

ASEAN'S Long March to a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea

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Introduction

For the past quarter of a century member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been embarked on a “Long March” to secure a legally binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) with China. Progress has been painfully slow but momentum has built up over the past eighteen months. In May 2017, China and ASEAN members reached agreement on a draft Framework COC at their 14th Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) held in Guiyang, Guizhou province. The next stage will be to open formal consultations on the text and timeline for completing the COC.

At the same time as these positive diplomatic initiatives are developing, there are ominous signs that China’s commitment to “self-restraint” is in reality a green light for further militarization of its artificial islands in the Spratly archipelago and military presence in the South China Sea. The Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) reported on 29 June 2017, for example:

New imagery shows that while China is keeping attention focused on its negotiations [sic] with Southeast Asian countries over basic principles to manage South China Sea disputes, its construction of military and dual-use facilities on the Spratly Islands continued. New missile shelters, radar/communications facilities, and other infrastructure are going in on Fiery Cross, Mischief and Subi Reefs, suggesting that while the region is engaged in peaceful discussion, China remains committed to developing its power projection capabilities.¹

ASEAN Commences its Long March, 1992-2011

ASEAN first became involved in South China Sea issues in July 1992 when China and Vietnam became embroiled in a dispute over oil exploration activities near Vanguard bank. ASEAN issued a declaration that urged unnamed parties “to exercise restraint” and for the first time called on “all parties concerned to apply the principles contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as the basis for establishing a code of international conduct over the South China Sea.”²

ASEAN’s call for self-restraint went unheeded. In late 1994/early 1995 China occupied Mischief Reef - a feature in the Spratly Islands claimed by the Philippines. ASEAN foreign ministers now expressed their “serious concern” and urged the parties involved “to

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¹ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, “Updated: China’s Big Three Near Completion,” 29 June 2017; <https://amti.csis.org/chinas-big-three-near-completion/>. China considers its diplomatic discussions with ASEAN members as consultations.

² “ASEAN Declaration On The South China Sea, Manila, Philippines,” 22 July 1992, <http://www.aseansec.org/1196.htm>.

refrain from taking actions that de-stabilize the situation.”³ The Philippines lobbied its fellow members to adopt a code of conduct that would constrain China from further encroachment.

Five years later, in March 2000, ASEAN and China exchanged their respective draft Code of Conduct and agreed to consolidate them into a final text.⁴ However, four major areas of disagreement proved insurmountable: the geographic scope, restrictions on construction on occupied and unoccupied features, military activities in waters adjacent to the Spratly islands, and whether or not fishermen found in disputed waters could be detained and arrested.

After two years and eight months, ASEAN member states conceded and signed a non-binding political statement with China, the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in November 2002. This document set out four trust and confidence building measures and five voluntary cooperative activities. ASEAN nevertheless recommitted itself to attaining a COC. The DOC reaffirmed “that the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea would further promote peace and stability in the region and agree to work, on the basis of consensus, towards the eventual attainment of this objective.”⁵

It took just over two years of discussions before ASEAN and China reached agreement on the terms of reference for a Joint ASEAN-China Working Group (JWG) to implement the DOC.⁶ At the first meeting of the JWC in August 2005, ASEAN tabled draft Guidelines to Implement the DOC. Point two of the ASEAN draft, which called for ASEAN consultations prior to meeting with China, proved a sticking point. Another six years of intermittent discussions and the exchange of twenty-one successive drafts took place before final agreement could be reached.⁷ ASEAN once again conceded and changed the

³ “Statement by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the Recent Developments in the South China Sea,” 18 March 1995; <http://www.aseansec.org/2089.htm>.

⁴ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, “Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (Draft),” March 2000 and People’s Republic of China, “Code of Conduct on the South China Sea (Draft of the Chinese Side),” March 2000. Copies may be found at <https://www.scribd.com/document/346497873/Thayer-ASEAN-China-South-China-Sea-Code-of-Conduct-Background>.

⁵ Point 10, “Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, November 4, 2002,” <http://www.aseansec.org/13163.htm>.

⁶ “ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, Kuala Lumpur, 7 December 2004” and “Terms of Reference of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea,” <http://www.aseansec.org/16888.htm> and <http://www.aseansec.org/16885.htm>.

