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The Reaction of Small States to the Advancement of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea

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The Reaction of Small States to the Advancement of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea

an undergraduate senior thesis
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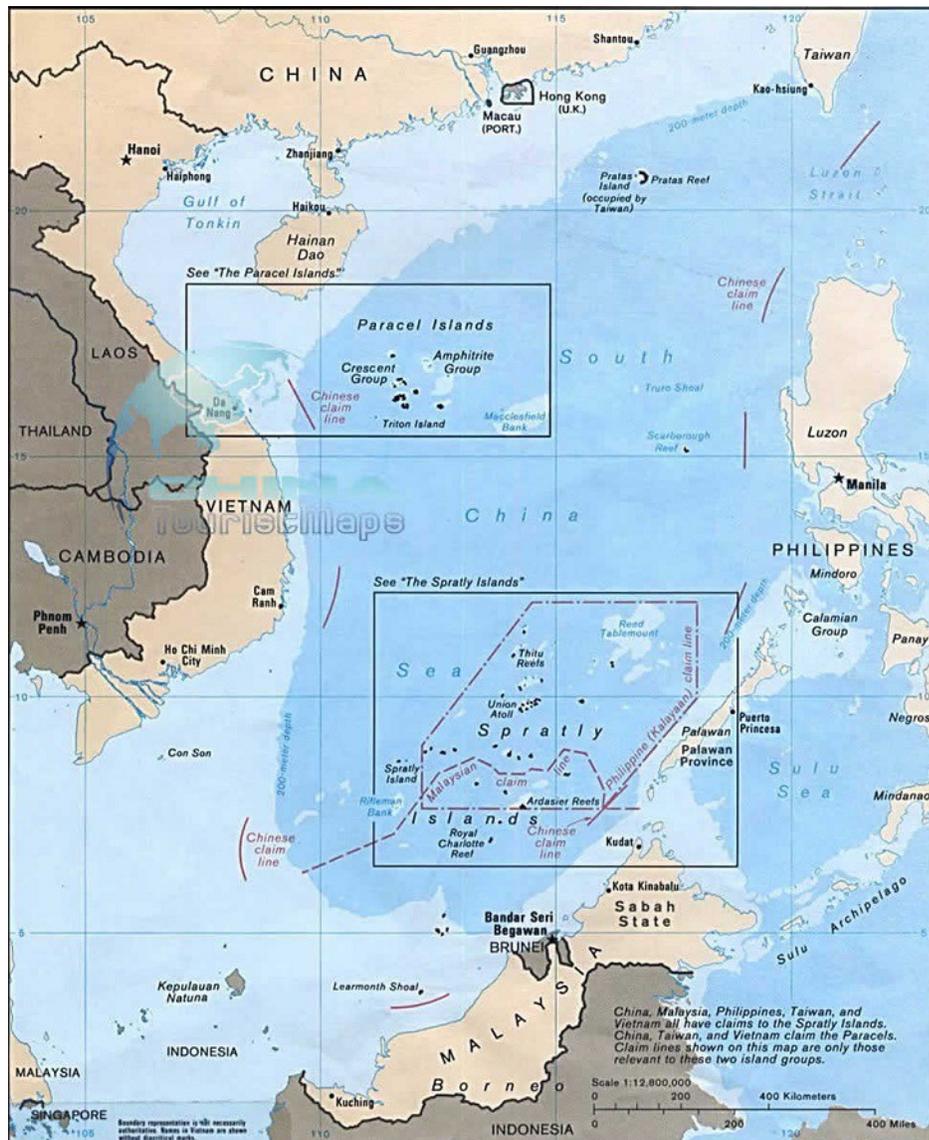


Table of Contents:

Pages 05 - 21	Chapter One: Introduction
05 - 07	Main Argument
07 - 10	Significance of Inquiry
10 - 11	Limitations on the Scope of Research
11 - 15	Literature and Theory
15 - 20	Methods and an Evaluation of Case Study Relevance
21	Organization
Pages 22 - 38	Chapter Two: The Factors Involved in the People's Republic of China's Territorial Claims in the South China Sea
22 - 25	From the ROC to the PRC: Promoting Claims in the South China Sea
25 - 27	The Role of International Law and of Norms:
27 - 32	Economic Stability Through the Securing of Shipping and Resources:
32 - 34	Regime Legitimacy:
34 - 38	Increasing Control and Naval Capacity:
Pages 39 - 51	Chapter Three: A Case Study of the History and Strategy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's in its Interactions with the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea
39 - 43	The Conflict of Vietnamese State Regimes

	with the PRC in the SCS:
43 - 45	The Oil Production Race:
45 - 46	Increasing Military Capacity:
46 - 47	International Law and Multilateral Organizations:
47 - 48	Perceived Changes in the International Structure:
48 - 51	The Strategy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the SCS Disputes:
52 - 66	Chapter Four: A Case Study of the History and Strategy of the Republic of the Philippines in its Interactions with the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea
52 - 53	The Republic of the Philippines: Early Claims in the SCS
53 - 53	UNCLOS
53 - 54	Joint Development and Good Relations
54 - 55	The Departure of US Forces:
55 - 56	The ASEAN Forum and PRC Domestic Law:
56 - 59	Dispute Developments in the 1990s
59 - 60	Recent Dispute Developments:
60 - 61	The Republic of the Philippines' Focus on SCS Resources:
61 - 65	The Strategy of the Republic of the Philippines in the SCS Disputes:
65 - 66	Conclusion:

Pages 67 - 77 **Chapter Five: A Case Study of the History and Strategy of the Republic of Singapore in its Interactions with the Conflicts in the South China Sea**

67 - 68 The Republic of Singapore and Perception of Security:

68 - 69 The Conundrum of Conflict Over Features in the SCS

69 - 71 US-Singaporean Military Relations:

71 - 72 Other Military Relations:

72 Trade and Diplomacy

72 - 77 Strategy of the Republic of Singapore Toward Conflict in the SCS:

Pages 78 - 86 **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

78 - 81 Changes to the International Order and the Objectives of PRC:

81 - 82 The Perceived Interests of the US in the South China Sea

82 - 84 The Relative Power of Weaker Claimant States Vis-A-Vis the PRC:

84 - 86 Hedging with External Balancing: Continuity in Regional Strategy

Pages 87 - 94 **Sources Cited:**

Pages 95 **Index of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

Chapter One: Introduction

This paper will outline the internal and external factors that have spurred the People's Republic of China (PRC) to issue strong rhetoric and naval expansion in the defense of their claims to territory in the South China Sea (SCS). An analysis of the PRC's posturing will provide the contextual background necessary for answering the following research question central to this paper. What strategies have relatively less capable states engaged in the region as a reaction to the advancing capacity of the PRC?

The escalation of tensions between the PRC and other states in the region, namely, the Republic of Singapore, the Republic of the Philippines, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, will be analyzed with applicable theoretical framework. Each of these states will be treated in separate case studies to address the inquiry.

Main Argument

After the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s subsided, the relative economic power of the PRC was noted. Through great efforts of diplomacy, the PRC was seen as a good neighbor for nearly a decade. However, after the global financial crisis that began in 2008, the PRC leadership felt inclined to flex its military and diplomatic strength. Since then, the Southeast Asian states have become weary of the complications of PRC dominance in the region. Without outside actors, PRC dominance is inevitable due to the relatively weaker position, in terms of economic development as well

as military capacity, of the Southeast Asian states. Despite what seemed to be a harmonious rise, the PRC is likely facing a generous level of engagement coupled with significant external balancing moving forward.

As the United States (US) military has maintained a heavy presence in East Asia since the Pacific War, and the current administration has proclaimed its commitment to increasing its presence in the region, its role with regard to the balance of power is likely an essential ingredient for the strategy employed by the Southeast Asian states in question in their response to the PRC's growing capacity in the SCS. The Hanoi regime, which is most skeptical of US involvement in the region's affairs, will not balance the PRC with its ties to the US alone. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam has had a long standing relationship with Moscow, and will likely exploit that as an additional means to balance.

The three relatively small states analyzed in this paper cannot depend on external balancing alone. States in the region will attempt to balance the growing military influence of the PRC in the SCS by developing their own military capacity. As these states control much smaller economies and command weaker military forces, internal balancing can only provide a secondary deterrent against PRC advancements in the SCS. Regardless of the outcome in the SCS, the PRC has become the region's most highly productive economy and will likely maintain this position indefinitely. For this reason alone,

engagement through diplomacy and trade is necessary.

Moreover, each state is likely to develop a multifaceted strategy in response to the PRC's growing capacity and assertiveness in the SCS, with external balancing as the chief constituent. As considerations on the future relations with the region's leading state economy are a crucial element of the Southeast Asian states' long-term interests, coupled with the uncertainties of dealing with supra-regional states, this external balancing may not necessarily be realized by the establishment of formal military alliances with other powers, but by some softer form of external balancing.

Significance of Inquiry:

Since the 1970s, the Southeast Asian states in question have managed relations with the PRC over territorial disputes within the SCS. Complicated by these states' limited naval capacity and the competition between the US and the Soviet Union (USSR), minor naval skirmishes occurred, transferring administration of islands in the SCS and creating political momentum surrounding the SCS issue. However, territorial disputes in the SCS have never been as heated as those witnessed in the preceding half decade.

The PRC has recently increased its capacity to project power into the SCS to such a degree that it is unclear whether any regional states could adequately deter or resist any potential aggression by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) navy (PLAN). As a consequence, the common themes of "peaceful rise" and "good neighbor diplomacy"

(Lin et al. 2005, 1), ubiquitous in international relations prior to 2008, have been deteriorating into sentiment erring on the side of caution for the states with an interest in the SCS (Dutta, 2005, 269-270). Further exacerbating the potential for mistrust and miscalculation, the PRC leadership has its own concerns. Regional states, especially the Republic of the Philippines and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, have also projected their power in the SCS, occupying islands, capturing Chinese merchant vessels, and increasing ties with states that could counterbalance the PRC's naval capacity and territorial ambitions.

In this unstable international order where overlapping and competing territorial claims are settled by coercive measures or at least treated with strong rhetoric threatening the same, the PRC leadership feels that it must also grapple with a domestic order of potentially greater risk. With a burgeoning domestic demand for hydrocarbon and marine resources, in addition to the steady shift toward an outward leaning economy, which has been maturing since the reform and opening policies (Gǎigé kāifàng), that is heavily dependent upon the shipment of a significant fraction of import and exports through the SCS, the PRC leadership is also erring on the side of caution by increasing security of these matters moving forward. Such socioeconomic realities are not solely experienced by the Chinese, with freedom of navigation in the SCS being asserted by scholars and practitioners as a supra-regional concern. The

Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of the Philippines, and the Republic of Singapore are also experiencing economic expansion, an increasing demand for resources, and with the exception of the Republic of Singapore, these states are also participants in the territorial disputes. Essentially, there is some commonality between the PRC and the regional powers in the substance of concern fueling the conflict. Resulting from this conflict of perceived national interests, the potential for destabilizing security competition between these states is a growing possibility.

Military security is of course not the sole means by which a state can secure its interests. The PRC and the regional powers addressed in this paper have been increasing their efforts in diplomacy, alliance building, and military development simultaneously. The key multilateral organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has been the preferred diplomatic mechanism through which the Southeast Asian states have pursued a peaceful resolution to the issue, with particular effort invested in the advancement of a binding code of conduct. In 2002, a non-binding code was authored by the ASEAN forum, but it has been sharply criticized as ineffective in creating norms of behavior. Validating this criticism, provocations in the SCS have escalated since 2008. As this is truly a supra-regional issue, considering the volume of shipping that travels through the SCS, states outside the region have become involved diplomatically. In addition to economic concerns,

the so-called "hub-and-spokes" alliance format, a vestige of the Cold War which features the US in bilateral security cooperation with many East Asian states, complicated the balance of power in the region. Moreover, the US Navy could intervene if tensions erupt into armed conflict, as the US may justify such behavior by referring to its previous commitments to protect the freedom of navigation and may be obligated by legally binding defense treaties.

As one of the single most important bodies of water with regard to global commerce, and potentially energy reserves, the SCS disputes are a necessary subject of study. Detailing how these three states of relatively less capacity cope with the rising power of the PRC will require applying international relations theory while simultaneously highlighting the nature of the potential flashpoint that is the SCS.

