



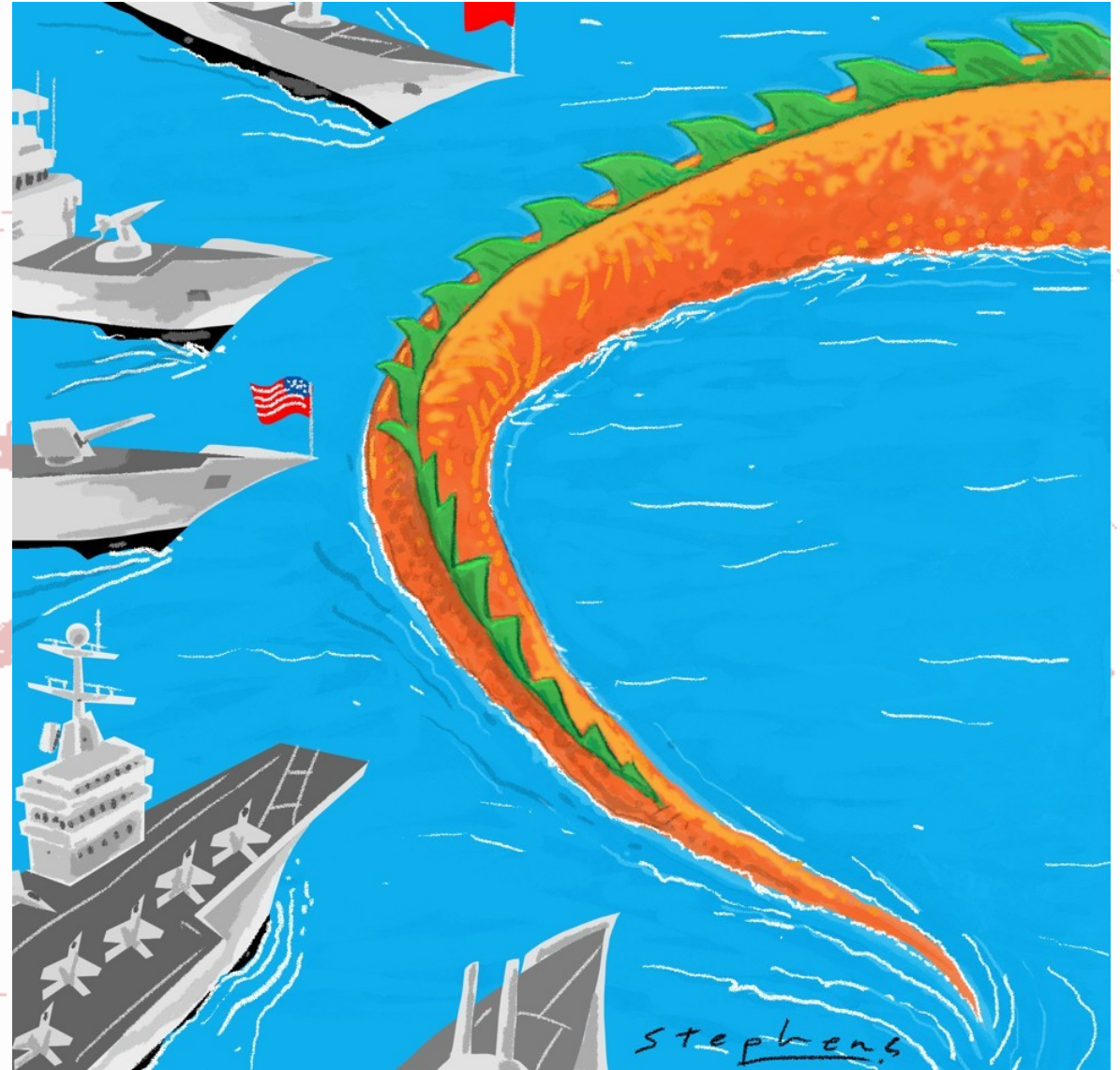
An aerial photograph of a busy port area. Several large cargo ships are docked at long piers extending into the water. The ships are mostly white with dark hulls. The water is a light blue-grey color. The sky is overcast and grey. The overall scene depicts a major maritime hub.

