



## Negotiating for Peace in the South China Sea: Strategy and Challenges

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**Abstract:** The South China Sea is a crucial maritime region that supports global trade, fisheries operations, and harbors significant untapped natural resources. However, it remains a source of international conflict due to ongoing territorial disputes, challenges related to freedom of navigation, piracy, illegal fishing activities, and environmental concerns. The rising tension among China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan and the United States makes competition in the area more intense. The study investigates the obstacles involved in peace negotiations over the South China Sea, with attention to the reasons diplomacy and strategies prevent a resolution. The paper reviews two types of mechanisms: first those from the ASEAN framework and second those from the UNCLOS and CoC for handling conflicts in the South China Sea. The study emphasizes confidence-building measures (CBMs), as well as multilateral negotiations and Track II dialogues, which serve as effective methods for reducing conflicts. Surveillance units equipped with artificial intelligence play a vital role in enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness, thereby improving regional security outcomes. According to the study's findings, national interests, sustainable management strategies, and cooperative security arrangements will determine the long-term stability and peace of the South China Sea.

**Keywords:** South China Sea, Maritime Security, Code of Conduct, Maritime Domain Awareness, Negotiations, Conflict Resolution

### Introduction:

The protection of the seas is a critical element in maintaining stability, promoting economic development, and ensuring the security of the oceans. It is a complex concept that encompasses various threats and challenges within the political, economic, environmental, and security frameworks. This includes issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction, as well as freedom of navigation, conservation, and management of maritime resources of nations, and counter-measures including combating piracy, human trafficking, smuggling, and the theft of fish stocks through (IUU) illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. If left unresolved, these challenges can transform international relations into a more hostile environment, exacerbate tensions among states, disrupt global trade, and jeopardize the livelihoods of people in coastal regions. In the

current era of globalization, the oceans serve as the lifeblood of the global economy, with over 80% of intermodal trade by volume conducted via maritime transport. International sea lines of communication and strategic shipping routes, particularly the South China Sea, facilitate the flow of commerce, energy resources, and information services, underscoring the importance of maritime security for economic prosperity. In addition to trade, the oceans are rich in natural resources, including fisheries, oil, and natural gas, which are essential for the development of many nations. However, competition for these resources can lead to rivalry and potential conflicts, making a secure and cooperative maritime environment increasingly vital. Moreover, the relationship between maritime security and other global security issues has become increasingly evident. For example, climate change and environmental degradation have intensified the security threats faced by naval forces due to a decline in fish stocks, rising sea levels, and the erosion of coastal installations and structures. Additionally, new threats have emerged as technology evolves; the equipment and processes governing shipping and ports have introduced cyber threats that require innovative strategies to ensure the security of maritime transport. Consequently, maritime security encompasses more than just the absence of conflict; it also includes sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and the promotion of the environment as well as, and collective peace among states in the volatile maritime environment. (Bueger.C, 2015).

Because the South China Sea is a major world shipping route, it plays a key role in maritime security challenges for Southeast Asia and for the world at large. This vital waterway holds significant strategic importance, connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans and serving as a busy channel for trade ships traveling between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In reality, the waters of the South China Sea carry over a third of the \$3 trillion value of world maritime trade each year. The seaborne traffic is particularly critical for energy transportation, as approximately one-third of the global flow of crude oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and other products transits through this route. In addition to its role as a trade corridor, the South China Sea is rich in various mineral and hydrocarbon reserves. The South China Sea is one of the richest fishing zones in the world, providing sustenance for millions of people who rely on fisheries in the surrounding countries. These fisheries play a crucial role in food security and the economy; however, they are increasingly under threat from overfishing and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Moreover, plenty of oil and natural gas in the region have fueled demand from East and Southeast Asian countries which are currently rivaling each other for access to the oil and gas in the South China Sea. Since the South China Sea has major strategic significance, it exceeds its economic importance. Historically, being the area which connects different seaways, it has always been of strategic military and geopolitical importance. It is the best geographical location provides an ideal platform for regional and extra-regional powers to project naval strength, rendering it a strategic asset for both a regional and also an actor from outside the region. Most significant powers, including China, the United States, and Japan, consider the South China Sea a strategic region for power projection and the defense of access to vital maritime transport channels. Some nations, particularly China, have actively intensified their activities in the region by paving roads, constructing artificial islands, and militarizing certain areas, despite protests from other countries and the global community. The concerns encompass diplomacy in the economic sphere, resource management, and naval and military strategic positioning, which have transformed the South China Sea into a hotspot for conflict. Issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction, combined with conflicting territorial claims, are shaping