Limitations on the Scope of Research:

As there is little evidence that economic and multilateral organizations and treaties have provided any effective constraint on state behavior, their analysis will be limited in this paper. ASEAN is the chief organization involved in the SCS disputes. Despite efforts taken by the ASEAN member states, the forum has failed to constrain the PRC in its advancements in the SCS. According to one analyst: "it remains uncertain whether the ASEAN members and China will ever succeed to agree on a legally-binding code of conduct for the South China Sea" (Emmers, 2002, 2). If multilateral, economic

organizations such as ASEAN are ineffective, elaboration on their role in the SCS disputes is not necessary to describe the strategies of the claimant states. International law is a relevant factor in the foreign policy formulation of all states mentioned in this paper. However, the fundamental legal instrument, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), has no enforcement mechanism to bind its signatories. As a result, the perception and implementation of UNCLOS by the states mentioned in the text will be discussed only when absolutely necessary.

Literature and Theory:

This paper will analyze the strategies of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of the Philippines, and the Republic of Singapore in response to the regional destabilization brought about by the increasing capacity of the PLAN and the PRC's power projection into the SCS, through international relations theoretical framework of the realist paradigm. As this paper will argue that diplomatic efforts are secondary to the power-based strategies utilized by the smaller states in the face of security threats, it should ensue that the realist paradigm is the best lens through which to view the disputes in the SCS. The liberal framework, dealing with trade and international norms and laws is relevant, and descriptions of relations between states that are not military related will be provided. However, due to the failure of international norms, laws, and trade as a means to prevent conflict, it will be shown through an

analysis of recent history that the small states in the region have not relied on liberal institutions to ensure regional stability and their perceived nation interests.

The theoretical tradition of realism "depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self-interested states" in an anarchic international system, and is a valuable tool with which international relations can be analyzed as it provides "powerful explanations for war, alliances, imperialism, obstacles to cooperation, and other international phenomena" (Walt, 1998, 31). Focusing on the changing structure of the international system in East Asia over the last several decades, this paper will highlight how these structural changes have influenced the behavior of these states in the SCS.

The realist paradigm includes several competing theoretical frameworks. The frameworks most applicable to the SCS disputes are structural and offensive realism. John Mearsheimer has argued that states in the international system "fear each other", and "there is little room for trust among states". Moreover, "[s]tates operating in a self-help world", that is, in an international system in which the only assurance of state survival is a self-derived increase of power, and the "ideal situation is to be the hegemon in the system" (Mearsheimer, 2001, 32-34).

Considering that the PRC is in a position with much more power than its neighbors, external balancing is an ideal strategy for

weaker states to prevent themselves from being overpowered. As the only states with the capacity to challenge the PRC militarily do not exist within the region, the small states of Southeast Asia may look to an "offshore balancer", one with the ability to project their power into the SCS, to protect their interests (Mearsheimer, 2001, 42). However, in the realist paradigm states do not depend wholly on balancing alliances. "Alliances are only temporary marriages of convenience... [s]tates operating in a self-help world almost always act according to their own self-interests and do not subordinate their interests to the interests of other states" (Mearsheimer, 2001, 33). The uncertainty of external balancing must result in states engaging in multifaceted strategies of external and internal balancing, as well as engagement with the rising power in the system. This form of strategy is known as hedging. (Roy, 2005, 305)

On the opposite end of the strategic spectrum, in the face of a rising power a weaker state might choose to align with this state as opposed to balancing it; this presents the dichotomy of bandwagoning versus balancing, respectively. (Roy, 2005, 305) During the period of relative peace in East Asia after the late 1990s and leading up to the economic depression which began with the crisis in 2008, some scholars argued that bandwagoning was the standard reaction to the PRC's increasing influence in the region. One of the most staunch critics of the application of realist theory to East Asia, and the popular notion set forth by Aaron Friedberg, that the region is "ripe

for rivalry" (Acharya, 2003, 149), is David Kang. Kang argued that international relations theories, developed by Western institutions, by Western scholars, which serve to analyze the history of Western states, are inadequate in their capacity to analyze the relationships among East Asian states. Kang argued that "Asia has different historical traditions, different geographic and political realities... [t]hus... nation-states in Asia do not necessarily function like states in the West" (Kang, 2003, 83-84). In Kang's perspective, "[h]istorically, it has been Chinese weakness that has led to chaos in Asia... East Asian regional relations have historically been hierarchic, more peaceful, and more stable than those in the West" (Kang, 2003, 66). In essence, Kang argues that because of the Confucian tradition of hierarchy in East Asia, the smaller states will likely bandwagon with the PRC. This paper, while not attempting to refute the power of historical tradition and cultural identity in East Asia, will argue that Kang's predictions are wrong, due to the changing power structure which has been occurring over the last five or so years coupled with the relationships established by the great power politics of the 20th century, *videlicet*, the US with the Singaporean and Filipino regimes and the Russian Federation with the Hanoi regime.

Amitav Acharya adds to this refutation of Kang's thesis by arguing that regional states are not bandwagoning, at least not by the definition established by Stephan Walt, which "implies

acquiescence to a rising power by a state threatened by it." Acharya goes on to argue that those seeking to use trade interests between the PRC and its weaker East Asian neighbors are confusing "economic self-interest with bandwagoning"; moreover, "[t]here are good economic reasons for East Asian state to pursue economic ties with China, but these do not amount to deference" (Acharya, 2003, 151).

The final tenet of the realist paradigm with which to analyze the disputes in the SCS is the conception of security dilemma. Security dilemma expounds the circumstances under which "the measures a state takes to increase its own security usually decrease the security of other states" (Mearsheimer, 2001, 36). This concept is particularly applicable to the SCS issue as the rapid development of the PRC's military capabilities provide a strong incentive for states to react by increasing their defenses.

Methods and an Evaluation of Case Study Relevance:

By first analyzing the literature establishing the historical context of relations among the states with interests in the SCS, this paper will lay a foundation for exploring the most recent sequence of events. Drawing from primary and second sources, while also exploiting literature authored by individuals of various nationalities and from all levels of analysis, this paper aims to achieve a balanced assessment of the motivations driving state actors' diplomatic and military efforts.

As the topic of this paper focuses on the response of the

Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Republic of the Philippines, and the SPG, the actions taken by the relevant PRC institutions involved in the SCS issue will be treated first, providing an empirical background with which various theories of international relations can be applied (i.e. security dilemma theory and power transition theory). After providing an analysis of actions taken by the PRC with regard to the SCS, individual case studies will be prepared, detailing the motivations, actions and statements of the regional powers.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam will be the first state analyzed through an individual case study. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was chosen for a case study as its history of territorial disputes in the SCS with the PRC are of longest duration. Additionally, the PRC had already been engaged in conflict with the military forces commanded from Saigon in the SCS prior to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's defeat of the Republic of Vietnam and subsequent control over all the territory and people once governed by that regime. As a consequence, the 1970s featured multiple altercations between PRC and Vietmanese naval forces, and new occupancies of some disputed islands.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the only state with territorial disputes in the SCS to have engaged in military conflict with the PRC resulting in losses of territory and human life. This fact is significant in that Socialist Republic of Vietnam leadership

can draw on this history in a variety of manners: expectations of the PRC's resoluteness can be measured by past experience; expectation of coercive response to any Socialist Republic of Vietnam claims, such as the contracting of resource extraction rights, could change behavior, especially considering the current disparity in military capacity where the PLA is obviously better funded, technologically superior, and greater in force size. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam can utilize historical narratives of PRC aggression in the SCS to bolster support both internally and externally for any desired policy position.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam case must be considered simply because of the state's proximity to the PRC territory. Beyond sharing a land border, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam territory is situated near Hainan Island, which is home to the PRC's Southernmost naval outpost, and likely point of power projection into the SCS, Yulin Naval Base. More recently, the increase in PRC naval capacity sets a precedent for what some scholars and practitioners worry is the PRC's grand strategy for occupying and militarily fortifying these islands for further power projection.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam case holds more substance in that its leadership has advanced a multifaceted policy approach. The involvement of multiple great powers in the disputed territory of the SCS, such as the US and the Republic of India, will be treated in addition to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's diplomatic

relationship with the PRC and ASEAN.

The Republic of the Philippines will be the second state analyzed through an individual case study. As with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, proximity to and history of interaction with the PRC render the Republic of the Philippines case study vital to understanding how states with less capacity have dealt with the PRC in the SCS. Hainan Island is near the main Republic of the Philippines island of Luzon, where approximately half of the Republic of the Philippines's population resides and where the political center, Manila, is located. The overlapping claims began in 1972 when the Republic of the Philippines first initiated its formal declaration of right to ownership of some features in the SCS by organizing a portion of the claim, most of which is referred to as the Kalayaans, under the management of the adjacent island province of Palawan.

Only since the US military forces left the Republic of the Philippines territory in 1992 have substantive challenges over the disputes with the PRC began. Since conflicts arose, the Republic of the Philippines has allowed the return of US forces to its territory and has publicly stated the importance of the US in its alleged capacity to ensure stability in the region. This unique circumstance lends weight to the realist paradigm. The poor relationship between the PRC and the Republic of the Philippines has brought about the most significant provocations in the SCS. It can be argued that

relations between the Beijing and Manila regimes are currently more strained than with any other claimant states.

In addition to history and geographic proximity, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of the Philippines claim island formations that are believed to sit above oceanic crust containing significant hydrocarbon reserves. Fish stocks are also extracted from this region by the fishing industries based in the four regional states, the PRC, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of China (ROC). The securing of resources vital to the maintenance of growing economies is of obvious importance to all claimants.

The Republic of Singapore will be the third and final state analyzed through an individual case study. This case analyzing in conjunction with the others is necessary because the Republic of Singapore's relationship to the issue of the stability in the SCS is quite different from that of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of the Philippines. The Republic of Singapore is one of few states in the region without claims to territory in the SCS. Dependent on trade, regional stability and freedom of navigation are the only priorities for the Republic of Singapore in this SCS issue.

To ensure these aims, the Republic of Singapore, like the Republic of the Philippines, advocates for US leadership and naval presence in the SCS. In addition to this promotion, the US Navy's Western Pacific Logistic Group has been based at the Republic of

Singapore's Changi Naval Base, since 1992. This entity provides logistic support for the US Navy's Seventh Fleet. The US Air Force (USAF) is also enjoys a permanent presence in Republic of Singapore territory.

The importance of the Republic of Singapore territory for freedom of navigation and shipping security through the SCS cannot be overstated. The islands which constitute the Republic of Singapore territory are positioned between the southernmost point of the Malay Peninsula and islands controlled by the Republic of Indonesia, separated by the Strait of Singapore. The Strait of Singapore is a key body of water, a potential choke-point, in shipping between the Strait of Malacca and the SCS. As much of the world's shipping volume, including that of the industries based in the states in question, passes through this corridor, understanding the role of the Republic of Singapore in the SCS issue is essential. The importance of the Port of Singapore as a refueling and cargo transfer point is also notable. Moreover, its vital role in the shipping industry and that the Republic of Singapore is willing to aid US military forces in their capacity to project power into the SCS to a greater extent than any other regional power further justifies its use as a case study in discovering how relatively weaker states are responding to the increasing presence of PRC power in the region.

Organization:

Followed by this introductory chapter, this paper will contain five additional chapters. The four chapters to follow consist of individual case studies. These case studies provide the empirical evidence necessary to support an analysis of the subject matter. The final chapter will consist of an analytical conclusion, drawing from the evidence, an explanation of how these states of relatively less capacity have managed with the increasing capacity and power projection of the PRC.

