"South China Sea"

Rock Pang

I am simply one who loves the past and is diligent in investigating it.
K'ung-fu-tzu (551-479 BC) <u>The Analects</u>

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South China Sea

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THE TERRITORIAL HISTORY OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

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The South China Sea is one of the most strategically important areas in Asia today, not only because it possesses a large number of potential oil and fishery resources but also because it is located in an area essential to trade with eastern Asia. To complicate matters further, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei each claim various small islands in the region as national territories.[1] Four archipelagos lie within the South China Sea; among these, the major areas of territorial dispute include the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands, and the Macclesfield Bank.[2] The islands and territories of the Paracels are generally categorized into two groups, the western Crescent Group and the northeastern Amphitrite Group; both regions are heavily disputed, primarily by China and Vietnam. Similarly, the aforementioned nations constantly vie for control over the Spratly Islands and their roughly 3,000 features. Likewise, China and the Philippines both claim sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal in the Macclesfield Bank. Current animosity regarding control over the region, however, marks a stark contrast to the relative rapport between powers in earlier eras.

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From prehistory to the Yuan Dynasty (1271 CE-1368 CE), the coastal empires in this region shared these territories and enjoyed a peaceful trade. During the Yuan Dynasty, however, powerful Western countries became involved with and seized control over various features in the South China Sea. This relationship between Western countries and the South China Sea held until after World War II, when Western interest in the area declined. After the Communist Party attained power in 1949, China undertook unilateral actions in the area that instigated conflict with its neighbors, leading to international territorial disputes that have persisted to the present. While China, Vietnam, and the Philippines consistently assert historical claims for sovereignty in the region, this history proves far more byzantine than suggested.

This essay will review the South China Sea's intricate territory from prehistory to the present, demonstrating that, according to historical territorial possessions, none of these countries has a legitimate claim to the entirety of the sea and its associated land masses. The author will further illustrate that political vicissitudes, ideological clashes, and various national actions have made the current situation particularly convoluted.

The South China Sea: Prehistory to 1368

Human activity in the South China Sea dates back to 1.5 million years ago, when findings show that the so-called "Java Man" lived both in China and Java. Homo sapiens then developed in the same area some 50,000 years ago, after which the region evolved into a vital economic hub for trade between civilizations. Gradually, these early societies adopted similar forms of feudalism influenced by elements of a shared Indian culture.[3] Unlike their successors, ancient peoples active in the South China Sea did not contest possession of the area, nor did they attempt to annex these territories. Instead, they shared the essential region in order to encourage mutually beneficial trade between civilizations.

Prehistory

Victor Paz, a Philippine archaeologist, contributed greatly to the understanding of ancient civilizations in the South China Sea with his 2005 discovery of jewelry made from tiny cone-shaped shells. This finding demonstrated the Neolithic heritage of ancient life in the Illé Cave, a site in the northern Palawan province of the Philippines, and affirmed the existence of ancient civilizations in the region.[4] While the exact origin of these crafts remains uncertain, the fact that they integrate elements of multiple cultures indicates close contact between early civilizations around the sea.

Ancient human activities in the South China Sea were simultaneously extemporaneous and interdependent, as suggested by Wilhelm Solheim's Nusantao Maritime Trading and Communication Network Theory. According to this theory, elements of culture disseminated via the central-periphery theory of population radiation generally occur in a primarily unidirectional manner. Anachronistic artifacts, however, such as jade lingling-o, an ancient Philippine necklace pendant, and bicephalous earrings found in Vietnam and Taiwan, demonstrate that cultural items were traded in a multitude of directions. This evidence indicates that there likely existed a trade network between these civilizations,[5] invalidating the theory—in favor of some Chinese claims—that ancient residents in Southeast Asia originally migrated from Taiwan. Discovery of similar items in different regions shows that cultures developed and then expanded through the bustling trade network; the activities also suggest that income disparity was minimal in these cultures. Such semi-nomadic people shared the sea, which was considered a collective community.[6] The Nusantao people of Southeast Asia developed a lifestyle consistent with coastal trading communities, dependent on trading and fishing, and without ethnic identities and delineated territories.

This archaeological evidence thus demonstrates that, prehistorically speaking, the South China Sea was home to a variety of cultures with a common lifestyle and trade. These conditions laid the foundation for future commerce and cooperation.

Communication Between Empires Surrounding the South
China Sea

The South China Sea has consistently been strategically
pivotal, as it connects East Asia to the Indian Ocean; accordingly,
the region cultivated a prosperous business network. During the
first ten centuries CE, a traditional Indian-influenced political
pattern gradually developed under which the various empires
generally adopted a cooperative position toward the common
sea.[7] While different empires assumed dominant roles at different
times, it is important to note that China was not the predominant
power in the South China Sea at this time, in contrast to current
claims by Chinese officials.[8]

Funan, Champa, and Srivijaya, all independent Chinese
tributaries, were the three Southeast Asian states most involved
in early trade in the South China Sea.

During the rise and fall of regional powers, these states
were significantly influenced by an ancient Indian political pattern
called the mandala system. The mandala system was an extremely
fluid and dynamic model, as allegiances of the constituent cities
shifted depending on their fluctuating relationships with the
monarch at the center of the empire.[9] The authority of kings from
different states diminished as their distance from the center of
their kingdoms increased. Moreover, one community might rec-
ognize more than a single authority but only if those authorities
remained powerful.

A similar adoption of the mandala system gave these states
a shared framework for cooperation. Nevertheless, this system's
hidden challenges eventually emerged when Western countries
became involved with the region's politics.

Funan

In the first centuries CE, the first state to play a dominant
role in the South China Sea trade was the Funan Empire, an in-
dependent kingdom spanning from Southern Vietnam to western
Cambodia. Funan controlled a crucial geographical location on

the trade route to China and had an exceptionally advantageous climate, both contributing to the empire's prosperity. After the Roman Empire developed a fruitful trade with Southeast Asia and the Chinese market began demanding goods from Southeast Asia, Funan developed as a thriving regional hub. Trade, however, depended significantly on the seasons; while sailing from South China to Funan was straightforward in winter thanks to an advantageous northeast monsoon, there was a long wait until June when the same ships could use the southwest monsoon to sail back to China. Furthermore, ships needed to be in port before the harsh typhoon season in July. Despite these difficulties, the advantageous location and generally accommodating climate made Funan an excellent entrepot for trade ships.

Funan became well known for its friendly and peaceful maritime trade, primarily via the South China Sea. One way the state developed this reputation was by establishing a beneficial relationship with the Jin Empire in South China; in 357 CE, the emperor of Funan sent a tamed elephant to secure a healthy trade partnership.

