

**China's Participation in the South China Sea Environmental Project:
Moving From a Laggard to a Leader in the Regional Environmental Cooperation**

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(ABSTRACT)

The South China Sea is known as an area where the Chinese government stands against its Southeast Asian neighbors in unresolved sovereignty conflicts over the disputed islands and the exploration for natural resources. Therefore, the South China Sea presents challenges for multilateral environmental cooperation. China was not an active participant in the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea before the 1990s. However, the approval of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)/Global Environmental Facility (GEF) South China Sea Project in 1999 marked a dramatic attitude change by the Chinese government towards the South China Sea environmental protection. It is the first multilateral inter-governmental initiative signed by China on any issues related to the South China Sea. Before signing its approval of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project, the Chinese government strongly opposed any multilateral cooperation concerning the South China Sea, since most of the islands in the South China Sea are territorially disputed islands between China and other coastal countries. This thesis tries to find the reasons why China changed its attitudes on the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. Based on an analysis what happened for China from 1995 when the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project was initiated, to 1999, when China approved this project, this thesis found that the

motivations for China to participate in the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea are collective of national interests, rather than a pure environmental interest.

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Lists of Abbreviations

Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICD)
Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
Department of International Cooperation (DIC)
Energy Information Administration (EIA)
Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)
Global Environmental Facility (GEF)
Ministry of Finance (MOF)
Nonprofit Governmental Organization (NGO)
Office of Marine Environmental Protection (OMEP)
International Organizations (IOs)
State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA)
State Oceanic Administration (SOA)
United Nation (UN)
United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development (UNCED)
United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE)
United Nation Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nation's Environmental Programme (UNEP)
World Commission on Dams (WCD)
World Health Organization (WHO)
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose and Research Questions

This thesis is guided by these general research questions: *why did the Chinese government participate in the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea, where the Chinese government resents any internationalization of the disputed issues? Why did the Chinese government transform its role in the multilateral environmental cooperation from a reluctant participant to an active regional leader?* I would forecast now that the answer to those questions will go back to “collective national interests” rather than a “pure environmental interest” as the Chinese government moves to finish this transition. However, UNEP also has succeeded in facilitating multilateral environmental cooperation by providing scientific and funding assistance.

With these questions, this thesis delves into the People’s Republic of China’s¹ stance towards the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea from 1949, when China was formally established to, March 2007, when United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)/Global Environmental Facility(GEF)’s South China Sea Project² was fully completed. Since the 1990s, activities to develop systematic regional environmental cooperation in the South China Sea³ have emerged. This thesis

¹ In this paper, if I mentioned China, I meant the People’s Republic of China.

² The UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, also called “*Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*” is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in partnership with seven riparian states bordering the South China Sea (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam). It is the first attempt to develop regionally coordinated programmes of action designed to reverse environmental degradation particularly in the South China Sea are, the area of coastal habitat degradation and loss, halt-land based pollution and fisheries over-exploitation issues. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from http://www.unepscs.org/Project_Background.html for more information.

³ When I mention South China Sea, I refer it to a geographical definition which has nothing to do with politics

primarily focuses on examining what happened in China from 1995 to 1999, since China opposed the UNEP/GEF South China Sea in 1995 when it was initiated, but approved it in 1999. China, as a regional leader, changed its role from a reluctant environmentally cooperative actor to a very active participant in the South China Sea is puzzling, particularly because the South China Sea is a sensitive region for implementing environmental cooperation.

The South China Sea is a region with many conflicts. However, the core dispute in the South China Sea is tied to the claims and counter-claims of sovereignty over hundreds of small islands in Paracel and Spratly island groups. China and other littoral countries have a long history of trade and fishing here, and this area is strategically significant for the free passage of global shipping. Recently, increased population growth and rapid economic development throughout the entire Asia-Pacific region has resulted in the over exploration and depletion of natural resources. Both military and marine conflicts make environmental cooperation unfeasible in this area.

Due to Asian littoral countries' increasing demand for marine resources, environmental degradation is becoming severe in the South China Sea. The littoral countries have begun to realize the importance of environmental cooperation. Three initiatives have been undertaken concerning international environmental cooperation in the South China Sea region where degradation is obvious. For example, the Chinese government claims that the Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands are a part of its Hainan province. Actually, China only occupies 14 islands in the Paracel Islands, while Vietnam

occupies 22; and the Philippines occupies 11 of them.⁴

Given the military and resource conflicts, China's changing attitudes toward multilateral cooperation seems puzzling. China has transformed its role from a reluctant environmentally cooperative actor to a very active leading force in the South China Sea Project. China refused to sign this project at the beginning of 1995, however, it signed this project in 1999 and fully participated as a leader during 2002 to 2007. James D. Seymour argues that the country generally has become more willing to participate in the various international agreements pertaining to the environment; and, "on certain issues, such as biodiversity, China has become a leader."⁵ In the regional environmental protection arena, China is more likely to be a leader than a participant.

Recently, there many papers and studies have investigated China's growing role in institutions for the regional cooperation.⁶ Most scholars believe that China's leading role in environmental cooperation in the South China Sea is linked with China's desire to be a regional leader. Susan Shen, the international coordinator for the environment with World Bank, also claims that China's active response to environmental cooperation is a sign of China's desire to be a regional leader. She states, "Being actively involved in international environmental issues is all tied with China's wanting to be a leader in the world. In addition, with the upcoming Olympics, they really do want to have a seat at the

⁴ Spratly Islands. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from Wake: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spratly_Islands

⁵ Seymour, James D. (2005). China's Environment: a Bibliographic Essay. In Day, Kristen A. (Ed.), *China's Environment and the Challenge of Sustainable Development*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe. p. 261.

⁶ See Ryosei, Kokubun., & Jisi Wang. (Eds.). (2004). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order*. New York: Japan Center for International Change. Naughton, Barry. (1997). *The China Circle, Economics and Electronics in the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong*. Washington DC: Bookings Institution Press. Hynge, James. (2006). *China Shakes the World, the Rise of a Hungry Nation*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

table in the international arena. They also see themselves as representing the interests of the World's developing countries at international environmental meetings.”⁷ Elizabeth Economy, the Senior Fellow and Director for Asia Studies at the Council on Foreign Affairs refer to China's active environmental diplomacy in Southeast Asia as a vehicle to become a regional leader. She also mentions that the environmental cooperation is one of the sophisticated strategies to establish China as an important regional leader. She claims,

China's active diplomacy in Southeast Asia is reflected in growing trade relations and in signing numerous environmental cooperation agreements with its neighbors...Over the past few years, China has received much acclaim in the region for its multilateral approach, its ability to understand the needs of regional actors and its desire to address the region's concerns.⁸

In addition, Elizabeth Economy argues that during the last few decades, China's economic success has allowed it to pursue a more active role in the international stage, particularly a leading role in Asia. “China is recognized both as a regional and aspiring global power.”⁹

Methodology

This thesis explores the reasons why China became a regional leader in the environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. First, this thesis argues that the

⁷ Quoted in Clay, Rebecca. (2002). China, the Next Environmental Superpower? *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 110 (9), A527

⁸ Economy, Elizabeth.C. (2005). China's Rise in Southeast Asia: Implications for the United States. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14 (44), 413

⁹ Economy, Elizabeth.C. (2005). China's Rise in Southeast Asia: Implications for the United States. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14 (44), 409

environmental cooperation in the South China Sea serves as an instrument of China's diplomatic goals. The thesis contends that the environmental cooperation is not a purely environmental issue, because when the Chinese government deals with multilateral environmental cooperation, it takes into account other considerations, such as foreign affairs, security, trade, and economic dimensions. The Chinese government's aspiration to repair its relationship with neighboring countries after the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests,¹⁰ and Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games could be interpreted as the foreign affairs motivation for China to join the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. China's increasing business trade with Asian countries is a trade dimension that explains why the Chinese government participates in the cooperation. The increasing demand for oil, gas, fisheries and other marine resources are the economic dimensions. This thesis argues that political, economic, and cultural benefits rather than environmental gains are the major reasons for China to participate in the multilateral cooperation in the South China Sea area.

Second, this thesis assumes that international organizations play an important role in facilitating multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. The international organizations catalyze multilateral environmental cooperation by providing

¹⁰ The Tiananmen Square Protests is referred to the June Fourth Incident in China. On 15 April 1989, "students held a vigil in Beijing's Tiananmen Square that commemorated the death of Hu Yaobang, a progressive leader who had sought reforms in China. They demanded freedom and empowerment for a young generation. The vigil became an ongoing protest in the square on 4 May and gave rise to a prodemocracy movement throughout China. Calling for a change in government through political liberalization and an end to official corruption, the demonstrators displayed Lady Liberty, meant to resemble the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and signaling a desire for an open way of life. Although the situation was far from a civil war, the scope of the largely nonviolent opposition to the government was very broad." US History Encyclopedia: Tiananmen Square Protest. Retrieved May 15, 2008 from <http://www.answers.com/topic/tiananmen-square-protests-of-1989>

funds, technological supports to developing countries. In the South China Sea arena, the whole region lacks scientific knowledge and environmental cooperation capabilities. Hence, this thesis assumes that the UNEP could play an independent role in facilitating multilateral environmental cooperation.

Based on the independent variables described above, this thesis will examine the changes of China's stand on multilateral environmental cooperation. Environmental cooperation in the South China Sea is puzzling, because disputes over endless territorial and natural resources exploration in the South China Sea make this region one of the most difficult areas for multilateral cooperation. However, from the 1970s, with the help of UNEP, countries in this region have worked with others in both the East Asian Sea and the South China Sea programmes to solve marine environmental problems. Multilateral environmental cooperation and agreements have built a basis for state decision makers to follow regional environmental rules. China transformed its role from a reluctantly environmental cooperative actor to a very active actor and even a leader, in the South China Sea programme.

When initiating the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project at the beginning of the 1990s, China strongly opposed this project, however, when China agreed to participate in this project, it became very active. What caused China to transform its role from a laggard in multilateral environmental cooperation to a leading implementer in the South China Sea area? Through a case study of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project building processes, I will try to understand the factors that led to environmental

cooperation. Primarily I will focus on China's participation and changing attitude toward multilateral environmental cooperation from the 1995 to 1999. In this thesis, when mentioning China as a "laggard" or an "active leader", my research is based on scholars' and other countries' evaluation rather than the Chinese government's self-evaluation. I will choose one of the United Nations Regional Sea Programmes--"*Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand (South China Sea Programme)*" to explore the Chinese government's changing attitude in the environmental politics.

Analysis of Content-Case Study

This thesis will use a qualitative analysis of the case study to investigate UNEP's environmental programme and explore the reasons why countries choose to cooperate with others. I will primarily focus on analyzing what happened in China before China signed the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project in 1999.

I will use both primary and secondary data to investigate the reasons for China to exhibit multilateral environmental cooperation. By primary data, I refer to data that are collected by experts from international organizations, such as the United Nation (UN), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank. Furthermore, I collected data from newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *China Daily*, and *People's Daily*. Some of the reports this paper uses were published by UNEP South China Sea Workshop, Global International Water Assessment; I also use data provided by ADB, *Asian Outlook 2007*. For secondary data, I refer to data collected by other experts, researchers, and students,

reported in newspapers, magazines, journals, and Internet sources.

Recently, investigations of environmental cooperation are after on case studies. A case study actually provides an effective and easy way to conduct research. The positive aspect of case-study design is its ability to focus on one particular phenomenon in a complex environment. The South China Sea project provides a good case study to explore why countries are willing to cooperate with each other in environmental issues while they have military and other conflicts. The negative aspect of using case studies is that they have limited generalizability. It is highly possible that the finding from the South China Sea case is not suitable in others cases.

Validity and Reliability

Most of the existing literature on methods in international environmental politics focuses on the question of whether qualitative or quantitative studies are better for processing research questions. The predominant mode of analysis of international environmental politics so far has been largely qualitative, with most researchers selecting a small number of cases to study.¹¹ This approach shares a common research standard and aims with a number of non-qualitative methodologies, while collecting data and analyzing it in qualitative ways.¹² It is more appropriate to investigate environmental politics using qualitative research methods rather than quantitative ones.¹³ After

¹¹ Hochstetler, Kathryn & Laituri, Melinda. (2006). *Methods in International Environmental Politics*. In Betsill, Michele M., Hochstetler, Kathryn & Stevis, Dimitris (Eds.), *Palgrave Advances in International Environmental Politics*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan. p. 82.

