

Essy on south china sea dispute



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The main idea of the South China Sea dispute is a series of complex, legal, technical and geographic components critical to understanding the dispute. However, the issues involving territory and sovereignty are the most pervasive security problems facing the region especially after the cold war. It is considered to be a major 'flashpoint' for the conflict in East Asia as the significances is the assumed presence of natural resources such as oil, hydrocarbon, manganese nodules and fish after the cold war, its strategic location is straddling as the world's second busiest international sea lane in South East Asia. Its small features and indeterminate maritime regime are the subject of conflicting claims among China and Taiwan and four member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Therefore, this research aims to study the historical background and the evolution of the South China Sea Dispute, and its conflict management and resolution. In this case, there are several impacts from internal and external factors related to the claimants. However, it is thus possible to state that the dispute is difficult to be solved by using one approach among the parties as its commitment has been both limited and ambiguous behind, involved with territory, maritime zone and the rich resources assumed existed in the South China Sea. Meanwhile the relations between the conflicting parties have been at a level where their behavior does not seem threatening and the militarization is unlikely used to solve the problem. The author will examine the Impact of ASEAN and the U. S. involving in this issue and its role as well as the approaches that have been used in solving the dispute such as CBMs, ARF, and the Indonesian workshop, with a view to proposing the possibility of the conflict solutions towards, the process on Code of conduct, multilateral

Conflict Resolutions and other joint development cooperation over the existing resources.

INTRODUCTION

After the cold war, the South China Sea is considered to be a major 'flashpoint' as the significances of these islands are the assumed presence of natural resources such as oil, hydrocarbon, manganese nodules and fish, as well as their strategic location straddling as the world's second busiest international sea lane in South East Asia. Several countries¹ thus claim sovereignty over parts of these waters for several decades². Since the nature of this dispute has become political, a number of political efforts for peaceful settlement have been increasing.

1 ASEAN Countries: Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam. And other two disputants: China and Taiwan.

2 Noel M. Novicio, " Introduction," in The South china Sea Dispute in Philippine Foreign policy: Problem (Singapore : Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, 2003)

The three million square kilometers South China Sea is the maritime heart of Southeast Asia. It is two thirds the size of the combined land territory of all the ASEAN states. Most Southeast Asian countries have coastlines overlooking or close to the South China Sea. Some would be wary about having to share a common maritime boundary with such a big and increasingly powerful nation as China, or even having it as a very close neighbor. The main idea of the South China Sea dispute is a series of

complex, legal, technical and geographic components critical to understanding the dispute. Nonetheless, the issues involving territory and sovereignty are the most pervasive security problems facing the region. Non-claimants most immediate concerns evolve around freedom of navigation through this important sea lane linking Middle East, South Pacific, Southeast and Northeast Asian and the North American markets and resources.

Six nations - China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei - presently claim the Spratly Islands in part. All except Brunei maintain some form of presence there. Vietnam reportedly has stationed troops on 21 islands, the Philippines on eight, China on six, Malaysia on three and Taiwan on one. Their competing claims are founded on a variety of historical, territorial and legal issues. China claims the Spratly and the Paracel islands as well as the surrounding waters and has attempted to prevent the other claimants, whether Vietnam, the Philippines or Malaysia, from developing the oil and gas potential of their own claim zones.

The parties concerned assent to resolve their disputes in the South China Sea through friendly consultations and negotiations in accordance with universally recognized international law, under the 1982 U. N. Convention on the law of the Sea, as well as exercising self - restraint and exploring ways for cooperation in the disputed areas. China maintains its absolute sovereignty over the Spratly Islands while support the joint economic development of the disputed areas. China has generally preferred the bilateral negotiations to the use of multinational forum favored by other claimants. In sum China would appear to see the benefits of diplomacy

in the Spratly's dispute, but has stopped short of any commitment with, might limit its future actions³.

