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**Kent Denver and Littleton High School**

**Model United Nations Conference**

**October 11, 2014**

**Background Guide**

**Advanced National Security Council**

**Mitigating Chinese Aggression**

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**General Overview of the Council**

 The National Security Council (NSC) is the United States president’s chief forum for discussing national security issues and pressing foreign policy matters. It is comprised of the president’s senior national security advisors and cabinet officials. It is chaired by the president and has seven regular attendees. Three others occasionally attend, as well as any heads of executive departments or agencies when appropriate. This council will include: Barack Obama (President), Joe Biden (Vice President), John Kerry (Secretary of State), Jack Lew (Secretary of Treasury), Chuck Hagel (Secretary of Defense), Susan Rice (National Security Advisor), General Martin E. Dempsey (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), W. Neil Eggleston (Counsel to the President), Jeffrey Zients (Assistant to the President for Economic Policy), Michael Daniel (Cybersecurity Coordinator), General Samuel J. Locklear (Commander of the US Pacific Command), Ahn Ho-Young (South Korea ambassador to US), Jose L. Cuisia, JR. (Philippines ambassador to US), General Shigeru Iwasaki (Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Council of the Japan Self-Defense Forces), Itsunori Onodera (Japanese Minister of Defense)

 Instead of drafting resolutions, this council will pass directives, which are simply the operative clauses of a normal resolution. They are much more frequent than resolutions and can be passed quickly in order to respond to crises. Delegates will be receiving additional information throughout committee based on future issues regarding Chinese aggression and what happens in council. Foreign representatives will be non-voting members of the council and cannot pass directives, but are vital for debate and can recommend any action. Delegates are highly encouraged to thoroughly understand their character and research all facets of the issue of Chinese aggression.

        The date of this council starts on October 11, 2014. The Chinese Navy has reportedly seized Taiwanese and Japanese fishing trawlers and crews fishing inside the claimed Chinese EEZ around the Senkaku Islands. The Chinese Air Force has stepped up patrols through the airspace, flaring tensions with Japanese Defense Forces. Taipei and Tokyo have both condemned Chinese actions and have issued an ultimatum to the Chinese government, threatening a military response. Delegates should come prepared to respond to this situation and any others that arise during committee.

**Background Information and History**

When Obama took office in 2009, American foreign policy underwent a major shift away from the Middle East and toward the Pacific as the war in Iraq was ending and operations in Afghanistan were winding down. As Secretary of State for half of Obama’s tenure in office, Hillary Clinton stated that the new direction of the State Department would be “a substantially increased investment – diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise – in the Asia-Pacific region.” This includes strengthening bilateral security alliances, developing relationships with emerging powers (including China), expanding trade and investment, bolstering military forces, and advancing democracy and human rights. In order to achieve these goals, the Obama administration believes it needs remain in political accordance with its allies, make sure allies can easily react and adapt to Chinese aggression, and provide defense and communications infrastructures in those countries (both government-owned and supplied by the U.S.) are functioning. In the past couple of years, the U.S. has greatly increased its diplomatic and militaristic presence in the Asian Pacific, working with its allies to mitigate Chinese aggression. In 2011, for example, Japan gave $5 billion to the United States in order to ensure the presence of American military forces in Japan, while also expanding intelligence, surveillance, and information sharing to address cyber threats and promote regional security.

China has become increasingly provocative in response to American policy in Asia, which China claims is actually intended to further isolate China and contain Chinese aggression by strengthening the relationships among other regional nations. Maritime disputes have flared up in recent years, as China is provoking not only the U.S., but also other nations in the region. Although there have been more recent disputes, China has been assertive in the South China Sea for many years. It has had a stronger position on the issues since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012. The South China Sea is an area rich in oil, natural gas, and fishing areas; the Spratly and Paracel Islands, as well as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, are areas of dispute in relation to natural resources. In 2007, the Peoples' Republic of China predicted that the fishing and oil resources in the South China Sea could be worth up to one trillion dollars. China has been using its fishing vessels and naval ships to provoke other boats in disputed waters, issuing “flybys” where Chinese fighter jets fly dangerously close to foreign planes, and harassing sailors and fishermen.

