

Senkaku/ Diaoyu Islands	
Claimants	PRC, Taiwan, Japan
Chinese Name	Diaoyu Islands
Geopolitical Significance	Oil, natural gas, fisheries, shipping links, military deployment
Ownership and Claims (20 th century – present day)	1942-1972: U.S. Administration 1971: China, Taiwan Claimed Sovereignty 1972: U.S. returned islands to Japan
Current Administration	Japan
Notable Conflicts and Developments	1978: Japanese right-wing group built lighthouse on an Island; 1990: Anti-Japanese demonstrations in Taiwan and Hong Kong over light-house recognition; 1996: Japanese right-wind group built new lighthouse on an island 2010: Collision between Chinese fishing vessel and Japanese coast Guard.

While China continues to claim more territory by nonmilitary means, a large informational campaign that supports China's position is being held. China's territorial claims are being presented as ones actually having historical basis, being peaceful in nature and based on recognition of sovereignty of other states. Another popular tactic is exploiting the international law. By operating in the so called "gray zone" Chinese politicians are able to avoid direct punishment for their actions and use West's binary notion of war and peace to their advantage. [1], [6], [7]

All of these actions are in line with military doctrine of PRC since the media is involved, psychological pressure is applied, and more and more law issues arise.

Furthermore, China continues to amass its military presence in Asia Pacific Region. And that is the moment where artificially constructed islands come into play. China has a large number of territorial claims. In some territories in East Asian Sea, primarily Spratlys, China has been constructing artificial islands. What is so troubling about it? Well, China not only gains more territory but also builds military bases there. That in its turn creates a number of threats to regional security. Further deployment of military aircraft on Woody islands by China tells us about the possible creation of more air bases in the future. Deployment of AAT in February of 2016 proves that the main goal of hybrid warfare waged by China is claiming territories without open interstate conflict.

Other important aspect of hybrid warfare is the usage of informational technologies. Hacker attacks have become a reality, and states start to use them to their advantage and try to improve their potential in the sphere. China has been actively exploring cyber warfare since 2003. However, it officially recognized cyber warfare units only in 2013. In the research published by an independent IT agency Mandiant more than 61398 threats originated from China. Independent researchers state that the number of cyber operatives ranges at anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 individuals [1]

China's hybrid warfare can create a number of serious threats to regional security such as:

- Threat to peace and stability – The establishment of military-capable operating bases in the South China Sea in disputed waters on artificially created islands are hybrid warfare operations carried out below the threshold of military conflict, but these actions may in fact make such conventional military force-on-force conflict more likely in the future.

- Dominative position of China in the region could threaten freedom of navigation in the South China Sea
- China could try to forcibly establish and maintain physical control over all or most of the Spratly Islands, triggering an aggression

So all of that in turn may lead to:

- Violation of state sovereignty
- Destabilization of the region
- Damage to infrastructure
- Violation of freedom and human rights
- War

[1], [6], [7]

Therefore, PRC's territorial claims issue demands attention of international institutions such as ASEAN. Undoubtedly, it must be resolved in a peaceful manner. However, considering constantly evolving hybrid warfare, Beijing's economic ties to major world powers and growing military asks a lot of questions in terms of regional security.

1. Hybrid Warfare <http://apdf-magazine.com/hybrid-warfare/-warfare/>
2. The Problem with Hybrid Warfare <https://warontherocks.com/2015/04/the-problem-with-hybrid-warfare/>
3. The Hybrid Threat Concept: Contemporary War, Military Planning and the Advent of Unrestricted Operational Art https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1170/MR1170.ch3.pdf