

Both documents represent the US standpoint. While the first one refers to the economy, the second one alludes to American sea power. On the one hand the economics of globalization, on the other hand geopolitics.

Why does the South China Sea (SCS) matter ? Why is it important ?

You should use any opportunity to link the documents between them (be it a common subject or a contrast).

1) Because oil flows run through it.

The South China Sea

The strait of Malacca is a bottleneck, a very sensitive area.

➊ More than 30% of global maritime crude oil trade moves through the South China Sea. Source: US Energy information administration, 27 August 2018.

The South China Sea is a major trade route for crude oil, and in 2016, more than 30% of global maritime crude oil trade, or about 15 million barrels per day (b/d), passed through the South China Sea. More than 90% of crude oil volumes flowing through the South China Sea in 2016 transited the Strait of Malacca, the shortest sea route between suppliers in Africa and the Persian Gulf and markets in Asia, making it one of the world's primary oil transit chokepoints. In addition, a significant amount of crude oil (about 1.4 million b/d) passes through the strait on its way to Singapore and the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, where it is refined before transiting the South China Sea in the form of petroleum products.

Singapore, a city-state, is the regional hub.

The SCS is also vital for the oil exporting countries like Saudi Arabia.

The South China Sea is a major trade route for the Middle East, which accounted for more than 70% of total South China Sea crude oil shipments in 2016. Saudi Arabia is the largest source of crude oil, making up almost one-fourth of crude oil volumes traversing the South China Sea. More than half of Saudi Arabia's global crude oil shipments traveled through the South China Sea in 2016.

About 90% of China's 2016 maritime crude oil shipments were transported through the South China Sea. About 90% of the crude oil imported by Japan and South Korea was shipped through the South China Sea in 2016. Most of Japan's and South Korea's imports are from Middle Eastern suppliers and are transported through the Strait of Malacca and then the South China Sea.

The world's great economic powers have a common interest in keeping the SCS open for traffic. But there are tensions, as some of them try to get the upper hand.

<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=36952>

➋ The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt transiting the strait of Malacca on 1 April 2018.

This nuclear-powered carrier is one of eleven American aircraft carriers. It carries up to 80 state of the art fighter-bombers, that make it the strongest air force base in any area where it cruises.

The main competitor of the US is China. Since 2011, the US has declared that containing China is its first strategic

Aircraft carriers are powerful ships. Most of the time, an American carrier is stronger than any air force in the surroundings.

Carriers are a means of diplomacy: their deployment shows that military options exist. American diplomacy is backed by force.

That picture is a means of propaganda: it means that the US is strong, that it is a reliable ally.



On the flight deck, we can see many aircraft. In a situation of crisis, they would not be displayed like that, so conspicuously.

We can see fighter-bombers, which provide the strike capability.

Airborne early warning aircraft, to defend the fleet and to lead the fighters against any aggressors.

Helicopters, with anti-submarine weapons.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, discuss the importance of the South China Sea in the world economy and its geopolitical consequences.