China’s strategy is focused on overcoming the American grip in Asia. International relations scholars commonly refer to the Chinese military strategy as “asymmetrical balancing”: a strategy in which China can focus its efforts solely on negating traditional U.S. advantages in the region. Whereas the United States must focus broadly on protecting global security interests, China, as many scholars argue, desires only to counter American interests in the Asian Pacific. This could be the reason why China is acting so aggressively not only towards the United States, but also America’s allies in the region, such as The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Korea, and Japan.

**Timeline of US-China Relations**

* 1964: The PRC engaged in its first successful nuclear tests. Relations between China and the U.S. were unfriendly.
* 1971: As a sign of diplomacy, American Ping-Pong players competed in China against China’s Ping-Pong team. This was significant because the US was making an attempt to improve relations between the two countries.
* June 17, 1971: Okinawa Treaty ratified by the US and China, which gave control of the Ryukyu islands to Japan. In a more controversial point, the treaty also appears to include the Daioyu/Senkaku islands.
* June 1989: nearly a million students gathered in Tiananmen Square in Beijing to protest corruption in the Chinese government and to support a shift to democracy. Thousands were massacred by Chinese troops and almost 10,000 people were arrested. As a result, the US cut off all military sales to China, which caused a rapid deterioration in US-Sino relations.
* Late 1990s: According to the US Office of Naval Intelligence, "Virtually all of China's ships and submarines were essentially single-mission platforms, poorly equipped to operate beyond the support of land-based defenses." The Chinese navy has grown a lot since the 1990s, and it is probable that these technologies will continue to advance in the coming years.
* 2000: Bill Clinton signed the “U.S.-China Relations Act of 2000” which normalized trade and ultimately allowed China to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) later in 2001. Trading between the US and China increased dramatically from $5 billion in 1980 to $231 billion in 2004.
* March 2007: China announced an 18% increase in its military budget, reaching a total of over $45 billion. Comparatively, the US military spending budget in 2007 was around $540 billion. Chinese military spending has been increasing by about 15% every year from 1990-2005, and continues to grow today.

**Recent Incidents**

* In May of 1999, an accidental NATO attack on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade heightened tensions between the U.S. and China. The attack was supposed to be against the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, but the information behind it was not accurate. There has been a big dispute over whether or not the attack was intentional. The Clinton administration blamed the attack on the inaccurate information provided by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), but the international community still doubts that the Clinton Administration could have conducted an “accidental” attack. As a result of the bombing, thousands of protests were held in China, many people attacking US property.
* April 1, 2001: A mid-air collision between a Chinese J-8 Interceptor and a USN EP-3 signals intelligence aircraft became known as the Hainan Island Incident. It sparked a firestorm of diplomatic troubles, but ultimately China backed down on the monitoring of US surveillance flights and the US continued with operations as normal.
* November 2002: China and the Association of Southeastern Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted a Declaration on the Conduct of Parties on the South China Sea. However, this Declaration only concerned the Spratly Islands, not the Paracel Islands, which is the subject of dispute between China and Vietnam.
* November 2004:  China brought drilling platform Katan 3 into Vietnam's territorial waters to explore oil and gas. It was 63 miles from the Vietnamese coastline and 67 miles from Hai Nam Island.
* July 2007: China pressured the oil company BP to withdraw from its oil contract with Vietnam or otherwise face serious consequences in doing business with China. BP complied.
* March 8, 2009: Five Chinese vessels provoked the *USNS Impeccable* while it was doing surveillance activities approximately 75 miles from claimed Chinese territory. China threatened to collide with the U.S. ship.
* June 11, 2009: A Chinese submarine struck and damaged the *USS John S. McCain,* which was sailing approximately 144 miles outside of the Subic Bay in the Philippines.
* July 2009: China gave order forbidding commercial fishing in Chinese claimed territorial water around the Paracel Islands, including areas illegally claimed. China sent navy patrol boats into the area to enforce its ban, which it claimed was for the purpose of protecting resources. Vietnamese fishermen found in the area were caught, fined, or chased out. Vietnamese fishing boats were also sunk in some instances.
* August 2009: Five Chinese vessels pursued a U.S. surveillance ship in the South China Sea. The U.S. ship was doing routine surveillance acceptable under international law, even though China deems it illegal to perform these activities in its Exclusive Economic Zone.
* February 25, 2011: A Chinese ship fired three shots at Philippine fishing vessel *Maricris 12*.
* May 26, 2011: Chinese patrol boats cut a submerged cable of the *Binh Minh 02*, Vietnam’s hydrocarbon survey ship, while it was operating in Vietnamese waters (approximately 80 miles off the coast of Vietnam).
* July 5, 2011: Chinese soldiers boarded a Vietnamese fishing boat near the Paracel Islands, injured its captain, threatened crew members, and took away fish. Just a few months later, China detained 21 Vietnamese fishermen in the same area and held them for seven weeks.
* December 5, 2013: A Chinese warship almost collided with the *USS Cowpens* while it was lawfully operating in the South China Sea.
* August 2014: China held military exercises in Inner Mongolia with Russia and other Central Asian nations that are part of the Chinese-led anti-U.S. alliance, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

