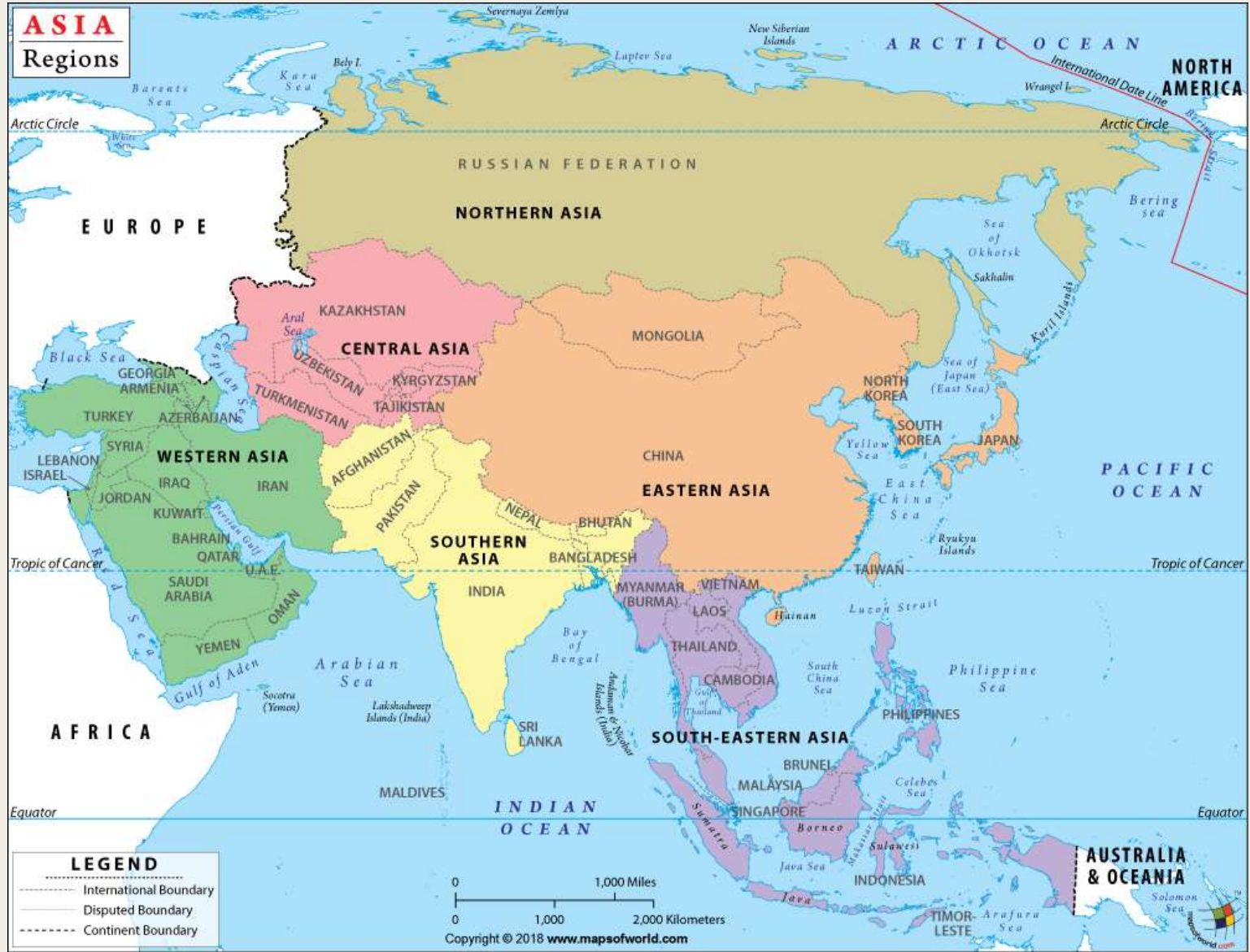


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# MAIN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES IN ASIA

Daniela Finkousová



# Western Asia

- Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen
- Region is very important worldwide for its mineral wealth
- as far as religion is concerned, the region is more or less homogeneous
  - *primarily Sunni Muslims (except Iran)*
  - *Christians only in in Georgia, Armenia*
  - *Israel is a Judaic state -> in the area one of the most conflictual for its character*



## ■ Israeli–Palestinian conflict

- One of the most problematic conflicts in the world
- Israel surrounded by arabic countries
- Problems started with the creation of an Israeli state
  
