Anchors Aweigh: The Case for Ending South China Sea Patrols

OBSERVATION 1. The DEFINITIONS. 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the structure of the Status Quo. We offer two key facts 3

FACT 1. Artificial Islands. 3

China is extending its South China Sea military presence by developing artificial islands 3

FACT 2. US Navy Patrols 4

The US Navy conducts large operations to challenge Chinese sovereignty 4

OBSERVATION 3. The PLAN, to be implemented by the President and the Defense Department 4

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS 4

JUSTIFICATION 1. Ineffective and Outmatched 4

China has the capability to easily knock out the US naval presence in the South China Sea 4

JUSTIFICATION 2. Expensive Unwinnable Arms Race 5

US Naval buildups encourage an expensive and futile arms race 5

JUSTIFICATION 3. Improve US-China relations. We see this in 2 sub-points 5

A. The Link: China-US relations are at a tipping point over confrontation in the South China Sea 5

B. The Impact: US ­China cooperation is key to solving global problems 5

JUSTIFICATION 4. Risk of War. We see this in 2 sub-points: 6

A. The Link: US Military operations are likely to provoke a violent response rather than prevent one 6

B. The Impact: Political, economic and military disaster. Our objective should be to reduce tension and avoid conflict with China 6

OPENING QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY 7

Over-Involvement puts America in a lose-lose situation 7

We need to choose cooperation over conflict 7

Every reason to avoid needless conflict with China 7

INHERENCY 7

America has a Carrier Strike Group (CSG) deployed in the South China Sea 7

Current Policy: US Navy South China Sea patrols will continue near disputed islands 8

US Sec. of Defense will increase naval patrols in South China Sea 8

Chinese Island Claims 8

New Surveillance Deployments 8

Chinese claim of “historical rights” 8

JUSTIFICATIONS 9

Ineffective & Outmatched 9

Chinese South China Sea presence unpreventable – in the long run, there’s little or nothing we can do 9

Current Strategy is failing to pressure China toward more reasonable policies 9

Freedom of Navigation Operations don’t really accomplish much. 9

US deployment has limited effect: China believes we won’t go to war, so military moves have no credibility 10

American military gestures are fruitless – we need negotiations instead 10

Expensive Arms Race 10

Unwinnable and expensive naval arms race – US carriers can be easily neutralized by China 10

US aircraft carriers in the South China Sea have great expense and high vulnerability to new Chinese capabilities 10

Expensive naval patrols in the South China Sea – a cost we shouldn’t be bearing. $6.5 million/day 11

Arms Race Escalation 11

Example of military cost: 47 Poseidon Aircraft for $9.9 billion 11

US/China Relations 11

Provocative naval patrols do no good, they only increase mistrust 11

South China Sea is not as important as improving US-China relations 12

South China Sea has big implications for US/China cooperation on global issues. 12

Speaking in context of tensions in the South China Sea [note title of the article]… 12

We need cooperation, not confrontation, over South China Sea 12

Poseidon Surveillance craft increase tensions 12

War Risk 13

A/T “Economic ties prevent US/China war” – Economic ties didn’t prevent World War 1 nor World War 2 13

Stepping back from confrontation reduces risk of war and can lead to peaceful resolution 13

South China Sea patrols are bad: They complicate US-China relations and make peaceful settlement more difficult 13

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 14

South China Sea patrols raise tensions, don’t help allies, and won’t resolve maritime disputes 14

Chinese-American Relations are vital to avoid catastrophe 14

Mutually Assured Restraint eases tensions 14

US reduction of advanced arms would de-escalate arms race 15

Empathetic Policy avoids Conflict 15

DISAD RESPONSES 15

“Failing to uphold international law / Freedom of navigation” responses 15

Hypocrisy: Can’t claim US concern for international law when we haven’t ratified UN Conference on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) treaty 15

Insisting on clear boundaries would only increase conflict 16

“China Power Grows” responses 16

Remote deterrence would check Chinese expansion and give space for them to make diplomatic concessions 16

“US Allies Threatened by China” responses 16

We can maintain our commitment to the allies without provoking China by positioning of US forces 16

Regional Allies can defend themselves 17

Regional allies have no incentive to act while under US protection 17

US leading role in the South China Sea is unnecessary: Our allies should do most of the work, since they have the most at stake 17

US shouldn’t make promises to allies about contested territorial claims. Turn: Promotes allies’ assertiveness 17

“US National Security At Risk” responses 18

Islands do not imperil US security and aren’t worth the risk of confrontation 18

China is not a threat to the US globally 18

Anchors Aweigh: The Case For Ending South China Sea Patrols

By Eric Meinerding

Professor Nick Gvosdev a the US Naval War College said it best in 2014 QUOTE:

Whenever possible, the ethical statesman operating within the parameters of the current international order should “seek a way out of conflict within the constraints of the Westphalian system,” noted Stanley Hoffmann in his 1987 Morgenthau Memorial Lecture at Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.[1](https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/#fn-7255-1) Correspondingly, one can argue that policymakers should act from a related ethical obligation not simply to seek a way out from conflict but, whenever possible, take the steps that might avoid precipitating a conflict in the first place, creating the conditions for diplomacy which, as Hans Morgenthau observed, is the only “way to moderate power and pursue peace.” [[1]](#footnote-1)

It is because my partner and I believe in ethical, peaceful foreign policy that we stand Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policies toward the People’s Republic of China.

OBSERVATION 1. The DEFINITIONS.

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2016* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy)

**Substantia**l:  “c :  [important](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/important), [essential](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/essential)” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2016*<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial>*)*

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the structure of the Status Quo. We offer two key facts

FACT 1. Artificial Islands.

China is extending its South China Sea military presence by developing artificial islands

NEW YORK TIMES 2015 (journalist Derek Watkins). “What China Has Been Building in the South China Sea.” October 27th, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/30/world/asia/what-china-has-been-building-in-the-south-china-sea.html?_r=0>

The speed and scale of China’s island-building spree have alarmed other countries with interests in the region. China [announced](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1273370.shtml) in June that the creation of islands — moving sediment from the seafloor to a reef — would soon be completed. Since then, China has focused its efforts on construction. So far it has constructed port facilities, military buildings and an airstrip on the islands, with recent imagery showing evidence of two more airstrips under construction. The installations bolster China’s foothold in the Spratly Islands, a disputed scattering of reefs and islands in the South China Sea more than 500 miles from the Chinese mainland.

