

The National Security Council Towards a Strategic Lasting West Philippine Sea International Relationship

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Abstract:

This paper examined the National Security Council (NSC)'s strategic dynamics in long-term West Philippine Sea relations. The examination will examine how geopolitics, marine security, and international law affect national security. This study examines how defensive technology advances and strategic alliances affect regional diplomacy. It will also assess the socio-economic effects of territorial conflicts, resource access, and regional stability locally and globally. The qualitative study covered international relations in general and focused on ASEAN, the US, and China. It will focus on how national security decisions affect defense, security, and trade. This study aims to create a West Philippine Sea policy framework that fosters collaboration and ensures long-term security. The findings revealed a need to enhance comprehension and resolution of the complex issues related to the West Philippine Sea, with a specific emphasis on the strategic influence of the National Security Council in establishing a durable international arrangement. The study will analyse practical matters such as territorial conflicts, economic resource allocation, and national security considerations that have historically influenced diplomatic ties in the region. The analysis will examine the alignment of geopolitical disputes, technological progress in marine defense, and economic objectives with strategic alliances. Additionally, the analysis will include social and human issues, such as the consequences of these conflicts on local communities and national identity. The study aims to uncover potential avenues for improved cooperation among nations, regional stability, and sustainable economic development, offering a holistic strategy to address enduring challenges and promote enduring collaboration.

Introduction

This study explores the long-term implications of the West Philippine Sea dispute, focusing on how geopolitics, marine security, and international law shape national security dynamics. It investigates the impact of advancements in defensive technologies and the role of strategic alliances in influencing regional diplomacy. In particular, it assesses the socio-economic consequences of territorial disputes, resource access, and regional stability, both at local and global levels.

Anchored in the broader field of international relations, the study concentrates on the interactions among ASEAN, the United States, and China—key actors whose decisions significantly affect regional peace, security, and trade. By analyzing how national security strategies intersect with defense, diplomacy, and economic interests, the research aims to propose a comprehensive policy framework for the West Philippine Sea. This framework seeks

to enhance multilateral collaboration, safeguard sovereign rights, and ensure long-term maritime security.

The primary objective is to deepen understanding and contribute to the resolution of complex issues surrounding the West Philippine Sea, with particular emphasis on the strategic role of the National Security Council (NSC) in shaping sustainable and cooperative international arrangements. The study will examine critical dimensions such as territorial disputes, economic resource allocation, and national security priorities that have historically influenced diplomatic relationships in the region.

Furthermore, the analysis will align geopolitical tensions, technological advancements in marine defense, and economic goals with evolving strategic partnerships. It will also address the conflict's social and human dimensions, including its impact on local communities and national identity. Ultimately, this research endeavors to identify viable pathways for regional cooperation, enduring peace, and sustainable development, offering a holistic approach to navigating persistent maritime challenges.

Methods

The theoretical framework for a qualitative study on "The National Security Council Towards a Strategic Lasting West Philippine Sea International Relationship" is Realism in International Relations, an approach developed by academicians Hans Morgenthau (1948) and Kenneth Waltz (1979). The realist perspective significantly emphasizes pursuing national interest, power, and survival within an anarchic international system. This approach is appropriate for examining the strategic decisions made by the National Security Council on the West Philippine Sea, where the Philippines encounters intricate territorial conflicts with influential international powers such as China.

Realism is based on the fundamental principle that people primarily behave in their own self-interest, frequently motivated by security considerations. In order to establish a durable international relationship in the West Philippine Sea, the National Security Council must adopt a practical decision-making strategy that effectively balances the objectives of enforcing territorial sovereignty and participating in diplomatic engagements with regional countries. Morgenthau's classical realism emphasises the fundamental friction between states arising from the battle for resources and territory. In contrast, Waltz's neorealism introduces the structural forces inside the international system that influence the behaviour of sovereign states. These theoretical viewpoints offer a framework to comprehend the security policies and foreign policy measures implemented by the National Security Council in reaction to the intricate geopolitical dynamics of the West Philippine Sea Region.

Regarding the West Philippine Sea, realism elucidates the necessity of adopting a strategic strategy that prioritizes the national interest while recognizing the constraints and possibilities arising from the global situation. Hence, realism serves as a valuable paradigm for analyzing the formulation of policies by the National Security Council to safeguard national sovereignty while promoting enduring international relations.