The chronological format will be presented as follows:

- Chapter One: Introduction
- Chapter Two: A Case Study of the People's Republic of China
- Chapter Three: A Case Study of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
- Chapter Four: A Case Study of the Republic of the Philippines
- Chapter Five: A Case Study of the Republic of Singapore
- Chapter Six: Conclusion
- Annotated Bibliography
- Index of Key Words, Abbreviations and Acronyms

**Chapter Two: The Factors Involved in
the People's Republic of China's Territorial Claims
in the South China Sea**

From the ROC to the PRC: Promoting Claims in the South China Sea

Due to the numerous domestic and international problems faced by the Republic of China (ROC) administration, it was not until the early 1930s that a formal assessment of the territorial boundaries, which constituted the self-perceived land and water expanses to be rightfully controlled by ROC state, was conducted. Prior to this point, most maps used by the ROC regime for international discourse were antiquated or of foreign origin. As the ROC leadership sought to consolidate power and wrest control of fringe territories from various entities with competing claims to the right of governance, it was necessary to promulgate the exact territorial boundaries. To achieve this aim the administration created the Land and Water Maps Inspection Committee. (Li & Li. 2003, 287-289)

With regard to the South China Sea (SCS), at the committee meeting on 21 December 1934 the formal land claims were approved. The precise location and names, in both the English and Chinese language, of physical land bodies were issued. The following month, for the January 1935 issue of the committee's journal, the names and coordinates of 132 physical land bodies were published; of the 132 bodies 28 were of the Paracel Island group (Xishā qúndǎo) and 96 of

the Spratly Island group (Nánshā qúndǎo). Later, the committee published two maps designating 4° northern latitude as the southern most extent of the regime's territorial claims in the SCS, extending to James Shoal (Céng mǔ ànshā) of the Spratly Island group. (Li & Li. 2003, 289)

After the close of the Pacific War, Japanese Imperial forces left the SCS allowing the ROC regime to regain possession of a majority of its claims. Reaffirming its claims in 1947, the administration renamed many islands of the Spratly and Paracel groups in a manner corresponding to their geographic location. The Ministry of Internal Affairs promoted measures to ensure international recognition of ROC territorial claims, and authorized the government of Guangdong Province to protect the state's interests in the SCS. To promote their claims, the Ministry of Internal Affairs published The Administrative Division Map of the Republic of China that enclosed the Pratas Islands (Dōngshā Qúndǎo), the Paracel Islands group, the Macclesfield Bank (Zhōngshā Qúndǎo), and the Spratly Island group within an eleven-dash or "dotted" line. According to an official within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, "the dotted national boundary line was drawn as the median line between China and the adjacent states" (Li & Li. 2003, 289-290).

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, all maps and relevant publications followed the position of the previous regime with regard to territorial claims. However, in 1953

Premier Zhou Enlai reached an agreement with the existing Vietnamese regime to remove two lines that ran through the Gulf of Tonkin. Afterward, the nine-dotted line was published both for international audiences as well as in all state-sponsored education texts. (Li & Li. 2003, 290)

In the following years, repeated proclamations by PRC officials, state-sponsored media and educational authorities brought the issue of sovereignty in the SCS to a prominent position in Chinese political culture. Despite competing historical claims by the government in Hanoi, PRC officials were resolute in promoting their claims as non-negotiable. For example, in 1977, after conflicts arose between SRV and PRC naval forces over the occupation of islands in the Paracel group, Foreign Minister Huang Hua asserted: “[t]he territory of China reaches as far south as the James Shoals, near Malaysia’s Borneo territory... I remember that while I was still a schoolboy, I read about those islands in the geography books. At that time, I never heard anyone say those islands were not China’s... The Vietnamese claim that the islands belong to them. Let them talk that way. They have repeatedly asked us to negotiate with them on the issue; we have always declined to do so... As to the ownership of the islands, there are historical documents that can be verified. There is no need for negotiations since they originally belonged to China.” (Dutta, 2005, 273-274)

PRC leaders have been careful to frame their arguments in a

manner consistent with domestic and international law. The historical claim to sovereignty is bolstered by the PRC constitution, which states that the PRC, "stands for the development of state relations between China and other countries on the basis of the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit..." (PRC, 1982).

The Role of International Law and of Norms:

International norms and laws challenge the PRC's claims to sovereignty in the SCS. The PRC's argument is that Chinese regimes have occupied the islands since antiquity and thus the PRC has inherited legitimate title. The PRC leadership resents that international law does not adequately accept historical claim arguments. However, while the norms and laws do not accept the PRC's historical claims, there are some advantages for the PRC. Also, the law serves to promote a more aggressive policy by the PRC toward the occupation of the disputed islands; such a policy would consist of attempts to settle on unsettled features in the SCS and the display of naval patrol in the areas where the PRC is currently in control.

In 1928, an early case of international arbitration between two claimant states of island territory, the Island of Palmas Case between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States, established an international norm for what constitutes effective occupation of an island territory. The Hague Court established that

neither proximity nor historical claim constituted a legal right to own territory. To justly claim territory, the court ruled that a party must have the capacity and intent to exercise control over the territory in question. (Roque, 2002, 437-448)

This recognized norm both benefits and challenges the PRC's claims in the SCS. The disregard of historical claims when continuous control cannot be proven is to the detriment of PRC claims in most cases; only in the Paracel Islands group, where the PRC maintained effective control for several decades (Buszynski, 2012, 140). The PRC has not had effective control over most of its territorial claims in the SCS since the establishment of the dotted line and the PRC in the late 1940s, but argues that since other regional states did not protest the creation of the nine-dotted line, international silence on this matter equates to acquiescence to PRC claims (Li & Li. 2003, 290) Regardless, this norm encourages the PRC to increase its capacity to ensure jurisdiction over uncontrolled features in the SCS that it deems to be sovereign territory. Moreover, establishing effective control and consistent jurisdiction would provide the RPC with a legal argument for its claims.

Beginning in the 1960s, the United Nations (UN) began negotiations on what came to be known as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Rowan, 2005, 1). UNCLOS was signed in 1982 by the PRC and most relevant states, and then ratified in 1994. Two major provisions of UNCLOS are relevant to the disputed

territory in the SCS. First, territorial waters extend outward from a state's coast for 12 nautical miles (22 kilometers; 14 miles). In these territorial waters, the sovereign state exercises complete control over all activity occurring within them, save the "innocent passage" of foreign vessels (UN, 1982, 26-27).

The most important provision of UNCLOS with regard to the SCS disputes is the establishment of exclusive economic zones (EEZs). An EEZ extends from a state's coast for 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers; 230 miles). States have the right to access and exploitation of all resources within their EEZ. Hydrocarbon reserves and fish stocks are pertinent examples of resources protected under the EEZ provision. (UN, 1982, 40-41)

By this provision, the land features in the SCS gained new potential for all claimant states. Essentially, whichever state enjoys legal claim to the island groups also enjoys the right to exploit all resources extending from them via their EEZ. By this it is evident that UNCLOS increased the value of these islands to their claimant states; this serves to exacerbate the dispute. By providing a legal umbrella under which states could extract two vital resources, namely, hydrocarbons and fish stocks, the EEZ provision increased the incentive for the PRC to establish jurisdiction over its claims.

Economic Stability Through the Securing of Shipping and Resources:

In addition to the persistent trend of increasing population

growth within the territory controlled by the PRC, since the reform and opening policies (Gǎigé kāifàng) were established in the early 1980s, the Chinese have increased their consumption of resources annually. By converting the once inward-leaning, isolationist economy into a dynamic outward-leaning economy, the aggregate output in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) has steadily increased by approximately 10% annually for nearly three decades. Now dependent on the import and export of numerous products (e.g. raw industrial materials, capital goods, consumer goods, energy resources, and agricultural commodities), the PRC leadership seeks to maintain its perceived legitimacy by securing its capacity to import and export freely, allowing economic growth to continue. Access to and extraction of domestic sources of energy is also a key component in the government's calculations on continuous economic growth.

(Buszynski, 2012, 140-143)

To support its economic growth, the PRC has increasingly advanced its consumption of energy resources, especially petroleum. In the early years of dynamic economic growth, the PRC territory held enough petroleum to allow for self-sufficiency. It was not until 1993 that PRC firms began importing crude oil. Despite being one of the world's most prolific petroleum producers, along with considerable state owned enterprise (SOE) efforts to increase rates of extraction, demand has consistently exceeded supply. By 2003, aggregate consumption of petroleum within the PRC's territory was the

second greatest by any population, surpassing Japanese levels and trailing only American levels of consumption. The PRC is the third largest importer of petroleum, with more than 40% of its consumption derived from imported crude in 2006. Some estimates project Chinese consumption doubling by the year 2030, with imports increasing five-fold (Kreft, 2006, 109-110). As demand for imported petroleum increases, the International Energy Agency projects 80% of consumption via imports by 2030. If these projections are accurate, the necessity of supply security becomes inescapable (IEA, 2004, 66-67).

The PRC has been attempting to diversify its hydrocarbon sources to meet this demand. From recent extraction in the waters just beyond the mouth of the Pearl River and near Hainan Island, the expansion of offshore installations have reinvigorated old disputes, namely, those between Japan and the PRC in the East China Sea surrounding the Diaoyu Islands and those in the SCS. After the ratification of UNCLOS in 1994, the push for hydrocarbon extraction in the waters surrounding the disputed territory in the SCS was initiated by claimant states. The estimated hydrocarbon resources in the SCS vary by source; 213 billion barrels of oil have been estimated by a Chinese firm in 1989 (Saudi Arabia boasts the world's largest petroleum reserves at 265 billion barrels) (Guo, 2013). Moreover, if the PRC could secure its claims in the SCS, it would potentially hold the most abundant petroleum reserves. More

importantly, claiming and exploiting these reserves would solve concerns over access to petroleum, a vital ingredient fueling the PRC economy.

However, with SRV and RP contracts already producing oil in the SCS, the PRC has had to escalate its efforts to establish its claims. By 1992, the SRV's offshore oil production was nearly twice the volume as that of the PRC's; it is important to note that a significant portion of the SRV's offshore oil production occurred in the contested waters of the SCS. PRC state officials and SOE executives were openly concerned that the disparity between the regional states and the PRC in developing oil resources in the SCS would hamper economic growth. Additionally, as the SRV and the RP continued to explore and extract petroleum through the efforts of domestic and foreign firms, some PRC leaders worried that these international interests could jeopardize the physical capture of the territories in the SCS (Dutta, 2005, 279-282).

Exacerbating energy related tensions in the SCS further, much of the petroleum imported to the PRC and the rest of Northeast Asia passes through the Strait of Malacca and then through the SCS; over 50% of imported petroleum is transported through these straits (Kreft, 2006, 112). This maritime choke-point is one of the most significant concerns for the PRC, driving policy makers to act with haste to ensure stability of the region through diplomatic means as well as increases in the capacity for naval power projection in the

SCS (Buszynski, 2012, 145).

Shipment of oil through the SCS is not the only transportation concern for the PRC. More than 30% of all commercial shipping passes through the SCS, with most of it traveling between the Spratly Islands. For the PRC, the strategic advantages that would come along controlling the Spratly Islands, and the SCS in general, are obvious: among these are protection of commercial interests, potential for military outposts, and bargaining power when dealing with states dependent on shipping through the SCS. It is for these reasons that non-claimant states cite freedom of navigation as the chief concern in the SCS issue (Weitz, 2011).

Fish stocks in the SCS are also playing a role in the PRC's claims. Historically as well as today, peoples of the region consider marine protein a dietary necessity. With dwindling stocks in the PRC's inland water bodies as well as in the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea, the need to secure access to the SCS stocks is becoming more urgent. Since 2005, the SRV claims that PRC patrol boats have seized 63 fishing vessels, capturing hundreds of crew. This is but one example of how the PRC is seeking to defend its claim to the fishing resources near its island claims in the SCS (Buszynski, 2012, 141-144).

While the insecure nature of resource demand and shipping prompts the PRC to take action to secure its perceived interests, the state cannot act with impunity, despite being the dominant military

power of the region. It is assumed that in the event of another Taiwan crisis or some other military escalation between the US and the PRC that the US Navy currently has the capacity to stop oil imports from the Middle East by either ceasing shipment from the source, where there are numerous US military installations to ensure this, or by blockading the Straits of Malacca. Blockading the waterway between the Malay Peninsula and Island of Sumatra would not only threaten a considerable portion of the energy supply of the PRC, but also its ability to import and export in general, since much of the PRC's trade flows through these straits. Thus two necessary approaches result: the PRC perceives that it must gain access to the SCS oil deposits within the EEZ surrounding its territorial claims for both immediate relief of demand but also for its long-term economic growth; and the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) must increase its presence in the SCS. By expanding PLAN presence in the SCS, the PRC can exhibit to the international community that it, above all other claimants, has effective occupation of the disputed territories while simultaneously increasing the security of its access to the shipping lanes to and from the Indian Ocean via the SCS. The threat of piracy also spurs the expansion of PLAN capacity in the region.

Regime Legitimacy:

The one-party system that is the PRC has delivered a mixed history of policy success. While repression of dissent, censorship

and a network of public-opinion shaping campaigns play a role, in the recent decades, it is arguable that economic growth and national prestige are the key factors that keep domestic pressure from rising to the point of revolution, or at least major reforms. As these two criteria are requisite to the maintenance of regime legitimacy, solving the SCS issue has become ever more necessary.

