

# GREAT DECISIONS

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## 3. Conflict in the South China Sea

### Acronyms and abbreviations

**ADIZ**—Air Defense Identification Zone

**ASEAN**—Association of South East Asian Nations

**CNOOC**—China National Offshore Oil Corporation

**EEZ**—Exclusive Economic Zone

**ICBM**—Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

**ITLOS**—The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

**PLAN**—People’s Liberation Army Navy

**THAAD**—Terminal High Altitude Area Defense

**UNCLOS**—United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

**WTO**—World Trade Organization

### Glossary

**Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ):** Airspace within which identification, location and control of aircraft are performed for reasons of national security.

**Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** An organization of ten countries located in Southeast Asia that promotes economic growth and regional stability. Since 1997, ASEAN also hosts a forum known as ASEAN Plus Three (APT), which includes China, Japan and South Korea.

**Central Military Commission of China (CMC):** The organization commanding China’s army and navy, chaired by President Xi Jinping.

**China Dream:** A vision of China’s future, developed by President Xi Jinping. It is characterized by a revived Chinese nationalism, and represents the promise of complete prosperity, which President Xi claims will be achieved in 2049 (100 years after the founding of the PRC) as a result of his programs.

**Chinese Communist Party (CCP):** The founding and ruling political party of the People’s Republic of China. It is constitutionally recognized as the “vanguard” of state and society.

**Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea:** A formal agreement between China and ASEAN countries, signed in 2002. It sought “to enhance favorable conditions for a peaceful and durable solution” of South China Sea disputes.

**Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE):** China’s second imperial dynasty. The period under Han rule is considered China’s “golden age” and the basis of Chinese culture.

**International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS):** The tribunal for disputes concerning the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. ITLOS is based in Hamburg, Germany, and consists of 21 independent members.

**Liu Huaqing (1916– 2011):** Commander of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy (1982–87). He led the modernization of the navy.

**National Security Commission of China:** The commission tasked with coordinating China’s national security policy, advising the Politburo in matters of national security, and conducting crisis and risk management. It was founded by President Xi Jinping in 2013.

**Nine-dash line:** The historical demarcation used by the Chinese government to define its territorial claims in the South China Sea. (The line has, at various times, consisted of nine, ten and eleven dashes). In 2016, The Hague’s Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that the

nine-dash claims were legally baseless—a ruling that Beijing vehemently rejects.

**Soft power:** A political term developed by Joseph Nye in the late 1980s. It denotes a country's ability to persuade other actors in international relations without the use of force or coercion.

**Taiwan Relations Act:** An agreement signed by Taiwan and the U.S. in 1979. It defines relations between the two parties, and theoretically obligates U.S. intervention in the case that China attempts an invasion of Taiwan.

**United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):** An international agreement defining the rules that govern the use of oceans. The convention came into force in 1994. Currently, 167 countries and the EU are signatories; the U.S. recognizes UNCLOS as customary international law, but is a non-signatory.

**Xi Jinping:** President of China since 2013. President Xi also serves as general secretary of the Communist Party and chairman of the Central Military Commission.