International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Taiwan-China Issue in the South China Sea

Toshbekov Bobur[1]

[1]Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, Webster University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

E-mail: bobur.toshbekov.wm@gmail.com, boburtoshbekov@webster.edu

Abstract

This article examines the long-standing territorial dispute between China and Taiwan in the South China Sea, which has caused tension and conflict in the region for several decades. The article analyzes the role of negotiation and conflict in resolving this issue, particularly in the context of China's military buildup and the involvement of other regional nations. The findings of this research suggest that effective negotiation and conflict resolution strategies are essential for resolving the Taiwan-China problem in the South China Sea and ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Keywords: territorial dispute, negotiation, conflict resolution, regional stability, military buildup, geopolitics, maritime boundaries, international law, diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

Both nations, China and Taiwan contend to have territorial authority over the region, and the Taiwan-China problem has been a cause of conflict for decades in the South China Sea. Due to China's aggressive military buildup in the region and the participation of other regional nations including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, the situation has become increasingly difficult in recent years.(Ba, Alice D. ,2011) This article will provide a detailed and critical examination of the Taiwan-China problem in the South China Sea, with a focus on the role of negotiation and conflict in resolving the dispute.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Historical Background

The history of the region now known as the South China Sea has been marked by the competing interests and claims of several civilizations, particularly the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Malay peoples. Early Chinese culture referred to the region as the "South Sea" or the "Nan Hai," and it was a province of China. Along the South China Sea's shore, China established a network of port cities that they utilized for both trade and fishing.

During that time, numerous groups, notably those of the Vietnamese and Malay peoples, vied for dominance of the region.(Bo, Hu, 2019). During the eleventh century, the Champa Kingdom of central Vietnam controlled the Paracel and Spratly Islands, which are the subject of the present Taiwan-China conflict. The Champa Kingdom governed the islands for several centuries before Chinese troops arrived in the 15th century.

The South China Sea's authority was further confused in the 16th century when European nations including the Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish started to establish a presence there (Buszynski, 2007) Across the area, trade routes and trading stations were constructed by European explorers and traders, and tensions between European powers and local authorities grew as rivalry for resources and influence grew.

Early in the 20th century, when the government of China first asserted its claim to the area, the Taiwan-China argument in the South China Sea entered its current age.(Emmers,2010) The Paracel and Spratly Islands were depicted on a map the Chinese government published in 1947, thus staking claim to the whole region.

When the Communist Revolution in China took place, the Kuomintang Party, which at the time ruled Taiwan, inherited this claim. Yet, the United States became a dominating force in the region following World War II and aimed to reduce Chinese dominance.

With Taiwan, the United States entered a mutual defense treaty in 1951, promising to protect Taiwan from any outside threats (Callahan,2009) This agreement opened the stage for a Crucial Role for the United States in the Taiwan-China Conflict issue and significantly enhanced American protection over the whole South China Sea.

The South China Sea's Taiwan-China dispute, which placed China against the United States and Taiwan, was a matter of contention during the Cold War. But, as China started to emerge as a significant global force in the 1970s, the situation started to alter. The United States and China established diplomatic relationships in 1979, thus endorsing that China has claimed the land as its own.(Fravel, 2016). This action marked an

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

important turning point in the Taiwan–China conflict and prepared the way for China to start aggressively defending its rights in the area.

Tensions have risen in recent years despite efforts by the US and other regional countries to mediate the resolution of the South China Sea conflict between Taiwan and China. China and Taiwan continue to maintain their territorial claims and compete for control of the region's resources, making the dispute a key hotspot in the area today.

Current Situation

There is ongoing tension and a threat of violence around the Taiwan-China dispute in South China currently. Due to competing claims by Taiwan and China, the South China Sea is one of the nation's most volatile regions, China, and other regional nations to its islands, reefs, and waterways.(Le Hong Hiep,2015).