the prevailing regional security dynamics. Consequently, this area, through strategic infrastructure growth, represents both the potential offered by connectivity and resources in the maritime domain and one of the most contentious maritime disputes of the 21st century. (Emmers, R. 2021). The goal of this paper is to critically discuss and examine the complex and diverse factors influencing maritime security in the South China Sea. As a strategically significant area, the South China Sea serves not only as a major trading hub and a repository of valuable natural resources but also as a key arena for interstate confrontation. Situated in this strategically tapped area, the study aims to elucidate the factors that define security in this region and to understand the intricate relationships between economic activities, strategies, and political dynamics that shape its security landscape. There are four objectives for this paper. First, it explores why the South China Sea is significant economically, strategically and militarily, by focusing on its function as a major route for trading ships, a rich source of marine resources and a key military spot for nations. All this makes the region important in both regional and global discussions.

Next, it explains what the key threats are that sailors face and how they risk the safety of the international shipping system. Such threats are made up of claims over territory, piracy, entry onto fishing grounds not permitted by law, polluting the sea and FONOPs. They have the capacity to harm the area and have consequences for global peace and security too.

Next, this paper studies the interests and actions of parties coming from and outside the region in the South China Sea. The report highlights the contrasting aims and disputes that have arisen when analyzing what China, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia have achieved, along with the roles of the United States, Japan and Australia in this region. In addition, it analyzes how ASEAN and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea respond to these security risks. Also, the paper pays attention to the problem of conflicts and how they can be managed together with the promotion of sustainable development. The analysis also includes how to solve the region's problems by using multilateral diplomacy, confidence-building steps and technologies like Maritime Domain Awareness MDA systems. The authors use these strategies to give useful advice that promotes cooperation and sustainability in the South China Sea area. By studying background materials, this paper aims to improve knowledge of maritime security matters in the South China Sea and their wider effects. Together, the issues of economy, defense and strategy show that national interests and regional security are closely linked.

### **Research Methodology:**

Qualitative methods involving description and analysis are applied in this paper to investigate maritime security in the South China Sea. A variety of secondary sources is used in the study, for example, articles written by scholars, official reports, policy material and legal tools such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This paper explains the changes and forces in this region by looking at previous events, current policies and international influences.

### **Literature Review**

As a result of economic, strategic and environmental reasons, the South China Sea now draws significant worldwide interest. A lot of studies examine changes in security matters within the region and pay close attention to how international law affects them and what regional and global actors contribute. This research seeks to explain and highlight key maritime security

problems and controversies in the South China Sea. According to Goh (2013) and Fravel (2019), the disputes in the South China Sea can be linked to territorial issues. The waters of the South China Sea are vital for resources, security, and national identity. This area is regarded as a strategically important maritime corridor, containing important sea routes and significant economic assets, including oil, gas, and fishing grounds, which have intensified the contention over these waters. In his 2014 book, Kaplan points out that the nine-dash line China has adopted is seen as both a bold claim of power and a threat to other countries near the South China Sea. Buszynski (2016) also agrees that China's emergence in recent years, along with its military advancements in artificial intelligence, has shifted the balance of power in the region, causing concern among other countries and prompting the United States, as an extra-regional actor, to take notice.

