



# Rivalry in South China Sea

Surya Bhan Prasad

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, M.G.K. Vidyapith, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

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**Abstract** - The South China Sea covers an area of about 3885000 square kilometers, with an average depth of about 1310 meters and situated at south region of China. Economically and politically point of view it is very important because About 40% of the maritime trade of most countries goes through the South China Sea. Other than this, there is a lot of potential for crude oil found in this area and there are about 30000 types of fish in this area and this part is also in accounts for about 15% of fish production of the world. China wants to monopolize this area, while the border countries adjoining this area also show their control over some parts of this region, which is one of the main reasons for the dispute. Because this region is very important from the economic and political point of view, so America cannot let this region go under the control of any one country. Apart from this, Japan was once occupied here, so Japan also has a lot of interest in the area. For all these reasons, this area has been a matter of rivalry and the possibility of war in this area remains constant.

**Keywords** : South China Sea, Cause of rivalry, Coastal Countries, It's politically and economically importance.

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## Introduction

It is part of the Indo-Pacific Ocean and about 40% of the maritime trade of most countries goes through the South China Sea, that is why it is very important from the commercial point of view. It is an important economic and political sub-region. Along with this, fishes are found in abundance in this area and this area is very important in terms of fish trade. Relations between China and the US have become more bitter in Hall's decades. In some areas both the countries have been able to cooperate with each other like trade, space projects, cyber security etc. Nevertheless, tensions between the US and China regarding the South China Sea are not taking the name of decreasing, due to which the possibility of military conflict between China and America in the region has increased. Japan and South Korea depend mostly on the South China Sea to supply and export their fuel and raw materials.

Deep and small features in the South China Sea Competing claims to territorial sovereignty have long been a source of tension and mistrust in the region. The South China Sea is also important to Australia from the point of view of trade and navigation. Australia has been conducting aerial surveillance operations in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean called Operation Gateway since 1980. While the US maintains regular surveillance in this area by its Navy.

There was a naval exercise organized by the US and China in the disputed area as seen in July 2020. The main reason for the dispute in this area is also that the border countries adjoining it also show their control over some part of it. The conflicting claims of sovereignty and territorial jurisdictions in South China Sea are very complex and difficult for the international actors to resolve.

To increase its influence on this part, a barrage of medium-range missiles was fired by China over a considerable distance in the South China Sea. China has been trying to control this entire area for a long time, which is a cause of controversy. There has been a steady increase of Chinese fishing boats in the waters adjacent to the Natuna Deeps in Indonesia, as well as the deployment of survey vessels in the economic zone Z, adjacent to Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam, and the Philippines. In addition, two new administrative districts were created by China, covering the Paracel and Spratly islands. In recent years extensive construction has been carried out by China in the Spratly Islands occupied by it. Such actions taken by the government have further fueled the tension in the region.

The US is also strengthening its military presence in the region, due to which the dispute is escalating. The Philippines and Vietnam have also raised concerns of US observers by saying that China is gaining effective control over the South China Sea. The region is an area of political and economic importance to the United States and its allies, so the US cannot allow the region to be controlled by any one country.

The South China Sea, a part of the western Pacific Ocean, has been in the news for many years. China calls this part its own and it is building an artificial island here. Because of this, countries around the South China Sea, which claim parts of it, have expressed strong objections.

There are about 250 small and big islands in the South China Sea, mostly uninhabited deep. Some of these lamps remain submerged for several months due to tidal ebb, this area is between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and is surrounded by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. All border countries except Indonesia claim some parts of its own, which is a big issue of controversy.

What Dr. Fen Jung, an expert on Chinese international relations at Australian University, has to say that China claims that the area was first discovered by Chinese sailors 2000 years ago and Named it and started business here. According to them, during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, the entire part of the South China Sea was occupied by Japan. After the defeat of Japan, China sent its naval warships here to recapture it. Dr. Jang says that after the war, the Chinese government officially released a map showing a

large part of the South China Sea and almost all the lands in its share of about 3000000 square kilometers through a line. This line is called the Nine Line. However, till date China has not given any clarification regarding this line.

China says that other countries were interested in the South China Sea when oil exploration was started there. According to Dr Jung, this claim of China seems to be true to some extent because no one else challenged China's claim before the 1970s.

The main reason why this area is important for all the countries is that the treasure of crude oil can be found at this place, apart from this there are about 30000 types of fish and it has contributed about 15% of the world in terms of fish production. .

In the 2012 China stopped the fishermen of the Philippines to fish here, while according to the Philippines this area is part of its Special Economic Zone and due to this dispute, the Philippines approached the International Court of Justice. A tribunal was created under the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention, to investigate the matter, which gave its decision in favor of the Philippines, which was not accepted by China. After this, tensions started with Indonesia, who had stayed away from this matter till now. The South China Sea is one of the busiest sea routes in the world and about 80 percent of the world's trade is done by sea route, of which about one third of the trade route passes through the South China Sea. Business of about \$ 3.37 trillion is done from this area, so many countries show their interest in this area.

