



Forum: Security Council

The question of: The confrontations in the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan

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Territorial disputes have always been one of the leading causes of conflicts between world countries, **what cause?** it defers, but it all circles back to one thing, power.

I. Description of the issue

The territorial conflict and geopolitical tensions in the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan include China, Japan, and South Korea. It revolves around the ascendancy of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the control of strategic resources in the region. The ongoing confrontations have resulted in strained and tense relations between the countries involved, causing major concerns about regional stability, and as of now, the case remains unresolved.

These uninhabited islands, located northeast of Taiwan and southwest of Japan's Okinawa Island, are believed to have significant natural resources such as oil and gas reserves and are strategically important due to their proximity to major shipping lanes.

China claims sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, asserting that they have been part of its territory since ancient times. Japan, on the other hand, maintains that the islands have been an integral part of Japanese territory since the late 19th century. This dispute escalated in recent years, with both countries engaging in military posturing, increased maritime patrols, and occasional clashes near the islands.

Japan and Russia have clashing declarations over the Southern Kuril Islands, also known as the Northern Territories in Japan. These islands, located in the northern part of the Sea of Japan, were occupied by the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. Japan argues that the islands are an inherent part of its territory and seeks their return, while Russia maintains dominance over them.



The dispute hampers bilateral relations between countries, and the conflict impedes the daily life of the people of the countries and has t even prevented the signing of a formal peace treaty to formally end World War II hostilities between the two countries.

These confrontations in both the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan have caused strained relations between the countries involved. In addition, it has raised concerns about regional stability and contributed to an overall atmosphere of tension in the region. Efforts to resolve these disputes through diplomatic means have been challenging, and the situation remains complex and unresolved.

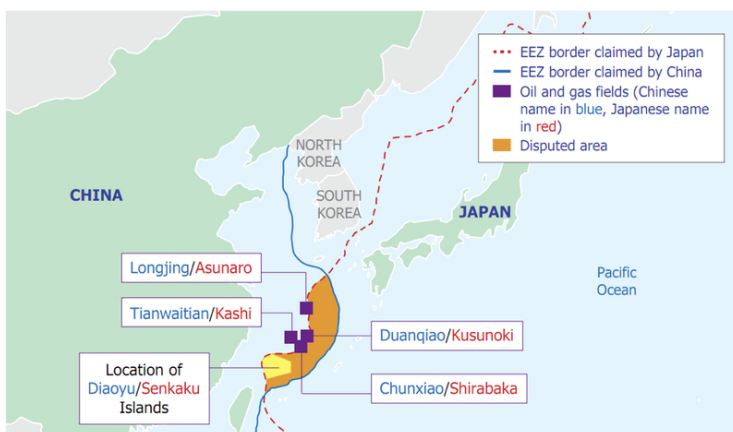
II. Definition of Key Terms

- **Territorial Disputes:** A conflict between countries over the ruling and control of specific territories or areas.
- **Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands:** The disputed islands that are in the East China Sea, claimed by both China and Japan.
- **Strategic Resources:** Valuable natural resources, such as oil, and gas that are found in the area and contribute to the area's geopolitical significance.
- **Maritime Patrols:** The task of monitoring areas of water. Generally conducted by military and law enforcement agencies. Maritime patrol is usually aimed at identifying human activities
- **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ):** This is an area of sea in which a state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, such as energy production, natural resources, and so on. it extends about 200 nautical miles from a country's coast,
- **ASEAN: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations** is a political and economic union of 10 member states in Southeast Asia.
- **UNCLOS:** The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is an international treaty that sets out the legal framework for the use and conservation of the world's oceans and their resources.

