

Atharva and I negate the resolution;

Our sole contention is fanning the flames.

[Swaine '13](#) explains that "[While China supports]... efforts to... control disputes through negotiation, sustain... cooperation with neighbors, and generally avoid conflict... it [also] seeks to maintain [a] resolute defense against perceived attempts... [to] undermine China's... position involving [maritime] disputes."

However, he continues that "[in the case of US intervention, these objectives contradict each other, and] Beijing seems to adopt [the latter view and thus maintains its defense]... [resulting] in efforts to... strengthen [itself] by... increasing its overall ability to patrol and operate in disputed areas."

Fortunately, US presence in the South China Sea is declining, as [Lendon '17](#) reports that "[Despite intermittent shows of power, like military exercises], top [navy] leaders acknowledge [that we] lack the money, manpower, and weapons to ensure success [in Pacific challenges]."

This lack of a committed US presence has allowed negotiations to begin between China and Southeast Asian nations.

[Reuters '18](#) finds that "[the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN] and China have reached a "milestone" in talks... over a code of conduct... with a working text that will serve as a basis for future negotiations."

[Zhou '17](#) explains that the code of conduct is "a set of norms to guide the conduct of parties and promote maritime cooperation in the South China Sea." [UNTV '18](#) corroborates, writing that the code will "ensure peace, stability, and confidence gets built up...whilst [the parties] take time to resolve the territorial disputes."

This has already manifested, as [Gupta](#) from a month ago reports that "China has resolved numerous sovereignty-linked disputes [in the South China Sea]... with countries large and small," adding that "a key feature in each instance [was] that the United States was neither an ally nor key defense partner of that country." Overall, [Bo '18](#) concludes that "the situation in the South China Sea is cooling down... [with] the biggest variable [being] the Sino-US... strategic competition."

Unfortunately, accession to UNCLOS increases US involvement in the region, re-igniting conflict in the South China Sea by pushing China to a hardline.

[Mirasola '15](#) finds that "[UNCLOS] provides [a] venue through which the U.S. could press its claims in the region." However, [Fuchs '16](#) explains that "[American presence in UNCLOS would confirm] the suspicions of hardliners in China who view international legal regimes as a vehicle for advancing U.S. interests."

Historically, this has increased hardliner clout, as [Zhang '16](#) writes that after the Philippines vs. China 2016 arbitration case, "hardliners [were] winners in internal debates... [as the decision justified] suspicions [that the arbitration case was an American conspiracy against China]." He continues that as a result, "Chinese diplomats [deadlocked] negotiations [as] China [built] up its physical presence."

Importantly, [Zhang](#) continues that "[Chinese] leadership cannot... ignore [hardliners once they gain power] for fear of stoking popular nationalism... which can easily spin out of control." Thus, [Ibarra '17](#) concludes that "[pressure from the US would] only trigger [China's] memory of... [being dominated] by foreign powers and... push Chinese foreign policy to a hardliner position lest... the Communist Party risk their domestic legitimacy."

Problematically, [Lague '12](#) explains that "[a hardline Chinese government would be] determined to block any effort from rival claimants to negotiate over disputes." This ends regional stability, as [Stratfor '17](#) explains that "For China... the very act of engaging in talks helps relieve the immediate tensions... and reduces the chances of... conflict."

Furthermore, [Zhang '16](#) writes that hardliners believe China should "expand its territorial and military reach... [by] building the islands into mini-bases [and] conquering... features currently under other countries' control." Unfortunately, [Zhang '17](#) finds that "China's military occupation of [other countries' islands]... may... trigger... regional war... but the hard-liners [incorrectly] believe that... [this would] be transitory and bearable."

The impact is economic destruction.

[Fisher '16](#) writes that "\$5.3 trillion... [of] goods moves through the sea every year... [or] about 30 percent of global maritime trade," a sum which [Winn '17](#) finds "would slow to a trickle" if a regional war occurred. Problematically, trade is key to alleviating poverty, as the [World Bank '15](#) finds that as "developing countries now constitute 48% of world trade [from just 33% in 2000]... the number of people living in extreme poverty has been cut in half." [Xu '14](#) adds that "1.5 billion people... rely heavily on [the South China Sea] for food and jobs."

Thus, we negate.

Extra Stuff

[Zhang '16](#) continues that "[as a result], China's military [swiftly began] regular patrol of the South China Sea... [and] conducted a new round of military exercises..."

Critically, [Valesco '13](#) reports that "regional organizations are 6.73 times more likely [than any other third-party] to craft an agreement that is not broken for at least 5 years."

[Mourdoukoutas '18](#) finds that "[a hardline] stance [by China] on the South China Sea raises nationalism at home, pushing Beijing into a corner [if anything] happens."

[Allison '17](#) reports that "Xi told his Politburo colleagues that "winning or losing public support is an issue that concerns the [Communist Party's] survival or extinction."

[U.S Naval Institute '18](#) writes that "The [Chinese] People won't tolerate it if [they] lose territory yet again" due to the memory of China's century of humiliation at the hand of western powers.

Furthermore, [Xiaoming '18](#), the Chinese ambassador to the United Kingdom, explains that the "parties [have] agreed to hold three more rounds of diplomatic consultations."

[Heydarian '18](#) finds that the Philippines and China have reached "a suitable legal framework ... to "advance cooperation on offshore oil and gas exploration... [forming] a blossoming partnership laced with Chinese investment promises."

This happened again only two weeks ago, as [Huang](#) reports that "China was making a clear and deliberate statement that it will not tolerate challenges to its sovereignty when... a Chinese... destroyer sailed within 41 meters... of the USS Decatur."

Success in regional negotiations has precedent as [Hyer '15](#) writes that "[China] has sought improved relations with...smaller neighboring states [in the past and] has proved to be...willing to compromise in order to establish legitimate boundaries through peaceful negotiations, even ceding territory believed...to [have belonged] to China historically."