



7th South China Sea International Conference in
Vietnam



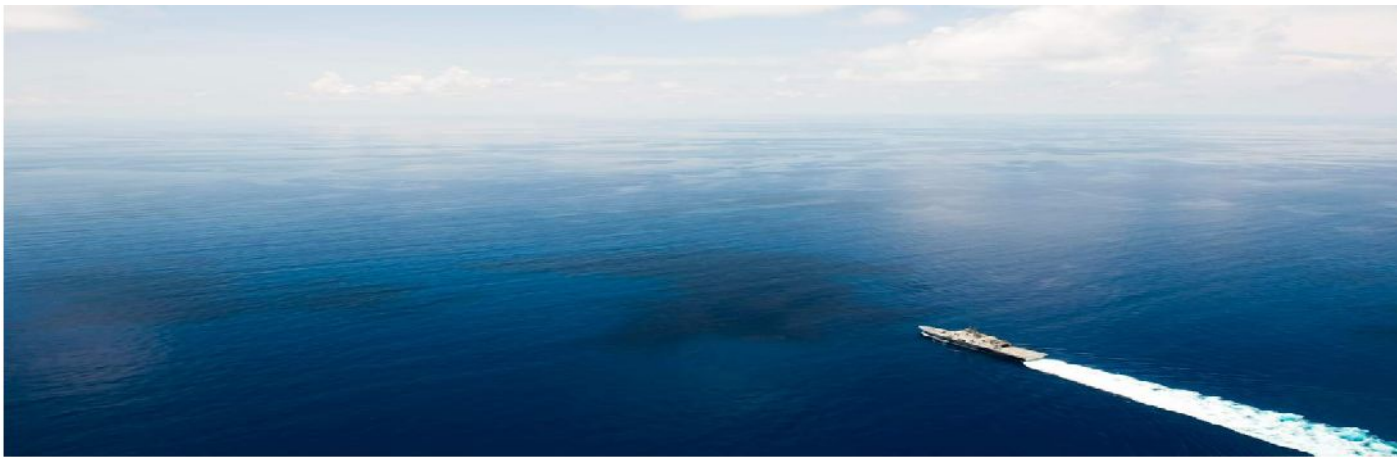
International hotspots: China's Strategy of Deterrence and Legitimacy in the South and East China Sea disputes

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Argument

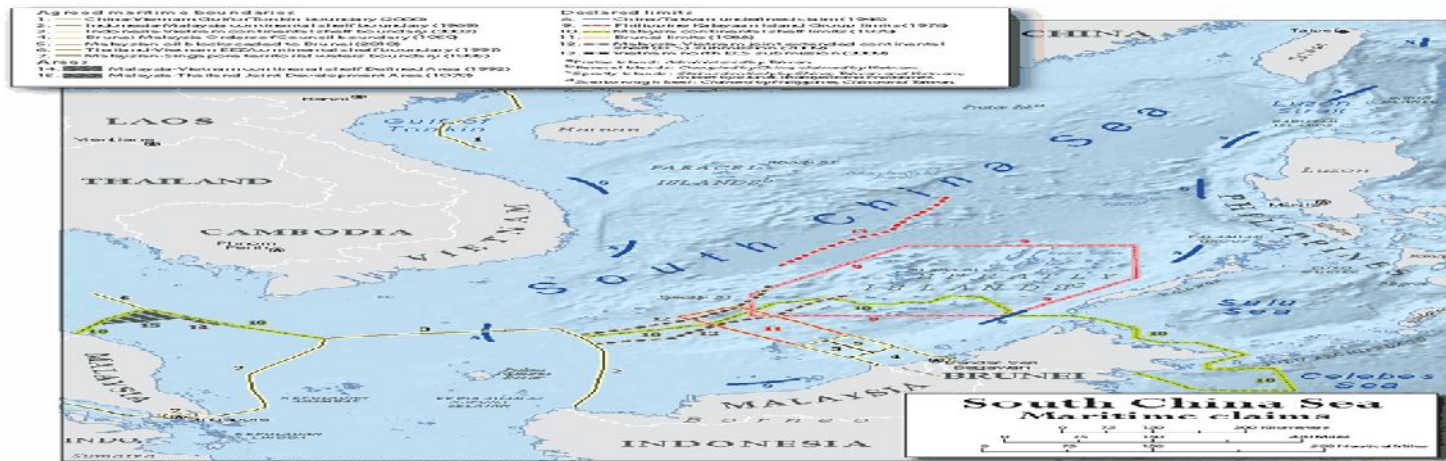
Both China and the U.S. are conditional revisionists

=> Deterrence with credible reassurance to lower tensions



Legal grey zones

- China's claim and entitlement to territorial sovereignty and maritime zones
 - History and effective control
 - Military activities within maritime zones
- => China and the U.S. manifest their interpretations of legitimacy



Blurred strategic lines

China:

- Advocates peace and stability (not intending to militarize)
- Reacts to challenges to its territorial and maritime zone claims (not willing to give up an inch)

U.S.:

- Prioritizes freedom of navigation based on international law
- Considers options for flying and sailing near features whose legal status is not clear



Different interpretations of deterrence

China: includes the option of using compellence against offensive behaviour that has not involved the use of deadly force => maritime military build-up and law enforcement capabilities to defend sovereignty claims.

U.S.: forward military presence used to manifest that international waters cannot be treated as within the jurisdiction of another state



Credible reassurance

China:

Clarify the implications of its efforts to become a global and regional maritime power: freedom of navigation without changing the state of play + refrain from compellence with law enforcement capabilities in disputed areas

U.S.:

Clarify the implications of its efforts to strengthen the U.S. alliance system: refrain from operating in legal grey zones to demonstrate commitment to universally approved interpretations of international law