**Current Situation**

Recent Chinese aggression has hindered a 2011 initiative between President Barak Obama and President Hu Jintao to maintain good relations aimed at millennial cooperation. China, now the world’s second largest economy, has been expanding its military at an unprecedented rate as more “hawkish” leaders begin to occupy the political sphere, most notably the current president, Chairman Xi Jinping.

China is currently attempting to secure a naval position through territorial control over much of the South China Sea. And although many of China’s neighbors depend heavily on Chinese trade and economic stability, nations in the South China Sea may adjust trading and economic policies depending on Chinese aggression. The United States wants to mitigate Chinese aggression in order to maintain healthy trade relationships and peace in the region.

**United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas**

The United States has relatively little traction when dealing with Chinese diplomats on the subject of theUnited Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) because the U.S. has not yet ratified the treaty. Ratifying the treaty remains one of Obama’s top priorities in resolving this issue, as it will show U.S. leadership and influence in the region. However, many officials believe that ratifying the treaty is not beneficial for American interests. The treaty resulted from the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea between 1973 and 1982. It defines the rights and obligations of nations to promote peaceful use of international waters and their resources, as well as maintain the sovereignty of nations. There are three different instances in which nations can claim waters surrounding it: islands, rocks or reefs, and low tide elevation (submerged rocks and reefs not visible above water). Low tide elevation is not entitled to any Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Currently, the Paracel Islands are claimed by both Vietnam and China, and the Spratly Group of Islands is claimed by China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. These disputes, along with the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, are creating conflict in the region and prompting U.S. action.

**Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands**

 The Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, five small, uninhabited landmasses, have sparked recent contention over ownership between Japan, China, and Taiwan. The disputed islands are close to international shipping lanes, and offer rich resources including oil, gas, and fish. Japan argues that the islands were unoccupied until 1895 when the Japanese government claims them for its own. However, China claims that it owns the islands based off of ancient Chinese maps and texts, and therefore has jurisdiction. China began asserting its sovereignty in these areas as early as May of 1970, but has taken a harsh stance on the issue in the past few years. Taiwan also believes that it has historical claims to the islands. These islands have been a source of rising tension between the Asia Pacific’s biggest economies since 2012 when Japan effectively nationalized the islands. The move angered China, where people protested, forcing the temporary closure of some Japanese-owned businesses. Since 2008, Chinese fishing vessels have provoked other nations’ ships around the islands, sometimes causing collisions. There were also military vessels sent by China into disputed waters. China also required other nations to notify the Chinese government when they used its airspace around the islands. The 1960 [Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Mutual_Cooperation_and_Security_between_the_United_States_and_Japan) requires the United States to abide by Article V’s mutual defense pact and assist Japan against any attack on its territory.