³ Mara C. Hurwitt, LCDR, USN. B. A. University of North Carolina, " U. S. Strategy in Southeast Asia: The spratly Islands Dispute", (Master Thesis. Fort Leavewoth, Kansa), 1993. pp 1 - 7

⁴ Joshua Goldstein, International Relations (New York: Harper Collins College Publisher, 1994), pp. 47-49

Despite a strong initial objection by China, ASEAN manage to place the dispute on the agenda of ARF and claimed some success in dealing with China on the Spratly issue. The collective identity of ASEAN also shows an important step of ASEAN as a bridge of confidence and security building among Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Later on ASEAN and China had adopted the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of the parties in the South China Sea, but no legally binding documents were drawn up. However, the core of the South China Sea dispute remains to be of territorial sovereignty and not law of the sea issues.

METHODOLOGY/EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

This study uses qualitative The Methodology for this research is descriptive analysis, including the data and relevant information, facts and articles, which are used to support the analytical method to understand and recommend the trend to settle the disputes. The information in this research is mostly from primary sources: speeches and direct quotes of the concerned people through, books and official documents. The interview from the related

persons and academic scholars are also included. The secondary sources: updated articles, news concerning the issue from books, newspapers, magazines and websites including relevant research papers and studies addressing on this issue will also be studied.

Theoretical Frameworks

Realism

In World Politics, the Realist Theory has been notable for the international relations since 1919. The ideology of realism mainly focuses on the term of power with a pessimistic view of human nature's power, and the pursuit of interest. 4 The reason why realism is still 'the central tradition in the study of world politics' (Keohane 1989 a: 36) is that it offers something of a 'manual' for maximizing the interest of state in a hostile environment. 5 After the cold war, the Realist theory became dominant as many contemporary realist writers often claimed to rest on an older classical tradition which includes Thucydides (c. 460-406 BC), Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 - 1527) and Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679), with the fact that these realists viewed that state leaders should conduct themselves in the realm of international politics are often grouped under the doctrine of *raison d' état*, or reason of state together. This also shows how state leader conduct their foreign affairs to ensure the security of the state. 6 It is largely seen that realist concludes that the first priority for state leader is to ensure the survival of their state. 7 The passion of egotistic behavior and self - interest in international politics are significant characteristics. 8 There are three core elements that are present in both older and modern realist, statism, survival and self-help,

'three Ss' to elaborate more in the realist concept. 9 For Statism, it identifies that state is the key actor while the other actors are less important with the sovereignty as its distinguishing trait. State is the only actors that really 'count'. The other actors rise and fall, unlike State that is permanent. 10 The second principle action is the pre-eminent goal. It is the priority for the leaders in order to attain all other goals. And the third one is self - help. There is no other state or institution that can be relied on to ensure the survival.

5 Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, " Introduction: the timeless wisdom of realism" in The globalization of world Politics: An Introduction to International relations ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Third edition, NewYork: Oxford University, 2005)

6 Ibid. p. 162

7 Ibid. p. 164

8 Jack Donnelly, Realism and International Relation (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 9

9 Ibid. p. 172

10 Ibid. p. 173

11 Ibid. pp. 69 - 170

Kenneth Waltz's theory of International Politics has argued that states, especially the great powers, have to be sensitive to the capabilities of other

states. Power is a means to the end of security; states however, should consider security rather than power. 11

Realism is used to study the background, the nature of the claimant nations and the cause of the dispute behind anxiety to deal with the problem. The past, present and future status of the claimants are also applied by Realism.

Neo - liberalism

This refers to a school of thought who believes that nation-states are, or at least should be, concerned first and foremost with absolute gains rather than relative gains to other nation-states. It is also called 'Neo - liberalism Institutionalism.' This school employs game theory to explain why states do or do not cooperate, since their approach tends to emphasize the possibility of mutual wins; they are interested in institutions which can result in joint profitable arrangements and compromises.

Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, have stated that Neo - liberalism is a response to Neo - realism, while not denying the anarchic nature of the international system, neoliberals argue that its importance and effect has been exaggerated. 12 They view 'institutions' as the mediator and the means to achieve cooperation among actors in the system. Both theories, however, consider the state and its interests as the central subject of analysis; Neo - liberalism may have a wider conception of what those interests are. Neo - liberalism argues that even in an anarchic system of autonomous rational states cooperation can emerge through the building of norms, regimes and institutions.