⁷ Tran Truong Thuy, “Recent Developments in the South China Sea: From Declaration to Code of Conduct,” in *The South China Sea: Towards a Region of Peace, Security and Cooperation*, ed. Tran Truong Thuy (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 2011), 104.

wording of point two to read that ASEAN would “promote dialogue and consultation among the parties.”⁸

In July 2011, after ASEAN’s concession, the Guidelines to Implement the DOC were finally adopted. With the exception of the alteration to the wording of point two, and the insertion of a new point that activities and projects carried out under the DOC should be reported to the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting, the final guidelines were word for word the same as the original ASEAN draft tabled in 2005.⁹ Even with the adoption of these Guidelines, China insisted that sovereignty and jurisdictional disputes could only be resolved bilaterally by the parties directly concerned.

In January 2012, at the first meeting of ASEAN and Chinese senior officials in Beijing, it was agreed to set up four expert committees on maritime scientific research, environmental protection, search and rescue, and transnational crime. These committees were based on four of the five cooperative activities included in the 2002 DOC. Significantly no expert committee on safety of navigation and communication at sea was established.

Potholes in the Long March, 2012-2013

Immediately after the adoption of the Guidelines to Implement the DOC, ASEAN officials returned to their original objective of reaching agreement on a COC.¹⁰ Initially, China moved to quash any attempt by ASEAN members to unilaterally draft a COC; then China sought to delay progress.¹¹ ASEAN officials nevertheless proceeded and after seven meetings reached agreement on key elements to be included in ASEAN’s draft Code of Conduct.¹² This document was formally approved by a meeting of ASEAN senior officials that met in Phnom Penh from 6-7 July 2012. On 9 July, ASEAN Foreign Ministers unanimously approved “ASEAN’s Proposed Elements of a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) between ASEAN Member States and the People’s Republic of China.”¹³ ASEAN senior officials immediately met with their Chinese counterparts and agreed to commence discussion on the COC in September.

⁸ “Guidelines to Implement the DOC,” <http://www.aseansec.org/documents/20185-DOC.pdf>.

⁹ See a table comparing the drafts in Carlyle A. Thayer, “Sovereignty Disputes in the South China Sea: Diplomacy, Legal Regimes and *Realpolitik*,” in Vladimir Kolotov ed., *Proceedings of the International Conference on Topical Regional Security Issues in East Asia* (St. Petersburg: Faculty of Asian and African Studies and the Ho Chi Minh Institute, St. Petersburg State University, 2013), 313-314.

¹⁰ Point 10, “Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, November 4, 2002,” <http://www.aseansec.org/13163.htm>.

¹¹ Thayer, “Sovereignty Disputes in the South China Sea: Diplomacy, Legal Regimes and *Realpolitik*,” 315-325.

¹² Estrella Torres, “Manila tack on China row wins Asean nod,” *Business Mirror*, 13 July 2012.

¹³ Carlyle A. Thayer, “ASEAN’s Code of Conduct (Unofficial),” *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, 11 July 2012, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/101698395/Thayer-ASEAN's-Code-of-Conduct-Unofficial>.

ASEAN's remarkable accomplishment was quickly undermined by the extraordinary events at the ASEAN Ministers' Meeting (AMM) Retreat held in the evening of 9 July. Cambodia's Foreign Minister Hor Nam Hong, as ASEAN Chair, took the unprecedented step of repeatedly ruling that two paragraphs on the South China Sea in the draft joint statement were bilateral matters and must be deleted. He eventually walked out and, as a consequence, for the first time in its forty-five year history ASEAN foreign ministers failed to issue a joint statement.¹⁴ China took advantage of ASEAN's disarray to renege on its agreement to meet with ASEAN senior officials to begin discussions on the COC.

Amidst the recriminations that followed ASEAN's 45th AMM, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa initiated consultations with his ASEAN counterparts and quickly secured an agreement on ASEAN's Six-Point Principles on the South China Sea.¹⁵ Once again ASEAN resumed its quest for the full implementation of the DOC and the conclusion of a regional COC. In response, China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi announced at a press conference in Jakarta that China was willing to work with ASEAN to implement the DOC and "on the basis of consensus" to work toward the eventual adoption of the COC.¹⁶

In 2012 Thailand assumed the role of ASEAN country coordinator for relations with China and proceeded to raise the South China Sea issue.¹⁷ In January 2013, the ASEAN Chair passed from Cambodia to Brunei and career Vietnamese diplomat Le Luong Minh replaced Surin Pitsuwan as ASEAN Secretary General. Both pledged to give priority to reviving discussions with China on the COC.¹⁸ On 22 January 2013, without prior consultation with other ASEAN states, the Philippines formally lodged a legal Notification and Statement of Claim to establish an Arbitral Tribunal under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).¹⁹

¹⁴ Carlyle A. Thayer, "ASEAN'S Code of Conduct in the South China Sea: A Litmus Test for Community-Building?," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 10(34), No. 4, 20 August 2012, 1-23. This article is based on the leaked transcript of discussion at the Foreign Ministers' Retreat.

