
ASMUN Conference 2019



Committee Guide Security Council

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CHAIRS

Dear delegates of *The UN Security Council*,

We are Stijn Geugien and Jona Janssen. We are currently attending the sixth year of VWO on Vincent van Gogh. We take a particular interest in philosophy, history and geography. We have attended several MUN conferences throughout the years. Combined, we have participated in *ASMUN* (2x), *HSP-MUN* (3x) and *OLMUN* (2x). In these conferences we have been exceptionally successful and proclaimed several awards (no brag).

We have never had the opportunity of being a chair during one of these conferences. However, because of our other MUN experiences we have discovered that we *do* like thinking about world issues, debating about them and giving speeches. We're confident that we are going to enjoy the position of being a chair just as much as we did our position as delegates.

We look forward to making *The UN Security Council* a committee in which the debate will be fruitful, constructive and properly substantiated. The council is the most esteemed and powerful of all the UN councils. Therefore, perhaps even more so than in any other council, strong arguments and a good preparation are key. If you have any further questions about preparing, debating or MUN in general, don't be afraid to contact us!

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COUNTRIES IN THE COMMITTEE

- China
- Russia
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- France
- Bolivia
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Equatorial Guinea
- Ethiopia
- Kazakhstan
- Kuwait
- Netherlands
- Peru
- Poland
- Sweden
- Malaysia
- Japan

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council, established in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, is known to be the United Nations' smallest and most powerful council, counting no more than 15 Member States. The main purpose of the United Nations Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. In order to manage high degree of urgency issues, the Security Council has to be able to respond quickly and strong to crisis situations, which is why the Council has been granted powers that other councils have not.

Before going in depth about the Council's unique powers, another look should be taken at the Member States of the Security Council. Unlike other councils, the Security Council contains five permanent Member States: The People's Republic of China, the Republic of France, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Not only do these Member States own a permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, all five permanent Member States have been granted the unconditional power to veto a resolution or amendment during Substantive Voting, in other words: whenever one of these five veto-powers votes 'no' during Substantive Voting, an amendment or a resolution fails. The other 10 non-permanent Member States are being elected by the General Assembly for a period of 2 years.

As mentioned before, the Security Council has several powers at its disposal. The first and most important 'power', is that all nations under the United Nations Charter have to comply

with the Council's decisions. If a Member State fails to comply, the Council is able to enforce measurements in order to pressure the Member State to comply with its decisions. These measurements are also few of the powers only the Security Council has been granted. The measurements categorized as these powers are: blockades, economic sanctions, embargoes, financial restrictions and travel bans and also severance of diplomatic relations. Furthermore, the Council has the power to appoint special envoys, dispatch missions (e.g. sending peacekeeping forces) and to investigate and mediate. In order to utilize such a power, the Security Council is to include the desired power in the resolution after which the resolution, through voting procedure, has to be accepted.

Now, tensions have been rising in the South China Sea. China has been creating artificial islands, on which they have built airstrips and military bases. This would already be controversial, but it is even more now because the area in which they are building is outside their internationally recognized borders and inside those of others.

This is not just a problem of border crossing. It is an issue of military presence, international law, economic trade routes and natural resources on which many nations depend. As China is continuing its practices, other countries might lash out and its increasingly becoming a volatile region. Philippines seems to be willing to go to war over the area.

Furthermore, the dredging of the sea bed, which is done in order to create the islands, and the reforming of coral reefs into airstrips causes major damage to the ecosystem of the South China Sea.