China has stepped up its military presence and infrastructure on the islands and reefs it claims as its own in the South China Sea in recent years, becoming more aggressive in its territorial claims there. China has continued to establish its claims in the South China Sea through military actions and other means, despite rejecting the authority of the international tribunal. Taiwan, on the other hand, is still making its own claims in the area despite being diplomatically isolated and not being recognized internationally.(Hayton,2014). In an attempt to counteract Chinese influence, the Taiwanese government has increased its military presence on the islands it claims and has worked to establish stronger connections with other regional countries.

The United States has been actively participating in the Taiwan-China conflict in the South China Sea as part of a broader geopolitical tilt towards the Asia-Pacific region. Liberty of route planning operations has been done many times by the US in the area to dispute China's claims of having sole control over the area's waterways and airspace.(Hu, Nien-Tsu Alfred,2014).

The involvement of other regional countries, including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, whose islands or resources in the region are the subject of competing claims from several parties, complicates the present situation in the South China Sea. In order to counteract China's expanding influence, these nations have simultaneously been strengthening their military and diplomatic relations with the United States.

Concerns about a possible conflict in the area have been expressed because of the ongoing tensions in the South China Sea. (Kao, 2014) One of the primary causes of instability in the area continues to be the potential for a military conflict between China and the US or between China and one of its smaller neighbors.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

In recent years, diplomatic efforts have been made to resolve the Taiwan-China dispute in the South China Sea.(Liu, Fu-Kuo,2017). A bilateral agreement was reached in 2015 by the US and China to build a communication channel between their troops and lessen the possibility of military mishaps in the area.

Ultimately, the South China Sea's Taiwan-China problem continues to be extremely complex and unstable. Conflict is still a persistent concern because of the conflicting claims and interests of several regional powers, as well as the strategic considerations of powerful nations like the United States. The chances for a peaceful resolution over the long term are still unclear, despite ongoing diplomatic attempts to resolve the situation.

Role of Conflict

In the South China Sea Taiwan-China conflict, the conflict has been a major factor. The conflict has a complicated and diversified role in the Taiwan-China dispute in the South China Sea. The conflict has on the one hand, been a key factor in the issue, since rival territorial claims have caused tensions on the diplomatic and military levels between Taiwan, China, and other regional countries(Rowan,2005). Conflicts throughout history, such as the Chinese Civil War and the Japanese colonization of Taiwan and the South China Sea, have left a legacy that has influenced the present situation.

The dispute has also been made worse by bigger geopolitical factors, such as China's ambition to impose its control in the area and the United States' strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific region. The conflict has become more complex, and a settlement is now more challenging, due to the involvement of other regional powers, such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia. The threat of armed confrontation and military posturing has been one of the main causes of tension in the Taiwan-China problem in the South China Sea. On the islands and reefs, it claims, China has built military facilities and airstrips and maintained a sizable military presence.(Samuels,2013). Taiwan, the US, and other regional nations have expressed alarm over the Chinese military's military drills and patrols in the area.

For its part, Taiwan has expanded the size of its military presence across the area, including on the islands and reefs it claims. To mark out its rights and balance off China's expanding influence, the Taiwanese military has undertaken drills and patrols in the area.

With the considerable military forces deployed by China, Taiwan, and other regional countries, the possibility of an armed conflict in the South China Sea nearby the Taiwan China problem continues to be of great concern.(Sibuet,2021). Given the

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

proximity of armed units and the absence of effective communication and coordination between them, the danger of error or accidental conflict is very significant.

Yet the conflict over Taiwan with China in the South China Sea is not just a military one. Competition in the economy and strained diplomatic relations have both been major factors in the war. Concerns about China's intentions and conduct among regional countries have grown because of its rejection of international legal judgements and its use of economic pressure and influence (Wang,2022).