FACT 2. US Navy Patrols

The US Navy conducts large operations to challenge Chinese sovereignty

David Larter 2016. (Reporter for the Navy Times) “The U.S. just sent a carrier strike group to confront China” March 4th, 2016. <http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/03/stennis-strike-group-deployed-to-south-china-sea/81270736/>

"Clearly the Navy and DoD is demonstrating its full commitment to presence and freedom of navigation in the region,” said Jerry Hendrix, a retired Navy captain and analyst with the Center for a New American Security in Washington, D.C. “With the full carrier strike group and the command ship, the Navy is showing the scope of its interests and ability to project presence and power around world.” The destroyer Lassen's vaunted October patrol within the 12-mile limit of China's man-made South China Sea islands was the first challenge of China's sovereignty over the Spratly Islands since Chinese land-reclamation projects began there.

OBSERVATION 3. The PLAN, to be implemented by the President and the Defense Department

1. End Naval Patrols. The US military will no longer deploy Naval craft within the Exclusive Economic Zone of mainland China nor within 12 nautical miles of contested islands within the South China Sea without permission from the Chinese Government.
2. End Air Reconnaissance. The US will no longer deploy reconnaissance aircraft missions over contested islands within the South China Sea.
3. Plan mandates are suspended in case active hostilities break out between Taiwan and Mainland China or between China and the US or any of its regional allies.
4. Timeline will be immediately upon an Affirmative Ballot
5. Funding from existing budgets with net decrease in spending due to canceled activities.
6. All Affirmative speeches may clarify the plan.

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS

JUSTIFICATION 1. Ineffective and Outmatched

China has the capability to easily knock out the US naval presence in the South China Sea

Peter Coy 2015 (Economics editor for Bloomberg Businessweek) “Conflicting claims over the sea don’t have to degenerate into open hostility.” October 29th, 2015. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-10-29/cooling-off-the-south-china-sea> (brackets added)

China’s military buildup seems to have emboldened some people, including [US-educated Chinese venture capitalist Eric] Li. He says the U.S. is “punching above its weight” in the South China Sea, because if push came to shove, China could knock out U.S. aircraft carriers with cheap and abundant missiles. That attitude appears to extend to the top. Asked why China is asserting itself now, a senior official in the People’s Liberation Army, who spoke on condition of not being named, said, “I think I should be frank: Because China now has the capability.” The same official said there are more than 200 other land features in the South China Sea that China could seize and build on within 18 months, implying that the U.S. should be grateful for China’s forbearance.

JUSTIFICATION 2. Expensive Unwinnable Arms Race

US Naval buildups encourage an expensive and futile arms race

Tom Mockaitas 2016. (International security analyst/military historian. Prof. of History, DePaul University, teaches counter- terrorism courses around the world). “Avoid Confrontation in the South China Sea” February 28th, 2016. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-mockaitis/avoid-confrontaiton-in-th_b_9343508.html>

Unfortunately, the U.S. has few options to counter Chinese moves in the region. It must not provoke a military confrontation with Beijing. A large buildup of U.S. forces would only encourage Chinese counter measures and could lead to an expensive and futile arms race.

JUSTIFICATION 3. Improve US-China relations. We see this in 2 sub-points

1. The Link: China-US relations are at a tipping point over confrontation in the South China Sea

Fu Ying and Dr. Wu Shicun. 2016. (Fu Ying is the Chairperson of Foreign Affairs Committee of China’s National People’s Congress; Chairperson of Academic Committee of China’s Institute of International Strategy, CASS; and Specially Invited Vice Chairperson of China Center for International Economic Exchanges. Wu Shicun is Ph.D Senior Research fellow and President of the National Institute of the South China Sea Studies.) “South China Sea: How We Got to This Stage.” May 9th, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/south-china-sea-how-we-got-stage-16118?page=show>

The South China Sea issue has become one of the major irritants in the China-US relations in recent years, over which the public opinion in the two countries are very critical of each other. There are even frictions in the sea between the two navies. The South China Sea seems like an outlet for the rivalry and confrontation that are building up of late between China and the US. As a result, the two sides seem to be reassessing each other’s intentions on a strategic level. The latest rhetoric is about “militarizing the South China Sea”, and on the part of the US, announcements to carry out “freedom of navigation operational assertions”. Hawkish voices are growing louder in both sides of the Pacific. Such frictions surrounding the South China Sea are leading to further strategic mistrust and hostility. The American scholar David M. Lampton was straightforward when he observed worriedly in reference to the existing situation, “A tipping point in the U.S.-China relations is upon us”. It is obvious that the South China Sea issue is a major catalyst for the troubled China-US relations, if not the key contributing factor.

1. The Impact: US ­China cooperation is key to solving global problems

US­China Smart Power Commission 2009 (chaired by former US Defense Secretary William Cohen and Maurice R. Greenberg), March 2009, "Smart Power in US­China Relations," CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090309_mcgiffert_uschinasmartpower_web.pdf>

The evolution of Sino­US relations over the next months, years, and decades has the potential to have a greater impact on global security and prosperity than any other bilateral or multilateral arrangement. In this sense, many analysts consider the US­China diplomatic relationship to be the most influential in the world. Without question, strong and stable US alliances provide the foundation for the protection and promotion of US and global interests. Yet within that broad framework, the trajectory of US­China relations will determine the success, or failure, of efforts to address the toughest global challenges: global financial stability, energy security and climate change, nonproliferation, and terrorism, among other pressing issues. Shepherding that trajectory in the most constructive direction possible must therefore be a priority for Washington and Beijing. Virtually no major global challenge can be met without US­China cooperation.