Bello (2015) and Rosenberg (2018) define the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as a valuable instrument for addressing conflicts related to maritime claims, including Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and territorial seas. A significant analytical event in the literature is the historic ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in 2016, which upheld the Philippines' petition against China's assertion of the nine-dash line. In their article published two years ago, Scofield and Storey identified the legal victory of the Philippines as a successful case that supports UNCLOS and the principle of freedom of navigation. However, Hayton (2019) affirms that enforcing compliance is a significant weakness of international law, particularly illustrated by China's disregard for the PCA ruling. This situation has sparked a major debate regarding the capacity of international institutions to effectively manage maritime issues, especially in relation to powerful nations like China. A number of scholars use regional strategies to reduce tension and use platforms such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in their efforts.

Baviera (2015) emphasizes that even with internal conflicts in ASEAN, it is important for East Asia's stability by making diplomatic forums and confidence-building measures in the South China Sea. Emmers (2017) and Pempel (2018) explain that ASEAN has been trying to work out a Code of Conduct (CoC) with China. Even so, they admit that it has not been an easy job due to different national priorities and China's lack of recognition for the CoC's legal nature. According to Li and Xue (2017), the authors point out that coastal nations depend on the region's fisheries and energy for their economic and food security. South China Sea is a key area in terms of protecting geopolitical interest and combining both economic and strategic value. Because it helps unite different economies, supports communities and shapes security approaches, the maritime domain has become a major target for the use and demonstration of political power at all levels. The South China Sea, on the other hand, is a vital economic corridor that connects the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Approximately 30% of the world's sea-borne trade by volume, valued at over \$3 trillion annually, transits through this region, transporting a variety of products, including oil and gas in the form of LNG, electronics, and consumer goods. The South China Sea plays a major role in world commerce and its stability matters for countries everywhere, as well as for those in the region, since smooth trade is required to keep economies running. Besides trade, it is believed that the South China Sea contains extensive natural resources. Fisheries remain the primary source of food and income for millions of people in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. Beyond their significance for regional food supply, the fisheries sector continues to be a crucial pillar of many national economies. Nevertheless, the increasing

demand for seafood, coupled with illegal, unreported, and depleted the resource hence escalating rivalry among neighboring states. Additionally, there are expectations of significant hydrocarbon resources in the South China Sea, particularly oil and natural gas. Some estimates suggest that the seabed may contain over 10 billion barrels of oil and more than 200 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, which represent valuable energy assets. These resources are especially important to energy-demanding nations in the region, intensifying competition for exploration and production rights. However, differing territorial demarcations and the lack of a unified legal framework present challenges that exacerbate tensions and threaten the stability of the region. (Li, X., & Xue, L.2017).

Not only now but also in the past and future, the South China Sea is an extremely important area in terms of maritime connectivity and military strategy. Its strategic position at the center of the Middle East and North African region also makes it a gatekeeper to the two major global oceans: the Pacific and Indian Oceans. For major powers, control of the South China Sea translates to dominance over one of the busiest sea lanes in the world. It is equally significant to the naval objectives of several countries. Thus, territories such as the South China Sea are regarded by China as a 'core interest' and an integral part of its security concerns. The construction of artificial islands and the transformation of certain geographic features into military facilities—such as airstrips, radar stations, and missile installations—underscore China's intentions to assert dominance in the region. These actions have raised alarms among other claimant states, including Vietnam and the Philippines, and have prompted increased deployments and Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) by the United States and its partners. (O'Rourke, R. 2021)

For the smaller regional states, the South China Sea remains a vital route for accessing the sea and its resources, thus becoming integral to their political economy and security doctrines. Conversely, external actors, including the United States, Japan, and India, have intensified their activities in the region to effectively counter China's influence while upholding paramount maritime law. This publication provides evidence that the economic and strategic concerns of the littoral states have contributed to the militarization of the region. The implications of this militarization extend beyond the South Asian neighborhood, as emissions affect global commerce, energy, and the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the South China Sea is not only an economic lifeline for regional nations but also a geopolitical tinderbox as well and these areas provide a geographical intensity to this sharpening competition and disputes among the involved countries.