Hence, conflict plays a multifaceted and complex role in the Taiwan China dispute in the South China Sea. The struggle is also motivated by more general geopolitical reasons and economic competitiveness, even though military posturing and the possibility of armed war remain key concerns. To resolve the Taiwan-China dispute in the South China Sea and advance long-term stability in the area, it will be essential to address the root causes of conflict, such as territorial claims, strategic interests, and economic competitiveness.

Role of Negotiation

The parties concerned can also build trust and ease tensions through negotiation. With each party questioning the other's motives, the Taiwan-China dispute in the South China Sea has been characterized by a lack of trust. With the help of negotiation, the parties may have a positive discourse and increase their trust and confidence in the process.(Wan et al, 2010) By fostering more trust, it may be possible to lessen the possibility of errors in judgment or miscommunications that could escalate an already contentious situation.

Notwithstanding the potential advantages of negotiation, there are still a number of issues that need to be resolved. The absence of trust between the parties is one of the main problems. Building trust can be challenging and time-consuming given the lengthy history of tension and conflict(Storey,2010). The parties may have doubts about one another's intentions and be unwilling to give in out of concern that they would be perceived as giving in. All parties concerned will need to make a consistent effort to resolve these trust concerns.

The problem of power imbalance presents another difficulty. China may be reluctant to negotiate from a position of perceived weakness because it is the biggest and most powerful country in the area. The negotiating process is unbalanced since other nations find it difficult to refute China's demands due to its status as a regional power. It

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

will need new solutions and a willingness to play around with new negotiation strategies to address this power imbalance.(Song,2016)

Multilateral organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea are possible venues for negotiations (UNCLOS) (Song, 2010). These forums offer an unbiased stage for debate and negotiation and can aid in fostering agreement between the parties. Many high-level talks to address the Taiwan-China conflict in the South China Sea have been hosted by ASEAN. UNCLOS, which provides a legal framework for addressing disputes about marine borders and territorial claims, has further helped.

Direct negotiations between Taiwan and China are still another possible dialogue route. While there have not been many of these discussions in the past, there have been some encouraging developments recently. For instance, the historic meetings between the presidents of China and Taiwan in 2015 hinted at the possibility of healing relations. But progress has been slow, the two parties continue to disagree on critical subjects.

Regardless of the strategy employed, regional multilateral institutions have also been used to resolve the South China Sea problem. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which was formed in 1994 as a forum for debate and cooperation in light of worries over politics and safety in the Asia-Pacific area, is one of these platforms.(Yoshihara et al, 2016). Members of the ARF include China, Taiwan, and several other parties with the South China Sea claims.

The Implementing Guidance of the DOCs, which aimed to advance confidence-inspiring measures and prevent incidents in the South China Sea, was adopted by the ARF in 2011. The recommendations placed a strong emphasis on the necessity of resolving conflicts peacefully and in compliance with international law, especially UNCLOS. Also, they encouraged the creation of useful cooperation activities and the avoidance of actions that can escalate the conflict.

Conflicts in the South China Sea have continued Even though the DOC approved it and the implementation guidelines. This is due, among other things, to the DOC's lack of enforcement and binding nature. Moreover, China has continued in making territorial claims and building military facilities on features that are in question, which worries other claimants and those who support them.

There have been various attempts in recent years to revive discussions about a COC for the South China Sea that is enforceable under international law. China first put out the concept of a COC in 2002, with the initial goal of handling possible disputes between China and ASEAN. However, the COC negotiations started slowly and have

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

been beset by conflicts over important topics including the code's scope, dispute resolution procedures, and the participation of third parties.(Yoshihara, et.al, 2011)

China and ASEAN decided to begin talks on a COC in 2017, and since then, there have been multiple rounds of discussions. Progress has been slow, though, and there are concerns that China is using the talks as a means of stalling for time and strengthening its hold on the disputed territories.(Sibuet, 2021) A COC may not be adequate to address the fundamental problems in the South China Sea, such as the conflicting regional claims as well as the militarization of disputed features, according to some analysts.