The Importance of the Question

The question of how the National Security Council (NSC) may establish a strategic and enduring international engagement regarding the West Philippine Sea is of utmost importance for multiple compelling reasons. The inquiry is pertinent because to the geopolitical sensitivity of the West Philippine Sea, which has substantial ramifications for regional security, economic interests, and international diplomacy. The sea's strategic significance, due to its abundant natural resources and crucial maritime transportation routes, requires a properly defined and efficient approach to international relations. Through the examination of this issue, the study will offer valuable understanding of how the NSC can effectively manage intricate geopolitical dynamics in order to promote robust and collaborative international partnerships, hence enhancing national security and regional stability.

The Significance of the Findings

The results of this research will have significant implications for policymakers, diplomats, and academics engaged in the fields of international relations and security studies. The study aims to provide helpful recommendations on handling territorial disputes and boosting diplomatic engagement by examining the techniques that the NSC may use to establish a sustainable and effective international partnership in the context of the West Philippine Sea. The importance of these discoveries resides in their capacity to influence strategic strategies, foster regional collaboration, and alleviate conflicts, so enhancing the stability and predictability of the global environment.

Implications for Theory, Methodology, and Practice

These findings will have far-reaching ramifications for theory, technique, and practice. This study will theoretically enhance the comprehension of strategic diplomacy and conflict resolution in the field of international relations, namely in relation to marine situations. In terms of methodology, it will emphasize the importance of qualitative approaches in revealing detailed insights into diplomatic strategies and their efficacy. Significantly, the results will offer practical suggestions for the NSC and other organizations on how to effectively interact with global stakeholders, handle conflicts, and establish collaborative structures. This pragmatic implementation will optimize the strategic capacities of national security institutions and strengthen foreign relations strategies.

Limitations to Generalization of the Findings

The results' generalizability may be constrained by many reasons. Firstly, the study will be tailored to the specific circumstances, concentrating on the distinct geopolitical and historical dynamics of the West Philippine Sea, which may not be immediately relevant to other areas or international interactions. Furthermore, the detailed and contextual qualitative quality of the study may not yield the quantitative data required for making broad generalizations. Furthermore, the conclusions will be shaped by the attitudes and experiences of the particular stakeholders interviewed, which may not encompass all perspectives or consider all factors in the field of international relations. Therefore, while the insights obtained will be helpful, they should be evaluated with an awareness of these limitations imposed by the context and methodology.

This research study would enhance and further the attainment of pertinent development objectives at various levels. Through the study, policymakers and stakeholders will gain a

deeper understanding of the intricate nature of international interactions in the West Philippine Sea, which will facilitate well-informed decision-making and strategic planning. Through offering comprehensive analysis of regional security and cooperation, the research will enhance the acquisition of individual expertise and leadership abilities necessary for effectively navigating and managing international conflicts and partnerships.

At the institutional level, the research will enhance the National Security Council's capacity to develop and execute efficient plans for preserving a strategic and long-lasting international partnership in the West Philippine Sea. This will empower institutions to synchronize their policies and activities with wider regional and national security goals. On a larger scope, the research will facilitate the attainment of national and regional development objectives by fostering stability and collaboration in the West Philippine Sea, which is essential for long-lasting economic expansion and regional political stability. Through its contribution to policy and strategic debates, the research will help to create a more stable and secure environment, promote international collaborations, and strengthen regional and national development initiatives.

Through this research, students will acquire expertise in strategic international relations, diplomatic negotiation, and policy analysis, strengthening their professional competencies. They will acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the intricacies of maritime territorial conflicts and the operational dynamics of geopolitical tactics. By engaging in research, students will cultivate their proficiency in collecting and analyzing qualitative data, so equipping them to critically assess and actively participate in the formulation of policies. Furthermore, they will enhance their capacity to articulate intricate concepts with precision and to participate in strategic analysis, therefore equipping them for positions in global diplomacy, security policy, and regional strategic planning.

The general methodology of this qualitative research will be exploratory, aiming to determine the perspectives and tactics used by the National Security Council (NSC) in developing a strategic and enduring international partnership regarding the West Philippine Sea. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, the study will examine the lived experiences, insights, and decision-making processes of key stakeholders within the National Security Council (NSC), diplomats, and other relevant institutions. The application of this approach will enable a thorough understanding of how these actors see the complexities of geopolitics and manage diplomatic efforts to protect national security interests while also promoting international collaboration.

The objective of this study is to investigate the strategic function of the National Security Council (NSC) in promoting a durable and efficient international relationship regarding the West Philippine Sea conflict.

