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Southeast Asian Security Complex:

The Case of The Spratly Islands Conflict

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Abstract

The issue of security is still an aspect of concern for domestic and international politics. In Southeast Asia, in 2003, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to establish three pillars for the future single community by 2015: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). To live at peace with one another and with the world in democratic and harmonious environment, Southeast Asian Nations must take the APSC as a crucial mechanism to construct the field of political and security cooperation. The APSC should be promoted and analyzed in order to reach the establishment of peaceful regional security and the administration of regional security context. Meanwhile, there are many cases to tackle. Especially, focusing on this thesis is the interregional maritime territorial issue between China and ASEAN members – Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysia – over disputed islands, namely the Spratly Islands conflict. Therefore, this thesis endeavors to investigate and study the security context of the Southeast Asian region through ASEAN action such as community integration by focusing especially on the Spratly Islands dispute case for a better understanding of Southeast Asian regional security. The Spratly Islands conflict has become a major concern for ASEAN due to its significances, the rise of China and the involvement of the United States. The islands are very important not only for ASEAN and China, but also for the United States as a superpower confined by the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). Furthermore, this thesis will employ the RSCT to frame the research in order to implement research on the processes leading to the Southeast Asian securitization, conflict management, and establishing strong security cooperation (rather than on finding a resolution for the conflict) focusing on the regional, interregional, and global levels. As a result, ASEAN has promoted the Spratly Islands dispute as the desecuritization of the region via an international stage such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meetings (AMM) with the intention of creating amity between relevant countries in the region.

Keywords: ASEAN, ASEAN Way, The ARF, Regional Security Complex, Securitization

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Southeast Asian Security Complex: The Case of the Spratly Islands Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of security is still an aspect of concern for domestic and international politics. In Southeast Asia, in 2003, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to establish three pillars for the future single community in 2015: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). Today, the public has realized that ASEAN seems to promote the AEC aspect more than the APSC and ASCC. However, it is essential for ASEAN to promote not only the AEC but also the other two pillars, especially the APSC, in order to establish peaceful regional security and administer the regional security context along with powerful countries like China and the United States in terms of the military's modernized and territorial claims.

According to the future plan of ASEAN, there are many cases to tackle for example, domestic problems between the nation state members like Thailand and Cambodia, and the interregional maritime territorial issues between China and ASEAN members – Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysia – over disputed islands, namely the Spratly Islands. To resolve the problems, ASEAN usually employs the ASEAN Way of implementing dispute resolution within the region. Furthermore, ASEAN hosts interregional (Asia-Pacific) conferences under the name of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as the stage for security negotiations. It is very interesting to see how ASEAN reacts to the cases and what factors force the community to react.

Moreover, the Southeast Asian region has a lot of natural resources and is one of the world's most important maritime trade routes and an area with a significant number of long-standing territorial disputes, particularly over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. In recent years the geopolitical balance in the region has not only been shifting, primarily in response to the rise in the economy and military of China (China's National Defense, 2008 & 2013), but is also the result of the United States' interest in balancing power within the Asia-Pacific region as the Obama administration's pivot to Asia (White House, 2013). Meanwhile, relations between Southeast Asian countries and China have been increasingly positive, especially in economic terms; however, there has

been an anxiety within the Southeast Asian region over China's actions in the region, particularly the sovereignty claim over the South China Sea, where the Spratly Islands are located, which China considers to be of real interest to their country. Consequently, Southeast Asian countries (most of them) have sought to strengthen themselves, find resolution at the international stage, and reinforce relations with the United States in order to balance the rising power of China within the region and to securitize the Southeast Asian region (Taylor, 2011).

Therefore, this thesis endeavors to thoroughly investigate and study the security context of the Southeast Asian region through ASEAN action such as community integration by focusing especially on the Spratly Islands dispute in the South China Sea for a better understanding of Southeast Asian regional security. The Spratly Islands conflict has become a major concern for ASEAN due to its significance, the rise of China and its foreign policy. China has claimed its sovereign power over almost all-maritime territory of the archipelagos in the South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands. The islands are very important not only for ASEAN and China, but also for the United States as a superpower confined by the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) (Buzan & Waever, 2003). Therefore, this research will try to understand the responses of ASEAN to the Spratly Islands conflict. By doing so, this thesis will employ the RSCT to frame the research. The RSCT consists of four focusing levels as: domestic, regional, interregional, and global; however, this thesis will focus on regional, interregional, and global aspects in order to avoid being a too broadly focused topic. In the case of the regional issue, the thesis will study the approaches and the decision-making conditions of ASEAN. While regarding the interregional issue, the thesis will explore the action ASEAN takes in order to proceed in the security context concerning the Spratly Islands and how ASEAN reacts to the rise of China in its policy and military modernization. Furthermore, a new strategy of the United States, which has turned to focus on the Southeast Asian region as a stage for balancing power with China (the new challenging superpower), will be analyzed.

1.1 THE SPRATLY ISLANDS CONFLICT

The Spratly Islands are situated in the southern part of the South China Sea and comprise a collection of over 230 shoals, reefs, and small islets that are spread over

roughly a 150,000 square mile area. Geographically, the islands lie 120 miles west of the Philippine island of Palawan, 150 miles northwest of the Malaysian State of Sabah, 230 miles east of the Vietnamese coast and 900 miles south of China's Hainan Island. The various claims to the Spratly Islands are very complicated. The reasons for the claims can be divided into three groups of claimants. The first group consists of China, Taiwan, and Vietnam claiming for historical background reasons. The second group, the Philippines, claims for the right of discovery. Malaysia and Brunei are in the last group associated with the continental shelves and the Law of the Sea Convention. The conflicting and overlapping boundaries are complicated by various entitlement intentions. China, Taiwan, and Vietnam argue for the entitlement of the entire Spratly Islands area. The Philippines argues for 60 islets, rocks, and atolls called Kalayaan (Freedom land). On the other hand, Malaysia maintains three islands and four groups of rock at the southern boundary of the Spratly Islands while Brunei demands a single reef from the area (Coker, 1996).

Furthermore, the Spratly Islands are located on both sides of the sea lines of communication (SLOCs), which are significant commercial routes for the region and the world. These sea lines link the Pacific and the Indian Oceans via the Malacca Strait, which provides maritime traffic proceeding to Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Indochina and the West Pacific. The other great powers, other than China, that need to use these sea lines for significant sea import of oil and goods through this area are Japan and South Korea, as well as the United States in accordance with the strategy for accessing a route for the United States' fleet between the Pacific and Indian Oceans (Wurfel & Burton, 1996). Moreover, the greatest economic aspect in this area is the potential for natural resources, namely oil and gas. According to geologists' estimation, the Spratly Islands territory may have a billion tons of oil and gas, which are significant for supporting economic and military growth in the future (Collins, 2003). So a nation with sovereign control over the Spratly Islands territory would have power and a commanding position to influence trade (to the rest of the world) and geopolitical strategy throughout this region.

1.2 OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Therefore, this research endeavors to investigate in depth the Southeast Asian security dynamic, conflict management and security complex approach to the Spratly Islands dispute. It will focus on the matter of securitization and desecuritization of the region under the ASEAN framework. The Spratly Islands conflict will be used as the indicator to illustrate Southeast Asian security development. With regard to the ASEAN intention in 2003 to be a single community by 2015, the security aspect of the Southeast Asian region should be revisited since the policy decision factors will be changed, whereas the securitization in the region is fluctuating all the time regarding the nature of the Regional Security Complex. In addition, it is possible to state that the dispute is difficult and too complex to be solved by applying only one approach among the parties. The commitment of ASEAN has seen some limitations and ambiguity behind it as it involves the territory, the maritime zone and the essential resources assumed to exist in the South China Sea. The content of this research will express the framework that ASEAN tries to provide solutions for the Spratly Island dispute, especially on security cooperation issues such as code of conduct, multilateral conflict resolutions, and other joint development cooperation over the existing resources. Then it will generalize the impact of China on the ASEAN security approach, which leads to internal and external problems in the region.

Outlined in the background mentioned above, this thesis endeavors to answer the following research questions:

1) How did the Southeast Asian region become securitized or desecuritized in the period from 2003 until now?

From this question, two sub-questions emerged:

1) How is this (de-)securitization reflected in the Spratly Islands conflict and its management?
2) What role has the Spratly Islands conflict played in the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex?

This thesis is structured as follows. After this introductory chapter, the second chapter will outline and discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis in terms of applicability and relevance. This thesis employs the Regional Security Complex Theory

(RSCT), which complements the scope of the Southeast Asian security complex concerning the Spratly Islands conflict. The third chapter deals with the methodological approach to the study. This thesis employs a case study method that relates and supports the RSCT as defined in the theoretical part as the RSCT works as a descriptive framework for area studies such as, in this thesis, the Spratly Islands conflict. The Spratly Islands conflict case will focus on the relevance of the securitization of the Southeast Asian region, the rise of China, and the involvement of the United States as the global actor. This is followed by an empirical study of securitization in the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex as shown in the fourth chapter as the application to the case. The thesis will analyze the significance of the Spratly Islands, ASEAN approaches, China's aggressiveness, and the United States involvement, respectively. In the final chapter, the thesis will conclude with my findings as well as suggest possible further research on the security context in the Southeast Asian region.

2. THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX THEORY

The thesis has applied the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to analyze the security (complex) context in the Southeast Asian region through the Spratly Islands dispute. The factors shaping the Southeast Asia security context, the ASEAN security integration, and the current status of the dispute will be explored. Buzan and Waever (2003) developed a theory in their work *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Security complex, coined by Buzan and Waever (2003), refers to a region where the interdependence between the states is sufficiently intense so that their national security concerns cannot be analyzed or resolved separately from others within the region. The development of the RSCT has focused not only on traditional security matters, known as the political-military sector, but also on security concerns and the international sector. The other contents of insecurity terms beyond a military context consist of economics, environment, natural resources, and so on (Buzan & Waever, 2003).

The RSCT offers a new concept of security as "…an issue, which is posited (by a securitizing actor) as a threat to the survival of some referent object (nation, state, the liberal internal economic order, the rainforests) that is claimed to have a right to survive.

Since a question of survival necessarily involves a point of no return at which it will be too late to act, it is not defensible to leave the issue to normal politics" (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.71). This concept of security focuses on the perception of security threats over whether to act or not so that further definitions are provided as securitization (and/or desecuritzation). The process of securitization / desecruitization, according to the RSCT, can be illustrated through the international system by making themselves apparent in regional clusters (Buzan & Waever, 2003). The definition used for securitization and for the purpose of this thesis draws on the RSCT definition as:

> the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object and to enable a call for an urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.491).

This means that the process by which a threat is treated is done so equally by all involved and is of mutual concern and requires some action. The mutual concern requires all actors to view the issue as dangerous to the referent object, which is mutually defined by the same object by the region security complex actor. On the other hand, desecuritization is defined as "the discursive process by which a political community downgrades or ceases to treat something as a threat" (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.489). As Buzan and Waever (2003) explain, it is an issue that can be dealt within an ordinary political framework and can be worked through by coming to a peaceful multi-lateral agreement such as the ASEAN security framework concerning the Spratly Islands. According to Buzan and Waever the process of such peaceful agreements "is reinforced by the promotion of norms regarding peaceful settlement of disputes, regular multilateral dialogue at several levels, and adherence to some international arms control agreements such as those on unclear non-proliferation" (2003, p.160).

In this thesis, although the process that deals with security threats differs with regards to securitization and desecuritization. However, in both cases the referent object is seen as the significance of the Spratly Islands and the sovereignty over the area. The actors are the ASEAN member countries and the security threat is the China aggressiveness.

The concept of regional security complex covers how security is integrated in a region shaped by geography. Threats are likely to travel a short distance and may occur in the region. The security of each actor interacts with the security of the others within a region as security interdependence. The regional security complex is defined by durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of sub-global, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence. The formation of the regional security complex derives from the interplay between the anarchic structure and its balance of power consequences, and on the other hand the pressures of local geographical proximity (Buzan & Waever, 2003). With regard to the regional security complex, actors within a security complex have closer relations, whether friendly or antagonistic, with one another than they do with actors outside the complex.

The theory behind the concept of regional security complex is the RSCT, which evolves the contemporary security terms and identifies emerging security threats. Within the theory, the regional actors socially construct the regional security complex because they are the ones defining the problem in such terms and interacting to produce a regional formation over the issue. With regard to ASEAN, this community is viewed as a loose cooperation (unstructured community cooperation), economic developing region defined by political instability. Mutual interest, economic cooperation, sovereignty over its territory, and the rise of China (in terms of China's aggressiveness) may be new security terms that have driven ASEAN to a cooperative pursuit of regional security. These factors will lead to the settlement of the ASEAN security dynamics. It will decide the desecuritzation as developing the promotion of norms regarding peaceful settlement of disputes; it is the process that moves the referent, that is, the significance of the Spratly Islands and the sovereignty over the area, and the conflict, the Spratly Island conflict into the political sphere and (maybe) removes security from deliberation. In contrast, according Buzan and Waever (2003) these factors may cause ASEAN to securitize mutually to concerning threats and lead to an inflammatory situation rather than settling a conflict and developing a co-operation. This securitization process is not a normative goal as claiming a right to use extraordinary means or break normal rules for reasons of security is not an ideal result for a conflict resolution (Buzan & Waever, 2003).

As Buzan and Waever (2003) point out, the regional security complex is a set of

units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be analyzed or resolved apart from one another. Its units normally generate the formative dynamics and structure of a security complex, due to the fact that the threats travel short distances in a shorter time. However, they may arise from collective securitizations of outside pressures as well. Thus, the standard form of the regional security complex is a pattern of rivalry, balance of power, and alliance among states within the region; to this pattern can then be added the effects of penetrating external power (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.47).

