

Main finding 4:

The disputes in the South China Sea cannot be viewed in isolation from the Taiwan question

A viable negotiated solution to the conflict in the South China Sea may require that Taiwan and China develop common policies on behalf of "China" without disturbing the fragile balance in cross-strait relations. Yet in the period 1995-99 Taiwan's South China Sea policies were moving away from those of China under the impact of changing cross-strait relations and new domestic power relations among parties and state agencies. By mid-1995 growing tension made China terminate informal cross-strait co-operation with Taiwan, including meetings between the two sides on the South China Sea issue. Oil exploration co-operation took place afterwards, but Taiwan's authorities carefully restricted it to non-contested areas. The Kuomintang and the Democratic Progress Party agreed to reduce the practical impact of Taiwan's huge u-line claim in the South China Sea without abandoning it, as seen in legislation in 1998 and 1999. Since 1995 a cautious South China Sea policy favoured by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve relations with Southeast Asian claimants prevailed over the more aggressive approach promoted by the Navy.

Relevant publications from the project

- **Kristen Nordhaug :**
«[Taiwan and the South China Sea Conflict: 'The China Connection' Revisited](#)» in Knut Snildal (Comp.): Perspectives on the Conflict in the South China Sea, SUM Workshop Proceedings, August 1999.
- **Kristen Nordhaug**
"[Taiwanese Trade and Investment Policies and their Implications for the South China Sea Region.](#)" Paper presented under panel 4: Economic Integration and Disintegration at the conference "Human and Regional Security around the South China Sea", Oslo 2-4 June 2000

Internet publication (in Norwegian)

- **Kristen Nordhaug**
"[Taiwans rolle i konflikten i Sør-Kina-havet](#)" (oktober 2000)