12 Steven L. Lamy, "Neo - Liberalism" in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International relations*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Third edition, New York: Oxford University, 2005), pp. 212 - 217.

In this case, the author will use Neo - liberalism in the recommendation through the joint development resource and other cooperation, which will be the approach to settle the conflict.

International Regime

An international regime is viewed as a set of implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules and procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a particular issue-area as Stephen Krasner, 1983, had defined. An issue-area comprises of interactions in such diverse areas as nuclear nonproliferation, telecommunications, human right or environmental problems. A basic idea behind international regimes is that they provide a transparent state behavior and a degree of stability under conditions of anarchy in the international system. It is more than a set of rules it is higher level than institution. It has four elements principle, norm, rules and decision making procedures

This regime theory is used to explain the ARF with regards to settle the dispute.

Regime can explain this phenomenon of ARF and others documents involved with the forum among the claimants and ASEAN along with the future of ASEAN's institutionalization and recommendations moving forward and developing as a Code of conduct.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a wide range of methods of addressing sources of conflict matter at the inter-personal level or between states and of finding means of resolving a given conflict or of continuing it in less destructive forms than, say, armed conflict. Processes of conflict resolution generally include negotiation, mediation, diplomacy and creative peace building. The term " conflict resolution" is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms dispute resolution or alternative dispute resolution. The processes of arbitration, litigation, and formal complaint processes through an ombudsman, are part of dispute resolution and therefore they are also part of " conflict resolution

In this issue Confident-building Measures (CBMs) has been used to explain the approaches that ASEAN should try to settle the dispute such as ARF, using CBMs and move forward to Preventive Diplomacy in order to develop code of conduct. One of the definitions for CMBs is to limit or reduce the level of fear among parties in conflict, which is essential for building confidence and a sense of security. Confidence-building measures (CBMs) aim to lessen anxiety and suspicion by making the parties' behavior more predictable. 13 Such agreements are meant to build trust among the conflicting parties and limit escalation. Some common CBMs are agreements meant to give each party assurance that the other is not preparing for a surprise military action or pursuing policies associated with such future action. Such agreements provide a way to avoid misunderstandings about ambiguous events or perceived threats and play an important role in instilling a sense of stability and security.

13 Michelle Maiese, " Objectives of Confidence-Building Measures", in [http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/confidence_building_measures/South Asia](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/confidence_building_measures/South%20Asia)

Mutual confidence is crucial to reducing the likelihood of violent confrontations. In addition, such measures can allow for new institutional arrangements that will pave the way for more peaceful relations. Finally, confidence-building measures can be crucial tools in preventive diplomacy and can be explained the recommendation to settle the dispute as one approach in the future.

Mediation/Third Party in Conflict Management

Mediation is a special kind of negotiation designed to promote the settlement of a conflict. In this negotiation a distinctive role is played by a third party, that is, one not directly involved in the dispute in question¹⁴. The Third party should be impartial in the dispute. Its role is not to be confused with being a 'facilitator' or providing 'good offices'. The third party searches actively for a settlement and is sometimes described as a 'full partner' in the negotiations¹⁵.

14 Jacob Bercovitch, " From Conflict Management to conflict Resolution: The Problem - Solving Approach," in Social Conflict and Third Parties Strategies of Conflict Resolution, (USA: Westview Press., 1984), pp. 19-35.

15 G. R. Berridge, " Mediation," in Diplomacy Theory and Practice, (Third Edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 194-211.

To summarize this method, Mediation/Third Party is used to explain the trend and possibility in resolving the issue as one options to settle the long dispute in the South China Sea. The primary means available to the six Spratly Islands contestants to influence the outcome of the dispute are diplomacy and military force-or some combination of the two. Clearly, the claimants do not all possess equal strengths and capabilities, particularly in the area of military power, and have developed their strategies accordingly. As a regional forum, ASEAN can employ its own diplomatic powers to mediate a peaceful settlement in the Spratlys; however, its efforts cannot succeed unless the claimant nations themselves are willing to engage in multilateral negotiations.