Moreover, the established function for the RSCT can be seen from four levels – domestic, regional, interregional, and global (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.51) – while using the structure at a regional level to both access significant change and to identify the most likely pattern of evolution. The theory also offers the possibility of systematically linking the study of internal conditions, the relation among units in the region, the relation among regions, and the interplay of regional dynamics with globally acting powers. Thus, the overall structure of the RSCT embodies four variables: boundary (which differentiates the RSC from its neighbors), anarchic structure (which means that the RSC must be composed of two or more autonomous units), polarity (which covers the distribution of power among the units), and social construct (which covers the patterns of amity and enmity among the units) (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.53).

The RSCT is a significant tool for providing valuable insight into the understanding of the Southeast Asian regional security environment and the development of its security framework by exploration at the regional, interregional, and global level, respectively. The creation and survival of ASEAN are useful for the transformation of the region's essential structure and responsible for the confrontation of the post-Cold War era. The transformation of Southeast Asian security from conflict formation to security regime has moved the region forward from its shadowy past to a new creation of a distinct and autonomous region with relative control over its own boundary, polarity, structure, and social construction. Moreover, the Spratly Islands conflict and the rise of China have linked the Southeast Asian security concerns sufficiently closely together and highlighted the extent to which stability and security cannot be achieved without strong cooperation. The increasing threat posed by nontraditional and transnational security

issues has ensured that the intensity of the Southeast Asian (regional) security complex continues to deepen and a regional cooperation level remains an imperative feature of the regional security environment.

The domestic region's relations and patterns of amity within Southeast Asia provide its regional peace. Nevertheless, the region is still comprised of individual and self-interested states who have accepted the need for economic and security cooperation in the pursuit of their own survival. ASEAN continues to face criticism over its functional autonomy of its units. The ASEAN style of conflict management, the ASEAN Way, has achieved the proposed initiatives, created the source of criticism; raised questions about ASEAN reliance on unbinding consensus based on decision-making and led external regions to penetrate in the region. However, the intertwined security interdependence and the strategies to cope with it are much more complicated than they appear. Proximity and familiarity can draw regions together, on the other hand historical and cultural aspects can pull them apart.

My thesis aims to thoroughly investigate the evolution of the Southeast Asian security dynamic, conflict management, and the security complex approach concerning in particular the Spratly Islands dispute. This study is also an exploration and evaluation of the Southeast Asian security complex on the Spratly Islands dispute. Furthermore, the thesis will examine a number of actions (securitization and/or security cooperation in the region) focusing on levels such as the regional, interregional, and global level (which interlink with each other). The Spratly Islands conflict will be used as an indicator to illustrate Southeast Asian security development. Regarding the ASEAN intention in 2003 to be a single community by 2015, the security aspect of the Southeast Asian region should be revised since the policy factors will be changed and securitization in the region is fluctuating all the time as the nature of the Regional Security Complex.

3. METHODOLOGY

My research question is *How did the Southeast Asian region become securitized or desecuritized in the period from 2003 until now?*, which is relevant to the case study method. When it comes to using a case study method, it can be determined from the research question what a study is trying to address. Thus, I employed the case study method for my study. Meanwhile, this condition correlates with the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) defined by Buzan and Waever (2003) that the RSCT works as a descriptive framework for area studies such as, in this thesis, the Spratly Islands conflict and the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.42).

This research was based on the case study of the Spratly Islands Conflict, and mostly used a qualitative research method (data collection). The data and relevant information, including articles, were utilized to foster the analytical method for understanding and analyzing the Southeast Asian security complex concerning the Spratly Islands dispute. The information in this research was mostly from primary sources: literatures and official documents. By analyzing the data from various sources such as the APSC blueprint, the meeting reports of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), an understanding of the implementation process of the ASEAN security community would encourage the outcome of this thesis to be a fruitful one. Moreover, China's official documents and the United States' point of view were illustrated in order to complete the research. Secondary sources – the Internet, the official website, updated articles, news, reports including relevant research papers and studies on this issue –also be studied.

The sources mentioned above are vital as evidence because not only is it the narrative way of presenting a case study, but it is also the logic and chronology of my investigation in which the reasoning can be included. In addition, this thesis tried to use a more overtly narrative format in order to recreate the context and sequence of evidence so that the reader can understand the meaning of what the study would like to convey. Additionally, the data can produce be a good story and needs to be presented well. However, at each key point in the narrative, evidence needs to be presented for the

development and direction of the narrative. This must be much more than impressionistic: impressions and assertions must be substantiated in some way (Gillham, 2000).

Moreover, the qualitative methods enabled this thesis to carry out an in-depth investigation about the Southeast Asian security complex where little is known about what is going on in terms of its security aspect. This thesis explored the complexities of security beyond the Spratly Islands, China's aggressiveness, the United States' perspective and the Southeast Asian region. The method also enabled the study to gain a deeper understanding of Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and other security cooperation actors since the real information can only be perceived from the inside. The inside information can be derived from the perspective of those involved in inspection as viewing the case from the inside out. Regarding the thesis objective, this thesis explored the Southeast Asian security complex by using the RSCT in order to implement research on the processes leading to securitization, dealing with the conflict, and establishing strong security cooperation (rather than on finding a resolution for the conflict) focusing on the regional, interregional, and global levels (involvement of the United States and China).

Due to the fact that this research could not conduct further data collection in Southeast Asia or the Spratly Islands, the secondary data was mainly used for the study. As for this thesis, to focus on the Spratly Islands conflict, the thesis explored articles, books, journals, websites, and Internet databases for data gathering. All these data enabled this research to perceive, conceptualize, examine, and especially to connect all evidence of the Spratly Island conflict and Southeast Asia security context together. In terms of data gathering, rather than the official website, this study collected data from Internet databases and Lund University databases, for instance Lovisa and LUBsearch, which can provide various kinds of materials from different fields such as articles, journals, theses, e-books, and newspapers. Lovisa is the local library category, which provides a variety of books. Furthermore, LUBsearch is a common access to all library resources and also connects to several data partners, particularly ISEAS (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) (ISEAS, 2013) and CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) (CSIS, 2013). The advantage of gathering data from Internet databases is to get convenient and reliable sources because they are all approved by Lund University, which

has provided this research with accurate citations and references.

Moreover, EBSCOhost database has provided many related articles and journals. EBSCOhost is a database where one can select databases from different fields such as economy and political science. From this database, EBSCOhost provided necessary and useful information with a wider range of materials, for instance magazines, newspapers, journals, and book reviews, which were useful for referencing. In addition, the processing through various websites also helped this study with finding online information where there are a number of documents relating to the Spratly Islands conflict and Southeast Asia from different perspectives such as news, events, meeting, forums, and so on. Internet databases facilitated this research tremendously to access different kinds of databases and websites. However, a disadvantage of gathering data from articles and news on general websites, which are not in academic databases, is that some of the sources do not clearly show authors or date of publishing, which are difficult to identify and quote. So, the thesis tried to avoid unclear data sources by not using them as references.

In addition, this thesis focused on two main factors as evidence and theory, and it also needs data to be able to understand the main content of the hypothesis and theoretically explain them. It is necessary to consider all evidences to effectively analyze the case. As Gillham (2000) points out that a researcher needs to maintain a case study database and combine multiple sources of evidence, whereas he needs to look for different kinds of evidence (what people say, what you see them doing, what they make or produce, and what documents and records show). Finally, all of these evidences must be woven into a narrative account presenting as a chain of evidences; for example, documents, policy statements, regulations, and guidelines as key elements to consider such case. Records of events, which go back in time, are also included since they may provide a useful longitudinal fix on the present situation (Gillham, 2000).

When it comes to data analysis, this thesis employed a case study approach method to analyze the data. A case study approach which focuses on a single place, a particular group, or a specific issue, is helpful in scope down research topics such as focusing on Southeast Asia security complex concerning the Spratly Islands conflict

(Hardwick, 2009, p.441). A case study approach can also mix methods of data collection and analysis: quantitative and qualitative methods (Hardwick, 2009). Data accumulated by different methods but focusing on the same issue are part of what is called the multi-method approach, which this thesis has applied (Gillham, 2000). Moreover, reliability and validity are significant concerns in order to use the case study as a method. However, the reliability and validity are difficult to establish for using the case study. In doing so, this study was based on the triangulation of the case study, which is data, events, and interpretation. The aim of this thesis overall is to explore the data and events of the Spratly Islands conflict simultaneously. Every analyzed level was described in terms of data and events that occurred in the region. After that, the interpretation and analysis were used to critical analyze the case (Rowley, 2002).

Furthermore, a case study uses in-depth investigation of a current social phenomenon, such as that focused on the Spratly Islands conflict, which can link to the Southeast Asian security complex through the ASEAN framework. The research question, *How did the Southeast Asian region become securitized or desecuritized in the period from 2003 until now?,* is seen as a descriptive question. Meanwhile, this condition correlates with the RSCT as described by Buzan and Waever (2003) that the RSCT works as a descriptive framework for area studies such as, in this thesis, the Spratly Islands conflict and the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.42). Thus, the thesis employed the case study since the main thrust of a case study can be, firstly, descriptive (provide a full portrayal of the case); it provides a trace of interaction events over time, describes a culture or subculture and seeks to discover key phenomena. Secondly, exploration: it may provide initial analysis of a phenomenon that will be explored later and investigated in depth. Finally, explanation: it provides an account of what caused a particular phenomenon observed in the study and focuses on phenomena in a real-life context. In doing so, when it comes to using a case study method, it can be determined by the research question that a study is trying to address (Yin, 2012).

Ultimately, the general perspective of the case study method implemented this thesis in order to; first of all, systematically develop a comprehensive describing pattern of behavior by concerning ASEAN approaches and the Spratly Islands conflict.

Secondly, the method provided an annotated description of the procedure and analysis applied to the case. Finally, the case study method developed a sharper awareness of both the Spratly Islands conflict and the variety of insights that were gained in the application of using the case study method to investigate in depth the Spratly Islands conflict and Southeast Asian security complex (Fidel, 1984; Yin, 2012).

4. FINDINGS: THE APPLICATION TO THE SPRATLY ISLANDS CONFLICT CASE

This thesis aims to investigate the evolution of the Southeast Asian security dynamic, conflict management, and security complex approach, in particular, to the Spratly Islands dispute. The dispute is one of the reflections of the security management within the region, which is growing larger as a regional community. With regard to the ASEAN intention in 2003 to be a single community by 2015, the security aspect of the Southeast Asian region should be revised since the policy decision factors will be changed, whereas the securitization of the region has been fluctuating all the time regarding the nature of the Regional Security Complex. It is essential to discuss the Spratly Islands in order to understand the background to and the importance of the security issue in Southeast Asia. The next part of this thesis will go deeper into the significance of the Spratly Islands to the region, which has led to the conflict and the concern over the security issue of the Southeast Asian states. The application of the case will lead to a clearer view of the response of ASEAN and the implementation of security management by the ASEAN states, and also the conditions that cause problems within the region, from both outside and domestic sources.

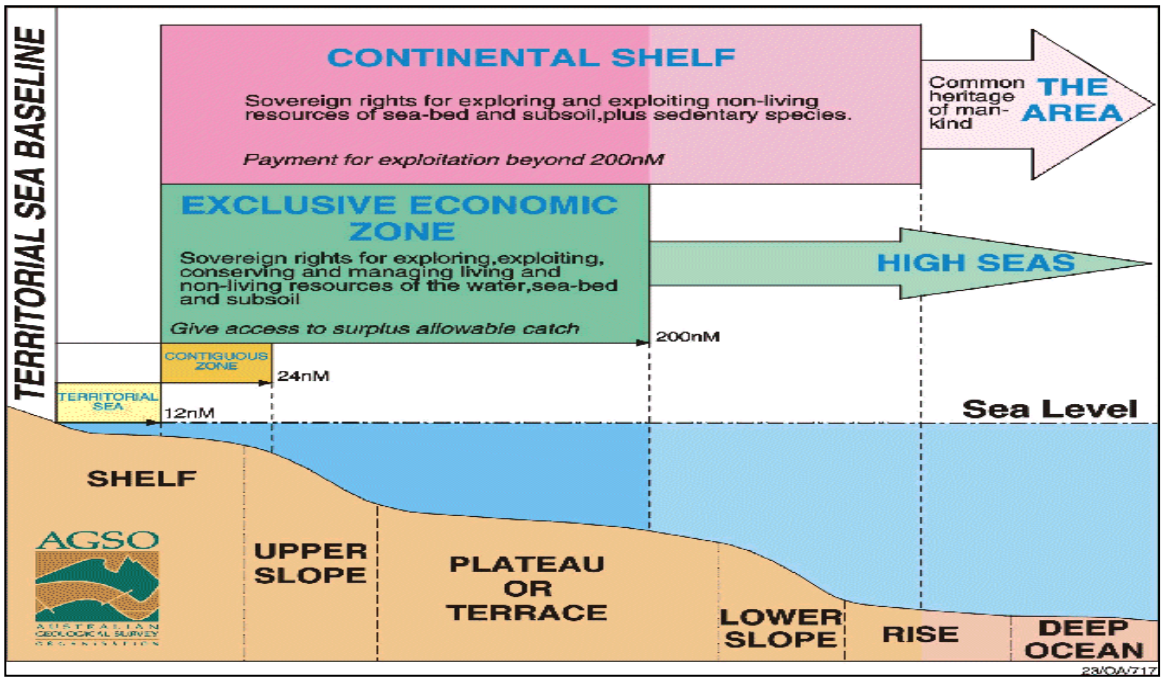
4.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPRATLY ISLANDS

In the Spratly Islands conflict, all relevant stakeholders seem to compete for natural resources, location, and the important sea lines of communication (SLOCs), which connect to the West Pacific and are close enough to all the claimant countries' military strategies (defense). Furthermore, the Spratly Islands are also concerned about a great power. China, Japan, and the United States have become acutely aware of the importance of this SLOC in the South China Sea for all military and civilian maritime traffic from the Persian Gulf across the South China Sea (Silja, 1999; EIA, 2013).

