

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

by

WOLFGANG SENFTLEBEN¹

Karl Haushofer in his geopolitical masterpiece "Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans"² (Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean) was one of the first geographers to draw significant attention to the strategic importance of the South China Sea in the nineteen twenties. Already his earlier work on "Dai Nippon — Betrachtungen Uber Japans Weltkraft, Weltstellung und Zukunft"³ (Dai Nippon — Reflections on Japan's world power, world position and future development) stressed on the vital position of the South China Sea area for Japan's supply line. In fact, Japanese politicians and military authorities studied Haushofer's geopolitical theories carefully and realized that any country that establishes dominance over the South China Sea islands group will be well placed for easy reach to countries in the region as the Japanese had so effectively demonstrated at the beginning of the Pacific War. During the post-World War II period, the South China Sea was one of the most neglected ocean areas serving somehow as a "buffer zone" between the spheres of interest of the pre-War world powers of China, France (Indochina), Great Britain (Borneo Territories), and the United States of America (Philippines). It was only in the early 1970s that the importance of the Paracel, Spratly, Pratas and Macclesfield island groups in the South China Sea had been rediscovered that resulted in military and diplomatic clashes between the countries concerned. The principal reasons for the sudden awakening of interest in the area can be seen in the recent off-shore oil discoveries in the continental shelf of the South China Sea and the impending revision of the International maritime law which may augment the importance of island regimes for economic exploitation. The following treatise tries: (1) to summarize the development and events of the last three years; (2) to analyse the conflicting nature of sovereignty claims by the neighboring countries and the historical, legal and geographical background to such territorial claims; and (3) to offer solutions to the conflict.

¹ Visiting Associate Professor at the Research Institute of Geography (graduate school), National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan.

² Haushofer, K. (1924): "Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans"; Berlin.

³ Haushofer, K. (1913): "Dai-Nippon — Betrachtungen Uber Japans Weltkraft, Weltstellung und Zukunft"; Bernn (in German).

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND DE FACTO POSITION

The South China Sea, often simply also called China Sea, is enclosed by Southeastern China, Indo-china (Vietnam), the Malay Peninsula and Borneo (Malaysia), the Philippines and Formosa (Taiwan); and consists of four major archipelagos: Paracels, Spratlys, Pratas and Macclesfield Banks.

a) *The Paracel Archipelago*. — Webster's Geographical Dictionary gives the following antiquated definition:

“The Paracel islands (Japanese: Hirata Gunto; Chinese: Hsi Shan Chuntao; Vietnamese: Hong Sa) is a group of small islets and reefs in the South China Sea, about 250 miles east of Central Annam (Vietnam) claimed by France and Japan, occupied by Japan in 1939 and returned to China after World War II”.

The Paracel group at present is claimed by Vietnam (as a successor state of the former French Indo-China) and China, represented by the People's Republic of China. The Republic of China on Taiwan has voiced a similar claim not as a third party, but as the “only legal and elected government for all-China” in pursuance of her “one-China-policy”.

Red China is currently in *de facto* possession of the Paracels. Their close proximity to the Southern island of Hainan gives the Paracels the function of a “glacis” area. The territorial dispute inherited from the pre-War period was activated again in January 1974 when China and Thieu's South Vietnam fought a 100-minute war on land and sea in the Paracels. The South Vietnamese navy sank a 700T Chinese gunboat and lost one of its own ships. On 20th January, 1974 Chinese forces overrun all Vietnamese positions. The Peking-based “New China News Agency” reported one year later, that a “revolutionary committee” has been established on the islands and the Kwangchow Song and Dance Ensemble had given a performance on the Yunghsing Island. In November 1975, Peking's cultural magazine “Guang Ming” devoted a full-page report on the Paracels which was directed towards Hanoi. With the Communist seizure of power in South Vietnam the long-standing dispute did not disappear or diminish, but the re-united Vietnam was diligent in publishing a map of Vietnam showing those islands as Vietnamese territory. Vietnam apparently receives Soviet-Russian support, since Russia with her world-wide socio-imperialistic ambitions has a vital interest in the South China Sea being free from Chinese domination.