Funan additionally sent ambassadors to India to help regulate sea trade.[10] Hence, for almost three centuries, Funan adopted the dominant role in the South China Sea trade and attracted many traders due to its reputed affability. Concurrently, Funan's sea power increased. One example of this strength comes from a Chinese account of the third century CE, which claimed that the Funan ship might have been over fifty meters long with as many as four sails and able to carry approximately 700 people and 600 tons of cargo per trip.[11] The spectacular number of seamen, passengers, and ships well supported this large maritime commerce.

Overall, the peaceful Funan state capitalized on its geological location and predictable climate to serve as a hospitable hub en route to China. Funan did not focus on securing the South China Sea but instead on maintaining strong relations with its surrounding countries, promoting trade in the area. It was the same maritime commerce, however, that accelerated the downfall of Funan. Because of excessive dependence on sea trade, Funan did

not develop a supportive agriculture. As Srivijaya, a rising power in the Sumatra, and nearby Champa, developed into invaluable trading centers, they became key features on regional trade routes; Funan was eclipsed by its rivals and collapsed in 550 CE.

Champa and Srivijaya

After Funan's decline, Champa developed into a thriving empire in Southern Vietnam. Established in 192 CE, Champa secured great prosperity in the fourth century CE through maritime trade. Unlike Funan, which valued sociability and peace, Champa became notorious for its support of piracy. However, despite Champa's illicit approaches to achieving profit, the state did not seek to monopolize the South China Sea, with ambitions contrary to those of many nations in the region today.[12]

While the king of Champa eventually concentrated on a more mutually beneficial maritime trade in the South China Sea, he initially instigated a great deal of conflict in the region.[13] Champa had tacit and often volatile trade relations with Liu Song, a southern Chinese empire in the Southern and Northern Dynasties. Because Liu Song did not have access to land routes from China to the West, the empire developed a trade dependent on maritime routes that were often harassed by Cham piracy. As pirates suffocated China's maritime trade, Liu Song was forced to encroach upon Cham territory in 446 CE. However, Liu Song's purpose was to eliminate problems in these transnational waters rather than to intentionally declare sovereignty over the South China Sea.[14] Following a Chinese attack, Champa limited acts of piracy toward Chinese vessels, allowing for a relatively peaceful trade relationship to develop between the two empires. In 1155 CE, an envoy from Champa presented 65,579 catties of aromatics to China, reinforcing the relationship between the two powers.[15]

Srivijaya, another tributary state of China, was established primarily on the island of Sumatra in 650 CE and was also friendly toward its surrounding states. Srivijaya developed an intimate relationship with China during the pro-trade and pro-communication Tang Dynasty. In 902 CE, Srivijaya sent a tributary mission and in

1155 CE, the ambassadors presented 111,615 catties of frankincense and sandalwood to China, demonstrating further stability in the bond between the two empires.[16] Ancient Srivijaya relied on the South China Sea as a necessary passage for trade.[17] Because they adhered to similar mandala systems, the three states of Srivijaya, Champa, and Funan all established flexible boundaries over the South China Sea, focusing on trade across the shared ocean.

Ancient Empires on the Chinese Mainland

For centuries, the dynasties who controlled the southern shore of the South China Sea were different from those controlling the inland areas of what is now China. From the third century CE to the sixth century CE, China was "a civilization pretending to be a state,"[18] where the northern-based kingdoms looked inward and those of the south looked outward.[19] The southern-based kingdoms of China, soon defeated by their northern-based counterparts, engaged in commerce with the Southeast Asian empires. In the current era, it is difficult for the northern Chinese who took power to trace the history of trade activities mainly conducted by their now extinct southern counterpart. Moreover, rather than those of the north, it was these southern empires that sent ships through the South China Sea, and there is little archaeological evidence to suggest that any Chinese ships completed trade voyages across the South China Sea until the tenth century CE.[20]

Admittedly, ancient China was quite powerful, but this fact alone does not prove that China was the first empire to control the South China Sea. In the first millennium CE, the Zhou Empire drove Vietnamese troops out of Chinese territory. In 221 CE, the Chinese Qin Empire conquered Vietnam, which recovered its independence after 15 years. In 220 CE, the Han Dynasty was divided into what became known as the Three Kingdoms, a period with tripartite Chinese forces. The Wu state, one of the eponymous three kingdoms, dominated Southern China. This territorial possession continued until 265 CE when Jin, a later southern empire, replaced the Wu state as the prevailing force in the region. The Jin state collapsed, however, and lost control over Vietnam in 420

CE.[21] Notably, all of these early expansions occurred on the land rather than the waters of the South China Sea.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Yang Fu of the East Han Dynasty made reference to the Spratlys [Nansha Islands] in his book entitled *Yiwu Zhi*," a document upon which Chinese officials are heavily reliant.[22] However, historical evidence suggests that Yang's research most likely involved questioning foreign traders arriving at ports rather than independent voyagers.[23] In the trade with Funan, Champa, and Srivijaya, nearly all of the boats were sent by the Southeast Asian states; there were few Chinese traders voyaging to Southeast Asia through the South China Sea.

Song Dynasty

During the Song Dynasty, China sent a multitude of ships to voyage across the South China Sea. In 987 CE, Song sent four missions abroad to encourage trade with foreign states. In 989 CE, private Chinese traders were permitted to voyage throughout the region. Then, urged by merchants and governors, Song promoted the maritime trade to an even greater extent. The Song coinage became a medium of exchange as far away as Sumatra and Java, and the currency circulated rapidly around the South China Sea trade network.[24] Nevertheless, because travel through the South China Sea was thought to be especially dangerous, Chinese sailors called it "Wanli Shitang."[25] According to a Chinese account from 1178 CE, Zhou Qufei's "Lingwai Daida," Wanli Shitang was a vast archipelago filled with dangerous rocks.[26] Therefore, although the Song encouraged openness, the dynasty remained tentative and, to some extent, afraid of the South China Sea until 1279 CE when the Yuan Dynasty took power.

Yuan Dynasty

Yuan was the first empire to invade the South China Sea, interrupting what had become a peaceful trade routine, and acting in a manner that is very much in line with contemporary Chinese policy. In 1279 CE, the Yuan Dynasty began with a show of power

and aggressiveness when Kublai Khan, the ruler of Yuan, sent a maritime army to attack coastal Southeast Asian empires.[27] During the invasion, Chinese geographer Guo Shoujing arrived in the Scarborough Shoal, one area currently under dispute between China and the Philippines, to conduct "Measurement of the Four Seas" research. According to the *PLA Daily*, Guo was the first person who ever surveyed the Scarborough Shoal.[28] However, evidence suggests that Cham pirates arrived on the feature a century earlier but found it too inhospitable for habitation.

Eventually the cost of an enduring, remote invasion of the South China Sea only served to weaken the nomadic empire of Yuan, at which point excursions through the region only contributed further to its downfall. Conversely, empires that sustained a peaceful trade in the South China Sea maintained power for centuries.