Moreover, the claimant who acquired control over the Spratly Islands would bring about a radical change to the regional balance of power, as the location of the archipelago is so strategic.

4.1.1 STRATEGIC ASPECT OF THE SPRATLY ISLANDS

These various national efforts to claim the Spratly Islands mainly stem from the jurisdictional rights of coastal states over offshore seabed resources according to consensus at the United Nations Convention in 1982 on the Law of the Sea: UNCLOS (UNCLOS, 1982). This agreement provides an extension of state rights over an island or group of islands (archipelago). Furthermore, a state that has territorial sovereignty over an island will have the exclusive right to exploit the resources (living and nonliving) of the water and seabed surrounding the island (and/or archipelago). With regard to UNCLOS, the sovereign state over an island is permitted to establish a 12 nautical miles territorial sea and 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around that island (UNCLOS, 1982, Article 121). If an entire archipelago obtains recognized sovereign independence as an archipelagic state, it has the right to draw a straight baseline between the outermost islands and will acquire exclusive rights to explore and exploit resources within the area enclosed by that baseline (UNCLOS, 1982, Articles 46-54).



Source: http://workjournal.archipelago.gr/?p=1674 (Accessed 24 April 2013)

In contrast, the legal rights to exploit resources offshore non-state archipelagos such as the Spratly Islands will flow from the rights to exploit continental shelf offshore groups of islands (UNCLOS, 1982, Articles 77 & 81). Consequently, all claimants over the Spratly Islands declared EEZ or continental shelf delimitations seaward from points fixed by islands over which they asserted sovereignty so that the entire ocean and seabed in the Spratly Islands would be subjected to various degrees of national jurisdiction. Moreover, security concern and economic interests have brought about the military actions to make sovereignty claims over the Spratly Islands (Joyner, 1999).

In doing so, China as one of the claimants is considered the most likely candidate to successfully take over the Spratly Islands when one compares every dimension of China's abilities such as its economy, military capacity, and so on with other claimants' capabilities. Meanwhile, the United States and the Southeast Asian countries (ASEAN) would not let China wins its claim. This would result in notable apprehension and fear among them. All of them may consider building up their militaries because of their historical animosity towards China and if they perceive the hegemonic intentions of China. The Spratly Islands conflict would provoke a serious situation within the Southeast Asian region so that it might attract involvement from superpowers outside the region such as the United States on a global level as defined by the RSCT. On the other hand, these factors also stimulate the Southeast Asian region to find a cooperative security as desecuritzed as developing the promotion of norms regarding peaceful settlement of disputes. Since the security aspect of the region cannot be analyzed or resolved apart from one another. The region security aspect normally generates the formative dynamics and structure of a security complex, due to the fact that the threats travel short distances in a shorter time. The standard form of the regional security complex, the pattern of rivalry, balancing of power and alliance among region states could lead to the penetration of external power as well.

Source: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/south-china-sea.htm (Accessed 24 Aprill 2013)

Thus, it can be observed that the Spratly Islands (located in the South China Sea) are significant in strategic aspects. Firstly, they connect to other regions such as the West Pacific and Malacca Strait. Secondly, especially from a strategic point of view, the sovereign states across the area possess legal control of the SLOC, which is necessary for maritime strategy and a fruitful fishing area. Furthermore, the areas are possibly rich in the natural resources that are economically significant. The countries with territorial sovereignty over the area will has the extension of the maritime zone to 200 nautical miles around the group of islands (archipelago). This condition has led to claims over the Spratly Islands for economic advantages.

4.1.2 ECONOMIC ASPECT OF THE SPRATLY ISLANDS

When it comes to the economic aspect, the South China Sea is the fifth biggest water area in the world and has an approximate area of around 3.5 million square kilometers. The area reaches from the Taiwan Strait to the Malacca Strait. It is acknowledged worldwide as having the most crowded maritime traffic in the world. Three-quarters of the big oil tankers from the Persian Gulf use this SLOC for transportation to Northeast Asia and the West Pacific. Furthermore, the South China Sea

(including the Spratly Islands) is not only important to China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan as the significant export countries, but also useful for the main maritime transportation of Southeast Asian countries (ASEAN) (Simon, 2010). Moreover, the United States, which is not directly involved in the Spratly Islands conflict, needs this significant SLOC for transportation of their goods; for instance, the United States exports its goods to the Philippines, Hong Kong, and other East Asian countries through this SLOC (EIA, 2013). Moreover, the rising oil demands in the region rely on this SLOC in order to import oil from the Middle East and Africa. The maritime transportation in the region usually uses this SLOC to connect with other regions around the Asia-Pacific. This indicates that the Spratly Islands area (in terms of the SLOC), which is extremely economically important, is particularly significant for Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and the West Pacific (Xu, 2013).

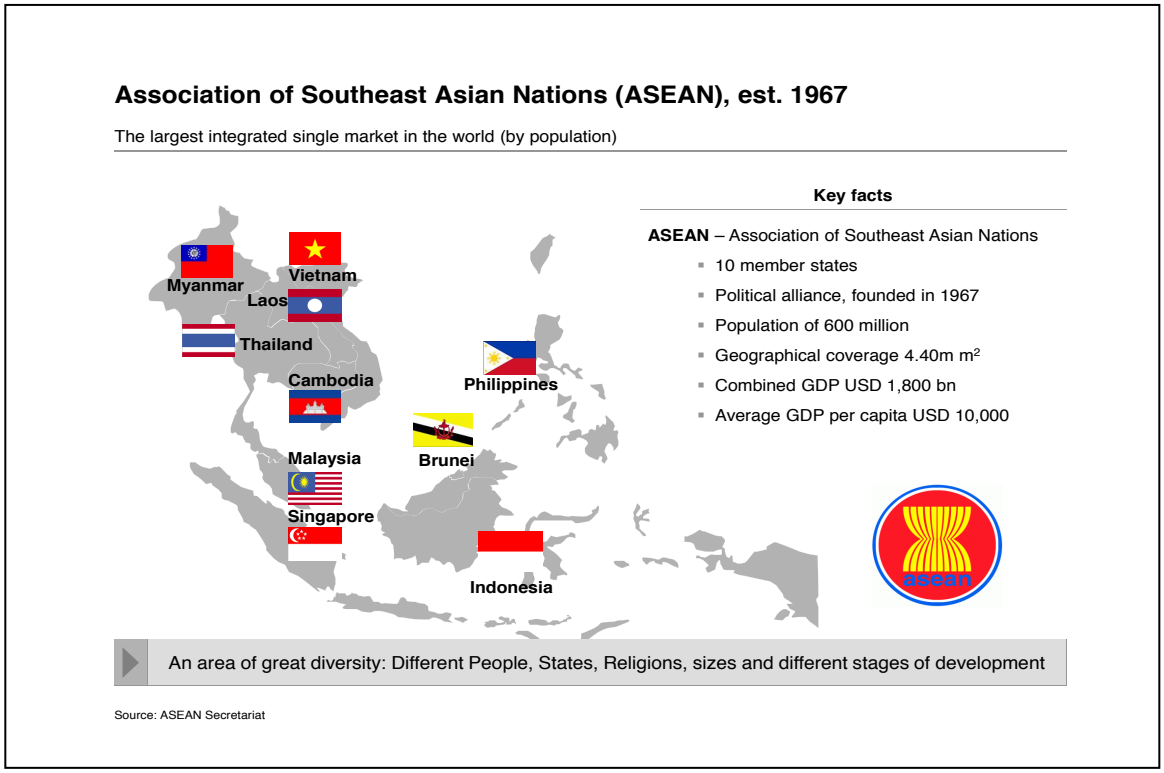
Freedom of navigation through the SLOCs, especially the Spratly Islands and the South China Sea, remains strategically essential for the region. Thus the significance of the Spratly Islands should be highlighted. They are not only important for strategic commercial and military SLOCs, but also for the exploration and exploitation of natural resources such as oil and gas in the region. Consequently, the struggling claims for sovereignty, maritime, and seabed jurisdictions, and the right of fishery over the area, have brought all claimant countries into a tangled nexus of regional conflicts and rivalries.

In addition, economically, the Spratly Islands area is invaluable in terms of natural resources such as fishing resources and potential oil and gas resources in the seabed surrounding the area. The economic value of the region, especially Southeast Asia, is the greatest catalyst in the ongoing dispute among the claimants. The Spratly Islands are an important fishery area for all of the littoral countries of the area. This is supported by the fact that the most recent incidents among the countries involved in the Spratly Islands conflict have revolved around violations of fishing claims in Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines by China (and vice versa) as shown in the summary of conflict in the South China Sea since the 1980s (see Appendix).

The greatest long-term economic factor is the presence of oil and gas deposits in the area around the Spratly Islands. Although little gas or oil has been found to this point, geologists have estimated that there may be as much as a billion tons of oil and gas (EIA, 2013). One of the complications in oil and gas exploration of the Spratly Islands area has been the depth of the seabed, which needs advanced technology or development of the system for exploration. The natural resources, oil and gas, of the Spratly Islands area have become an increasingly important reason for all claimants and the region nearby to keep steady on their claims and intention. With regard to the economic aspect, new sources of oil and gas are necessary to support the country's development in every dimension, including economic growth and military capacity. Eventually, the need for these resources will encourages all involved countries to maintain their intention and/or seek a proper solution to achieve their goals or benefits. With regard to Southeast Asian domestic oil production, projected to stay the same or decline as consumption rises, the region's countries will look to new sources of energy to meet their domestic demand and national interest. Thus the Spratly Islands area offers the potential for the discovery of important natural resources (oil and natural gas), creating an incentive to secure larger parts of the area for domestic production (EIA, 2013).

4.2 THE REGIONAL LEVEL FINDINGS

4.2.1 THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)



Source: http://www.asean.org/asean/asean-secretariat (Accessed 1 April 2013)

ASEAN has proved to be the most successful alliance of the third world nations in existence since the post-Cold War era. ASEAN is based on the goals of accelerating the economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region as well as of promoting regional peace and stability. In order to build a globalization of cooperation, all small nation states need to work together and they have to make an efficient response rather than take an observing role. Small nation states in Southeast Asia established a loose cooperation in 1967 called ASEAN, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Later Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia joined ASEAN, making up what are today the ten member states of ASEAN, which are different in politics, culture, and religion. The intention was to have a concrete cooperation for increasing regional development and peace within the region. However, this notion of unity is just an illusion because it is likely an abstract agreement for such a

union of states rather than a united strength. At the 9th ASEAN Summit in 2003, the ASEAN leaders resolved that an ASEAN Community should be established in order to promote partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies. Consequently, to accelerate the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015, the Cebu Declaration on the acceleration of the establishment of an ASEAN community by 2015 was signed at the 12th ASEAN Summit in January 2007 (ASEAN, 2007). Accordingly, ASEAN will promote action collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in economic, social and cultural, technological, scientific, and administrative aspects. Moreover, ASEAN not only has to handle the common needs of its members, but also has to explore all possible co-operations among member nation states, in order to become a successful regional organization with its strategic geopolitical location. Consequently, ASEAN shifted its cooperation (from the anti-communist aspect in the very beginning foundation period) to the economic cooperation and security community simultaneously.

From the end of the Cold war, ASEAN's security perspectives were necessarily widened. After intending to be a single community in 2003 as an ASEAN community, it has become increasingly possible to refer to Southeast Asia as one security complex. According to various aspects and many threats such as the enlargement of ASEAN to include ten Southeast Asian countries, the regional impact of the economic crisis and political consequences, the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the emergence of China, and the Southeast Asian countries' security which have all been linked. In addition, all Southeast Asian countries have critically agreed that a regional dilemma cannot be analyzed and solved separately from the others (Collins, 2003). Further, it can be observed that ASEAN tends to concentrate more on economic issues than security matters, as we can see from the many ASEAN community summits that always focus on ASEAN economic forums. However, in this globalized world where natural resources have become more and more vital, many disputes have revolved around overlapping territorial claims, particularly where potential natural resources (fishery, gas and oil reserves) are involved. To preserve the regional interests, cooperation over security must be ensured and highlighted as well as economic cooperation. The Spratly Islands dispute is one of the good examples that elaborate the overlapping territorial claims over natural resources,

commercial shipping, geopolitics, and fishing lanes.

Regarding the geography of Southeast Asia, the Spratly Islands connect not only the Southeast Asia region with others such as Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan), the West Pacific and Indian Ocean (through the Malacca strait), but also the Southeast Asian countries themselves together. Consequently, the conflict involves not only four of the ten ASEAN members (Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines), but also countries from outside the region (China and Taiwan). Moreover, China and the United states, as the great power and superpower respectively, are the powers from outside the region that penetrate in the conflict and the Southeast Asia region.

In addition, the core of the South China Sea dispute, especially the Spratly Islands conflict, remains an issue of territorial sovereignty and not a compliance with the law of the sea issue. While ASEAN, which acts as the institution for the Southeast Asia region, tries to reduce the tension in this situation, there are still disputes among claimants most of the time. In spite of the fact that ASEAN and China had adopted the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in 2002, no legally binding documents were drawn up. In addition, the Spratly Islands dispute still exists and has become more significant and complicated than the situation in the past. Thus, all related nations should consider the dispute in broader aspects and the conditions of policy decision should be reconsidered. Since we are in a globalization era, we are intertwined in more various dimensions than in the past. Every nation, especially the regional communities, becomes more interdependent. There are many approaches affecting the complexity of Southeast Asia's security decision-making involving political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects.

