



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

SOCOMUN XXXII

SECURITY COUNCIL

TOPIC: OPEN AGENDA



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Security Council

Open Agenda

Hi delegates, my name is Grace Garrigan, and I am so excited to be your committee chair for SOCOMUN XXXII! In my four years of MUN, I have not only developed my public speaking and leadership skills, but also have gained friends, confidence, and discovered my passion of international politics/relations. At school, you can see me at MUN meetings, at meetings with my club called Eagle Outreach, hanging out with friends, or getting chicken tenders almost every day! Outside of school, you can see me at the beach or on a hike, making charcuterie boards, practicing high and triple jump, and binge-watching shows on Netflix. This conference is meant to be a learning experience for new MUN students to gain knowledge and a deeper understanding of MUN as we guide you. I highly recommend researching this topic before the conference to have prior background knowledge, a solid country policy, and some well-developed solutions for committee and speeches. For more help and resources, please visit the SOCOMUN website or contact us with the email below. Remember that what you put into the conference is what you will get out of it, but more importantly, remember that MUN is FUN!

Hello delegates, my name is Joseph Lee, a current senior at SMCHS and your vice chair during committee. I play club and high school soccer and enjoy mountain biking as well. My MUN experience has been filled with fun and growth as I have been to both online and in-person conferences. My favorite MUN experiences have been traveling to Washington DC for NAIMUN LX and winning a tri-delegate committee with some of my friends.

Hello delegates, my name is Harrison Beck. I am your rapporteur during committee and a sophomore this year. This is my second year of MUN, and I plan to stay in MUN for all four years of high school. Last year I attended conferences such as SOCOMUN and Edison MUN. I have enjoyed learning about different countries, issues, and forming solutions. I am excited to be part of the dais this year and wish you all the best of luck.

Through the SOCOMUN conference, delegates will debate on the topic presented according to their country policy, collaborate with others to form realistic solutions for resolutions papers during informal consultations, present the resolution papers, and answer questions about resolutions. At SOCOMUN, the Security Council committee has the topic of “Open Agenda,” which means that there is no set topic that should be debated on and delegates can bring solutions to motion and vote for. However, it is strongly encouraged that all delegates research and prepare to debate on **The Dispute Over the South China Sea**, the default debate topic.

If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us directly via email at socomunsc@gmail.com! Our main goal as a dais is to provide a safe, fun, and educational space for delegates to develop their leadership skills and explore MUN, gaining qualities useful for the future.



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Background:

The South China Sea is one of the most desirable regions in the world. It is not only where one-third of maritime trade occurs, but also very desirable for its location, oil and gas reserves, and high fish population. However, the South China Sea's desirability has caused conflict between neighboring nations to the sea including China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Malaysia. This conflict has mainly been over the land and reefs in the South China Sea, which are the Paracels and the Spratlys. The Paracels contain many small islands, rocks, and coral, while the Spratlys have fewer islands and more rocks, reefs, and coral. The Spratlys are especially valuable compared to the Paracels, as the area is rich in fish and natural resources.

Despite the many nations in the territorial dispute, China has caused most of the conflict with the other Southeast Asian nations as the nation feels they should have the most control over the South China Sea. In 1947, leaders of China came together to make what is known today as the “nine dash line,” which makes a U shape that contains almost all of the South China Sea. As China’s power continued to grow, they continually used their “nine dash line” to assert control over the South China Sea and claim more territory. They first took over the Paracels, which angered the Vietnamese as they lost some of their territories. Even though many nations still claimed this territory as their own, China built oil rigs, artificial islands, and military bases. This increased tensions between nations that were in proximity to or claimed land in the South China Sea because they feared the military force of China with new military bases throughout the South China Sea. Tensions increased further in 2012 when China also claimed that the Scarborough Shoal was their territory because it is in the “nine dash line,” even though the Philippines had claimed the territory shortly back in 1946. However, it was later decided that China’s “nine dash line” should not and cannot decide the territorial claims in the South China Sea. To protect its claimed land from nations like the Philippines and Vietnam that disagreed with their abuse of power, China increased its naval forces and patrol in the South China Sea. For example, in 2021 China used water cannons to disrupt Philippine ships in route. Chinese attacks and activities like this have only increased, placing people and the environment in danger.

Most of China’s actions in the South China Sea have been against the Law of the Sea, which was established in 1982 by the United Nations. The Law of the Sea defines a true island, states that each coastal nation’s islands have a territorial sea, explains what an Exclusive Economic Zone is and its rights, and explains artificial islands and rocks. Even though the Law of the Sea was established to help disputes like those in the South China Sea, it is not enforced enough, leading nations like China to ignore it and threaten lines of communication.

With its large naval presence, the United States of America has been a great help with the disputes but remains neutral. The United States is allied with many smaller Southeast Asian nations such as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam, and has been in support of freedom of navigation and a code of conduct for the South China Sea. While keeping their neutrality, the US rejected China’s “nine dash line” and increased freedom of navigation operations. These operations include using surveillance and warships to track artificial islands and other claimed territories of China in the South China Sea. This has helped to keep more peace and ensure freedom within the sea.



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Possible Solutions:

When developing and analyzing solutions for the dispute of the South China Sea, it is important to keep in mind the Law of the Sea and the sovereignty of each nation. By adding more specifics to the Law of the Sea, the law can be enforced throughout the South China Sea, which will make it hard for nations like China to ignore it. The Law of the Sea should contain specific punishments for attacks on ships and trade, how to deal with claiming territory, and details on military bases in the South China Sea. The changes to the law should not infringe on the sovereignty of any nation, as each nation is entitled to its own rights and the changes are simply to better enforce the Law of the Sea and its goals. Additionally, delegates should creatively and realistically develop freedom of navigation operations. These operations are very useful as they allow nations to track the actions of nations, the movement of war and trading ships, and artificial islands. Lastly, peaceful negotiations can be a great solution for resolving this dispute. Over the years, nations have only met to claim and argue over their disputes, which has only increased tensions. A peace talk between countries involved in this dispute can help to lower tensions and allow more freedom of the South China Sea rather than limitation.

The solutions explained above are great ways to resolve the dispute of the South China Sea. However, the dais strongly encourages all delegates to develop their own unique solutions rather than reusing the ones above. When making solutions, you should be thinking outside the box, while also making sure to add specific and necessary detail to them. A great way to do this is to think of the 5 W's – who, when, why, where, and what – and to think of how solutions will be able to happen. Additionally, please do not worry about funding for your solutions as it is assumed that funding will be received from the United Nations.

Questions to Consider:

To guide your research and preparation, here are some questions about the South China Sea to consider. These questions will help you to create effective solutions that are in line with your country policy, which will greatly help you in committee. Please note that these questions do not need to be answered before or during committee, but are merely just for guidance and assistance as you ponder the issue and develop create solutions.

1. What is your nation's policy and stance on the topic of the dispute of the South China Sea? How has your nation been involved with this issue?
2. How can the citizens, environment, and ships of smaller and weaker nations be protected from China's threats and negative actions? How has the dispute of the South China Sea affected your country?
3. Can this issue solely be solved by adjusting China's view of territory in the South China Sea, or will multiple nations need to contribute?
4. How can the Law of the Sea be better enforced in the South China Sea? Will it need to be revised to be enforced? How can it be enforced without causing conflict between nations?
5. In what ways can freedom of navigation operations be taken to the next level? Should the United States increase their involvement of the issue?



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