



# Vietnam Role in South China Sea

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**Abstract** - Vietnam has very high stakes in the South China Sea (SCS), which is its life-line. Its geographical situation clearly brings out this dimension. Vietnam borders the Gulf of Tonkin, Gulf of Thailand, and Pacific Ocean, along with China, Laos, and Cambodia. The elongated roughly S shaped country has a north-to-south distance of 1,650 km and is about 50 km wide at the narrowest point. The country has a long coastline of 3,260 km, excluding islands, running from Mong Cai in the North to Ha Tien in the Southwest.

**Keywords** : South China Sea, Vietnam & Coastal Countries, It's politically and economically importance.

## Introduction

The South China Sea is between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and consists of about 300 small and large islands, mainly the Parasil Deep Group and the Spratly Islands, which are made up of several lamps and apart from this, Prataash, Natuna, Scarborough Shawl, etc. also. The border countries are China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines and Vietnam etc. For many years, China has wanted to establish its hegemony over the South China Sea. Whereas its neighboring countries call some part of the South China Sea as their own. Due to which this area has always been disputed. After all, what are the reasons why China is pushing hard to go to this part. The main reason for this is that this part is very important from the commercial and political point of view. Because the South China Sea covers an area of approx about 360,000 square kilometers and the region is expected to contain about 11 billion barrels of crude oil and about 266 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Apart from this, the fish industry sector contributes about 10 to 15% of the total fisheries in the world. Apart from this, this area is counted among the busiest sea routes in the world because about 30% of the maritime merchant cargo ships pass through this area, and the country under whose jurisdiction the South China Sea. On passing in, there will be a huge tax receipt, due to which the economy of that country will become very strong and that country will become powerful. That is why different countries are eager to capture this region. That is why Vietnam and China etc. want their sovereignty of this area. Not long ago, the dispute between Vietnam and China over this area heated up. In July 2020, China carried out the activities of its military forces near Vietnam's parcel lamps. Vietnam termed

this activity of China as illegal and strongly objected to it. In this regard, Vietnam and the United States signed a MOU to stop China's ongoing illegal activities in the region. Because maritime laws have been made by the International Court of Justice in 1982, according to which any country can keep its possession in the sea up to 200 nautical miles from its border, it will be illegal to occupy more than that.

Action taken by Vietnam to secure the region "To protect the Spratly Islands, Vietnam has installed five new mobile rocket launchers in its territory that can hit and destroy Chinese runways. In 2020, India and Vietnam jointly conducted a 2-day naval drill operation to establish peace in the region. China's claims on the South China Sea at approx 90% of its part. China claims that this area was first discovered by the citizens of China and since then trade is being done here by China. In this regard, in 1947, China drew 9 dash lines in its map, which was made almost by including the entire South China Sea and all the part inside those lines China claims as its own. And to establish its dominance in this area, China keeps taking various measures. Under this, China built an artificial island in this area in 2014 and built runways etc., deployed missiles here and radar etc. Planted and stationed his army there, which prevent small border countries in this area from fishing and oil exploration etc. The Philippines filed a suit against it in the International Court of Justice, which ruled in favor of the Philippines in 2016 and declared China's activities illegal. But China refused to accept any decision of the International Court.

**Vietnam role** - China is constantly trying to capture the Parcel Deep group occupied by Vietnam and for this it keeps doing some illegal activities. He prevents Vietnam from fishing here, and searching for oil, etc. In April 2020, China sank a Vietnamese fishing vessel in this area. Due to which to put pressure on China, Vietnam along with India conducted a joint naval operation in this area, in which the navies of both countries showed their strength. Even after the Philippines won the case against China in the International Court, China refused to obey the court order, due to which Vietnam raised a strong objection.

China perceives Vietnam as an obstacle for acquiring its control over this strategic sea. Not only Vietnam is the strongest opponent of the Chinese nine-dash line claim in the region, Vietnam's sustained economic growth has pushed it to emerge as an important player in the South East Asia, which China perceives is not in its interests. Its role in the Asean in keeping the countries united on the issue of the illegal Chinese claims, maintaining the pressure for the finalisation of the Code of Conduct, and in the Asean Outlook for Indo-Pacific annoys China. These bring strategic rivalry between the two nations, despite the two countries have 'comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership'. Though Vietnam publicly does not oppose China, yet it asserts its claims in the South China Sea. It has approached the UNSC for the implementation of the Ruling of International Cort in 2016.

The recent developments have brought significant changes in the security environment, which are favourable for Vietnam. Vietnam unified the Asean countries during its chairmanship to demand the end of the Chinese coercive activities. It became the Non-permanent Member of the UNSC, raising its stature. The first Quad meeting in March, not only assured strong support for Asean's unity and centrality as well as AOIP in the

Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific but also for facilitating collaboration “to meet challenges to the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas.” Vietnam’s handling of the pandemic has been admired globally.

### **U.S. Support**

More recently in August 2021, US Vice President Kamala Harris, who was on a tour of Southeast Asia countries in Singapore, accused China of coercion and intimidation over illegal claims in the South China Sea. He said that China should immediately vacate the South China Sea area because the South China Sea is important for American security. The Indian-American Vice President’s seven-days visit to Singapore and Vietnam is his second attempt at the world stage to stand with smaller countries in the face of China’s growing security and economic challenges. He accused China of coercing China into the South Sea and threatening other countries, saying the issue has been a matter of dispute between several countries in the region for many years. Harris said the US would certainly support its allies in the event of a threat. In the Singapore speech, Harish outlined the American perspective on human rights and the rules-based international order. He also appealed to the Asian countries to strengthen the distance of the rich. He said that China’s wrong claims have been rejected by the International Tribunal in 2016 itself, but with the help of it, it is putting pressure on regional countries. Kamala Harris said Beijing’s actions in the South China Sea were in defiance of a rule-based decision. It is a threat to the sovereignty of the surrounding countries. He also recalled the 2016 international tribunal’s decision, referring to the historic victory of the Philippines over China.

**Conclusion** - Therefore, it is concluded from all the above facts that China does not want to give any share to any coastal country in the South China Sea and wants its monopoly, in which China has to face the most opposition from Vietnam itself. Vietnam strongly opposes China’s illegal activities. In order to make medicine of this Chinese disease, India and the United States etc. have also sought help in Vietnam. India should take advantage of this opportunity and make a treaty with Vietnam in the matter of oil extraction. Although ONGC company is engaged in the exploration of oil in Vietnam, which is not pleasing to China. Vietnam’s military power is very strong and India should equip Vietnam’s army with Brahmos missiles to strengthen it against China, the only weapon that China panics. In recent times, all countries are angry with China due to Corona disease and India should take advantage of this and unite all the countries of South China Sea and join them so that China can never dominate India.

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