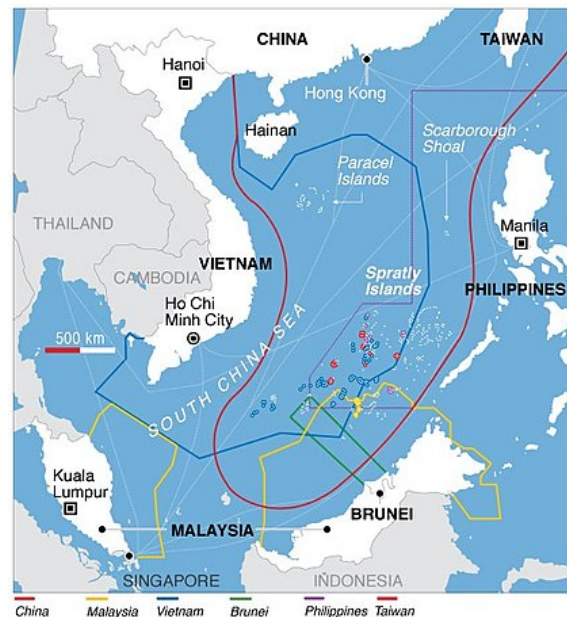
It is your task as delegates to find a solution to the distribution of the natural resources in the area. To find a solution to the border issue, whether to recognize the nine-dash line, or stick with the current system. It is your task to delicately find a midway between China and the nations surrounding the South China Sea, to solve the issue before it can go to war. Furthermore, it is important that the areas will be demilitarized to an extent which will be less likely to spark conflict. You also have to decide on how to react to the cabbage strategy. Finally, following the Sustainable Development Goals, you have to find a solution to the destruction of the ecosystem.

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA - WHAT IS GOING ON?

In 2014, ships from China carrying loads of sand and rock started unloading their load on underwater reefs located between and around the Spratley Islands in the South China Sea, creating small islands. After turning these reefs into small islands, the Chinese began constructing buildings, sea ports, airports and military bases on these areas, claiming their territory in the heart of the South Chinese Sea. Most of the South Chinese Sea has been divided over Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and China, leaving little left to be called international waters, which falls under the United Nations Maritime Law, meaning it belongs to everyone.

The South Chinese Sea, like every other sea in the world, has been divided over the adjacent countries (mentioned earlier) as Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) (according to Article 55 UNCLS: *"The exclusive economic zone is an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, subject to the specific legal regime established in this Part, under which the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State and the rights and freedoms of other States are governed by the relevant provisions of this Convention."*) according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), Article 57: *"The exclusive economic zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured."* as can be seen in Figure 1.

However, taking a closer look at the figure, one can notice the odd red line marking China's territory, which does not comply with Article 57 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Democratic People's Republic of China asserts strongly to have a historical claim of the South Chinese Sea dating back to the mid/late forties following the defeat of Japan at the end of WWII after which the then called Republic of China, reclaimed about 90% of the South China Sea making this public in 1947 using the nine-dash line, on which the red line in Figure 1 is based.



This is where the Spratley Islands become important, because as Article 57 already states, by claiming such a small area of land, the country increases its EEZ. As the Spratley Islands are partly located in the international waters or close to the international waters, the country claiming these islands increases its EEZ. As China is determined to fully claim its nine-dash EEZ, it has started creating islands like Cuarteron Reef, Subi Reef, Mischief Reef, Johnson Reef, Hughes Reef, Gaven Reef and Fiery Cross Reef in order to not only increase its power

in the South China Sea, but also to be able to support its Cabbage Strategy. With the Cabbage Strategy, small areas or, in this case, specifically islands are slowly but surely being cut off with security layers - ships - from their main land and their supplies. Through the created islands, China has the ability to increase the number of ships surrounding the Spratley Islands and to increase the number of ships it is able to support. China, on the other hand, has publicly stated that their actions are not militaristic. Taking all a step further, since 2015, China has been threatening to implement an air identification zone, meaning that everything flying over the South China Sea would need China's permission. In the last years, China's movements in the South China Sea and its interaction with its neighbours has increased and although disputes have until now only been in legal and diplomatic realms, minor clashes are rising and tensions increasing.

REASONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

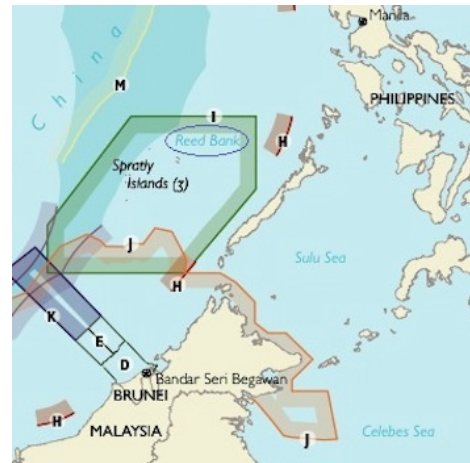
As mentioned before, the nine-dash line's existence began after the second world war, when Japan lost its control over the seas. However, it has only been in recent years that China has started using this line as an actual border and have started increasing their investments in the region. Why are they doing this?

The simple motivations behind China's actions are economic. Every year, five trillion dollars of goods travel through this sea, thirty percent of the worlds shipping trade. It is the main trade route for ship between Africa, Europe and Southern Asia and the economic powerhouses of East Asia: China, Japan and South-Korea. This makes the sea very important for China to hold, as it would give it a choke hold on its neighbours.

More reasons for this expansion are the resources existing in the area. Ten percent of the world's fisheries are in South China Sea and it is estimated that there are eleven billion barrels of oil and five trillion cubic meters of gas, a Chinese company estimates that even more oil and gas is buried in the sea. These estimates have caused the South China Sea to be described as a "second Persian Gulf". This has caused tensions between Vietnam, the Philippines and China. They have tried working together on this issue, among the attempts being the trilateral Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking, which ran between 2005 and 2008, but nothing successful came out.



For Vietnam and the Philippines, this is more than just about selling the resources. Ten percent of Vietnam's total energy needs are supplied by the Nam Con Son Basin in the South China Sea. The Philippines currently gets a third of its energy from a gas field off the coast of Luzon, but this gas field is expected to stop producing around 2024 and at this moment the only option to still get the energy would be drilling in the Reed Bank, however, this is in the Spratly Islands, where China is constructing islands and military bases. For China, getting these resources would mean having great influence over its southern neighbours and gaining resources for its own population.



There is another reason for this expansion that is less obvious to the casual observers, but that is obvious for China. As mentioned before, the nine-dash line would give China a choke hold on its neighbours, but this could also be reversed. In the world of international politics, geopolitics are a major factor in decision making and here it is especially the case. Tim Marshall says in *Prisoners of Geography*: "All great nations spend peacetime preparing for the day war breaks out." Nations have taken land in the past in order to secure its borders, look at the Soviet Union spreading as far east as possible to lessen the danger of the North-European plain, which stretches from the Pyrenees to the Urals. China's land borders however, are secure. Mountain ranges in the east, south and west, jungles in the south, deserts and small populations in the north, China is secure, except from its supply over water.

China is blocked to the oceans by enemies all around the seas: South Korea, Japan and Taiwan in the west and the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia in the south. This means that China has not security in the seas, which is why they are now building a new navy in order to be the military power of the seas and to be able to force themselves out into the oceans in case of war, but the islands are also a show of a different tactic, the carrot and the stick and this is the stick. China building islands will not only move its diplomatic borders and economic rights in the region, it will also heavily increase its military capacity and manoeuvrability in the sea. It will be a beacon of the power of Beijing to all its southern neighbours, we are here. This stick, mixed with some economic carrots, is used by China to lure its neighbours away from the friendships with the west and into its own sphere of influence. Which will give China more security in times of diplomatic crisis or even war.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The constructing of islands in the South China Sea is of course a project that calls for international responses, especially when military bases are being constructed on the ex-reefs. Many reactions come from the countries that are directly being affected, like Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, but countries who have no direct part in this also chose not to stay silent.