The presence of other countries, notably the United States, has complicated discussions over the South China Sea. The US has developed a keen interest in the war because it sees it as a threat to its regional strategic interests. To dispute China's claims, the US has strengthened its military Liberty of route planning processes were done in the South China Sea. (FONOPs). The US has been accused by China of causing regional instability because of its engagement in the South China Sea, which it views as an interference into its domestic affairs. By forging deeper connections with other regional countries like Russia and India, China has also attempted to balance US dominance.(Zhang, Feng,2017)

Negotiations over the South China Sea have become more difficult as a result of the engagement of worldwide countries since it has introduced another layer of geopolitical considerations and mistrust. To lower tensions and enable discussions on the South China Sea, some observers contend that the US and China need to have a constructive discourse and figure out how to manage their competition in the area.

Overall, talks have been extremely important in resolving the Taiwan-China dispute in the South China Sea. Military conflicts have been avoided owing to negotiations, which have also given the parties a chance to vent their frustrations and look for points of agreement. Yet, talks by themselves might not be adequate to address the fundamental problems in the South China Sea. Conflict cannot be readily settled through discussions due to overlapping territory claims, geopolitical interests, and historical grudges. Furthermore, the struggle has become even more complicated because of the involvement of other forces. The parties must exhibit political will, uphold international law, and engage in constructive conversation if they want to see progress in the South China Sea.

Potential solutions

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Finding a solution to the Taiwan-China conflict in the South China Sea that is acceptable to both parties is difficult given its complexity. Nonetheless, several potential answers have been brought, some of which have received a lot of support.

A possible solution to the controversy in the South China Sea has been suggested: bilateral talks between Taiwan and China. Direct discussions between the two parties are required for this option to go over the issues at hand and discover areas of agreement.(Zhao,2018) The benefit of this strategy is that it offers a platform for both sides to express their concerns and cooperate on a solution. It has historically been difficult for both parties to participate in constructive dialogue, thus the success of this strategy depends on their desire to do so.

Joint development is an additional option. With this strategy, China and Taiwan will collaborate to develop the South China Sea's resources.(Hu et al, 2013) Conflict is less likely with joint development since both sides may share the advantages and dangers of resource exploration. The difficulty with this strategy is that it necessitates a high degree of confidence and cooperation between the two sides, which may be challenging given the conflict history between Taiwan and China.

Another option for resolving the Taiwan-China dispute in the South China Sea is through international mediation. To promote negotiations between Taiwan and China, this strategy entails the presence of a neutral third party. The benefit of this strategy is that it enables both sides to concentrate on finding a resolution as opposed to their previous disagreements. Finding a third party that both sides trust and are ready to deal with is the difficult element of this strategy.

One more suggested a potential solution to the Taiwan-China conflict in the South China Sea is an international tribunal. Using an international court to settle conflicts between Taiwan and China is this strategy.(Adnan et al, 2020) The benefit of this strategy is that it offers a neutral platform for settling disagreements, lowering the possibility of prejudice. The difficulty with this strategy is that it necessitates agreement from both sides to follow the court's decision, which may be challenging, especially considering the historical animosity between Taiwan and China.

CONCLUSION

Both sides have long-standing territorial disputes over the South China Sea, which are complicated by the Taiwan-China problem. The issue has been significantly impacted by conflict, and the involvement of other regional powers has only made the situation more complicated. Yet, there are several alternative options that may be investigated to

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

arrive at a peaceful solution, and negotiation also can play a significant part in settling the conflict. All parties concerned must make a concerted effort to find these answers, which includes being prepared to make a compromise and work towards an agreeable outcome. It will ultimately take a commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, as well as a willingness to work towards a peaceful conclusion that respects the views of all relevant parties in settling the South China Sea dispute between Taiwan and China.

REFERENCES

Adnan, M, and Fakhara S. (2020) "South China Sea Dispute: China's Role and Proposed Solutions." *Journal of Political Studies* 27, no. 1: 205-220.

