spills, illegal discharge of toxic and hazardous substances?
11. How can the international community address security measures for ships and port facilities to prevent acts of terrorism, including the use of storeways or concealed weapons?
12. How can the international community prevent the militarisation of the Arctic region, via search and rescue operations and disaster response? Should the international community develop an arctic maritime security policy?

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