With China increasing its power in the heart of international waters and close to countries' national waters, it is triggering the arming of those countries. China is testing the borders and when possible crossing them, as we can for example see in the cabbage strategy. In May 2013, China crossed the border of the Philippines and started to surround the Second Thomas Shoal with increasingly more ships, which is only 105 miles from the Philippine coast. China said to be monitoring what the Philippines were shipping. In reaction, the Philippine Navy contracted some civilian ships and made use of those to ship supplies to the marine's present on Second Thomas in order to prevent confrontation. A few months later, the Chinese Coast Guard came to sail even closer to the Philippine island.



In the meantime, the United States chose to keep an eye on the events and has military aircraft surveilling the area. In 2014, the Philippines submitted a memorial in the South China Sea case against Beijing to the UN tribunal in The Hague and invited neighboring countries like Malaysia and Vietnam to join the case. A month later, China had disrupted a supply operation to Second Thomas, being reported as a blockade, resulting in the Philippine navy quickly retreating. When the Philippine Navy once was on his way to Second Thomas shipping only water and food, the presence of military aircraft from China, the United States and the Philippines themselves was undeniable. In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in favor of the Philippines, however China has dismissed the ruling and enforcement seems difficult.

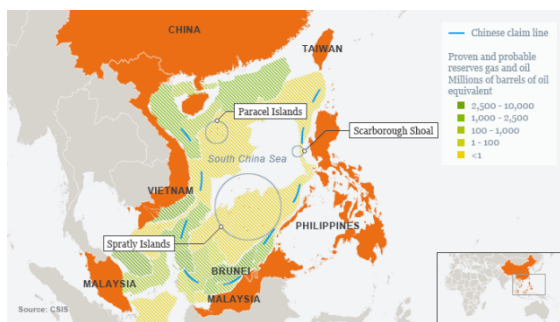
One of the ships China chose to surround the Spratly Islands with, are fishermen ships. These ships would fish in waters that were from China and another country, but also in waters that were not from China, crossing not only a border but also violating fishing laws of the countries. The Philippines and Indonesia reacted to this with arresting the fishermen. The Indonesian Navy even lost some shots at the fishermen as a warning, later declaring that "This arrest was made to show the world that Indonesia will take firm action against ships that violate our territory," because "We [the Indonesian Navy] strongly suspect they

[the Chinese fishermen] were poaching fish in our territory because we found fresh fish on the boat”.

These are just few of the many examples of how countries chose to deal with China’s increasing presence in the South China Sea. Whereas the Philippines chose to avoid conflict and brought the case to court, Vietnam unleashed “bouts of fiery rhetoric” and started expanding its own military facilities in the Spratley Islands, as did Indonesia. Vietnam has also sought closer ties with Japan, India and the United States, as if preparing to fight.

Taiwan however, after remaining vague about its EEZ borders with China, declared that its territory is in accord with international law and UNCLOS. Furthermore, it has started advocating the East China Sea Peace Initiative, calling on the countries to settle the disputes. Brunei, on the other hand chose to follow an entirely different direction, improving bilateral ties with China and becoming reliant on China in both economic and political fields.

Some countries are preventing their economies from getting hit (too hard), like Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia. This is also why Vietnam is reacting very boldly towards China. Brunei’s



steps, however, can be explained by looking at its dependence on gas and oil exportation, which make up 90% of the government's revenue and 60% of the country's GDP. The resources used for this export, lay mainly in its EEZ in the South China Sea, close to China's national waters. The falling prices of gas and oil make it hard for the country to stabilize a

wealthy and subsidized state.

This is where China comes in, not only is China a customer of Brunei's export, they have also invested multiple hundreds of million dollars in Brunei's industry and have offered to assist Brunei in its deep-sea drilling. Without China, Brunei would have little to no support and nothing to fall back on, making China a very important partner. Same goes for Malaysia: its economy depends on the gas it manages to extract from the South China Sea and would not be what it is today without China's investments. Therefore, Malaysia and Brunei have chosen to at first reacted tempered or not at all, though as the stakes increased, the countries chose different directions: whereas Brunei started leaning more on China, Malaysia increased the frequency of its patrols along the Malaysian coast and has started showing signs of a bolder stance.