As noted above, unfettered access to the resources contained within and those being transported on the SCS are vital to the continuous growth of the economy. Controlling the SCS does more for the regime than ensure its economic growth. Nationalism plays a decisive role. It has been argued that modern Chinese nationalism is grounded in the affirmation of historical memory, a state-promoted history of "national humiliation," an experience during which foreign powers repeatedly took advantage of the militarily weaker regimes of the Qing Dynasty and the ROC to the social and economic detriment of the population. One prominent feature of period between the mid-19th century until after the Second World War was the seizure of territory by foreign powers, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, occupied by the United Kingdom and Imperial Japan, respectively. The effect on national prestige tends to create a sense of duty for the PRC regime to assert its claims to territorial sovereignty, and even to regain the so-called "lost territories."

As one strategic analyst has put it, "[b]y attaching the regime's legitimacy to its ability to protect and defend Chinese

sovereignty, the communist party leaders committed themselves to holding firm on their claims on Taiwan, the South China Sea islands, and other maritime territorial claims... Any Chinese leader, who suggests independence for these areas or gives up 'historical' claims, risks being ostracised for surrendering the "sacred motherland". Having wrapped themselves in the flag, the regime's leaders find it difficult to compromise on the issue of territorial integrity" (Dutta, 2005, 277-278).

Essentially, as a consequence of the combination of history and regime rhetoric, the PRC must display strength in its approach toward the SCS disputes to appease the nationalistic fervor from within, while also being able to physically secure these claims to ensure access to vital resources (Cronin, 2013). It can only do so through the establishment of international recognition, even if such recognition is given begrudgingly, of the PRC's sovereignty and military control over the SCS territories. These two factors ultimately determine the legitimacy of the ruling elite.

Increasing Control and Naval Capacity:

During the 1980s, PLAN Admiral Liu Huaqing dominated the debate on the future of the PRC's capacity to project naval power. Liu is often referred to as "China's Mahan" by foreign analysts. This label is given as Liu advocated for steady build up of naval capacity with an aim to control strategic islands, harbors, straits, lines of communication, and other valuable assets, as did US Navy Admiral

Alfred Mahan, in arguing that sea powers must to protect their coasts by committing considerable resources to naval power projection. To secure future economic growth, Liu argued that the PRC must buildup the PLAN so that it could possess the capacity to wrestle control of the so-called "first island chain," the islands from just South of Japan through those in the SCS, from "foreign powers." Moreover, because many of these islands were controlled by foreign military powers, the islands in this 'chain' could act in concert as a barrier to contain the PRC. For naval advocates like Liu, controlling this territory is necessary for the expansion of the PRC's outward-leaning economy and the protection of its sovereignty more generally (Holmes, Yoshihara, 2006, 81-83).

By 1992, the issue of access to and control of the first island chain became an issue of debate within the National People's Congress. Budgetary allocations, especially to the PLAN, were given in favor of ensuring development of oil fields and securing other interests in the SCS. During that government meeting, sovereignty over the SCS was coded into domestic law, in the Law of the Territorial Sea. Reflecting Liu's sentiment and that of the regime's attention to issues of sovereignty, at that year's congress, PLAN Admiral Zhang Lianzhong stated: "We will never forget that China was invaded several times by imperialist troops from the sea. The nation's suffering from lack of sea defence still remains fresh in our minds; and the history should not repeat itself" (Dutta, 2005,

280-281).

More recently, this sentiment is no longer discussed exclusively among the PRC elite and defense scholars. The intent of the PLAN, and PRC leadership in general, toward maritime policy has been shared through openly published government documents and state-owned media sources. Printed in multiple languages, a PRC defense white paper was published in 2004 that served to highlight the mission of the PLA in matters of international conflict and especially naval conflict. The paper reported that efforts to increase the PLAN's fleet by both number of ships and quality were underway. The stated goal was to increase the PLAN's capacity to such an extent that it could be capable of "winning both command of the sea and command of the air", as the "PLA Navy is responsible for safeguarding China's maritime security and maintaining the sovereignty of its territorial seas along with its maritime rights and interests" (PRC, 2004).

Since 2008, existing naval bases with access to the SCS, such as the Yulin Naval Base on the Southern coast of Hainan Island, have been receiving increasing funding and construction projects have advanced their capacity. Yulin Naval Base currently specializes in supporting nuclear submarines; however, construction is underway to allow it a capacity to dock aircraft carriers. In June of 2009, during an advisory meeting, PLA General Zhang Li promoted the construction of an airbase and seaport at Mischief Reef (Měi jì jiāo), an island of the Spratly group. At a distant 1110 kilometers

from Hainan Island, General Zhang advocated this plan as a means to project power deep into the SCS, controlling the Spratly Island group, and potentially increasing the range of the PLAN vessels so as to bypass the Straits of Malacca (Hsiao, 2009, 1-2). It should be noted that this island was previously occupied by the RP until shortly after the US military withdrawal; in 1994, the PLAN took possession of Mischief Reef during monsoon season, when RP forces regularly abandoned post (Dzurek, 1995, 67).

Echoing Admiral Liu's strategic vision, in recent years defense practitioners have advocated for an "anti-access" strategy. A lesson learned from the US Navy's involvement during the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crises led to the development of this unique asymmetrical strategy. In theory, the anti-access strategy consists of deploying anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), particularly the model Dong Feng 21D, capable of striking a moving target at a range greater than 1500 kilometers. If stationed where capable PLA bases are currently located, these ASBMs could prevent foreign ships from accessing the waters beyond most of the first island chain, including Taiwan and more than half of the SCS. In essence, the purpose of the ASBMs, also championed as "carrier killers," an obvious reference to the US Navy's favored vehicle of power projection, are to allow the PRC access to its perceived territorial waters while denying the interference of competing navies. (Erickson, 2009, 5-6).

The implications of the PRC's expansion of naval capacities into

the SCS and that of the deployment of its ASBMs has been cause for concern among regional powers and those with perceived interests in the SCS. These developments have been contemporaneous with the US's "rebalancing" toward Asia. The US's renewed emphasis on its policy toward Asia and Southeast Asia in particular has created further concern within the PRC leadership to increase its security efforts (Lee, 2012, 22).

**Chapter Three: A Case Study of the History and Strategy of
the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's in its Interactions with
the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea**

The Conflict of Vietnamese State Regimes with the PRC in the SCS:

In the early 1970s, the two states competing for control over the Vietnamese population each held their own distinct territories in the SCS, although each regime claimed the Paracel Island Group and the Spratly Archipelago. The state based in Hanoi could not allocate enough resources to physically occupy most of their claims; the government in Saigon garrisoned some islands of the Spratly Island Group and many of the Western portion of the Paracel Island Group, often referred to as the Crescent Group. (Garver, 1992, 1001-1003)

Power politics complicated the disputes during this time as the three great powers with forces deployed in Asia, the Soviet Union (USSR), the United States (US) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), sought a means to balance power in their favor. Tensions between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the PRC grew near the end of the Indochina Wars following the rapprochement between the US and the PRC in 1972. Concerned that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam would align itself with the USSR, the PRC leadership forecast that the Hanoi government would allow Soviet naval expansion via the islands in the SCS, further encircling the PRC. As a consequence, the PRC looked to capture the islands held by the weakening forces of

the Saigon government to avoid the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from recovering them after the seemingly inevitable fall of the Saigon regime. The Eastern portion of the Paracel Island Group, also known as the Amphitrite Group, was under the control of the PRC already by that time, with a significant military installation on Woody Island. The ideal geographic circumstance and unlikelihood of significant military resistance brought PRC leaders to conclude that capturing the Crescent Group would come at little cost. The slight cost of controlling the entire Paracel Group coupled with its strategic importance prompted the PRC to instigate an engagement by Saigon forces. (Garver, 1992, 1003-1004)

That the chairman of the PRC's Central Military Commission, Deng Xiaoping, personally oversaw the engagement speaks to how the Beijing government perceived the strategic importance of the Paracel Group. In late January 1974 the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) clashed with Saigon forces throughout the Crescent Group, and after several days of minor fighting, eventually forced the Saigon forces to abandon the Paracels altogether. However, only a year had passed before the Saigon regime fell. The Hanoi-based regime then moved to control its claims in the SCS. While the PRC had developed some infrastructure on the newly captured territory, not all islands were under the PRC's physical control. Six islands of the Crescent Group were seized and garrisoned by Hanoi forces in April of 1975. This effort to prevent the PRC from fully capturing the Paracel Island

Group would provide a foothold for future bargaining over the disputed islands, and would prove effective control. The following month, in May of 1975, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam published an official map that featured the Paracel and Spratly groups as exclusive Socialist Republic of Vietnam territory. (Garver, 1992, 1005)

The Hanoi regime publicly disputed PRC claims that both islands groups had been Chinese territory since ancient times; instead, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam promoted their own claim to historical jurisdiction. The SCS issue subsided for some time as Socialist Republic of Vietnam relations with the PRC became further complicated by the more important issue of Socialist Republic of Vietnam and USSR collusion. (Garver, 1992, 1006)

From 1976 through 1978, leading up to the brief war between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the PRC over interests in Indochina, both states were heavily involved in reconnaissance and surveying of both islands groups, and building infrastructure on their possessions. During and after the conclusion of the land conflict, the opposing sides engaged in an international campaign, amassing historical evidence to promote their position of sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly island groups. Skirmishes in the SCS did not cease after the war in early 1979. Multiple incidents occurred through 1982, typically featuring one party repelling the surveying or fishing vessels of the other. (Garver, 1992, 1007-1008)

From 1982 through 1987, there was relatively little conflict between the two states as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was heavily involved in its war with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. During this time, the PRC continued to survey the SCS with increasing emphasis on the Spratly Island Group. In response, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam began to occupy some Spratly features, while beginning to increase naval exercises. This escalation prompted the PRC to publicly claim that Socialist Republic of Vietnam forces illegally occupied over 20 Spratly features and were advancing to expand their control. It was not until PLAN vessels began patrolling the waters surrounding previously uninhabited features of the Spratly Island group that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and PRC forces clashed again. In 1988, at Johnson Reef, a small Spratly feature, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam had planned to establish an outpost, and upon attempted delivery of construction materials was turned back by PLAN warships. This escalation occurred, in part, because both claimant states were concerned by intelligence information that suggested the other would increase the extent of its occupation during the following typhoon season. (Garver, 1992, 1007)

After a naval confrontation ended in favor of the PRC, the reef, previously submerged during high tide, was transformed into an artificial island with a support base and helipads. (Rowan, 2005, 6)

The unique historical experience of the Vietnamese regimes with Chinese regimes, the PRC in particular, make it reasonable to

anticipate that the PRC will use force to manage disputes in the SCS. Considering this reality in Hanoi-Beijing relations coupled with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam military record of defeat against the PRC in all previous altercations, any attempts to settle these disputes would likely require external leverage.

