

Jeremy and I affirm.

Our Sole Contention is Calming the Seas

China's claims to the South China Sea have made it home to an extensive territorial dispute. Consequently, [Streiff '18 of RedState finds](#) tensions in the South China Sea are at an all-time high.

Tensions will continue increasing for two reasons.

First, militarization.

US allies in the South China Sea feel unprotected. [Hayton '17 of Foreign Policy explains](#), the Trump administration has demonstrated that it does not understand the interests of its partners in Southeast Asia to protect them against China.

This has pushed unsure allies in the region towards militarization. [Gates '17 of the Diplomat writes](#), the absence of rule of law at sea [fueled by Chinese expansionism] will provide incentives for nations [such as the Phillipines] to build up their armed forces, increasing [tensions].

Second, Chinese aggression.

China's shows of aggression are growing more frequent and dangerous, as [Lockie of the Business Insider in May this year reports](#), Beijing upped the ante in the South China Sea by releasing footage of its nuclear bombers landing on artificial islands in disputed waters. In order to send a clear message that it dominates the region, China has become increasingly confrontational in the South China Sea.

Fortunately, ratification would de-escalate tensions by signalling our commitment to our allies. [Vanecko '11 of Naval War College writes](#), acceding to UNCLOS shows our allies that we are fully committed to a global partnership.

The solution is multilateralism, as in the past China has pushed its agenda by unilaterally bullying its neighbors. [Stratfor '17 explains](#), China approach[es] individual countries and uses its economic leverage over them, in an effort to dilute the coalition against it.

The U.S. wants to work multilaterally, as [Mirasola '15 of Harvard Law School explains](#), the U.S. has repeatedly emphasized that territorial disputes should be addressed multilaterally. By not ratifying UNCLOS, it [por]trays a dangerous ambiguity about America's commitment to opposing Chinese unilateralism.

[Gates '15 of the Diplomat concurs](#), the United States is the only actor in the region with the resources and relationships necessary to diffuse tensions and create an enduring solution grounded in international law.

[Vanecko furthers](#), China may be receptive to multilateral dialogue [under] UNCLOS [because of their economy's increasing dependence on global trade]. With a multilateral coalition comprising the majority of China's trade partners, [Beijing] would have no choice but to listen or risk damaging relations with economically vital countries.

[According to Hyer '15 of Brigham Young University](#), when China faced multilateralism in the 1960s, Beijing decided to concede its territorial ambitions and settle boundaries 4 nations showing that the nation would choose its relationships over its national interests.

The impact of unchecked rising tensions is two-fold.

First, conflict.

As tensions rise, the chance of miscalculation also increases. [Glaser '12 of the Council on Foreign Relations writes](#), China routinely intercepts US reconnaissance flights in its EEZ, often in aggressive ways that increase the chance of an accident. The large growth of Chinese submarines has also raised the risk of an incident. A simple misunderstanding could then result in a deadly exchange of fire, precipitating further military escalation.

One potential conflict zone is Vietnam, as [Kim '15 of Bradley University finds](#), the continued erosion of Vietnam's territorial integrity, caused by appeasing Chinese encroachment, "could trigger a popular uprising, or even a [violent] revolt within the army."

The impact would be devastating, as [Pham '17 of Forbes explains](#), the smallest miscalculation could spiral out of control and have huge consequences for billions of people.

Second, trade.

Rising tensions raises the cost of shipping in the South China Sea. [Chandran '17 of CNBC finds](#), maritime insurance rates spike if insurers identify parts of the South China Sea as a war risk.

[Madaus '17 of Global Risk Insights reports](#), The last time waters were declared a high-risk area, insurance prices increased 300-fold. If the South China Sea were to be declared a high risk zone, shipping cost increases could reach \$600 million a year for Japan, \$270 million for South Korea, and billions for China.

Problematically, higher insurance leads to higher prices, as [Hoffman '18 of Bloomberg finds](#), any disruptions in the South China Sea would quickly reverberate through the global food chain, clogging other ports and raising costs on everything from corn to oil.

This is devastating, as huge volumes of trade flow through the region. [Cahill '12 of Energy Intelligence states](#), 500 million people live within 100 miles of the South China Sea coast and depend upon it for access to trade, jobs and food

Thus, we are proud to affirm.