From prehistory to 1368 CE, people around the South China Sea nourished cooperation and significant trade between empires. Based on historical sovereignty alone, no single country holds claim to the entire area. The Nusantao people cherished the South China Sea and considered it a necessary passage for trade. The Southeast Asian empires surrounding the South China Sea increasingly valued its importance as well. Nonetheless, in contrast to the territorial disputes in the region today, the various nations of the South China Sea did not declare sovereignty over the sea's territories.

Before the tenth century CE, little historical evidence exists suggesting that the Chinese sent ships to the South China Sea, but China clearly was an important receiver on the southeastern trade route. Contrary to contemporary Chinese claims, ancestors of empires in Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei were predominant inhabitants centuries before the first Chinese voyage in the South China Sea. Furthermore, after this time, the Chinese Yuan Dynasty attempted to dominate the South China Sea militarily, only to find failure.

The South China Sea: 1368-1949

Following the Yuan Dynasty, the Ming and Qing dynasties began sending commercial vessels through the South China Sea, but most Chinese merchants were reluctant to enter the area until the middle of the nineteenth century. Prior to the twentieth century, the boundaries of the South China Sea were constantly manipulated by Western countries. Furthermore, the involvement of Western powers using a modern international territory system conflicted with regional traditional political patterns, complicating the issue of territorial claim. As Western explorers realized the importance of the South China Sea, countries, particularly in the West, began to seize features in the area. Nevertheless, after World War II, even Western nations failed to agree upon sovereignty in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, the Republic of China (Kuomintang) devoted itself to a massive map-making campaign and early occupation in the South China Sea.

Ming Dynasty

Regionally, the Ming Dynasty became notorious for starting the Seclusion Policy following the fall of the Yuan Dynasty. The Ming emperor feared foreign intervention and banned private maritime trades, although unofficial trade was never exterminated. During the prominence of the Ming Dynasty, the "eunuch voyage" (The Seven Voyages of the Ming Chinese Treasure Fleet) became a highlight. Zheng He, the commander of the eunuch voyage, was a close confidant of the Ming emperor and conducted seven excursions to the Indian Ocean. This lavish expedition aimed to overwhelm foreign peoples and convince them indisputably of Ming's power.[29] The troops stopped at Champa and Sumatra, and, during the third voyage in 1409-1411, battles broke out between Zheng's forces and those of a local small kingdom in the Malay Peninsula. Eventually, Zheng captured the Malay leader and escorted him back to China. Zheng flaunted Chinese military prowess for each country he passed, amounting to a "pro-expansionist" excursion[30] through which Ming sought to assert regional dominance.

After the ostentatious "eunuch voyage," Ming's court laid aside its ships, allowing them to rot.[31] Disturbed by domestic conflicts, Ming's emperors prevented private maritime business. As a result of this action, the Ming's outlook toward the sea became less sophisticated, as the Emperors began again to consider the South China Sea in accordance with the theory of Wanli Shitang, which stressed the danger of that sea area. During this time, Chinese smugglers became active voyagers in the South China Sea, and it was these seamen who assisted the Portuguese on their journey to China.[32] Furthermore, the official Seclusion Policy suggests that the Ming Dynasty retreated from the islands where the Yuan people had arrived. Hence, the Scarborough Reef, currently claimed by China, was lacking both permanent inhabitants and frequent patrols during this era. In contrast, the Cham Empire was still maintaining peaceful trades throughout the South China Sea.[33]

Maritime trade in the South China Sea increased during the second half of the 1500s as the Ming government sought to overcome financial burdens. In 1567, the Ming government opened its coast and removed the private sea trade restriction.

During this time, Western businessmen developed a rising demand for Chinese products, such as porcelain, while the Chinese increased their exports in exchange for more silver.

Clashes Over Political Ideology

By the 1500s, Western explorers had begun scientific expeditions and surveys in the South China Sea. When Vasco da Gama voyaged from Europe to India in 1498, Portugal not only avoided an Arab blockade but also carved out a convenient maritime trade route. The Asian continent attracted Western merchants who exploited this new trade route, causing territorial disputes for the raw materials. In 1511, Portuguese Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque defeated the Sultan of Malacca, gaining control over the maritime passage to the Eastern Spice Islands. Later, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese circumnavigator funded by Spain, reached the Spice Islands from the Pacific Ocean in 1521, only to be killed in the Philippines. Another Spanish expedition was attacked by

the Portuguese, contributing further to the conflicts between the two countries over Asian spices. As a result of the 1529 Treaty of Zaragoza, Portugal gained sovereignty over Indonesia while the Spanish acquired dominion over the Philippines. The two nations agreed on the South China Sea as a border partition.

However, the rise of the Netherlands and England soon put an end to Spanish and Portuguese control in the region. The development of modern Western sea theories exacerbated contention as both the Netherlands and England debated legal delineations of territories in the South China Sea. Concurrently, the Dutch East India Company increased Dutch influence in Southeast Asia. Targeting the South China Sea, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and England disputed sovereignty in the territory.

Hugo Grotius, a Dutch jurist, laid the foundations for free sea doctrines in 1609, basing his theories upon the *mare liberum* (the free sea), which argues that the sea, like air, cannot be completely occupied by one power but should be free for all to use.[34] According to *mare liberum,* the sea should be considered international territory; thus, Grotius argued, no country should hold sole sovereignty over the South China Sea. Grotius, however, contributed to free sea trade and worked to abolish maritime monopolies for the sake of the Dutch international economic expansion. Under Grotius' claim, Dutch merchants would have free access to sea trade throughout the region, including travel through the South China Sea.

An opponent of Grotius, John Selden—who was working for the English king to protect England's dominion over the sea—declared that, although ships had the right to innocent passage through another state's waters, states also had a right to restrict access to those waters under certain circumstances. The open sea could be "occupied" and therefore was not necessarily open to all.[35] Later, Selden and Grotius' theories merged to some extent, creating the so-called "cannon shot" rule that allowed states to control the waters up to three or four nautical miles from their coasts.[36] These early offshore territorial sovereignty theories were developed with the interests of specific companies and countries

in mind, thus ensuring that they would only further contribute to territorial disputes over the South China Sea.

Three decades later, the 1648 Peace of Westphalia demanded fixed boundaries to distinguish sovereignty, establishing a new discourse surrounding the South China Sea. This European consensus, however, conflicted with the region's traditional mandala system. Adhering to the Peace of Westphalia, European countries deemed that sovereign countries should have consistent, declared boundaries and that all territories held by a sovereign country should be treated equally.[37] Conversely, the mandala system deemed that there should instead be gradual transitions in authority with no acknowledged ruler. Smaller territories might recognize more than one sovereign power or possibly none at all.[38] As a result, the sea's borders became ambiguous, with regional empires refusing to declare sovereignty. It was only when powerful colonial countries came to the area that the transition from fluid frontier to fixed frontier laid the foundations for current conflicts in the South China Sea.[39]

Qing Dynasty

As Western powers flocked to the region and contributed to political conflict in Southeast Asia, the Qing Dynasty in China became uninterested in the South China Sea. Qing was the last dynasty in China, and is well known for its Seclusion Policy, which reinforced the early prohibition against incorporating advanced European technology. During Qing, Western countries increased their military power, as demand for access to the Chinese market increased. After the Opium Wars, China reverted to an almost colonial society in which the South China Sea was controlled by various Western countries. Similarly, states surrounding the South China Sea were eradicated or colonized so that sovereignty over the sea fully transferred to Western countries.