b) *The Spratly archipelago*. — The Spratly archipelago (Chinese: Nan Sha Chuntao; Vietnamese: Truong Sa) consists of four separate main atoll groups with more than 200 single islets. Only two of them

Oct.-Dec., 1976

THE POLITICAL GEOG. OF SOUTH CHINA SEA

165

reportedly are settled with semi-permanent population (mostly fishermen and military personnel) with the rest being uninhabited due to shortage of drinking water and adversative physical conditions. These shoals and reefs scattered over a large ocean area, are only a few feet above sea level and do not provide protection against inundations and typhoon destructions. The geographical location is approximately 280 nautical miles from Camranh Bay (Vietnam), 775 miles northeast of Singapore, 200 miles from Manila, 700 miles from mainland China (Kwangtung) and 1100 miles south of Taiwan.

The Spratly archipelago is claimed by the Republic of China on Taiwan who occupies the principal part of the area, by Communist China, Vietnam, and with certain reservations, by the Philippines. Malaysia who is the nearest neighbor to the largest Spratly island, has not claimed the area. The Nationalist Chinese have stationed a garrison on Itu Aba or Taiping island in the Spratlys since 1946; the military equipment includes two barracks, 5 canons, a generator for electricity and a weather station. The garrison whose number is not disclosed officially might be around 500 according to Taipei news reports. From time to time, the National Chinese Ministry of Defence issues a statement that her armed forces still continue to occupy the Taiping island in the Spratlys.⁴ In February 1974 Thieu's South Vietnam sent a task force to the islands close to the Vietnamese coast to beef-up off-shore oil exploration in the Gulf of Siam. The Communist government in Vietnam followed the steps of their predecessors and landed a force there to relieve the military garrison. Hanoi's newspaper "Quan Doi Nizzapnh" boosted in a front-page article that "concrete programs are now under way to defend the islands". The unified Vietnam commands one of the strongest navies in the region, but until now, no naval clash has occurred in the Spratlys. The Philippines aim is directed towards economic exploitation of the continental shelf. In May 1976, a Philippine Foreign Office statement disclosed massive oil explorations in the Reed Bank which sparked off a strong-worded protest by China, Taiwan and Vietnam.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The recent revival of the long-standing dispute over the South China Sea must be seen on the background of the following events:

a) *Third Conference on the law of the sea.* — In 1973 the United Nations started to formulate a new maritime law with far-reaching

⁴ A spokesman of the MND said "the Chinese government garrison on Itu Aba in the Spratly group were not attacked. He made the remarks in answering a press query on a foreign wire service dispatch, claiming that Viet-cong troops had "liberated" the islands. The Chinese troops are still stationed only on Itu Aba... the government remains in touch several times a day with the garrison troops, all is quiet — nor did they sight any intruder."

consequences for the majority of nations.⁵ Although a final agreed text has not been codified it seems certain to bring about an extension of the 'territorial water' from the present 3 miles to 12 miles and a further 200 miles exclusive 'economic zone'. Red China has unilaterally extended the area under her jurisdiction to 200 miles through National legislation which would incorporate most of the disputed South China Sea islands. According to International law, a country in legal possession of the islands, would be entitled to establish a 12 miles 'territorial water' and a 200 miles 'economic zone' around each principal island which virtually would convert the South China Sea into a *mare clausum* with only a few sea lane left for navigation. According to current law, low-tide elevations do not create a 'territorial water', but several Pacific and Indian Ocean nations are pressing hard that reefs, atolls, lagoons, etc. should be conferred the same right even if submerged at mean low water.

b) *Oil exploration.* — The South China Sea is one of the potential areas for oil exploration and almost a dozen fields are already yielding oil. Major known oil fields have been reported from West Malaysia (east of Dungun and Kuala Trengganu), Sarawak (Lutong, Baram, Bakau, and Baronia-fields), Brunei (Seria, Ampa-fields), Sabah (Tembungo, Erb-West, and Semarang-fields), Vietnam (Mekong Delta), and the Philippines (Reed Bank off Palawan islands). Most of the South China Sea is within the continental shelf of Southeast Asia and does not present technical problems for drilling and exploitation.

c) *Major world shipping route.* Unlike the Yellow and East China Sea, the South China Sea is one of the world's strategic waterways with particular vital interest for Japan. With the reopening of the Suez Canal in June 1975 the importance as a major shipping route has even increased, since most of the pre-1975 traffic between Europe and the Far East has been diverted through the Straits of Lombok and Philippine Sea. The prospected cut through the Isthmus of Kra in Southern Thailand would further strengthen the South China Sea route.