The Oil Production Race:

After the hydrocarbon surveys published in the year 1989 estimated greater petroleum deposits in the SCS than all of the PRC's onshore petroleum deposits combined, the territorial disputes described above regained attention and conflict seemed imminent. This was particularly because these deposits occurred mostly within the EEZ of the Spratly Island Group. Perhaps as a response, by late 1989 Socialist Republic of Vietnam increased its naval presence and added to its garrisons in the Spratly Island Group, and began offshore petroleum extraction in the waters where it held control. The PRC leadership decided to cease military operations in the SCS in order to propose a regional dialogue concerning the disputes. Premier Li Peng announced the possibility of jointly developing the Spratly Island Group. Many international analysts, including some Vietnamese, saw this PRC policy shift as a short-term strategy to ease tensions arising from two major setbacks: the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Tiananmen incident. As this policy shift coincided with these events, it seemed natural to skeptics that the PRC sought to improve its international image. (Garver, 1992,

1015-1016) Partly as a result of the sudden position change by PRC leaders, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam did not respond in favor of the PRC proposal. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam did not remove military forces as suggested by Premier Li, and the regime's extractive efforts intensified. Additionally, rather than agreeing to dialogue over joint development, Socialist Republic of Vietnam oil production increased. (Oldgaard, 2003, 17)

By 1992, PRC leadership remarked how far along the Socialist Republic of Vietnam had come in its petroleum production efforts. At that time, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's offshore oil production was nearly double that of the PRC's (Dutta, 2006, 280). International disputes were raised again later in the year 1992, as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam publicly protested that the PRC had begun extracting oil in the Gulf of Tonkin. While this did not lead to military escalation, what amounted to a race to explore and extract oil resources from the contested territory began. The PRC could utilize US-based firms to harvest oil, even within the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's EEZ, with relatively little risk as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was negotiating the lifting of a US trade embargo and also wished to attract the assistance of US-based firms. Over the next few years, both the PRC and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam were leasing drilling rights to several US-based firms. In addition to US-based firms, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's joint venture with the Moscow, VietSovPetro, was still

functioning despite the regime change in Moscow. (Rowan, 2006, 5)

Increasing Militarily Capacity:

With the fall of the USSR, and the subsequent end of the economic and military aid it had received from that regime in 1992, the SRV had less capacity to protect its claims. Further increasing the power vacuum in the region in the PRC's favor, the US military fully withdrew its forces from the Philippine Islands by mid-December of 1992. In response to these dramatic shocks in the regional power structure, from 1994 through 1999 the SRV began a program to increase its military capacity while simultaneously reaffirming relations with the new regime in Moscow. (Tenneson, 2000, 204-205)

Purchasing equipment and arms from the Russian Federation was the main means by which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam increased its military capacity. Twelve fighter jets, two naval vessels with missile loads, a package of short-range surface-to-surface missiles, several combat helicopters and four radar stations were purchased during these years. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam also contracted with the Russian Federation for assistance in constructing two warships. Some purchased were also made with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the late 1990s. (Tenneson, 2000, 204-205)

Considering the power structure of Asia and the history of disputes with the PRC, a chief motive for the Hanoi regime to increase its military capacity was surely to respond to the sudden

disparity in power. Regardless of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's attempts to modernize its naval and air power, the PRC's capacity to project power into the SCS was far greater. Given that the PRC economy is larger, growing with greater intensity, and allocating more funds to its military, it is not feasible for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to compete in a modern arms race. Therefore, it would constitute a poor strategy to internally balance the PRC as the sole response. The Hanoi government cannot be sure that its interests in the SCS will be secure in the future without complicating the disputes further by including the interests of other powers, chiefly the US, the Republic of India and the Russian Federation. Moreover, by increasing military ties with powerful states and entangling their petroleum industries with extraction contracts within the disputed waters, the Hanoi regime has attained some leverage over the PRC with regard to the territorial disputes.

International Law and Multilateral Organizations:

To ensure that its perceived national interests are protected amid an increasingly powerful and assertive PRC, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has implemented a multifaceted hedging strategy.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam formally joined the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) forum in 1995, but has seen the organization do little to establish means by which associated states can hold one another accountable for actions taken in the SCS (Emmers, 2002, 2). Accordingly, the Socialist Republic of

Vietnam has also sought to promote its interests within the context of the UNCLOS. As all states with coasts along the SCS have ratified UNCLOS, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam assumes that this convention may be valuable in establishing an international norm applicable to its disputes in the SCS. (Tonnesson, 2000, 209-210)

Perceived Changes in the International Structure:

Despite nearly a decade during which the claimant states cooperated in multilateral organizations like ASEAN and experienced relatively little public dispute over claims in the SCS, in more recent years, claimant states have spurred renewed interest in the SCS issue. As was the case after the USSR regime was dissolved in the early 1990s, the uncertain position of the US and European economies coupled with the increasing scale of the PRC's role in regional trade at the time of the market panics in late 2008, changes have occurred in the regional power structure. This accounts for much of the media and scholarly attention toward the future implications of the PRC's increasing role in the international order, and more acutely in the region.

Consequently, since the US and European market panic in 2008 and subsequent economic depression as opposed to the relative stability of the PRC economy, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has sought to involve powerful states in its military affairs and resource development in the SCS. With more confident state officials in Beijing, leaders in Hanoi have been compelled to react so as to

prevent a deterioration of the currently profitable status quo in the SCS.

The Strategy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the SCS

Disputes:

The current Vietnamese state regime can draw from a short but significant history of strained relations with the PRC, especially with regard to territorial disputes. These experiences have taught the leadership in Hanoi that the PRC is willing to use force to settle disputes when it benefits them to do so. The past several years have brought about a rekindled interest in the SCS disputes, and therefore the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, as a relatively weaker state, must develop an asymmetric strategy to deter the PRC from using force to alter the status quo in the SCS. In attempting to achieve this end, the Hanoi regime has developed a multifaceted strategy consisting of internal balancing through an increase in military spending, interest-focused trade relations and external balancing. Hanoi has created an interest for several powerful states in a peaceful settlement or the maintenance of status quo in the SCS. This has occurred due to cooperation between Hanoi's state-owned firms and those of other states with regard to hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation, resulting in the establishment of an additional economic incentive for supra-regional states to encourage peace in the SCS. Hanoi has also developed military ties with great powers, mainly the US and the Russian Federation.

As mentioned before, since the mid 1990s, through oil production contracts with US-based firms and with Moscow via the joint venture, VietSovPetro, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has encouraged two great military and economic powers to invest their energy-related interests in the maintenance of status quo in the SCS. More recently, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has involved the Republic of India through a joint petroleum venture with an Indian state-owned enterprise, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). On 03 December, 2012, the Indian Navy Chief Admiral D.K Joshi remarked on the SCS disputes and the New Delhi regime's interest by asserting: "Not that we expect to be in those waters very frequently, but when the requirement is there for situations where the country's interests are involved, for example ONGC Videsh, we will be required to go there and we are prepared for that" (Keck, 2012.)

In addition to promoting the involvement of great powers through their interests in securing energy, the SRV has increased military ties with other states as well. Even before 2008, civil and military leaders representing the US and SRV visited each others' state capital regularly. On several occasions, US Navy warships have met a port of call at Ho Chi Minh City and other port cities controlled by the SRV. In 2009, the US began selling "non-lethal" military equipment to the SRV, and began negotiations concerning the joint development of a civilian nuclear program the following year (Weitz, 2011). Since 2010, the US and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have

conducted joint naval exercises. By the end of that year, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam invited foreign navies to use the Cam Ranh Bay Naval Base for peaceful purposes (Weitz, 2011).

While the Russian Navy continued good relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam after the collapse of the USSR, military cooperation between the Russian federal government and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has increased in this last decade. In late 2012, these two states began talks to establish a "material and technical support station" in Cam Ranh Bay. As cooperating with the US may serve to agitate the PRC, because the PRC perceives the US as its most significant external threat, working with the Russian Federation provides the Hanoi regime with leverage in the SCS dispute without instigating a relatively stronger response from Beijing (Li, 2012).

Moreover, it is clear that the SRV does not seek to balance the PRC's power projection solely by forming good relations with the US and its military. The Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are expected to continue to foster relations, while the SRV has extended an open-ended invitation to other navies to increase their ties with it.

Officials in Hanoi deny seeking an alliance with the US, but the historical ties between the regimes in Moscow and Hanoi justify current relations between the two states. Further aiming to appear non-aligned, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is not cooperating

with powerful states to the exclusion of the PRC. Over the past decade, military-to-military talks occur between the two states and joint military exercises have occurred. (Weitz, 2011)

The PRC, the US and the Russian Federation are the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's greatest trading partners (EC, 2012, 4) For trade reasons alone, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam would not benefit from the outbreak of conflict with the PRC over the disputed territories in the SCS. For this reason, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has produced a multifaceted hedging strategy in its response to the advancing military capacity of the PRC. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam cooperates militarily with the three most highly funded militaries (i.e. the US, the PRC, and the Russian Federation). The Socialist Republic of Vietnam's trade with two other great military powers (i.e. the State of Japan and the Republic of India) has increased over time. The Vietnamese state has also been successful with its attempts to increase the extent to which non-claimant states, namely the ROI, the US and the Russian Federation, have become invested in the energy resources deposited beneath the disputed territories. In essence, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has managed to maintain formally good relations with the PRC while simultaneously balancing its power projection in a few distinct ways.

Chapter Four: A Case Study of the History and Strategy of the Republic of the Philippines in its Interactions with the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea

The Republic of the Philippines: Early Claims in the SCS

As the Spratly Group was abandoned by all states and firms with claim after the Second World War, a Filipino businessperson settled eight of the Westernmost features in 1947. As a result of the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951, which forced the State of Japan to renounce ownership of its claims in the SCS, the private ownership of these features by this Filipino national became recognized by an international forum (Thang, Thao, 2012). By 1971, the president of the Republic of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, declared the eight Western features of the Spratly group as sovereign state territory. Shortly after, the state issued hydrocarbon drilling rights in the region and began plans for infrastructural development. In 1974, the eight Spratly features; Nanshan, Flat, West York, Northeast Cay, Thitu, Lankiam Cay, Loaita, and Commodore Reef, were deeded to the state. (Rowan, 2005, 3)

It was not until 11 June 1978, via Presidential Decree 1596, that legislation was passed coding the Western Spratly group features into domestic law. This decree established that the Republic of the Philippines claims the features' surfaces, seabed, subsoil, airspace, and the continental margin of the group. The regime had improved its

claims by building shelter for fishing crews who port in the area, constructing an airstrip on Thitu Island, and, most importantly, reiterating its claims during its signing of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In addition to the islands fully controlled by Manila's forces, the majority of the Western Spratly Island Group was also claimed. To Filipinos, the Western section of the Spratly Island Group, that amount to about fifty separate features, are known as the Kalayaans. (Storey, 1999, 96)

UNCLOS

UNCLOS and its Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ) provision provides the Republic of the Philippines with legal jurisdiction over much of the Western Spratly group and other claims in the Northern region of the SCS. Consequently, signing of the UNCLOS would give legal security to what were mostly geographic features already occupied by Filipinos and state forces. While there was little confrontation between the rulers in Beijing and Manila during the 1980s, their overlapping claims in the SCS would develop into a more pronounced dispute as the 1990s progressed. (Rowan, 2005, 3-4)

Joint Development and Good Relations

Save the experience of the Hanoi regime, throughout the 1980s there had been virtually no notable developments between claimant states. This is particularly true with regard to relations between the PRC and the Republic of the Philippines. In April of 1988,

President Corazon Aquino visited Beijing to meet with PRC officials on economic issues. While there Aquino discussed with the PRC's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, the topic of sovereignty over the Kalayaans. The two heads of state agreed to put aside the issue of sovereignty, as the PRC also claimed the Kalayaans by claiming all features of the Spratly Archipelago. In addition to leaving the issue of sovereignty to be handled peacefully at a later date, Aquino and Deng publicly agreed to engage in the joint development of both hydrocarbon reserves and management of fish stocks in the Spratly region. (Storey, 1999, 96-97)

The Departure of US Forces:

There has been a constant US military presence in and around the Philippine islands since the late colonial era. Immediately after formal independence from the US in 1947, the Republic of the Philippines established the Military Bases Agreement which allowed the US military to continue operations of their Philippine base installments. The two major US bases were Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. Along with bases on the islands of Okinawa and Guam, the Philippine bases were a significant feature of the US military grand strategy in the Asia-Pacific region during the Cold War era. Beyond supporting US military power projection, the bases provided external security for the Republic of the Philippines, allowing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to focus their efforts on internal security issues. In 1951, the two states signed

the Mutual Defense Treaty, which is still in force to this date.

(Storey, 1999, 102)

Events in the early 1990s dramatically changed the nature of the US military presence in the Asia-Pacific, and most pronounced in the Philippines. The changes in the international structure brought about by the fall of the Soviet Union led to a decreasing interest among US policy makers in allocating funds for the maintenance of some strategic Cold War projects. Among the population controlled by the Philippine state, resentment toward the US military presence grew to such an extent that in September of 1991, the state terminated the US lease of all bases. Earlier that year, the eruption of Mount Pinatubo rendered Clark Air Force Base unusable. Moreover, anti-US sentiment within the Philippines coupled with a lack of resources resulted in the complete withdrawal of all US military forces by the end of 1992. The power vacuum created by US force withdrawal was exacerbated by AFP budget cuts in the late 1980s. (Storey, 1999, 103)

The ASEAN Forum and PRC Domestic Law:

The year of 1992 was very eventful in the arena of SCS disputes. In February, the PRC passed the Law of the Territorial Sea, which established the PRC's claims to the territory within the SCS into domestic law. For the Republic of the Philippines and other claimant states, this PRC domestic law was provocative. Moreover, as the Republic of the Philippines and the PRC has proposed to shelve the sovereignty issue, this move could have been interpreted as a

betrayal of that agreement. In part as a response to this and as the conclusion of a general trend in multilateral efforts, some claimant states through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed the Declaration on the South China Sea nearly six months later. (Dutta, 2005, 282-284)

Foreign representatives from six Southeast Asian states, including the Republic of the Philippines, signed the Declaration on the South China Sea in July of 1992. The ASEAN member states sought to create a norm of behavior as each recognized that, "South China Sea issues involve sensitive questions of sovereignty and jurisdiction of the parties directly concerned", and hence all state signatories pledged to, "[emphasize] the necessity to resolve all sovereignty and jurisdictional issues pertaining to the South China Sea by peaceful means, without resort to force... [urge] all parties concerned to exercise restraint with the view to creating a positive climate for the eventual resolution of all disputes" (ASEAN, 1992.)