JUSTIFICATION 4. Risk of War. We see this in 2 sub-points:

1. The Link: US Military operations are likely to provoke a violent response rather than prevent one

Bonnie S. Glaser 2015. (Senior Advisor for Asia, Center for Strategic and International Studies). “Armed Clash in the South China Sea.” April 2015. <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883>

The most likely and dangerous contingency is a clash stemming from U.S. military operations within China's EEZ that provokes an armed Chinese response. The United States holds that nothing in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) or state practice negates the right of military forces of all nations to conduct military activities in EEZs without coastal state notice or consent. China insists that reconnaissance activities undertaken without prior notification and without permission of the coastal state violate Chinese domestic law and international law.

1. The Impact: Political, economic and military disaster. Our objective should be to reduce tension and avoid conflict with China

Abraham Denmark 2015 (senior vice president for political and security affairs at the National Bureau of Asian Research; quoted by journalist Peter Rugh) 6 Feb 2015 “We Asked a Military Expert What Would Happen if the US Went to War with China” <http://www.vice.com/read/we-asked-a-military-expert-what-would-happen-if-the-us-went-to-war-with-china>

A conflict between China and the US of any significance would be disastrous for both sides—politically, economically, and militarily. It's something both sides have a profound interest in avoiding. The Chinese would have to take very seriously the implications of entering into a conflict with the US military. The US military is by far the most capable military that has ever been seen in human civilization. A war is not something to be taken on lightly. From an American point of view, our objectives are always to reduce tension, avoid conflict, and reduce the potential for miscalculation.

2A EVIDENCE: End South China Sea Patrols

OPENING QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Over-Involvement puts America in a lose-lose situation

Anatol Lieven 2012 (Professor in the War Studies Department of King’s College London and a senior fellow of the New America Foundation in Washington) June 12th, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/13/opinion/avoiding-a-us-china-war.html>

But if the United States were to commit itself to a military alliance with these countries against China, Washington would risk embroiling America in their territorial disputes. In the event of a military clash between Vietnam and China, Washington would be faced with the choice of either holding aloof and seeing its credibility as an ally destroyed, or fighting China.

We need to choose cooperation over conflict

FU Ying and WU Shicun. 2016. (Ying is the Chairperson of Foreign Affairs Committee of China’s National People’s Congress; Chairperson of Academic Committee of China’s Institute of International Strategy, CASS; and Specially Invited Vice Chairperson of China Center for International Economic Exchanges. WU Shicun is Ph.D Senior Research fellow and President of the National Institute of the South China Sea Studies.) “South China Sea: How We Got to This Stage.” May 9th, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/south-china-sea-how-we-got-stage-16118?page=show>

The future direction of trend would very much depend on the perceptions and choices of the parties involved. If they choose to cooperate, they may all win. If they choose to confront each other, they may only head for impasse or even conflict and no one can benefit totally.

Every reason to avoid needless conflict with China

Charles V. Peña 2016. (Senior Fellow at the American Security Foundation. He had over twenty-five years of experience as a senior analyst and program manager supporting Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. Former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute). “War in the South China Sea: Not Worth It.” April 21st, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/war-the-south-china-sea-not-worth-it-15875>

There is also this to consider: China is America’s second-largest trading partner, and the United States is China’s largest trading partner. In other words, both countries have every reason to avoid needless confrontation.

INHERENCY

America has a Carrier Strike Group (CSG) deployed in the South China Sea

David Larter 2016. (Reporter for the Navy Times) “The U.S. just sent a carrier strike group to confront China” March 4th, 2016. <http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/03/stennis-strike-group-deployed-to-south-china-sea/81270736/>

The carrier John C. Stennis, two destroyers, two cruisers and the 7th Fleet flagship have sailed into the disputed waters in recent days, according to military officials. The carrier strike group is the latest show of force in the tense region, with the U.S. asserting that China is militarizing the region to guard its excessive territorial claims. Stennis is joined in the region by the cruisers Antietam and Mobile Bay, and the destroyers Chung-Hoon and Stockdale. The command ship Blue Ridge, the floating headquarters of the Japan-based 7th Fleet, is also in the area, en route to a port visit in the Philippines. Stennis deployed from Washington state on Jan. 15.

Current Policy: US Navy South China Sea patrols will continue near disputed islands

Arshad Mohammed and J.R. Wu 2016. (Mohammed is a foreign policy for Reuters. Wu is a foreign policy reporter). “U.S. expects 'very serious' talks with China after missile reports.” February 17th, 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/southchinasea-china-missiles-idUSKCN0VP2UT> (“Paracels” are disputed islands in the South China Sea)

The United States also has conducted sea and air patrols near artificial islands that China has built in the Spratly islands chain farther south in the South China Sea, including by two B-52 strategic bombers in November. Obama said the United States planned to continue such patrols in the name of freedom of navigation.

US Sec. of Defense will increase naval patrols in South China Sea

Haotian Qui 2016. (PhD Candidate in International Relations at Georgetown University). “The Line That America Shouldn't Cross in the South China Sea.” June 18th, 2015. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-line-america-shouldnt-cross-the-south-china-sea-13138?page=show>

U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter recently proposed [more-assertive military options for the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea (SCS)](http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-military-proposes-challenge-to-china-sea-claims-1431463920). The new policy would dispatch U.S. naval ships to within 12 nautical miles (nm) of China-controlled reefs, currently being "upgraded" into islands, and conduct flyovers with navy surveillance aircraft.

Chinese Island Claims

Dr. Andrew S. Erickson 2015. is an associate professor in the Naval War College’s China Maritime Studies Institute. He serves on the *Naval War College Review*’s Editorial Board. “AMERICA’S SECURITY ROLE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA” Presented in a Hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, 23 July 2015. <https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/9bb6b27b-509c-44c9-bd32-8967632939ee/Americas-Security-Role-in-the-South-China-Sea.aspx> (brackets in original)

Beijing’s stance regarding South China Sea sovereignty issues is categorical and steadfast. In a position paper rejecting outright the Philippines’ recent initiation of international arbitration regarding their bilateral dispute, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs states, China has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea Islands (the Dongsha [Pratas] Islands, Xisha [Paracel] Islands, the Zhongsha Islands [whose main features include Macclesfield Bank and Scarborough Shoal] and the Nansha [Spratly] Islands) and the adjacent waters.