PRINCIPLES FOR DETERMINATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The following principles to determine sovereignty or rights of ownership can be brought up:

- a) self-determination (of the local population through a plebiscite);
- b) cultural, ethnic or geographical affinity;

⁵ see: WHITMORE BOGGS (1951): "National claims in adjacent seas"; Geographical Review. G.E. PEARCY (1959): "Geographical aspects of the law of the sea"; A.A.A.G. ARCHER & BEAZLEY (1975): "The geographical implications of the law of the sea conference"; Geographical Journal. HEROLD, D. (1975): "Die dritte Seefahrtskonferenz der Vereinten Nationen"; Die Erde, 106 Jg., Heft 4, pp. 277-290.

- c) annexation by prescriptive right or customary law;
- d) historic rights or colonial connections; and
- e) legal title through treaties or conventions

None of these criteria gives a clear indication how the South China Sea dispute is to be settled. Most bi-lateral or international treaties are not clear or do not specifically refer to the South China Sea, but rather delineate the respective zones of their interest. The case is further complicated since more than half a dozen countries with different political and ideological orientation are affected.

a) *The right of self-determination*, one of the principal tenets of the United Nations when granting independence to colonial areas, cannot find consideration in the South China Sea dispute. Except for the two largest islands in the Spratly group, the area has no indigenous population due to shortage of drinking-water. According to Taiwanese informations, there is a population of approximately 1000 on the Spratlys, including a Nationalist Chinese garrison stationed on the largest island of the group. The majority of inhabitants can be classified as semi-permanent settlers, mainly fisherman without their families. Except for the short Japanese occupation, the islands never have been under colonial domination.⁶

b) *Cultural, ethnic and geographical affinity*. — The present population of the Paracel and Spratly islands is purely Chinese with origin from the southern Kwantung province. A number of French settlers living there before the War had been forced to leave in 1939 when Japan occupied the area. There is a Chinese Taoist temple on the Spratlys, and Chinese naturalists reportedly have unearthed a slab in the Paracels which is to prove Chinese presence on the islands since the last seventy years. For multiple reasons, however, cultural affinity cannot justify ownership claims as many African and Asian examples have shown in the past.

c) *Annexation by prescriptive right*. — Military occupation and *de facto* exercise of power over a long period leads frequently to the deduction of *de jure* ownership rights, as the Israeli example demonstrates. This also explains why Taiwan has stationed a garrison on Taiping island in the Spratlys since the last twenty years. After the military occupation of the Paracels, Red China has set up a "revolutionary people's committee" to consolidate her administrative and political power. The landing of a North Vietnamese expeditionary force on some other Spratly island seems to serve the same purpose. Except

⁶ A number of useful geographical informations on the Paracel and Spratly islands are contained in the Chinese-language weekly periodical NEWSDON (Sinwen Tienti weekly), No. 1360 and 1365 of 1974.

for the Paracels' naval clash between Thieu's South Vietnam and Communist China in January, 1974 no open military provocation between the parties concerned has occurred, and the present aim is to maintain the *status quo* in the region.

d). *Historical connections* between the South China Sea and the Chinese mainland date back to the end of the SUNG-Dynasty (1127-1289 A.D.) when a Chinese military unit was temporarily stationed there for the first time. During the MING-Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.) the South China Sea was officially claimed as Chinese territory and the local fishing population paid tribute to the Chinese emperor. The Chinese admiral CHENG-HO was sent to take possession of the South China Sea islands. CHENG-HO's seven naval expeditions (1405-1431 A.D.) took Chinese explorers as far as Indonesia and Africa. Coins have been discovered in the Paracels that date from the period of emperor MING CHEN. Since republican time the South China Sea was administered from Kwangtung province and formed the 'Hainan Special Administration District'. But China's influence in the area diminished in the twenties due to civil war and internal disintegration.