map from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11341139

**China’s “Nine-Dash Line” Claim and Air Identification Zone**

In May 2009, China issued a U-shaped, nine-dash line in the South China Sea that includes the disputed areas around the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. China claims that this nine-dash line, which spans approximately 200 nautical miles, is based off of a map from 1947 when the Kuomintang Nationalists were still in power. The boundaries were proposed in a letter in response to Malaysia and Vietnam’s claims to territory. China believes that it has sovereignty over land and sea within the nine-dash line, and has claimed nearly the entire South China Sea as part of its Exclusive Economic Zone. The nations that are most affected by China’s nine-dash-line claim are the other South China Sea coastal states, including Vietnam, the Philippines, and other nations that fish and want natural resource in the disputed waters. The nine-dash line conflicts with neighboring nation’s territorial claims, as the region claimed by China overlaps with the EEZs of Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Indonesia. China’s nine-dash line EEZ claim also affects the United States, not only because U.S. vessels engage in commercial activity in the South China Sea, but also because of China’s threat to thwart any foreign military activity in the region. According to Philippine President Benigno Aquino, “China’s nine-dash line territorial claim over the entire South China Sea is against international laws, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas." Other nations in the South China Sea have rejected the Nine-dash line, specifically Vietnam and Malaysia. The United States has repeatedly affirmed its interest in freedom of the seas, navigation, and open access to Asia’s maritime commons in response to China’s hostile claims. China has also claimed an Air Defense Identification Zone, which overlaps with many other nations’ zones. This further escalates tension over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, as well as other territorial disputes in the region. The U.S. said it would ignore China’s air claims, even though other nations are complying out of fear of escalated conflict.



**Taiwan**

The issue of Chinese territorial claims to Taiwan also has been cause for contention in the Asia Pacific region. Taiwan is not recognized by the United Nations as a state, and was replaced by China on the Security Council in 1971. China does not believe that Taiwan has the right to exist as an independent nation, adding to the tension over territorial claims and raising the question of whom the United States recognizes as sovereign actors in the situation. Early in January 2010, the U.S. proposed a multi-billion dollar arms deal with the Republic of China (Taiwan), angering China (PRC); even recognizing Taiwan as a sovereign entity will anger China. A month later, President Obama visited the Dalai Lama, which also sparked criticism from the Chinese government. Many Taiwanese believe they have sovereignty over many parts of China, and therefore make the same claims to the South and East China Seas as the mainland does. However, Taiwanese President Ma Ying-Jeou proposed the East China Sea Peace Initiative. Under this plan, the three nations that have claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (Taiwan, China, and Japan) would agree to work together and allow peaceful use of disputed waters while each having their separate territorial claims. In 2013 Taiwan and Japan signed a fishing agreement that allowed Taiwanese ships to sail in the Japanese-claimed waters around the islands. President Ma believes that national sovereignty cannot be divided, but natural resources can; he hopes that this initiative can serve as a microcosm to a solution of Chinese territorial aggression. Along with balancing territorial claims over disputed waters, the U.S. is concerned over China’s aggressive provocations towards Taiwan. The United States supports Taiwan and arms it to defend its claimed sovereignty. The United States should be aware of these ongoing issues and prepared to respond to potential future conflict. For the purpose of this committee, this issue might become relevant in a crisis situation.

**Character Biographies and Positions**

**Barack Obama**

**President of the United States**

As the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama wants governments to unite around politics of purpose, especially in averting Chinese aggression. Obama believes that ratifying the Law of the Sea Convention is integral to showing U.S. influence and leadership in the Asian Pacific region. However, many American officials think that ratifying the UN convention would override U.S. sovereignty. Obama stated, “Our goal is not to counter China. Our goal is not to contain China. Our goal is to make sure international rules and norms are respected”. He wants to maintain good relationships with surrounding East Asian nations, promoting regional security and bilateral relationships. Obama has also affirmed America’s commitment to defend the Japanese Senkaku Islands, which fall under the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty.