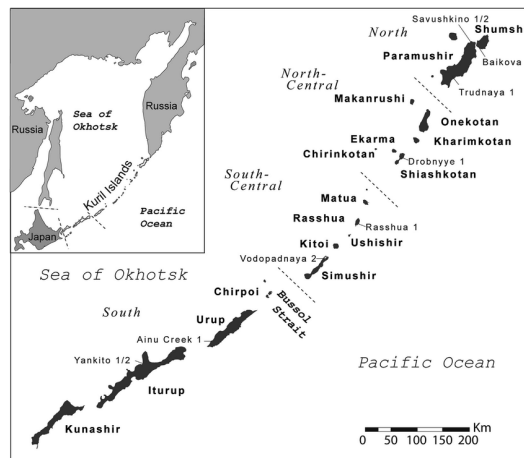
III. Background information

The Senkaku Islands are a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea, and are administered by Japan. They are located northeast of Taiwan and east of China, they are also known as the Pinnacle Islands or the Diaoyu Islands in China and as the Tiaoyutai Islands in Taiwan.

The islands are the focus of the territorial dispute between Japan and China and Japan and Taiwan. The discovery of potential undersea oil reserves in 1968 in the area was a catalyst for further interest in the disputed island



Kuril Islands are a volcanic archipelago (about 56 islands) that is approximately 1,300 kilometers from the northeastern tip of Japan to the southern tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. The islands are between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean. These islands are rich in natural resources such as minerals, oils, gas, fish, and more



IV. The main three affected countries and players

- **China** claims its sovereignty over the disputed territories and has been strongly involved in the disputes, and has increased its military presence in the region.
- **Japan** too claims sovereignty over some of the Islands. It has been engaged in the dispute since long ago and has a strong alliance with the U.S. for security support.
- Although **South Korea** is not directly involved in the disputes, South Korea has maritime territorial disputes with Japan.

Other countries such as the United States, Russia, and Taiwan also have interests and involvement in the region, however, to a lesser extent.



V. Timeline of Events

Date	Event
After the end of World War II	The USA takes control of Japan. This includes the Ryukyu Islands and Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The greater Ryukyu Islands are seen as being of strategic significance. The government of China makes repeated claims to the islands and in April 1948 calls for their return. The U.S. occupation of Japan's main islands lasted until the end of the Korean War in 1952, but the United States continued to occupy Okinawa until 1972.
In 1947	China demarcates its territorial claims in the South China Sea with an eleven-dash line on a map. The claim covers the majority of the area, including many important and strategic parts, which China regained from Japan after World War II.
In 1951	The Treaty of Peace with Japan is officially signed, ending World War II. Japan renounced all claims to Korea, Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. However, the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands are not explicitly mentioned in the treaty, but there was an understanding that Japan will control them as a part of Okinawa's Prefecture and is given full sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands, but, in return, the United States is permitted to open military bases on Okinawa.
In 1960	The USA and Japan sign the bilateral Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, which states that any attack on territories under Japan's administration would require action by both countries to "meet the common danger."
In 1969	A report published by the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East finds "substantial energy deposits" in the seabed between Taiwan and Japan (Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands). This marked one of the first credible findings of resources there, renewing interest in the region.



May 1970	China asserts its own sovereignty after Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan hold talks on joint energy exploration in the East China Sea.
In 1971	The United States and Japan sign the Okinawa Reversion Treaty, in which the USA returns full control of the Ryukyu Islands to Japan. The move is seen as reinforcing the U.S.-Japan security alliance.
In 1972	China and Japan reestablish relations after slowly rebuilding economic ties.
In 1974	A year after the Paris Peace Accords, Chinese forces take control of the western portion of the Paracel Islands, planting flags on several islands and seizing a South Vietnamese garrison.
After three decades of negotiations	The third and final United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, or UNCLOS culminates in a resolution that defines the rights and responsibilities of nations in their use of surrounding waters based on exclusive economic zones and continental shelves. UNCLOS does not address sovereignty issues related to the South and East China Seas, and its vague wording has prevented it from serving as a credible body of law in resolving territorial disputes.
In 1988	After roughly a decade of relative calm in the South China Sea, China, and Vietnam clashed, marking an armed conflict. Artillery is used and many of them were destroyed, sailors were killed and many more were hurt in one of the most serious military confrontations in the South China Sea.
In 1992	China passes the Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone.
In 1998	China and the United States sign the Military Maritime Consultative, the first bilateral military agreement between the two countries, which serves as a confidence-building measure after a period of frozen relations
In 2002	China and the ten ASEAN states reach an agreement in Phnom Penh on the ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. This code of conduct seeks to ease tensions and create guidelines for conflict resolution. The agreement comes after six years of negotiations.