Countries that are indirectly being affected by the dispute are like the United States, India and Japan have shown the world similar reactions: the countries have been increasing their military presence in the South China Sea.

Japan has been improving its ties with the Philippines and Vietnam, providing military training and transferring military equipment to the countries. Besides these efforts, Japan remains silent and cautious when it comes to the dispute.

The United States, attaching great value to freedom of navigation, regularly holds Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs), ensuring the freedom of navigation in waters like the South China Sea, that the United States would fly or sail anywhere that international law allows and stressed the importance of the South China Sea for shipments. The US has also stated not wanting to abandon its Asian allies in this dispute.

The Philippines reacted very positively to the US' presence and have welcomed the US actions. Although it is hard for the US to stay aside of such disputes, they prevent to get involved as much as possible stating the US-China relation as vitally important and one they want to see continue and even improve, just like the situation in the region.

CONSEQUENCES ON NATURE

The construction does not only have consequences for the surrounding nations of the Spratly Islands, it also has huge impact on the life beneath the ocean surface. The islands are recognized as one of the most diverse ecosystems on earth and the creation of islands on top of the reefs causes great damages.

As said, the islands are being build mainly on rocks and reefs. This is done through dredging, pumping up sand from the bottom of the sea and then placing it on top of the reefs and rocks. This sediment that is used to build the island "can wash back into the sea, forming plumes that can smother marine life and could be laced with heavy metals, oil and other chemicals from the ships and shore facilities being built."¹ Those are the words of Frank Muller-Karger, professor of biological oceanography at the University of South Florida. He points out the dangers to the sea life that are posed by the dredging of the Chinese.



China, however, claims that the building of the islands is a green project that does no harm to the environment. In the words of the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei "China's activities on the Nansha Islands strictly follow the principle of conducting green project[s]

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/30/world/asia/what-china-has-been-building-in-the-south-china-sea-2016.html>

and building ecological islands and reefs.”² The Nansha Islands is the Chinese name for the Spratly Islands. The Chinese claim that the harm done to the reef is limited, even though evidence suggests otherwise.

This seems like an unimportant part of the topic, but ecosystems are fragile and can quickly break down when a certain species of plants or animals dies out. This can have a butterfly effect which could have big consequences, not only on nature, but also on the human depending on that nature. Which is why life in sea is one of the Sustainable development goals of the UN.

BLOC POSITIONS

THE WEST

Most of the west takes a dim view towards the actions taken by China in the South China Sea, they don't recognize the nine-dash line and don't recognize the air identification zone either. The US particularly has much to lose in the region as a lot of goods travel through the region to the US.

Furthermore, the west opposes the moves as they infringe on the sovereignty of the other nations around the China sea, some of which are their allies. They are also in favour of international water, which support trade and would like to see the situation stay relatively the same as it used to be, with no radical changes.

Of course, the nations are not always to bold in their opposing views, as China is a big trading partner to most nations in the west. Meaning that most nations have an interest in keeping positive relations with China, which means not opposing it too harshly

Finally, the destruction of the coral reefs and the ecosystem connected to them, are also not appreciated by the western nations. They mostly support the sustainable development goals and want to have them succeed.

² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/26/china-calls-south-china-sea-island-reclamation-a-green-project-spratly-islands/>

ASIA

Most Asian countries are against the moves made by China. Nations such as South-Korea and Japan have an interest in keeping the water international, as many of their traded goods come through the sea. The main thing however is the expansion of Chinese territory, which could be used to mount pressure on the surrounding nations. With these new islands, China will have a larger and faster to react force in the area, which many nations don't want. India and Indonesia for example, would rather not see Chinese influence flow south.

Furthermore, some nations have an interest in keeping the border as they are, because of the natural resources. These countries are either dependant on, or believe they can gain from, these natural resources to provide food and energy to its inhabitants, and don't want the Chinese taking these resources for themselves.