New Surveillance Deployments

Geoff Dyer 2015. (Journalist for the Financial Times specializing in US foreign policy. Former China and Brazil Bureau Chief). “US steps up South China Sea surveillance.” December 8th, 2015. <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/12/08/us-steps-up-south-china-sea-surveillance.html>

The US is to deploy P-8 Poseidon surveillance aircraft to Singapore for the first time in the latest response to China and its growing military presence in the South China Sea.

Chinese claim of “historical rights”

Julie Makinen 2016. (Reporter for the LA Times Beijing Bureau) June 9th, 2016. “Beijing vows to ignore tribunal's ruling on South China Sea. But can it?” <http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-china-hague-tribunal-20160609-snap-story.html>

The Philippines has asked the tribunal to rule on the validity of China’s claim to territory that falls within what China calls the “nine-dash line,” a U-shaped area of demarcation dipping far off the mainland’s southern coast, sweeping east of Vietnam, down near Malaysia and Brunei, and then looping back up west of the main Philippine islands. The loop encompasses the Paracel and Spratley islands and Scarborough Shoal. Though China has never explicitly defined what privileges it believes it has within the nine-dash line, it has asserted “historic rights” in the area.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Ineffective & Outmatched

Chinese South China Sea presence unpreventable – in the long run, there’s little or nothing we can do

William G. Frasure 2016. (Professor of Government at Connecticut College. He has worked and lived intermittently in Hanoi since 1997, teaching, lecturing, directing academic exchanges, and occasionally consulting for various Vietnamese government agencies and ministries.) May 3rd, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/u-s-credibility-in-the-south-china-sea/>

The persistent increase in China’s intimidating presence in the South China Sea has the effect, intended or not, of raising doubts about America’s course there. The appearance grows that the U.S. may, for a while, offer encouragement to its allies, actual and would-be, but can do little or nothing to actually prevent China’s military dominance of the maritime region. Such is likely to continue to be the case, especially if China exercises self-discipline and patience, moving small step by small step, refraining from ugly provocations or attempts to humiliate the U.S.

Current Strategy is failing to pressure China toward more reasonable policies

William G. Frasure 2016. (Professor of Government at Connecticut College. He has worked and lived intermittently in Hanoi since 1997, teaching, lecturing, directing academic exchanges, and occasionally consulting for various Vietnamese government agencies and ministries.) May 3rd, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/u-s-credibility-in-the-south-china-sea/>

By drawing closer to the U.S., China’s Southeast Asian adversaries seek to acquire some degree of balance in the region, so as to dissuade China from brazen invocations of military might to enforce its sweeping claims. Which is to say, they hope a more visible, active American military presence will deter China. There is no doubt that the United States has, for the time being, adequate military resources to more than balance anything China can put into the South China Sea. But, as aficionados of the Cold War will recall, a fundamental component of deterrence is credibility. It is one thing to possess assets, it is another to convince an adversary of your willingness to use them, and another still to convince friends of your willingness to use them on their behalf. A further step requires that your friend believes that your adversary is intimidated by your posture. It is this last element that seems to be at play in the South China Sea. The United States seeks to assure the Philippines and Vietnam, perhaps others, that China will be sufficiently intimidated by growing U.S. involvement to move toward more reasonable, more accommodating policies, and accept the need to resolve the conflict through serious multilateral negotiation. There is little to indicate that the approach is working.

Freedom of Navigation Operations don’t really accomplish much.

Harry J. Kazianis 2016. (Executive Editor of *The National Interest*; also a Senior Fellow for Defense Policy at the [Center for the National Interest](http://www.cftni.org/) and a Senior Fellow at the China Policy Institute (non-resident) “For the US, Sailing Around the South China Sea Is Not Strategy” June 2nd, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-us-sailing-around-the-south-china-sea-not-strategy-16429>

So far, the only US action that demonstrates resolve has been to conduct three so-called “freedom of navigation” operations, or FONOP – suggesting to Beijing that Washington [will](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-australia-southchinasea-carter-idUSKCN0S72MG20151013) “fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows.” Unfortunately for the United States, while such actions show some sort of response, they do nothing to slow China’s attack on the status-quo – and fall far short of a much needed comprehensive strategy. As Washington simply sails around the South China Sea, Beijing presses ahead with installing ever-more advanced pieces of military hardware and could be planning to reclaim the strategically important Scarborough Shoal next. Beijing’s new islands and equipment are permanent; while America’s naval excursions are temporary, the vessels destined to float away.

US deployment has limited effect: China believes we won’t go to war, so military moves have no credibility

**Analysis: This creates a seeming contradiction between “increased risk of war” and “war can’t happen,” but it’s a problem for the Negative, not the Affirmative. If current policies increase the risk of war, that’s bad. But if the US really would never go to war over South China Sea islands, then the entire Status Quo policy is just a bluff that will be revealed some day as a big lie. China already believes it is. So either we do go to war, and that’s bad. Or we would never go to war, and status quo policy is a big lie and waste of money.**

Tom Mockaitas 2016. (International security analyst/military historian. Prof. of History, DePaul University, teaches counter- terrorism courses around the world). “Avoid Confrontation in the South China Sea” February 28th, 2016. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-mockaitis/avoid-confrontaiton-in-th_b_9343508.html>

How then should the U.S. respond? The much-vaunted “re balancing” of U.S. forces to Asia has been limited by the conflict in the Middle East and the resurgence of Russia. Deploying more naval and air assets to the region would, in any case, have limited effect. The U.S. will not go to war over the South China Sea, and China knows it. That realization reduces the credibility of any American military moves.