**Key Maritime Security Challenges:** Maritime security in the South China Sea is jeopardized by a range of factors that threaten the stability of the area and the well-being of its inhabitants. These challenges, stemming from territorial disputes, economic competition, and environmental pollution, are likely to influence security and order both in the region and globally. The main difficulty in the South China Sea at present is the conflict over territory that involves several neighboring countries. In the South China Sea region, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan claim many of the same islands, reefs and maritime areas. Much of these disagreements come from the Spratly and Paracel Islands, as well as Scarborough Shoal, whose value lays in where they are positioned and what resources they might have. China's territorial claims, represented by the nine-dash line, encompass nearly 90% of the South China Sea and have sparked conflict with other claimant states .They prove China wrong by quoting the laws included in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). After losing in an

international court last year, China has kept up its assertive behavior by expanding artificial islands and sending more coast guard ships and military forces. Such behaviors raise the chance of fighting and unsettle regional peace. (Poling, G. B. 2020).

Even so, piracy and armed attacks on ships still threaten the South China Sea, even though there has been a gentle decrease according to analysts. Because there are more ships in transit now and they are close to the coast, criminal groups can take advantage. Hijacking events can damage business, endanger the crews and end up costing the companies a lot of money. Efforts by the Malacca Strait Patrol have improved maritime security, but piracy is still an ongoing issue. Unfortunately, because of IUU fishing, fish populations in the South China Sea are threatened. Excessive fish catches and unsound methods keep depleting fish all over the world, threatening the jobs and food of many fishermen and fisherwomen. The South China Sea fishing industry supplies almost 12 percent of the world's fish which gives it great importance. Yet, disputes over fishing rights tend to increase the tension between coastal states. The matter is made worse by the actions of fishing fleets as government tools and Grey Zone methods put in place by China. Overcoming IUU fishing effectively depends on better cooperation, stronger enforcement and following rules between nations.

Problems in the environment are gaining importance for the South China Sea and threaten the concept of maritime security. Degradation of the marine environment is mainly caused by overfishing, the loss of habitat and water pollution. Land reclamation and island building that destroy reefs are major problems worldwide with China's actions to blame. Because these ecosystems are suffering, the region's systems can no longer self-regulate well and the lack of resources leads to more rivalry among states. Rising sea levels and many natural disasters due to climate change put additional pressure on these regions and their people. The South China Sea has great strategic importance and its peaceful management is guided by international laws and the order based on rules. Although UNCLOS and the proposed CoC are major instruments, the challenges with managing and obeying them limit their effectiveness. Approved in 1982, UNCLOS defines the borders of maritime zones, explains how they can be used and outlines steps for handling conflicts over them and the resources they contain. The Philippines received authorization in 2016 that rejected China's claim through the nine-dash line under UNCLOS. But by not obeying the ruling, China shows that enforcing UNCLOS is often difficult because it depends on cooperation from its member states. (Rosenberg, D.2018).

The main aim, whether organized by ASEAN and China or under the CoC, is to stop conflict and encourage countries to cooperate. Nevertheless, the recent discord over whether a binding agreement was essential for ASEAN and China has slowed things down and made people question the outcome. Maritime laws face enforcement challenges due to globalization and differing interpretations of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Actions such as the construction of military bases on islands and the deployment of maritime militias exacerbate tensions and foster hostility. While UNCLOS and the Code of Conduct (CoC) are intended to facilitate solutions to cases of compliance, political will, and political will and to improve regional cooperation. Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: The nature of the South China Sea issues necessitates regional collaboration, coordination, and effective conflict resolution strategies to maintain order. Due to the serious and complicated challenges in peace and security today, countries now rely on multilateralism, confidence-building measures

(CBMs) and Track II diplomacy to promote better ties. Discussions among several countries present chances for both claimant and non-claimant states to seek solutions that are friendly and political to their conflicts. One organization that has played a crucial role in these discussions is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which emphasizes diplomacy grounded in dialogue, consensus-based decision-making, and non-interference. At the ARF and EAS, people involved discuss crucial matters such as the dispute in the South China Sea. At the SEAN Regional Forum ARF and East Asia Summit EAS, people involved discuss crucial matters such as the dispute in the South China Sea. ASEAN and China have been engaged in discussions regarding the Code of Conduct (CoC) to address concerns and establish standards of conduct. Although the pace of progress has been slow due to varying priorities, the CoC has the potential to serve as a framework for avoiding confrontation and fostering partnerships.

