
China's ambitions in the South China Sea

❶ The viewpoint of an American scholar.

In 2012, China took control of Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines. Since then, it has enlarged its claims, asserting exclusive ownership of the entire South China Sea and redefining the area by redrawing the map with a “nine-dash line” that encompasses 90 percent of the territory. If accepted by others, its neighboring countries have observed that this would create a “South China Lake.”

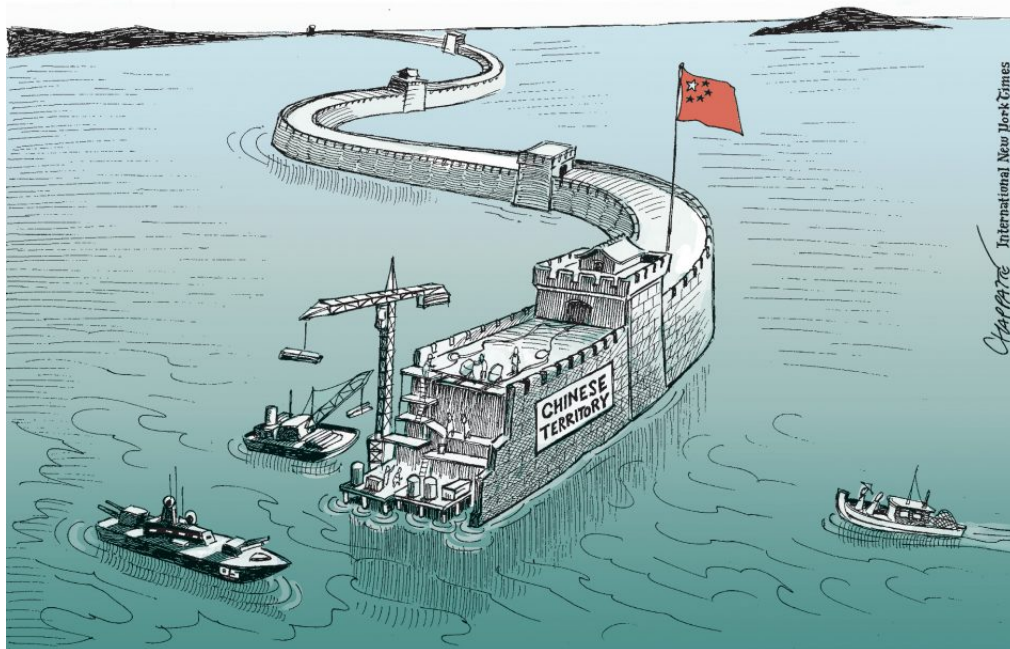
- 5 China has also undertaken major construction projects on features throughout the sea, building outposts on seven different features in the Spratly Islands. (...)

China's longer-term objective is also clear. For decades it has chafed at the operation of US spy ships in waters adjacent to its borders. China asserts that under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea the United States must request permission for these ships to operate in China's Exclusive
10 Economic Zone, which extends two hundred nautical miles from China's shores—a claim the US flatly rejects.[...]

- The ability to project power in the area will also give China greater influence over the \$5.3 trillion in trade that passes through the South China Sea every year. As it slowly muscled the United States out of these waters, China is also absorbing the nations of Southeast Asia into its economic orbit
15 and pulling in Japan and Australia as well. It has so far succeeded without a fight. But if fight it must, Xi intends to win.

Graham ALLISON, *Destined for War*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

❷ Cartoon by Chapatte published in the New York Times, 20 may 2015.



➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, explain why the disputes about the South China Sea are so important for the United States.