American military gestures are fruitless – we need negotiations instead

[*Harry J. Kazianis*](http://cftni.org/expert/harry-kazianis/) *2016. (Senior Fellow for Defense Policy at the Center for the National Interest and Senior Editor for The National Interest magazine.)* “*What China will do if it loses the South China Sea arbitration ruling.” July 1st, 2016.* <http://atimes.com/2016/07/what-china-will-do-if-it-loses-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-ruling/>

“Experience has shown that China’s foreign policies and legal positions are not written in stone. An increasingly vigorous effort by those nations that have their own maritime disputes with China to promote their settlement through diplomacy that includes resort[ing] to international legal institutions may ultimately prove effective,” New York University law professor Jerome A. Cohen, an expert on law in East Asia, said in April [during a lecture](http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/20/a-big-ruling-on-the-south-china-sea-nine-dash-line-draws-near-beijing-philippines-japan-taiwan-aftermath/) at Taiwan’s Soochow University. “If all affected nations in the East China Sea and the South China Sea ‘bombard the headquarters’ in Beijing by taking their international law disputes with China to international legal institutions — rather than relying exclusively on endless, fruitless, and unequal bilateral negotiations or American military gestures — there is hope for a turnabout.”

Expensive Arms Race

Unwinnable and expensive naval arms race – US carriers can be easily neutralized by China

Tom Mockaitas 2016. (International security analyst/military historian. Prof. of History, DePaul University, teaches counter- terrorism courses around the world). “Avoid Confrontation in the South China Sea” February 28th, 2016. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-mockaitis/avoid-confrontaiton-in-th_b_9343508.html>

Beijing is developing anti-ship missile with the American Navy in mind. Such a weapon could neutralize U.S. carrier battle groups. Trying to outmatch China in its own backyard will not work. Attempting to do so would merely add to rising defense costs.

US aircraft carriers in the South China Sea have great expense and high vulnerability to new Chinese capabilities

Haotian Qui 2016. (PhD Candidate in International Relations at Georgetown University). “The Line That America Shouldn't Cross in the South China Sea.” June 18th, 2015. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-line-america-shouldnt-cross-the-south-china-sea-13138?page=show>

The conflict will be limited, as it is safe to assume that the overall strategic balance between the two countries ultimately forestalls an all-out war. It will be a surface battle mainly involving relatively low-value naval assets, because the involvement of airpower will be limited. [Neither the United States, nor China are geographically positioned well to provide long-range, land-based fighter escorts](http://www.janes.com/article/42322/chinese-j-11bh-aggressive-with-usn-p-8a-says-dod). The United States could choose to station a Carrier Strike Group in the area, but regularly deploying a big deck in the SCS entails much greater expenses and risks, due to China's rising anti-intervention capabilities. [Whether an anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) doctrine exists in China](https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/sites/twq.elliott.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Fravel_Twomey.pdf) is an open question. But China clearly possesses capabilities, including a strengthening submarine fleet, airpower and mid-to-long-range missiles, to threaten American airpower projection.

Expensive naval patrols in the South China Sea – a cost we shouldn’t be bearing. $6.5 million/day

Charles V. Peña 2016. (Senior Fellow at the American Security Foundation. He had over twenty-five years of experience as a senior analyst and program manager supporting Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. Former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute). “War in the South China Sea: Not Worth It.” April 21st, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/war-the-south-china-sea-not-worth-it-15875>

Still, Washington sent the USS John C. Stennis carrier strike group (CSG) to the South China Sea as a show of force. The acquisition cost of a CSG is on the order of $13 billion, and it costs $6.5 million a day to simply operate a CSG. These are not costs the United States should bear.

Arms Race Escalation

Arshad Mohammed and J.R. Wu 2016. (Mohammed is a foreign policy for Reuters. Wu is a foreign policy reporter). “U.S. expects 'very serious' talks with China after missile reports.” February 17th, 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/southchinasea-china-missiles-idUSKCN0VP2UT> (“Paracels” are disputed islands in the South China Sea)

Mira Rapp-Hooper, a South China Sea expert from the Center for a New American Security, said it was not the first time China had sent air-defense missiles to the Paracels, but the latest move appeared to be a response to U.S. patrols.

Example of military cost: 47 Poseidon Aircraft for $9.9 billion

United States Department of Defense 2015. “The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a Changing Environment” August 14th, 2015. <http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_SecuritY_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF>

Finally, the Department of Defense is investing in critical enabling capabilities, including persistent, deep-look ISR platforms that will provide us with greater situational awareness and early warning of potential crises in the maritime domain. The U.S. Navy is procuring 24 E-2D Hawkeye carrier-based airborne early warning and control aircraft, and as stated in the President’s most recent budget submission, investing $9.9 billion over the next four years to procure the final 47 P-8A Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, many of which will be deployed to the Asia-Pacific region. The Department is also making substantial investments to develop the MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial system, which will provide broad area situational awareness to our operational commanders. The first deployment of MQ-4Cs will arrive in the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) in FY 2017.

US/China Relations

Provocative naval patrols do no good, they only increase mistrust

Haotian Qui 2016. (PhD Candidate in International Relations at Georgetown University). “The Line That America Shouldn't Cross in the South China Sea.” June 18th, 2015. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-line-america-shouldnt-cross-the-south-china-sea-13138?page=show>

Since the EP-3 collision in 2001, the United States and China have been involved in numerous incidents in the region. Military encounters between the two are multidimensional in the SCS, occurring on fronts like airspace, surface, subsurface and cyberspace. Confrontations sometimes involve paramilitary assets such as armed fishing boats. Ideally, the encounters should make both Washington and Beijing more experienced in how to interact with one another in a rational and predictable way. Unfortunately, a robust and mutually respected code of conduct has not been established. The actions such as going public on patrolling-warning interactions or potentially sending vessels across the 12-nm line will do no good amid already high mistrust between the two countries.

South China Sea is not as important as improving US-China relations

Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt 2014. (US Navy (Ret.) is a senior fellow with CNA Strategic Studies. Over his 15 years at CNA, as both a vice president and now as a fellow, he has had a number of papers dealing with security issues in Asia published.) “The South China Sea: Assessing U.S. Policy and Options for the Future.” November 2014. <https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2014-U-009109.pdf>

Finally, China is very important to the resolution of other critical issues that matter to Washington, such as ending the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs; addressing climate change; maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait and East China Sea; and promoting trade, investment, and economic growth. This mix of important issues provides a broader context for U.S.-China relations, and makes it clear that the South China Sea should not become the central strategic element in the overall U.S.China relationship.