¹² Hochstetler, K & Laituri, M. (2005). *Methods in the Study of International Environmental Politics*. Forthcoming in Michele Betsill, Kathryn Hochstetler, and Dimitris Stevis, (Eds.), *Palgrave Guide to International Environmental Politics*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

¹³ See Curtin, Michael & Fossey, Ellie. (2007). *Appraising the trustworthiness of qualitative studies: Guidelines for*

systematically collecting information about the variables and relationship between them, using documents and other archival records, and observation, I have been able to analyze the UNEP's South China Sea project qualitatively. However, this approach is hindered by inability to systematically control variation.

This study could be categorized as a “single-case study.”¹⁴ Robert Yin identified at least six sources of evidence in case studies, which include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artifacts. In my thesis, I choose documents and archival records when doing case study analysis. For archival documents, I used UNEP's meeting records, survey data and reports. For example, I refer to “UNEP/GEF/SCS Project United Nations Environmental Programme Project Document” from November 2001, and “UNEP/GEF Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs.” However, if some archival records are not accurate, my research's reliability will be questionable.

When collecting data,¹⁵ I downloaded many documents from UNEP's South China

occupational therapists. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 54(2):88-94.

¹⁴ See Yin, Robert K. (1994). *Case Study: Research Design and Methods, Applications of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

¹⁵ Books and journals from Virginia Tech Newman library and library loan also helped me a lot in doing this thesis. However, most of books are written in English, and some authors do not know Chinese language; therefore, most of information and data obtained for their research are based on translation. As a result, some information may not be accurate when translated from Chinese to English, and therefore will make my research less reliable. Thanks to library loan, I could borrow Chinese books from other university libraries, and most of them come from Hong Kong's universities.

In addition to online and library resources, I also asked my friends from the University of International Relations of Beijing and Peking University to collect data for me. They have online access to Chinese academic databases. I gave them some key words for research: South China Sea, environmental cooperation, environmental politics, UNEP, and UN. However, there may be some bias while they collected data for me. It is possible that they chose the quickest way to find those articles, and did not care about the accuracy of those data. Furthermore, because there are some restrictions for them to access to sensitive issues, particularly the South China Sea case, they may have had difficulties in collecting documents, the documents they found were not neutral. If so, my research could be restricted by the selection bias.

Sea's official website <http://www.unepscs.org/>. Fortunately, UNEP does not make any restrictions on one's access to data and documents. In addition, the documents are also updated very frequently so I could access the newest archival records. I have also collected data from Chinese official governmental websites, such as the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) at <http://www.zhb.gov.cn/>. Being able to read and understand the Chinese language allows me to analyze the documents on the website of SEPA since most of the documents are written in Chinese. Only small portions of the documents are translated into English.

Significance of the South China Sea Case

I chose the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Programme as a case study for three reasons: First, the South China Sea region had little history of cooperation before the 1970s when UNEP's regional sea programme was initiated. It is an area with conflicts, disputes, and resentments between both nations and local peoples. There were more than 13 military clashes over the past two decades, and more than 10 disputes over drilling and exploration in the last ten years.¹⁶ In 1967, UNEP initiated a loose regional environmental cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)¹⁷. However, cooperation with ASEAN was limited, and nothing substantive other than some meetings among political leaders occurred.¹⁸ Western countries criticize ASEAN for

¹⁶ Rosenberg, David. (n.d.). *The South China Sea, An online resource for students, scholars and policy-makers interested in South China Sea regional development, environment, and security issues*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://www.southchinasea.org/why.html>

¹⁷ ASEAN is a geo-political and economic organization of 10 countries located in Southeast Asia. It was formed by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. ASEAN aims to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development among its members, and the promotion of regional peace.

¹⁸ See Leifer, Michael. (1973). The ASEAN States: No Common Outlook. *International Affairs*, 49, 600-607. Fifiedl,

being too “soft” in solving disputes among members. Furthermore, it is an organization focused on economic issues and human rights instead of environmental problems.¹⁹ Separate and apart from ASEAN, UNEP’s South China Sea Programme focuses on environmental degradation and environmental cooperation. Because China has turned from a laggard on multilateral cooperation to an active actor in the South China Sea during the implementation of the South China Sea project. I want to investigate China’s change in attitude on participating in the South China Sea project.

Second, the South China Sea provides a good case to study how international organizations help to bring about multilateral environmental cooperation in a politically and environmentally complex place. The South China Sea represents a region of globally significant biological diversity. The high biological diversity is not merely threatened by a continuation of current unsustainable patterns of use, but also has been seriously degraded in recent years. In recent decades, the population in this area has increased rapidly, and economies have been transformed from reliance on subsistence agriculture to reliance on industrialization and export-driven economic growth. Most countries focus on economic growth that usually comes at the expense of environmental degradation. Increasing population and economic growth bring severe pollution and ecological degradation in the South China Sea. Will hostility and opposition still be the center of a state’s strategy when they encounter regional environmental problems? This case study

Russell H.(1979). ASEAN: Image and Reality. *Asian Survey*, 19, 1199-1208.

¹⁹ See Hund, Markus. (2001). Development of ASEAN Norms Between 1997 and 2000: A Paradigm Shift? *ZOPS Occasional Paper*, 15. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from <http://zops.uni-trier.de/op/OccasionalPapersNr15.pdf>

provides me with a chance to study whether environmental cooperation is based on a state's long-term interest in maintaining continuable natural resources, or its short-term interest in the overexploitation of natural resources. The South China Sea project provides me with a good case to explore the efforts of intervention of International Organizations in regional conflicts.

Finally, the South China Sea project gives me a chance to study the role of technology and funding support provided by international organizations and developed countries in promoting multilateral environmental cooperation in a complicated geopolitical region. The United Nation Development Programme(UNDP), which aims to help developing countries adopt integrated approaches to natural resource management, has improved developing countries' people's lives by providing financial and technical assistance to regional environmental cooperation. International banks such as World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have provided both financial and technical support for environmental activities in the region. Japan also provides a loan to China to help China solve environmental problems. I want to know whether China's changing attitude in environmental cooperation is affected by international organizations' catalytic and coordinating efforts by providing funding and technological supports.

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provides the research questions and purpose of this thesis, which aims to examine China's changing positions in the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. Furthermore, this chapter presents the research methods, research

limitation and significance of research in the environmental cooperation in the South China Sea.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the theoretical basis for the environmental cooperation. The theoretical contexts are based on Kenneth Waltz's realism theory, which claimed that individual state participate in the international cooperation because it could gain more interests from cooperation. Furthermore, this chapter also provides epistemic community model, international regime model to explain environmental cooperation. Finally, this chapter focuses on analyzing academic works on the environmental cooperation in the South China Sea.

Chapter 3 analyzes China's changing position in participating the UNEP/GEF's South China Sea project in the 1990s. By demonstrating China's environmental protection situation from the 1970s to the 1990s, and what happened in China from 1995 to 1999, the chapter focuses on examining factors contributed to China's changing positions in the international environmental cooperation. From analyzing the Three Gorges Dam and 1997 Yangtze River flood, Beijing's bid for 2008 Olympic Games, Hong Kong's and Macao's return to the PRC in 1997 and 1999, and Asian financial crisis in the 1997, this chapter tries to find the reasons under China's agreement to participate in the South China Sea project in 1999.

Chapter 4 concludes the major findings of this research, and argues that first, international organization plays a significant role in facilitating multilateral environmental cooperation, especially in the South China Sea, an area that had little

history of cooperation before the 1990s. Furthermore, it concludes that China's participation in the multilateral environmental cooperation was led by a mix of China's national interests.

Chapter 2: Literature Review on Environmental Cooperation

This chapter provides a theoretical background for the international cooperation. As I mentioned in the chapter one, this part is primarily based on the realism theory, which argues that cooperation occurs because states want to gain more interests. Furthermore, this chapter presents the institutional bargaining model and epistemic community model to explain environmental cooperation.

For over thirty years, environmental cooperation around regional seas and oceans has influenced the general research agenda of international and comparative environmental politics and policy. James Dougherty defines international cooperation as a set of relationships that are not based on coercion or compliance and that are legitimized by mutual consent of members, as in international organizations and regimes.²⁰ Lisa Martin defines international environmental cooperation as the mutual adjustment of government policies through a process of policy coordination.²¹

Paul Harris points out that cooperation occurs because states want to overcome common problems, and cooperation occurs despite international anarchy because individual state finds out it is counterproductive not to cooperate with others.²² According to Paul Harris, international environmental cooperation is essential to robust efforts in addressing local, regional, and global environmental problems.²³ Paul Harris

²⁰ See Dougherty, James E., Pfaltzgraff, Robert L., & Dougherty, James L. (1997). *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. New York: Harper & Row.

²¹ See Martin Lisa L. & Simmons, Beth A. (2001). *International Institutions: An International Organization Reader*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

²² See Harris, Paul G. (2002). *International Environmental Cooperation-Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia*. Boulder: University of Press of Colorado

²³ See Harris, Paul G. (2002). *International Environmental Cooperation-Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia*.

claims that international cooperation is more likely to occur when states have overlapping interests, the number of the states in a region is relative small, and states have common characteristics conducive to cooperation. Furthermore, states are reluctant to cooperate until they face a common threat and through cooperation, they could achieve a common objective. He argues, “International cooperation can be facilitated by powerful actors, as when the United States facilitated international economic cooperation in the second half of the twentieth century or when international intuitions are involved in facilitating cooperation.”²⁴ I fundamentally agree with Harris’s opinion, and his theory on international cooperation could be explained by the South China Sea area. South China Sea area states have overlap and common interests, natural resources and disputed islands, they also face the same problem, the increasing environmental degradation. UNEP’s South China Sea project could promote most of states’ interests by facilitating cooperation. China realizes that it will lose more, if it chooses not to cooperate with others.

K. J. Holsti²⁵ claims that states are compelled to cooperate when they face the common problems, especially environmental problems, and an individual state’s efforts are not enough to solve these problems. He identifies four main sources of international cooperation: states cooperate to reduce costs, to increase efficiency, to address common threats or problems, and to lower the adverse consequences their actions have on others.

Boulder: University of Press of Colorado.

²⁴ Harris, Paul G. (2002). *International Environmental Cooperation-Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia*. Boulder: University of Press of Colorado, 7

²⁵ See Holsti, K.J. (1995). *War, Peace and State of the State*. *International Political Science Review*, 16 (4), 319-339.

He points out that most of problems are created by global modern life; one state could not solve global problems now, so when facing environmental issues, cooperation is much effective. However, he also mentions that states are reluctant to cooperate unless a problem becomes severe enough to garner attention from international organizations (IOs) and Nonprofit Governmental Organization (NGO)s' attention, scientists and experts from IGs and NGOs will become involved in pursuing environmental problems. This leads international negotiation to be an eminently political process since states want to maximize interests and minimize costs.

Lisa Martin²⁶ explains that states cooperate to overcome common problems, and cooperation occurs despite international anarchy because self-interests states recognize it is often counterproductive if they decide not to cooperate, if they agree to cooperate, national interests could be promoted and common benefits could derived from cooperation with other countries.

Gareth Porter, Janet Welsh Brown, and Pamela Chasek²⁷ summarized major theories of environmental cooperation in the international relations. From a “structural” or “hegemonic” power perspective, they claim that powerful states, like United States, Japan, and Europe build international regime to facilitate their power and public goods in a certain area, without these powerful states, regimes are unlikely to cooperate. They also claim that the most powerful regime United States in the western world will work with

²⁶ See Martin, Lisa L. (1993). Credibility, Costs, and Institutions: Cooperation on Economic Sanctions. *World Politics*, 45(3), 406-432. Martin, Lisa L. & Beth A. Simmons. (1998). Theories and Empirical Studies of International Institutions. *International Organization*, 52, (4), 729-757.

²⁷ See Porter, Janet & Brown, Welsh & Chasek, Pamela. (2000). *Global Environmental Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press.

China in the South China Sea are will facilitate cooperation in the Pacific area.

There is also a “institutional bargaining model” to explain international regimes’ role in environmental cooperation, this model highlights that states could not easily determine their national interests in the environmental issue area. Most empirical studies²⁸ on international environmental cooperation are centered on investigating the roles of institutions or regimes in facilitating cooperation; they are interested in investigating the non-state actors’ role in the environmental cooperation. Due to the complexity of the environmental issues, diplomats and policymakers could not easily identify their states’ interest. Harris argues, “But international regimes arise nevertheless.”²⁹ Therefore, the environmental cooperation becomes an outgrowth of the diplomatic bargaining. International environmental cooperation becomes possible when states are facing the common problems, such as environmental degradation in the South China Sea.