Some nations however, are more inclined to lean towards China, as China supports them economically or otherwise. As they fear Chinese might and want the Chinese money, they would rather have a friendly relationship with China, than one with animosity.

MIDDLE EAST

Although the Middle East is located far from the problem area, it is dependent on the South China Sea as the South China Sea belongs to one of their major trade routes: about 70% of oil shipped through the South China Sea in 2016 came from the Middle East. This is one reason for the Middle Eastern countries to stand against China in this dispute.

A reason to stand with China on this matter, is that China is investing millions and even billions in the countries located in the Middle East, which the Middle East has welcomed with its arms wide open. It has also been said, that China is creating a small Marshall-plan for the Middle East. The Middle East will in general want to be as careful as possible with China, as it has become a very important partner in their economic fields, though as freedom of navigation is of upmost importance for their shipments (through the South China Sea) they will want to protect this too.

AFRICA

The year 2018 has marked a milestone for the China-Africa relations: during the China Africa Cooperation (attended by almost all African countries) Chinese president Xi Jinping pledged to \$60 billion in the form of loans, grants and development finances. Egypt, for example, has already been invested in with more than \$50 billion. An important message of the Africa China Cooperation is that it sees economic development as the key to many security and humanitarian problems.

With this as its motive, China has not only been improving their economic relations, but also their bilateral relations in general. Though, furthermore important for the economy is Africa's shipping to Asia. With the South China Sea being the shortest route from the African suppliers to the Asian markets, the freedom of navigation is crucial to the African economies. Just like the Middle East, the African countries find themselves in a difficult position.

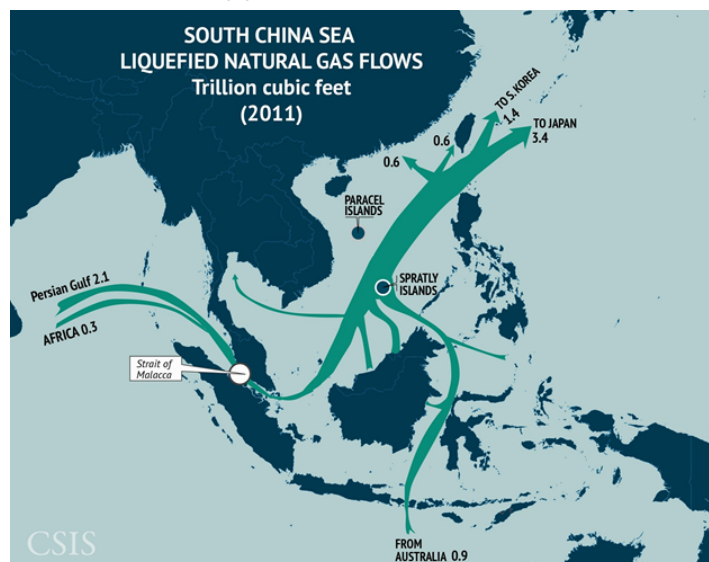
LATIN AMERICA

Although China is trying to improve its economic and political relations with Southern and Middle America, it is not going as easily as China had planned. Due to their difficult past marked by failed deals, Southern and Middle America are giving China each other a harder time, not exactly improving the situation.

Furthermore, China has become more of a competing force to Southern and Middle America's exports and economies in general than a supporting force. Head of Mexico's Federal Agency Neil Dávila has also stated that "We [the United Mexican States] do not want to be China's next Africa'. Some Southern and Middle American countries have expressed similar feelings, though countries like Venezuela and Argentina have argued that it is time to replace the US by China.

As can be seen in the figure aside, Southern and Northern America are not shipping anything (noteworthy)

through the South China Sea, however although this dispute is focused on the South China Sea, it is also about the freedom of navigation and as also Southern and Northern America value this, the debate is important to them too.



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REASONS FOR CONSTRUCTION

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INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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