Despite resistance from southern merchants, the Qing government banned sea trade again as a means of consolidating Qing power. As with Ming's policy, this limitation proved coun-

terproductive to trade. So, the trade ban was lifted and Chinese merchants set sail again to the wide South China Sea in 1684.

Western Exploration in the South China Sea

By the seventeenth century, Western sovereignty in China had become extremely limited; the Spanish restricted their control of Manila, the Portuguese claimed only Macao and Timor, the Dutch had been dislodged from Formosa Island, and the English respected Southeast Asian border customs.[40] After 1684, when private trade was again legalized, Chinese merchants began participating in Southeast Asian business activities, contributing to an economic boom in the South China Sea.

However, fearing dangers associated with Wanli Shitang, such as shoals and other unknown risks, China refused to send expeditions farther south. Instead, China promoted economic activities just on the edge of the South China Sea. It was thus an English captain, John Harle, who first encountered and named the Macclesfield Bank in 1701.[41] Similarly, it was also a British ship that discovered and named the Royal Captain Shoal and the Scarborough Shoal in 1748.[42] At the cost of their lives, these explorers made unprecedented contributions to the knowledge of the region and stimulated modern exploration of the South China Sea.

Concurrently, Vietnamese efforts to explore the region proved largely successful. European companies began entrusting the Vietnamese government to rescue or salvage ships lost in the South China Sea, while Vietnamese fishermen visited nearly every island in these waters.[43] Moreover, in 1795, the British East Indian Company (EIC) sent ships to accurately map the South China Sea, and in 1810, they successfully disproved the Wanli Shitang theory.[44]

It took time, however, for many Chinese to accept the idea that the South China Sea was safe. As late as 1843, the Qing writer Wang Wentai still supported the interpretation of Wanli Shitang. Wang still believed that the Paracels were 500 kilometers long and extremely treacherous, writing "in the Wanli Shitang

[...] there are big rocks, but we do not know anything about it."[45] The Qing Dynasty's reluctance thus delayed Chinese occupation in the South China Sea.

While the Qing Dynasty hesitated to explore the South China Sea, colonial powers began securing territory in the region. As people became much more informed about the nature of the South China Sea, industrial countries came into the region and continued direct expansion in south, east, and southeast Asia.[46] Concomitantly, Great Britain defeated France in the Napoleonic Wars, thus ensuring a new English hegemony in the eighteenth century. To open the Chinese market following this victory, Britain declared the "Opium Wars" of 1840 and 1860, which resulted in the Qing ceding Hong Kong and opening five ports to English trade. Simultaneously, Great Britain seized the Malacca Straits. Despite the fact that the East India Company was essentially bankrupt, it maintained its colonial efforts in the South China Sea and eventually claimed Sabah, an eastern Malaysian state at the rim of the Spratly Islands, as British territory.[47]

France also became involved in territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Motivated by perceived ill treatment of Catholic missionaries, France seized Danang in 1858. Soon after, France colonized Saigon in Vietnam and, subsequently, Cambodia and Annam became French protectorates.[48] France then seized the Gulf of Tonkin, a controversial sea area disputed by Vietnam and China. Despite this claim, in 1887 China signed a boundary agreement with France, recognizing French control of Tonkin.

Meanwhile, the German Reich conducted a series of surveys around the Paracel Islands between 1881 and 1884 and used these surveys to create maps of the area. As a result of its victory in the Spanish-American war, the United States annexed the Philippines and became interested in gaining additional territories in the South China Sea. Moreover, Japan soon developed a territorial interest in the region, investing in the Pratas Islands after Nishizawa Toshiji, a Japanese businessman, argued that producing

fertilizer from the island's guano would be particularly lucrative.[49] The Cantonese government, however, foiled this plan by spending 130,000 silver dollars to convince the Japanese to vacate the Pratas.[50] This evidence suggests that the Pratas were historically a Chinese territory; they are currently controlled by the Taiwanese Republic of China.[51]

As Western countries became increasingly involved in the region, the settling of territorial disputes in and around the South China Sea created borders between the region's countries. The Philippines and Indonesia were split by an agreement between Portugal and Spain in 1529; the line between Malaysia and Indonesia was largely fixed by the British and the Dutch in 1842; the Chinese-Vietnamese border was dictated to the Chinese by the French in 1887; the general frontiers of the Philippines were set by the U.S. and Spain in 1898; and the border between the Philippines and Malaysia was constituted by the U.S. and Britain in 1930.[52]

Efforts by the Qing and Republic of China (Kuomintang)

As other Southeast Asian states were completely colonized, the moribund Qing government made a final endeavor for dominion over the South China Sea.

Encouraged by the successful negotiation of the Pratas Islands, Zhang Yenjun, governor of the Guangdong province, made efforts to ensure that the South China Sea was recognized as Chinese territory.[53] In 1909, he dispatched ships to the Paracel Islands; these ships cruised around, made surveys, and fired the occasional cannon to claim the islands for China. Soon afterward, the Paracel Islands appeared on Chinese maps for the first time.[54]

Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China was established in 1912 and made a number of claims to these islands that the Chinese government still maintains today.[55]

The unilateral map-making progress intensified in the period of the Republic of China. Contrary to the last map of the Qing Dynasty Almanac, the 1912 map produced by the new republican government did not include the Paracel Islands.

However, in 1914, the New Geographical Atlas of the Republic of China contained the first Chinese map to include a line drawn across the South China Sea, dividing the Pratas and the Paracel island groups. It went no farther south than 15°N, and, according to the cartographer, referred to borders as they existed prior to 1736.[56] In 1916, the Map of National Humiliation highlighted the loss of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Tonkin but the South China Sea was noticeably absent.[57]

This map-making campaign then became far more vigorous and controversial.

