



The All-People Defense at Sea Is an Important Factor for Vietnam to Resolve Disputes in the East Sea

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Abstract. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Vietnam has accelerated the process of industrialization and modernization, which has been determined since the 7th National Party Congress (1991). Besides the socio-economic goals, the issue of building a strong all-people defense is a major issue. As the sovereignty situation in the East Sea could not be resolved in this decade, the role of Vietnam's national defense at sea became even more important. Especially reflected in the coastal economic relations with security and defense, the role of the island system that Vietnam is controlling, oil and gas exploitation activities and civil presence at sea.

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1. Introduction:

One of the most steadfast points of the Communist Party of Vietnam is to build a strong all-people defense to defend the country. The all-people defense is defined by Vietnam as the national defense strength built on the political, spiritual, human, material and financial foundation, of an all-people, comprehensive and independent nature, autonomous, self-reliant, self-reliant and step by step modernized. The issue of building an all-people defense in Vietnam is led by the Communist Party of Vietnam, managed by the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and by the People. This process is based on Marxism-Leninism, which is directly the theory of the war to protect the Fatherland and Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the national defense, the people's war to defend the Fatherland.

The unreasonable claims that China unilaterally claim overlapping the Vietnamese waters poses the problem of ensuring the dialectical relationship between national construction and defense, in particular, to develop marine economy and protect security and defense at sea. Based on the assessment of changes in the regional economic - political situation, the international legal system and the application of the theory of power at sea, this article has a reference value for Vietnam in its to formulate policies on building an all-people defense at sea, especially in some specific contents.

1.1. Coastal Economic Sectors:

Economy, security and defense have a dialectic relationship, and this principle also applies at sea. A. T. Mahan's theory of sea power proves that the merchant fleet (*expanding to include coastal supporting industries*) and the navy have a close relationship, supporting each other's strength. Therefore, Vietnam needs to define national defense at sea in a new context that must be associated with two basic contents: (i). to maintain peace and stability at sea to successfully realize the cause of national industrialization and modernization. (ii). strengthening the power at sea, the ability to prevent, repel, and eliminate the risk of war from the sea and the ability to successfully cope with maritime war situations if they occur of all sizes and levels.

With more than 3,260 km of coastline divided according to different types of terrain and climate, Vietnam has a great advantage in selecting coastal economic development models and building appropriate infrastructure, associated with security and defense interests, can be used for security and defense tasks when necessary. However, on the basis of that advantage, Vietnam must simultaneously create a strategic development arrangement among economic sectors and between regions of the country, creating the continuity and smooth development of the whole economy as well as being able to coordinate the deployment of security and defense tasks at all times. Some coastal economic sectors in which Vietnam has advantages such as maritime

economy (sea transport and seaport services), seafood (fishing and farming), marine tourism, search, rescue and rescue services should be prioritized and put in a master plan associated with building all-people defense at sea. Because these economic sectors are derived from the specificity of the marine environment, closely related and determined from the mainland, able to build flexible and suitable infrastructure for economic conditions - society in each region and at the same time easily create a link similar to that of other countries in the region.

The CPTPP Agreement (2016) and the RCEP Agreement (2020) will promote regional economic links in Asia-Pacific in general and the East Sea in particular. The East Sea dispute will become a hot issue that is strongly internationalized in the coming time because no country concerned wants to lose the economic benefits that sea brings (Ministry of National Defense 2019). With an important geostrategic position, Vietnam will have many new opportunities in coastal economic development, but it comes with the challenges of security and sovereignty due to competitive strategies of major countries that East Sea is increasingly falling into more chaos. Therefore, developing the coastal economy in association with building an all-people defense at sea is a way for Vietnam to bring into play the synergy, ensuring the goal of both building and protecting national sovereignty according to the own stability in the context of the East Sea with many changes.