Other, more complex forums and frameworks, including the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) among the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, as well as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), address various regional threats and issues that impact development in the South China Sea. (Green, M. J.2021). This is because confidence-building measures (CBMs) aim to minimize distrust and prevent the escalation of situations. Some of these measures include military cooperation, such as joint exercises, military search and rescue operations, maritime security initiatives, and information sharing. For example, the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) provides guidelines on how naval vessels and aircraft can safely operate in proximity to one another, thereby reducing the likelihood of miscalculations, particularly during unplanned encounters in hostile territories. Hotlines and Communication Channels: The mechanisms that provide direct lines of communication between the defense establishments of the claimant states help to correct perceptions of threats and alleviate tensions. Joint Patrols and Training: Labor multilateralism encompasses activities such as coordinated joint operations and counterfeiting prevention within the designated area. Unfortunately, the commonly employed Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) and their worth rarely show much potential as it is judged by geopolitical relations. For instance, certain ASEAN-led CBMs are hindered by China's reluctance to fully engage, which in turn impacts regional security.

The features found in the South China Sea can be explained by the many different interests of nearby and faraway nations. They play a major role in shaping the maritime security environment along this important shipping route with their strong claims and plans. Moreover, regional organizations, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the lead, support collaboration and aid in resolving conflicts. China leads the disputes in the South China Sea by making maps with a nine-dash line to outline its own islands. Beijing has set up artificial islands at sea and has armed maritime militias to protect its interests. Besides being important economically and politically and supporting China's BRI, the South China Sea provides the setting for its growing navy and coast guard to operate. Vietnam has challenged China by saying that the Paracel and Spratly Islands really belong to Vietnam. Recent disputes in the South China Sea have shown that Vietnam is involved in these incidents and is strengthening its maritime security. Cooperation with non-ASEAN extra-regional countries such as the United States and Japan, is also increasing in Vietnam. The South China Sea is important to Vietnam's economic development because it provides opportunities in fisheries and for hydrocarbon resources.

The Philippines lays claim to the Spratly Islands and how it relates to China over the South China Sea is not simple. Because the Philippines came out ahead in the 2016 UNCLOS case against China, Manila aims to keep diplomatic ties balanced with Beijing and at the same time increase its partnership with the United States. Economic protection, mainly for the country's fishing industry, is the biggest reason the Philippines has an interest in the South China Sea (Hayton, B. 2014). Malaysia has claimed sovereignty over part of the Spratly Islands and utilizes its portion of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for resources such as oil and natural gas. Although Malaysia has maintained relatively friendly relations with China, it has also expressed concerns regarding China's activities at sea, including the presence of Chinese vessels in the Malaysian EEZ (Ian, A. 2013). Although Indonesia does not claim the archipelago, it has overlapping interests with China regarding fishing rights in the waters of the Natuna Islands, which are located in the Indonesian EEZ. Regarding regional security, Jakarta actively participates in promoting stability and advocates for an ASEAN-led approach to manage tensions in the South China Sea (SCS). The United States is concerned about the South China Sea and supports FONOPs, conducts military boats and holds China accountable to the principles in international law. Japan is pushing its Free and Open Indo-Pacific policy by supporting its navy and joining meetings on security and defense with nations in the region. Australia advocates for the respect of international law and engages in joint educational activities with the United States, ASEAN, and other partners to establish practical exercises and enhance capacity-building cooperation. India, through its geopolitical approach known as the Indo-Pacific Strategy and Act East Policy, actively opposes Chinese aggression at sea while steadily strengthening its relations with Vietnam and the Philippines. (O'Rourke, R. 2021) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plays a leading role in addressing maritime security issues in the South China Sea region. Currently, ASEAN provides several platforms for discussing disputes, including the dialogue forum of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the meetings of the East Asia Summit (EAS). Some of the key focuses of ASEAN include negotiations for the establishment of the Code of Conduct (CoC) to promote peaceful relations with China and other nations. However, ASEAN as an organization lacks assertiveness due to internal divergences, varying degrees of reliance on China, and a policy of non-intervention (Vassal, L. 2016).