In 1933, three years after French occupation of the Spratlys began, the government established the Review Committee for Land and Water Maps.[58] In the Newly-Made Chinese Atlas, the government expanded its southern sea border to 7°N, this time including the Spratly Islands.[59] In 1935, the Chinese government unilaterally published a journal in which 132 islands in the South China Sea were claimed as Chinese territories, including islands both in the Paracels and Spratlys.[60]

The Republic of China continued to promote cartographical efforts that benefitted Chinese territorial claims. In April of 1935, the Map of Chinese Islands in the South China Sea stretched the border to 4°N, including the James Shoal.[61] The James Shoal, however, is over 1,000 miles from the Chinese mainland but less than 50 miles from the Malaysian coast, weakening China's claim for sovereignty in the region. Additionally, in the Map of Chinese Domain in the South China Sea, the Republic of China assumed Chinese territorial possessions, including the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands, the Pratas Islands, and the Macclesfield Bank.[62] The Chinese government today is still fundamentally dependent on borders delineated by the Republic of China's Kuomintang government.

These vigorous map-making campaigns suddenly ended with the Japanese invasion in 1937. As Japanese forces invaded the capital of Nanjing, China focused on military resistance, with the South China Sea becoming a so-called "Japanese lake." Dur-

ing World War II, Japan occupied Woody Island in the Paracels and Itu Aba in the Spratlys. It was not until 1945 that U.S. forces eliminated the Japanese Itu Aba military base and the fortune of the South China Sea transferred to the U.S. However, the U.S. could not determine which country had the most legitimate claim to sovereignty over the South China Sea. Because the region was of no vital interest to the U.S., at the 1944 Yalta Conference it was suggested that the South China Sea fall under the control of "the projected international organization"—what would become the United Nations. Due to France's long history of pursuing control in the region, however, France was reluctant to negotiate.[63] As a result, the U.S. left sovereignty over the South China Sea in an ambiguous state.[64]

The South China Sea soon became an area contested by the Philippines, Vietnam, France, and China. In 1946, the Philippines declared independence from the U.S. and argued that the Spratly Islands were rightly Philippine territory.[65] In the same year, the Kuomintang government seized the Spratly Islands from Japan and published new names for each of the islands; no country protested this action.[66] Concurrently, the French navy sent a minesweeper to set a stone marker on Itu Aba in the Spratlys, declaring the island French property. In the same year, China sent ships to the Spratlys and left markers.[67] In 1947, the Chinese Geography Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs drafted a list of new names for all the islands in the South China Sea,[68] increasing the total number of Chinese islands from 132 to 159.[69] Notably, in the 1947 Location Map of the South China Sea Islands, the eleven-dash line created by this conglomeration of newly claimed islands stretched from Taiwan to the coast of Brunei to the Gulf of Tonkin. This well-known legacy was the first time the Kuomingtang government officially marked the South China Sea as Chinese territory, including the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands, the Pratas Islands, and the Macclesfield Bank.[70] The government soon stated that it would negotiate precise boundaries with countries according to the principles of international laws, but it did not make any changes to the map.

Western explorers were the first to survey the islands of the South China Sea. Then, as a result of the subsequent downfall of multiple Asian empires and military development in Europe and the U.S., the South China Sea was quickly seized by Western states. Powerful military capability enabled Western countries to overcome ideological clashes between the mandala and modern sovereignty systems. Moreover, it was Western countries that manipulated the boundary in the South China Sea before the twentieth century. However, given that other Southeast Asian countries were largely controlled as colonies, the government of the Republic of China made unilateral cartographical claims across the South China Sea. After World War II, international society felt ambiguous toward this area. The Republic of China became active in the South China Sea but created disputes with the Western countries, which had earlier surveyed the region's islands. At the end of the Kuomintang period, because various surrounding countries claimed sovereignty over the islands with little international agreement, the territorial conflict over the South China Sea became even more complicated.

The South China Sea: 1949-Present

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the current period of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) control over China, Chinese military power increased, and China enhanced its military presence in the South China Sea. However, few countries would consent to the Chinese and Vietnamese notions that a single party should completely occupy all of the territories in the South China Sea. The growing assertiveness on the Chinese side was notably based upon claims made by the Kuomintang government. In the twenty-first century, to combat suspicions aroused regarding China's commitment to peaceful diplomacy, due to the predominant military presence of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the South China Sea, China made several friendly gestures and adopted the "take and talk" policy, in which it appealed to negotiation, yet refused to withdraw forces from the islands.[71]

The Peaceful 1950s

The first half of the 1950s saw no major skirmishes in the South China Sea. Almost all of the interested countries were bogged down by other internal issues and were incapable of expanding their presence on the islands. The People's Republic of China was not active; its only action was in the Paracels. In 1950, the People's Republic Army occupied Woody Island after Taiwan withdrew from it, a move indicating Chinese control of the Amphitrite Group. Meanwhile, France occupied Pattle Island, an action indicating a perceived control over the Crescent Group.[72] China did not respond militarily to the French initiative due to its involvement in the Korean War, rendering Pattle Island the only territory that was militarily occupied by a sovereign country in the South China Sea at the time.[73] Facing similar internal issues, Vietnam experienced harsh national conflicts between the decline of French colonialism and the rise of communist leader Ho Chi Minh; neither power was particularly interested in territorial ownership in the South China Sea. Although the Philippines announced sovereignty over the Spratly Islands, it did not submit its claim at the 1951 San Francisco Peace Conference because the Philippines did not have a military powerful enough to support this claim. After the Second World War, no country surrounding the South China Sea had the capability to control it, a situation that further complicated territorial politics in the region.

A few years later, as countries recovered from World War II, the South China Sea became the target of almost all of its surrounding countries, a time during which all involved parties made sweeping territorial claims. Because there existed little international agreement, these assertions were primarily spurred by each country's national interests in 1953.[75]

In 1958, China took the first action in which the government formalized its claims to the whole South China Sea through its Declaration on the Territorial Waters.[74] Because China and Vietnam had both adopted communist ideologies, China transformed the "U-shaped line" with eleven dashes to the "nine-dash line," removing two dashes in the Gulf of Tonkin to support Vietnamese

independence. In reaction to this Chinese courtesy, in 1956 North Vietnam declared that, "according to Vietnamese data, the Xisha [Paracel] and Nansha [Spratly] Islands are historically part of Chinese territory."[76] After 1975, however, Vietnam was reunified and declared sovereignty over the Spratlys and Paracels based upon previous French colonization of the islands. The reunited Vietnam reasserted its claim to the entirety of the archipelagoes, denying the former agreement.[77]

The Philippines joined this dispute in 1950 after Tomás Cloma discovered an unoccupied island in the Spratlys near Palawan. Cloma declared this island the country of "Freedomland" and asked for support from the UN, only to receive protests from all countries associated with the South China Sea.[78] Although the Philippine government ignored Cloma, Manila ultimately adopted these new territories, named them Kalayaan, and annexed them to the Palawan Province.

Factors for Chinese Actions

In the 1970s, due to shifting international relations, Chinese-supported nationalism, and new countries entering the dispute, the South China Sea situation became even more intricate. Meanwhile, these factors also encouraged China to become more assertive in its actions. Chinese military power grew exponentially in the 1970s and the government paid closer attention to the islands in the South China Sea; under a specific goal—the recovery of so-called "lost territories"[79]—China further increased its claim of sovereignty in the region.