Another explanation of an international organization’s role in facilitating environmental cooperation is based on “*epistemic communities*.” Harris defines an epistemic community is “a group of scientists or technical experts that share a common concern about a problem and that, through international collaboration and connections to bureaucrats and policymakers, is able to bring a problem into domestic and international policy process.”³⁰ Mainstream international relation views focus on how scientific

²⁸ See Young, Oran R. (1999). Institutional Bargaining Model in Global Environmental Regime Theories. *Journal of Political Studies*, 1 (1), 1-19. Harris, Paul G. (2002). *International Environmental Cooperation-Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia*. Boulder: University of Press of Colorado.

²⁹ Harris, Paul G. (2002). *International Environmental Cooperation-Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia*. Boulder: University of Press of Colorado, 9

³⁰ Harris, Paul G. (2002). *International Environmental Cooperation-Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia*. Boulder: University of Press of Colorado, 10

knowledge and rational management are essential for successful responses to global environmental problems. The prevalent argument of international environmental cooperation depends on sufficient availability of scientific information to be able to be accessed by countries.³¹ Peter Haas first articulates his epistemic communities' model, which he developed as a part of his analysis of Mediterranean Action Plan. For Haas and his colleagues, epistemic communities are the agents pursuing the solution to collective action problems as in the liberal institutionalism accounts of cooperation. Despite Haas's statements, other scholars, particularly constructivists, tend to claim that scientists are neutral politically, at least concerning their production of scientific knowledge, and that scientific truth is easily translated into policy processes.³² However, I do not believe that science could be easily translated into one state's policy. Though one individual country could be informed by the scientists the importance of protecting environment, it may still ignore the advice provided by the scientists, since protecting environment might hinder economic development.

Tom Nass explores the role of experts, non-governmental actors and governments in regime building processes from the case of the South China Sea study. He emphasizes the role experts and scientist played in the environmental cooperation. In addition, some other scholars also believe that epistemic communities are the vital elements of cooperation in the South China Sea.

³¹ Andersen, S. and Ostreng, W. (1990). The Northern Environment: Is Cooperation Coming? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 512 (1), 58-68.

³² Paterson, Matthew. (2006). Theoretical Perspectives on International Environmental Politics. In Betsill, Michele M., Hochstetler, Kathryn & Stevis, Dimitris (Eds.), *Palgrave Advances in International Environmental Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 606

Environmental Protection in the South China Sea

The first comprehensive work examines the environmental cooperation in the South China Sea is Sulan Chen's dissertation *Instrumental and Induced Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea (2005)*. Her dissertation examines the development of environmental cooperation in the South China Sea from the late 1970s (when The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was built) to 2005, when South China Sea programme was still in the progress, Chen explores why environmental cooperation happens in such a disputed area, South China Sea. Her contribution to environmental politics is that she finds out that UNEP has played both *inductive* and *instrumental* roles in promoting environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. Furthermore, she demonstrates that an authoritative and independent international organization plays an important role in facilitating multilateral marine environmental cooperation in a dispute area.

Lead by Morten Boas, a senior research fellow at the centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo, the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) conducted two projects from 1998 to 2002 to examine the energy and security conflicts in the South China Sea. "*Security & Maritime Conflict in East Asia*" and "*Energy and Security in the South China Sea*" projects are parts of research and networking activities conducted within the Norwegian Network for Pacific Asian Studies. The major finding of these projects are "as knowledge of environmental hazard is diffused in the region, the impetus for conflict resolution will grow and the disputed

Parcel; Spratly Islands have environmental and symbolic, but little economic or strategic value; Fish and gas may lure China and Vietnam into cooperation in the Gulf of Tonkin.”³³ Importantly, these scholars claim that the role NGOs and IGOs played in the regional cooperation are limited. Even though governments portray themselves as environment-friendly, marine environmental problems are still not dealt with efficiently.³⁴ It is believed that, “Narrow state interests and power politics continue to characterize state interaction, while co-operation and the influence of environmental groups remain inconsequential. The influence of science and non-governmental actors is limited to agenda setting and the framing of issues raised for discussion.”³⁵ The limitations of these researches are that these projects were conducted before the implementation of UNEP/GEF South China Sea Programme, so the relationship between narrow state interest and multilateral environmental cooperation should be reexamined now, when the “South China Sea Programme” was fully conducted.

³³ PRIO. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://www.prio.no/page/Project_detail/9244/41307.html

³⁴ PRIO. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://www.prio.no/page/Project_detail/9244/41307.html

³⁵ PRIO. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://www.prio.no/page/Project_detail/9244/41307.html

Chapter 3: Case Study:

China's Participation in the South China Sea Project

This chapter analyzes China's changing positions in the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea in the 1990s. First, I will introduce the background and basic information of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, and then I will address the informal environmental workshops and the development of the South China Sea project. From analyzing China's participation in the informal workshop, this chapter found that based on trust built in the informal workshop among the South China Sea countries, China became more confident in accepting a formal workshop to advance environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. However, when UNEP and GEF initiated the formal project UNEP/GEF South China Sea project to solve the environmental degradation of the South China Sea in 1995, China refused to sign on the project. Since China refused to sign on the South China Sea project in 1995 but approved this project in 1999, I will primarily focus on investigating what major developments to cause China to change its attitude toward environmental cooperation in the South China Sea.

This chapter will explore the Chinese government's changing attitudes towards UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, including those of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEA), and Energy Information Administration (EIA)'s. As I mentioned in chapter one, this thesis hypothesis is that the Chinese government's participation in multilateral environmental

cooperation is not motivated by pure environmental concerns; it is a collection of many interests and motivations, such as trade, economy, foreign affairs and security. The UNEP/GEF South China Sea project is a good case to investigate the Chinese government's action in the environmental cooperation.

The UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project

The implementation of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, also called “*Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*” project was started in February 2002, and completed in 2007. It is one of the largest marine environmental projects of the GEF (\$32 million), and implemented by UNEP.³⁶ Seven countries bordering the South China Sea participated this project, including China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Other two littoral countries, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, did not participate in this project because they are not developing countries and are not eligible to receive funding from the Global Environmental Facility.³⁷ According to UNEP/GEF's official document, the overall goals of this project are to Create an environment at the regional level, in which collaboration and partnership in addressing environmental problems of the South China Sea, between all stakeholders, and at all levels is fostered and encouraged; and to enhance the capacity of the participating governments to integrate environmental considerations into national development planning.

³⁶ UNEP. (2001). *Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*. Retrieved May7, 2008 from <http://www.unepscs.org>

³⁷ UNEP. (2001). *Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*. Retrieved May7, 2008 from <http://www.unepscs.org>

The medium term objective of this project is to elaborate and agree at an intergovernmental level, the strategic Action Programme encompassing specific targeted and actions for the long-term, to address the priority issues and concerns.³⁸

This project was UNEP/GEF's first attempt to develop regionally coordinated programmes of action "in the area of coastal habitat degradation and loss, halt land-based pollution and address the issue of fisheries over-exploitation in order to reverse environmental degradation."³⁹ The project was divided into four major components, namely: Habitat Degradation and Loss; Overexploitation of Fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand; Land-Based Pollution and Project Coordination and Management.⁴⁰

Among these four components, habitat degradation, overexploitation of fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand, and land-based pollution are the three major components, and the above list reflects the priority ranking determined at the regional level. The UNEP/GEF South China Sea project articulated the priority of these four components:

Habitats and biodiversity related concerns and over-exploitation of marine resources ranked higher than either pollution or freshwater related concerns.

Within the comparative ranking of importance of the habitats in the region, mangroves and coral reefs ranked significantly higher than seagrasses and

³⁸ See Global Environmental Facility. (2001). *UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project Document*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from <http://www.gefweb.org>

³⁹ UNEP. (2001). *Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*. Retrieved May 7, 2008 from <http://www.unepscs.org>

⁴⁰ See Global Environmental Facility. (2001). *UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project Document*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from <http://www.gefweb.org>

estuaries/wetlands. Overexploitation of marine resources ranked almost as high as coral reef degradation whilst from among the pollution related issues land-based pollution and in particular sewage were considered the most important pollution issues in the region, overall, pollution was considered less important than either, habitat degradation and loss, or over-exploitation of marine resources.”⁴¹

UNEP realized that the unresolved territorial disputes and the 1997 Asian financial crisis would potentially disrupt the smooth operation of the South China Sea project.⁴² Because there are territorial disputes among South China Sea countries, especially in the Spratley and Paracel Islands, UNEP claimed that “non activities will be undertaken in geographic areas under dispute and that issues relating to sovereignty will not be addressed either directly or indirectly during project activities.”⁴³ Furthermore, it expressed concerns that the economic and financial crisis might affect the participating countries’ ability to co-finance the project, and that currency devaluation could impact the budget for this project. For the territorial disputes concern, UNEP’s realized that the territorial disputes was China’s major consideration in participating the cooperation, since China is the major claims of territorial disputes. For the financial crisis, UNEP promised that “the impacts of the economic crisis in the region have been taken into account in the

⁴¹ See Global Environmental Facility. (2001). *UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project Document*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from <http://www.gefweb.org>

⁴² UNEP. (2001). *Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*. Retrieved May 7, 2008 from <http://www.unepscs.org>

⁴³ UNEP. (2001). *Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*. Retrieved May 7, 2008 from <http://www.unepscs.org>

calculation of the baseline contributions of the countries to this project.”⁴⁴ Moreover, China’s assistance to the Southeast Asian countries during the financial crisis also helped countries to recover the currency values. China’s reluctance to participate in the South China Sea project was based on China’s conservative foreign policy in the South China Sea, which denied any internationalization of the South China Sea issues. This paper will examine the development of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, China’s participation in the South China Sea project, and analyze the reasons for China’s changing attitudes toward the environmental cooperation based on what happened in China from 1995 to 1999.

The Informal Environmental Workshop in the South China Sea

Before the implementation of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, there were several attempts in the previous decade to bring the states in the South China Sea together to solve the increasing environmental problems, and a number of informal multilateral meetings and attempts were made to build an environmental regime.⁴⁵ However, at the beginning, these attempts were focused on bilateral cooperation rather than multilateral cooperation. For example, in the past ASEAN has “usually promoted regional cooperation through bilateral relations, which over time have developed into an

⁴⁴ UNEP. (2001). *Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*. Retrieved May 7, 2008 from <http://www.unepscs.org>

⁴⁵ For example, ASEAN member states “have been increasingly aware that industrial pollution threatened the resource base of progress, ASEAN Ministers met and passed several resolutions on the subject: the 1990 Kuala Lumpur Accord on Environment and Development; the 1992 Singapore Resolution on Environment; the 1994 Bandar Seri Begawan Resolution on Environment and Development, and the 1995 ASEAN Cooperation Plan on Transboundary Pollution.” Rosenberg, David. (n.d.). *The South China Sea, An online resource for students, scholars and policy-makers interested in South China Sea regional development, environment, and security issues*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://www.southchinasea.org/why.html>

overlapping and interlocking network.”⁴⁶ Multilateral cooperation in the South China Sea started in the form of “informal consultation” and beginning in 1990, a number of informal multilateral meetings were held. These informal meetings resulted in the establishment of a multilateral political process, “Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea.”⁴⁷ The informal workshops were held in Indonesia under the auspices of the Research and Development Agency within the Department of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁸ Indonesia and Canada played an important role in facilitating these informal workshops: Indonesia was the leader in the informal workshop and Canada provided financial support for the meetings. Each of the informal meetings,⁴⁹ much were attended by government and military officials, scientists, researchers, and non-governmental leaders, have been convened to explore a way to engender environmental cooperation among the nations bordering the South China Sea.⁵⁰ Officials and researchers from China did not attend the first workshop, but began to participate from the second workshop in 1991.⁵¹ When preparing the second workshop, most ASEAN countries agreed that Mainland China and

⁴⁶ Rosenberg, David. (n.d.). *The South China Sea, An online resource for students, scholars and policy-makers interested in South China Sea regional development, environment, and security issues*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://www.southchinasea.org/why.html>

⁴⁷ See Donne, John. (2008). *Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The South China Sea Informal Working Group*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://faculty.law.ubc.ca/scs/>

⁴⁸ See Donne, John. (2008). *Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The South China Sea Informal Working Group*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://faculty.law.ubc.ca/scs/>

⁴⁹ The First Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea was held in Bali, January 1990; the Second Workshop in 1991; the Third Workshop, in 1992; the Fourth Workshop, in 1993; the Fifth Workshop 1994; and the Sixth Workshop in 1995. All these meeting lasted from 1990 to 1999, which indicated a long period of informal cooperation in the South China Sea. In addition, a series of technical working group meetings, including those on Marine Scientific Research (Manila, May 1993), Resource Assessment (Jakarta, July 1993), Legal Matters (Phuket, July 1995) and Shipping, Navigation and Communications (Jakarta, October 1995) have also been organized. During the ten years period, thirty-two meetings were convened under the informal meeting agencies, the most important, confidence and trust was build among countries.