Regional conflicts: US and South China Sea

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What is it about?

- South China sea presents very lucrative area
- Oil reserves, gas reserves, fish populations, and viable trade routes
- According to UN law, large part of the SCS is international waters
- UN Maritime law declares international waters cant be claimed
- China doesn't respect the 200 miles rule
- China enforces historical 9 dash border (and with it resources of SCS)



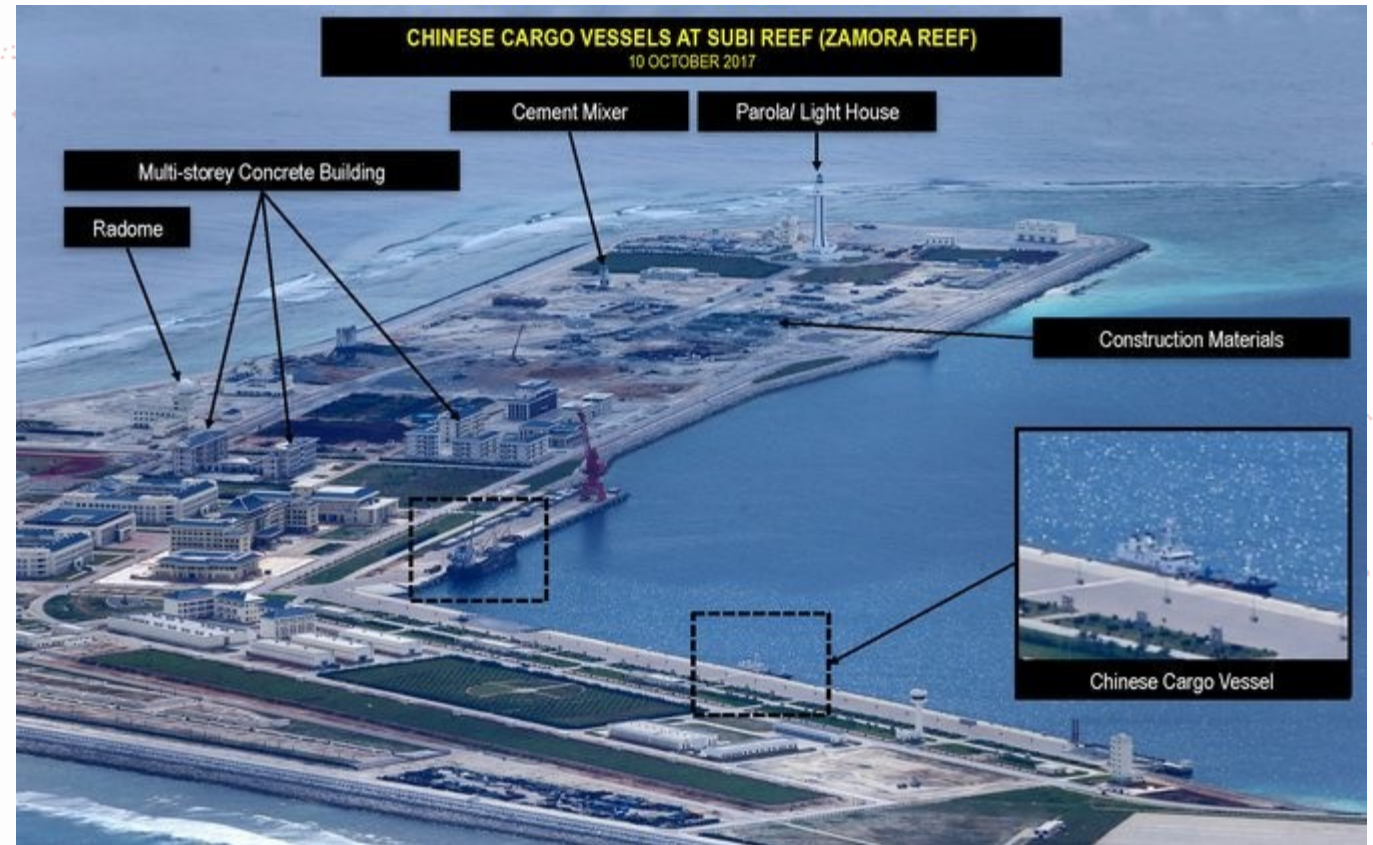
What is it about?