**Joe Biden**

**Vice President of the United States**

 Vice President Joe Biden has greatly supported the Obama administration’s effort to reestablish leadership in the Asia Pacific. He has travelled to myriad countries in the East Asian region, aiming to calm tensions and demonstrate support for Japan and South Korea, two key U.S. allies. Biden wants to stop Chinese aggression while still maintaining a good relationship with China and the other East Asian nations. He has condemned China for its declaration of an air defense zone over the East China Sea, and is urging nations to improve communication with China and crisis management procedures to avoid any escalation of military tensions.

**John Kerry**

**Secretary of State**

John Kerry is deeply concerned over Chinese aggression in the Asian Pacific, and wants to see the dispute resolved peacefully through international law and arbitration rather than direct confrontation. He proposed a plan for establishing a code of conduct for the South China Sea and for China and the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to halt provocative actions. He said, “We need to work together to manage tensions in the South China Sea and manage them peacefully and also to manage them on a basis of international law”. Kerry believes that Chinese aggression will destabilize the Asian Pacific region, interfere with international maritime commerce, and disturb the global economy. He is especially concerned with China’s introduction of an oil rig near Vietnam.

**Jack Lew**

**Secretary of Treasury**

        As Secretary of Treasury, Jack Lew is invested in maintaining a healthy economic relationship between the United States and China. He believes that Chinese aggression could hurt bilateral trade, as well as the general economic stability of the Asia Pacific region. He travelled to China with Secretary of State John Kerry to participate in the Strategic and Economic Dialogue earlier this year, which focused on mitigating Chinese maritime aggression, regional stability, and narrowing trade gaps. Lew is interested in Chinese aggression from an economics perspective.

**Chuck Hagel**

**Secretary of Defense**

Chuck Hagel believes that Chinese aggression is destabilizing the region and undermining peace. He opposes any countries’ intimidation or threats to assert territorial claims, and while he doesn’t directly mention China, he certainly alludes to its recent aggression. Hagel supports an increase in America’s military presence in the Asian Pacific to show support for allies in the region and assert its authority. He believes that the U.S. cannot ignore the mounting tension as China is breaking international rules and standards. These disputes threaten East Asia’s long-term progress and future relations with the region. Chuck Hagel also firmly believes that the U.S. should protect the interests and security of regional allies, such as ASEAN, South Korea, and Japan.

**Susan Rice**

**Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (National Security Advisor)**

Susan Rice has deemed recent Chinese aggression in the South China Sea as provocative and unhelpful. She echoes Obama and Kerry’s statement that the only way to resolve the territorial disputes over sovereignty is through international law and peaceful resolution. China is hindering diplomatic resolution, and its intimidation tactics are destroying future relations with the United States. She believes that the aggression is creating anxiety in the Asia Pacific region and the U.S. should work to maintain strong alliances and trade partners.

**Martin E. Dempsey**

**Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

Martin E. Dempsey, the highest-ranked military advisor, is working to boost the defense capabilities of Southeast Asian countries due to Chinese aggression. He recently visited Vietnam to have discussions about how it should handle the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, namely the oil rig deployed by China in waters claimed by Vietnam. Dempsey believes that China is using military force in situations where diplomacy should rule, and that the Pacific region is becoming less stable because of “coercion and provocation” by China. While he believes that increasing regional defense mechanisms is important, military aggression and confrontation will not solve the issue.

**W. Neil Eggleston**

**Counsel to the President**

The Counsel to the President advises on all legal issues concerning the White House. Due to the disputes over international law and arbitration, W. Neil Eggleston will have a significant interest in Chinese aggression in the East and South China Sea. China is using international law, the UNCLOS, as a basis for sovereignty claims in regional waters; Article 56(a) of the treaty states that a “coastal state has sovereign rights in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to exploit the living and nonliving natural resources in the water and on the seabed,” and Article 56(b) states that a “coastal state has jurisdiction with regard to establishing artificial islands, conducting marine scientific research, and protecting the marine environment.” However, Beijing’s nine-dash line does not follow international law. Eggleston will want to ensure that the legality of international conventions and laws are maintained.