¹⁵ "Statement of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on ASEAN's Six-Point Principles on the South China Sea," 20 July 2012.

¹⁶ Tarra Quismundo, "China says it's willing to ease Asean rift on sea," *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, 11 August 2012.

¹⁷ "Thailand seeks talks on South China Sea," *Bangkok Post*, 15 January 2013 and "Sihesak seeks South China Sea parley," *Bangkok Post*, 25 January 2013.

¹⁸ Bagus BT Saragih, "ASEAN chief pushes RI to act on South China Sea dispute," *The Jakarta Post*, 9 April 2013. "New ASEAN chair Brunei to seek South China Sea code of conduct," *GMA News*, 14 January 2013; "New ASEAN chief seek to finalise Code of Conduct on South China Sea," *Channel News Asia*, 9 January 2013; and Termsak Chalermphanupap, "Toward a code of conduct for the South China Sea," *The Nation*, 22 January 2013.

¹⁹ Carlyle A. Thayer, "China At Odds with UN Treaty," *USNI News*, 3 March 2013; <http://www.scribd.com/doc/132136055/Thayer-South-China-Sea-China-Rejects-Arbitration-Claim-by-the-Philippines>.

These developments altered the dynamics of the previous year and Beijing responded accordingly. In early April 2013, at the 19th ASEAN-China Senior Officials Consultation, China announced its willingness to commence discussions with ASEAN on a COC later in the year. Two months later ASEAN convened its 46th AMM in Brunei and issued a joint communiqué that declared:

91. We looked forward to continued engagement with China in the full and effective implementation of the DOC in all its aspects. We would continue carrying out mutually agreed joint cooperative activities and projects in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC. We stressed the need to maintain the positive momentum on dialogue and consultations following the 19th ASEAN-China Senior Officials Consultations and 8th ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC. Taking into account the importance of the 10th anniversary of the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership in 2013, we look forward to the formal consultations between ASEAN and China at the SOM level on the COC with an aim to reach an early conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which will serve to enhance peace, stability and prosperity in the region.²⁰

China's response to ASEAN was guarded. In early August, Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Wang stated at a press conference on 5 August that China and ASEAN had only "agreed to hold consultations [as distinct from negotiations] on moving forward the process on the 'Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC)' under the framework of implementing the 'Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)..."²¹ Wang then cautioned that the parties must have reasonable expectations, negotiations must be based on consensus, outside interference must be prevented, and all parties must adopt a step-by-step approach.²²

On 13 September 2013, China and ASEAN held their first consultations on the COC under the umbrella of the JWG to Implement the DOC at a meeting of senior officials in Suzhou, China.

ASEAN's 23rd Summit met on 9 October 2013 in Brunei. The Chair's Statement endorsed the foreign ministers' joint communiqué and "tasked our Ministers to continue to work actively with China on the way forward for the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) on the basis of consensus."²³

ASEAN's Long March Quickens Pace, 2014-2017

²⁰"Joint Communiqué 46th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 29-30 June 2013," <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-statement-communiques/item/joint-communicue-46th-asean-foreign-ministers-meeting-bandar-seri-begawan-brunei-darussalam-29-30-june-2013>.

²¹ "Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Process of 'Code of Conduct in the South China Sea'," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 5 August 2013. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t1064869.shtml>.

²²"Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Process of 'Code of Conduct in the South China Sea'."

²³"Chairman's Statement of the 22nd ASEAN Summit, 'Our People, Our Future Together,' Bandar Seri Begawan, April 24-5, 2013," <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-statement-communiques/item/chairmans-statement-of-the-22nd-asean-summit-our-people-our-future-together>.

During 2014 and 2015 ASEAN and China continued to make progress on measures designed to implement the DOC. For example, at the 12th ASEAN-China SOM held in Quang Ninh, Vietnam on 9 June 2014, senior officials discussed the nature of the COC as well as approaches to designing it for the first time.²⁴ They also reached agreement to draft guidelines for a hotline to respond to urgent incidents at sea and complete the wording of the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on the Implementation of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES). Finally, the SOM discussed preparations for a special meeting of their foreign ministers.