- This puts China at odds with other actors in the region
- Those actors are US allies or partners
- China backs its claims with military buildup
- Other regional powers uneasy
- Some of these (South Korea, Japan) directly relies on US for defense



Chinese Military buildup

- South Chinese sea contains no real landmass
- Only sandy archipelagos
- „Little blue men“
- China is expanding these archipelagos
- ...and building military bases on them
- This way, step by step, China annexes the SCS



Countries at stake

- Vietnam
- Tai-wan
- Phillipines
- Brunei
- Malaysia



What is in stake for US?

- US wants to uphold freedom of maritime navigation (SCS being vital naval trade route)
- As such, US officialy backs UN Maritime Law
- US backs Vietnam against China expansionism
- Unspoken long term goal: Keeping its military dominance in Pacific
- Unspoken long term goal: halt the chinese rise to the position of new global super power



USA presence in Pacific – Japan and Korea

- Japan is one of the key actors of the dispute, heavily reliant on shipping lanes and fish populations
- What has the US to do with the Japan?
- After the WWII, Japan was occupied by USA
- Japan was demilitarized
- USA made the vow to be responsible for Japan's safety
- USA stationed troops in Japan
- After the end of initial occupation, US and Japan begin to build new relations, and Japan became member of US sphere of influence
- Korean War
- US brought sizeable force to theatre
- War never officially ended (cease fire)
- As such, similar situation as with Japan

The USA in Southeast Asia

- Since WWII supporting Japan (others distrustful)
- „hub and spokes“ system (bilateral treaties since 1951)
 - Japan, South Korea, Philippines
 - Military alliance, economic support
 - Containment of Communism
 - Impossible multilateral solution (differences)
- Vietnam war
 - 1955 – 1975
 - US withdrawal (1973)
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)
 - 1967
 - Regional intergovernmental organization
 - Better relationships between SEA states (economy, politics, culture, military)
 - USA approaches the states as a region



The USA in Southeast Asia

- Nixon doctrine 1969 (vietnamese syndrom)
 - Responsibility given to states
 - Economical, military support, but....
- After cold war
 - „benign neglect“ aproach
 - Little attention, only when needed (security threats)
 - Wanted to have economical influence (not supporting East Asian Economic Group – EAEG)
 - 9/11
 - North Korea ballistic missile tests (93, 98)
 - Cooperation with Japan
 - 100 000 soldiers in the region



The USA in Southeast Asia

- After 9/11
 - Japan being the main partner
 - Economical and security areas
 - Lack of interest
 - Absent at regional summits
 - Deeper integration
 - Cooperation with China
 - No interest on region building
 - 2004 Tsunami
 - → rise of regionalism (ASEAN)
 - Since 2006 more interest X rising power of China