LEGAL SITUATION AND TREATIES

The relationship between Imperial China and her southern neighbour of Indo-China was regulated by a treaty signed in June 1887 between China and France the colonial power of former Indo-China. France has delineated her sphere of influence by drawing line at the 108° of longitude with an eastward recess along the Annamese coast. The treaty, however, does not specifically refer to the disputed ownership of the South China Sea, since British and Spanish interest had to be taken into consideration. In the nineteenthirties when China was impoverished through internal trouble, France took again the initiative and made a formal declaration against Chinese immigration into the area. Instead, France encouraged French settlers to emigrate to the Spratlys. When the Philippine archipelago was ceded by Spain to the United States of America in December 1898 in the Peace Treaty of Paris, the 118° was designated as the dividing line, with the Spratly and Pratas archipelago located outside the "International treaty limits" or the "historic waters of the Philippines". Britain as the protecting power in Northern Borneo (and Malaysia as the successor state) never laid any claim to the Spratlys although being the closest neighbour.

The Paracel group was occupied by Japanese forces in 1939, the Spratlys in June 1940. Both areas were subsequently made a submarine base, since then they have been of military and strategic im-

portance to several nations. The U.S.A. used the Pratas islets for the surveillance of shipping routes during the Vietnam War and planted seismic detectors on the ocean's ground. The Republic of China undertook a naval exercise on Tungsha Chuntao (Pratas Islands) in 1975 and landed several amphibian planes there. The Soviet Union has used the Macclesfield Bank repeatedly for naval operations. During the Pacific War, the largest island of the Spratlys was developed economically. The Japanese constructed a light railway, a meat cannery, and a supply centre, but all the installations were bombed and completely destroyed at the end of the War.

After Japan's surrender in 1945 all the South China Sea possessions were returned to the Republic of China and the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty of April 1952 signed in Taipei gave China full sovereignty over the islands. It must be stressed, however, that this was a bilateral agreement lacking broad international recognition. The South China Sea problem was brought again on the agenda at the Conference of San Francisco in 1951. Vietnam (at that time represented by France) renewed her claim to the islands and none of the 51 participating countries objected to it. The Republic of China (after her retreat from the mainland to Taiwan) was not present at the Conference.

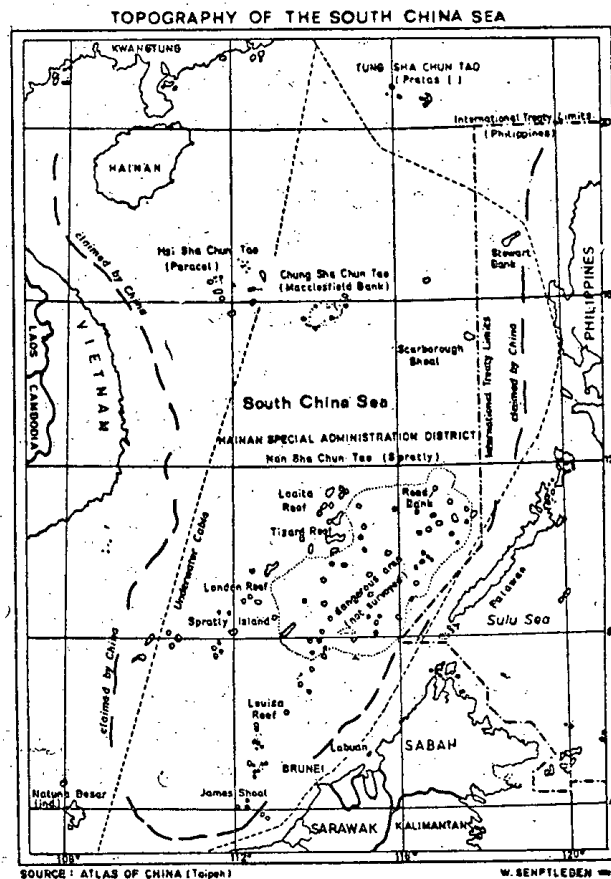
An excellent summary of facts and commentary on People's China's political bearing on international and territorial problems provides COHEN & CHIU's work in two volumes on "People's China and International Law" which traces back with loving care China's attitude towards off-shore islands in the South China Sea.⁷

ARCHIPELAGIC THEORY AND SEMI-ENCLOSED SEA

The Communist Chinese regime in Peking (P.R. China) and the Nationalist Chinese government based in Taipei (R.O.C.) are aligned in claiming Chinese sovereignty over the entire region of the South China Sea, including the Paracel, Spratly, Pratas and Macclesfield archipelagoes. Peking's People's Atlas of China (1954) as well as Taipei's 'National Atlas of China' (published by the National War College, Taipei, 1971) show the same kind of cartographic expansionism with regard to the South China Sea and the boundary line includes all the ocean area which is not in accordance with the practice of International maritime law; see figure 1).