The next ASEAN-China SOM on the DOC was held in Chengdu, China on 19-20 October 2015. Senior Officials “agreed to maintain the momentum of regular official consultations and work towards the early conclusion of a COC on the basis of consensus.” On 21 November 2015, the 18th ASEAN-China Summit was held in Kuala Lumpur. The Chairman’s Statement “underscored the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability as well as upholding freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea” and reaffirmed

our commitment to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety: to build, maintain and enhance mutual trust and confidence; to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities; to not resort to threat or use of force; and for the sovereign states directly concerned to resolve their differences and disputes through peaceful means, including through friendly consultations and negotiations, in accordance with international law including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982).²⁵

ASEAN’s desire to press China to quicken the pace on consultations on the COC collided with Beijing’s foot dragging at the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers Special Meeting held in Kunming on 14 June 2016. This meeting was co-chaired by China and Singapore, as ASEAN’s country coordinator for China. Prior to the meeting ASEAN ministers signed off on an agreed press statement that expressed their frustration:

We noted that 2016 is a milestone for ASEAN-China relations as it marks the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China dialogue relations. We look forward to working together with China to bring ASEAN-China cooperation to the next level. But we also cannot ignore what is happening in the South China Sea as it is an important issue in the relations and cooperation between ASEAN and China. This is the context in which this Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held today.²⁶

The press statement was anathema to China because Beijing had long argued that the South China Sea was a bilateral matter that did not involve ASEAN. China therefore exerted heavy diplomatic pressure on ASEAN ministers to drop their press statement

²⁴ Carl Thayer, “The ASEAN-China Special Meeting Mystery: Bureaucratic Snafu or Chinese Heavy-Handedness?,” *The Diplomat*, 17 June 2016; <http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/the-asean-china-special-meeting-mystery-bureaucratic-snafu-or-chinese-heavy-handedness/>

²⁵ “Chairman’s Statement of the 18th ASEAN-China Summit, Kuala Lumpur, 21 November 2015,” <http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Chairmans-Statement-of-the-18th-ASEAN-China-Summit-Final.pdf>.

²⁶ Quoted in Carl Thayer, “Revealed: The Truth Behind ASEAN’s Retracted Kunming Statement,” *The Diplomat*, 19 June 2016; <http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/revealed-the-truth-behind-aseans-retracted-kunming-statement/>.

and agree to a Chinese ten-point declaration instead. Cambodia played a willing accomplice to China's heavy-handedness and scuttled ASEAN consensus. The special meeting ended in disarray. Singapore's foreign minister left early rather than attend the joint press conference. Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam later issued a copy of the press statement that was published in their media.²⁷

On 12 July 2016, the Arbitral Tribunal hearing the claims brought by the Philippines against China issued a unanimous Award that found against China on all but one matter.²⁸ Chinese propaganda then went into high gear to attack the probity of the judges and the legal basis of their Award.

Initially only two ASEAN members, the Philippines and Vietnam, issued statements acknowledging the Award by name. Since then all ASEAN members have used the circumlocution "legal and diplomatic processes." Rodrigo Duterte, newly elected president of the Philippines, set aside the Award in order to placate if not ingratiate himself with China.

Kavi Chongkittavorn has made a persuasive argument that "ASEAN's overall position on the South China Sea has been strengthened" after the Award. He based his argument on an exegesis of four documents adopted at the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Vientiane twelve days after the Award:

- ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC);
- Joint Communiqué of the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Vientiane, 24 July 2016;
- Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China on the Full and Effective Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (25 July 2016); and
- Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Members States on the Maintenance of Peace, Security and Stability in the Region.²⁹

Kavi concluded that ASEAN had reached a new consensus position on the South China Sea and this "unexpectedly generates a win-win situation for concerned parties" and with the Philippines' return to the fold ASEAN's bargaining power has increased and "renewed the process of mending ASEAN-China relations..."³⁰

The following month Chinese and ASEAN senior officials who met in China for their third meeting of the year made notable progress in three areas. First, they approved

²⁷ Thayer, "Revealed: The Truth Behind ASEAN's Retracted Kunming Statement."

²⁸ Carl Thayer, "After the Ruling: Lawfare in the South China Sea," *The Diplomat Magazine*, no. 21, August 2016, 1-18.