The shift in regional political dynamics during this period bolstered Chinese confidence in the South China Sea. Despite the fact that China, the Soviet Union, and North Vietnam were all communist countries, the relationship among these nations was often tenuous. In 1969, the bond between China and the Soviet Union was particularly strained as the two nations headed toward a border war in northern China. Moreover, because the motivations for the war against South Vietnam differed between China and North Vietnam, the latter sought assistance from the Soviet

Union. While China was concerned that the Soviet Union might send troops if North Vietnam won the war, the 1972 rapprochement between the U.S. and China emboldened China.

Bolstered by the support of the U.S., the Chinese presence in the Paracels became a strategic effort to "pre-empt the Russians from using the islands after the Vietnam War."[80]

Chinese nationalism was another significant factor contributing to further Chinese naval aggression in the South China Sea. Because Chinese politicians named the period between the Opium Wars and the establishment of the People's Republic of China the "Century of Humiliation,"[81] citizens became aroused and indignant when territorial disputes threatened to harm national interests. Declaring that the South China Sea was about to be invaded by an ambitious southeastern country, the Chinese government reinforced support for "maritime irredentism."[82] This philosophy upheld the acquisition of Chinese territories because of the humiliating history in the late nineteenth century and propagated the idea that China was going to be excluded from the South China Sea. China claimed that the South China Sea was an exclusive and integral part of the nation and argued that the region's islands had been Chinese territory since ancient times.[83]

Sino-Vietnamese Clashes in 1974

In 1970, Chinese forces began to survey the islands in the South China Sea and upgraded military equipment on Woody Island, which had been seized again by the CCP in 1955. In 1974, China went much further by renewing its claim for sovereignty over the Paracels. Without giving Vietnam any notice, China sent its navy to control the Paracels, initiating the possibility of a sea battle. On January 14, the Chinese landed on Robert Island, near South Vietnam's Pattle Island,[84] and planted flags on Money Island.[85] The Chinese defended Duncan Island—which had been occupied by Vietnam since 1959[86]—against Vietnamese soldiers,[87] opening fire against Vietnamese naval vessels, destroying four Vietnamese flotillas, and dashing Vietnamese hopes for peaceful negotiation. The Chinese navy then shelled and occupied Robert

Island before taking control of Money Island. Pattle Island, discovered by France and transferred to South Vietnam in 1956, was then "swept with [Chinese] artillery."[88] As previously mentioned, Robert Island, Duncan Island, Money Island, and Pattle Island are all included in the Crescent Group, which had been ceded from France to South Vietnam in 1956. Its counterpart, the Amphitrite Group, was primarily occupied by China after the Second World War. Above all, China's actions during this time displayed an assertive posture to support its claim to the Paracels, expanding this assertion to include most of the islands disputed with Vietnam.[89]

After the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, the relations between the People's Republic of China and Vietnam reached a climax. After being pillaged by the Chinese navy in 1974, Vietnam repudiated its original recognition in 1956 that the Paracels and the Spratlys both belonged to China; instead, Vietnam focused on defending the Spratly Islands. Hanoi further seized six islands from South Vietnam just before the fall of Saigon in 1975. However, in contrast to its assertive approach with the Paracels, China's strategy to seize the Spratlys was initially peaceful, partly because China was incapable of quickly occupying the Spratly archipelagos. Hence, China just condemned the Vietnamese territorial claims in the Spratlys at first. As Deng Xiaoping came into power in China and suggested the policy of reformation and opening, the South China Sea became an attractive area to support China's economy due to its vital resources and strategic trade routes.[90] Deng's growing interest in the region was supported and bolstered by Liu Huaqing, commander of the Chinese Navy.

This experienced commander posited that "active green-water defense" was needed; he advocated a more aggressive strategy, aiming to seize the sea areas between the mainland coast and the first-island chain, including a chain from Taiwan, the Philippines, Borneo, and Singapore.[91]

However, just before the Chinese navy sent ships to the Spratlys, Malaysia and Brunei entered the South China Sea dispute and claimed territories in the Spratlys.

Contrary to the alleged historical evidence provided by Vietnam, China, and the Philippines, Malaysia based its claim for twelve territories in the Spratlys on the continental shelf principle. According to Article 76 and Article 77 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), "the coastal State does not have to proclaim the continental shelf to exercise sovereign rights over the continental shelf which contains submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance."[92] Similarly, Brunei did not provide historical evidence but instead sought to advance the continental shelf theory.[93] However, Malaysia and Brunei were far less contentious in terms of territories claimed—particularly Brunei, which only claimed two islands without military backup.

The 1982 adoption of UNCLOS was an international agreement that further complicated the situation in the South China Sea. On the one hand, it significantly validated claims by Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei, which all gained internationally-recognized titles for portions of the Spratlys[94]—indicating a stance against the militarily and politically powerful China. On the other hand, the proposal of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) would eventually trigger future territorial disputes. UNCLOS defines the EEZ as an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea where coastal states have the right to explore and manage natural resources.

Inhospitable islands, reefs, and even shoals were targeted for occupation because governments wanted to exploit potential crude oil and develop fisheries in the EEZs. According to the UNCLOS, features of "islands" that can support human habitation or economic life generate a 200-nautical-mile EEZ, while "rocks"— features that cannot support human habitation or economic life—generate a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea but no EEZ.[95] Therefore, countries evaluated the huge potential of the

South China Sea and even attempted to send people to harsh features to attest that a "rock" could support life. Countries did not want to miss any potential for exploring oil resources, and Beijing was thus uncompromising in its claim for islands in the South China Sea.

Clashes in the Spratlys in 1988

After preparing for nearly a decade, China ventured to the Spratly Islands in 1988. Chinese actions soon precipitated the 1988 clash in the Spratlys by adding a site there in response to a UNESCO mandate that countries establish monitoring stations as part of a survey of the world's oceans in 1987. The PLAN soon arrived at the site, Fiery Cross Reef, which was submitted to UNESCO as a world heritage site.

Nevertheless, Fiery Cross Reef was extremely inhospitable. Unlike normal management of such an observatory, China used its position on this reef to springboard larger action in the South China Sea. Admiral Liu ordered the South Sea Fleet to conduct PLAN's first combat patrol in the region,[96] claiming that "the Spratlys are [a Chinese] territory, which we will frequently visit from now on."[97] China thus treated the site as a military monitoring post, which rendered Fiery Cross Reef the trigger point of a 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash.

