Problems at sea are reaching the brink to explode in the status quo. **Chaudhury of The Economic Times** reports this August that China’s outright rejection of UNCLOS, blatant disregard of the norms of maritime engagement, militarization of the artificial islands, and the power projection over its much smaller and weaker neighbors has turned the South China Sea into a dangerous flashpoint. **Dr. Taylor of Asian Pacific Affairs** explains in August 2018 that this flashpoint is going through a series of individual crises that feed off and escalate one another, a similar pattern that occurred before the outbreak of both World Wars.

These can be seen right now, as **Gates of The Diplomat** in 2017 writes that the absence of the rule of Law of The Sea perpetrated by China’s expansion is providing incentive for Asian nations to build up their armed forces as tensions are boiling over. This is dangerous, as **French of Columbia** in 2014 finds that Beijing has prepared to use military conflict to make an example of a smaller country like Vietnam or The Philippines to assure that their resistance against China is futile. For example, **Stout of Time** finds that China’s current aggression against Vietnam mirrors the lead up to their 1980 invasion of the country, which killed 50 thousand in 6 weeks.

A byproduct of tensions is the region is devastating regional trade**. Weilun from the Business Times** explains in ‘16 that increased tension in the South China Sea ravages trade and investor confidence. **Crabtree ‘16 of CNBC** furthers that the region has over 5 trillion dollars of trade flowing through annually, with over one-and-a-half billion people relying on that trade for food and jobs.

The **Odyssey Online** in 2017 writes that if mediation doesn’t occur, China will continue to snowball the region and tensions will boil over. **Nguyen of Texas A&M** puts it simple. If the South China Sea dispute continues to escalate, the livelihoods of millions of people and the economies of many countries are at stake.

**Our Sole Contention is Turning the Tide**

**Mogato of Reuters** points out the clear trend in the Status quo: as credible American Leadership is deteriorating, East Asian nations are appeasing to China. **Kuok** in 2018 furthers that due to concern that Washington does not have its back, Asian countries in the region have all appeased to China under pressure and have allowed them to develop in their own exclusive economic zones.

**Erickson** thus concludes that acceding to UNCLOS and once again exercising leadership over the development of its rules is the first and most critical step in combating China.

This is key, as **Voeten of Georgetown** finds that American leadership is essential for fostering multilateral cooperation. Currently, the absence of a multilateral agreement means certain Chinese success in the South China Sea, as countries dealing with China on their own has been ineffective. De **Tolve of The Naval Law Review** writes that China is exploiting the lack of American commitment in a regional agreement by using their political and economic leverage to coerce individual nations to give in to Chinese demands.

However, American led multilateralism is especially viable now. **Erickson** reports that Asian states are desperate for active American leadership over the laws that govern legitimate international action. American accession to UNCLOS prompts action against China as **Huock of Penn State** finds that as a party to UNCLOS, the U.S. would assume a natural leadership role of multilateral efforts and would begin facilitating coalitions. **Yamei of the CIIS** finds that through UNCLOS, the United States can use these coalitions to counter China’s abuse.

By turning the tides of conflict, multilateralism through UNCLOS begins a step by step approach to create peace with China in two ways.

First, is creating diplomacy. **French of Columbia** writes that the more China sees a coordinated response to its military buildup, the more likely it is to turn toward diplomacy, ending their desire to expand. **Townshend of the Guardian** **in 2015** confirms that this multilateral coalition would present a sovereign threat to China’s influence in the region, by politically isolating China and depriving them of what they care most about, their political leverage over regional countries.

Second, is solving disputes. **Hansen of The University of Iowa** quantifies that multilateralism has a 61% higher chance of working to solve disputes than one on one efforts.

Because war is good for nothing, we Affirm.