This situation can lead to the Southeast Asian region searching for cooperation over security: a secure community, including the emergence of Southeast Asian security (complex). On the other hand, the Spratly Islands dispute can be seen as the trigger factor for the region in terms of securitization or desecuritization in which reference object should be secured by whom (country, actor, and so on). In addition, the claimant countries for the Spratly Islands area will focus on the conflict, which will lead to action in the security aspect that may affect the entire Southeast Asia region. Hence, the Spratly Islands dispute has created security concerns that could lead to securitization and/or

strong integration (security cooperation) as desecuiritization for the Southeast Asia region. The Spratly Islands dispute could be viewed as an example potential flashpoint in the Southeast Asian region since it not only encompasses a blend of security problems, but could also impact such external regional powers as China and the United States and thus spill over into a much wider conflict. Consequently, this thesis is interested in the Spratly Islands dispute, how claimants and Southeast Asian countries interact, and their potential resolutions for the conflict.

From the perspective of the Southeast Asian region, the security issue can be seen throughout the ASEAN framework in terms of building globalization and cooperative relations: all small nation states need to collaborate and make an efficient response to critical situations rather than act in an observing role. When it comes to the security (cooperation) aspect, since ASEAN in 2003 planned to establish an ASEAN Community by 2015, ASEAN has developed its security integration along with economic cooperation terms by, for instance, establishing the APSC, AEC, and ASCC by 2015. With regard to the ASEAN security context, one of the ways to assess its role in managing security in Southeast Asia is to examine ASEAN's mechanisms for managing conflict. It can be seen that the constructivist approach to international relations offers the best way to profoundly investigate ASEAN's mechanisms, since the approach goes beyond the consideration of power and material interest and draws attention to ideational factors, to actors, and agents beyond the state and the possibilities for change. ASEAN, as a regional organization, tried to form its security cooperation through region wide inclusiveness and conflict avoidance. This can be seen from the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), which ASEAN adopted as the guideline to resolve the problem in particular border conflicts (Mely, 2005; ASEAN, 2013). ASEAN intends to maintain a dynamic harmony over any hostile situations among its members based on a concept of RSCT concerning patterns of amity and enmity (Buzan & Waever, 2003). The commitment of the states to norms of sovereignty, noninterference in the internal affairs of member states, nonuse of force, and avoidance of conflict was enshrined in the TAC and ZOPFAN. In addition, ASEAN has upheld its good relations on the international stage by cooperating with external countries and other regions such as APEC (ASIA-Pacific Economic Cooperation), ASEAN Plus Three

(ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea) and especially the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is the focal point of this thesis. ASEAN hosted the ARF comprising ASEAN and dialogue partners in terms of the entire Pacific security dimension (ARF, 2013). ARF is the most elaborate and security-specific entity among all ASEAN's rosters of instruments in the organization's institutional development.

4.2.2 THE ASEAN POLITCAL-SECRUTIY COMMUNITY (APSC)

According to the APSC blueprint (ASEAN, 2009), the APSC began over four decades of close cooperation and solidarity. The ASEAN heads of states/governments envisioned looking outward, living in peace, stability, and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies. It is predicted that the APSC will bring ASEAN's political and security cooperation at a higher level. The APSC has promoted political development in adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and respect for and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms among ASEAN members. It is a means by which ASEAN member nation states can pursue closer interaction and cooperation to set up shared norms and create common mechanisms to achieve ASEAN's goals and objectives in the political and security fields by 2015. The ASEAN Political-Security Community (ASEAN, 2009) envisages the following three key characteristics:

Key Characteristic	Purpose
1. A community of shared values and norms	ASEAN's cooperation in political development aims to strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law, and promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms
2. A unified region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security	In building a cohesive, peaceful, stable, and resilient Political Security Community, ASEAN subscribes to the principle of comprehensive security, which not only goes beyond the requirements of traditional security but also

	takes into account nontraditional aspects vital to regional and national flexibility. ASEAN is also committed to conflict prevention-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and post-conflict peace building.
3. A dynamic region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world	ASEAN fosters and maintains friendly and mutually beneficial relations with external parties to ensure that the ASEAN's member nation states live in peace with the rest of the world in a democratic and harmonious environment.

Regarding conflict management, especially border conflict, ASEAN usually employs the unique Asian resolution comprising restraint, respect, and responsibility: the ASEAN Way. ASEAN uses two types of internal conflict management in terms of border conflict as formal and informal mechanisms. Formal mechanisms can be divided into, first of all, the institutionalized framework of discussion and consultation mechanisms such as the ASEAN Summits, the ASEAN Ministers Meetings (AMM), and so on. Second are the institutionalized bilateral mechanisms and processes that are outside the formal institutional framework. And the legal instruments that are meant to prevent and manage disputes, for instance the TAC, are last. In Southeast Asia, the TAC has had a significant role as the key code of conduct governing inter-state relations in the region. ASEAN (2011) has continued to uphold the principles of the TAC by:

(1) The mutual respect of independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and all national identity;

(2) The right of every state to lead its national existence;

(3) Noninterference in internal affairs;

(4) Settlement of differences or disputes in a peaceful manner;

(5) Renunciation of threat or the use of force; and

(6) Effective regional cooperation: to foster cooperation and understanding among High Contracting Parties and ensure the preservation of peace and harmony in the region.

On the other hand, informal mechanisms are used throughout the ASEAN Way, such as: adherence to ground rules, emphasis on self-restraint, acceptance of consultation and consensus, using third-party mediation to settle disputes, and adjourning while shelving the settlement of conflicts (Mely, 2005).

4.2.3 THE ASEAN-CHINA POLITICAL-SECURITY RELATIONS

When it comes to political and security relations with China, the claimant country over the Spratly Islands, and possible threat to the region, ASEAN-China dialogue relations began when Qian Qichen, the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, attended the opening session of the 24th AMM in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During the meeting, he expressed China's keen interest to cooperate with ASEAN for mutual benefit. Subsequently, China was accorded full Dialogue Partner status at the 29th AMM in July 1996 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The relationship between ASEAN and China was elevated to a higher plane with the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity at the 7th ASEAN-China Summit in October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia and the adoption of the Plan of Action (POA) 2005-2010 to implement the Joint Declaration at the 8th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2004 in Vientiane, Laos. In order to continue to deepen the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, a new POA 2011-2015 was adopted at the 13th ASEAN-China Summit in October 2010 in Hanoi, Vietnam (ASEAN, 2013a). ASEAN and China continued to enhance their close and strategic partnership on political and security cooperation through regular dialogue and consultations which included summits, ministerial meetings, senior officials and experts meetings, as well as broader ASEAN-initiated regional architectural forums such as the ARF, ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) (ASEAN, 2013b).

Focusing on the Spratly Islands, with the desire to promote a peaceful, friendly, and harmonious environment in the South China Sea, ASEAN and China signed the Declaration on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (DOC) in November 2002 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. According to the declaration, all parties agreed to seek peaceful solutions to solve disputes within the region. China was the first dialogue partner of

ASEAN to accede to the TAC in October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia (ASEAN, 2013b). China's accession to the TAC has contributed to the stature of the TAC as the code of conduct for inter-state relations in the region. In 2004, the ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting decided to establish the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group (JWC) to implement the DOC. The JWC held its first meeting in Manila in August 2005 and provided recommendations in four main contexts: the guidelines and action plan for the DOC, specific cooperative actions in the area, an expert for providing recommendations to the JWC, and the convening of workshops (Thayer, 2011). However, China opposed specific cooperation and specified that ASEAN countries should not practice and consult among themselves before meeting with China. China also insisted that the disputes over the South China Sea should be resolved by bilateral consultations among relevant parties and not with ASEAN (multilateral). China stated that it accepted only bilateral talks for resolving disputes (Thayer, 2012). Later China revealed which participating countries agreed to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes in the areas.

In 2010, however, there was a report that China identified the South China Sea as one of its core interests, confirming by its national flag on the ocean floor near the Spratly Islands (Taylor, 2011; Miere, 2011). Consequently, ASEAN and China had adopted the new guidelines to implement the DOC on 21 July 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. The eight substantive points in the guidelines are as follows (ASEAN, 2011; Thayer, 2011):

(1) The implementation of the DOC should be carried out in a step-by-step approach in line with the provisions of the DOC;

(2) The parties to the DOC will continue to promote dialogue and consultations in accordance with the spirit of the DOC;

(3) The implementation of activities or projects as provided for in the DOC should be clearly identified;

(4) Participation in the activities or projects should be carried out on a voluntary basis;

(5) Initial activities to be undertaken under the ambit of the DOC should be confidence-building measures;

(6) The decision to implement concrete measures or activities of the DOC should be based on consensus among parties concerned, and lead to the eventual realization of a code of conduct;

(7) In the implementation of the agreed projects under the DOC, the services of experts and eminent persons, if deemed necessary, will be sought to provide specific inputs on the projects concerned; and

(8) Progress of the implementation of the agreed activities and projects under the DOC shall be reported annually to the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting

According to the preamble of the new guidelines, the DOC has just been identified as a milestone document signed between ASEAN Members and China. The guidelines intend to guide the implementation of possible joint cooperative activities, measures, and projects. Moreover, the implementation of the DOC will contribute to the deepening of the ASEAN-China strategic partnership for peace and prosperity. However, it is unlikely that the DOC was an agreement between ASEAN as a group and China. Besides, the guidelines are only provisional and none official agreement have been set up (nothing has been binding yet). In addition, it also was an inducement for China to take concrete action.

The guidelines for implementing the declaration were agreed at the ARF in July 2011 following a spate of incidents that had led to rising tension in the region. China in particular had been viewed as increasingly assertive, on occasion forcing non-Chinese vessels out of what it considers to be its territorial waters and sabotaging the work of exploration vessels in the area. In August 2011, China stated that it opposes complicating and internationalizing the issue of the South China Sea and insists on resolving disputes with its neighbors through consultation and negotiations. That statement was regarded, however, as a discursive reference to the United States regarding recent efforts to strengthen its diplomatic and military relationships with both established allies in the region and countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines. In November 2011, China went on to propose that a legally binding code of conduct should be negotiated (Taylor,

2011). From these actions, it appears that the Southeast Asian security dynamics, through the ASEAN framework concerning the Spratly Islands conflict, is more developed in peaceful settlement norms. According to the RSCT, this seems to imply that ASEAN is becoming desecuritized rather than securitized. For ASEAN to be securitized, it would have to include China's actions, which in turn would lead to inflammation which then would need extraordinary means, breaking normal rules and in the worse case scenario, using forces to resolve the conflict.

Further evidence for the development of peaceful solutions according to the RSCT can be found in the proposal of Premier Wen Jiabao. Following the proposal of Premier Wen Jiabao at the 14th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2011 in Bali, Indonesia, China set up the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund, with 3 billion Chinese Yuan, to provide financial support for ASEAN-China cooperation in the areas of maritime scientific research, connectivity, and navigation safety, particularly to implement agreed cooperative activities and projects within the DOC framework (ASEAN, 2013c). Subsequent to the adoption of the guidelines, four activities were implemented in 2012 as part of the implementation of the DOC, namely: (1) Workshop on Marine Hazard Prevention and Mitigation in the South China Sea in July 2012 in Kunming, China; (2) Workshop on Marine Ecosystems and Biodiversity in August 2012 in Singapore; (3) Symposium on Marine Ecological Environment and Monitoring Techniques in October 2012 in Xiamen, China; and (4) Joint Workshop in Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the DOC in November 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (ASEAN, 2013c). From these guidelines, it is clear that the desecuritization process over the Spratly Islands conflict is reached.

Another instance where desecuritization is evident is when ASEAN and China agreed to set up four expert committees on maritime scientific research, environmental protection, search and rescue, and transnational crime, in January 2012. The DOC raised the issue of COC again, but China stated that it would discuss the COC at the appropriate time or in appropriate conditions (Thayer, 2012a). Meanwhile, the Philippines had tried to issue other articles dealing with the COC, which caused a divide between ASEAN nations (Thayer, 2012b). As China sought to take a seat at the ASEAN discussion, the tension over the Spratly Islands dispute could be seen from the 20th ASEAN Summit in

Phnom Penh from April 3 to 4, 2012, where the Philippines and Vietnam objected strongly to including China in the discussion (ASEAN, 2012). However, a compromise was reached: ASEAN would proceed on its own to draft a COC, while Chinese talks would take place through the ASEAN chair. In June 2012, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) agreed to submit the draft ASEAN proposed key elements of the regional COC in the South China Sea to the ASEAN SOM for consideration (Torres, 2012). In July, there was a discussion between ASEAN and China over the adoptions of key elements of the COC, but the original draft of the Philippines was pruned as some articles were dropped, whereas the key elements of ASEAN's draft were reduced to a preamble and two articles. In the Philippines draft, two items, which were about the principles and norms of internal law, were dropped, though they were about the principles on the peaceful uses and cooperative management of the oceans and the need to protect the region from any form of increased militarization and intimidation (Thayer, 2012). Although this instance seems like it is difficult to categorize the agreement under desecuritization and securitization, the RSCT makes it possible to categorize it in the political sphere. Since a solution cannot be agreed upon in this instance, the issue, according to the RSCT, can be resolved in the political sphere.

Further evidence of becoming desecuritized can be seen in the Philippines' 2003 declaration of the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. It was replaced with the 2006 Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Towards an Enhanced ASEAN-China Partnership. Meanwhile, the Philippines' original proposal for a zone of peace, freedom, friendship, and cooperation was modified to an area of peace, stability, friendship, and cooperation. In ASEAN's draft, there were two disputes settlement mechanisms included that closely reflected the wording in the Philippine working draft. The first mechanism was the dispute settlement mechanism included in ASEAN's TAC. The second mechanism was for cases where parties are unable to resolve their dispute within the ASEAN framework by providing a solution under international law, including UNCLOS. The International Tribunal should adjudicate the Spratly Islands conflict for the Law of the SEA (ITLOS) over maritime jurisdiction (UNCLOS, 1982, Articles 186-191 & 279-299; Thayer, 2012). This argument is put into the normal political (desecuritization) framework. No special measure processes to deal with the

Spratly Islands conflict were included in the agreement, which indicates that the process can be seen as the ordinary political framework for the implementation of the code of conduct stated in the RSCT.

