

Coastal States in the South China Sea and Submissions of the Outer

Limits of the Continental Shelf

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to examine the submissions of the outer continental shelf made by coastal states of the South China Sea and the potential impact for the developments in the South China Sea. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) and the guidelines of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, the establishment of extended continental shelf constitutes an obligation. However, the implementation of the guidelines to extend the continental shelves in the narrow enclosed or semi-enclosed seas where there are maritime disputes such as in the South China Sea is complicated. According to the UNCLOS 1982 coastal states must meet a double requirement: how to fulfil the obligation of making submissions of the outer limit of the continental shelf in time and how to do so without prejudice to the rights of the regional community and other neighbouring states.

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