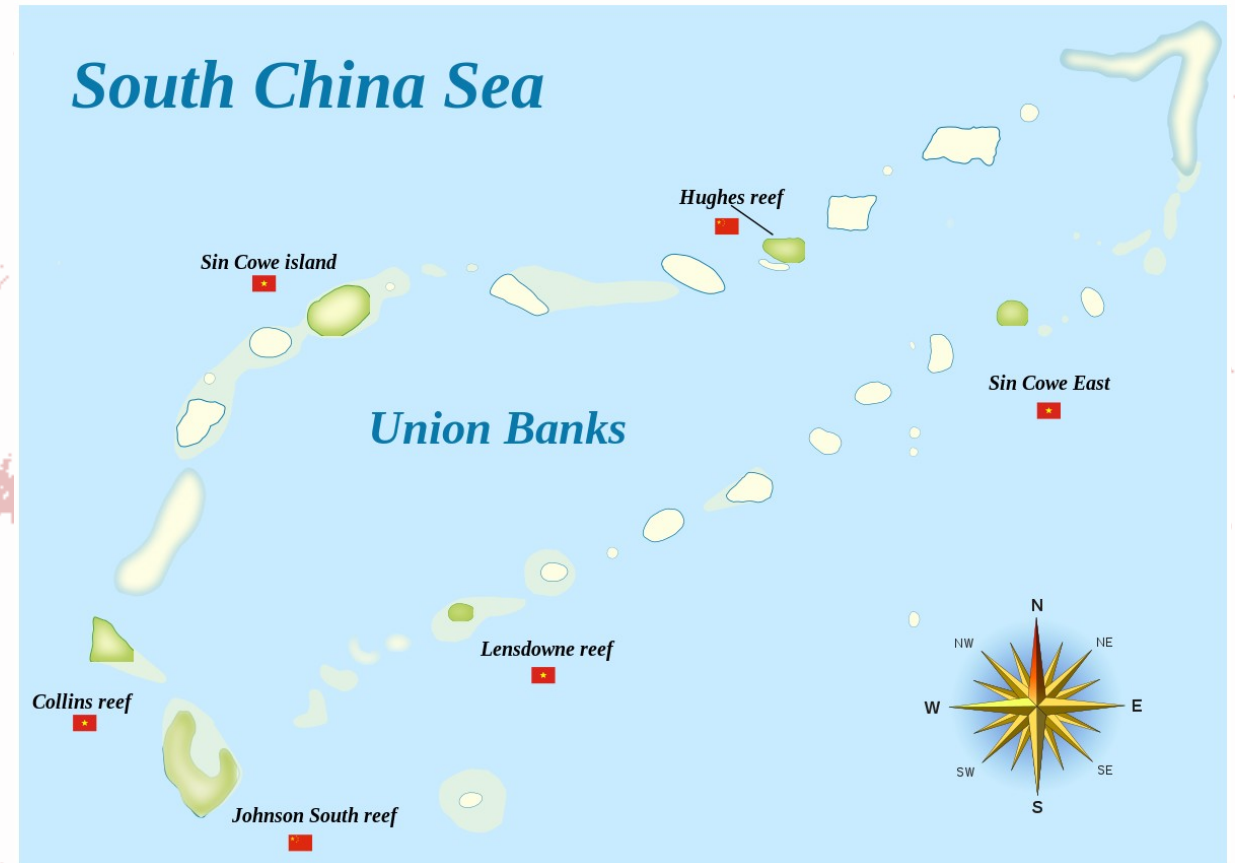
South China Sea conflict

- Oil, natural gas
- Fishing (10 %)
- Trade - Goods worth \$5.3 trillion
- Claims - China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam
- Interests – the USA, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia



The conflict

- Lots of skirmishes
- ASEAN states choose diplomatic solution
- Battle of Paracel islands (1974)
 - After withdrawal of the USA
 - **China X South Vietnam**
- 1988 battle (China X Vietnam)
- Since 1990's two sides of the conflict
 - China X Asean + USA (late 90's)
 - China slowly but surely gains influence



USA X China

- Hainan Island incident (2001)
 - collision between a US spy plane and a Chinese fighter jet
 - No escalation
 - „Letter of the two sorries“
- USNS Impeccable (2009)
 - ocean surveillance ship
 - International waters
 - China ordered it to leave
 - US sending a guided-missile destroyer to protect the ship



The US role in the conflict

- Attention to the region in late 90's – oil (several explorations)
- Fear of China's growing power
- Main goals
 - status quo
 - Maritime freedom
 - Containment of China
 - 2010 – Clinton – „USA are neutral and support multilateral solution“
- Tools
 - Supporting ASEAN states (2014 the Philippines)
 - The law (UNCLOS)
- Patrolling the coast
- Cold war?



Implications

- Even though the countries and UN objects, chinese takeover of SCS reached far
- Diplomatic solutions doesnt seem to work
- Most countires in the region dont have the might to stand against the China
- As such, any strong stance on the issue, and possibly armed one, is up to US



To act or not to act?

- Dangerous situation
- If US lets China fully take SCS, economical loses
- However, more importantly, big political defeat for US and possible breaking point
- Acting is however very dangerous
- US Navy has enormous military advantage though
- Still, there is propably not enough political will to do so.



Questions? Comments?



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