**Jeffrey Zients**

**Assistant to the President for Economic Policy**

Similar to the Secretary of Treasury, Jeffrey Zients will be focused on economic implications of Chinese aggression. He wants to maintain a healthy economic relationship between the United States and China, however will consider economic sanctions if China takes any further aggressive actions. Jeffrey Zients has also served as the acting director of the Office of Management and Budget, and therefore will want to monitor US spending in the region to mitigate the conflict. The Asia Pacific region increased defense spending and military expenditures by 3.6% in the last year, and much of it is due to China and the United States.

**Michael Daniel**

**Cybersecurity Coordinator**

Michael Daniel is responsible for development of national cybersecurity strategy and policy, and oversees the implementation of those policies. He wants the federal government to work with the private sector, NGOs, other branches of the government, and other nations on Cybersecurity. He will be concerned with China’s increasingly aggressive tactics to breach American systems. Cybersecurity will play an important role in mitigating Chinese aggression in the Asian-Pacific region. It will also have a large effect on US-China relations. He is worried about China stealing intellectual and physical property to use against other nations as well as diminish the U.S.’s presence in the region. This delegate should be very knowledgeable on potential cyber attacks.

**General Samuel J. Locklear**

**Commander of the US Pacific Command**

General Samuel J. Locklear is the supreme military authority for the various branches of the Armed Forces in the Pacific region. He has control over the U.S. Army Pacific, Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Pacific Air Forces. Locklear believes that U.S. dominance in the region has weakened due to China’s aggression, and therefore aims to reinstate America’s power. He is unsure whether China will further provoke the United States or neighboring nations, but wants Washington to work with Beijing to form a cooperative security plan. Locklear wants China to be a “net provider of security, not a net user of security.” The General will need to focus on America’s ability to effectively respond to Chinese aggression.

**General Shigeru Iwasaki**

**Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Council of the Japan Self-Defense Forces**

General Shigeru Iwasaki is the highest-ranking military officer in Japan, and calls Chinese aggression dangerous, especially its territorial claims over the Senkaku islands. Iwasaki wants to work with the U.S. to defend the East China Sea islands, which fall under the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. General Iwasaki will work closely with General Locklear to deepen operational cooperation.

**Itsunori Onodera**

**Japanese Minister of Defense**

Itsunori Onodera calls for dialogue with China on the territorial disputes in the East China Sea. He believes that as an important neighbor of Japan, it is imperative to have talks with China. The Minister of Defense believes that Chinese aggression, including Chinese fighter jets flying dangerously close to Japanese aircraft, is dangerous for regional security, and would rather China choose a more diplomatic path.

**ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), South Korea, Japan**

**Ahn Ho-Young (South Korean ambassador to US), Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. (Philippines ambassador to US)**

 China’s aggressive tactics in the South China Sea are making the ten-member group, South Korea, and Japan more cohesive. They want a peaceful resolution to the disputes and to de-escalate tensions in the region. Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea, rejecting all claims from Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Brunei. ASEAN, South Korea, and Japan are anxious about China’s aggressiveness, and their newfound unity also worries China, who prefers a more divided group. They want China to agree to a legally binding Code of Conduct and settle disputes through international law. They also request help from the international community, specifically the United States, to help settle the disputes and maintain good relationships. However, they have not specifically stated China in any of their statements, in order to keep strong trade relationships with China.

**China**

China firmly believes that the U.S. is infringing upon its sovereignty in the Exclusive Economic Zone. It defends its air and sea excursions, saying that Chinese pilot’s maneuvers that were accused of being too close to other jets  “professional, and maintained a safe distance from the U.S. aircrafts.” China also believes that it is U.S. surveillance flights throughout its EEZ that are the root cause behind any accidents, not its own aircraft. China deems the South China Sea as one of the country’s core national interests, along with Tibet and Taiwan. It declared an Air Defense Identification Zone in the East China Sea and believes that the disputed Senkaku-Diaoyu islands are covered by its mutual defense pact with Japan. China also believes that oil and other resources are vital to its growing economy, thus it is adamant on keeping its claimed territory.