South China Sea has big implications for US/China cooperation on global issues.

Speaking in context of tensions in the South China Sea [note title of the article]…

Bonnie S. Glaser 2015. (Senior Advisor for Asia, Center for Strategic and International Studies). “Armed Clash in the South China Sea.” April 2015. <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883>

The stakes and implications of any U.S.-China incident are far greater than in other scenarios. The United States has an abiding interest in preserving stability in the U.S.-China relationship so that it can continue to secure Beijing's cooperation on an expanding list of regional and global issues and more tightly integrate China into the prevailing international system.

We need cooperation, not confrontation, over South China Sea

*Fu Ying and Wu Shicun. 2016. (Ying is the Chairperson of Foreign Affairs Committee of China’s National People’s Congress; Chairperson of Academic Committee of China’s Institute of International Strategy, CASS; and Specially Invited Vice Chairperson of China Center for International Economic Exchanges. WU Shicun is Ph.D Senior Research fellow and President of the National Institute of the South China Sea Studies.) “South China Sea: How We Got to This Stage.” May 9th, 2016.* <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/south-china-sea-how-we-got-stage-16118?page=show>

Fourth, China and the US share common strategic interests in maintaining the freedom and safety of navigation, and promoting stability and prosperity in the South China Sea area. China and the US and are not disputing parties to each other. Therefore, the two countries should avoid the trap of security dilemma and misunderstandings by engaging in dialogues and clarifying each other’s intentions. China and the US need and should be able to work towards cooperation. As China is growing into a maritime power, the wider seas and oceans in the world are increasingly important to its development as well as its global cooperation.

Poseidon Surveillance craft increase tensions

Geoff Dyer 2015. (Journalist for the Financial Times specializing in US foreign policy. Former China and Brazil Bureau Chief). “US steps up South China Sea surveillance.” December 8th, 2015. <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/12/08/us-steps-up-south-china-sea-surveillance.html>

The P-8s, which the US has also flown from Japan and the Philippines, operate an advanced radar system and have become a central part of the US strategy to mark a greater presence in the South China Sea. China has complained about the presence of the spy aircraft in the region, including issuing a series of warnings to a P-8 in May that was flying over contested islands and had a crew from CNN onboard.

War Risk

A/T “Economic ties prevent US/China war” – Economic ties didn’t prevent World War 1 nor World War 2

Col. Mike Pietrucha 2015 (US Army; was an instructor electronic warfare officer in the F-4G Wild Weasel and the F-15E Strike Eagle; as an irregular warfare operations officer, two additional combat deployments in the company of U.S. Army infantry, combat engineer, and military police units in Iraq and Afghanistan ) “The Economics of War with China: This Will Hurt You More than It Hurts Me” 4 Nov 2015 <http://warontherocks.com/2015/11/the-economics-of-war-with-china-this-will-hurt-you-more-than-it-hurts-me/>

In 1909, Sir Norman Angell published the [*Great Illusion*](https://archive.org/details/cu31924007365467)*,* arguing that European economic interdependence effectively rendered militarism obsolete. Five years later, the tinderbox that was early 20th-century Europe exploded into the most devastating war in over 250 years. Even when the Great War ground to a halt, it set the stage for a worse one only 21 years later. The willingness to slug it out with economic partners was not limited to Europe, either. In the Pacific, the United States was [Japan’s largest trading partner](http://historybusiness.org/2573-japanese-trade-with-the-united-states.html) in 1940 when Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. In 1940 the trade volume between the United States and Japan had been on a [steady increase](http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/cg/ir/college/bulletin/e-vol.9/06Ryohei%20Nakagawa.pdf) throughout the Great Depression despite the U.S. embargo on scrap metal. In fact, Japan set itself on a course for war with virtually all of its major trading partners, more or less simultaneously.

Stepping back from confrontation reduces risk of war and can lead to peaceful resolution

Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/> (brackets added; Etzioni is a PhD in sociology, professor of International Affairs at George Washington Univ., and former Senior Advisor to the White House)

MAR [Mutually Assured Restraint] is based on [Dr. Amitai] Etzioni’s longstanding contention that “psychological gestures initiated by one nation will be reciprocated by others with the effect of reducing international tensions” and that “this tension reduction, in turn, will lessen the probability of international conflicts and wars.”It seeks to build on what has been described as the “Kennedy experiment”—a period of time between June and November 1963 when unilateral measures were taken, first by the United States, then by the Soviet Union, to step back from their confrontational posture, which had nearly brought the world to the brink of nuclear war the previous year. These actions validated the assertion that creating the psychological space for the relaxation of tensions could lead to more substantive agreements designed to channel the U.S.-Soviet rivalry into more peaceful directions. While this fragile détente did not survive the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the overthrow of Nikita S. Khrushchev, elements of this approach resurfaced in the early 1970s and characterized the successful winding down of the cold war by the late 1980s.

South China Sea patrols are bad: They complicate US-China relations and make peaceful settlement more difficult

Doug Bandow & Eric Gomez 2015 (Bandow – JD from Stanford Univ. law school; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan. Gomez – Master of Arts in International Affairs from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M Univ.; research associate at Cato Institute) 22 Oct 2015 Further Militarizing the South China Sea May Undermine Freedom of Navigation <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/further-militarizing-south-china-sea-may-undermine-freedom-navigation> (brackets added)

The idea that FONOPS [freedom of navigation operations] will rein in Chinese actions in the SCS [South China Sea] is appealing. Administration critics charge that China has been making all the right moves to bolster its territorial claims while the United States [sits on its hands](http://breakingdefense.com/2015/09/us-has-steered-clear-of-chinese-artificial-islands-in-south-china-sea/). However, FONOPS will not resolve SCS territorial disputes. In fact, this approach likely will complicate U.S.-Chinese relations and make a peaceful settlement of territorial disputes more difficult.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

South China Sea patrols raise tensions, don’t help allies, and won’t resolve maritime disputes