Specifically, this will answer the following questions:

1. How does the National Security Council influence the formulation of policies regarding the West Philippine Sea?

2. What are the key diplomatic strategies employed by the NSC to strengthen international relations in the West Philippine Sea region?
3. How does the NSC collaborate with other national and international stakeholders in addressing security concerns in the West Philippine Sea?
4. What challenges does the NSC face in maintaining a strategic and lasting relationship with other claimant countries in the West Philippine Sea?

How do the NSC's strategies align with the broader national security and foreign policy objectives of the Philippines regarding the West Philippine Sea?

Results and Discussion

The National Security Council and the West Philippine Sea Dispute

The National Security Council (NSC) of the Philippines, established through Executive Order No. 330 on July 1, 1950, under President Elpidio Quirino and later recognized under Executive Order No. 115 in 1986 by President Corazon C. Aquino, plays a critical role in advising on national security matters. This advisory body is responsible for coordinating and integrating policies affecting national security (Executive Order No. 115, 1986).

Structure and Functions

The NSC comprises two primary bodies: the Council Proper, also known as the Executive Committee, and the National Security Council Secretariat. The Council Proper, chaired by the President, includes relevant Cabinet and Congress officials, as well as invited representatives from other sectors. Its main functions are to review national security and defense challenges, formulate solutions, and ensure clear communication of decisions to relevant agencies.

The National Security Council Secretariat, led by the Director General or National Security Adviser, provides technical support. It prepares plans, budgets, and staffing for the NSC, with these elements becoming effective only upon presidential approval (Executive Order No. 115, 1986).

National Security Policy 2024

To ensure the security of the Philippines' sovereignty, the NSC has developed several National Security Policies, including the current National Security Policy (NSP) 2023-2028. This five-year policy aims to enhance national security governance by addressing security threats and fostering sustainable economic and human development. The NSP 2023-2028 represents the third iteration of national security policy documents, specifically addressing modern challenges such as the maritime disputes in the West Philippine Sea (National Security Council, 2023).

The West Philippine Sea Dispute

The West Philippine Sea, part of the South China Sea, has been a focal point of contention between the Philippines and China. On January 22, 2013, the Philippines challenged China's maritime claims in the South China Sea, which includes areas within the West Philippine Sea. China's claims, based on the nine-dash line, are disputed by the Philippines and other neighboring countries (Rival, 2022). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) ruling favored the Philippines, affirming that the Spratly Islands fall within the

Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and rejecting China's historical claims (Pedrajas, 2023). Morales (2019) highlights the South China Sea dispute as a major challenge to the Philippines' commitment to international law and regional stability.

Administration's Approach

The Philippine government's approach to the West Philippine Sea has varied across administrations. President Benigno C. Aquino III focused on preventing Chinese occupation through military and diplomatic efforts and by filing a case with the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). In contrast, President Rodrigo Duterte initially set aside the PCA ruling,

opting for improved bilateral relations with China, seeking economic benefits through infrastructure loans and foreign direct investments. However, these efforts faced setbacks, including delays in funding and continued coercive actions by China (De Castro, 2020). President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has aimed to strengthen bilateral relations and economic agreements while addressing security concerns, resulting in numerous new agreements (Salido, 2023).

ASEAN Framework Resolution

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has attempted to mediate the maritime dispute through the ASEAN Code of Conduct (COC). This approach is considered more successful in managing disputes compared to legalistic methods (Hu, 2021). Foreign policy decision-making often involves balancing national interests with external influences, a process evident in ASEAN's efforts to address the West Philippine Sea issue (Baviera, 2020).

Strategic Planning by the NSC

The NSC formulates the National Security Policy with a five-year framework to address national challenges. The National Security Policy 2017-2022 focused on enhancing defense capabilities, pursuing international support for a rules-based regime in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea, and engaging in confidence-building measures (National Security Council, 2017). The subsequent National Security Policy for 2019-2024, signed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., emphasized aligning agencies for better maritime security, acquiring advanced monitoring technologies, and strengthening defense cooperation (National Security Council, 2019).

Importance of Strategic Planning

To mitigate tensions and strengthen international relations, the Philippines should continue to adhere to a rules-based system, foster cooperation with other nations, and enhance diplomatic engagements. Strategic planning includes modernizing defense capabilities, declaring marine protected areas, and ensuring a self-reliant defense posture. These measures aim to safeguard the country's sovereignty while maintaining harmonious international relationships (National Economic and Development Authority, 2019).