The principle of *mare clausum* was pursued in the Middle Ages by many seafaring nations, like Venice, Genoa, Sweden, Denmark and even

⁷ COHEN, J.A. & CHIU, H. (1974): "People's China and International Law — A Documentary Study in two volumes"; Princeton University Press.



England, and culminated in the division of oceans of the world between Spain and Portugal in 1493. It was only with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 that the Iberian kingdoms ceased to have power to enforce their claims. Subsequently, the interest of the Dutch and English with their large commercial fleets was directed towards the "Freedom of the High Sea". This principle was developed and formulated by Hugo Grotius in his 1609 work on "*Mare Librum*"⁸ and still forms one of the basic tenets of the current maritime law.

On the other hand, the Archipelagic Concept which has been propagated by the Philippines, Mauritius, Fiji and Indonesia at the U.N. Third Conference on the Law of the Sea, but may possibly find similar application to other archipelagic states like Micronesia, Bahamas, Seychelles or Maldives, aims to draw a straight baseline along the outermost islands of their coastal archipelagoes which would convert all waters enclosed into 'territorial water' under the full jurisdiction of the respective State. The Archipelagic Principle, if formally adopted

⁸ Grotius, H. (1609): "*Mare Librum*"; Leiden.

by the United Nations, cannot find any consideration in respect to the South China Sea problem.⁹

Although no clearcut definition for the delimitation of archipelagoes has been agreed at, there is a mutual consensus of opinion that mainland states should not be entitled to apply the Archipelagic Concept to their archipelagoes or off-shore islands forming part of a coastal state.¹⁰ A similar case is the Canadian claim to sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic.

The Spratly, Paracel and Pratas island groups in the strict sense cannot be regarded as genuine archipelagoes since the definition accepted by the majority of States implies that:

“those component islands and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity, and historically have or may have been regarded as such”.

The Chinese position of claiming the South China Sea as internal waters of China, whether voiced by Peking or by Taipei, has no legal justification and is not consistent with International law. The Red Chinese working paper on “sea areas within the limits of national jurisdiction” submitted by the Chinese delegation to the U.N. Third Conference on the Law of the Sea¹¹ underlines such claims to the South China Sea, but is less rigid than previous statements and leaves a margin for possible mutual negotiations.

According to the “Informal Single Negotiating Text” of the United Nations Third Conference on the Law of the Sea (1975)¹² the South China Sea could be best classified under the category of “Enclosed and Semi-enclosed Seas” (part IX, articles 133-135).

⁹ For further reading on the Archipelagic Theory consult: COQUIA (1962): “The Territorial Waters of Archipelagoes”; *Phil. Int'l. Law J.*, No. 149; KLEIN (1966): “The Territorial Waters of Archipelagoes”; *Fed. B.J.* 317; RAJAN, H.P. (1973): “Towards Codification of Archipelagoes in International Law”; *Indian J. Int'l. Law (New Delhi)*, No. 13, pp. 468-480; FRANSSEN, M.K.T. (1973): “The Archipelagic Principle”; *Oceanus (Mass.)*, No. 17, pp. 14-17; RAJAN, H.P. (1974): “The 1973 Draft Articles on Archipelagoes by Fiji, Indonesia, Mauritius and the Philippines analysed”; *Indian J. Int'l. Law*, No. 14, pp. 230-244; AMERASINGHE, C.F. (1974): “The Problem of Archipelagoes in the International Law of the Sea”; *Int'l. Comp. Law Quart.*, London, No. 23, pp. 539-575; TOLENTINO, A. (1975): “Archipelagic Theory and the Law of the Sea”; *Philippine Geogr. Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 158-170.