In 2008	After years of dispute over gas fields in the East China Sea, Japan and China signed a Joint Energy Development Agreement that includes a potentially gas-rich field. The nations agree to explore four fields jointly While the accord is hailed as a major step toward maritime cooperation on energy resources—a strategic priority for both countries.
In 2010	China became the world's largest energy consumer, consuming 2.3 billion tons of energy in 2009 and becoming the second-largest consumer and net importer of oil, increasing the strategic importance of trade routes in the East and South China Seas. A collision between a Chinese fishing trawler and Japanese Coast Guard vessels near the disputed Senkaku Islands triggers a diplomatic standoff between China and Japan. This incident results in a diplomatic crisis, intensifying tensions in the region and emphasizing the sensitivity surrounding the territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands.
In 2014	Japan and Russia hold talks to discuss the Kuril Islands dispute, but again, no breakthrough is achieved. The negotiations between Japan and Russia continue but the different positions and interests of both parties prevent a resolution to the long-standing territorial dispute.
In 2019	South Korea intends to dissolve the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) with Japan, further straining relations over historical and territorial disputes. The GSOMIA dissolution signaled a deterioration in bilateral relations between South Korea and Japan, with historical and territorial disagreements being contributing factors.



Currently	Confrontations and disputes in the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan persist characterized by sporadic clashes, heightened military presence, and ongoing diplomatic efforts to seek resolutions. However, despite these efforts, the situation remains unresolved. Tensions continue to linger in the region, with sustained military activities, maritime patrols, and diplomatic dialogues aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution to the territorial and geopolitical disputes. Nevertheless, finding a definitive and lasting solution to these conflicts remains challenging and elusive.
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VI. Previous attempts to solve the issue

Many different countries have been involved and engaged in diplomatic actions, efforts and negotiations in order to solve this issue. However, despite all of that, finding a solution, a definitive and lasting solution appeared to be really difficult and challenging

- I. **China, Japan and North Korea** have held numerous negotiations and diplomatic meetings to discuss the issue in hand and to promote a peaceful and secure solution that suits everyone.

These discussions took place at many levels, as well as through many platforms, such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and other regional forums.

- II. **The ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties:** In 2002, China and the ASEAN member states reached an accord known as the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). This aimed to ease tensions, prevent incidents, and create guidelines for resolving conflicts in the South China Sea.
- III. In some instances, some countries turned to international adjudications to resolve these disputes.



But despite all of the efforts, the intricate and problematic nature of the disputes, conflicts, and each country's national interests, have interfered with the progress of finding a definitive resolution. and the disputes continue to disturb the daily life of all.

IV. Possible solutions

In general, military incidents in the East China Sea should be prevented with the help of peace negotiations. Otherwise, the UN may have to step in further to prevent further endangerment of human life and rights.

V. How to prepare as a delegate

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is your country's stance on this topic?
2. How does your country view the potential effect of the dispute on Regional and global stability and security?
3. Has your country ever made an effort to encourage resolutions or peace talks between the involved parties before?
4. What efforts and steps, if ever, has your country taken to ensure its interests and maintain stability concerning the dispute?
5. What is the nation's opinion on the role of global organizations in addressing and solving geopolitical disputes?
6. What economic or geographic interests does your country have in the disputed areas?
How could your country navigate work towards these interests while maintaining a good relationship with other countries and not violating any others?

Questions directed to countries more involved in the dispute :

1. What is your county's historical and legal basis for claiming sovereignty over the disputed territories?



2. How does your country perceive the impact of the territorial disputes on regional stability and security?
3. What diplomatic efforts has your country undertaken to resolve the disputes and promote peaceful dialogue with the involved parties?
4. Can your country provide information on any economic or strategic interests it has in the disputed areas and how it balances those interests with respect to the claims of other nations?
5. What measures has your country taken to ensure freedom of navigation in the East China Sea while asserting its claims?

VI. Sources

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