In July 2012, ASEAN and China agreed to start talks on a legally binding maritime code of conduct to manage the Spratly Islands conflict. Also, in the same month ASEAN Secretary General, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, confirmed that the first formal meeting between ASEAN and Chinese senior officials on the COC would take place in Phnom Penh in September 2012. However, the move of China was questioned as on July 11, China's attitude shifted and it refused to begin talks (Thayer, 2012). In addition, the document of ASEAN's proposed elements of a regional COC between ASEAN and China was not officially released and still remains an internal draft ASEAN document. Even though ASEAN and China have an agreement to resolve the Spratly Island conflict peacefully, this event shows that there seems to be no legally binding agreement to jointly resolve the conflict. Therefore, it is hard to identify the process either desecuritization or securitization, according to the framework of the RSCT.

4.2.4 THE FRAGMENT OF ASEAN

At the 45th AMM and related meetings in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in July 2012, the meeting aimed to establish the joint communiqué between ASEAN foreign ministers (ASEAN, 2012a). The 132-paragraph draft summarized the wide range of issues taken up by the AMM. It also summarized the discussion on the South China Sea including the standoff at Scarborough Shoal between China and the Philippines. However, in the South China Sea section, no joint communiqué was issued. During the summit, the view from Cambodia, as the ASEAN chair for 2012, was to limit the issue of maritime borders in the South China Sea, despite disagreement from Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Cambodia refused to include the dispute over the South China Sea in the forum because it preferred bilateral talks with China. The action of the Cambodian government conformed to the demand of China that the talks over this dispute must be bilateral only, though both sides had agreed on the DOC before. The objective was to prevent territorial claims in the South China Sea at the ASEAN level.

However, the shape of this issue depends largely on the rise of China as a real great power that wants to be a new world superpower.

This was, according to Cambodia, due to the argument raised by Cambodia, as the host for the summit that time, who said that the failure of the 45th AMM to adopt a joint communiqué rested squarely with the Philippines and Vietnam and their insistence on including a reference to Scarborough Shoal and the natural resources exploration over EEZs (Thayer, 2012). The discussion on the South China Sea dispute continued among the foreign ministers of the ASEAN nations, and they could not find a unanimous agreement as Cambodia disagreed about proposing the joint communiqué and adopting the COC. All ASEAN countries wanted to seek a solution for the dispute and adoption of the COC with unanimous agreement, but Cambodia stated that there was no consensus. Cambodia pointed out the problem of the discussion on Scarborough Shoal, the inclusion of the wording on the EEZ and the continental shelf, compromise text that could satisfy every party, and the discussion between ASEAN and China on the disputes in the South China Sea. The case of the dispute in the discussion was about paragraph 16 of the draft joint communiqué, in which it was mentioned by Cambodia that strong wording was used (ASEAN, 2012a; Thayer, 2012).

The failure to issue a joint communiqué at the 45th AMM indicated that there was a deal between China and Cambodia as leaked information from unnamed diplomatic sources to the press stated that "China bought the Chair, simple as that," and this was supported by Yang Jiechi, Foreign Minister of China, who was quoted as thanking Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen for supporting China's core interests (Thayer, 2012; Perlez, 2012), since Cambodia received a lot of assistance including military aid from China. Although the draft of the joint communiqué was sent to China for consideration, it was unacceptable to China, and had to be sent back for amendment. The case of the COC for the South China Sea disputes has proved that China has a highly influential power over the maritime territory and also the Southeast Asian region. The influence of China hung over behind-the-scenes deliberations on the South China Sea in many respects, dividing ASEAN countries that are grateful to China and those that are willing to stand up to China (Perlez, 2012). ASEAN has tried to talk with China as a regional community, but China always refuses and accepts only bilateral talks. In addition, Chinese

intervention in the region can be carried out with mutual interest between China and other ASEAN members as occurred in the case of Cambodia at the 45th AMM. As a result, consensus among ASEAN members can't be reached unless ASEAN can expel the power of China from the region and work together as a real single community in terms of politics and economy.

Although ASEAN has a number of agreements with China, in fact, no legally binding documents were drawn up. Moreover, the Spratly Islands conflict still exists and it has become more significant and complicated than the situation in the past as shown in the summary incidents. China's action (aggressiveness) has created an anxiety within the Southeast Asian region. It can be seen that China's aggressiveness leads to a revisable ASEAN security context. Meanwhile, ASEAN's objective of creating the APSC by 2015 is predicated on the assumption that ASEAN members share a common identity and responsibility for contributing to peace, stability, and security in Southeast Asia. The APSC blueprint (2009) states that one of its goals is to ensure implementation of the DOC in the South China Sea and ASEAN tries to achieve this objective blueprint of the APSC by calling for a continuation of ASEAN's consultation among member states and working towards the adoption of a regional COC (ASEAN, 2009; Thayer, 2012). ASEAN's failure to issue a joint communiqué after the 45th AMM poses procedural questions about the fate of decision-making over the Spratly Islands dispute (on the South China Sea) and ASEAN's community-building. It also urges questions about the status of ASEAN's agreement on the key principles in its draft COC (Emmerson, 2012).

Furthermore, it is a fact that ASEAN also has more internal competition than cooperation. ASEAN needs relations with external powers rather than member nation states (Nischlke, 2002). At this time, this means that ASEAN is unable or unwilling to create a balance by itself. This is ASEAN's weakness in trying to establish regional integration. In addition, the ASEAN Way obstructs the creation of a single community because the way requires consultation and consensus among members is the biggest issue. As a result, any dispute between member states is postponed or left to avoid conflicts, which has made ASEAN a peaceful region without any major conflicts in recent decades. On the other hand, these aspects result in ASEAN's slow growth because if any nation state does not agree with recognition, the agreement is canceled as agreeing

to disagree, as was experienced at the 45th AMM (Mely, 2005). ASEAN should develop a peaceful decision-making norm (as desecuritization) being not related to serious aspects, which may lead to conflict. Secondly, it is the principle of noninterference that relates to the common foreign and international law. In this regard, ASEAN itself is too strictly. This creates an obstacle for ASEAN in terms of transnational presence. To solve the problem, the member should collaborate together with mutual and trustworthy agenda. ASEAN interpreted this strictly because the nation-state members do not trust one another sensitively. From now on, ASEAN has to think about regional collaboration and increasing trust among member states in order to pursue the single community-building goal by 2015. Moreover, with regard to new possible threats such as demands for energy and other natural resources, these unresolved disputes, including China's increasing aggressiveness, may become a significant aspect in the future military balance of power in the Southeast Asian region, as every country seeks to modernize its military and expand its armed forces in order to protect its national interests, and engage other international partners, such as the United States, in order to balance the rise of China.

4.3 THE INTERREGIONAL LEVEL FINDINGS

4.3.1 THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)

At this level, ASEAN tries to use the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to find a resolution and the tension reduction in multi-lateral collaborations (as desecuritization process). In this section, the thesis will discuss the relation between ASEAN and its international relation policy at the interregional level, specifically over the Spratly Islands conflict. At the interregional level, ASEAN established the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994 to maintain peace and stability and to promote regional development and prosperity. A brief history of the ARF, its objectives, frameworks, and the performance of the ARF over the Spratly Islands conflict will be discussed in order to understand what the current approach of ASEAN has achieved and how that applies to the RSCT.

After the Cold War ended, the new world order changed and led to the hegemony of the United States. Meanwhile, the United States reduced its military role in the Southeast Asian region and began its Chinese friendship policy (Mely, 2005). The Southeast Asian region was affected and in fear. Since the region's security policy was

depended upon and had been intertwined with the United States' anti-communist policy for decades, the United States tried to make Southeast Asia peaceful and stable even though the Southeast Asian region acted as a neutral region during the Cold War era (ASEAN Charter). The United States employed a new policy, namely the East Asia Security Initiative (EASI), which gradually reduced the military in Southeast Asia from 135,000 men to 120,00 men in 1992 (Amitav, 2009). With regard to the EASI, the Southeast Asian region without the United States' security support was suspicious of the vacuum of power in the region (Mely, 2005). Meanwhile, China as the rising power in Asia was developing its international relations on the global stage and capacities in areas such as the economy and military. However, the Southeast Asian countries kept an eye on Chinese foreign policy, which was unpredictable. After that, there was differentiation in internal political aspects that made all Southeast Asian governments concerned about China's rising power penetration and possible hostile acts in the region.

Therefore, at the 4th ASEAN summit in Singapore in 1992, ASEAN members agreed to use the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) in order to discuss regional security aspects and it was agreed to develop governmental level meetings in the form of the ARF. The first meeting of the ARF was held in Bangkok in 1994 (ARF, 2013). The first ARF objective was to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security aspects of common Asia-Pacific interest. The second objective was to make contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. At the 27th AMM in 1994 it was stated that the ARF could become an effective consultative Asia-Pacific Forum for promoting open dialogue on political and security cooperation in the region. In this context, ASEAN should work with its ARF partners to bring about a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations in the Asia-Pacific (ARF, 2013a). The ARF comprises ASEAN and dialogue partners in terms of the entire Pacific security dimension. The current participants in the ARF are as follows: Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, the United States, and Vietnam (ARF, 2013). The ARF is the most elaborate and

security-specific entity among all ASEAN's rosters of instruments in the organization's institutional development.

The role of the ASEAN political process through the ARF is to employ the ARF as a consultative forum on proactive political and security issues. The ARF aims to build collaborative understanding, familiarity, trust, and predictability in the behavior among member states within the Asia-Pacific region (and outside the region). The ARF endeavors to implement throughout the region promotion of trust, cooperation, and good relations. Furthermore, preventive diplomacy is developed in order to prevent the occurrence and spread of conflict. Then all parties and participants may develop the ARF as a forum for discussing and resolving the conflict (ARF, 2013, 2013a). However, the ARF is now only the platform for dialogue and consultation. Its status is not the official organization. The ARF is just a forum for exchanging perspectives and frameworks through which member countries will seek ways to cooperate with an emphasis on the participation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the military.

4.3.2 THE ARF FRAMEWORK

The three (3) stages of the ARF framework is outlined below:

1. Promotion of confidence-building measures

This stage is a measuring process to promote trustworthiness among members; the main purpose of the stage is to allow member states to meet and discuss continuously in order to promote familiarity and trust among members, leading to cooperation under the same norm. This process will be carried out via the promotion of international activities under the norms of ASEAN, including the declaration to make Southeast Asia become the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), and the TAC, which aim to include the ASEAN Way and the principle of consultation and consensus. In addition, the measure to create trustworthiness among members will not only come from the meetings between members, but also the exchanges of security and military personnel. Also, it will include the participation of the United Nations (UN) in registering weaponry and distributing the defense white papers (Mely, 2005, p.28).

2. Development of preventive diplomacy

At the eighth ARF meeting in 2001, the meeting issued the Concept and Principle of Preventive Diplomacy by defining the meaning of preventive diplomacy as diplomacy under the consensus agreement; this is a political action agreed to by all relevant members, aimed at preventing conflicts between member states, especially those that have the potential to threaten the liberty, security, and peace of the region. Also, this measure aims to prevent the conflicts that can lead to military confrontations and to reduce the impacts of the conflicts. This measure must pass through the process of trust construction between members and of mutual norms; it also tries to open channels to seek mutual understanding. In addition, the purpose of developing preventive diplomacy is to create the diversity that differs from former diplomatic approaches. That is, to open opportunities for representatives from other sectors in the society, not from diplomats, such as nongovernmental organizations, scholars, and people who have been accepted by the society to participate in creating peace and security for that region (ARF, 2001).

3. The elaboration of approaches to conflicts

This stage is to develop the mechanism that will be the framework of joint operation between member states when there is a problem; it can be implemented when every member trusts each other and feels at ease to talk about the problem. This stage will lead to mutual solutions of problems (ARF, 2013, 2013a, 2013b).

Through the ARF meeting it is possible to fit desecuritization into the RSCT framework because every stage can explain a peaceful resolution, a mutual co-operation and confidence building among the dialogue partners within the Asian Pacific region. Furthermore, the importance of the ARF is increasing in every dimension, that is, not only in traditional security, but also from the political cooperation and stability in the Asia-Pacific region to concerns over economic impact. In accordance with the fact that the stability of the Asia-Pacific region is challenged with the new format such as nuclear weapons, terrorism, transnational environmental problems, epidemic disease, human rights, drugs, economic criminals, and so forth, the ARF plays on the significant international stage as a collaboration platform. In doing so, the ARF enable former enemies to come together at the negotiating table (Mely, 2005). Moreover, it also

maintains the predictable environment of international relations among member states and helps to promote political cooperation among members in dealing with the problems that affect the region's stability in order to increase the role and credibility of small countries as being ARF members (Foong, 1996; Desker, 2001). Hence, the Spratly Islands conflict may be compromised and resolved as desecuritization. However, the ARF takes place under the ASEAN summit so that the forum is driven by the ASEAN principle as host. Regarding the ASEAN Way, the practical experience may hinder the development and success of the ARF, as ASEAN experienced in the Regional Level in section 4.2.4.

4.3.3 MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ARF

The ARF as the stage for the Asia-Pacific dialogue and consultation on security and political aspects includes the divergence of member countries, especially China and the United States, joining in the same forum. By this, the ARF's objective is for the prevention of easy interference from external regional powers including China as a forum member in order to encompass China in a multilateral framework (Hong, 1997). While China as a forum member makes use of its benefits in terms of making good international relations, especially with ASEAN countries, it is mainly interested in bilateral talks and are primarily present for observation purposes. However, China has good economic relations, such as the APEC and ASEAN Plus Three. Although the economic relations between China and ASEAN are improving and since there is more focus in this area, there could be a risk that the security aspect maybe be reduced and separated from the economic aspect. Similarly, the United States has the same economic focus, which could also risk the reduction in security in this region. This situation corresponds with ASEAN's conviction that the United States should join the forum as a balancing power with China in this region. In contrast, have China allow the United States to join because it is better to have a multilateral than a bilateral framework, that is, between the United States and other members (Naidu, 2000).

