

2018 Annual Report

National Institute for South China Sea Studies

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



2018 has seen a general trend of peace and stability in the South China Sea. Factors that contributed to this include noticeable progress in the consultation and negotiation of the Code of Conduct, enhanced security cooperation between China and ASEAN countries, as well as concerted efforts among claimant states in setting aside the disputes and focusing on promoting functional cooperation in various fields. That said, this positive trend was by no means smooth, but rather marred by sporadic and occasional tensions, as China-US competition dominated regional geopolitics. With the United States showcasing both its political and military clout, either directly by itself, or through its allies, partners and proxies, the South China Sea could hardly escape intervention from extra-regional powers and the negative impact of unilateral actions by some regional countries. Meanwhile, as the Indo-Pacific strategy gradually rolls out, its impact on regional geopolitical structure remains to be seen.

Facing an increasingly uncertain and volatile world, China is determined to embrace it with renewed efforts of reform and opening-up. Here in Hainan, where NISCSS is headquartered, a new development goal has been designated by the central government. Accordingly, as a pilot program, Hainan will redevelop into a free trade zone (FTZ) and international free trade port (FTP) with Chinese characteristics. Granted with more autonomy to reform, Hainan will be redesigned to foster a law-based, well-regulated and convenient business environment to better encourage the free flow of goods, labor and capital.

It is against this background that NISCSS, as a leading think tank dedicated to the research of South China Sea issues, and one of the most vocal advocates of friendship and cooperation among South China Sea littoral states, spares no effort to enhance the communication and understanding amongst the various concerned parties. Such an endeavor manifests itself through our publications, research projects, policy proposals, workshops, dialogues, forums, contributions to regional and global discourses, and support for development of talents in ocean law and governance. Meanwhile, to serve Hainan's FTP and FTZ build-up, NISCSS is also playing an active role in policy consultation with regard to its positioning as a gateway to the Pacific and Indian Ocean, and catalyst for cooperation of a greater South China Sea region.

We at NISCSS are proud to present a summary of our achievements in 2018 through this report, and we look forward to another year of quality and impact with our multidisciplinary strength and depth of expertise.

Wu Shicun

President, National Institute for the South China Sea Studies

2018 ACHIEVEMENTS



5 BOOKS AND 260+ WORKS OF COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS



NEARLY 200+ POLICY PROPOSALS



HOSTED 14 CONFERENCES AND DIALOGUES,
ORGANIZED 2 OCEAN-RELATED TRAINING PROGRAMS



COMPLETED 22 RESEARCH PROJECTS



NISCSS SCHOLARS SPOKE AT 100+ ACADEMIC COLLOQUIUMS



HOSTED 42 DELEGATIONS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND
INSTITUTES FROM HOME AND ABROAD



NISCSS SCHOLARS PROVIDED INSIGHTS TO 100+ NEWS
OUTLETS GLOBALLY, INCLUDING

CCTV, China National Radio, China Radio International, Xinhua News Agency, Global Times, China Daily, Phenix TV, South China Morning Post, Lianhe Zaobao, Reuters, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, etc.



NISCSS OFFICIAL WECHAT ACCOUNT POSTED 143 ARTICLES

MORE THAN 80% OF THE POSTS WERE ORIGINAL

DREW 500,000+ PAGEVIEWS IN TOTAL

PAGEVIEWS FOR A SINGLE ARTICLE UP TO 270,000

FOLLOWERS INCREASED BY 75% COMPARED TO THE YEAR 2017

SELECTED COMMENTARIES AND ANALYSES

Wu Shicun Reviewing the South China Sea Situation and Exploring the Way Forward, *Ocean Year Book 32*

Where Should We Go Next? Opportunities and Challenges in the South China Sea, *IPP Review*

China's Sea Power Nation Strategy, South China Sea and the Belt and Road Initiative, Speech at the 7th U.S-China Track II Dialogue on Maritime Affairs and International Law

Hong Nong Freedom of Navigation: A Lost Legal Doctrine, *IPP Review*

Pence's Speech: Key Turning Point or a Play for the Midterms, *China-US Focus*

How China's Arctic Policy Paper Has Warmed the Atmosphere with International Observers, *South China Morning Post*

Li Jianwei Are China and the U.S. Heading for Open Confrontation, co-author with Ramses Amer, *China-US Focus*

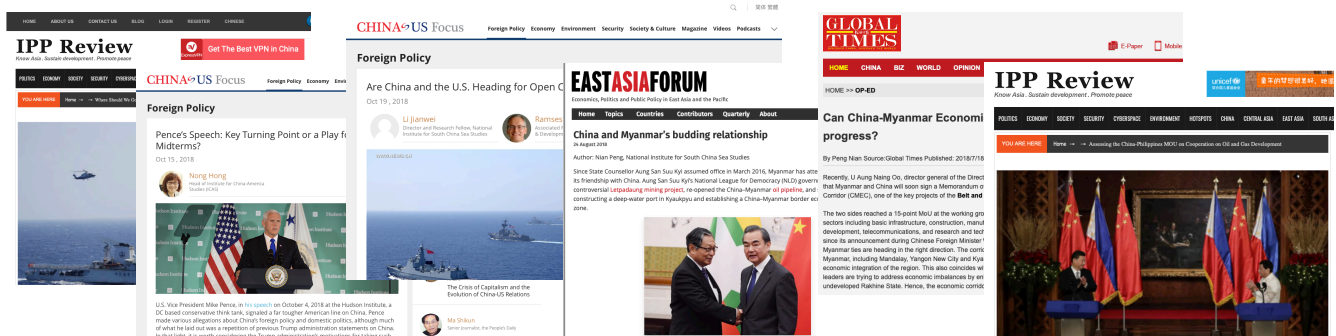
Yan Yan Code of Conduct in the South China Sea: Negotiation History and Future Prospect, *South China Sea Review*

COC Negotiation: Prevention and Management of Fisheries Dispute Should be Taken into Consideration, NISCSS Website

Liu Xiaobo Issues Surrounding the China-Japan Maritime and Airspace Liaison Mechanism, *IPP Review*

Peng Nian The "Debt Trap" is not Detrimental to the BRI, *IPP Review*
China and Myanmar's Budding Relationship, *East Asia Forum*

Chen Xiangmiao US Moves Worsening South China Sea Row, *Global Times*



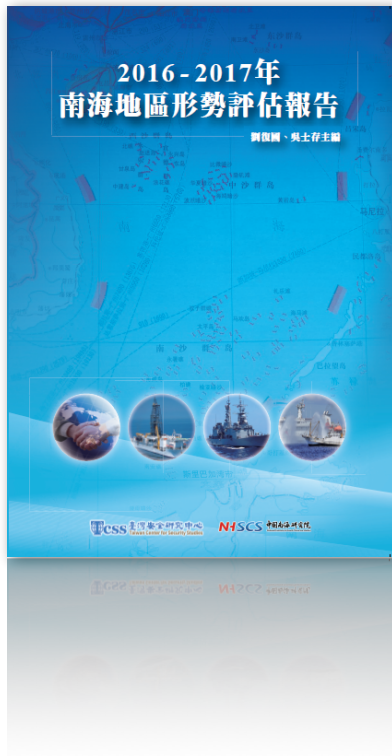
SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Assessment of South China Sea Situation (2016-2017)

Wu Shicun & Liu Fu-kuo Eds.

Taiwan Center for Security Studies

January 2018



This report provides an interdisciplinary analysis on the developments of the South China Sea situation during 2016-2017, and the evolution of South China Sea policies of all claimant parties as well as extra-regional powers such as the United States, Japan, India and Australia. A chapter is also dedicated to critically review and assess the decision of the South China Sea arbitration.

Initiated in 2011, jointly written and edited by scholars from both Chinese mainland and Taiwan, the annual assessment report has been published for seven consecutive years, witnessing the arduous progress of joint research among scholars across the Taiwan Strait.

Japan Military Power Report (2018)

National Institute for South China Sea Studies

Current Affairs Press

December 2018



This report aims to present the Japan Self-Defense Force's capacity building, force development, and operations in the post-WWII era, and represent dynamically the historical evolution and future trend of the adjustment of Japan's defense policy to the international community in a systematic and comprehensive way. It also provides an in-depth analysis on the challenges, progress and outlook of China-Japan defense relations.

It is the first specialized professional report issued by a Chinese Government-backed think tank.

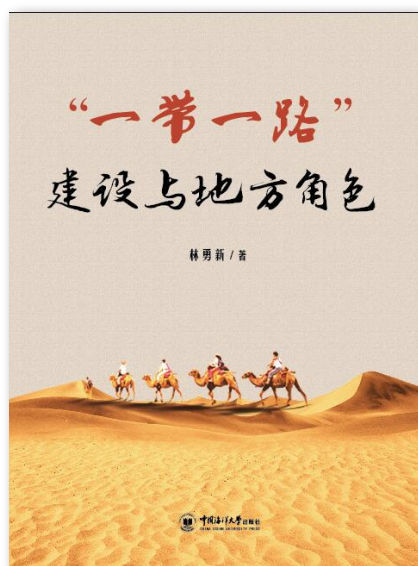
SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

The Belt and Road Initiative and the Role of Chinese Locales

Lin Yongxin

Publishing House of Ocean University of China

December 2018



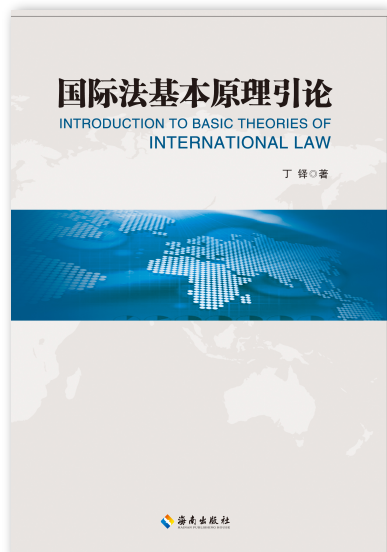
This book provides a comprehensive analysis on the strategic positioning, policy planning and the development roadmap of seven provinces in southern and eastern China, including Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Guangxi and Yunnan, along with the most developed port city of Shanghai. These locales, in the author's opinion, have a special role to play in the implementation of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative, and their experiences should be referenced for how the Belt and Road Initiative should be developed at its new stage.

Introduction to Basic Theories of International Law

Ding Duo

Hainan Publishing House

December 2018



Based on current development trends of international law and academic research, this book aims to provide a comprehensive analysis on the basic principles of international law and their impacts. Many fields of international law are discussed in this volume, including the development and evolution of international law, basic concepts of international law, subjects of international law, international legal responsibility, territory and oceans, diplomacy, war and peace, as well as international dispute settlement. In addition, this book further discusses the basic path and key steps of the development of international law and its applications in international society today.

SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

South China Sea Review Issue 2

NISCSS

World Affairs Press

May 2018



South China Sea Review aims to provide quality academic discussion specializing on South China Sea issues. It covers various academic fields related to South China Sea issues such as history and geography, international relations, security and geopolitics, international law, as well as contemporary issues such as the Belt and Road Initiative. Contributed to by ten respected scholars, Issue 2 focuses on topics of regional concerns in 2018 including the decision of the South China Sea Arbitration, re-construction of South China Sea's legal order, comparative analysis between the legal regimes governing the Antarctic and South China Sea issues, South China Sea Code of Conduct negotiations, protection of submarine cables, and the conservation of coral reefs.

Free Trade Zone Development Briefing

NISCSS

November-December 2018



This monthly newsletter provides updates about the development of free trade zones in China, success stories from foreign countries and regions, expert opinions from China and abroad, and case studies of policies, projects, and experiences of various social and industrial sectors of free trade zones that Hainan can draw lessons from. Distributed and circulated widely in relevant government agencies in Hainan, it aims to assist government officials of different levels and inform key policy makers.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

South China Sea Situation and Future Trend



With more than two years of relative peace and stability in the South China Sea following the conclusion of the South China Sea arbitration, we now occasionally yet sporadically see rising tensions in the South China Sea region. There are several issues which could lead to a rise in tensions. First, as the negotiation and consultation over the text of the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea continues, some claimant states may seize the “window of opportunity” before the conclusion and the effective date of the COC to strengthen their control over relevant features and maritime spaces in the South China Sea. Second, some regional and extra-regional countries may engage in hyping-up China’s “militarization of the South China Sea” as China resumes facility deployments on the Spratly Islands. Third, the US-Japan-Australia military alliance looms larger in their geo-military competition against China in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, especially in the context of the Trump Administration’s “Indo-Pacific Strategy.”

In sum, although the South China Sea is unlikely to undergo any disruptive change as it advances towards peace and stability in the future, the possibility of intermittent rising tensions and compartmentalized turmoil will remain high as a result of increasing uncertainty.

The South China Sea situation is unlikely to deviate from its previous course in the coming year of 2019. However, the military rivalry among regional and extra-regional parties, as well as the dynamism over the development of regional order will continue to dominate the discourse in the region. This trend would manifest in five aspects. First, the divergence on some substantial issues among parties involved in drafting the COC are likely to stand out as the negotiation progresses; Second, claimants such as Vietnam may take unilateral actions before the conclusion of the COC negotiations; Third, effective regional maritime cooperation is likely to be plagued by factors such as the negative legacy of the South China Arbitration and the US Freedom of Navigation Operation Programs (FONOPs); Fourth, the military activities of the United States, as well as its allies and partners such as Japan and Australia would further intensify; Finally, it is possible for the Tsai Administration in Taipei to soften its stance in its South China Sea claims in exchange for Washington’s support for the administration’s propagated Independence Movement. That said, China has seen increasing influence in shaping the South China Sea situation.



RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Economic Cooperation of the Greater South China Sea Region under the Framework of BRI



The NISCSS Delegation visited Port Klang Free Zone, Malaysia

The South China Sea is an integral part of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Thriving maritime economic activities demand closer cooperation of the greater South China Sea region. An economic cooperation framework of this region could not only meet such needs, but also be a good response to the region's common goal of further economic integration. While the COC negotiations and consultation process illustrates the commitment of all relevant parties to develop a rules-based regional order, promoting a strong framework for economic cooperation in the greater South China Sea region would complement this process, foster closer ties in the region, and contribute to the building of a community of a shared future among China and other regional states.



To achieve such cooperative framework, an inclusive and step-by-step approach should be adopted to engage South China Sea countries, and countries outside the region. This process could start with some promising industries and projects in which cooperation has already begun, such as maritime and air connectivity, port economics, maritime tourism, fisheries and aquatic farming, and maritime disaster prevention and mitigation. Track-2 or track-1.5 consultation mechanisms could be established, such as an expert forum on the economic cooperation framework of the greater South China Sea. This would provide intellectual support for cooperation and

decision-making at the government level. Pilot projects should be established which can deliver tangible benefits for all countries involved, and provide a model for practical cooperation. On the basis of project implementation and demonstration, the vision of an economic cooperation framework of greater South China Sea could be formally announced at a leaders' summit or via existing intergovernmental mechanisms.

Hainan FTZ and FTP



The NISCSS Delegation with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte

To better serve Hainan's development to be a FTZ/FTP, in 2018, NISCSS established a special research program on applicable FTZ/FTP laws and policies in Hainan. It also joined an academic consortium dedicated to policy research and consultation for Hainan FTZ/FTP development, along with various think tanks, research institutes and universities, such as China Institute for Reform and Development, Hainan University and Hainan Normal University. Thus far, NISCSS has conducted field studies in seven different countries including the Netherlands, Malta, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore, to study their successful practices and experiences and explore areas of cooperation. Based on in-depth research and analysis, NISCSS submitted ten policy reports with regard to the industrial and social development as well as international cooperation of Hainan FTZ/FTP to relevant government agencies in 2018. These proposals have well informed Hainan's policymaking, covering various sectors such as shipping and ports, culture and entertainment, cruise and maritime tourism, petrochemical industry, and the development of rural areas.

MULTILATERAL FORUMS AND CONFERENCES

April 11, 2018

Boao, Hainan, China

Sub-forum of "21st Century Maritime Silk Road and Economic Cooperation of the Greater South China Sea"

Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2018

The South China Sea sub-forum, as part of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2018, is designed as a high-profile multilateral dialogue platform to share wisdom and provide constructive ideas to enhance regional peace, stability, prosperity and maritime cooperation in the South China Sea.

This is the fifth South China Sea-themed sub-forum held by the NISCSS under the BFA annual conference framework, with the support and facilitation of China-Southeast Asia Research Center on the South China Sea (CSARC). The Forum brought together nearly one hundred eminent scholars and practitioners from various government agencies, think tanks, research institutes and maritime industries of both littoral countries of the South China Sea and extra-regional nations including China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, India, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.



The open-door session was chaired by Ms. Fu Ying, Chair of Academic Committee of the National Institute for Global Strategy of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.



NISCSS President Wu Shicun advocated the importance of developing an economic cooperation framework of the greater South China Sea to foster stronger bonds among regional countries for common development and prosperity. He also emphasized that parallel measures of rule-making and building cooperative mechanisms will also be conducive to achieving lasting peace of the South China Sea and to establishing a China-ASEAN community of shared interests, shared responsibilities and a shared future.



MULTILATERAL FORUMS AND CONFERENCES

May 24-25, 2018

Beijing, China

The 42nd Annual Conference of the Center for Oceans Law and Policy (COLP) of the University of Virginia

The 42nd Annual Conference of the Center for Oceans Law and Policy (COLP) of the University of Virginia School of Law was co-organized by NISCSS, along with COLP, the Chinese Society of International Law, and Korea Maritime Institute. Themed “Cooperation and Engagement in the Asia Pacific Region”, the conference brought together more than 180 participants from 17 countries and regions, as well as international organizations including the United Nations, International Seabed Authority (ISA), International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.



Wang Hong, Administrator of State Oceanic Administration, delivered a keynote speech at the conference.

In his keynote speech, Wang Hong, Administrator of China’s State Oceanic Administration, introduced China’s implementation of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in ocean-related fields. He proposed four initiatives that aim to strengthen maritime cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries: to continue the build-up of partnership based on maritime cooperation, so as to enhance equality and mutual confidence among parties of global ocean governance; to continuously encourage the cooperation on blue economy, so as to promote the healthy growth of ocean-related industries; to step up the joint effort of environmental preservation and restoration, so as to share the responsibility of global ocean governance; and to further the cooperation on non-traditional maritime security issues, so as to create a harmonious regional security environment.



Miguel de Serpa Soares, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, addressed the opening by video message.

NISCSS President Wu Shicun pointed out in his remarks at the conference opening that pragmatic cooperation on ocean governance has great prospects and tremendous potential. He proposed that an economic cooperation framework for the greater South China Sea should be developed; and Hainan, as the sole province-scale Special Economic Zone in China, would have an important role to play in developing such an economic cooperation mechanism. Especially with the newly announced national policies of establishing Hainan as a free trade zone, Hainan will become a national pilot program for further integration into the global economy, and serve as an important contributor to regional economic cooperation.



MULTILATERAL FORUMS AND CONFERENCES

November 15-16, 2018

Haikou, Hainan, China

The 6th Asia Maritime Security Forum

This forum brought together more than 40 participants from China, Canada, Australia, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines, who are mainly scholars and experts from renowned marine research institutes and universities. This institutionalized project was organized under the cooperation framework established between the NISCSS and the China Institute at the University of Alberta with the purpose of enhancing academic exchanges in maritime security of Asia and the Arctic among concerned parties.



In his speech, NISCSS President Wu Shicun briefly analyzed the current situation of the South China Sea and challenges to regional security cooperation. First, the military presence of extra-regional countries, such as the United States, has destabilized the security environment of the region. The continuous American interference in regional affairs has caught ASEAN countries in the dilemma of side choosing between China and the United States. Second, the negative impact of the U.S. "Indo-Pacific Strategy" on the security cooperation in the South China Sea has started to emerge. The increased military deployment, scope of military activities and level of military cooperation of the US and its allies in the South China Sea would certainly lead to a more complex and volatile regional security environment. Third, non-traditional security cooperation in the South China Sea has been making little progress due to pressing traditional security issues and the absence of relevant cooperation mechanisms with binding force.



Themed "New Development of Oceans Law and Policy in Asia Pacific and the Arctic", this year's forum featured topics including regional maritime security, developments regarding the law of the sea, the intersection of maritime operations and international legal frameworks, and maritime cooperation within and beyond national jurisdiction, and put forward proposals on international cooperation with regard to maritime security and ocean governance in the Asia Pacific and Arctic.



BILATERAL DIALOGUES

January 16-17, 2018
Sanya, Hainan, China
The 6th U.S.-China Track II Dialogue on Maritime Affairs and International Law



July 26-27, 2018
Provincetown, US
The 7th U.S.-China Track II Dialogue on Maritime Affairs and International Law



Currently, this track II dialogue is the only institutionalized platform for maritime policy communication between China and the United States. Co-organized by the NISCSS, National Committee on US-China Relations and the Institute for China-America Studies, it is held alternatively in the two countries bi-annually, bringing together eminent experts and scholars from various think tanks, research institutes, universities and government agencies, including the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute for China-America Studies, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Fudan University, Xiamen University, Office of the Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State, Center for Naval Analyses, Naval War College, Yale University, Stanford University, New York University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Washington.

In the 6th and 7th rounds of dialogue, participants had in-depth discussions on a series of issues of mutual concern such as the geopolitics of the South China Sea, status quo of maritime affairs in the Asia Pacific, implications of the newly-resurrected "Indo-Pacific" strategy, law enforcement operations on the sea, the gap in interpreting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and new developments in maritime-related International law, military activities and international law, as well as legal issues and pragmatic cooperation on the sea.

Expert opinions and policy proposals developed through this dialogue mechanism have been shared and reviewed by relevant government agencies of both China and the US.

BILATERAL DIALOGUES

July 30-31, 2018

Tokyo, Japan

2018 China-Japan Dialogue on Ocean Affairs

Jointly initiated by the NISCSS and Sasakawa Peace Foundation Ocean Policy Research Institute (OPRI-SPF) in 2016, this Dialogue aims to develop a better mutual understanding of convergent and divergent views between China and Japan on ocean affairs, and establish an institutionalized mechanism for coordination and cooperation between the two countries in relevant fields.



This year, the two-day program covered various ocean-related issues such as the latest development in China and Japan's ocean policies, blue economy and fishery technology, cooperation in disaster relief and search and rescue operations, as well as potential areas of maritime cooperation. Approximately 50 experts and scholars from a variety of related government agencies, universities, think tanks, and research institutes of both China and Japan attended the Dialogue.

December 7, 2018

Seoul, South Korea

The 5th China-ROK Maritime Cooperation Forum

As an institutionalized mechanism under the cooperative framework between the NISCSS and Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy (KIMS) launched in 2014, the China-ROK Maritime Cooperation Forum has been playing a positive role in enhancing policy interactions, maritime cooperation and the management of differences between the two countries.

Co-organized by the NISCSS and KIMS, this year's forum brought together more than 40 scholars and officials from various ocean-related agencies, think tanks and universities of both China and the ROK. In-depth discussions were held on a series of topics of mutual concern, such as maritime security and order in East Asia, cooperation on maritime economy in the context of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and institutionalized bilateral cooperation on ocean affairs. Kim Geon, Ambassador for International Security Affairs from the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Jeong Hoseob, former Chief of Naval Staff of ROK Navy were also present at this forum.



CROSS-STRAIT FORUM

December 27-28, 2018

Haikou, Hainan, China

The 16th Cross-Strait Forum on the South China Sea

Co-organized by the National Institute for South China Sea Studies and Taiwan Chengchi University, the 16th Cross-Strait Forum on the South China Sea brought together more than 80 scholars and experts from universities, research institutes and government agencies as well as media representatives from both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The one-and-half-day program covered a variety of topics such as “assessment of the current South China Sea situation”, “regional rule making”, “maritime security challenge and management”, “China-US relationship and its impacts on the South China Sea”, and “Cross-Strait relations and potential cooperation”.



In his speech, President Wu Shicun pointed out that the South China Sea witnessed two parallel trends in the year of 2018. On the one hand, China and other claimant states have made great efforts in setting aside the disputes and mitigating their differences. China and ASEAN states have made noticeable progress in the ongoing consultation and negotiations of the South China Sea Code of Conduct (COC) and maritime security cooperation. China-Philippines relations have improved, while bilateral cooperation on oil and gas development has also seen a big breakthrough. On the other hand, China-US military competition continues to dominate the geopolitical arena. The presence of the United States and its allies such as Japan and Australia shows a tendency of becoming normalized.

Liu Fu-Kuo, Director of the Center for Taiwan Security Studies of Taiwan Chengchi University, believes that the current situation in the South China Sea is largely stable, though the US Freedom of Navigation Operation Programs (FONOPs) raises tensions in the region from time to time. The Arbitration decision would continue to influence the interactions among relevant parties as well as development of regional dynamics in a negative way. Meanwhile, he shares the same opinion with other participants of the forum that the results of the latest elections in Taiwan have shown that it is in the common interests of both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume and enhance cross-strait exchanges and communication, and to further explore potential areas for cooperation in the South China Sea.



SUMMER CAMP

August 13-18, 2018

Haikou, Hainan, China

The 6th South China Sea-themed Summer Camp

The South China Sea Summer Camp is designed to help college students across the Taiwan Strait to get a better understanding of South China Sea issues, inspire interest in maritime research, and deepen exchange. Since it was launched in 2012 in Haikou, the summer camp has been held alternately in Chinese mainland and Taiwan. And more than 170 college students from the Chinese mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and overseas have attended the programs. The NISCSS, Taiwan Center for Security Studies of Taiwan Chengchi University and China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies of Wuhan University co-organized the 2018 program.



In this year's program, participants also visited the Hainan Maritime Safety Administration, China (Hainan) Museum of the South China Sea and the Hainan Museum for field studies. The program has met the participants' expectations of not only increasing their knowledge about the various aspects of the South China Sea dispute, but also enhancing the mutual understanding and friendship among participants across the Strait.



Twenty post-graduate students and junior scholars from 13 universities and research institutes have been enrolled in this year's program, including NISCSS, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Nanjing University, Wuhan University, Shandong University, Hainan University, Zhejiang University, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Taiwan Chengchi University, Taiwan Sun Yat-Sen University, and Taiwan Chung Cheng University. The one-week program covers a range of activities featuring seminars, field studies and a group report. Seminar speakers include prominent scholars specializing in different academic fields such as South China Sea history and geography, security, international law, international relations and marine science, as well as experts from ocean affairs-related agencies.



ACADEMY

November 12-21, 2018

Haikou, Hainan, China

Fourth Program of China-ASEAN Academy on Oceans Law & Governance

As an important project under the auspices of the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund, this academy is designed as an institutionalized platform to promote maritime personnel training and exchanges among China and ASEAN countries, and to develop a professional community of ocean governance for the South China Sea region. The 2018 program brought together over 30 participants from ocean-related government agencies, research institutes and think tanks of China and ASEAN countries as well as South Korea, Micronesia and the Taiwan region.



The 10-day program is mainly course based, yet also includes simulation exercises, group reports, and field trips to ocean-related agencies and business entities including Hainan Maritime Safety Administration and Haifeng Aquaculture Ltd, so as to help participants have a better understanding of practices of law enforcement, management and international cooperation in the field of maritime safety as well as the development of marine industry in Hainan.



The program covered a variety of subjects, such as the law of the sea, marine science, blue economy, climate change and adaption, marine environmental protection and preservation, biological restoration and sustainable development, and transdisciplinary approach to ocean governance. The courses are delivered in English by thirteen prominent scholars and experts from China, Canada, Japan and the United States.



Participants from ASEAN countries spoke highly of the course design and program organization. They believe the program has not only helped to enhance their understanding of the transdisciplinary nature and approach of ocean governance, but also helped to build trust, connections and friendship among all participants, which, in the long term, would contribute to the sustainable development of the South China Sea region as well as the maintenance of peace and stability.



ABOUT NISCSS

The National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCSS) is a leading think tank in China dedicated to the research of South China Sea issues. There are seven research programs within NISCSS, which cover an extensive portfolio of multi-disciplinary research on the South China Sea, on such subjects as history, geography, geopolitics, regional security, international law, marine economy, environmental and ecological protection, the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, laws and policies of Hainan pilot free trade zone and free trade port, and regional cooperation.

NISCSS began its life as the Hainan Research Institute for South China Sea Studies (HRISCS) in 1996. In July 2004, HRISCS was upgraded and renamed as the National Institute for the South China Sea Studies. In 2013, NISCSS established its Beijing Office in order to promote the study of the South China Sea as well as to improve its network of academic and professional ties. In 2014, the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) was launched in Washington, D.C. with the support and sponsor-ship of NISCSS-affiliated Hainan Nanhai Research Foundation. ICAS is an independent think tank that serves as a bridge to facilitate the exchange of ideas and people between China and the United States. In 2016, China-Southeast Asia Research Center on the South China Sea (CSARC) was inaugurated at Boao. Initiated by the NISCSS, the CSARC also incorporates influential think tanks in Southeast Asia. Based in China and facing Southeast Asia, the CSARC will convey peaceful and rational voices to the international community with the common vision of regional countries to maintain peace and stability, and seek for common prosperity of the greater South China Sea. In 2018, NISCSS and China Institute for Reform and Development (CIRD), along with Hainan University and Hainan Normal University, co-founded the Institute for Free Trade Ports with Chinese Characteristics, so as to facilitate the development goal of Hainan to be a free trade zone and free trade port.

After twenty years of development and growth, the NISCSS today enjoys more than a hundred established partnerships and academic exchanges with renowned think tanks from over twenty countries and regions of the world.