Nonetheless, ASEAN remains a positive force characterized by confidence-building measures and multilateralism. Essentially, success in the South China Sea requires improved coordination and solidarity among ASEAN member states, as well as ongoing support from external superpowers. The prospects for maritime security in the South China Sea depend on changes at both the national and global levels. Therefore, it is essential to adopt flexible policies and strategies to address threats while leveraging opportunities for cooperation and development. This critical analysis encompasses primary trends, future strategies, and potential conflict resolution scenarios. There will be increased militarization in the South China Sea as rising power actors searching for protection of their stakes. China's move to make artificial islands and military bases, along with the United States conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs), exemplifies this ongoing contest. This situation heightens the risk of miscalculations and conflict, particularly with other regional players, including Vietnam and the Philippines, which are enhancing their naval capabilities. Innovation in surveillance systems, artificial intelligence, and satellite imagery is transforming maritime security. These instruments improve situation visibility and allow better observation of unlawful behaviors, including piracy and



illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Additionally, they heighten the stakes in power dynamics within the maritime domain.

However, climate change is widely recognized as a persistent existential threat to maritime security due to the impacts of global warming, particularly the rise in sea levels and the increasing frequency and severity of storms. Additional factors contributing to competition for natural resources include the destruction of coral reefs and overfishing. Collectively, these issues are likely to exacerbate tensions between states.

### **Recommendations for Strengthening Regional Cooperation:**

- Regional states should enhance the CODE OF ASEAN's regionalism and urge the conclusion of the CoC dealing with the South China Sea. Proceeding from the experience of regulating relations between shipping companies in other industries, a legally binding CoC with a transparent set of sanctions can help establish the principles for regulating disputes and promoting cooperation.
- Measures for confidence and security building measures like the formation of joint patrols, naval exercises, and communication links would help in decreasing the possibility of inadvertent escalations and help in developing confidence and trust among the various stakeholders. One can extend programs such as the CODE OF PRACTICE FOR UNPLANNED ENCOUNTERS AT SEA (CUES) so that operational conductivity can be evident.
- Modernising surveillance systems of maritime domain awareness, coupled with the information sharing of the regional navy and coast guard will enhance the observation and reaction capacity. It is evident that while adopting technologies it is possible to work jointly to overcome trust divides for purposes of practical collaboration.
- Cooperation is built on sharing the benefits from using oil and gas and fishery resources, rather than causing conflict. Features in the South China Sea are similar to the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area.
- Jointly coordinated by ASEAN and backed by the region's partners from outside, regional voice can also play a strong role in maintaining the international rules-based maritime order. It also means residents of a united ASEAN can be assured smaller states will not be put at the mercy of larger counterparts such as China in the making of agreements.
- Global environmental problems can be solved through cooperative conservation management for the conservation of long-term environments. Managerial solutions on the coastal states and their fishing vessels can include regional arrangements for reducing overexploitation of fish stocks improving the status of marine habitats and improving climate change adaptation across sectors.

### **Conclusion:**

The South China Sea continues to be an important seascape characterized by contentious geographical position and security risks. This paper has discussed the general economic and strategic significance of the region, the main threat to maritime security and the part of various participants. Conflicts like Gold Mine leasing, bounty hunting, unlawful fishing, and destruction of our natural resources reflect the reality that there is a need to work together to enhance regional security. At the same time, the place of institutions like UNCLOS and possible cooperative approaches, including legal obligations of the binding Code of Conduct, are also highlighted.

One of the key prospects for sustainable peace and development in Southeast Asia is that the national befalls of the member states should be aligned with regional peace. In the same way, the self-interest of individual states working in that domain contributes to sovereignty, economic safety, and geopolitical advantage, however, competition without constraint may lead to further disintegration of the regional integration process and international relations. Showing that all nations have the aim to achieve their national objectives together with creating dialogue and encouraging the development of positive sustainable relations over the sea can inspire confidence in the security of marine space. As a result, we should reach a good compromise that helps the South China Sea become safe, cooperative and well-developed.

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