**Future Conflict**

In the near future, China will still make aggressive claims to the East and South China seas, sparking conflict with the United States. The growth of Chinese power, Chinese dissatisfaction with the strong U.S. presence in the Asian Pacific, and U.S. allied commitments in the region will intensify any encounter. The United States will still remain defensive in the region and not engage in military conflict unless provoked by China, but the threat is growing. Delegates should take into consideration the global implications of sanctions and high intensity combat; this could disrupt global shipping patterns, industrial production, and consumption worldwide. China is bolstering its presence in the region, furthering Sino-American tensions. The current Chinese second-strike nuclear capability provides the ability to respond to a nuclear attack and is a vital component of the Chinese nuclear deterrence capabilities. This will soon be allied with a host of anti-ship ballistic missiles and cyberspace capabilities that will aid in countering not only U.S. naval influence in eastern Asia, but also their informational grip on nations around the world. Likewise, delegates should consider the implications of intervening and defending nations versus staying out of the conflict. One potential area for conflict is in cyberspace, as China has recently been accused by the United States of cyber hacking.

According to a 2007 Defense Department report to Congress, China's military has invested heavily in defenses against cyberattacks as well as concepts like "computer network attack, computer network defense and computer network exploitation." China has also been virtually attacking U.S. corporations, electrical and power grids, and military and naval bases. One potential threat is a “Digital Pearl Harbor,” a digital attack on U.S. systems and cause major blackouts, interfere with communication systems in armed forces bases in the Asian-Pacific region, and destroy control measures. The Chinese are very capable of this level of cyber warfare, and could potentially use it to diminish America’s presence in the region. Delegates should further research the possibility and implications of this type of attack, as it is very plausible in the near future, and is already happening today.

        Besides cyber warfare, there are three other likely scenarios that could lead to conflict due to Chinese aggression (know that it is not limited to these conflicts, but these are potential sparks):

1.     A disputed due to U.S. military operations in China’s EEZ that prompts an armed Chinese response. The U.S. believes that there is nothing in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that prevents military forces and ships of all nations to conduct activities in Exclusive Economic Zones without China’s consent. China, however, believes this violates domestic and international law. China routinely intercepts U.S. flights and U.S. Naval patrols in its EEZ, which could lead to a collision. A maritime collision is also possible, and the large growth of Chinese submarines also increased the likelihood of an incident.

2.     China and the Philippines clash over natural gas deposits, especially in the disputed area of Reed Bank. Oil survey ships have been harassed by Chinese vessels, even though the Philippines has an exploration contract through the Manila Department of Energy that states that the claimed territories are in its own Exclusive Economic Zone. If the Philippines and China enter an armed conflict, the U.S. would have an obligation to intervene because of its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. Manila also expects that the U.S. will provide military assistance if China attacked the Philippines around the Spratly Islands. The U.S. could also be drawn into a conflict between China and Vietnam over the oil rig dispute.

3.     U.S. involvement due to confrontation involving Japan in the East China Sea or the Philippines in the South China Sea. The United States would be obligated to take military action under defense treaties it has with those nations. Although the U.S. has stronger defense commitments to Japan, defending the Philippines is also important to the U.S.

This could lead to a crisis or conflict between China and a neighboring country such as Japan, the Philippines, or Vietnam, and the United States could be drawn into it as a result of bilateral security treaties with Japan and the Philippines. The Obama administration, in response to Chinese aggression regarding these matters, attempts to meet national interests, interests of allies, and cooperate with an ever-increasing belligerent superpower. The United States has significant political, security, and economic interests at stake if any conflict occurs and Chinese aggression is not mitigated. The U.S. wants to maintain global rules and norms, such as the UNCLOS. Likewise, it wants to ensure alliance security and regional stability, as any conflict could harm its relationships and peace. Trade is an important factor, and the U.S.’s economic interests will play a large role in its decisions. Finally, Washington wants to maintain a healthy relationship with China, and therefore must act carefully in order to keep the peace in the long run. Delegates should consider all factors that play into Chinese aggression.

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