Ba, Alice D. (2011) "Staking claims and making waves in the South China Sea: how troubled are the waters?." Contemporary Southeast Asia: 269-291.

Bo, Hu. 2019Chinese Maritime Power in the 21st Century: Strategic Planning, Policy and Predictions. Routledge,.

Buszynski, L., and Iskandar S. (2007) "Maritime claims and energy cooperation in the South China Sea." Contemporary Southeast Asia : 143-171.

Callahan, William A. 2009 China: The pessoptimist nation. OUP Oxford,.

Emmers, R. (2010) "The changing power distribution in the South China Sea: Implications for conflict management and avoidance." Political Science 62, no. 2: 118-131.

Fravel, Taylor. 2016 US policy towards the disputes in the South China Sea since 1995. Springer International Publishing,.

Hayton, Bill. 2014.The South China Sea: the struggle for power in Asia. Yale University Press,.

Le H. H. (2015) "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea: Navigating Rough Waters.": 486-488.

Hu, Nien-Tsu Alfred, and Ted L. McDorman, 2013. Maritime Issues in the South China Sea: Troubled Waters or A Sea of Opportunity. Routledge,.

Kao, Shawn Shaw-fawn. (2014) "Scarborough Shoal Dispute, China's Assertiveness, and Taiwan's South China Sea Policy." International Journal of China Studies 5, no. 1: 153.

Liu, Fu-Kuo, Keyuan Zou, Shicun Wu, and Jonathan Spangler, 2017. South China Sea Lawfare: Post-Arbitration Policy Options and Future Prospects. Vol. 2. South China Sea Think Tank,.

Rowan, Joshua P. (2005) "The US-Japan security alliance, ASEAN, and the South China Sea dispute." Asian Survey 45, no. 3: 414-436.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Samuels, Marwyn. 2013 Contest for the South China sea. Routledge,.

Sibuet, Jean-Claude, Minghui Zhao, Jonny Wu, and Chao-Shing Lee. (2021) "Geodynamic and plate kinematic context of South China Sea subduction during Okinawa trough opening and Taiwan orogeny." Tectonophysics 817: 229050.

Song, Yann-Huei. (2010) "The South China Sea workshop process and Taiwan's participation." Ocean Development & International Law 41, no. 3: 253-269.

Song, Yann-huei, and Keyuan Zou. 2016 Major law and policy issues in the South China Sea: European and American perspectives. Routledge,.

Shokhrukh, Y., & Bobur, T. (2022). China's Presence, Priority Interests and Actual Image in Central Asia. International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding, 9(12), 8. https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v9i12.4295

Storey, Ian. The South China Sea Dispute in 2020-2021. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute,.

Wan, Shiming, Anchun Li, Peter D. Clift, Shiguo Wu, Kehui Xu, and Tiegang Li. (2010) "Increased contribution of terrigenous supply from Taiwan to the northern South China Sea since 3 Ma." Marine Geology 278, no. 1-4: 115-121.

Wang, Dongxiao. 2022."Air-Sea Interaction in the South China Sea." In Ocean Circulation and Air-Sea Interaction in the South China Sea, pp. 307-394. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore,

Yoshihara, Toshi, and James R. Holmes. (2011) "Can China defend a "core interest" in the South China Sea?" The Washington Quarterly 34, no. 2: 45-59.

Zhang, Chi, Shouye Yang, Xiangtong Huang, Yanguang Dou, Fangliang Li, Xinning Xu, Qiang Hao, and Jianhua Gao. (2022) "Sea level change and Kuroshio intrusion dominated Taiwan sediment source-to-sink processes in the northeastern South China Sea over the past 244 kyrs." Quaternary Science Reviews 287: 107558.

Zhao, Suisheng. (2018)"China and the South China Sea arbitration: Geopolitics versus international law." Journal of Contemporary China 27, no. 109: 1-15.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.