1.2. Geopolitics and Island Economy:

Island geopolitics and economics are fundamental and specific to the coastal state. Vietnam's waters are about 1 million km² (out of a total of 3.5 million km² in the East Sea) with a system of more than 3,000 islands and 1,000 reefs. Vietnam's geopolitics and island system play an important role in protection, exploration and exploitation of marine resources, protection of the marine environment, scientific research, maintenance of maritime security and safety, and piracy, international cooperation on sea and many other fields. These fields create the necessary common strength to ensure the process of building and deploying an all-people defense at sea. In the opposite direction, the national defense will constitute the legal mechanism of the host country, an important and permanent security force, ensuring the operation of the island economic sectors. In fact, building an all-people defense posture based on geopolitical advantages and the island system is to arrange forces and means associated with economic development in Vietnam's waters and islands according to a strategic intention, to bring into full play the strength of the nation towards the sea.

Several theories of geopolitics (Mackinder), sea power and power of the sea (Mahan) show that geopolitics associated with the island system are an important basis for national power. But the exploitation of sea power to transform into national power depends on the maritime strategy that that country defines (Mahan. A. F.1957). The

issue of building an all-people defense at sea in Vietnam is also subject to this rule, Vietnam's geopolitical and the island system advantages are hardly to be fully exploited if the East Sea remains a major chess board for the US and China. Because of strategic competition and militarization, the scope of operations of ships is narrowed and there are more potential risks. Therefore, Vietnam needs to take advantage of the geopolitical and economic activities of the island to both develop its economy, create a defense position at sea, and prevent and prevent attempts to encroach upon and invade, hostile force (Mahan. A. F.1957).

1.3. Oil and Gas Exploitation at Sea:

Oil and gas exploitation at sea is a unique field because of the dependence on natural factors, an oil field can flow underground in the waters of many countries. This makes the common exploitation mechanisms among the countries concerned must be specific and clearly committed, and there is a mutual interdependence in management thinking and suitable behavior with special activities. own point.

Vietnam's oil and gas industry discovered the first gas seams in March 1975, up to now, exploration and exploitation activities have been deployed at many mines on the sea areas from the continental shelf back to the shore. Since 2006, the Government of Vietnam has established the Vietnam Oil and Gas Group, which emphasizes that is the agency *to do conduct multi-sector business activities, and perform defense, security tasks, protection of sea and islands according to the assigned responsibilities and scope*. In addition to coastal economic activities and the island system, oil and gas activities are also being strengthened by Vietnam in the role of ensuring security and defense at sea, which is an indispensable element in building an all-people defense posture at sea. In addition to the economic development mission, each oil lot and each rig must be a pilot milestone asserting national sovereignty in accordance with international law, especially in sensitive marine areas such as the northeast and southern seas. In the context of complicated sovereignty disputes that are consistent with the expansion of foreign ships, the oil and gas industry of Vietnam needs to better assume the information function, at the same time, the planning and construction in the oil and gas sector should be linked to the ability to operate and use it for defense purposes when necessary.

4.1. Presence of Civilian Vessels:

Civil boats are an indispensable force for each coastal country, this force is the most active, active and continuous. In Vietnam, the civilian force is mostly fishing vessels, commercial ships and transport service ships, this fleet has been thriving since the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, especially after the start of Doi Moi in 1986 (Ministry of National Defense 2019). However, disputes in



the East Sea and current non-traditional security limit the operation of civilian ships, safety concerns at sea are raised after a series of collisions and arrests between foreign military ships and Vietnamese civilian ships around disputed waters.

Civil ships are an indispensable element in the construction of the all-people defense of Vietnam, but need to promulgate specific policies to protect this force when it is attacked by pirates and attacked or arrest by foreign ships. Completion of the legal system for civil boats must be built on the basis of international law, specifically UNCLOS 1982, SOLAS 1974, COLREGs 1972, SAR 1979, Torremolinos Protocol 1993, SUA 1988 to ensure excellent counterbalance civil role and consistency with international law when dealing with matters that arise between nations. Civil ships that participate in building an all-people defense at sea must be protected by military forces in emergencies or in bordering waters, with two

primary objectives is to ensure civilian presence in seas in accordance with international law; and get benefits from marine economic activities.

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