¹⁰ U.N. THIRD CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1974): “Canada, Chile, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, and Norway: working paper; Symbol No. A/CONF. 62/L.4 of 26 July 1974.

¹¹ U.N. THIRD CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1973): “Working paper on sea area within the limits of national jurisdiction”, submitted by the Chinese delegation; “Symbol No. A/AC.138/SC.II/L.34 of 16th July 1973.

¹² U.N. THIRD CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1975): “Informal Single Negotiating Text”, part II; Symbol No. A/CONF.62/WP.8/Part II, of 7th May 1975, Articles 133-135.

THE PHILIPPINES' POINT OF VIEW

Based on historical grounds, the Philippines' point of view seems to be the weakest and is of different nature than the other claimants. In contrast to China, Taiwan and Vietnam, the Philippines do not claim the entire Spratly archipelago, but only those off-shore islands on the continental shelf close to the Philippine coast.

The Philippines virtually occupies and claims four Spratly islands on the ground that they were *res nullius* and did not belong to any country since the islands are uninhabited consisting mainly of shoals and shallow banks. Therefore the United Nations' Convention on Continental Shelves of 1958 should be applicable to grant the Philippines the exclusive right of economic exploitation of the continental shelf. With the new international maritime law in the offing, the Philippines would receive a 200 nautical miles' exclusive economic zone beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea for the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, but on the condition that the ocean area is considered a *res nullius*. The continental shelf of the South China Sea could be consequently divided among the claimants according to the "principle of equidistance" by drawing a "median line", i.e. the line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points of the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea of each State is measured.

The Philippines strongly oppose the application of historical grounds for resolving the South China Sea issue, which is in contrast to her position in the dispute about Sabah. All of the South China Sea islands, except for the Stewart Bank, are located outside of the "historic waters of the Philippines" (so-called International treaty limits) which according to the Philippine Constitution¹³ forms the National boundary of the country. To make it clear once again, the Philippines do not claim the four Spratly islands as a sovereign part of their National territory, but demand the right of the exclusive exploitation of natural resources in accordance with International and National laws.¹⁴

The Philippines' claim dates back to 1946 when it was voiced in the United Nations General Assembly, and was repeated periodically

¹³ Article 1 of the New Philippine Constitution reads as follows: "The national territory comprises the Philippine archipelago, with all the islands and waters embraced therein, and all the other territories belonging to the Philippines by historic right or legal title, including the territorial sea, the air space, the subsoil, the seabed, the insular shelves, and the other submarine areas over which the Philippines has sovereignty or jurisdiction. The waters around, between, and connecting the islands of the archipelago, irrespective of their breadth and dimensions, form part of the internal waters of the Philippines."

¹⁴ Fisheries Act of the Philippines, 1932; Petroleum Act of the Philippines, June 18, 1949, No. 45 Official Gazette.

OCT.-DEC., 1976

THE POLITICAL GEOG. OF SOUTH CHINA SEA

173

in 1950, 1956 and 1971, i.e. shortly after Taiwan lost her seat in the United Nations in favor of Mainland China. The dispute became heated up again in mid-1976 when the Philippines officially disclosed that a Swedish-Filipino oil exploration firm had started oil drilling in the area of Litetan (Reed Banks) approximately 250 miles northeast of the Spratlys and 200 miles off the Philippine island of Palawan.

In contrast to the East China and Yellow seas which leave some hope for a partial solution in the three-cornered boundary dispute between China, Korea and Japan, the chances for a settlement in the South China Sea dispute are remote. Taking the issue to the International Court of Justice at The Hague may not bring satisfaction to the litigant parties as it was illustrated by the border settlement between Thailand and Cambodia in the late 1940s. Any arbitration by the World Court would be further complicated because of the different nature of claims and the fact that the decision of the Court has no binding force since there is no rule of *stare decisis* in international law. There has been no equivocation in the Chinese position towards the South China Sea and there is little hope Peking would eventually settle for an equidistant line and greatly favor the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam at the expenses of China and Taiwan. Taking the Anglo-Norwegian Fisheries Case as a precedent, which led to the North Sea demarcation between Norway, Denmark, Great Britain and West Germany, there is very little hope for similar application, because it involves negotiations between all parties concerned. With the Communist takeover in South Vietnam and the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Philippines, the possibility of direct discussions between the parties in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding has been greatly increased. The trip of Philippines' Foreign Secretary, Mr. Carlos Romulo to Peking in June 1976 was certainly a first step in this direction.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