Vietnam was alarmed by Chinese assertiveness. In reaction, the Vietnamese occupied Ladd Reef, Discovery Great Reef, and Tennent Reef.[98] As it turned out, obtaining Fiery Cross Reef did not deter the Chinese from venturing into the southern part of the Spratlys. Vietnam continued to lose territories as China continued its expansion. On February 18, 1988, instigating a second confrontation, China invaded Cuarteron Reef, whose sovereignty was transferred from France to Vietnam following the Vietnam War—the only part of London Reef not guarded by the Vietnamese army at the time. This surprise attack made Hanoi insecure, pushing Vietnam to supervise each of their sites in the broader Union Bank. On March 13, the Chinese invaded Johnson Reef, one feature in the Union Bank, with Vietnamese soldiers arriving

almost simultaneously. Conflict ensued that resulted in the death of seventy-two Vietnamese soldiers.[99] By April 1988, in addition to Fiery Cross Reef, Cuarteron Reef, and Johnson Reef, the Chinese had seized control over McKennan Reef, twelve miles away from Union Bank, Subi Reef, ten miles away from a Philippine island, and Gaven Reef, which sat in the disputed area between China and Vietnam. Eventually holding six territories in the Spratlys, China gradually achieved its "active green-water defense" goal. This security, however, was short lived, as the Mischief Incident occurred soon afterward.

The Mischief Incident

Before 1995, China's main competitor in the South China Sea was Vietnam. In nearly three decades, as Chinese military power increased, the Chinese had seized four territories in the Paracels and six territories in the Spratlys from Vietnam. Three years later, Beijing was poised to continue with its expansion by seizing territories belonging to the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), spurring international protests.[100]

In 1995, however, China turned its attention to Mischief Reef, an unoccupied territory internationally accepted as part of the EEZ of the Philippines. This Chinese unilateral action undermined the authority of international laws and threatened further expansion across the South China Sea using military means.[101] At that time, the economy in the Philippines was in complete disarray and the U.S. naval base in Subic Bay had closed, leaving the Philippines defenseless.[102]

The Mischief Incident began with the pursuit of oil in the Spratlys. Manila wanted to recover its economy by securing potential oil in the sea near Palawan, appointing Alcorn Petroleum to assess its value.[103] Beijing, however, had awarded drilling rights to an American company, Crestone, allowing them to explore oil resources near the Vanguard Bank, which had been occupied by Vietnam since 1989.

In response, Vietnam dispatched ships to block the Crestone's contract area.[104]

When the Alcorn company arrived at Mischief Reef in January 1995, the crew found that a Chinese infrastructure had already been established and that the reef was surrounded by hostile boats.[105] This finding worried the Philippine government because of China's superior military power. In response, the Chinese explained that the Chinese vessels in the reef were merely passing fishing boats rather than a military presence.[106] However, in February, a satellite photograph told the truth: there were hundreds of tons of wood and steel, prefabricated housing units, communications equipment, and all of the men and materials required to set up four bases in Mischief Reef,[107] disproving China's explanation.

A shocked Philippine government immediately called for the destruction of these markers. By mid-June, many Chinese markers had been destroyed and sixty-two Chinese sailors arrested.[108] Eventually, China opened negotiations with the Philippines and on August 10, 1995, they reached a consensus on the South China Sea, in accordance with the principles of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea.[109] However, while China and the Philippines had become allies on paper, China did not withdraw its military presence from the Spratlys.

China's halfhearted negotiations and the discontinuation of a Philippine military presence on Mischief Reef abetted the second Mischief Reef Incident. While Beijing and Manila actively negotiated on paper, the Chinese navy continued fortifying Mischief Reef between 1998 and 1999, adding anti-aircraft guns and new communications equipment.[110] This time, Philippine military response was weaker, causing China to assume that the international reaction to this incident would be weaker as well.[111] The Philippine position was further undermined when the U.S. decided to remain neutral during the crisis. Watching Mischief Reef fall under the control of Chinese naval ships and weapons, the Philippines could do nothing but lament that, as President Ramos states, until the Mischief Reef situation was normalized, the country "would not feel safe and secure as regard[ed] Filipino-

Chinese bilateral relations…[The Philippines] would always be on the alert."[112] The Philippine stance showed intransigence and indicated the unlikeliness of any future compromise.

China's seizure of Mischief Reef was the first major occupation in the South China Sea following the end of the Cold War. This occupation enhanced regional concern over an expansionist China and worries that China would seek to dominate the South China Sea through military means.[113] In 1995, these fears proved justified when the Chinese navy proceeded to occupy Natuna Island, an area included in the Indonesian EEZ. In 1993, at the Track-Two Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea, the Chinese government noted nearby waters as Chinese territory, directly violating UNCLOS principles.[114] Indonesia sent officials to Beijing and reclaimed the territories, citing UNCLOS. In a response similar to that given during Philippine protests, the Chinese reaction was ambivalent. Beijing agreed to negotiate further but maintained its military presence in the Natuna Islands nonetheless.

The end of the twentieth century saw only one successful and peaceful solution to territorial disputes in the South China Sea: the boundary delimitation of the Gulf of Tonkin. Almost half a century after Beijing eliminated two of the dashes in the "eleven-dash line," Beijing and Vietnam formed an agreement on the Gulf of Tonkin in 2000. Of the area subject to delineation in the Gulf, Vietnam obtained 53.23% and China 46.77%.[115] This peaceful negotiation established a booming trade between China and Vietnam, suggesting that a peaceful coexistence, rather than invasion, might be a more prosperous solution to the South China Sea disputes.[116]

Chinese Solutions in the Twenty-first Century

In the twenty-first century, following international pressure for peace, China became a *status quo* state and halted its expansion in the South China Sea. However, this peaceable demeanor was hardly supported through action—China's "take and talk" policy did not change much. As the trend of globalization ex-

panded, Southeast Asian countries and China formed a mutually dependent trade relationship, an arrangement that prevented aggressive conflicts in the South China Sea, despite the lack of territorial resolution. China consistently maintained that "further negotiation" was required before a settlement could be reached while it simultaneously refused to allow for the *status quo* in this region to change.

Then, in 2002, the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea called upon the peaceful relationship between China and ASEAN nations to consolidate cooperation.[117] This declaration played a role in relieving tension in the South China Sea, stating, "the Parties concerned reaffirm that the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea would further promote peace and stability in the region and agree to work, on the basis of consensus, towards the eventual attainment of this objective."[118] More importantly, the countries emphasized the significance of settling disputes "without resorting to the threat or use of force, [but instead] through friendly consultations and negotiations by [the] sovereign states directly concerned, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law."[119] In theory, because countries agreed to bolster stabilization, provoking conflicts would become difficult at best. To a certain extent, the declaration maintained the *status quo,* ensuring that the Chinese military presence in the islands occupied in the later twentieth century could not be easily interrupted by Southeastern Asia.