²⁹ Kavi Chongkittavorn, "ASEAN's Strategies After the PCA Decision," Presentation to International Workshop on The Legal Status of Islands and Rocks in International Law and Practice in the East Sea, co-hosted by Pham Van Dong University and Nha Trang University, Nha Trang, Vietnam, August 18, 2016.

³⁰ Chongkittavorn, "ASEAN's Strategies After the PCA Decision."

guidelines for a hotline for use during maritime emergencies. Second, they agreed that CUES applied to the South China Sea. Third, they agreed to complete a draft framework for the COC by mid-2017.

The ASEAN foreign ministers' new consensus was endorsed by the combined 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits held in Vientiane from 6-7 September. ASEAN leaders also welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on the DOC, the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on the Application of the Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea in the South China Sea, and the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States in China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

The most recent ASEAN consideration of South China Sea issues took place at the 29th ASEAN Summit, held in Manila in late April 2017 under the chairmanship of President Duterte. There was intense wrangling among the leaders over the wording of the chairman's draft statement, particularly over recent Chinese militarization of its artificial islands.

The final statement issued by the chair went out of its way to assuage China. The South China Sea section was boiled down to two paragraphs that repeated past policy formulations. The statement noted blandly, "we took note of concerns expressed by some Leaders over recent developments in the area" rather than "serious concerns" noted in 2016 such as land reclamation, escalation of activities, and militarization. Once again ASEAN elided mention of the Arbitral Tribunal's Award, although paragraph seven called for "full respect for legal and diplomatic processes."

What Lies Ahead?

As of July 2017, progress on implementing the five areas of cooperation suggested in the 2002 DOC (marine environmental protection, marine scientific research, safety of navigation and communication at sea, search and rescue, and combatting transnational crime) is only at a nascent stage. The agreement to apply CUES to the South China Sea is a good starting point to address safety of navigation and communication at sea; but CUES does not cover the operations of coast guard vessels that have been the main transgressors of good order at sea. It remains to be seen how effective the hotline will be in dealing with incidents such as the recently reported attack on Vietnamese fishermen in waters near the Paracels by Chinese ships on 18 June 2017.³¹

China and ASEAN are poised to enter a protracted period of consultations over a code of conduct that will provide an effective mechanism to manage maritime disputes in the South China Sea. The COC, however, will not address competing sovereignty claims or disputes over maritime jurisdiction. These issues can only be resolved by direct

³¹ Elizabeth Shim, "Chinese boats attack Vietnamese fishermen in South China Sea," *United Press International*, 29 June 2017. http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/06/29/Chinese-boats-attack-Vietnamese-fishermen-in-South-China-Sea/8561498755312/.

negotiations between the states concerned. There is little likelihood this will occur.

A copy of what purports to be the ASEAN-China draft Framework COC does not mention the geographic scope of coverage, how respect for sovereignty can be upheld when sovereignty is contested, how to resolve differences in interpretation of the forthcoming COC, how to resolve disputes once they arise and how to enforce compliance.³² These deficiencies will have to be addressed in the final COC. ASEAN diplomats reported privately that China insisted that the COC should only cover the Spratly Islands and exclude the Paracels and Scarborough Shoal. As noted above, the scope of geographic coverage was a major bone of contention when draft COCs were exchanged in 2000.

ASEAN and China will have to resolve differences over the legal status of the COC. Reportedly, China opposes a legally binding COC and would like the COC to be signed by foreign ministers. ASEAN, reportedly, would like the COC to be ratified by national legislatures and deposited with the United Nations.

With respect to ASEAN's position, it should be noted that the statement by ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the TAC adopted in 2016 noted that this treaty "is the key code of conduct governing relations between states" and that all parties including High Contracting Parties from outside Southeast Asia should "continue to fully respect and promote the effective implementation of the TAC." More significantly, ASEAN Foreign Ministers also agreed to "explore a legally binding instrument building upon the TAC for the wider region."³³

In the end, however, ASEAN and China will need to square their repeated affirmations to uphold international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea with their sea blindness regarding the binding Award issued by the Arbitral Tribunal (set up under Annex VII of UNCLOS).

If the past is prologue, China's disregard for the Award and its continual militarization of its features in the South China Sea means that ASEAN's Long March for a COC will remain a protracted one.

³² A copy may be found at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/350500541/ASEAN-China-Draft-Framework-Code-of-Conduct-in-the-South-China-Sea>.

³³ All quotations in this paragraph are taken from, "ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC);" <http://asean.org/storage/2016/07/Statement-of-the-40th-Anniversary-of-the-TAC-ADOPTED.pdf>.