⁵⁰ See Donne, John. (2008). *Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The South China Sea Informal Working Group*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://faculty.law.ubc.ca/scs/>

⁵¹ See Donne, John. (2008). *Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The South China Sea Informal Working Group*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://faculty.law.ubc.ca/scs/>

Taiwan⁵² should attend the informal meeting since both of them have claims in the South China Sea, and they actually occupied several islands.⁵³ However, the Chinese government emphasized that Taiwan was a part of the People's Republic of China, and therefore Taiwan should not attend any international meeting as an independent country.⁵⁴ It is not possible to engage both China and Taiwan in a "formal" meeting due to China's concern about internationalizing the China-Taiwan issues and China would not attend a meeting to solve South China Sea problems through a third party or in a multilateral forum.⁵⁵ Since the Taiwan issue is one of the most sensitive issues for the Mainland China,⁵⁶ the workshop used both "informality" and "personal capacity" to ensure that the workshop would not be involved in any formal political issues, particularly Chinese sovereignty issues.⁵⁷ All participants were encouraged to attend these meetings in their "personal capacity," which means they did not represent any government or political

⁵² Here Taiwan refers to a geographical area, not with political implications.

⁵³ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁵⁴ It is Mainland China's "One-China" foreign policy, which states that China should be represented only by the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan) should be excluded from any formal inter-government forums or meetings.

⁵⁵ Dijala, Hajim and Gault, Ian Townsend. (1999). Preventive Diplomacy: Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. In Crocker, Chester A., Hampson, Fen Osler & Aall, Pamela (eds.), In *Herding Cats: Multilateral Mediation in a Complex World*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

⁵⁶ In 1949, because its failure during the Chinese Civil War, the Kuomintang (KMT), led by Chiang Kai-shek, retreated from Mainland China and moved the ROC government from Nanjing to Taipei, Taiwan's largest city, while continuing to claim sovereignty over all of China. On the mainland, the victorious Communists established the People's Republic of China, claiming to be the sole representative of China including Taiwan and portraying the ROC government on Taiwan as an illegitimate entity. For Mainland, Unification of Taiwan is a matter of national pride and the evidence of China's rising as a powerful state. However, Taiwan Leaders believe that unification Taiwan will not happen. As Taiwan's new leader Ma Ying-jeou said that "unification with longtime rival China is unlikely 'in our lifetimes' because the Taiwanese oppose the mainland's authoritarian rule." See PRC (2005). *Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council, The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*. Enav, Peter. (2008). Taiwan leader: China Unification Unlikely "In Our Lifetimes" *Associated Press*. Retrieved May 14, 2008 from <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5iy-eiL6SQss9s-x12ll6dXPWUNFwD90M4GQ81>

⁵⁷ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

perspectives and were not to discuss any issues concerning the sovereignty claims.⁵⁸ As a result, the individual participants from both mainland China and Taiwan attended the second informal workshop based on their personal capacity and interests.⁵⁹

China's participation in the informal workshop was facilitated by two reasons,⁶⁰ one was to repair relationships with its neighboring countries and built a responsible national image in the South China Sea area; the another was to use "informal" form of cooperation to discuss with other islands claimants. It provided Beijing an opportunity to great understanding of its neighboring countries' standpoints in the South China Sea after long-time diplomatic break.⁶¹ By not discussing any political and sensitive issues, the informal workshop opened the door to all members of the South China Sea, regardless of their international standing or political claims. The informal work provided a forum for countries to discuss South China Sea cooperation in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, and it provided a channel for Mainland China and Taiwan to sit down together and address common environmental issues regardless of political disputes. Before the implementation of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, the informal workshop was one of the best ways to engage China in the South China Sea issues; it also built trust among Southeast Asian countries and China as bases for the formal environmental cooperation in the South China Sea.

⁵⁸ See Donne, John. (2008). Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. *The South China Sea Informal Working Group*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://faculty.law.ubc.ca/scs/>

⁵⁹ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁶⁰ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁶¹ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

The Development of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project

Based on the trust and understanding built on the informal South China Sea workshop, and following the successful model of the Mediterranean Action Plan⁶², UNEP/GEF began to initiate a formal workshop to address marine environmental problems. Starting in 1995, the UNEP held several conferences to form a multilateral cooperative project for the South China Sea, and this idea matured in 1996 when six countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) excluding China endorsed the idea to develop the South China Sea Project.⁶³ The planning commenced in 1996, when the Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) requested assistance from UNEP to prepare a proposal for grant assistance from the GEF in addressing water related environmental degradation in the South China Sea.⁶⁴ China did not endorse this project until three years later.⁶⁵ China had strongly opposed any efforts to internationalize the South China Sea issues, and this was probably the main reason why China refused to join UNEP initiative at the beginning. Beijing feared that the involvement of UNEP would entail internationalization of all of South China Sea disputes. The Chinese government was willing to discuss about South China

⁶² The United Nations Regional Sea Programme, which aimed to address the world's oceans and coastal areas' degradation through multilateral management, was launched in 1974 by engaging neighboring countries in comprehensive and specific actions to protect their shared marine environment. The Mediterranean programme was adopted in 1975 by UNEP, it succeeded in coordinating countries to solve ocean environmental problems ranged from Syria to Israel, Albania to Spain. The success of the Mediterranean Action Plan, one of United Nations Regional Sea Programmes, encouraged UNEP to initiate another regional sea programme in the South China Sea.

⁶³ See UNEP. *The UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from http://www.unepscs.org/Project_Background.html

⁶⁴ See UNEP. *The UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from http://www.unepscs.org/Project_Background.html

⁶⁵ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Sea affairs as long as it did not have implications for its sovereignty claims.⁶⁶

China refused to sign onto the South China Sea project, the preparation and approval of the South China Sea project took an unusually long period. Because of the Chinese government's resistant attitude, beginning in 1996, UNEP spent one and a half years persuading the Chinese government to participate.⁶⁷ The Chinese government's reluctance to participate in the South China Sea Project prevented UNEP from proceeding to the next step. UNEP tried to engage China in the South China Sea project, and its bottom line was that even if negotiations with China failed, the project would still be funded with the participation of the rest of the countries bordering the South China Sea.⁶⁸ As the largest country bordering the South China Sea, if China agreed to join the South China Sea project, it would greatly influence the outcome of this project. However, if China refuses to participate at last, UNEP would still work with other countries.

The SEPA⁶⁹, MFA⁷⁰, and the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) held different

⁶⁶ Lee, Lai To. (1994). *China and the South China Sea Dialogues*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

⁶⁷ During these one and half years, there were many meetings between UNEP officials and Chinese leaders. UNEP tried to know the reasons behind China's refusal to participate in the South China Sea project, and China expressed its concerns about territorial disputes in the South China Sea. See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁶⁸ Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, 26

⁶⁹ In 1973, the Chinese government held the first National Environmental Protection Conference in Beijing, and built its own national and local environmental protection agencies. In 1998, China's National Environmental Protection Agency was promoted to the ministerial level, creating State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) and elevating the status of environmental concerns in domestic and international governmental policymaking. The center of the Chinese environmental policymaking is Beijing, and the chief bureaucracy of national environmental protection is SEPA. There are two major roles of SEPA, one is domestic role and another is international environmental coordinating role. For domestic roles, SEPA focuses on formulating general and specific environmental policies and laws; conducting environmental impact assessment on major economic and technical policies; and guiding major environmental problems in local regions. For international environmental coordinating roles, SEPA focuses on managing and participating multilateral and regional environmental cooperation; acting as focal point of managing the implementation activities of international conventions and projects in China; administering foreign economic cooperation in the environmental protection system; coordinating and implementing relevant overseas funded projects; and handling international affairs of environmental protection entrusted by the State Council.

⁷⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with its Department of International Co-operation is the political and operational focal point for GEF in China and is the funding window for the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank

opinions towards Chinese participation in the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project.⁷¹ SEPA⁷² is the “window agency”⁷³ of UNEP, and is the technical support department for GEF’s projects in China; it plays a leading role in coordinating actions between the Chinese government and GEF. There were different voices in the SEPA. The Office of Marine Environmental Protection (OMEP) advocated participating in the South China Sea project since most of the officers in the OMEP have a background in marine environmental science and there a keen concern about scientific knowledge instead of political issues. However, the Department of International Cooperation (DIC) did not want to participate in the South China Sea project, because its officers did not want to create obstacles for their future work over sensitive issues in the South China Sea.⁷⁴ MFA and SOA strongly apposed towards multilateral cooperation in the South China Sea. MFA’s objection was based on China’s long-standing policy in the region, SOA’s objection was based on its organizational interests, as the major marine environmental government agency; it saw SEPA as trespassing its role by implementing the project in the South China Sea.⁷⁵

(ADB). MFA is in charge and monitors the performance of GEF’s projects in China, furthermore, MFA functions as the executive management of GEF, and sets GEF priorities under the technical guidance of SEPA. MFA submits project proposals to GEF and implementing agencies and negotiates with GEF on project matters. Furthermore, MFA also signs implementing agreements with the project organizations, approves GEF budget plans and manages special fund accounts. MFA works together with SEPA to monitor approved projects and evaluate completed projects.

⁷¹ When exploring SEPA, MFA, and SOA’s attitudes toward participating in the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, this thesis is primarily based on Sulan Chen’s interviews with officials from China and UNEP.

⁷² SEPA has implemented and executed most of GEF’s projects in China by attending GEF’s conferences. SEPA provides feedback to the Chinese government.

⁷³ In China, the central government assigns a “window agency” for each international organization, and each window agency help international organization to deal with activities in China.

⁷⁴ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁷⁵ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Among SEPA, MFA, and SOA, MFA's position towards the South China Sea project was the most important factor, given its extraordinary power in assessing international projects in the name of national interests.⁷⁶ MFAs held that if it approved the South China Sea project, this would contradict China's opposition to any internationalization of South China Sea issues.⁷⁷ However, certain considerations led MFA to change its position on the environmental protection about the South China Sea.

China's Position on International Environmental Cooperation

The above analysis demonstrates that preparing multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea was a long and hard work. Before analyzing China's positions toward the South China Sea project, it is necessary to understand China's environmental protection situation before China signed the South China Sea project in 1999.

China began to manifest an awareness of environmental problems in the 1970s.⁷⁸ In 1971, a small group for environmental protection was established informally under the State Council.⁷⁹ The Chinese government's efforts to deal with ecological problems through international contacts began in a modest way around 1972 after China sent a delegation to the First United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE)

⁷⁶ Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, 241

⁷⁷ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁷⁸ Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. In Edmonds, Richard Louis (ed.), *Managing the Chinese Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 86

⁷⁹ Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. In Edmonds, Richard Louis (ed.), *Managing the Chinese Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 86

in Stockholm.⁸⁰ China's first high-level environmental policy body was established with the help of UNCHE environmental conference, which was the first time that Chinese officials attended international environmental cooperation conference.⁸¹ However, China did not play a constructive role at UNCHE. Like many developing countries, China assigned principal responsibility for pollution protection to the developed countries and claimed developing countries have to develop their economies first. Furthermore, the official statement of the Chinese delegation largely used cold war rhetoric.⁸² The Chinese delegation opposed to certain major powers, including the United States, as practicing exploitation in the name of the human environment, and as shifting the cost of environmental protection onto the developing countries under the guise of international trade.⁸³ Many scholars and observers saw China as a "laggard" participant in the international regime and as avoiding international obligations by shunning treaty commitments or exhibiting a disdainful attitude towards compliance obligations.⁸⁴ Though international organizations wanted to help the Chinese government solve its severe environmental problems, the Chinese government insisted that Chinese environmental protection was China's domestic issue. As Song Jian, the Chairman of the State Council's Environmental Committee said at a press conference in 1991, "while we

⁸⁰ Edmonds, Richard Louis. (1999). The Environment in the People's Republic of China 50 Years On. *The China Quarterly*. 159, 640

⁸¹ Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. In Edmonds, Richard Louis (ed.), *Managing the Chinese Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 86

⁸² See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁸³ United Nations. (1972). *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*. Paper presented in Stockholm.