When it comes to the United States' point of view, it not only observes the significance of the region but also maintains its alliance with countries within the Southeast Asian region. Moreover, the United States can use the ARF as the balancing

stage to China as the rising power in Asia in order to protect its advantages and powers in Asia. A good example, which the United States emphasizes, is the unstable situation in the South China Sea, especially the Spratly Islands. At the 17th ARF in Vietnam, Hillary Clinton, the United States Secretary of State, blamed China for its aggression over the Spratly Islands dispute. Moreover, Clinton also referred to the United States as a Pacific power and stated that it had a national interest in freedom of navigation, the respect for international law, and unimpeded, lawful commerce in the South China Sea. Since then the Obama administration has repeatedly stated its commitment to re-engaging with the region and strengthening its diplomatic and military ties, having recognized the Asia-Pacific as growing in strategic significance in the 21st century. In response to recent confrontations in the South China Sea, the United States has also frequently expressed its concerns and called for all sides to exercise self-restraint. Subsequently the United States' Navy pledged to increase its presence in Southeast Asia in November 2011 and deployed a contingent of US marines to Northern Australia in 2012 (Taylor, 2011).

As for the ARF itself, it is currently processing the first stage (which connect to the second stage); it has just begun to discuss preventive diplomacy, but it is still a long way from the implementation process. This is because the countries participating in the ARF are still writing the draft ARF preventive diplomacy work plan in order to study possible approaches to raising preventive diplomacy measures under the principle that there will be no use of preventive diplomacy in domestic issues or bilateral conflicts unless in some cases it is approved by concerned countries. However, the development of the second stage is limited by various conditions, though most countries are likely ready, because some countries still have other conditions, for example China. As a result, to fully promote the second stage the ARF needs to take more time, although two decades have already passed.

In terms of performance, the past decade has shown that the performance of the ARF is not yet empirical on the international relations level because the objective of the ARF is to set up a negotiating forum to stabilize familiarity and trustworthiness among members, the first stage of the ARF, which partly deals with the second stage. Nevertheless, the attempt to establish negotiations by the ARF regarding its objectives was able to partly restrain the conflict between China, Taiwan, and ASEAN countries

like Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam in the claims of sovereignty over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. As a result of its strategic importance for shipping navigation and natural resources, the archipelago in the sea has become the target of those countries. In this regard, ASEAN represented the neutral side, offering a stage to these countries to negotiate and resulting in the ASEAN-China DOC in 2002. This declaration helped to ease the problem for a while. However, apart from the agreement above, the ARF has not yet had anything concrete to show for its work, while the Asia-Pacific region is still facing many problems that cannot rely on negotiations for solutions, especially the Spratly Islands conflict. This is because within ASEAN, there is limited capability, a lack of institutional capacity, the issues of historical heritage, and international politics, which can be considered that the ARF has only been viewed as a "talk shop" (Mely, 2005, p.134).

In sum, the ARF is the region's foremost security forum and continues to provide a venue to foster dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues of common interests and to make significant contributions toward confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. However, the past performance of the ARF was still trivial; though it reduced the tension in the Spratly Islands conflict, this is not a permanent solution (Mely, 2005). This is not only because it lacks institutional capacity, but also because of the overriding objectives to instill trust and build confidence among member states which were getting to know each other during the formative years of ASEAN as experienced at the 45th AMM.

4.4 THE GLOBAL LEVEL FINDINGS

In this following section, the thesis will analyze the interference, the internal condition and the (hidden) agenda of the global actors, which affect the Southeast security dynamics and penetrate in the Southeast Asian region. Although the RSCT defined the new international system as 1 superpower (the United States) plus 4 great powers (The EU, Russia, Japan and China) (Buzan & Waever, 2003); the thesis will touch upon only the United States and China since both actors have notably significant interaction with the Southeast Asian region. The United States interaction within the Southeast Asian region will affect at the global level and the regional level as a

superpower. When it comes to China, it is defined as a great power; However, due to its power rising especially maritime power and directly involving the Spratly Islands conflict as one of the claimants, China's action can be shifted to affect the global level as becoming a new superpower. Then, it is necessary to investigate, discuss and analyze keenly both countries in which they have significant impact to the region and also penetration within the region.

4.4.1 CHINA'S AGGRESSIVENESS

In the Southeast Asian region, the end of the Cold War led to the military confrontation reducing between the United States and the Soviet Union as a proxy war within the region. However, regional stability and peace had not yet been achieved. In contrast, the withdrawal of United States power (military) from Southeast Asia provided a vacuum of power and led to new great power penetration within the region (Buzan, 2003). As Buzan and Waever (2003) defined the international frame after the Cold War era as one superpower (the United States) plus four great powers (China, Japan, Russia, and the European Union), China would possibly be the rising (super) power instead of the United States within Southeast Asia (and the world) in accordance with its increasing budgets in national defense and its actions such as its strategic policy and military modernization (Buzan & Waever, 2003; China's National Defense, 2008, 2013; Buckley, 2012).

When it comes to China, China's history in the 20th century was marked by occupation and civil war. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China has undergone a transformation, which has produced a tremendous economic turnaround such as with Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms (development in four factors: agriculture, industry, military, and technology) (Hays, 2008). China has not only become a major trading nation, building up an impressive foreign currency holding, but has also been the world's largest economy for a decade. The Chinese leadership has recognized that economic reform is the only way to achieve the status it desires on its own terms. Despite not facing any threat to its security, China has embarked on a path of radical change to both its military strategy and capabilities. The strategic focus has now shifted to the offensive. The main theme is power projection and the ability to fight a modern war with advanced

technology (Secretary of Defense, 2013).

Meanwhile, the fundamental issue is that the stability of the Communist Party of China (CPC) itself represents a concern for both Asia-Pacific and world security. Any movement by the West to promote human rights and democracy in China represents a direct threat to the existing regime. Since the late 1980s, China has seen many important events that have influenced China's foreign policy. In particular, the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 impacted China's image on the international stage and led to the development of China's unmoving economy. In its effort to emerge as a great power, China has changed its security strategy from defensive to offensive. If China wants to be a dominant world power as a rising power (a superpower), it will have the potential to do so in the current world order. China realizes that economic development is as important as the strengthening military; neither aspect can be separated from the other (Hynes, 1998; Miller, 2006).

China has also used its economic growth and change in military strategy to commence an ambitious military modernization program. For instance, the People's Liberation Army Navy (the PLA Navy) is upgrading its fleet with power projection in mind. China has an active submarine replacement program in place and has purchased Russian Kilo class submarines. New surface vessels are being built and the PLA Navy is paying more attention to replenishment of sea capability. It is considered that China concerns about the secured maritime interests in a crisis time. The PLA Navy upgrading corresponds with China's maritime territorial claim over the Spratly Islands and the South China Sea, which is the focus of this thesis (Erickson & Collins, 2007; O'Rourke, 2013).

It is clear that China's economic and military transformation has been aimed at challenging the balance of power existing in the region since after the Cold War. China is an emerging power, particularly as a maritime power, with global commercial and military modernization. Therefore, maritime security has become a significant strategic concern of China (Erickson & Collins, 2007). It is considered that China has demonstrated hegemonic intentions through its territorial claims in the South China Sea, especially over the Spratly Islands. A more aggressive and expansionist policy may develop as China faces more pressure to provide food and resources for a quarter of the

world's population. With its ongoing effort to develop a high-technology economic system, China has set the foundation that will likely ensure that it gets much stronger and perhaps even more powerful than the US (China's National Defense, 2013).

The economic and military transformation of China is well underway. It is critical that the world, especially its neighbors, is not naive to its intentions. Moreover, with China's ambitions concerning maritime territorial claims, the Southeast Asian region has been facing a possible threat from China (China's aggressiveness) in the future. According to China's maritime territories claim, China claims its territories and waters in the South China Sea as the 9-Dash line, which covers the Spratly Islands (Xu, 2013). The line is contested by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Since China submitted a new map to the UN in 2009, it has caused controversy concerning sovereignty over the area and demarcation. China issued new passports in late 2012 containing a map that covered the disputed territories based on the line, which drew fresh international criticism and reaction. Although ASEAN countries, for instance the Philippines and Vietnam, have contested this disputed boundary, China has insisted on its historical legitimacy of the boundary based on survey expeditions, fishery, and naval patrols since the 15th century, putting it at odds with the boundaries complying UNCLOS 1982 for the region since 1994 (Xu, 2013). China's PLA Navy and fishery protection vessels have increased patrols in the boundary within the EEZ of claimants. Moreover, China has offered leases on petroleum exploration blocks within the EEZ of Vietnam despite the fact that China has no right to claim an overlapping territory (Desker, 2012). Thus, China's rising global presence and its relationship with its neighbors, particularly ASEAN nations, will be reviewed and analyzed in this thesis.

4.4.2 CHINA'S MILITALY MODERNIZATION

China as a rising power has embarked on its ambition to increase its capacities as a comprehensive national power in many dimensions such as in political, economic, military power (modernization), technological, and diplomatic aspects (Dewan, 2010). According to China's National Defense White Paper 2013, China's armed forces have broadened their visions of national security strategy and military strategy, aimed at winning local wars under the conditions of informationization, made active planning for

the use of armed forces in peacetime, dealt effectively with various security threats, and accomplished diversified military tasks (China's National Defense, 2013). When it comes to informationization, Navarro and Autry (2011) explained that informationization aims to counter the United States' distant force projection, which protects freedom of navigation, especially for aircraft carriers. China's informationization creates a network of information flows that will pinpoint and target the United States' Navy forces from thousands of miles away, notably new satellite and missile strike capabilities. China's goal is to network by using low-tech devices, particularly fishing vessels, along with high-tech devices like those of the military. This could possibly increase the detection capability of fishing vessels as invisible sources. The correlation between China's PLA Navy and fishery protection vessels has increased patrols in the boundary within the EEZ of claimants. China is creating the network of information connection that links up lowly civilian fishermen with military and intercontinental missiles in order to fight the United States military and other enemies before they can get within attack range of China's mainland (Navarro & Autry, 2011).

China has gradually expanded all capacities for supporting its military, particularly the PLA Navy. This can be seen from the changing strategy of offshore defensive operations and integrated maritime operations capabilities such as from coastal to far sea defense. The improved strategy is significant because of trade and energy security concerns. For this reason, China needs to confirm for its secured SLOCs that become more important for Chinese maritime interest. Consequently, this situation has become the basis for China to extend its maritime defensive perimeter and consequently improve its ability to influence and protect initially regional and subsequently global SLOCs (Dewan, 2010).

As a correlation with the expansion of China's maritime economic interests, the PLA Navy employs a strategy for far sea defense calling for the development of China's long-range naval capabilities in order to preserve China's maritime security and the protection of China's flourishing and widespread maritime economic interests (Lin, 2010). The PLA Navy wants to protect its transportation routes and secure its SLOCs. The far sea defense strategy is significant for two reasons. First, it shifts the extent of its naval ambitions beyond its traditional coastal area (inshore). Secondly, it extends the

responsibilities of defense to include China's maritime economic interests. The redirection of China's armed forces may derive from China's perceived need to project power beyond its coastal area to where the PLA Navy is required to carry out the newly expanded far sea defense duties.

In line with China's far sea defense strategy, the PLA Navy employs three-stage strategy modernization plans (China's National Defense, 2008, 2013). The PLA Navy has developed cooperation capabilities in distant seas and countering nontraditional security threats in order to support its new strategy of far sea defense. On account of this, firstly, the PLA Navy aimed to develop a technologically modernized and networked naval capability (2002-2010) within the first island chain comprising islands that stretch from Japan in the north to Taiwan and the Philippines in the south as the 9-Dash line, which covers the Spratly Islands. The second stage (2010-2020) is to transform the PLA Navy into a regional naval force, which can operate beyond the first island chain to reach the second island chain, which includes Guam, Indonesia, and Australia. Finally, in the third stage it seeks to transform itself into a global force capable of blue-water operations (Blue Water Navy) by the middle of the 21st century (Cole, 2010).

Source: http://www.international.gc.ca/arms-armes/assets/images/South_China_Sea_2.jpg (Accessed 1 June 2013)

Furthermore, China realizes that the naval forces alone are not able to cover all its territories, so that China itself has to recruit better ways than using forces as well. China's willingness needs to not only protect trade and energy resources, but also secure maritime transportation and cargo vessels in order to confirm and strengthen its future (Dewan, 2010). As a result, the overall far sea defense strategy reflects increasing willingness and self-confidence to assert its interests in and around the East and South China Sea (including the Spratly Islands). For instance, in correlation with the support for China's far sea defense strategy, China in 2012 increased the military (the PLA) budget by 11.2 percent (about 110 billion US dollars) which represented the vanguard of an increase in the significance of the international arms trade as a share of 6 percent of the arms imported worldwide, which ranked second highest in the world and has increased steadily over the past two decades with no downturn (Buckley, 2012; SIPRI, 2013). Meanwhile, the area of China's interest within this strategy overlaps with the United States Navy's area of supremacy. It indicates a signal to the end of Unipolar (the era of dominant world power by the United States), which does not want to share its interest and influence. Moreover, this situation leads to concern not only over the United States, but also amongst the Southeast Asian region as a neighbor of China. It could possibly be the Chinese intention to challenge the security context (in particular the maritime security) that will affect the Southeast Asian region and the world as regards China's aggressiveness.

