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COMMITTEE: United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
AGENDA: De-escalating Tensions Regarding the Construction and Increased Militarization of Islands in the Waters of East Asia
DELEGATION: Socialist Republic of Vietnam



(General Introduction)

The South China Sea remains one of the most contentious maritime disputes in modern geopolitics, with multiple nations asserting claims over various islands, reefs, and waters. Central to this dispute is the militarization of islands and artificial land reclamation, particularly by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). These actions have intensified regional tensions, threatening freedom of navigation, regional stability, and the economic security of Southeast Asian nations. Given the strategic importance of these waters, it is imperative that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) facilitates a peaceful resolution based on international law.

(Background Information)

The South China Sea is a critical global trade route, with over **\$3.37 trillion worth of trade** passing through it annually. The region is also rich in fisheries, oil, and natural gas reserves, making it a hotspot for territorial disputes. The primary claimants in these disputes are China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982** serves as the primary legal framework governing maritime rights, particularly Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). However, China’s **Nine-Dash Line** claim disregards UNCLOS, leading to numerous conflicts.

China’s land reclamation projects and subsequent militarization of artificial islands, such as **Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef, and Subi Reef**, have escalated tensions. These islands now host **airstrips, radar systems, and missile batteries**, which increase the potential for conflict. Vietnam, the Philippines, and other ASEAN nations have consistently opposed China’s expansionist policies, calling for legal arbitration and diplomatic resolutions.

(Previous efforts)

Past International Efforts to Solve the Issue

1. **The 2016 PCA Ruling (Philippines v. China):** The Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that China's claims had no legal basis and that its island-building activities violated the sovereign rights of other nations. However, China refused to recognize the ruling.
2. **Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002):** ASEAN and China agreed to refrain from activities that escalate tensions, but China has repeatedly ignored these guidelines.
3. **UNCLOS 1982:** Provides a legal framework for maritime disputes, but enforcement remains weak without international compliance mechanisms.
4. **Bilateral and Multilateral Talks:** ASEAN and China have engaged in Code of Conduct (COC) negotiations, but China has stalled progress, preferring bilateral deals to exert influence over individual nations.

Vietnam's Position on the Issue

Vietnam firmly asserts its sovereignty over the **Paracel Islands (Hoàng Sa) and the Spratly Islands (Trường Sa)** based on historical claims and adherence to UNCLOS. Vietnam rejects China's militarization efforts and supports the enforcement of **international law** to resolve disputes. While Vietnam does maintain defensive infrastructure on its occupied islands, these measures are solely for **national security and civilian purposes**, unlike China's offensive militarization.

Vietnam's Past Efforts to Solve the Issue

1. **Legal Advocacy:** Vietnam has repeatedly called for the implementation of UNCLOS and the **2016 PCA ruling** as binding frameworks for dispute resolution.
2. **ASEAN Diplomacy:** Vietnam actively participates in **Code of Conduct (COC) negotiations**, advocating for a legally binding agreement to regulate military activities in contested waters.
3. **Bilateral and Multilateral Engagements:** Vietnam collaborates with **Japan, India, and Australia** to strengthen security without escalating military conflict.
4. **Defensive Measures:** Vietnam has strengthened its **coast guard patrols** and maritime law enforcement to **protect its EEZ from illegal incursions**

(Possible solutions)

Vietnam believes that peace in the South China Sea can only be achieved through diplomatic and legal means, grounded in international law. The following solutions align with Vietnam's stance:

1. **Strict Enforcement of UNCLOS and the PCA Ruling:** The international community, particularly the UNSC, must pressure China to abide by legal rulings and halt militarization.
2. **Finalization of the ASEAN Code of Conduct (COC):** This agreement must be legally binding and prevent the construction of military bases in disputed areas.
3. **Demilitarization Agreements:** A phased withdrawal of military assets from artificial islands should be negotiated under **UN supervision** to restore stability.
4. **Establishment of a Multilateral Monitoring Force:** The UN, in collaboration with ASEAN, should deploy an **independent maritime monitoring force** to ensure compliance with international laws and prevent aggressive actions.
5. **Sustainable Resource Management:** ASEAN countries should implement a **joint fisheries and resource-sharing agreement** to prevent overexploitation and ensure economic stability for all claimants.

While Vietnam is committed to **regional stability and cooperation**, it remains steadfast in defending its sovereignty and maritime rights. It is imperative that the UNSC and the international community stand against unilateral militarization and promote diplomatic solutions.

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