⁸⁴ Andresen, Steinar. (2007). The Effectiveness of International Institutions. *Environmental Agreement*. Springer. 16.

are appealing to the developed countries for help in environmental protection, we will depend mainly on ourselves.”⁸⁵

From the 1970s, Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese leaders began to recognize the severity of environmental pollution, and the first environmental protection law was initiated in 1978.⁸⁶ Before the 1990s, the Chinese government insisted on its preference for a bilateral talks (especially talks with United States and Japan) instead of a multilateral cooperation, and it resented interference of any third parties or the internationalization of any sensitive issues.⁸⁷ The Chinese government believed that pollution in the South China Sea was a domestic problem and should not be solved internationally.⁸⁸ If there was a need for cooperation, China preferred bilateral talk instead of multilateral cooperation.⁸⁹ In addition, to many international observers and officers at the UN environmental conferences, China was an “inflexible obstructionist, intent on allying the development countries against the advanced industrialized nations to prevent an international agreement on climate change.”⁹⁰

From the 1990s, China has begun to get involved itself in international environmental cooperation, and it has come to play an active role in international environmental affairs by supporting global environmental efforts. The China Council for

⁸⁵ China Daily. (1991, June 20).

⁸⁶ EPA. (2008). *China Environmental Law Initiative*. Retrieved May 10, 2008 from http://www.epa.gov/ogc/china/initiative_home.htm

⁸⁷ See Chen, Sulan. (2005). *Instrumental and Included Cooperation: Environmental Politics in the South China Sea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁸⁸ Kuik, Cheng-Chwee.(2005).Multilateralism in China’s ASEAN Policy: Its Evolution, Characteristics, and Aspiration. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 27

⁸⁹ Kuik, Cheng-Chwee.(2005).Multilateralism in China’s ASEAN Policy: Its Evolution, Characteristics, and Aspiration. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 27

⁹⁰ Economy, Elizabeth C. (2004). *The River Runs Black: the Environmental Challenge to China’s Future*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. P.99

International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICD), which aims “to further strengthen cooperation and exchange between China and the international community in the field of environment and development,” was established in 1992 following an international environment conference held in Beijing in October 1990.⁹¹ China articulated its need for international cooperation to promote its environmental protection and sustainable development at the 1992 CCICD conference.⁹² China has adhered to the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 1994, when UNFCCC went into effect. Furthermore, China signed in 1998 and approved in 2002 the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.⁹³ China joined United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)’s “Man and the Biosphere Programme” and global environmental programme in 1973.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the Chinese State Council approved China’s Agenda 21 in 1994, making it one of the first developing countries to participate in international environmental cooperation. China’s engagement in international environmental cooperation began with wildlife conservation because it was seen by both donors and recipients as a less politically controversial issue than other aspects of environmental cooperation. At the 1997 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), President Jiang

⁹¹ CCICD. Retrieved May 10, 2008 from <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/dlam/index.html>

⁹² Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. In Edmonds, Richard Louis (ed.), *Managing the Chinese Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 90

⁹³ International Cooperation. Retrieved May 10, 2008 from <http://www.showchina.org/en/environment/200701/t105739.htm>

⁹⁴ The Man and Biosphere Program (MAB) is an intergovernmental program, it emerged in the late of 1960s, even before the 1972 the United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. MAB focuses on global environmental problems. see Dyer, M. I. and Holland, M. M. (1988). Unesco’s Man and the Biosphere Program. *BioScience*, 38 (9), pp. 635-641.

Zeming acknowledged that the environmental protection had entered the arenas of international politics, economics, trade and culture; he expressed China's willingness to be a positive participant in global and regional environmental protection.⁹⁵ However, Jiang Zeming emphasized that China also rejected any interference in domestic politics in the name of environmental diplomacy.⁹⁶ China's concern about international environmental cooperation was that United States, Japan or Europe would interfere China's domestic affairs by pushing environmental protection pressure to China.

Though China demonstrated its interests in joining international environmental cooperation, China still opposed any international cooperation in the South China Sea at the beginning. Since the South China Sea is an area with territorial and resource disputes, when an environmental agreement or project impinges on China's national sovereignty, China was much more cautious than any other developing countries.⁹⁷ China feared that the South China Sea project would threaten China's national interests in the Spratley and Paracel Islands, and to involve China in the South China Sea programme, UNEP has insisted that this programme will not intervene in any sovereignty and territorial disputes. The UNEP/GEF South China Sea project indicates, "No activities shall be undertaken under this project in disputed area of South China Sea, nor shall issues of sovereignty be

⁹⁵ See Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. *The China Quarterly*, 156, 809-835

⁹⁶ See Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. *The China Quarterly*, 156, 809-835

⁹⁷ See Ross, Lester. (1998). China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms. In Edmonds, Richard Louis (ed.), *Managing the Chinese Environment*. (pp. 809-835). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

addressed directly or indirectly through project activities.”⁹⁸ What conditions and reasons caused China changing positions on the international environmental cooperation? Why did China change from a laggard actor on the international stage to an active participant, in environmental cooperation?

Changing China from 1995 to 1999

When examining China’s changing positions on multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea, it is necessary to know what happened from 1995 to 1999. As I mentioned before, China refused to sign the South China Sea project in 1995, but agreed to sign it in 1999. What factors contributed to China’s changing positions in participating the South China Sea project? During these five years, one witnessed China’s transition from a reluctant international environmental participant to an active actor. The period 1995-1999 was important for China, since China adjusted its strategy to set up a stable internal and external environment for China’s domestic economic development, and China became more likely to join the international community.⁹⁹ Though China became an international player after the 1970s economic reform, its domestic political, economic and environmental structures were not fully congruent with the entire world community.¹⁰⁰ The last five years of the 1990s was a period when China tried to fully integrated itself into the world community. Several factors during the period influenced

⁹⁸ United Nation Environmental Programme Project Document. Retrieved May 1, 2008 from http://www.unepscs.org/Project_Background.html

⁹⁹ Feng Ni. (2004). The Shaping of China’s Foreign Policy. In Ryosei, Kokubun., & Jisi Wang. (Eds.), *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp.139-156).New York: Japan Center for International Change

¹⁰⁰ See Yahuda, Michael. (1997). Hong Kong and China’s Integration into the International Community. In Cohen, Warren I. & Zhao, Li (Eds). *Hong Kong under Chinese Rule, the Economic and Political Implications of Reversion*, (pp.198-212). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

the Chinese change in position. For example, the GEF gave the Chinese government a report on how to maintain the sustainable development of Yangtze River Delta after 1998 summer Yangtze River flood, and the Chinese government began to work with UNEP on natural disaster management. UNEP analyzed causes of the 1998 flood, and it recommended China properly deal with the relationship with environmental degradation and land use and with the building of dams on the Yangtze River.¹⁰¹ The vice president of SEPA Guangyang Zhu said the effective way for China to maintain sustainable development and eliminate natural disaster was international environmental cooperation.¹⁰²

The following part is going to examine China's positions on international environmental cooperation from China's bid for the 2008 summer Olympic Games, Hong Kong's and Macao's return to Mainland China in 1997 and 1999 has encouraged China to obey international law and standards, and China's increasing trade with Southeast Asian and the 1997 Asian financial crisis. After examining these issues, this part expects to find that national interests rather than environmental interest encouraged China to participate in the South China Sea project.

The Three Gorges Dam and Environmental Protection

The Three Gorges Dam has received a great deal of criticism from both China and the Western world for its ecological impact, especially because of problems with

¹⁰¹ See UNEP. (2003). *A Current Perspective, by the UN Country Team in China*. Retrieved May 11, 2008 from <http://www.undp.org.cn/downloads/keydocs/cca2003.pdf>

¹⁰² See SEPA. (2005, September 8). *Guangyao Zhu: International Cooperation is the Effective Way to Solve Global Environmental Problems*. Retrieved May 11, 2008 from http://202.123.110.3/ztl/2005-09/08/content_30338.htm

relocation of people from the 1990s. Qinghua University hydrologist Professor Huang Wanli¹⁰³ wrote three letters to Jiang Zemin in order to persuade Beijing not to build the Three Gorges Dam. He claimed there were not enough reasons to build a dam in the Yangtze River.¹⁰⁴ However, Huang Wanli did not get any response from Beijing, and the Three Gorges Dam was approved in 1994. In 1995, President Clinton's National Security Council, citing environmental and human rights concerns, recommended that the Export-Import Bank should not finance the Three Georges Dam.¹⁰⁵ On May 31, 1996, the Export-Import Bank¹⁰⁶ refused to help finance The Three Gorges Dam in China. John Cushman reported the Export-Import Bank's decision in *The New York Times*, writing that "the bank said it would reconsider if China provided extensive new information about how it would protect water quality and preserve endangered species, and meet other concerns about the project."¹⁰⁷ The bank's president and chairman, Mr. Kamarck, make the assumption that China has not provided good plans for waste-water treatment plants upstream of the dam to reduce the pollution discharged into the reservoir. Therefore, toxic

¹⁰³ Huang Wanli has been a professor in the Hydraulic Engineering Department of Qinghua University, Beijing, since 1953. "He obtained his doctorate in engineering from the Engineering Institute of Illinois. He returned to China in 1937, after having worked at the Tennessee Valley Authority, and has held various positions including: chief advisor in water engineering technologies at the State Commission of Economic Affairs, chief of the bureau of water resources of Gansu province, and chief advisor to the Northeast China General Bureau of Water Resources." See Qing Dai. *Never Dam the Three Gorges, an Interview with Professor Huang Wanli*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from http://www.threegorgesprobe.org/pi/documents/three_gorges/Yangtze/ch15.html.

Li Xue, Mao Zedong's secretary and the former vice president of Water and Electricity Department said, there were many tragedies in China caused by not respecting science and knowledge, Huang Wanli was a typical example. Huang Wanli insisted not building Huang River Sanmen Dam, but the administrative officers denied his suggestions. Huang Wanli was the only person who opposed Huang River Sanmen Dam.

¹⁰⁴ Dai Qing. (2001). *Huang Wanli Passed Away, There Will No One Opposed the Three Gorges Dam*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from http://www.edubridge.com/erxiantang/library/sanxia_huangwanli.htm

¹⁰⁵ See Cushman, John. (1996, May 31). Export-Import Bank Refuses Loan Backing for Big China Dam. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0DE2DB1E39F932A05756C0A960958260>

¹⁰⁶ The Export-Import Bank is an independent agency of Clinton's National Security Council.

¹⁰⁷ See Cushman, John. (1996, May 31). Export-Import Bank Refuses Loan Backing for Big China Dam. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0DE2DB1E39F932A05756C0A960958260>

waste sites would be flooded, so the bank had concerns about the positive effects of the projects.¹⁰⁸

Some scholars criticize the Three Gorges Dam as one of the world's most disastrous environmental projects.¹⁰⁹ The project will change the entire Yangtze River ecosystem. The World Commission on Dams (WCD) reported that the major environmental impact of the Three Gorges Dam would be a loss of forests and wildlife, greater greenhouse gas emissions, loss of biodiversity, and creation of new wetlands.¹¹⁰ The Three Gorges Dam would affect many endangered species, such as the Chinese river dolphin, the Chinese sturgeon, river sturgeon and Chinese paddlefish.¹¹¹ The Chinese Academy of Sciences Mountainous Disaster and Environmental Institute also claimed that, out of 78 subsystems, only nine subsystems would have positive effects while 63 will have negative effects, and six remain in neutral.¹¹²

Furthermore, some media observers¹¹³ attribute China's 1998 summer flood¹¹⁴ to the construction of Three Gorges Dam. Most of these criticisms came from western

¹⁰⁸ See Cushman, John. (1996, May 31). Export-Import Bank Refuses Loan Backing for Big China Dam. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0DE2DB1E39F932A05756C0A960958260>

¹⁰⁹ See Mufson Steven. (1997, November 9). The Yangtze Dam: Feat or Folly? *Washington Post Foreign Service*, A01. Xie, Ping, & Wu, Jianguo, & Huang, Jianhui, & Han, Xingguo. (2003, November 14). Three-Gorges Dam: Risk to Ancient Fish. *Science*, 302 (5648), 1149-1151.

¹¹⁰ World Commission on Dams. (2004). Retrieved April 29, 2008 from <http://www.dams.org/>

¹¹¹ See Rosenberg, D.M.,P. & McCully, C.M. (2000). Pringle. *BioScience*, 50,746.

¹¹² See Edmonds, R.L. (1991). *Global Ecological Biogeography* (Letters), 1, 105.