FORUM AND PROCESS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

It seems that negotiations aimed at resolving territorial disputes have essentially been bilateral in nature, however; the overwhelming differences in the relative size and bargaining strength of China and the other claimants, as well as the existence of ASEAN which provides a natural grouping for the Southeast Asian claimants, have also led to calls by some of the claimants from the latter to negotiate with China on a collective basis. This move has gathered momentum especially after the Mischief Reef discovery in early 1995, which unified the ASEAN states as never before. However, as is common with negotiations regarding territory, progress has been slow. Attempts have therefore been made for some time now to explore cooperation in various fields while setting aside the issue of sovereignty and forestalling conflict. In this chapter, the author will review all the forum and process of conflict management both bilaterally and multilaterally.

3. 4. 1 China and ASEAN

ASEAN's role in the Spratly disputes has entered a new phase with the China-Philippines spat in the Mischief Reef area. ASEAN's leaders are intent on not letting the controversy block its eventual goal of creating a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia and the economic development this will engender. In this context, some observers believe ASEAN should take a united stand against China in order to persuade China to resolve the issue peacefully and multilaterally. 16

16 Mark J. Valencia, pp. 42.

17 Ibid, 42.

18 Buszynski, Leszek (2003) " ASEAN, the Declaration on Conduct, and the South China Sea". Contemporary Southeast Asia. Vol. 25. pp. 343-36

At the end of the 1995 annual meeting in Brunei, ASEAN Foreign Ministers issued a joint communiqué urging all claimants to 'refrain from taking actions that could destabilize the region, including possibly undermining the freedom of navigation and aviation in the affected areas'. 17 The statement also reiterated the importance of promoting confidence-building measures and mutually beneficial cooperative ventures in the Indonesian- sponsored workshops.

Ultimately ASEAN and China - which along with the United States and Japan were included in the Bali talks - agreed on " guidelines" for implementing the previously agreed 2002 Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Negotiations were difficult and the guidelines reveal more by

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what they do not say than by what they do. Indeed, they lack specifics, timelines and enforceability and their practical focus is on " soft" security issues such as environmental protection, marine science and transnational crime. Many saw the guidelines as only a first step towards a binding code of conduct. Nevertheless, the agreement was significant because with the world watching there was a lot at stake. 18And they also needed to demonstrate that the South China Sea is safe for commerce.

At the least, such a united front could moderate China's future actions in the area and push the dispute towards an interim solution. There was some urgency about taking a united stand before Vietnam joined ASEAN in order to avoid China's viewing ASEAN as a vehicle for Vietnam's agenda. There still may be a need to take a stand before Deng's death and the inevitable uncertainty it would bring.

There has long been a divergence of views within ASEAN regarding the 'China threat' and since ASEAN makes decisions by consensus, this divergence could reappear under stress. Apart from the problem that none of the three ASEAN claimants has shown any inclination to compromise with the others on the issue of sovereignty, ASEAN remains divided in its attitude towards China. Although Vietnam is now an ASEAN member, other members will try to prevent the organization from being dragged into the Vietnam-China rivalry.

Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore are not even claimants (although Singapore and Thailand are concerned about the safety of sea-lanes in the South China Sea, and Thailand has offered to mediate the dispute). Some

ASEAN states are concerned that confronting China now in the Spratlys could strengthen hardline nationalists in the struggle over the succession to Deng Xiaoping. Malaysia and Singapore prefer to encourage China's participation in a network of regional organizations as an 'embryonic structure of good citizenship'. Nevertheless, if China's strategy is clearly to divide and dominate, ASEAN may yet see the wisdom of jointly proposing a multilateral solution. 19

19 Joyner, Christopher C. (2002) " The Spratly Islands Dispute: Legal Issues and Prospects for Diplomatic Accommodation" in John C. Baker and David G. Wiencek, eds., *Cooperative Monitoring in the South China Sea: Satellite Imagery, Confidence-building Measures, and the Spratly Islands Disputes* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger). pp. 17-34

20 Tønnesson, Stein (2002) " The History of the Dispute" in Timo Kivimäki, ed., *War or Peace in the South China Sea?* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies). pp. 6-23

When Chinese Defense Minister General Liang Guanglie was telling the Shangri la Dialogue in Singapore on June 3 that " China is committed to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea" and that " China stood by" the DOC, news media were reporting that on May 26 a Vietnamese survey ship operating on its claimed continental shelf had its seismometer cables cut by a Chinese patrol boat. 20 Shortly after that event, China sent two vice chairmen of its Central Military Commission to Southeast Asia to try to reassure ASEAN claimants.