Dispute Developments in the 1990s

In May of 1994, the Philippine Department of Energy granted a contract to the Manila-based Alcorn Petroleum and Minerals and a US-based firm for exploration of the seabed southwest of Reed Bank, a feature of the Spratly Archipelago.. Upon learning of the project, PRC foreign ministers objected to the exploration as an intrusion of PRC sovereignty and a violation of the joint exploration agreements reached in 1988. After the PRC's protests, the brokers of the joint

venture offered an invitation to PRC state oil companies to become partner; Beijing declined. (Dutta, 2005, 283)

As the exploration project may have appeared to be the initial step in a unilateral attempt to exploit the hydrocarbons in the region, the PRC deployed a surveillance mission. It was discovered months later by a Filipino fishing crew that the PRC established an outpost on a previously unoccupied feature of the Spratly Archipelago called Mischief Reef. Despite being well within the Republic of the Philippine's EEZ, it has been argued that the leadership in Beijing felt compelled to occupy an island in the middle of Manila's claims so that PRC interests could be better assured. (Dutta, 2005, 283)

The official PRC position on the occupation of Mischief Reef asserts that structures built on this feature are there to provide shelter for Chinese commercial fishing crews. However, it was the detention of a Filipino fishing crew near Mischief Reef by PRC forces which first brought Manila to recognize the occupation. After the return of the fishing crew, Manila-commissioned reconnaissance aircraft observed the construction of bunkers and satellite equipment on Mischief Reef, infrastructure which does not align with the PRC's claim of use. Additionally, the reconnaissance mission spotted eight PLAN vessels paroling the waters around Mischief Reef. In response to this, the Republic of the Philippines' president Fidel Ramos protested that the occupation and use of Mischief Reef was: "inconsistent with international law and the spirit and content of

the 1992 Manila ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea to which both [the PRC and the Republic of the Philippines] are parties” (Storey, 1999, 97).

Having no capacity for military recourse against a more capable PLAN force, the Republic of the Philippines sought diplomatic dispute resolution with the PRC after discovering the Mischief Reef occupation. Both through the ASEAN meeting in Hangzhou in April of 1995 and through bilateral diplomatic talks, the state leadership in Beijing and Manila established a code of conduct by August of that year aiming to prevent further escalation. (Storey, 1999, 97)

At the same time Manila was engaging the PRC diplomatically, the state apparatus was passing legislation to increase its military capacity; the Senate of the Republic of the Philippines passed the AFP Modernization Act in February of 1995. This increase in military spending and planning occurred while state practitioners and scholars simultaneously engaged in debate over its relationship with the US. (Cruz De Castro, 2012, 68)

Diplomatic efforts failed only months after their conclusion; in January of 1996, Philippine Navy (PN) forces engaged with what were reported as PLAN warships in a brief fire exchange near Campones Island, an undisputed island near the main Philippine islands of Luzon. PLAN officials did not confirm these reports. More minor conflicts arose in 1997 and 1998, as Filipino fishing vessels were reportedly confronted by PLAN vessels near Scarborough Shoal

(Huángyán Dǎo), another disputed island not of the Spratly Archipelago. (Rowan, 2005, 3)

In addition to conflict, the Republic of the Philippines' intelligence sources claim that during the late 1990s the PRC advanced in their infrastructural developments on Mischief Reef. Philippine intelligence reported observing multistory buildings equipped with anti-aircraft guns, with rooftops purported to be have the capacity to serve as helipads. That these developments were in contrast to previous PRC statements concerning the island infrastructure's use and contrary to the various agreements for peaceful resolution caused much concern among Filipino scholars and state practitioners. (Rowan, 2005, 3) The official PRC position, which was not accepted by the state leadership in Manila, was that these installments on Mischief Reef and the aggressive tactics in general were carried out by low-ranking, nationalistic individuals within the PLAN "without the knowledge and consent of the Chinese government" (Storey, 1999, 100).

Recent Dispute Developments:

Since 2008, the Republic of the Philippines have officially reported seven separate confrontations between either PLAN forces or Chinese fishing vessels in the disputed territory of the SCS. For example: 02 March 2011, two PLAN vessels allegedly harassed a Manila-commissioned hydrocarbon exploration ship West of Palawan Island. The following month, the Republic of the Philippines issued a

complaint to the UN concerning the issue. Foreign ministers from Manila also sought to develop consensus within and support from ASEAN on the matter. Days after the Republic of the Philippines engaged in this multilateral dialogue with ASEAN members to promote a consensus concerning the escalating dispute, the Maritime Safety Administration of the PRC (CMSA) deployed their largest vessel to patrol the area, and Manila responded by confronting the CMSA vessel with a Philippine Navy destroyer. (Buszynski, 2012, 141-142)

While not escalating to the point of an exchange of fire, the Spratly region and Scarborough Shoal disputes which have taken place over the last five years have caused a dramatic diplomatic row between the two states. It seems that neither state is willing to act upon their strong rhetoric and threats of force. However, by May of 2012 PRC officials have begun to formulate economic sanctions. In the PRC leadership's cost-benefit analysis, ceasing imports of fruit grown on the Philippine islands coupled with banning the travel of Chinese tourists to the islands would be more suitable than military intervention. (Ambrosia, 2012)

The Republic of the Philippines' Focus on SCS Resources:

These recent disputes come, in part, as a reaction by the PRC to the increasing focus of the Philippine state on the resources within the disputed territory. Manila announced that it would offer fifteen hydrocarbon exploration contracts to foreign firms; the area to be explored is west of Palawan Island, into waters claimed by both

states. These contracts were part of a strategy to fulfill a domestic oil production target set by officials in Manila, the target being 60% of oil demand to be met by domestic production by 2011.

(Buszynski, 2012, 143)

As many of the clashes between the forces of the PRC, the Republic of the Philippines, or private entities based in those territories have involved fishing crews, the dispute over access to fish stocks has become an increasingly important issue, due in part to the significance of this resource to the populations of the claimant states. Zhang Hongzhou of the S. Rajartnam School of International Studies argues that "The root causes of fishing disputes between China and other countries are China's worsening supply and demand imbalances for aquatic products, and overcapacity of its marine catch sector" (Zhang, 2012, 20). This pressure has led the PRC to subsidize fishing in areas far off the PRC shores, such as near the Spratly Archipelago. The PRC state-sponsored fishing places further strain on the dispute between the two states, as the population under Manila's rule is also producing a demand for marine protein that is outstripping the available supply. (Beng, 2012)

The Strategy of the Republic of the Philippines in the SCS Disputes:

The perceived interests of the Republic of the Philippines in the SCS are clear. Access to what may be vast hydrocarbon resources, the harvesting of fish stocks and the maintenance of territorial integrity are the chief concerns when faced with opposition to claims

by the PRC. Attempting to settle the dispute between the two states peacefully has not resulted in any notable benefit for the Republic of the Philippines. As a consequence, it can be argued that Manila seeks to assert its claim with relevant international law and through a combination of internal and external balancing.

Fortunately for the Republic of the Philippines, most of the substantial features of the SCS that it claims, such as Reed Reef and Commodore Reef of the Kalayaans, are currently controlled by Manila or a sub-state administration, often the Provincial Government of Palawan. That the Republic of the Philippines can demonstrate effective control over many of its claims gives significant weight to those claims among the international community of states.

In addition to effective control, most of the SCS claims of the Republic of the Philippines are supported by the UNCLOS EEZ provision. The 200-nautical mile EEZ reaches beyond the majority of its claims. Palawan Island provides the Republic of the Philippines with an EEZ extending into the Spratly Archipelago, covering most of Manila's claims. The island of Luzon is within 200-nautical miles of Scarborough Shoal. Moreover, while the PRC's claims are mostly based on its unique interpretation of history with some effective control, the Republic of the Philippines enjoys more support from international law.

As has been historically true, the close alliance with the US still provides a security umbrella for the Republic of the

Philippines. Despite, the closing of US bases in 1991, the two states continue to uphold their 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. In addition to this legal commitment to mutual defense, since 2002 the US military has stationed a force of 600 troops to train and assist the AFP. Several thousand troops from both the US military and the AFP participate annually in war games on the islands of Palawan and Luzon, the two islands nearest to the territorial disputes in the SCS. (Mcindoe, 2012)

The military alliance between the US and the Republic of the Philippines allows Manila to balance PRC power projection. However, this balancing is imperfect due to the US interpretation of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. The treaty reads "an armed attack on either of the Parties [the US and the Republic of the Philippines] is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific." The Philippine state's leaders have petitioned to the US that the Kalayaan's and other disputed territories be included under the treaty. However, these efforts have failed as the US rebuttal notes that Manila was deeded the Kalayaans after the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty. (Dzurek, 1995, 68) In essence, only cases of PRC aggression against the Philippine Navy's ships or Filipino commercial vessels would trigger US military intervention.

As the disputed islands are not protected under the Mutual

Defense Treaty, the Republic of the Philippines has been allocating an increasing amount of resources to the advancement and modernization of its navy. The internal balancing efforts began with the AFP Modernization Act, passed in 1995. Section 3 of the document states: “[o]bjectives of the AFP Modernization Program. – The AFP modernization program shall be implemented in accordance with the following objectives: (a) To develop its capability to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic and to secure the national territory from all forms of intrusion and encroachment; (b) To develop its capability to assist civilian agencies in the preservation of the national patrimony, including the country's living and nonliving marine, submarine, mineral, forest and other natural resources located within its territory and its exclusive economic zone (EEZ)...” (Senado ng Pilipinas, 1995). A clear reference to matters pertaining to the SCS disputes, the document promotes increasing the AFP's capacity to protect the state's EEZ and all resources contained within.

More recently, in 2011 a spokesman for the AFP, Brigadier-General Jose Mabanta, publicly announced the purchase of a US-made Hamilton-class cutter. This vessel has been deployed specifically to patrol the waters around Spratly Archipelago. By the end of 2013, the Philippine Navy will receive two more retrofitted Hamilton-class cutters. (AFT, 2011) Recognizing that the Philippine Navy, having few large vessels, had not been able to operate effectively in the region

where it was needed the most, Rear Admiral Jose Luis Alano said "the country has no choice but to acquire ships like the US Coast Guard's Hamilton-class cutters because of seasonal changes in the South China Sea that make it treacherous to smaller vessels about half of the time each year" (Jaleco, 2012).

In August of 2012, the Republic of the Philippines began dialogue for the purchase of two large, anti-submarine frigates from the Italian Navy. Acquiring aircraft which can be deployed to the SCS is also a focus in Manila's modernization efforts; contracts for ten attack helicopters and multi-role fighter jets have been negotiated. In late 2012, commenting on the purchase of aircraft a spokesperson for the AFP stated: "We are also looking at other options for the lead-in but to be specific, based on our assessment, it is the T-50 of South Korea that is most advantageous to us in consideration to the obtaining situation in the West Philippine Sea [SCS] and what is affordable to us." (ABS-SBNnews, 2012)

Conclusion:

The disputes over claims in the SCS between the Beijing and Manila regimes have escalated recently due to the increasing importance of the resources located within the region. Historically there is little evidence that bilateral agreements concerning the territorial disputes between the two states will result in a resolution; neither has pressure from multilateral organizations like ASEAN done much to constrain the stronger state-actor. Consequently,

the Republic of the Philippines is employing a strategy of balancing and promotion of international law pertaining to territorial waters.

