

# **Managing Tensions in the South China Sea: Comparing the China-Vietnam and China- Philippines Approaches**

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Post-2009 Developments in the South China Sea
  - China-Vietnam: from tensions towards management
  - China-Philippines: incidents and control
- Dispute Management Approaches
  - Comparison between the China-Vietnam and China-Philippines Approaches
- Conclusions

# Post-2009 Development in the South China Sea (1)

- China-Vietnam: from tension towards management
  - Territorial issues
  - Fluctuating levels of tension
  - New management initiatives

# Post-2009 Development in the South China Sea (2)

- China-the Philippines: incidents and control
  - Legal spat over maritime claims
    - Baseline law of the Philippines
    - Philippine Arbitration Case against China: unilateral
  - spat over insular features
    - Scarborough Shoal
    - Second Thomas Shoal
  - spat over resources development

# Dispute Management Approaches: comparison and assessment(1)

- China-Vietnam approach
  - A highly structured and systematic mechanism of talks
  - Taken shape through years of tension and interactions
  - New initiatives since 2011

# Dispute Management Approaches: comparison and assessment (2)

## China-Philippine approach

Practical measures for dispute management since 1995

- Increased tension and *ad hoc* control
- Divergent approaches

# Conclusions

- China and Vietnam have developed extensive mechanisms for managing differences in the SCS
- China and the Philippines have not developed such mechanisms for managing their differences in the SCS
- This basic difference can help explain the way in which tension has been addressed in recent years
- Despite progress continued efforts are needed between China and Vietnam
- China and the Philippines need to establish better mechanisms to address their differences
- All three parties can positively contribute to regional efforts and to the ASEAN-China dialogue on the SCS