In terms of the significance of the Spratly Islands, the mutual benefits of regional (economic) integration should be given high priority and provide further compelling incentive for cooperation on natural resources, conservation, and security movements because of rich resources (Rosenberg, 2011). In contrast, despite numerous conflict incidents over the Spratly Islands, it is perceived that China has increased its power in order to take over all the disputed area. Furthermore, among all the claimants, China can be seen as a possible threat that makes others suspicious in particular among claimants. In recent years, China has developed dramatically according to its national strategy as a comprehensive national power, in particular with its maritime interests that represent the most significant wealth resources. By doing this, China needs an enhancing national power in order to protect, secure, and possibly become a challenging superpower in the

future. This leads to an effect on the arms race and military modernization within the region simultaneously. Moreover, China's maritime defense strategy is underway in increasing its power in order to pursue its strategy for far sea defense into the blue-water navy by 2020, in particular the first island chain, the second island chain, and including the conflict over the Spratly Islands. China realizes that when China has strength in economic and military power, no one will be able to challenge it.

4.4.3 EFFECT TO THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECRUITY DYNAMIC (China)

China has stepped up its power as a rising (super)power and has the most aggressive stance in terms of conflict resolution. In the same way, China has increased economic development and military capabilities simultaneously, especially the PLA Navy, in order to take over all its territories. This situation indicates the apparent possible threat of China to others, particularly Southeast Asian countries as its neighbors and countries involved in conflict, which leads to an increase in untrustworthiness in terms of using force for conflict solution. In addition, China's military modernization and strategy bring an anxiety to Southeast Asian countries as its neighbors and involved claimants in the Spratly Islands dispute. It can be considered that the Southeast Asian region has been worried and agitated by China's aggressiveness in terms of its military modernization and strategic policy as a possible threat in the securitization context of the region.

In addition to the reducing role of the US military in the Southeast Asian region after the Cold War era, the region has not been stable and peaceful. Moreover, the vacuum of power enables China to be a new superpower as a rising great power in the Southeast Asian region. Over the past two decades, a rising China has economically interpenetrated into Southeast Asia and become its largest trading partner. At the same time, Southeast Asia's maritime territory, particularly the Spratly Islands, has become a regional security flashpoint. China has asserted sovereignty over the Spratly Islands area; meanwhile, a number of littoral countries have advanced more modest territorial claims. When it comes to China's strategic shifts, which will affect Asia-Pacific balancing including the United States that had been reviewed with concern in China's latest National Defense paper, China has found territorial aggressiveness (China's National Defense, 2013).

The Southeast Asian region has increased the dynamic of regional security cooperation through ASEAN; however, ASEAN itself has never been successful in conflict resolution. Consequently, every country in the Southeast Asian region feels insecure. ASEAN countries struggle too hard to pursue and develop their military capacities. This condition leads to arms races, security dilemmas, and instability within the Southeast Asian region, and urges tension in the conflict over the South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands, as well as affecting the stability and security within the Southeast Asian region. Furthermore, Southeast Asian countries have increased their military budgets with a 6 percent enlargement in military spending in 2012 (33.7 billion US dollars), which has grown steadily over the decades (SIPRI, 2013). Recently, China has employed dynamic military exercises to intimidate other claimants and overlay these tensions over the Spratly Islands, which creates an emerging maritime rivalry and cooperation amongst Southeast Asian countries, China, and the United States. Whether China's peaceful rising as defined itself accounts for more than rhetoric will be tested in Southeast Asia's maritime territory, especially the Spratly Islands, early and often.

Most important is China's behavior (aggressiveness), which alarmed the Southeast Asian region and the United States as a superpower, and led them to seek securitization. Now this situation, including the Spratly Islands conflict, is a complicated subject. Southeast Asia and the United States believe that the pattern of China's aggressive far sea defense and the 9-dash line map reflected a high level and integrated decision to toughen policy at all points on China's territory. China's actions over the Spratly Islands and the South China Sea suggest a change in fundamental policy and aggressive implementation of China's long-term strategy that bring an anxiety to its neighbor as the Southeast Asian region and the United States as the balancing power to China within the region (Bush, 2012).

4.4.4 THE UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT

The United States is a (another) superpower from outside the region that wants to take its participation or penetration as defined by the RSCT in the South China Sea with this thesis focusing on the Spratly Islands conflict. This is due to the significance of the Spratly Islands' location. According to a statement made by top officials in the Obama

administration's pivot to Asia, the United States has a range of national interests in the Spratly Islands dispute. As General Dempsey (2013), the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, claims, the definition of the Obama administration's decision to pivot toward Asia as a policy widely interpreted as a response to China's expanding influence (China's aggressiveness), the United States sought to be a stabilizing factor and its absence would be destabilizing. After a decade of focusing on Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States has now carried out an Asia-Pacific policy as bringing more interest, more engagement, and more quality assets to the Asia-Pacific region (which includes Southeast Asia and the Spratly Islands area) (Moss, 2013; Perlez, 2013).

4.4.5 THE OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION PIVOT TO ASIA

In accordance with a report published by the Council on Foreign Relations, a report outlines four major reasons why the United States has national interests in the South China Sea, as follows: (1) Upholding global rules and norms such as freedom of navigation; (2) Alliance security and regional stability that the United States is expected to uphold to ensure stability; (3) Economic interests pertaining to shipping lanes where 1.2 trillion US dollars of United States' goods pass through each year; (4) Cooperative relationship with China from which both states benefit (Glaser, 2012, pp.4-6). These national interests are substantial and guide the United States' policy within the Asia-Pacific region.

Apart from the attempts to exploit enormous resources in the sea by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan, the freedom of navigation within the region is also a contentious concern, especially between the United States and China. The tension in the region around the Spratly Islands has been developed by the growth of the modernized military of China and its regional intentions. China has employed its military modernization, especially naval capabilities, to enforce its sovereignty and jurisdiction claims by force if necessary. Meanwhile, China is developing capabilities that may put the United States forces at risk in the South China Sea conflict. Regarding the growing importance of the relationship between the United States and China, the Asia-Pacific region, and the global economy, the United States has a dominant interest in penetration and preventing any disputes in the Spratly Islands

located in the South China Sea from intensifying force operations (Glaser, 2012). To put it another way, Patrick Ventrell (2012), acting deputy spokesperson in the office of press relations, states that:

> As a Pacific Nation and resident power, the United States has a national interest in the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, freedom of navigation, and unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea. We do not take a position on competing territorial claims over land features and have no territorial ambitions in the South China Sea; however, we believe the nations of the region should work collaboratively and diplomatically to resolve disputes without coercion, without intimidation, without threats, and without the use of force (Ventrell, 2012, n.p.)

In accordance with the national interest of the United States alliance in South East Asia, support is needed from the United States in order to balance the rise of China within the region. However, as stated above, they believe that this is an issue for the South East Asian region and the surrounding nations around the South China Sea.

Moreover, the Obama administration's pivot to Asia has embarked on an effort to develop and strengthen regional institutions by building out the architecture of Asia, which reflects Asia's urgent need for economic and diplomatic security. And the reason for this is to make an effective regional architecture, which is able to lower the barriers on shared challenges. It creates dialogues and structures that encourage cooperation, maintain stability, resolve disputes through diplomacy, and help ensure that countries can rise peacefully. There is no underestimating the strategic significance of the Southeast Asian region. The ten ASEAN countries have a population of over 600 million and impressive growth rates in countries like Thailand (a 25-percent increase in international investment in 2011) suggest that ASEAN nations are going to become more important in politics and economy. Furthermore, the Obama administration signed ASEAN's TAC on 18 February 2009, which led the United States to become the 16th non-Southeast Asian country to accede to the TAC and appoint the first resident US Ambassador to ASEAN (ASEAN, 2009a). In addition, the United States' President has traveled every year to meet with ASEAN's leaders since taking office and will do so going forward, and he has made a decision to participate at the Head of State level every year at summits on trade, energy, and security such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), a forum with ASEAN in a

leadership position held annually by the 16 countries in Southeast Asia, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand, consistent with the United States' goal to elevate the EAS as the premier forum for dealing with political and security issues in Asia (White House, 2013; EAS, 2013).

The region's political and security capabilities, challenging the peace and prosperity of Asia (including Southeast Asian region) will be tested by the wealth of resources in the South China Sea, especially around the Spratly Islands. Even the United States also involves by firmly opposing to any coercion or the use of force for advancing territorial claims. It seems that peaceful, collaborative, and diplomatic efforts, consistent with international law, are able to bring about lasting solutions that will respond to the interests of all claimants and all countries in this vital region, including China (Donilon, 2013).

The United States has significant concerns over the Spratly Islands in terms of geopolitical, security, and economic interests. A peaceful resolution over the Spratly Islands dispute should be considered according to international law. Failure to uphold international law and norms could damage the United States' interest as freedom of navigation is of critical interest to the United States and other regional states, particularly Southeast Asian countries. Therefore, to lose power over the South China Sea means the loss of navigation control for the United States. Although China always asserts that it supports freedom of navigation over the disputed area, China's military modernization and capacity development in terms of denying the United States naval access to those disputed water territories provides rational evidence of China's intentions to block freedom of navigation.

4.4.6 EFFECT TO THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECRUITY DYNAMIC (US)

The United States of America has a normative commitment in that it is committed to peaceful conflict resolution in the Spratly Islands conflict. However, the United States' allies around the South China Sea such as the Philippines and Vietnam have tried to seek support from the United States for peace and stability in the region, and for securing SLOCs in the region. Claimants and non-claimants over the Spratly Islands view the United States' forces as a necessity to allow decision-making and freedom from

intimidation in order to balance the rising power of China within the Southeast Asian region. As could be seen from the post-Cold War era, when the United States reduced its forces in the region, Southeast Asia came to an unstable peaceful condition, which provided a security dilemma as embarkation on costly and potentially destabilizing arms buildups increased their military budgets with a 6 percent enlargement in military spending in 2012 (SIPRI, 2013). Failure to reassure allies in the Southeast Asian region could also undermine the United States' security guarantee in the broader Asia-Pacific region, since ASEAN as the representative of the Southeast Asian region had always wanted the presence of the United States in the region as a force for stability (Petty, 2012).

On the other hand, the United States avoids getting drawn into territorial disputes and conflicts by Southeast Asian countries that are asking the United States to support some countries like the Philippines and Vietnam. In one such case, the Philippine desires the extended territorial scope of the United States' defense commitment to include the Spratly Islands where the dispute is located. The fundamental reality is that most ASEAN countries want to have a good relationship with the United States, and China is no exception. China wants the benefit of economic engagement and a reduction of tension over the Spratly Islands. From the United States' perspective, it wants a security hedge in the region. Meanwhile, ASEAN may not want to get crushed in between the United States-China competition for power. On the other hand, it does want a balanced competition to exist. Actions in the Spratly Islands issue indicate that there is no change in fundamental policy by a more aggressive implementation of China's long-term strategy to delay resolution of the fundamental disputes. The important concern is that various ASEAN countries have regarded those actions connected to China as threatening their interests. That being the case, it is neither surprising that they looked for the United States' action within the region, nor that the United States responded. The pivot to Asia or rebalancing of the United States' policy was really the cumulative expression of that response. The United States acted differently in different aspects. It was more careful in its response and conscious of the risk that some of its allies in Southeast Asia might try to lock the United States into its own agendas and of the need to reassure China that the United States is not implementing a policy of containment. But one of the threads that run

through the pattern of the United States' behavior is that the United States reacted to the response of its Southeast Asian friends and to China's actions (Bush, 2012).

The Spratly Islands conflict and the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex may be the critical challenges in the coming years to the United States' engagement with Asia. The essential ingredient in facing these challenges is the United States' leadership. The United States needs to play an active role in helping the countries of the region to enhance their capacity to succeed. The Southeast Asia region is vital to the United States' interests not only in the Asia-Pacific context, but also globally, as the Southeast Asian region has a profound impact on the United States' trade, alliances, and partnerships. As the region continues to grow and as new groupings and structures take shape, the United States should be a player, not a distant observer (Campbell, 2010).

Furthermore, diplomatically and strategically, the Southeast Asian region will be the site of a contest for influence between China and the United States from now on and in the near future. China in particular has expanded its presence and influence in Southeast Asia by decades. China's increasing presence has jeopardized the United States' influence. It could be considered that the United States and China are not intertwined in a zero sum game situation in the Southeast Asian region, that some of China's actions have made some Southeast Asian states wary of China's actions since the last decade, and that China's diplomacy and policy in Southeast Asia are perceived as successful actions because China has tended to prioritize mutual agreements, while putting off issues that are more difficult to resolve. Regarding the United States' interests, China's increasing presence in the Southeast Asian region has made the region eager to see a strong presence from the United States. Moreover, the motivation that leads to the United States' increasing engagement with ASEAN has been the desire to support Southeast Asia's political stature through the coming APSC and balance China's rising power as China expands its influence in the region (Manyin, Garcia & Morrison, 2009).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the RSCT, this theory is an "expected substructure and has important mediating on how the global dynamics of great power polarity actually operates across the international system" (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p.68). By doing this, the RSCT, based on durable patterns (amity and enmity) among units in the regional security complex, makes regional systems dependent on the actions and interpretation of regional security actors. Due to the RSCT framework, this theory focuses on securitization and desecuritization (or both) and are interlinked in that their security problems cannot be analyzed or resolved apart from one another among units in the region. Applying this to the Southeast Asian region, this research defined the Southeast Asian region as locked in to the regional security complex including their neighbors such as China, seen in this study. In practice, the use of particular conflicts as indicators such as the Spratly Islands conflict is not that different from the analysis generated by a traditional perspective, since it operates from the security issues that are on the agenda (Buzan & Waever, 2003). It is also in accordance with the great power – China - and superpower - the United States: both actors penetrate within the region and range over the global level.

The emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex can be effectively illustrated by applying the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). Regarding the overall structure of the RSCT, the Southeast Asian region can be identified as the regional security complex by the mutual geopolitical boundary, composed of ten country members, and social construct through the regional institute: ASEAN. Moreover, the RSCT helps this thesis in framing the focusing levels as regional (the relation among countries in the region), interregional (the relation among regions), and global level (the interaction of regional dynamics with super power). On the other hand, the RSCT reaffirm that the regional level represents a distinct ontological level of analysis, with blending the regional and global levels together in the international system through the existence of a regional framework, and the penetration of global actors. Even the findings derived from only the Spratly Islands conflict case are possibly not enough to confirm entirely the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex.