The EEZ provision of UNCLOS provides the Philippine state with a legal bases for the exploitation of both fish stocks and hydrocarbon deposits in the majority of its claimed waters. The international norm of effective control and jurisdiction is also in the Manila regime's favor. As much of Manila's claimed territories in the SCS are currently under its control, holding that position would provide both a strong argument under international law and a strong position vis-a-vis the attempts of another entity in the acquisition of territory or access to resources. For the maintenance of effective control, the Philippine Navy is in the process of modernization to expand its capacity to deter any incursions by PLAN forces or well-funded Chinese fishing crews. While the alliance with the US allows for relatively more security, it is clear that the internal balancing efforts taken by the Republic of the Philippines have included funding and modernizing the AFP to increase its capacity for protecting the external areas not included in the US treaty, namely, protecting Manila's claims in the SCS.

**Chapter Five: A Case Study of the History and Strategy of
the Republic of Singapore in its Interactions with
the Conflicts in the South China Sea**

The Republic of Singapore and Perceptions of Security:

The Republic of Singapore is a micro-state consisting of several islands at the Southernmost point of the Malay Peninsula. Historically, security has been a chief concern, and as a consequence the leaders of the Republic of Singapore have promoted the presence of the United States (US) military in the region as a hedge against regional powers. Despite this defense relationship and significant trade with the US over the decades, the island state has resisted aligning too heavily with any other state, including the People's Republic of China (PRC), which is also significant considering the ethnic demographics of the Republic of Singapore; over 70% of the population is ethnically Han Chinese. (Klingler-Vidra, 2012, 67)

Regardless of the rulers' desire to remain neutral, or unaligned, potential conflict could dramatically upset the outward-leaning Singaporean economy. Dependent on maritime shipping, the Republic of Singapore is especially vulnerable to any disruption regional conflict could cause. As the disputes in the South China Sea (SCS) are arguably one of the most likely causes for conflict in the region, Singaporean rulers are concerned about its capacity to seriously disrupt trade. In the year 2000, a defense paper was published by the Republic of

Singapore which stated: "In the 21st Century, Singapore's peace and prosperity will be more inextricably linked to that of the region... an unstable regional environment will not only set back our efforts to be a regional and global hub, but will also drive away investors" (Ministry of Defence (Singapore), 2000, 6).

The defense paper goes on to note that, "unresolved territorial and boundary issues in the Asia-Pacific region that could lead to conflict...the Spratly Islands, which are claimed wholly or in part by six parties... if not managed well, could escalate and have adverse consequences for regional stability." Exacerbating this potential conflict further, the paper explains that, "the competition for resources is likely to grow sharper as Asia-Pacific economic growth regains momentum. Resource scarcities could trigger future conflicts over access to or ownership of vital resources such as oil, energy, water and maritime resources." (Ministry of Defence (Singapore), 2000, 8)

While the Republic of Singapore already possesses the world's second busiest shipping port, as the economic climate in the region continues to improve, the shipping volume of goods and resources will only increase. With relatively no natural resources of its own, save its population and particular geographic circumstances that have made it an ideal trade hub and exporter of advanced consumer goods, the very survival of the Republic of Singapore is contingent on the unimpeded flow of shipping to and from its ports. (Chanlett-Avery, 2011, 2)

The Conundrum of Conflict Over Features in the SCS

The Republic of Singapore is not a claimant state with regard to the disputed territories in the SCS. Regardless, as the details above argue, the Singaporean stake in the peaceful resolution of disputes, or at least a continuation of the status quo, is quite high. Located at the easternmost point of the Straits of Malacca, a vital point of access to and from the SCS, the role that the Republic of Singapore's geographic circumstances would play in the event of conflict is taken into consideration by supra-regional powers. In a report on potential confrontation between US and PRC military forces centered on the Straits of Malacca, US Air Force (USAF) Major Lawrence Spinetta cited the advantages of utilizing the Singaporean ports and airstrips: "From a tactical perspective, Singapore is an ideal location" (Spinetta, 2006, 85). As a result of its vulnerability to disruptions in the flow of goods that would occur during times of conflict, coupled with the strategic advantages a great power could procure from a military relationship, the Republic of Singapore cannot help but be involved with the disputes in the SCS.

US-Singaporean Military Relations:

The Republic of Singapore maintained good relations with the US both in terms of trade and military ties during the Cold War. However, after the Soviet regime dissolved and the US military withdrew from the Philippine islands, Singaporean rulers were concerned with power vacuum that was created. In response to the changing international structure, Singaporean Air Force Brigadier General, Bey Soo Khiang remarked: "The reduction of the American

military presence in the Asia-Pacific region is likely to be destabilizing... We will then have a region fraught with potential for a competition for influence. To avert becoming another Kuwait, or suffering the tragedy of being bullied by a bigger and stronger power, countries will attempt to strengthen their national resilience"(Gallagher, 1994, 173)

More recently, in July of 2005 US President George W. Bush and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong established the Strategic Framework Agreement. This agreement, in addition to setting foundations for counter-terrorism initiatives, updated an earlier agreement between the two states, known as the Memorandum of Understanding. This partnership is part of the US military's places-not-bases strategy. In this context, places-not-bases constitutes a pseudo-military alliance in which the US military can access Singaporean facilities, thus negating the need for formal bases. In place since the year 1990, the Memorandum of Understanding assisted in the transition of US military forces in the post-Cold War Southeast Asian order. (Chanlett-Avery, 2011, 5)

The closing of the Subic Bay naval base increased the intensity of US Navy deployment to Singaporean ports in a rotational order. Once located at Subic Bay, the Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (CLWP) was relocated to Changi Naval Base in Singapore. CLWP is the logistic command and repair facility for the US Navy's Seventh Fleet, the fleet which patrols East Asia. This fleet is significant in that it would be the first to respond to any conflict in the region, as was the case in

Taiwan Strait Crises in 1996. In addition to servicing the US Navy's Seventh Fleet, since the year 1999 the Changi Naval Base has responded to port calls by nearly one-hundred US Navy vessels annually. By the year 2006, this Singaporean naval base had the capacity to dock the US Navy's largest aircraft carriers; Changi Naval Base is the only port in the region able to host US Navy aircraft carriers. (Chanlett-Avery, 2011, 5)

Most recently, a reaffirmation of ties between the US and the Republic of Singapore occurred during Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen's visit to the Pentagon in April of 2012. During this meeting between Ng and US defense officials, the success of the Strategic Framework Agreement of 2005 was noted, and dialogue concerning the strengthening of this agreement contained plans for more joint military exercises and the potential for a permanent deployment of four US Navy combat vessels at Changi Naval Base. (AsiaOne, 2012)

Other Military Relations:

While the US has been and remains the primary security partner of the Republic of Singapore, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) have been involved in military exercises with the forces of other states from the East Asia, including the PRC. Since 1971, the Republic of Singapore has been involved in the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA), which are a series of bilateral agreements between the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia. The FPDA requires the signatories to begin consultations under the circumstances of aggression or significant threat against Malaysia or the Republic of Singapore. (Gallagher,

1994, 181-182)

Trade and Diplomacy:

As a small state with a scarce supply of natural resources, the Republic of Singapore has engaged extensively in foreign trade relations. Singaporean rulers choose to diversify their trade relationships so as to avoid dependence on any state, especially the largest states such as the US and the PRC for with whom trade percentages are balanced near 10% of overall trade. The Republic of Singapore manages this, in part, through its strong support of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); over one-quarter of Singaporean trade occurs with other ASEAN member states. (Klingler-Vidra, 2012, 69-70)

Diplomatically, Singaporean political rulers have been pragmatic in their relations with influential powers. Opting not to create formal alliances has given the small state more room to maneuver. Ultimately, the Republic of Singapore, despite its close ties with the US and the PRC, seeks to be as independent as possible, forging complex relations with many states. Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew summed up this position, "We are connected with the world, we play a special role. And we are not going to be in anybody's pocket" (Klingler-Vidra, 2012, 67)

Strategy of the Republic of Singapore Toward Conflict in the SCS:

The Republic of Singapore perceives the disputes in the SCS differently than the claimant states. Its goals are not to obtain resources within the region via historical or legal claim. The Singaporean rulers view freedom of navigation as the chief

concern, for any impedance on commercial shipping through the SCS would surely disrupt the trade-dependent economy. To manage their stake in the SCS issue, the Republic of Singapore has developed relations with nearly all states in the region, and has hedged those relations by maintaining their close relationship with the US as a balance against regional powers. Affirming ties further, officials representing the Republic of Singapore have consistently advocated for US military presence in the region. In addition to external efforts, the SAF has established what is arguable the most technologically advanced military in Southeast Asia for the deterrence of threats to its sovereignty.

Singaporean rulers view the advance of PRC military capabilities, and the subsequent pressure brought to bear on the disputes with others who claim the geographic features and resources of the SCS, as a logical outcome of the PRC's economic growth. For this reason, the representatives of the Singaporean state have sought to minimize the concern regional states have developed over this issue. Through organizations such as ASEAN, the Republic of Singapore seems to seek a resolution to the SCS issue through diplomacy, regardless of which claimant states maintain effective control of the disputed territory. This position is evident in a statement made by the Republic of Singapore's Defense Chief Ng Eng Hen in April of 2012; Ng advised that: "[i]t is vital to evolve a regional security architecture which accommodates all stakeholders and rising aspirations. Relationships marked predominantly by strategic rivalry will

increase the risks of friction and conflict. We must therefore engage in ways to increase understanding and confidence among defence establishments" (AsiaOne, 2012).

As peaceful resolution to the SCS issues and the maintenance of status quo are the two circumstances under which the Republic of Singapore's interests are secure, regional stability is the foreign policy goal professed by state representatives. While building military-to-military ties with regional powers, including the PRC, the maintaining and strengthening of US military presence in the region has been facilitated by the Republic of Singapore as the most sure means of ensuring stability. It is clear that the Republic of Singapore, though unwilling to engage in formal military alliance, allows the US Navy and the USAF generous access to its infrastructure, and has increased these allowances as the disputes in the SCS have intensified. In addition to these allowances, the Republic of Singapore's foreign representatives have vocally advocated for US military presence. This trust in the US military is related to the perception that the historic presence of the US military in the region has promoted peace and prosperity. The common position of Singaporean rulers align with Joseph Nye's view toward the maintenance of a US military presence in East Asia, "[t]here are a number of reasons for East Asian prosperity... among the most important... are American alliances in the region and the continued presence of substantial U.S. Forces"; in essence, "[s]ecurity is like oxygen" (Nye, 1996). In April of 2012, Defense Chief Ng Eng Hen echoed this sentiment by

suggesting that the US foreign policy shift from the Middle East to Asia was "a useful reaffirmation" of the US position as "resident power" in the region (Bennett, 2012).

In the event that a conflict over the disputed territories in the SCS spreads or has greater implications, involving the Straits of Malacca for instance, the SAF has produced a strong deterrence and defensive position. Unlike most regional powers that can only purchase the majority of their advanced military equipment from foreign entities, the Republic of Singapore has a robust arms industry capable of producing naval vessels and refitting aircraft (Gallagher, 1994, 176). Singapore Technologies Engineering, the firm which accounts for the majority of Singaporean arms manufacturing, is the only defense manufacturer in Southeast Asia to be recognized in the top 100 defense manufactures list published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), and has frequently sold advanced armaments to states such as the United Kingdom (UK) (Economist, 2012).