Many experts believe that China's claim of its sovereignty over this area, is directly related to gaining control over trade from here. America is also very interested in this area so that no edge country is occupied and its cargo ships and warships regularly pass through here.

The Chinese army has been trying to occupy this area for a long time and that is why it has built 3 runways 3000 meters long in this area where it can land fighter aircraft, besides large tanks of crude oil in the sea under the ground. Going there, huge oil reserves are being built by China, as well as for the protection of the lands, it has installed missile systems here and it has done all this work in less than 36 months.

In August 2020, China also fired two missiles in the South China Sea, warning the US. As the UK Navy's Fleet Carrier Strike Group, led by the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, entered the South China Sea region, China has warned that the fleet is heading east through the South China Sea towards Japan. China objected to the passing of any country's warship or fighter planes in the area.

### **South China Sea historical background**

A long time before the Western powers came to Southeast Asia, the South China Sea had been pivotal for prosperity of Southeast Asian kingdoms. The Funan kingdom, situated at Cambodia, during sixth century A.D., its status as a strong maritime power in Southeast Asia. Funan kingdom was use naval force for

expanding its territory and achieving economic goals. Due to its powerful navy, the Funan Kingdom had succeeded in deriving economic benefits through the South China Sea. Except them Srivijaya Kingdom's, were dependent on its capacity to control the sea lanes in this area. This kingdom also uses its powerful navy between the ninth and twelfth century. By forcing the trade ships which sailed from South Asia and East Asia to ports in Palembang, the Kingdom of Srivijaya had established its empire as the centre of vast trading monopoly. In this way, it had gained the enormous economic. The powers of the Srivijayan empire started declining with the increased political and economic intervention of Chinese empire. By early twelfth century, the Chinese began to demonstrate their sea powers. The Chinese under the Southern dynasty (1127-1280) began to trade directly through South China Sea with the Southeast Asian kingdoms. This was partly responsible for decline of Srivijayan Empire. Since the Southern Sung empire and till the Western colonial powers came to Southeast Asia in approx sixteenth century, the expansion of Chinese naval powers in South China Sea was remarkable. This had served the Chinese kingdom to dominate Nan Hai (South China Sea) region. For a long time, Persians, Arabs, Indians, Chinese and people of Southeast Asia, all had freedom of the sea for trade, due to this the Western powers brought about an immediate and great impact on the status of South China Sea. European countries established foothold in Asia and now no country bordering the South China Sea could dominate this sea territory. Subsequently the United Kingdom, France, Netherland, and Spain divided South China Sea into their respective sphere of influence. The Western powers had accepted the principle of "the freedom of the sea" during the colonial period. They had evolved such policies that could allow them to move across the wide open sea unhindered to protect their colonial interests. In this endeavor, they were successful and such a policy enabled them to colonize Southeast Asian countries. The Western countries were absolutely free to use, abuse and exploit the vast ocean for their own ends. But with the decolonization of Southeast Asia after 1930, when France declared formal possession of the Spratlys and occupied South China Sea, this situation started changing in 1939, nine years after the French occupation, Japan by force succeeded in occupying the entire South China Sea. Since then till the end of the second world war, the Spratlys, along with the Paracels and Pratas had been placed under Japanese special jurisdiction, which was then known as the South Archipelago. At the end of the second world war, On 1 December 1947, China announced formally the incorporation of the Spratlys, along with the Paracels, into Guantung Province. This declaration was immediately opposed by Taiwan which sent troops and occupied South China Sea's, one of the islands of the Spratlys on 12 December 1947. However, Taiwanese troops temporarily withdrew from the Spratlys between May 1950 and July 1956.

There are about 250 small and big islands in the South China Sea, mostly uninhabited deep. Some of these lamps remain submerged for several months due to tidal ebb and is surrounded by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. All border countries except Indonesia claim some parts of its own, which is a big issue of controversy. According to their own historical records, the Spratlys have been part of the Chinese territory since the Han dynasty, ruling China in the second century A.D., Vietnam, on the other hand, has dated back its claim to the period of Emperor Gia Long in the eighteenth century. The Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei, however trace the history of occupation of the Spratlys in the twentieth century.

## Conclusion

Therefore, in conclusion, it can be said that South China Sea is very important for all countries. Any country which has a monopoly in this area can collect tax from the ships etc., passing through this area. This region has great potential for crude oil, which is one of the reasons for the competition in this region, besides the abundant fish trade in this region is also a reason for the region's competition. Therefore, overall it can be said that this region is the main reason for the rivalry between the countries due to being economically prosperous and being the means of transportation of many countries from this region. In whose part this area will go in future, only time will tell, but due to the prosperity of this region, there will be strong possibilities of war in this area.

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