¹¹³ See Lehre, Jim. (1998). *The Yangtze's Wrath*. (On April 12th, 1998, a panel of experts discussed the situation of China's summer flood on the Yangtze River.) Retrieved on April 29, 2008 from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/july-dec98/flood_8-12a.html; Macartney, Jane. (2007, September 27). Three Gorges Dam is a Disaster in the Making, China Admits. *Times*. Retrieved April 20, 2008 from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article2537279.ece>

¹¹⁴ China suffered massive flooding concentrated in the Yangtze River during the 1998 summer. "Flooding along the Yangtze River has forced nearly 250 million Chinese to flee their homes and seek higher ground. Millions of acres are under water and at least 2000 have died." Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/july-dec98/flood_8-12.html

media. When I searched the key words *Three Gorges Dam, China* from *People's Daily* during 1998-1999, among 152 articles, there were only two articles that admitted there were some problems with The Three Gorges Dam; the rest of the articles were either laudatory or gave brief factual reports about the progress of the Three Gorges Dam. When I searched the same words from *The New York Times* during 1992-2008, I found among 22 articles only two neutral articles, and all the rest criticized the Three Gorges Dams. For example, Joseph Kahn's article "A Coming Flood Erodes the Life of a Chinese City"¹¹⁵ maintained that the silt-laden Yangtze River, swelled by the giant Three Gorges Dam, would inundate Yunyang's quay, and residents would have to move to other places, though most of them did not want to. Only poor, desperate, unlucky people would remain here, Joseph Kahn claimed, "they are Noahs in search of an ark."¹¹⁶ Erik Eckholm argued that 1998's summer floods had revived the debate over construction of Three Gorges Dam. From the interview with Lu Qinkan, a retired government hydrologist and flood prevention expert, Eckholm found that some Chinese scholars have begun to admit the Three Gorges Dam does played a role in these flooding disasters.¹¹⁷

Although most of China's reports on the Three Gorges Dam were laudatory, different opinions began to appear from 1999 when the article *The Three Gorges, Are We*

¹¹⁵ Kahn, Joseph. (2002, December 15). A Coming Flood Erodes the Life of a Chinese City. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D07E7DA1F3AF936A25751C1A9649C8B63>

¹¹⁶ Kahn, Joseph. (2002, December 15). A Coming Flood Erodes the Life of a Chinese City. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D07E7DA1F3AF936A25751C1A9649C8B63>

¹¹⁷ Eckholm, Erik. (1998, August 26.). China Admits Ecological Sins Played Role in Flood Disaster. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A00E3DE153CF935A1575BC0A96E958260>

still Paying attention to you? was published in People's Daily on Feb 24, 1999. This article cited the former Premier Zhu Rongji's exhortation of the quality of the project and his criticism of the misappropriation of funds for resettling people from the Three Gorges area to be flooded.¹¹⁸ Zhu Rongji visited the Three Gorges both in 1998 and in 1999 after the 1998 Yangtze summer flood. The Chinese leaders began to realize the importance of protecting environment after the 1998 summer flood. Furthermore, in order to reduce the criticisms of the Three Gorges Dam. China signed UNEP/GEF's official document in 1999, only a half year after the 1998 summer flood, when the summer flood triggered much criticism about the Three Gorges Dam. This does not seem to be coincidence, as Beijing was trying to build a responsible international image, particularly during 1998-1999, in order to win its 2008 Olympic Game bid and restore Beijing's rule in Macao.

Olympic Game-Green Beijing

Beijing designated the years 1998-1999 as "Olympic years," which means both the Chinese society and the government would do their best during these two years to support Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games. From 1998, when the Chinese Council decided that Beijing would bid for the 2008 Olympic Games, to 2001, when Beijing won the bid after an exhaustive ballot of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Moscow, the Communist Party attempted during those four years to show Beijing was

¹¹⁸ The Three Gorges, We are still Paying attention to you? *People's Daily*. Retrieved April 28, 2008 from: <http://english.people.com.cn>. For more information about the analysis of the this article, see United States Embassy-Beijing "A March 1999 report from U.S. Embassy Beijing" from the website: <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/sandt/3GRGPDCA.HTM>

preparing economically and environmentally to hold the Olympic Games. China's GDP was \$1000 per capital in 1999, and its economic growth rate stayed about 10 percent per year from 1999 to 2001.¹¹⁹ The Communist Party also declared its determination to clean Beijing's sky by cutting down its air pollution emissions and by reducing construction.¹²⁰ Given the Communist Party's declaration to implement environmental protection, China's participation in the South China Sea project could be interpreted as a sign to show China was ready to take actions to protect environment for the coming Olympic Games.

On September 23, 1993, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had selected Sydney, Australia to host the 2000 Summer Olympic Games.¹²¹ This was a surprise for Beijing, since China was confident that it would win the bid.¹²² *The New York Times* concluded that both Chinese officials and ordinary people reacted to the loss of 1993 bid with anger and dismay.¹²³ The bid for Olympic Game had been regarded by the Communist Party as a turning point for it to diminish China's international isolation since the Tiananmen Square crackdown. China had never been as so vigorous in campaigning for an international competition before. As a Western observer pointed out, Beijing's bid

¹¹⁹ Beijing Capable of Hosting Olympic Games. (2001, February 08). *People's Daily*. Retrieved May 5, 2008 from http://english.people.com.cn/english/200102/08/eng20010208_61844.html

¹²⁰ International Olympic Committee. (2001). *Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in 2008. International Olympic Committee*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_299.pdf

¹²¹ 1993 Sydney, Australia, beat Beijing by just two votes in balloting of the International Olympic Committee

¹²² Ackerman, Susan Rose. (1995). How China Could Have Won: The Nonneutrality of the Olympic Voting Rules. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 14 (1), 140-142

¹²³ Eckholm, Erik. (1998, November 26.). Beijing Says It Will Bid for Olympic Set for 2008. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 30, 2008 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9401EED91439F935A15752C1A96E958260&scp=12&sq=air+pollution+beijing+olympic&st=nyt>

in 1993 had become an urgent political priority because the Communist Party wanted to return to the international stage.¹²⁴

Just as serious air pollution and human rights issues were two primary reasons for China's failure in the 2000 summer Olympic Games bid, when the Chinese Olympic committee representative announced that China planned to bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, China's main obstacles were still Beijing's air pollution, heavy traffic and bad international image after 1989 Tiananmen Square student movement. Among these problems, air pollution is the most obvious challenges, since most critics wondered whether Beijing would be environmentally ready for the Olympic Games.¹²⁵ Though most criticisms came from Western countries, some people in Beijing also expressed concern. Zhang Han, a student from Peking University said he personally did not think Beijing was qualified for the Olympic Games because of Beijing's bad air pollution, overcrowded streets, and mass transit system problems.¹²⁶ Another concern for Beijing was the negative influence of June 1989 Tiananmen Square student movement. Western scholars and reporters saw the Chinese government violate human rights during and after Tiananmen Square student movement.¹²⁷ Reporter Erik Eckholm wrote on November 26

¹²⁴ Eckholm, Erik. (1998, November 26.). Beijing Says It Will Bid for Olympic Set for 2008. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 30, 2008 from

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9401EED91439F935A15752C1A96E958260&scp=12&sq=air+pollution+beijing+olympic&st=nyt>

¹²⁵ Chepesiuk, Ron. (2002). Building Environment: Beijing Goes for the Olympic Green. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 110(9), A512

¹²⁶ Tyler, Patric E. (1993, September 24). Olympics, There is No Joy in Beijing as Sydney Gets Olympics. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 30, 2008 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE3DC1139F937A1575AC0A965958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=2>

¹²⁷ See Black, George, & Robin Munro.(1993). *Black Hands of Beijing: Lives of Defiance in China's Democracy Movement*. New York: John Wiley.

1998, the day China announced to bid for 2008 Olympic Games, “After China’s violent crackdown on student-led pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in 1989, many members of the United States Congress, other Western politicians and human rights groups had argued that it would be wrong to reward China with the Olympics.”¹²⁸ However, China tried to reduce the influence of the Tiananmen Square student movement by showing it is the rapid economic growth and the success of economic reform in the 1990s. In addition, to some degree, this helped China to diminish its post-1989 diplomatic isolation, and downgrade the role of human rights disputes in its relations with Western countries.¹²⁹

From 1998, Beijing prepared to bid for the Olympic Games again; the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee (BOBICO) was established on September 6, 1999 with the approval of the State Council.¹³⁰ Despite the challenges of air pollution and China’s human rights performances, China’s Olympic Committee said, “China is willing to do its best to promote the Olympic Movement,”¹³¹ and expressed great passion to hold Olympic Games. Beijing’s response to the criticisms of environmental pollution was to set the goal of a “Green Olympics.”¹³² Beijing promised in 1999 that it would minimize

¹²⁸ Eckholm, Erik. (1998, November 26). Beijing Says It Will Bid for Olympic Set for 2008. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 30, 2008 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9401EED91439F935A15752C1A96E958260&scp=12&sq=air+pollution+beijing+olympic&st=nyt>

¹²⁹ Eckholm, Erik. (1998, November 26). Beijing Says It Will Bid for Olympic Set for 2008. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 30, 2008 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9401EED91439F935A15752C1A96E958260&scp=12&sq=air+pollution+beijing+olympic&st=nyt>

¹³⁰ COC Website. (2004). Beijing Bid for 2008. *The Official Website of the Chinese Olympic Committee*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://en.olympic.cn/china_oly/index.html

¹³¹ COC Website. (2004). Beijing Bid for 2008. *The Official Website of the Chinese Olympic Committee*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://en.olympic.cn/china_oly/index.html

¹³² See Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Initiatives. Retrieved May 1, 2008 from

emissions of air pollution and reduce heavy traffic for the purpose “Green Olympics.” The investments on Beijing’s environmental protection continue to grow. Beijing vice mayor Ji Lin said that from 1998 to 2007, Beijing had invested a total of \$17 billion in protecting Beijing’s environment. Beijing spent \$0.8 billion in 1998 to protect environment, and the spending increased to \$1.5 billion in 2005.¹³³ Furthermore, the Olympic Games officials said Beijing would eliminate 2,580 old buses and 5,000 taxis to reduce air pollution in 2007 before Games begin.¹³⁴ Though the Chinese government claimed many efforts have been made to protect the environment, the World Health Organization(WHO) still said air pollution was at least 2 to 3 times higher than the standard levels.¹³⁵ Dr. Michal Krzyzanowski, an official from World Health Organization who expressed his concern about Beijing pollution to a BBC reporter said, “All of the cities are pretty highly polluted by European standards, but even by the standards of Asia, Chinese cities are pretty highly polluted.”¹³⁶ Holding 2008 Olympic Games not only gives China a chance to show its current economic, cultural, social and political development in a comprehensive way,¹³⁷ it also exposes China to pressures to meet obey international standards of environmental protection.

<http://www.solarcities.org/beijingolympics.htm>

¹³³ Beijing Olympic Games Committee. (2007, June 1). Beijing to Invest More Than \$3 Billion in Pollution Control in 2007. *The official website of the BEIJING 2008 Olympic Games*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from <http://en.beijing2008.cn/55/71/article214087155.shtml>

¹³⁴ Beijing Olympic Games Committee. (2007, May 5). Beijing Underlines Resource-saving and Environmental Protection. *The official website of the BEIJING 2008 Olympic Games*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from <http://en.beijing2008.cn/04/77/article214077704.shtml>

¹³⁵ Oster, Shai. (2007, February 15). Will Beijing’s Air Cast Pall Over Olympics? *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB117148719982908969.html>

¹³⁶ BBC. (2007, August 17). WHO fears over Beijing pollution. *BBC NEWS*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6950883.stm>

¹³⁷ COC Website. (2004). Beijing Bid for 2008. *The Official Website of the Chinese Olympic Committee*. Retrieved April 29, 2008 from http://en.olympic.cn/china_oly/index.html

Hong Kong's and Macao's Return to the Mainland of China

Hong Kong's and Macao's return to the mainland of China challenged PRC's environmental policies and rules in the Pearl River Delta area since there has been a long debate over whether the Guangdong provinces or Hong Kong and Macao caused the serious environmental problems in the Pearl River Delta area. There are many differences between Hong Kong and the mainland's environmental rules and regulations. The pollution emission standards between mainland China and Hong Kong differ because Hong Kong adhered to British emission standards before 1997. Though Hong Kong's environmental conditions are not satisfactory, if China wants to keep Hong Kong's sustainable development, China has to adjust its environmental standards in the Pearl River Delta area. If the emission standards between Hong Kong and Pearl River Delta area are the same, it will be much easier for the Chinese government to handle the issues about implementing environmental protections in Hong Kong. The following section will focus on analyzing Hong Kong's return and its influence in PRC's integration with the international standards.

