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ABSTRACT

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South China Sea: From Conflict to Cooperation

The Philippines believes in the wisdom that cooperative efforts, including joint petroleum development, can be pursued to enhance peace and promote conflict-resolution in international relations.

The Philippine National Oil Company, consistent with the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, made a big step towards this end by pursuing a possible tripartite agreement with China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and PetroVietnam that will help transform a previous area of conflict into acreage for possible cooperation and benefit. The three companies are working out a possible agreement to jointly acquire geoscientific data to assess the petroleum resource potential of particular areas in the highly controversial South China Sea.

The Philippines is strongly pushing for the agreement in the interest of building and maintaining peace, stability, security and prosperity in the area. PNOC's initial assessment of the South China Sea shows that around 10,000 kilometers of seismic data are needed to be acquired, processed and interpreted. The area is largely unstudied owing to political tensions over conflicting and overlapping maritime claims.