- The proclamation of the state of Israel represented the first war in the region
  - 14 May 1948
  - invasion of Arab states
  - 7 January 1949 – **truce and the division of Palestine (Israel, West Bank, Gaza)**
  - period of great population migration
  
- In 1964 Palestine Liberation Organization was founded by the Arab coalition
  - with the aim of creating an independent state
  
- Six-Day War
  - June 1967
  - the war marked a major defeat for the Arab coalition
  - broke out on June 5 with an Israeli air strike against Egypt's air bases
  - it is generally believed that Israel was in a hopeless situation
    - *Golan heights, Israeli-Jordanian border*
  - territorial gains of Israel
    - *West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights*

- *after the Six-Day war strengthens the militant wing of the PLO*
  
- *Yom Kippur war*
  - October 1973
  - was fought between Egypt and Syria (supported by the Arab world) and Israel (supported by the USA)
  - the attack of Egypt and Syria on the Sinai and the Golan Heights
  - the result was the victory of Israel
  
- *Camp David Accords*
  - September 1978
  - signing of peace agreements between Egypt and Israel
  - 2 major issues
    - *Egypt - Israel peace treaty*
    - *Palestinian solution -> unresolved*
  - the Sinai Peninsula returns to Egypt
    - *1982*

- First Intifada

- 1987 - 1993
- Palestinian uprising and armed conflict against Israel
  - *demonstration, strikes, non - payment of taxes, boycott of Israeli goods*
- Hamas was created at the beginning
  - *gained power from the insurgents*
- The detonator was an Israeli and Palestinian car accident that killed four Palestinian Arabs
- ended with the signing of the Oslo Peace Agreement in 1993

- Second Intifada

- 2000 - 2005
- Palestinian uprising in Israel
- Started after after Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount
- An attempt was made to reach a written agreement that should guarantee an end to the violence, but only an oral agreement was reached
  - *the agreement was rejected by radical terrorist groups led by Hamas*

- *in 2005, Israeli troops and Jewish settlers left the occupied Gaza Strip*
  
- *In November 2012, another conflict broke out between Hamas and Israel.*
  - the Israeli air force eliminated the commander of the Hamas armed forces
  - the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was concluded after eight days of mutual shelling
  
- *Gaza war in 2014*
  - July – August 2014
  - Caused by kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers by Hamas
  - the bloodiest clash since the second intifada
  
- *In May 2021, there were rocket attacks between the Gaza Strip and Israel*

# Central Asia

- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- includes post-Soviet republics
- the countries have many features in common because they were part of the Soviet Union
  - *Not really a conflict region*





## ■ Conflict in Fergana valley

- *The most significant territorial disputes take place in Fergana valley*
- *Characteristics of the region*
  - valley spreads across south of Kyrgyzstan, north of Tajikistan and east of Uzbekistan
  - the valley is very fertile and advantageous thanks to the two rivers Naryn and Kara
  - The most populous region in Central Asia
- *In 1911 the region was divided into five districts*
- *Today, valley is divided between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*
  - Challenging negotiations, all three countries have historic and economic claims to the region

**Figure 5 – Fergana Valley**



Source: Stratfor

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- Possible causes of the conflict

■ borders created by the Soviet Union

- *the people of central Asia were divided into distinct nationalities by the soviet union*
- *Nationalities artificially created (previously nomadic tribes)*
- *Borders were drawn without the fact that the valley is a huge mix of nationalities together*
- *Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan include national minorities of the other countries*
  - *Communities outside their country (Sokh – Uzbeks entirely in Kyrgyzstan)*

■ competition over natural resources

- *The valley is the main source of food for Central Asia*
- *Region is landlocked -> dependent on agriculture -> water source is crucial*
- *Fights and disputes over water sources in the valley result in diplomatic crises or deaths*
- *While part of the Soviet Union -> resource-sharing system*
  - *Energy-rich countries supplied the other, while countries with eater resources supplied the others*
  - *After the fall of Soviet Union, systém stopped working -> used as a threat aggravated by ethnic tensions*

- ethnic tensions
  - *Since the countries became independent, they began to stress the nationality importance*
  - *Ethnic problems in multiethnic countries worsen by economic situation and fight over resources*
  - *2010 – ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan*
    - conflicts in Osh and Jalal-Abad -> 200 killed, more than 2000 injured
    - Conflicts resulted in a humanitarian crisis -> about 300 000 refugees (dominantly Uzbeks) fled to Uzbekistan
  - *Relationships still tense -> mainly between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan*