Air pollution and beach pollution are the two major environmental problems in Hong Kong. Some Hong Kong citizens complain that Hong Kong's major air pollution has largely been caused by the cross-boundary emissions from Southern China, particularly Guangdong, Guangxi, and Fujian provinces.¹³⁸ Hong Kong's air pollution in the winter

¹³⁸ See Stern, Rachel E. (2002). Hong Kong Haze: Air Pollution as a Social Class Issue. *Asian Survey*, 43(5), 780-800. Retrieved on May 3rd, 2008 from the website: <http://www.jstor.org/pss/3557857>

originated from the Pearl River Delta area, “when prevailing winds from the north and west blow Guangdong’s emissions toward Hong Kong.”¹³⁹ However, researcher Cheung Chi-fai claims that rather than the mainland causing air pollution Hong Kong, Hong Kong transmits more sulfur dioxide to the mainland.¹⁴⁰ The late of the 1990s, it was a sensitive period to debate who contributed to air pollution more. In order to keep the 1997 transition smooth, the Communist Party did not want any environmental issues to affect Hong Kong’s return to China.

Another concern for Hong Kong’s sustainable development is its serious beach and water pollution. Researchers believe that if Hong Kong and the Mainland did not properly enforce environmental regulations, the Victoria Harbor¹⁴¹ will cease to be a tourist attraction. People who live in Hong Kong claim that the government should be responsible for taking action to solve this problem.¹⁴² On 17 September 1999, Hong Kong’s Environmental Department released its beach quality grading, which found that “beaches Casam and Gemini were poor, and Anglers’, Approach, Ting Kau, Castle Peak and Rocky Bay were closed because of their really poor water quality.”¹⁴³ Swimming in the beach was very risky because the water was seriously polluted by human sewage.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Stern, Rachel E. (2002). Hong Kong Haze: Air Pollution as a Social Class Issue. *Asian Survey*, 43(5), 784. Retrieved on May 3rd, 2008 from the website: <http://www.jstor.org/pss/3557857>

¹⁴⁰ Cheung Chi-fai. (2003, April 17). *Pollution Said to Blow over Border from Hong Kong*. 7.

¹⁴¹ Victoria Harbour is “the harbour between the Kowloon Peninsula and the Hong Kong Island of Hong Kong, China. With an area of about 41.88 km² as at 2004, its natural depth and sheltered location enticed the British to occupy the island of Hong Kong during the First Opium War, and subsequently establish the colony as a trading post.” See Wikipedia, retrieved May 3, 2008 from the website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Harbour

¹⁴² *Water Pollution in Hong Kong*. Retrieved on May 3rd 2008 from http://members.tripod.com/water_pollution_hk/HK%20pollution.htm

¹⁴³ Retrieved May 1, 2008 from http://members.tripod.com/water_pollution_hk/kent.htm

¹⁴⁴ Cheung, W.H.S., Chang, K.C.K., Hung, R.P.S., & Kleevens, J.W.L. (1990). Health Effects of Beach Water Pollution in Hong Kong. *Epidemiol Infect*, 105, 139-162

Researcher T. W. Wang pointed out that swimming in the Victoria Harbor could cause many health problems, including gastrointestinal, skin and respiratory illnesses.¹⁴⁵ World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)'s¹⁴⁶ conservation director Andy Cornish told the *South China Morning Post* that he did not recommend that anyone to swim in the Victoria Harbor since "it has long been polluted by horrendous amounts of industrial runoff and residential sewage."¹⁴⁷ The major source of Hong Kong's beach and water pollution is human, since Hong Kong is a dense populated city. Hong Kong's chief executive, Donald Tsang, claimed that the dense population was a major reason for Hong Kong's pollution, "There are finite amounts of land, fresh water and other natural resources in the world. Unlimited population growth takes a toll on these resources, and when population growth is excessive there can be damaging results."¹⁴⁸

Though Hong Kong started to protect the environment since the 1970s, the result has not been very successful. The air quality is still declining, according to Hong Kong University's Observatory, Hong Kong's air contains "almost three times more soot and other pollutants than New York's and more than double London's."¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the number of days in which visibility was less than eight kilometers rose from 40 in 1997 to

¹⁴⁵ See Wong, T.W. (1994). Swimming Related Illnesses in Hong Kong Beaches: An Epidemiological Perspective. *Hong Kong Medical Association*, 46 (1), 27-30. Retrieved on May 5th, 2008 from the website: <http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/hkjo/view/21/2100819.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ WWF is an organization aimed to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment. It was founded in 1961. Retrieved on May 5th, 2008 from the website: http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/who_we_are/index.cfm

¹⁴⁷ Michel. (2007, November 05). *Hong Kong's Water Pollution Cancels Batman's Swim*. Retrieved May 03, 2008, from <http://www.ecorazzi.com/2007/11/05/hong-kongs-water-pollution-cancels-batmans-swim/>

¹⁴⁸ Herald Tribune. (2006, October 18). Letters: Hong Kong's pollution, Too many people? *Herald Tribune*. Retrieved April 19, 2008 from <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/10/18/opinion/edlet.php>

¹⁴⁹ Ying Lou. (2007, April 2). Blue Skies May Cost Dolphins Dear. *The Standard*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?pp_cat=13&art_id=41405&sid=12898380&con_type=1&d_str=20070402&sear_year=2007

102 in 2005.¹⁵⁰ Victoria Harbor's is still seriously polluted, according to WWF Hong Kong, and Hong Kong has lost 80% of its fishing stock.¹⁵¹

The major reasons for the increasing pollution problems in Hong Kong are continuing population growth overwhelm its efforts on environmental protection¹⁵² and Hong Kong's weak implementation of environmental protections. The "Study on Sustainable Development for the 21st Century in Hong Kong" found that Hong Kong's existing environmental institutional mechanisms does not fully promote environmental protection, and that communication barriers between bureaus and departments prevent environmental cooperation between Hong Kong and Pearl River Delta area.¹⁵³ In order to keep the Hong Kong's sustainable development, if there is no way to control population growth, the most effective way to solve environmental problem is to implement environmental rules. Therefore, when UNEP provided an environmental pollution emissions standards and rules for both Hong Kong and Mainland in the South China Sea, the mainland government accepted it, since it is not Hong Kong's standard or Mainland China standard, but an international standard. From this aspect, Hong Kong's return to China in 1997 has encouraged China's interaction with international communities,¹⁵⁴ because international standards provided an alternative for harmonizing

¹⁵⁰ See Ying Lou. (2007. April 2). Blue Skies May Cost Dolphins Dear. *The Standard*. Retrieved May 9, 2008 from http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?pp_cat=13&art_id=41405&sid=12898380&con_type=1&d_str=20070402&sear_year=2007

¹⁵¹ WWF Hong Kong. (2008). *WWF Hong Kong*. Retrieved May 03, 2008 from <http://www.wwf.org.hk/eng/index.php>

¹⁵² *Does Hong Kong Have a Water Pollution Problem?* Retrieved May 03, 2008 from http://members.tripod.com/water_pollution_hk/kent.htm

¹⁵³ Ng, Mee Kam. (2004). Sustainable Development and Planning. In Mottershead, Terri. (Ed.), *Sustainable Development in Hong Kong*.

¹⁵⁴ See Yahuda, Michael. (1997). Hong Kong and China's Integration into the International Community. In Cohen, Warren I. & Zhao, Li (Eds). *Hong Kong under Chinese Rule, the Economic and Political Implications of Reversion*,

Hong Kong's transition.

China's Increasing Trade with Southeast Asian Countries

As a source of natural resources, investment, and trade, The Southeast Asian Countries is an important driver of China's economy.¹⁵⁵ Trade between China and Southeast Asian countries has increased since the 1990s. Now Southeast Asia is China's fifth largest trading partner, after the United States, Japan, European Union and Hong Kong.¹⁵⁶ The trade between China and Southeast Asian countries is increasing rapidly, with a growth rate around 20 percent for annually between 1991-2000.¹⁵⁷ China's highly developed economy also promotes trade between China and Southeast Asia. Since 1990 to now, China has experienced rapid economic growth through its international trade, and its exports quadrupled from \$62 million in 1990 to nearly \$2250 million at the end the 1999.¹⁵⁸ China's average economic growth rate of 10 percent per year has led to a tremendous increase in bilateral and multilateral trade with Southeast Asian countries.

Besides trade, China also saw Southeast Asia as a good place for investment, and investment relationships between ASEAN and China are also growing.¹⁵⁹ Southeast Asia

(pp.198-212). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵⁵ Glosy, A Michael. (2007). Stabilizing the Backyard: Recent Development in China's Policy Toward Southeast Asia. In Erisenman, Joshua & Heginbotham, Eric & Mitchell, Decker (Eds.). *China and the Developing World* (pp. 151-186). New York & London: M.E. Sharpe.

¹⁵⁶ See Pangestu, Mari. (2004). China's Economic Rise and the Responses of ASEAN. In Ryosei, Kokubun & Jisi, Wang (Eds.). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp. 241-264). New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, Inc.

¹⁵⁷ Pangestu, Mari. (2004). China's Economic Rise and the Responses of ASEAN. In Ryosei, Kokubun & Jisi, Wang (Eds.). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp. 241-264). New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, Inc.

¹⁵⁸ Pangestu, Mari. (2004). China's Economic Rise and the Responses of ASEAN. In Ryosei, Kokubun & Jisi, Wang (Eds.). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp. 241-264). New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, Inc.

¹⁵⁹ See Pangestu, Mari. (2004). China's Economic Rise and the Responses of ASEAN. In Ryosei, Kokubun & Jisi, Wang (Eds.). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp. 241-264). New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, Inc.

is regarded by China as a good place for investment because of its low salaries, rich natural resources, and convenient location. The Chinese government encourages Chinese companies to invest in Southeast Asia,¹⁶⁰ and the Southeast Asian countries have made many policies to lure Chinese investment. For example, Indonesia has signed memoranda of understandings with China over economic and technical cooperation, tsunami relief, and other issues to make investment much easier.¹⁶¹ As a result, China's oil company has invested in Indonesia's energy field in Papua New Guinea and Java, and China has been negotiating recently to purchase gas and oil from Indonesia.¹⁶²

In order to increase China's economic and trade interests in the South China Sea region, China has adjusted its foreign policy towards Southeast Asia. China did not take advantage of the Southeast Asian countries¹⁶³ during the Asian financial crisis of 1997, which left China a good image as a responsible actor. China helped Southeast Asia countries to get through the Asian financial crisis in 1997 by providing bilateral aid, which was a big surprise for ASEAN countries.¹⁶⁴ During the Asian financial crisis in

¹⁶⁰ See Pangestu, Mari. (2004). China's Economic Rise and the Responses of ASEAN. In Ryosei, Kokubun & Jisi, Wang (Eds.). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp. 241-264). New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, Inc.

¹⁶¹ Kang, David C. (2007). *China Rising, Peace, Power, and Order in the East Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 134

¹⁶² See Perlez, Jane. (2006, March 14). China's Role Emerges as Major Issue for Southeast Asia. *The New York Times*. p. A3

¹⁶³ China did not devalue its currency, the Renminbi (RMB) throughout 1997 to 1998 but peddged it to US dollar at a ratio of 8.0-8.3 RMB to the dollar. The western countries believed that China would devalue its currency in order to protect the competitiveness of its exports with ASEAN nations, since ASEAN countries' exports became much cheaper than China. However, China maintained Renminbi value in order to protect ASEAN countries' exports, which improved China's standing in Asia during Asian financial crisis.

See Halloran, Richard (1998, January 27). China's Decisive Role in the Asian Financial Crisis *Global Beat Issue Brief*. Retrieved May 10, 2008 from <http://www.bu.edu/globalbeat/pubs/ib24.html>

Pettway, Richard H. (1999). Asian Financial Crisis: The Role of China and Japan in the Post-Asian Crisis Era (or solution). *Bnet Business Network*. Retrieved May 10, 2008 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3674/is_199910/ai_n8852781

¹⁶⁴ See Richardson, Michael.(1998). Japan's Lack of Leadership Pushes ASEAN toward Cooperation with China. *International Herald Tribune*, 3 (17).