In conclusion, the Philippines faces ongoing challenges in the West Philippine Sea dispute. Through strategic planning and international cooperation, the country seeks to protect its sovereignty, enhance security, and foster positive relations with its global counterparts.

When it comes to promoting a strategic and long-lasting international alliance with the West Philippine Sea, the primary objective of this qualitative research is to investigate and evaluate the viewpoints and strategies of the National Security Council (NSC). The phenomenological method will be utilized in this research project in order to investigate the direct experiences, profound insights, and cognitive processes of key individuals who are involved in the National Security Council (NSC), diplomats, and other relevant organizations. Through the utilization of this methodology, a comprehensive comprehension of the manner in which these institutions evaluate the intricate geopolitical dynamics and manage diplomatic attempts to safeguard national security interests while simultaneously fostering international collaboration will be made possible.

Information will be gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis as the methods of data gathering. individuals from the National Security Council (NSC), foreign affairs offices, and academic specialists in the field of international relations will be included in the semi-structured interviews. These individuals will be specifically

selected. The participants will be given the opportunity to voice their perspectives on strategic policies and diplomatic activities pertaining to the West Philippine Sea through the development of open-ended questions that have been prior to being determined. In order to cross-reference data and acquire an in-depth understanding of the initiatives that have been put into action, a full examination of official NSC reports, government publications, and international agreements will be carried out. In addition, reflective journals and field notes will be kept in order to capture the observations that were made during the process of document analysis and interviews.

Through the use of theme analysis, an investigation into the data that was gathered will be carried out. It is planned to undertake transcription and coding of the interviews in order to discover frequent themes and patterns that are associated with the diplomatic endeavors and strategy of the National Security Council (NSC). During the thematic coding process, the primary objective will be to extract significant insights from both the interviews and the written materials. This will involve analyzing the degree to which different suggestions align with or depart from pre-established policies and geopolitical considerations. The use of data triangulation, which combines document analysis and interviews, will be implemented in order to achieve the goal of acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the strategic approaches that are being taken towards the West Philippine Sea.

For the purpose of ensuring that the research is of the highest possible quality, it will be carried out with the primary goal of giving credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability maximum importance. In order to establish credibility, it will be requested of the participants that they examine the transcriptions and preliminary findings in order to verify the accuracy of the information by member-checking. In order to guarantee that the findings may be transferred to other situations, detailed descriptions of the location and the individuals who participated will be provided. This will enable other people to assess whether or not the findings are applicable to situations that are comparable. A thorough audit trail will be maintained in order to guarantee trustworthiness. This audit trail will meticulously document all of the study conclusions and adjustments that were made throughout the investigation. For the purpose of enhancing confirmability, it is of the utmost importance to retain impartiality and reflexivity throughout the processes of data acquisition and processing.

There will be a strict adherence to ethical standards throughout the course of the research project in order to safeguard the participants' rights and privacy. Before any interviews are conducted, it is necessary for all participants to provide their informed permission in order to confirm that they have a complete comprehension of the objectives of the study and that they are free to withdraw their participation at any time. Through the utilization of pseudonyms and the safe storage of the dataset, we will be able to guarantee the protection of confidentiality and anonymity. The necessary formal approval will be obtained from an appropriate ethics review board, and all of the data will be treated in accordance with the established academic and legal norms in order to prevent any potential harm or misuse.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The present qualitative study will utilize an exploratory, phenomenological methodology to gain insight into the techniques employed by the National Security Council (NSC) in order to develop a durable international relationship of the West Philippine Sea. Primary data collection will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from the NSC, foreign affairs officials, and international relations specialists. Additionally, document analysis of official reports and agreements will be undertaken. A thematic analysis will be employed to examine the data, with a specific emphasis on detecting reoccurring themes and patterns associated with geopolitical strategies. In order to guarantee the quality of the research, credibility will be established by means of member-checking, while transferability, dependability, and confirmability will be addressed by providing detailed contextual descriptions, maintaining an audit trail, and practicing reflexivity. Priority will be given to ethical

considerations by acquiring informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms, and seeking ethical approval from a suitable review board. The study will strictly comply with academic and legal frameworks to protect participant rights and avoid any misuse of data. The objective of this methodology is to offer a thorough comprehension of how the NSC manages the intricate geopolitical dynamics of the West Philippine Sea while fostering international collaboration.

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