



# **Boao Forum for Asia, Annual Conference 2016**

## **Session Summary (No. 90)**

Boao Forum for Asia Institute

March 25, 2016

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### *Session 50*

#### **The South China Sea: Maritime Cooperation and Confidence Building Measures (CBMS)**

**Time:** 16:15-17:30, March 25, 2016

**Venue:** Dongyu Island Hotel, Yiyong Ballroom

**Moderator:** WU Jianmin, Former Ambassador to France

**Panelists:**

Sam BATEMAN, Professorial Research Fellow, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, University of Wollongong

Tan Sri Rastam Mohd ISA, Chairman, Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia

Michael D. SWAINE, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA

Jusuf WANANDI, Co-Founder & Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Indonesia

WU Shicun, President, National Institute for South China Sea Studies, China

ZHENG Yongnian, Director, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore



### **Key Points:**

- Carrying out extensive cooperation in all areas and constantly strengthening mutual trust concerning maritime matters
- China should have confidence and patience in resolving the South China Sea issues
- China and ASEAN are duty-bound to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea
- Formulating measures to avoid maritime incidents
- Promoting the formulation of the code of conduct (COC) in the South China Sea

### **Synopsis:**

Currently, pursuing peace, development and cooperation for mutual benefit is the mainstream in the South China Sea. But disputes still exist. The participants offered their own suggestions on how to resolve the South China Sea issues and prevent conflict escalation.

Wu Shicun expressed his view as follows: To better manage and control the situation in the South China Sea, all the stakeholders should, on the basis of fully respecting historical facts and the international law, carry out cooperation more extensively and constantly strengthen mutual trust concerning maritime matters. He made four suggestions: first, we should promote the cooperation mechanism of “one river and one sea” so that the regional cooperation between China and ASEAN can achieve “full coverage”, which will lay a solid foundation for the China-ASEAN community of common destiny, interests and responsibility; second, we should make full use of the platform provided by the China-Southeast Asia Research Center in



the South China Sea, effectively use the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund and provide intelligence support for the China-ASEAN practical maritime cooperation; third, we should advance the implementation of *the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* and the negotiation of the COC in the South China Sea, in the hope of providing institutional safeguards for effectively managing and controlling disputes in the South China Sea; fourth, we should implement the “dual-track approach” and avoid excessive interference of foreign countries in the matters concerning the South China Sea that affects peace and stability in the South China Sea and disturbs the overall relationship between China and ASEAN.

ZHENG Yongnian made the following point: The action and response on the side of the United States indicated that it made erroneous judgment on the South China Sea issues and made erroneous calculations in formulating its strategies in this regard. Now, the United States views China as a competitor, not a partner. As a result, it is working closely with claimants who are in conflict with China in the South China Sea to “contain” China. China is unswervingly determined to peacefully resolve territorial disputes regarding the South China Sea. The United States will pay a big price for its strategic misjudgement. China should have confidence and patience in resolving the South China Sea issues.

Jusuf WANANDI expressed his view as follows: China and ASEAN have the responsibility to safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea. China is one of the largest trading nations in the world. It needs navigation freedom, peace and stability in the South China Sea. Maintaining a peaceful and stable South China Sea is also in the interests of Southeast Asian countries such as



Indonesia. To that end, Indonesia and ASEAN are now cooperating with China. They strive to safeguard order and peace in the South China Sea by implementing *the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* signed in 2002 and promoting the negotiation on a legally binding COC in the South China Sea.

Michael D. SWAINE made the following point: To ensure that the troubled South China Sea is, at least for now, moving towards stability, it is necessary to build a series of short-term and mid-term faith building measures and crisis management measures, including establishing an official crisis management and control center, stepping up crisis pre-judgment, prediction and prevention, improving the channels for crisis management and carrying out more drills of crisis emergency response.

Tan Sri Rastam Mohd ISA expressed the following opinion: We should create a virtuous cycle of mutual trust and cooperation so as to improve the regional strategic environment. Countries should further enhance mutual trust, increase transparency, and facilitate the formulation of COC in the South China Sea, which will be applicable to all the countries that have legitimate interests in the South China Sea.

Sam BATEMAN said that all the parties should adopt effective measures to avoid and manage the occurrence of marine incidents involving any kind of vessels owned by any country in the South China Sea.

WU Jianmin summarized three points that we should all agree upon regarding the South China Sea: first, we want peace, not war; second, we



want dialogue, not confrontation; third, we want to pursue interests enjoyed by all, not some.