- Current situation

- April – May 2021 relationships between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were very tense
  - *the most significant escalation of violence since independence*
  - *Local dispute over water management*
  - *By 3rd May, 2021, both sides completed the withdrawal of their military forces*
  - *Resulted in ceasefire*



# South Asia

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives

- Religion

- 68% Hindus
- 31% Muslims
- 1% Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains
- the clash of two religions results in conflicts



## ■ Kashmir conflict

- *territorial conflict over the Kashmir region that began after 1947 – after the division of India*
- *2 main actors – India and Pakistan; China is involved with a claim to part of the territory (Aksai Chin)*
  
- *The main cause of the conflict*
  - 67% muslims, 30% hinduists
  - In 1947 British India divided to the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan
  - The majority of states joined India or Pakistan based on the major religion and the consensus between the ruler and the people
  - The region of Kashmir was mostly muslim but the ruler was hindi
  - The Kashmir maharaja decided for neutrality of the region -> due to the riots that followed he asked India for military help -> Kashmir joined India
  
- *The result of the riots was the Line of control*
  - Kashmir was divided into two parts between India and Pakistan





- Second Kashmir war

- August – September 1965
- skirmishes in Pakistan's neighboring province - border crossing
- China openly supports Pakistan
- the attack ends with the exhaustion of both armies - the embargo by the UK and the US
  
- on 22 September a UN resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire was adopted
  - *The armistice lasted until the war in 1971*
  - *over time, the countries have accused each other of violating the agreement and the ceasefire*
  
- The war ends with the Tashkent declaration
  - *signed under UN pressure*
  - *only three points were met from the agreement concerning the withdrawal of troops, peacekeeping and non-interference*
  - *no significant territorial changes*

- Indo-Pakistani War

- December 1971, only took 13 days
- the war was linked to the bangladesh war of independence
- India supported Bangladesh militarily and economically (The Bangladeshi government in exile is based in India)
- direct attacks by Pakistan on India -> attacks on indian flight bases
  
- The war ends with the fatal defeat of Pakistan
  - *fighting on both fronts - West (West Pakistan) and East (East Pakistan) -> army is rapidly depleted*
  - *loses territory of Eastern Pakistan -> independent Bangladesh*
  - *loses territory on the Western Front -> Azad Kashmir, Punjab and Sindh (over 15,000 km<sup>2</sup>)*
  
- Simla agreement
  - *july 1972*
  - *the parties undertook to find a peaceful solution to the dispute and to keep the Line of Control unchanged*
  - *returned as a gesture of goodwill in 1972*

- Elections of 1987

- March 1987

- important point in the history of the region -> elections generally considered rigged

- 5 parties / groups participate in the election

- Muslim United Front success was expected based on votes cast and popular vote

- The result of the election

- *Coalition of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and Indian National Congress – 66*

- *Indian People's Party – 2*

- *Muslim United Front – 4*

- *first signs of counterfeiting and manipulation before the elections -> arrests of opposition politicians and workers (mainly MUF)*

- *Despite the success of the MUF in the regions, the leaders of the pro-Indian parties were declared the winners*

- *prolonging the time of the sum of votes, refusing to count the votes if led by the opposition party, the sum of only a certain number of votes*

- *Farooq Abdullah (JKNC) elected Chief Minister and formed the government*

- *The government lacks legitimacy and people are frustrated*

- *rigged elections most likely led to the following riots and riots*

## – Uprising in Jammu and Kashmir

- 1989 –
- uprising against Indian self-government in the region
- various insurgent groups - strive for complete autonomy, to join Pakistan
- Pakistan has argued that it only provides moral and diplomatic support to the guerrillas
- accused by India of arms imports and insurgent training
  - *granted by Pakistan only in 2015*
- At the beginning of 1989, an attempt to Islamize Kashmir began -> violence against Hindus
  
- Insurgent motivation
  - *rigged elections 1987*
  - *support from Pakistan - incitement to insurgencies, support for terrorism*
  - *Islam - the struggle for faith and a large community*
  - *widespread human rights violations by both Indian troops and Kashmiri insurgents*
  - *bad economic situation, high unemployment*