Doug Bandow & Eric Gomez 2015 (Bandow – JD from Stanford Univ. law school; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan. Gomez – Master of Arts in International Affairs from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M Univ.; research associate at Cato Institute) 22 Oct 2015 Further Militarizing the South China Sea May Undermine Freedom of Navigation <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/further-militarizing-south-china-sea-may-undermine-freedom-navigation> (brackets added)

For instance, at the Shangri La Dialogue, [Carter declared](http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/606676/iiss-shangri-la-dialogue-a-regional-security-architecture-where-everyone-rises), “There should be no mistake: the United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.” A FONOP in the SCS would back his rhetoric. However, if China uses the U.S. action as a rationale for maintaining or increasing the rate of island reclamation then friendly states likely would feel even more threatened. This would counteract the FONOP’s original purpose and would likely push the United States and China into a dangerous spiral, requiring more shows of force to reassure allies against an assertive China acting aggressively in response to American shows of force. Chinese behavior in the SCS is a legitimate concern for the United States, but Washington should realize that this dispute is unlikely to be resolved with military power. Indeed, problems will only grow if both Washington and Beijing keep poking each other in the eye. Maintaining peace in the SCS instead requires the United States and China to work together to resolve precisely these kinds of contentious issues.

Chinese-American Relations are vital to avoid catastrophe

Anatol Lieven 2012 (Professor in the War Studies Department of King’s College London and a senior fellow of the New America Foundation in Washington) June 12th, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/13/opinion/avoiding-a-us-china-war.html>

As White argues, such a concert of power between the United States, China and regional states would be so difficult to arrange that “it would hardly be worth considering if the alternatives were not so bad.” But as his book brings out with chilling force, the alternatives may well be catastrophic.

Mutually Assured Restraint eases tensions

Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/> [Brackets add for clarification]

Given that the United States is not prepared to depart the Asia-Pacific region and that China is not going to voluntarily halt its rise as a great power, is there a policy prescription that can avoid turning predictions of a Sino-American clash into a self-fulfilling prophecy? Amitai Etzioni [Israeli-American Sociologist] believes so. Drawing upon his earlier body of work developed at the height of the cold war—most notably The Hard Way to Peace (1962) and Winning Without War (1964)—Etzioni proposes what he terms a strategy of “mutually-assured restraint” (MAR) wherein “both sides limit their military build-up and coercive diplomacy as long as the other side limits itself in the same way—and the self-restraints are mutually vetted.

US reduction of advanced arms would de-escalate arms race

Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/>

Etzioni maintains that a redeployment would not expose the American strategic position in the Western Pacific to unnecessary risk—even though it could complicate matters for U.S. strategic planners—while other means of technical collection would make up any of the gaps in intelligence that termination of the existing ship and air patrols would entail. Etzioni hopes that MAR might also make Beijing more willing to negotiate verifiable limits on the number of anti-ship missiles and other pieces of military equipment that it currently deploys in an offensive capacity against Taiwan and other neighbors. This, in turn, could be followed by a U.S. commitment to keep its most advanced weapons systems out of the region. Over time, it could lead both countries to agree to significant limitations on various types of arms produced or deployed by either country, which in turn could help promote strategic stability.

Empathetic Policy avoids Conflict

Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/>

Robert Merry has argued that, in order to prevent conflict from erupting between the United States and China, the Obama administration (and subsequent U.S. presidential teams) ought to “follow a carefully-calibrated policy in which America shows some empathy to legitimate Chinese security concerns while also demonstrating that it will not simply wink at bellicose actions. Areas of cooperation should include proposing clearer rules of the game. A détente also needs to be encouraged between China and its neighbors.”[17](https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/#fn-7255-17) The ethical tightrope that U.S. policymakers must walk is how to steer away from the apparent inevitability of conflict with a rising China without sacrificing U.S. interests or the interests of allies. The mutually-assured restraint approach may offer such a way forward.

DISAD RESPONSES

“Failing to uphold international law / Freedom of navigation” responses

Hypocrisy: Can’t claim US concern for international law when we haven’t ratified UN Conference on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) treaty

Bonnie S. Glaser 2015. (Senior Advisor for Asia, Center for Strategic and International Studies). “Armed Clash in the South China Sea.” April 2015. <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883>

First, the United States should ratify UNCLOS; though it voluntarily adheres to its principles and the Obama administration has made a commitment to ratify the convention, the fact that the United States has not yet ratified the treaty lends credence to the perception that it only abides by international conventions when doing so aligns with its national interests. Ratifying UNCLOS would put this speculation to rest. It would also bolster the U.S. position in favor of rules-based behavior, give the United States a seat at the table when UNCLOS signatories discuss such issues as EEZ rights, and generally advance U.S. economic and strategic interests.

Insisting on clear boundaries would only increase conflict

Prof. Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/>

Ranged against these pessimists, such as John Mearsheimer, who see conflict (and with it a heightened risk of an armed clash) as inevitable, are the optimists (such as Aaron Friedberg), who maintain that a clash is indeed avoidable, and who argue for a robust U.S. “forward presence” and deep engagement in the area that will convince China of the futility of competing with the United States militarily and instead encourage accommodation. Some, such as Joseph Bosco, even argue for the United States to end its policy of “strategic ambiguity” and define clear red lines in the region so that China will not make any miscalculations that might lead to conflict. However, as former U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley noted in a speech in Beijing in 2013, this approach still carries the risk of a “potential confrontation between the militaries of the two countries—particularly their naval forces.”