1997, the Chinese government promised that it would not devalue the Chinese currency, the Renminbi (RMB), in order to help Southeast Asian Countries export goods. ASEAN appreciated China's efforts in refusing the devaluation of Renminbi,¹⁶⁵ if China had not done so, the ASEAN countries would have suffered more economic damage because of their weak competitive export capabilities due to the financial crisis. Instead of not devaluing RMB, China also pledged money to Southeast countries during the financial crisis in order to help them recover soon. For example, China pledged \$1 million to Thailand to assuage the pressures of decreasing exports; it also pledged a \$400 million loan to Indonesia, and provided \$200 million in export credits.¹⁶⁶ China's assistance efforts in the Asian financial crisis also served for its own interests, by presenting China as a responsible and unselfish power in Asia. Furthermore, China's efforts helped China's interests, in that if the financial crisis had become worse, it would have influenced China's economy as well.¹⁶⁷ China built trust with ASEAN countries in the financial crisis; Malaysian leader Mohammed Mahatir expressed his appreciation towards China's efforts in financial crisis:

China's performance in the Asian financial crisis has been laudable, and the countries in this region greatly appreciated China's decision not to devalue the

¹⁶⁵ Glosy, A Michael. (2007). Stabilizing the Backyard: Recent Development in China's Policy Toward Southeast Asia. In Erisenman, Joshua & Heginbotham, Eric & Mitchell, Decker (Eds.). *China and the Developing World* (pp. 151-186). New York & London: M.E. Sharpe.

¹⁶⁶ Leifer, Michael. (1999). Indonesia and the Dilemmas of Engagement. In Johnston, Alastair Iain & Ross, Robert. S.(Eds.). *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*. London: Routledge. p. 104

¹⁶⁷ See Qing, Yang.(2004). China's Peaceful Rise and Sino-ASEAN Relations. *Journal of the CCP's Central Party School*,8(1), 125 .Wang, Hongying.(2003). China's Exchange Rate Policy in the Aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis. In Kirshner, Jonathan (Ed.). *Monetary Orders: Ambiguous Economics, Ubiquitous Politics*(pp. 153-171). Ithaca,NY: Cornell University.

yuan. China's cooperation and high sense of responsibility has spared the region a much worse consequence. The price China has to pay to help East Asia is high, and Malaysian people truly appreciate China's Stand.¹⁶⁸

China's efforts in helping Southeast Asian countries during the financial crisis also served as China's foreign diplomacy in the Asia. China wanted to reassure these countries by building a responsible and friendly image. From the late 1980s, Southeast Asia countries had feared that China's development could be a powerful competitor in the international market.¹⁶⁹ Southeast countries are losing their trade market share while China is increasing its exports to the United States, Japan and Europe. China's tendency to serve as a global factory which produces low-technology and labor-intensive products has an impact on Southeast Asian countries' exports, since most Southeast Asian countries' economies are based on labor-intensive exports¹⁷⁰ In order to reduce these fears, China has used specific policy to portray the benevolent nature of China's sacrifices in the supporting Southeast Asian countries' economies.¹⁷¹ As Rodolfo Severion, the Secretary-General of ASEAN said, "China is really emerging from this smelling good."¹⁷²

From analyzing China's changing attitude in the participation in the UNEP/GEF

¹⁶⁸ Ba Alic. (2003). China and ASEAN: *Renavigating Relations for a 21st Century Asia*. *Asian Survey*, 43(4). p. 637.

¹⁶⁹ See Kang, David. C. (2007). *China Rising, Peace, Power and Order in the East Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press.

¹⁷⁰ See Pangestu, Mari. (2004). China's Economic Rise and the Responses of ASEAN. In Ryosei, Kokubun & Jisi, Wang (Eds.). *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (pp. 241-264). New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, Inc.

¹⁷¹ Glosy, Michael A. (2007). Stabilizing the Backyard: Recent Development in China's Policy Toward Southeast Asia. In Erisenman, Joshua & Heginbotham, Eric & Mitchell, Decker (Eds.). *China and the Developing World* (pp. 151-186). New York & London: M.E. Sharpe.

¹⁷² See Richardson, Michael. (1998). Japan's Lack of Leadership Pushes ASEAN toward Cooperation with China. *International Herald Tribune*, 3 (17).

South China Sea project, and addressing what happened in China from 1995 to 1999, this thesis found out that China's changing national interests lead China's changing attitude in the multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. As I mentioned in chapter one, many factors contributed to China's changing positions in the international environmental cooperation. The 1997-summer flood, the mainland China, Hong Kong's and Macao's increasing air pollution, water pollution and other environmental problems, and the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta's serious ecological degradation have greatly influenced China's development. In order to maintain its sustainable development, China needed international organizations' help in enhancing its capacity for environmental protection.

Furthermore, China's participation in international environmental cooperation in the South China Sea could also be traced for its emerging position as a regional leader. Through the analysis of China's bid for the Olympic Games and China's efforts in Asian financial crisis, this chapter found out that instead of keeping silence, China began to let the world community hear its voice, participation in the South China Sea project was China's strategy to demonstrate China's rising power as a regional leader. Furthermore, the increasing trade with Asian countries also encouraged China to actively involved in the regional cooperation. The changing national interests includes China's growing environmental problem, emerging as a regional leader in Asia and its increasing trade with Southeast Asian countries contributed to China's positions in the South China Sea project. The empirical studies demonstrate that China's environmental policies serve as

China's national interests.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

By analyzing China's positions on multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea from 1970s to 1990s, this thesis has argued that China's participation in the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project was advanced by its internal and external pressures. The internal pressure comes from the China's increasing environmental degradation. From the end of 1980s, Chinese government increasingly was confronted with state failures in environmental policy making, as has been reported by both Chinese and international scholars.¹⁷³ The Chinese public has criticized the Chinese government's ineffectiveness in solving environmental problems.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, the 1997 summer Yangtze River flood, the air pollution in Beijing, the air and water pollution in Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong and Macao give the Chinese government many reasons to improve environmental conditions. The marine degradation in the South China Sea will affect Hong Kong's and Macao's sustainable development in the future. With the booming economy, littoral cities are facing more of an environmental burden than ever before. Overfishing, land based pollution, and decreasing mangrove swam area have affected local people's everyday life. In this situation, if the Chinese government does not participate in such an important environmental project, it will receive more criticisms from the international and domestic stage.

The external pressure comes from China's integration with the world community.

¹⁷³ See Economy, Elizabeth C.(2004). *The River Runs Black: the Environmental Challenge to China's Future*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

¹⁷⁴ See Economy, Elizabeth C.(2004). *The River Runs Black: the Environmental Challenge to China's Future*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

China's bid for Olympic Games, China's efforts to become a member of World Trade Organization at the end of the 1990s, China's increasing trade with the Southeast Asian countries, and Hong Kong and Macao's return give China an opportunity to show its rising power. However, these events also force China to become fully integrated with the international community. Participation in the multilateral environmental cooperation is regarded as the one of the best vehicles for China to dismiss its isolation from other countries and the world organizations,¹⁷⁵ since environmental cooperation does not deal with sensitive political issues.

The empirical research of China's participation in the multilateral environmental cooperation demonstrates that China's determination to participate in the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project is based upon increasing its national interests. China chooses to participate in the environmental cooperation since China could gain interests from this project. Therefore, the thesis supposes a realist analysis, which holds that the individual state participates in the environmental cooperation because it could gain more from cooperation.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, this section demonstrates that international organization plays an important role in facilitating multilateral environmental cooperation by providing technology, marine knowledge and reducing transition costs. Based on UNEP's efforts, China and Southeast Asian countries participated in the first formal multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea. China also built its first seagrass

¹⁷⁵ See Kang, David. C. (2007). *China Rising, Peace, Power and Order in the East Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press.

¹⁷⁶ See Waltz, Kenneth N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. MA: Addison-Wesley.

research center under the help of UNEP.

According to realism, the unit of international relations is state, and the rational state tries to maximize its interests while minimize its costs in foreign affairs.¹⁷⁷ China and South China Sea countries are the key units in this circle of environmental cooperation. China, as a regional leader, wants to enhance and further develop its role in Southeast Asia. One concern for the Chinese government to cooperate with the Southeast Asian countries is to prevent the USA and Japan from encouraging the Southeast Asian countries to “gang up” against China.¹⁷⁸ USA and Japan were regarded as the dominant powers in Asia, and China has been constrained to deal with USA and Japan’s influence in the Southeast Asian countries.¹⁷⁹ The rising of China’s power in the Pacific, aroused both the USA’s and Japan’s fear about China’s role in this area, and challenges their interests in the South China Sea.¹⁸⁰ Multilateral cooperation between China and Southeast Asian countries also steer American policy and avoids from actions that would hurt China’s interests.¹⁸¹ Therefore, in order to counter Japan and United States’ influence in Southeast Asia, China cooperates with the South China Sea countries through UNEP and GEF’s environmental project to reduce the chance that the Southeast Countries will unite with Japan and United State to prevent China’s rising power in the

¹⁷⁷ See Waltz, Kenneth N.(1979). *Theory of International Politics*. MA: Addison-Wesley.

¹⁷⁸ See Koron, Chuon. (1995). Analyst Interviewed on APEC’s Prospects. *FBIS_EAS*.12, 13.

¹⁷⁹ See Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. (2003).*Asia’s China Debate*. Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.

¹⁸⁰ See Sutter, Robert. (2006). *China’s Rise: Implication for US Leadership in Asia*. Washington: East-West Center Washington. This document could be retrieved on May 1st, 2008 from the website: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs//PS021.pdf>

¹⁸¹ See Sutter, Robert. (2006). *China’s Rise: Implication for US Leadership in Asia*. Washington: East-West Center Washington. This document could be retrieved on May 1st, 2008 from the website: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs//PS021.pdf>

South China Sea. The analysis also supposes a realist account of international behavior in which the unit of international relations is the state; international institutions are a reflection of balance of power, which was created by powerful states to maintain the existing power structure and gain more interests from this structure. Rational states should try to maximize interests while minimizing costs in the international politics. China, as a powerful state in the South China Sea, strengthening its rising power in Asia by participating the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project. China's participation in the cooperation was a reflection of China's rising power when compared with USA and Japan's dominance in the Southeast Asia. By joining the multilateral environmental protection project, China tried to maximize its interests.

Future Research

This research opens the door for future research concerning environmental security and multilateral environmental cooperation in the South China Sea region. The South China Sea region, as well as the entire Asia-Pacific region, is facing a rise of large-scale environmental degradation. As one of the most dynamic and sensitive areas in the world, the South China Sea should draw more scholars' attention to issues of environmental cooperation. When I collected data for my thesis, I found the mainstream research in the South China Sea is still about the national security and military disputes, I hope the more research will focus on environmental cooperation, and examine the causes behind multilateral environmental cooperation in this sensitive area.

Furthermore, it is clear to find how China does actively participate in the multilateral

cooperation regime behind China's integration in the world community. For example, besides China's successful bid for the 2008 Summer Olympics Games, there are many voices opposing Beijing's hosting the Olympic Games.¹⁸² Environmental concerns have been raised over air pollution and its potential effect on the performance and health of athletes.¹⁸³ Some western reporters argue that Beijing is not a perfect place to host Olympic Games since its heavy air pollution. The reporter Nick Cahill written that "Welcome to the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, and don't forget to strap on your dust masks."¹⁸⁴ Opposition towards Beijing Olympic Games still exist, though China won the bid, China's integration with the world community is still not easy. Even though China has demonstrated its willingness to participate the international community by joining many multilateral environmental protection organizations, China is still a source of serious environmental pollution. Therefore, a big question remains open: to what extent will China's participation in the international environmental cooperation promote China's full integration into the global community?

¹⁸² Calls for sustained pressure and possible boycotts of the 2008 Beijing Olympics have come from former French presidential candidate François Bayrou, actor and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Mia Farrow, Genocide Intervention Network Representative Ronan Farrow, author and Sudan scholar Eric Reeves. Retrieved May 11, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Summer_Olympics

¹⁸³ NPR. (2008). *Beijing Air Quality to Challenge Olympic Athletes*. Retrieved May 11,2008 from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88091804>

¹⁸⁴ Nick, Cahill.(2008, May 7). Commentary: Beijing's environmental issues cloud Olympic boycott debate. *The Orion Online*. Retrieved May 11, 2008 from <http://media.www.theorion.com/media/storage/paper889/news/2008/05/07/Sports/Commentary.Beijings.Environmental.Issues.Cloud.Olympic.Boycott.Debate-3366009.shtml>

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