But a second such incident occurred on June 9, just two weeks later. Earlier, on March 4, the Philippines had protested an incident on the Reed Bank in which two Chinese patrol boats allegedly threatened to ram a Philippine survey ship. Then, on the eve of General Liang's visit to Manila, Chinese fighter jets allegedly harassed Philippine fisher folk near disputed islands in the South China Sea. Worse, China responded to frenetic protests from Vietnam and the Philippines by warning that any exploration in the vicinity of the disputed Spratly Islands without its consent was a violation of its jurisdiction and sovereignty, as well as of the DOC. The real-time link between China's stark and sweeping position and its enforcement sent a chill down the spines of ASEAN claimants and drew US attention.

Indeed, Indonesia demonstrated that it could lead, not only to resolve regional disputes but also ASEAN as a whole. ASEAN and Vietnam in particular made a major compromise by agreeing to drop a clause that would mandate that it form an ASEAN position before dealing with China on South China Sea issues. Of course, there is nothing to prevent the claimants from informally consulting among themselves before approaching China, but the gesture was important to convince China that Vietnam cannot use ASEAN to "gang up" on it. China's position was that it should only have to deal with rival claimants - Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. Of course, as chair of ASEAN, Indonesia had a responsibility to improve the standing of ASEAN and its members. But Indonesia had more at stake than its reputation as a regional leader. Indeed, Indonesia has formally protested China's so-called "nine-dashed line" claim - which overlaps some of its claimed maritime area in the South China Sea.

3. 4. 2 ASEAN Regional Forum

In the early 1990s, the South China Sea Conflict and Sino-ASEAN Relations prospect of a rising China was still perceived as a threat in Southeast Asia. China at that point launched a diplomatic offensive to counteract the existing ideational and normative structures that created this threat perception. It relentlessly denounced the idea that China posed a threat to Southeast Asia. However, it took time before China's new policy had the desired impact and the perception of China as a threat decreased. ASEAN meantime changed its behavior toward China. China's foreign minister was, for the first time, invited to the ASEAN ministerial meeting in 1991. The year after, China became a dialogue partner of the ASEAN. However, at this point China was both inexperienced and reluctant to participate in multilateral frameworks. It only joined the ARF in 1994. This was, to quote Ren Xiao, a leading Chinese expert on Sino-ASEAN relations, "a remarkable development," as China at the time had "little experience in multilateral processes, except those within the United Nations system." 21

21 Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London Routledge, 2001). p. 175.

In reality, China's move was a hedge against ARF's taking an anti-China direction rather than reflecting a genuine interest in participating. During the same period, only limited progress was made in the SCS, which continued to be perceived as the next Asian flashpoint. The SCS conflict was stalemated at a high intensity level, and there was no mutual trust or confidence. 22

22 Global Times Report: "US, Philippines Start Joint Naval Exercise," June 29, 2011, Open Source Center, OSC-CPP20110629722004

23 Buszynski, Leszek (2003) " ASEAN, the Declaration on Conduct, and the South China Sea". Contemporary Southeast Asia. Vol. 25. pp. 343-362.

Military exercises between the US Navy and ASEAN members have been exceedingly common - even so during the George W. Bush administration. Since 1995, Cooperation Afloat Readiness And Training (CARAT) naval exercises have been conducted annually between the US and six out of 10 ASEAN members: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. This year, Cambodia became the first new CARAT participant in 16 years. Additionally, the Philippines and the US have held regular exercises in the wake of the global war on terror. As for other ASEAN members, Laos is landlocked, while Myanmar and the US are famously at loggerheads. Despite its symbolism coming some decades after the Vietnam conflict, the recent emergence of US-Vietnam naval exercises is not exceptional when viewed in the wider regional context.

