

While the US has started early to rope in other countries and build a favorable international climate over the South China Sea issue, it would have been surpassed by China since China has always objected to turning the issue into an international one. Between the two's claims, which is more credible?

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Although China is overwhelmingly more powerful than the other claimants, it never resorts to force. China controls fewer islands and reefs than the two countries and they both conduct construction work in the South China Sea.

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However, the US has stepped in with an illegitimate purpose and flared up tensions in the waters. No one would believe that the US would come all the way to the South China Sea to benefit the countries and peoples in the region. Instead, what they are more familiar with is a bossy US in noble disguise.

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China has more island disputes with Vietnam than with other countries, but meanwhile they have forged a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

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There is a slim chance that conflicts will break out between China and the Philippines. Yet the biggest risk of military clashes in the waters comes from the US, and the risk is rising.

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Over the South China Sea issue, China will outperform the US in garnering support worldwide as it safeguards national security while the latter sustains its hegemony.

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The US probably garners most support from the G7, its Asia-Pacific allies and several claimants, but China can be backed by the SCO, other BRICs nations and countries in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Apparently the US can find little benefit in escalating the dispute.

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Nor can the US militarily threaten China since in essence it is merely a paper tiger.

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All in all, the South China Sea issue needs to be addressed by countries in the region, with no space for the US to weigh in. China has the determination and patience to help the US figure out the reality.

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