“China Power Grows” responses

Remote deterrence would check Chinese expansion and give space for them to make diplomatic concessions

Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/> (Etzioni is a PhD in sociology, professor of International Affairs at George Washington Univ., and former Senior Advisor to the White House) (brackets added)

Skeptics of the mutually-assured restraint approach fear that it calls for a U.S. withdrawal from East Asia, leaving a vacuum that many believe a rising China would be only too happy to fill. [Dr. Amitai] Etzioni has always believed, however, that the modern-day revolution in military affairs—including recent developments in transport, logistics, and targeting—has given the United States a unique luxury: the ability to engage in what he termed sixty years ago as “remote deterrence.” In contrast to any other great power, only the United States is able to place over 100,000 troops 8,000 miles from home and sustain them indefinitely under combat conditions; only the United States can launch aircraft from its own territory to strike targets anywhere on the globe; only the United States can surge massive naval task forces into any maritime domain in any part of the world. As a result, Etzioni has maintained, the United States can afford to withdraw forces that are currently forward deployed in the Western Pacific in order to give Beijing the psychological space to, in turn, make diplomatic concessions—without significantly jeopardizing America’s overall strategic position should China fail to respond to such overtures.

“US Allies Threatened by China” responses

We can maintain our commitment to the allies without provoking China by positioning of US forces

Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/>

Similarly, the United States could maintain its commitments to defend allies in Asia, but acknowledge the existence of forward zones (both at sea and on land) where U.S. forces would not be stationed, thereby providing a degree of breathing room. The German precedent may also prove to be quite useful if and when the question of reunification on the Korean peninsula becomes a realistic prospect, since Beijing would look askance at any settlement that opened the possibility of U.S. forces being able to move directly to the Sino-Korean border. Indeed, China intervened in the Korean War not after the south had been liberated but once U.S. forces reached the Yalu River. MAR, in the end, is not a sure thing but a calculated risk—but one which, in Etzioni’s opinion, has a good chance to de-escalate a possible clash.

Regional Allies can defend themselves

Charles V. Peña 2016. (Senior Fellow at the American Security Foundation. He had over twenty-five years of experience as a senior analyst and program manager supporting Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. Former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute). “War in the South China Sea: Not Worth It.” April 21st, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/war-the-south-china-sea-not-worth-it-15875>

Indeed, U.S. allies in the region are more than capable of underwriting military expenditures for their own collective security needs. The combined economy of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia—all of whom have a stake in what happens in the South China Sea—is on the order of $9 trillion, which compares favorably to China’s $14 trillion economy. Arguably, Thailand (GDP $1 trillion) and India (GDP $2.4 trillion) also have an interest.

Regional allies have no incentive to act while under US protection

Charles V. Peña 2016. (Senior Fellow at the American Security Foundation. He had over twenty-five years of experience as a senior analyst and program manager supporting Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. Former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute). “War in the South China Sea: Not Worth It.” April 21st, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/war-the-south-china-sea-not-worth-it-15875>

Unfortunately, those countries have no incentive to shoulder that burden as long as the United States is willing to bear the expense and incur the risk via forward deployed forces. Just as is the case in Europe, U.S. allies in East Asia have minimal incentive to pay the costs for their own security and will free ride as long as Uncle Sam foots the bill. With [over $19 trillion](http://www.usdebtclock.org/) in national debt—China being largest foreign debt holder, owning about $1.2 trillion of U.S. debt according to the Department of Treasury—the United States cannot afford to protect and police the entire world, particularly when American interests are not directly at stake.

US leading role in the South China Sea is unnecessary: Our allies should do most of the work, since they have the most at stake

Charles V. Peña 2016. (Senior Fellow at the American Security Foundation. He had over twenty-five years of experience as a senior analyst and program manager supporting Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. Former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute). “War in the South China Sea: Not Worth It.” April 21st, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/war-the-south-china-sea-not-worth-it-15875>

The U.S. concern over Chinese actions revolve around the some [$5 trillion](http://www.pacom.mil/Media/SpeechesTestimony/tabid/6706/Article/671265/statement-before-the-senate-armed-services-committee.aspx) in oceanic commerce that passes through the South China Sea and the need for unimpeded navigation that is crucial to the economies of Japan, South Korea, Australia and other countries in the region. If China does pose a threat to trade routes (itself a questionable proposition given China’s position as both a supplier and consumer in international trade), why should the United States—whose homeland is thousands of miles away—take the lead and risk military confrontation with China? As an option of last resort, the America can play a supporting role, but the primary responsibility should rest with those nations in East Asia who are more directly threatened and stand to lose the most.

US shouldn’t make promises to allies about contested territorial claims. Turn: Promotes allies’ assertiveness

Doug Bandow 2013. (Senior Fellow at the CATO institute) “Avoiding Conflict in the South China Sea.” January 4th, 2013. <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/avoiding-conflict-south-china-sea>

The U.S. should not bias the outcome by promising to defend contested territorial claims. Former Undersecretary of Defense Michele Flournoy acknowledged the risk of the Philippines mistaking U.S. support for an opportunity to be much more assertive in staking their claims. America’s objective should not be to ‘defeat’ Beijing, but to promote an outcome which leaves the entire region more peaceful and stable.

“US National Security At Risk” responses

Islands do not imperil US security and aren’t worth the risk of confrontation

Charles V. Peña 2016. (Senior Fellow at the American Security Foundation. He had over twenty-five years of experience as a senior analyst and program manager supporting Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security. Former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute). “War in the South China Sea: Not Worth It.” April 21st, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/war-the-south-china-sea-not-worth-it-15875>

Ultimately, China’s man-made islands in the South China Sea do not imperil U.S. national security. Certainly, they are not worth the possibility of U.S.-Chinese military confrontation. Instead of being the first line of defense and directly involved in a regional dispute, the United States would be better off untangling itself from a needless entanglement.

China is not a threat to the US globally

Anatol Lieven 2012 (Professor in the War Studies Department of King’s College London and a senior fellow of the New America Foundation in Washington) June 12th, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/13/opinion/avoiding-a-us-china-war.html>

The danger of conflict does not stem from a Chinese desire for global leadership. Outside East Asia, Beijing is sticking to a very cautious policy, centered on commercial advantage without military components, in part because Chinese leaders realize that it would take decades and colossal naval expenditure to allow them to mount a global challenge to the United States, and that even then they would almost certainly fail.

1. Nick Gvosdev 2014. (Professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, a columnist for World Politics Review, and a blogger at Ethics & International Affairs) “The Ethics of Avoiding Conflict with China.” March 16th, 2014. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/the-ethics-of-avoiding-conflict-with-china/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)