Although domestic production of arms contributes greatly to the effectiveness of the SAF, this does not overshadow the importation of arms. Between the years 2005 and 2009, the Republic of Singapore increased arms imports by 146% (Weitz, 2011, 3). By the year 2012, this small state ruling over only approximately five million individuals became the world's fifth-greatest importer of arms, with 9.7 billion in imports when measured by US Dollars, which equates 24% of the state budget (Economist, 2012). Of the advanced technologies purchased for the

SAF, some have significant application to the SCS issue; for example, six E2C early warning aircraft have been purchased and deployed to monitor potential security risks, including the Spratly Archipelago. (Gallagher, 1994, 176-177)

Moreover, the overall security strategy employed by the Republic of Singapore toward the issues in the SCS consists of engagement, external and internal balancing. Singaporean foreign policy is one of engagement with the aim of encouraging cooperation between claimant states; as the accepted outcome of the disputes in the SCS are of less concern than regional stability, the Republic of Singapore has not taken sides, but rather insisted that all claimants behave responsibly. Military engagement with other states through bilateral action and the FPDA has bolstered the Republic of Singapore's position of neutrality and non-alignment, but actions and statements have made clear that the US-Singaporean military relationship is the top priority in external defense matters. The Republic of Singapore has plainly revealed its faith in the US military's capacity to prevent the PRC from utilizing its political and military size advantage over other claimant states with regard to the SCS issue. Due to the geographic position and relatively small size of the state, military expenditures have been greater than that of the average state since formal independence; however, the Republic of Singapore has been steadily increasing its military budget in concert with other states in the region as a response to the growing uncertainty that the SCS issue raises. As a result, it

possesses the most advanced and well-funded military force in Southeast Asia. In essence, if diplomacy and external balancing fails, it seems that the Republic of Singapore has done more to prepare for military conflict in the SCS than its neighboring states.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Changes to the International Order and the Objectives of the PRC:

The growing influence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was accepted during the period after the Asian financial crisis which began in the year 1997; as the PRC was less effected by the crisis and promoted a monetary policy that would not further strain the commercial circumstances in the region, many analysts were positive about role that the PRC would play in East Asia's future. This sentiment is embodied in the "good neighbor" policy that referred to the region-centered policy initiatives taken by the PRC, such as the PRC's participation in the ASEAN+3 summit and its pledge to a "partnership of goodneighborliness and mutual trust" (Lin et al. 2005,17).

Despite the PRC's new capacity to increase the stability and overall prosperity of the region, the state's ascendancy to great power status can be argued to have had altered the balance of power in the Asia-pacific region. This is especially true in Southeast Asia where there are no states in the region with the capacity to challenge PRC military dominance (Roy, 2005, 305). The global financial crisis that began in 2008, centered on the US and European markets, has been argued to have emboldened the PRC to formulate more assertive foreign policy. This began to raise concerns among the PRC's neighboring states, especially those with whom disputes with the PRC over territory have resulted in conflict, namely, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of the Philippines.

Generally, the economies of most East Asian states, including the Republic of Singapore and claimant states, as measured by Gross Domestic Product, have experienced substantial growth over the last decade. Although, due to the greater population size and economic production controlled by the PRC, a wide disparity in military expenditure has developed, with the PRC spending more than all other claimant states combined (SIPRI, 2012, 30).

In addition to concerns about the PRC raising its rhetoric over the disputed islands, the regional great power has simultaneously advanced its capacity to effectively control the South China Sea (SCS) through an increase in military spending, patrolling the sea, and the upgrading of civilian and military installations. A powerful example of these efforts is the establishment of Sansha Municipality (Sānshā Shì). Sansha Municipality, consisting of only an airstrip, a government building and residence for several hundred persons on a 13 square kilometer island of the Paracel Group, has been publicly declared as mechanism for increasing the PRC's control of the region. When speaking about the establishment of this new and southernmost manifestation of the PRC, Sansha Municipality Mayor Xiao Jie stated that it "a wise decision made by the party and the government of China to protect the sovereign rights of China, and to strengthen the protection and the development of natural resources" (Olesen, 2012).

While the PRC objectives have been laid bare, all states with interests in the SCS surely realize that these PRC objectives are supported by historical planning, driven by a need to establish

security, and made necessary by internal pressure. The vision of protecting the interests of the PRC from the pressure of foreign navies was given by PLAN Admiral Liu Huaqing; if the PRC is to secure its interests and protect its shores, it must have a navy capable of controlling the waters to the first island chain, which would encapsulate the PRC's claims in the SCS. The historical trend is moving in the direction of fulfilling the plan directed by Liu; the increases in PLAN capacity and installations such as Sansha Municipality are evidence of this. The motives behind the PRC's policy in the SCS can also be explained in terms of security concerns. In a report issued by the think tank, International Crisis Group, analysts note the security dilemma providing to PRC policy by stating: "China's claims to the South China Sea, along with its assertive approach, have rattled other claimants. But China is not stoking tensions on its own. South East Asian claimants, with Vietnam and the Philippines in the forefront, are now more forcefully de-fending their claims - and enlisting outside allies - with considerable energy" (ICG, 2012, 1). If other claimant states are attempting to secure their claims, this could disrupt the PRC's capacity to ensure the flow of resources it needs to maintain economic growth and future access to resources contained within the SCS. With regard to internal pressures, a decrease in economic growth may have a destabilizing effect on the political environment. As one facet of regime legitimacy rests on the further development of the economy, the PRC must maintain a semblance of control over a growing economy. The other facet of regime legitimacy rest on the satisfaction of

nationalist sentiment which has developed within the PRC territory. Essentially, the PRC must not be viewed as capitulating to its weak neighbors or the states which were once colonial masters in the region; thus the integration of territory that has been argued to be part of the historical Chinese motherland must be eventually achieved and strong stance on the PRC claims in the SCS maintained.

The Perceived Interests of the US in the South China Sea:

Since the year 1949 when the Truman Administration announced the US Defensive Perimeter Strategy in East Asia, East Asia has been formally declared an area of great security interest to the US, worthy of an intense military presence. The concept of a US Defensive Perimeter eventually came to encompass all territory and ocean East of a line drawn from the Aleutian island chain, through the Japanese Islands, the southern half of the Korean Peninsula, the island of Taiwan, and ending with the Philippine islands.

(Pearson, 2008, 49-50)

In addition to the historical justifications for military bases and various manifestations of military resource allocations throughout East Asia (i.e. Japanese Reconstruction post-occupation or Soviet Containment), the US perceives that the maintenance of stability in the region is of vital interest due to the extent to which East Asia and the shipping lanes of the SCS are a key component of global trade and economic prosperity. To ensure this end, the executive branch insists on a persistent military presence. Illustrating this position in the year 2011, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates at the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit

in Singapore championed US support for, "freedom of navigation and unimpeded economic development and commerce and respect for international law" (Miles, 2011). This commitment to freedom of navigation results in a commitment of US forces in the SCS region, however, challenges existed for the US as forces were busy with multiple occupations in central Asia at the time of formal policy creation. In 2011, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke to this reality: "[in the last] decade, our foreign policy has transitioned from dealing with the post-Cold War peace dividend to demanding commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. As those wars wind down, we will need to accelerate efforts to pivot to new global realities", and these new global realities are centered on the advancing capacity of the PRC in the international system, and East Asia in particular (Clinton, 2011). As the term 'pivot' was viewed as implying too much attention toward the PRC, policy of increasing US capacity in East Asia has become known as re-balancing (Brewster, 2012).

The re-balancing policy is designed to accomplish several forward-looking goals. Most germane to territorial disputes in East Asia, the US seeks to ensure allied states such as the State of Japan that it will uphold treaties. Rekindling the allegiance with such powerful states has implications for the continuance of trade as well as for balancing. Coupled with general concerns for trade stability in the region, re-balancing in Asia allows the US to protect its trade interests from the East coast of Africa to the West coast of North America. As US naval assets are equally distributed between the Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific waters

currently, the growing importance of East Asia has prompted the US leadership to shift the focus of US military presence from the relatively peaceful and secure Atlantic toward the contested areas in the SCS and Asia more broadly. (Brewster, 2012)

The Relative Power of Weaker Claimant States Vis-A-Vis the PRC:

The failure of bilateral agreements with the PRC compounded with the futility of multilateral efforts, such as those through the ASEAN forum, has brought the Hanoi and Manila regimes to strengthen their power in the face of the advancement of the PRC in the SCS. Both states have increased their military capacity with a focus on their navies' ability to defend the waters surrounding their territorial claims in the SCS. With an increase in the volume of imported naval equipment and selectivity toward the equipment and vessels well-suited for deployment in the SCS, it is clear that both the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of the Philippines see their place in a "self-help" international system in which internal balancing is necessary for to ensure their interests.

Despite efforts to increase their military power, both claimant states described in this paper do not possess an industrial base, let alone an economy, great enough to supply it with enough arms to deter the advance of the PRC. The security dilemma which has developed between the PRC and other claimant states has provoked the weaker state to enlist "outside allies" (ICG, 2012, 1). As the United States (US) military possesses the greatest naval power which currently patrols the SCS, and its political leaders have paid much attention to the importance of

peaceful resolution and freedom of navigation through the disputed waters, an allegiance with the US would be the most sensible means by which either state could externally balance the PRC. The Manila regime seems most keen to rekindle its military relationship with the US; the ease of this foreign policy decision comes in part due to the historical relationship between these two states and the defense treaty which is still active. The Hanoi regime, conversely, has not enjoyed a good relationship with the US historically. As a consequence, the extent to which it can use the US as an external balancer is limited. Regardless, it is clear by the recent military-to-military ties between the US and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that rulers in Hanoi would prefer to increase the role of the US in its SCS strategy. As the Socialist Republic of Vietnam cannot rely on the US, as does the Republic of the Philippines, it has created a more complex network of relationships in its efforts to balance PRC power. Hanoi has increased relations with the Russian Federation, as the military and diplomatic relationship between the them has been relatively cooperative since the founding of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

In addition to formal military ties, both the Hanoi and Manila regimes have engaged in contracting for oil reserve exploration and exploitation in the disputed waters of the SCS. For the Hanoi leadership, contracting with firms based in powerful states is a form of soft-balancing. Contracting with US, Russian Federation, and Republic of India-based firms, the Hanoi regime has created a web of interests in the hydrocarbon reserves which are arguably a

crucial component of the disputes. The most notable success of this contract-policy has been with the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). The contracts with this firm are deemed so valuable to the Republic of India, that the navy issued a threat of force if the supply were to be interrupted.

Hedging with External Balancing: Continuity in Regional Strategy

The uncertain future of the region plays a decisive role in how these states are aligning themselves. While attempting to balance the PRC, both internally and externally, the three states analyzed in this paper cannot fully do so to the detriment of relations with the PRC, although for the Manila regime, the relationship is deteriorating. As the PRC is the regions greatest trading partner and potential hegemon, for the sake of long-term considerations and for stability in the present, these states to engage with the PRC. While it cannot be considered bandwagoning, the Republic of Singapore, the Republic of the Philippines and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have maintained trading relations, and for the Singaporean and Vietnamese military, military exchanges with the PRC. In essence, Southeast Asian states cannot help but engage with the PRC due to proximity and level of economic integration, and for the sake of not alarming the PRC, thus avoiding a strong reaction, weaker states in the region generally choose not to increase ties with other powers to the complete isolation of the PRC.

The most common strategical choice for weaker states in the presence of a rising power, in the case the PRC, is to balance. As argued above, claimant states are employing balancing as their

chief mechanism to deter PRC aggression. The Republic of Singapore, while not a claimant state, is also supporting the involvement of a balancing power in the region. For historical reasons, a faith in the US military's capacity to keep peace in the region, Singaporean rulers have championed an increase of US military presence.

Moreover, it seems that weaker states have responded to the rise of PRC power and its implications for the SCS with a mixed strategy of trade relations, mild engagement, and hedging. This hedging is accomplished first through a prudent increase in the amount of internal power that a state can allocate to protect its interests in the SCS. This has been done through investing in application specific hardware that can be deployed to the SCS (i.e. early-warning aircraft, anti-submarine equipment, etc). However, as noted, procuring an adequate level of internal power to balance the PRC is not a realizable goal for any state in Southeast Asia. Consequently, the Hanoi, Manila and Singaporean regimes have sought military relations with great powers, with the US being chief among them, as a means to balance the growing military power of the PRC. As the maintenance of status-quo in the SCS is the most reasonable short-term goal, these relatively weaker states have been increasing their power and military relations to deter any aggression by the PRC, while engaging with the Beijing regime with an aim to postpone dispute resolution indefinitely.

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Index of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFP: the Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASBM: Anti-ship ballistic missiles
ASEAN: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone (UNCLOS Provision)
CLWP: the Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (US Navy)
CMSA: the Maritime Safety Administration of the PRC
DPRK: the Democratic People's Republic Korea
FPDA: the Five Power Defense Arrangements
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
ONGC: the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (a Republic of India SOE)
PLA: the People's Liberation Army
PLAN: the People's Liberation Army Navy
PN: the Philippine Navy
PRC: the People's Republic of China
ROC: the Republic of China
SAF: the Singapore Armed Forces
SIPRI: the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOE: State-owned enterprise
SCS: the South China Sea
UK: the United Kingdom
UN: the United Nations
UNCLOS: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US: the United States
USAF: the United States Air Force
USSR: the Soviet Union