During the last ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam, 2011, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton created a stir during the usually low-key gathering. She declared that " The United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commons and respect for international law in the South China Sea" and that America seeks " a collaborative diplomatic process by all claimants for resolving the various territorial disputes without coercion." Though the United States has maintained a potent naval presence in the region since WWII, this incident

broke new ground in identifying American interests regarding the South China Sea.

At the ARF, participants including China concluded by resolving to continue discussions on the matter. Despite the fear mongering that some commentators have done, China did not object to participating in further dialogue over the matter which was already underway with ASEAN to begin with. The ministers' statement reaffirms that the eventual conclusion of a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea should follow on from the earlier declaration mentioned above. 23 An ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC occurred in Vietnam in April 2010 and another Joint Working Group Meeting was in China before at the end of 2010.

Over time, this becomes a significant trust- and confidence-building process. It also helps develop routines for communication. This is useful for the successful progression toward an East Asian community, both in the sense of long-term peace building and the willingness and ability to handle issues and tensions occurring during the process. Moreover, it strengthens the voice of moderation. Different Track-2 processes facilitate the gathering of policy makers in a more informal setting to allow for relatively open and frank discussions on security issues.

Preventive Security Regimes

The most important are those subsumed under ASEAN, namely the Declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN); the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia; the 1976 ASEAN

Concord: and the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea .

24 Together, the regimes embodied in these instruments exert significant normative pressures on the ASEAN claimants to moderate their behaviour, refrain from resorting to the military option, seek co-operative modes of conduct and explore peaceful resolution of disputes. There are a number of preventive security regimes which condition state behaviour over the Spratlys. It can be argued, however, that given the low levels of institutionalization and the relatively weak sanctions upon aberrant behaviour contained in these regimes, they are " soft" regimes. The non-activation of the ASEAN High Council provided for by the Treaty of Amity also weakens the force of this particular regime for the ASEAN claimants.

25 Nevertheless, despite their " softness", the regimes have proved remarkably successful in constraining conflict and enhancing co-operation and confidence among the ASEAN states..

24 Ibid, 106.

25 Ibid, 106.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Council on Security Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) have significant potential for reinforcing preventive diplomacy and security in the Spratlys in the future if regime-building progresses gradually in the years ahead. For the present, their writ is highly proscribed by China's refusal to discuss the Spratlys in the ARF.

Escalating tensions in 2009-10 demonstrated the consequences of the failure to implement the DoC. Those tensions also challenged ASEAN's credibility and its oft-repeated claim to " centrality" of Asia's security architecture. As

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chair of ASEAN in 2010, Vietnam prioritized the issue, with a modicum of success: The Joint Working Group met twice in 2010 - in Hanoi in April and in Kunming in December - but did not achieve an agreement. Indonesia also pushed the issue when it held the ASEAN chair in 2011: The Joint Working Group met in April in Medan, which coincided with a dramatic increase in tensions in the South China Sea. As M. Taylor Fravel notes in this volume, China adopted more aggressive tactics between March and June, including harassing survey ships chartered by Vietnam and the Philippines. 26 By mid-year, tensions in the South China Sea had escalated to their highest point since the end of the Cold War.

26 Dutton, M. Taylor Fravel, James R. Holmes, Robert D. Kapan, Will Rogers and Ian Storey. Center for a New American Security, January : 2012. pp 53..

(http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_CooperationFromStrength_Cronin_1.pdf)

Conclusion

Summary

The resolution to the South China Sea maritime border dispute is difficult because it is as complex as these multiple claims are various in the motives and concerns. It would be summarized that the dispute is difficult to be solved by using one approach as its commitment has been both limited and ambiguous behind, involved with territory, maritime zone and the rich resources assumed existed in the South China Sea. Other underlying

claimant motivations vary but economics is clearly another common driving factor.

The potential for profit in the form of oil, gas, fish, and mineral resources seems to be behind many claims, although (especially in the case of oil) this is based more on expectations of future discoveries than on proof of existing reserves. The desire to use claimed territories to extend exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and continental shelf zones -- within which a country may control exploration, exploitation, and preservat