1. Petroleum experts share the view that Asia's future oil exploration would be focused on the South China Sea region. Large-scale exploitation of oil and natural gas, however, is only feasible in a clearly defined sovereign territory. There is little prospect for a joint oil policy or possible coordination of oil exploration in the South China Sea. The "Committee for Co-ordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian off-shore Areas" (CCOP/East Asia) founded in 1966 under the auspices of the U.N. regional agency ESCAP with the nine member states of Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore and Thailand, has not become active in this respect.

2. With the Communist victories in Indo-china and the Chinese conquest of the Paracels, the South China Sea has become a domain of Communist nations. China's claim is generally judged the strongest and it is believed that Peking will not retreat a single step from her stand, for this would compromise China's position in other border disputes. There is little hope that China would settle down on a compromise, say an equidistant line, or accept the arbitration of the World Court.

3. On the other hand, the Sovjetunion has a vital interest that the South China Sea does not completely fall into Chinese possession and is therefore backing Vietnam's claim. The South China Sea issue bears all the dangers of a potential military clash between a strong united Vietnam and her northern neighbour.

4. All parties have enough reason to keep the issue at low-profile and to maintain the *status quo*. A Red Chinese attack on Nationalist Chinese forces in the Spratlys seems unlikely unless such an operation is coordinated with an all-out assault on Taiwan. Vietnam similarly would like to expel Taiwan from the Spratlys since mainland China could not do so by idle.

5. It is in the interest of the region if the territorial dispute can be solved through negotiations and peaceful means. If the nations involved cannot compromise on a spatial division of their sovereignty rights, there should be a *modus vivendi* for a joint exploitation of resources *in situ* for the benefit of the entire area.

REFERENCES

- ARCHER, A.A. & BEAZLEY, P.B. (1975): "The Geographical Implications of the Law of the Sea Conference"; *Geographical Journal*, London, vol. 141, part 1, March, pp. 1-13
- ARIFF, M.O. (1970): "The Philippines Claim to Sabah — its historical, legal and political implications"; Singapore
- BELL, K.E. & THOMAS, G.G. (1973): "The Straits of Malacca in Relation to Problems of the Indian Ocean"; Singapore
- BEYER, H.O. (1948): "Early History of Philippine Relations with Foreign Countries, especially China"; Manila: Nat. Printing Company
- BONIFACY, A.L.M. (1931): "A propos d'une collection de peinture chinoises representant divers episode de la guerre franco-chinoise de 1884-85 servies a l'Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient"; Hanoi
- CHINA PUBLISHING COMPANY (1975): "China Yearbook 1975"; Taipei
- CHO, HUAN-LAI (1935): "Les origin du conflict franco-chinoise a propos du Tonkin jusqu'en 1883"; Paris
- COHEN, J.A. & CHIU, H. (1974): "People's China and International Law: A documentary study in two volumes"; Princeton University Press

- CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA (1973):** "Law of the Sea — The preliminary Micronesian Position"; prepared by Joint Committee on the Law of the Sea," Fifth Congress of Micronesia; Saipan, Marianas
- COQUIA (1962):** "The Territorial Waters of Archipelagoes"; Phil. Int'l. Law Journal, No. 149
- CRAWFURD, J. (1971):** "A descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries"; London: Oxford University Press
- DAS, C.V. (1973):** "Oil Discoveries and Technical Change in Southeast Asia"; Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
- FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW (1975):** "Asia Year Book 1976"; Hongkong
- HAUSHOFER, KARL (1924):** "Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans", Berlin
- KLEIN (1966):** "The Territorial Waters of Archipelagoes"; Fed. B. Journal, vol 26, No. 317
- LAY, CHURCHILL, NORDQUIST (1973):** "New Directions in the Law of the Seas", in three volumes; Oceana publications, published by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law; London
- NATIONAL ATLAS OF CHINA (1964):** "South China", volume IV, published by the National War College, Yang Min Shan, Taipei, Taiwan
- NEWSDOM (Sinwen Tienti weekly);** Hongkong, No. 1360, 1974, pp. 4-6; and No. 1365, 1974, pp. 4-5 (in Chinese)
- OCEANOGRAPHIC DATA of the South China Sea;** published by the Institute of Oceanography, Special Publication No. 2, Taipei, Taiwan, 1972
- PEARCY, G.E. (1959):** "Geographical Aspects of the Law of the Sea"; Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 49, No. 1, March, pp. 1-23
- PHILIPPINES NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION (1969):** "Symposium on Sabah"; Manila
- PRESCOTT, J.R.V. (1965):** "The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries"; London: Hutchison University Library
- PRESCOTT, J.R.V. (1975):** "The Political Geography of the Oceans"; Newton Abbot: David and Charles, Series: Problems in Modern Geography
- SENFLEBEN, W. (1972):** "Ein Kanal durch die Landenge von Kra?"; Zeitschrift fur Wirtschaftsgeographic, Hagen, vol. 7, pp. 206-7
- SUN, YAT-SEN (1953):** "The Vital Problems of China"; Taipei (reprinted)
- TANG, MIN (1974):** "Exploration of off-shore Oil in Asia"; Issues & Studies, a monthly journal of Communist problems and world affairs, vol. X, December, No. 15
- TOLENTINO, A.M. (1975):** "Archipelagic Theory and the Law of the Sea"; Philippine Geographical Journal, vol. XIX, No. 4, pp. 158-170
- WHITWORE BOGGS, S. (1951):** "National Claims in Adjacent Seas"; Geographical Review, New York, vol. XLI, No. 2, pp. 185-209
- WRIGHT, L.R. (1963):** "British Policy in the South China Sea Area — with special reference to Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo, 1860-1888", London School of Oriental and African Studies, Ph.D. thesis
- UNITED NATIONS THIRD CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1973):** "Working paper on sea area within the limits of national jurisdiction submitted by the Chinese delegation," Symbol No.: A/AC.138/SC.II/L.34 of 16 July 1973
- UNITED NATIONS THIRD CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1973):** "Archipelagic principles as proposed by the delegations of Fiji, Indonesia, Mauritius and Philippines;" Symbol No. A/AC.138/SC.II/L.15 of 14 March 1973
- UNITED NATIONS THIRD CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1975):** "Informal Single Negotiating Text", part II; Symbol No. A/CONF.62/WP.8/Part II of 7 May 1975

**SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SQUATTER
AND SLUM COMMUNITIES OF A MEDIUM-
SIZED CITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS¹**

by

RICHARD ULACK²

A large amount of social science research has been published recently on population problems in the cities of the developing world. The amount of work completed on internal migration and conditions in slum and squatter communities, for example, is significant. Most of the work completed has been based upon research findings from the primate cities of the developing world; less has been completed on the medium-sized, or intermediate cities, i.e., those with populations of more than 100,000 but less than 1,000,000. This is, in part, due to the fact that the primate cities of most developing nations have overshadowed the growth of most other urban centers. Population growth in these primate cities is still rapid; however, population growth rates in the intermediate cities are similar. Urban growth rates for both types of cities are, of course, increasing at rates much more rapid than those of usual areas and this is primarily a function of rural-to-urban migration.

In Southeast Asia, for example, the total population increased from 171 million to 285 million, or by 67 percent, between 1950 and 1970. The nine Southeast Asian cities with a population of one million or more in 1970 had increased by more than 145 percent since 1950: from 8.2 million to over 20 million. The 21 cities with populations of at least 100,000 in 1950 but less than 1 million in 1970 had increased by nearly 134 percent between 1950 and 1970, or from 4 million to nearly 9.5 million. The number of intermediate-sized cities in Southeast Asia had increased from 27 to 53 between 1950 and 1970 whereas there were 3 cities of more than 1 million in 1950 and 9 with 1 million or more in 1970 (previous estimates are from Davis, 1969). In Southeast Asia in 1970, 12 percent of the population lived in the intermediate

¹ Expanded version of an unpublished paper presented at the 72nd annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, New York City, April 11-14, 1976.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky.