

Main finding 10:

The jurisdictional disputes in the South China Sea could be resolved in six stages

1. Sign a bilateral treaty between China and Vietnam on the Gulf of Tonkin (done in December 2000).
2. Establish a joint Chinese negotiation team with representatives both from the PRC and Taiwan.
3. Strike a 'small bargain' over Scarborough Reef. China and the Philippines agree that the reef can have no more than 12-nm territorial waters. They shelve the sovereignty dispute to the reef, and prohibit economic activity.
4. Use the 'small bargain' as a model for a 'big bargain' over the Spratlys and Paracels. All claimants concede that none of the Spratlys can have more than 12-nm territorial waters. They shelve the sovereignty dispute to the islands and their adjacent waters. All recognise Chinese sovereignty to the Paracels, and agree that some of the Paracels can have a continental shelf and 200-nm EEZ.
5. All claimants define their continental shelf and maritime zone claims, using proper basepoints on coasts, offshore islands and the Paracels - but not Scarborough Reef or the Spratlys. Negotiations are held to establish median lines.
6. All claimants transfer their alleged sovereignty to the Spratly islands to a regional authority, setting up a system of marine nature parks. Within the parks all economic activity is prohibited, except environment-friendly tourism. The Spratlys are given back to their original inhabitants: the birds, fish and turtles.

Relevant publications from the project

- **Stein Tønnesson:**
["Can Conflicts Be Solved by Shelving Disputes?"](#), *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 30, 1999, No. 2, pp. 179-182.
(The version available here is a draft.)
- **Stein Tønnesson:**
"Can China Resolve the Conflict in the South China Sea?", Singapore: East Asian Institute [Working Paper](#), no. 39, 2000.
- **Stein Tønnesson:**
["Here's How to Settle Rocky Disputes in the South China Sea"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 6 September 2000
and ["Settling South China Sea disputes"](#), *The Straits Times*, 7 September 2000.
- **Stein Tønnesson:**
"China and the South China Sea: a Peace Proposal", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 31, 2000, No. 3, pp. 307-326.