The aim of this thesis has been to intensely investigate the evolution of the

Southeast Asian security dynamic, conflict management, and security complex approach, in particular the Spratly Islands dispute since 2003. The dispute is one of the reflections of the security management within the region, which is growing larger as a regional community. With regard to the ASEAN intention in 2003 to be a single community by 2015, the security aspect of the Southeast Asian region has been revised since the policy-decision factors has changed. In addition, the (de)securitization of the region has been fluctuating all the time regarding the nature of the Regional Security Complex. Consequently, it is very essential to discuss about the Spratly Islands conflict in order to understand the background and the important of security issue of Southeast Asia, as well as to illustrate the role that the Spratly Islands conflict played in the emergence of Southeast Asian security complex.

In answering the first research question, *How did the Southeast Asian region become securitized or desecuritized in the period from 2003 until now?*, the thesis explores Southeast Asian securitization through ASEAN approaches since it intended to be a single community in 2003. The thesis illustrates how ASEAN as an institution representative of the Southeast Asian region takes action in order to become regionally desecuritized. The Southeast Asian region qualifies as an RSC, which distinguishes it from neighbor regions, and has a unique conflict management approach known as the ASEAN Way. ASEAN has tried to shift the security context into mutual concern as ASEAN's security goal in the APSC. Moreover, focusing on the Spratly Islands conflict, ASEAN has tried to turn the conflict into an important issue that needs to be peacefully resolved or sought the reduction of tension and confidence building among all claimants. For instance, ASEAN sought multilateral cooperation, guidelines of implementation for the DOC, the balancing of the United States within region, and also the resolution on the international stage such as through the AMM and the ARF. Moreover, the thesis has found that the processes of (de)securitization among Southeast Asian countries is so interlinked (interdependence) that their security context cannot be analyzed or resolved apart from one another as shown in the 45th AMM. The thesis also tries to entirely investigate the Southeast Asian security approach through the ASEAN framework, conflict transformation, and a pattern of security interdependence, a security regime that is restrained by an agreed set of rules of conduct, and a security community where

member states settle their dispute in some way other than through the use of force concerning the Spratly Islands conflict. Thus, this thesis has also been able to answer the question pertaining to how this (de)securitization is reflected in the Spratly Islands conflict and its management.

However, it is a fact that ASEAN has also seen internal competition more than cooperation. ASEAN still rely on the relationship with external powers rather than member nation states. At this time, the concerns that ASEAN is unable to create a balance by itself become perceptible. This is ASEAN's weakness in trying to establish regional integration. In addition, the ASEAN Way, which is one of the primary causes, obstructs the creation of a single community because of the ways that require consultation and consensus among members. As a result, any dispute between member states or between member states and outside such as the Spratly Islands conflict will be postponed or left to avoid conflicts, which made ASEAN become a peaceful region (from an outside perspective) without any major conflict in recent decades. On the other hand, these aspects result in the slow growth of the ASEAN security aspect because if any nation state does not agree, the agreement will be canceled as agreeing to disagree, as experienced in the 45th AMM.

The finding of investigation provides some support that when it comes to the Spratly Islands conflict (only), the resolution and tension reduction of the Spratly Islands conflict are implemented through the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex by reaching the process of the political community. It can be considered that the (entire) Southeast Asian region has reached to the desecuritization by concerning only the Spratly Islands conflict. The significance of the Spratly Islands and the sovereignty over these territory are valued as the referent object, which needs to cope with peacefully settling conflict and leads to cooperation measures such as setting joint working groups, the implementation for DOC and the calling for mutual concern in the Southeast Asian region. Although some of ASEAN members, for instance the Philippines and Vietnam, want to promote the Spratly Islands dispute (as the securitization of the region) via an international stage such as the ARF and the AMM; however, with regarding to the intention of creating amity between relevant countries in the region, these process can be observed that the ASEAN security dynamic and framework for resolve the Spratly

Islands conflict turn the Southeast Asian region to become desecuritized. Moreover, the finding of this intense investigation found that due to the unity in the community, the ASEAN Way, the lack of institutional capacity, and the penetration of external powers might obstruct the implementation of this plan. Consequently, from now on, ASEAN has to not only concern more on regional collaboration but also increase trust among member states in order to pursue the single community-building goal by 2015.

Furthermore, this thesis has also provided an answer to the last (sub) research question on the role the Spratly Islands conflict has played in the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex. By doing so, the thesis has demonstrated the significance of the Spratly Islands in affecting the regional (the Southeast Asian region) and global level (the United States' balancing of the rise of China) in terms of strategic, economic, and maritime transportation. The Spratly Islands conflict can be seen as one of main trigger factors that lead to a major concern of the Southeast Asian security aspect due to its significance, the rise of China and China's aggressive maritime territorial claim. Moreover, these conditions affect all claimants over the Spratly Islands conflict and also the global actors such as the United States so that they have to focus on these factors for their national interest. This condition affects and leads to the domestic perspective. Thus, the further research and consideration should be conducted by focusing on the domestic perspective of each Southeast Asian country and involved countries that did not touch upon in this thesis in order to make fruitful conclusion of the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex. In addition, the domestic politics is also significant in order to understand the claimants' perspective concerning the Spratly Islands and China's actions. As China's economy and politics are growing stronger, other claimants carefully balance defense of their territorial claims and management of their relationship with China. These conditions correspond with the RSCT as well as being influenced by historical narratives and economic situations.

Although ASEAN and China have made a number of firm agreements, no settlement or legally binding of the conflict has been officially reached to date. The relationships between ASEAN and China have improved slightly in terms of economic, confident-building, and security agreements. However, it is not reasonable to give up on the Spratly Islands conflict; the political and security concern will be to end the dispute

that exists, as many efforts and public statements prove. Maybe, time, diminishing arms forces expenditures, and increasing cooperation within the Southeast Asian region will heal the conflict and force the countries to settle or to resolve the dispute in the near future.

Meanwhile, the methodology resulting from a single case research, the Spratly Islands conflict, has limited possibilities to be generalized to other cases. However, I would argue that this investigation could be another example to other regions in terms of the different regional system and penetration by global actors. It is not easy to say that the emergence of the Southeast Asian security complex and its security dynamic (concerning the Spratly Islands dispute) could be transferred to other regions without taking into account the regional context. The finding would probably not be applicable to regions including global actors. Therefore, I suggest that further studies are carried out to investigate primarily how progress in the Southeast Asian Security Complex framework could be applied to other RSCs and secondly security dynamics and interaction between RSCs and global actors. Moreover, although the RSCT focuses on four main levels, domestic, regional, interregional, and global, this thesis has just touched upon the regional level, which can lead to only the ARF at the interregional level in this thesis and a few studies about the global actors (China's aggressiveness and the United States' perspective). Meanwhile, the domestic level, for instance all claimant countries, would be relevant for further security studies. A matter of particular interest would be to study the broader aspects such as nontraditional threats. My study has just focused on security linked to maritime territorial disputes but not the rise of new security aspects such as the economy, terrorism, climate change, and so on.

In sum, after the Cold War era, the world was not located in Bipolarity (the United States and the Soviet Union) anymore and turned to be in the Unipolar. Consequently, the globalization occurred from the political climate change and the Unipolar from the United States. These conditions can be linked to international trade, investment, new actors, and so on, which were affected during the Cold War. Meanwhile, there was a vacuum of power in the Southeast Asian region from the United States' military withdrawal and also the rise of China that affected the region directly. The economic aspect became the first priority in many countries. It is believed that security

issues have received less attention than economic issues. However, when the security context is well considered in the post-Cold War era, it becomes a more significant aspect and remains a priority as well as the economy for the international community, especially in the region. The security and economy are related to each other as complex and interdependent. This can be seen from many countries that progress in the collection of economic prosperity with the accumulation of military power simultaneously, since economic wealth is one of the main factors in the maintenance of military capacities in order to secure the national interest and its benefits. Therefore, the relationship between security and the economy should be maintained and continued. Moreover, with regard to new possible threats as demanding for energy and other natural resources, these unresolved disputes, including China's increasing aggressiveness, may become a significant aspect in the future military balance of power in the Southeast Asian region, as every country seeks to modernize its military and expand its armed forces in order to protect its national interests, and engage other international partners.

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7. APPENDIX

The Summary of Conflict in the South China Sea since the 1980s

YEAR	INCIDENTS
1988	The Chinese and Vietnamese navies clashed at Johnson Reef in the Spratly Islands. Several Vietnamese boats were sunk and over 70 sailors killed.
1992	Vietnam accused China of landing troops on Da Luc Reef. China seized almost 20 Vietnamese cargo ships transporting goods from Hong Kong (June – September).
1993	Malaysia built a resort and accommodation for Malaysian troops and sent seventy troops to act as guards over there. Nowadays, it is a resort for the VIPs of Malaysia.
1994	China and Vietnam had naval confrontations within Vietnam's internationally recognized territorial water over Vietnam's Tu Chinh oil exploration blocks 133, 134, and 135. The Chinese claimed the area as part of their Wan' Bei-21 (WAB-21)
1995	- China occupied the Philippines' Mischief Reef. The Philippines' military evicted the Chinese in March and destroyed Chinese markers. - Taiwanese artillery fired on a Vietnamese supply ship.
1996	In January, Chinese vessels engaged in a 90-minute gun battle with a Philippines navy gunboat near the island of Capones, off the west coast of Luzon, north of Manila.
1997	The Philippines navy ordered a Chinese speedboat and two fishing boats to leave Scarborough Shoal in April. Later, the Philippines navy removed markers and raised their flag. China sent three warships to survey the Philippines occupied islands of Panata and Kota.
1998	In January, Vietnamese soldiers fired on a Philippines fishing boat near

	Tennent (Pigeon) Reef.
1999	- Malaysia occupied Navigator Reef, which had been claimed by the Philippines. - In May, a Chinese fishing boat was sunk in a collision with a Philippines warship. Chinese warships were accused of harassing the Philippines navy vessel after it ran aground near the Spratly Islands. - In July, another Chinese fishing boat was sunk in a collision with a Philippines warship. - In October, Vietnamese troops fired upon a Philippines air force plane on reconnaissance in the Spratly Islands. The Philippines defense sources reported that two Malaysian fighter planes and two Philippines air force surveillance planes nearly engaged over a Malaysian occupied reef in the Spratly Islands. The Malaysian Defense Ministry stated that it was not a standoff.
2000	In May, the Philippines troops opened fire on Chinese fishermen, resulting in one killed and seven arrested.
2001	- During the first three months, the Philippines navy boarded 14 Chinese flagged boats, confiscated their catches, and ejected the vessels out of contested portions of the Spratly Islands. - In March, the Philippines sent a gunboat to Scarborough Shoal to ward off any attempt by China to erect structures on the rock.
2002	- In August, Vietnamese troops fired warning shots at the Philippines military reconnaissance planes circling over the Spratly Islands. - Vietnam began the renovation of a runway on one of the Spratly Islands where there was a conflict over claim over the area. Vietnam blamed that on the tourism agenda.
2007	A Chinese warship ejected Vietnamese fishing boats from the Spratly Islands; three Vietnamese fishing boats sank. 250 Vietnamese fishermen protested in

	front of the Chinese embassy in Hanoi.
2008	Vietnam opposed Taiwan in the case of a Taiwanese C 130 airplane approaching one of the Spratly Islands. Vietnam claimed this was a violation of Vietnamese sovereignty and ordered the cessation of the action.
2010	- Hillary Clinton, United States Secretary of the State, blamed China for its aggressive military action over the Spratly Islands conflict at the 17th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Hanoi, Vietnam. - China expressed its disapproval of this through its statement that the United States should not interfere with China's action in the region and only the countries involved should resolve the Spratly Islands conflict. Later, China set up a military exercise around the Spratly Islands.
2011	- In February, a Chinese warship opened fire on Philippines fishing boats near Jackson atoll where the Philippines laid claim over the area. - In March, two Chinese warships intimidated a Philippines oil survey vessel. Later, the Philippines issued a serious statement about the Chinese action, saying that China had destroyed the peace and stability in the region. The Philippines protested from February to May. However, during that time, a Chinese warship opened fire on a Philippines fishing boat and threatened an oil survey vessel. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines stated the Chinese were in violation of Philippines sovereignty. Later, the Chinese ambassador for the Philippines refused to make excuses. China stressed that China needed peace and would use the military for self-defense. - In June, the Philippines officially announced that the South China Sea had become the West Philippines Sea. - Vietnam blamed Chinese warships and fishing boats for damaging the Petro Vietnam oil company's cable for surveying. Later, there were protests in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Vietnam set up a military exercise with real armaments and changed the South China Sea to the East Sea.

	- China claimed that the Spratly Islands were under China's sovereignty. Then all Chinese fishing boats around the area tried to protect themselves from being chased by the Vietnamese navy and blamed Vietnam for violating their sovereignty. So China begged Vietnam to stop its action.
2013	In May, the Philippines' coastguard shot and killed a Taiwanese fisherman in the disputed and overlapping water near the northern Batanes Islands, which the Philippines stated were in Philippines' water. This incident caused escalating tension in the aftermath. Following the rejection of the Philippines' late apology, Taiwan launched two waves of sanctions, both diplomatic and economic, on the Philippines. For instance, Taiwan stopped approving work permits for Filipinos, banned Taiwanese tourists from visiting the Philippines, and sent warships to the disputed area to conduct naval drills. The United States, which is the close allies of both countries, tried to cool down the tension. In late May, China sent its largest recorded fishing fleet, which included two large transport and supply ships, to the disputed Spratly Islands area.

Sources: Applied from (Jazes, 2008; Valencia, 2010; BBC News, 2011; Trajano, 2013; MaritimeSecurity.Asia, 2013)