Despite the focus on hypothetical "peaceful means" to deal with the territorial disputes, the declaration was considered "very weak," according to the preceding Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo,[120] because this declaration is a political document without legal binding force.[121] In the declaration, none of the countries contesting sovereignty made concessions with regard to their claims; they simply promised not to support these claims with military might. These countries continued to consolidate their territorial claims and build structures in the disputed territories, thus failing to prevent further skirmishes in

the South China Sea. China sent its navy to the four islands in
the Paracels and six islands in the Spratlys. Vietnam approved a
plan to move people to its controlled islands and build logistical
structures. The Philippines has developed tourism in its occupied
islands. Malaysia used soil to raise the level of the Swallow Reef
in order to construct hotels, an airstrip, and facilities for scuba
divers.[122] Above all, though countries were in agreement with
the ideal of cooperation, this declaration did not effectively and
pragmatically resolve the crisis.

During the period from 1949 to the present, disputes over
the South China Sea reached flash points for a series of conflicts,
with all of the involved coastal countries making aggressive claims.
These developments took place against a backdrop of significant
changes in China's relations in the region, as well as the coastal
states' growing awareness of their maritime rights in the South
China Sea.[123] China has played an active role in this area, but its
desire for the potential resources available in the region has made
its stance rigid and even aggressive, as demonstrated by the clashes
in 1974, 1988, and 1995. However, adhering to an international
call for peace, China has not militarily seized any additional ter-
ritories in the South China Sea since the Mischief Incident.

Conclusion

As this paper has discussed, the South China Sea connects
trade between the Indian Ocean and East Asia and is home to
numerous oil and fishery resources.

However, vying for sovereignty in this sea area has caused
further dissent and conflict in the region. Supporting a desire for
territorial ownership on this strategically significant sea, China,
Vietnam, and the Philippines all claim sovereignty based on his-
torical evidence. Because Chinese military power is much greater
than that of other claimants, however, a situation has arisen in
which countries organize ostensibly friendly negotiations where
no actual concessions are made.

From a historical perspective, no single nation has a legitimate claim to sovereignty over the entire area. In ancient times, the Nusantao people seemed to consider the South China Sea home to all sea tribes in both the Indian and Pacific Ocean. Later, major empires around the South China Sea shared this region and promoted mutually beneficial trade. After 1368, it was the Chinese Seclusion Act and the fear stemming from the Wanli Shitang theory that kept China from visiting this region; during the Qing Dynasty, sovereignty over the South China Sea was almost entirely held by Western countries. After the Chinese awakening in 1911, however, the Kuomintang attempted to claim sovereignty via map-making campaigns and international consensus; the CCP relied heavily on these principles after the Kuomintang government was defeated. By remaining consistent with this position, the CCP instigated skirmishes in the Paracels and Spratlys to seize control of the territories—actions that were deemed threatening by Vietnam and the Philippines.

Following a shift of focus to globalization, such impetuous military actions became rare, but countries remained unwilling to make territorial concessions. As countries continued to rewrite the history of this sea in their favor, perhaps only the silent reefs could possibly tell the truth of this millennia-long territorial history.
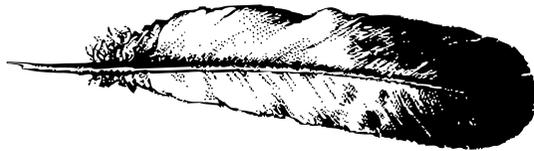
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Winston S. Churchill
A History of the English-Speaking Peoples [Abridged]
London: Cassell, 1998, p. 294

At Coke's prompting the Commons now went on to frame the *Petition of Right.* [1628] Its object was to curtail the King's Prerogative. The *Petition* complained against forced loans, imprisonment without trial, billeting, and martial law. These and others of the King's proceedings were condemned "as being contrary to the rights and liberties of the subjects, and the laws and statutes of the nation." Unless the King accepted the *Petition* he would have no subsidies, and must face the wars to which Parliament had incited him as best he could. Charles, resorting to manoeuvre, secretly consulted the judges, who assured him that even his consent to these liberties would not affect his ultimate Prerogative. When his first evasive answer was delivered, a howl went up from the great majority of all assembled. He fell back upon the opinion of the judges and gave full consent. The Commons voted all the subsidies, and believed that a definite bargain had been struck.

We reach here, amid much confusion, the main foundation of English freedom. The right of the Executive Government to imprison a man, high or low, for reasons of State was denied. At the back of the Parliament movement in all its expressions lay a deep fear. Everywhere in Europe they saw the monarchies becoming more autocratic. The States-General, which had met in Paris in 1614, had not been summoned again; it was not indeed to be summoned until the clash of 1789. The rise of standing armies, composed of men drilled in firearms and supported by trains of artillery, had stripped alike the nobles and the common people of their means of independent resistance. Rough, as the times had been in the earlier centuries, "bills and bows" were a final resource which few kings had cared to challenge. But now on the Parliamentary side force as yet was lacking...

HARVARD COLLEGE

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

September 15, 2010

Mr. Will Fitzhugh
The Concord Review
730 Boston Post Road, Suite 24
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776 USA

Dear Will,

We agree with your argument that high school students who have read a complete nonfiction book or two, and written a serious research paper or two, will be better prepared for college academic work than those who have not.

The Concord Review, founded in 1987, remains the only journal in the world for the academic papers of secondary students, and we in the Admissions Office here are always glad to see reprints of papers which students have had published in the *Review* and which they send to us as part of their application materials. Over the years, more than 10% (107) of these authors have come to college at Harvard.

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For all our undergraduates, even those in the sciences, such competence, both in reading nonfiction books and in the writing of serious research papers, is essential for academic success. Some of our high schools now place too little emphasis on this, but *The Concord Review* and the National Writing Board are doing a national service in encouraging our secondary students, and their teachers, to spend more time and effort on developing these abilities.

Sincerely,
Bill
William R. Fitzsimmons
Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

WRF:oap

Notes on Contributors

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Elizabeth Anne Johns (Tobacco Advertising) is an 8th Grader at the Whitney Young Magnet High School in Chicago, where she has taken part in National History Day. She enjoys playing the flute and doing mathematics, and she loves acting in Shakespeare plays.

Rock Pang (South China Sea) is a Senior at Beyond English in China. He is presently applying to colleges in the United States.

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Cathy Wu (Korean War) is a Junior at the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, where she is the president of Math Club and the co-president of Speech and Debate. She also founded and is currently leading the Business Startups Club. She has qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam twice.

Matthew Waltman (Dokdo Islands) is a Senior at the Dwight-Englewood School in Englewood, New Jersey. His essay on the John Peter Zenger Trial, for which he won an Emerson Prize, was published in *The Concord Review* in the Summer 2015 issue.

Daniel H. Wang (Missouri's Civil War) is a Senior at Taipei American School. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio and is living in Taiwan. He is interested in physics, biology, literature and history. He is an Eagle Scout and a member of the varsity swim team. He has worked as a docent at the National Palace Museum in Taipei.

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