– Kargil war

- May – June 1999
- an increased number of separatist conflicts and riots before the war
- 1998 - Both countries conduct the first successful nuclear tests
  
- the cause of the war was the intrusion of Pakistani troops through the Line of Control to the Indian side
- India is responding by mobilizing and sending troops and air forces to oust Pakistani troops
  
- The terrain of this area of Kashmir is very mountainous - the altitudes have fundamentally affected the course of the fighting
  - *difficult conditions for land and air transport*
  - *Pakistani troops strategic position at heights*
  - *the most important sections of the highway under direct fire/control of Pakistanis*
  
- Tololing War (May - June)
  - *strategic peak near the town of Kárgil*
  - *decisive battle war -> turns the conflict in favor of India*

- 4.7. Pakistan asks US for intervention -> refuses, due to LoC violation
- The fight ends on 26.7. Indian victory
  - *due to a major defeat and a bad international image, Pakistan is forced to end all fighting and withdraw troops from Indian territory*
  - *this war restores the inviolability of the LoC*
- After the war, India severed relations with Pakistan and increased its defense budget and intensified defense readiness
  - *improving relations with the USA -> the conflict remained at the regional level (did not grow into a larger one)*
- After the war, Pakistan was fundamentally criticized by the great powers and the international organizations
  - *the war showed poor strategies and conflict management*
  - *Pakistan faced international isolation*

– 21st century events

- Many terrorist attacks in India by Pakistani terrorist groups
  - *Attack on the Indian Parliament (13.12.2001)*
  - *Attacks in Bombai (26. – 29. 11. 2008)*
  - *Kashmir riots (june – september 2010)*
  - *Attack in Pulwama region (14.2.2019)*
  
- Terrorist groups seek to join Kashmir region to Pakistan
- both countries mobilize -> a period of military tension between the two countries
  - *threat of nuclear war*
  - *India blames Pakistan as the controller of terrorist organizations in the territory*
  
- The attacks have a major impact on international relations
  - *the attacks meant a renewed deterioration in India-Pakistan relations*
  - *the attacks are condemned worldwide -> the deterioration of relations between Pakistan and the world*

## – Role of China

- important part of the conflict - proximity, strong position in Asia and the world, the impact on Pakistan, Tibet
- China's position has changed dramatically over the years
- In 1948, India sought to resolve the conflict with the help of the UN Security Council
  - *China stands with India; along with Canada, the UK and the US supports the plebiscite in Kashmir*
  - *China proposes a solution - restoring peace in the region and withdrawing Pakistani troops; India's mandate to establish a plebiscite in Kashmir*
- Relatively neutral attitude during the 1950s
- September 1957 - 1960 - we notice a fundamental change in relations
  - *China is completing the construction of a major road leading through the Aksai Chin area*
  - *Although claimed by India, China is requesting an exchange of territory*
  - *India rejects the agreement and insists on claiming Aksai Chin*

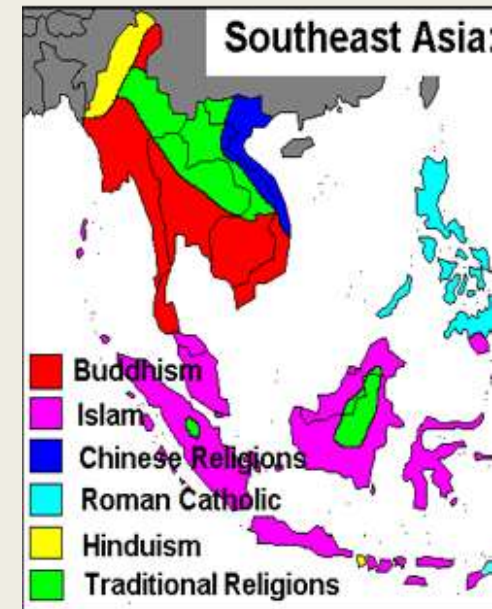


- Sino-Indian War (October - November 1962)
  - *subject of the border along the Himalayas*
  - *involvement of the great powers -> The US and the USSR support India militarily*
  - *since this war a reversal in relations*
  
- Sino-Pakistan Agreement (1963)
  - *border agreement between Pakistan in Kashmir and China*
  - *brought new territories to China and improved relations between countries*
  - *China officially recognizes Pakistan's control of the northern regions*
  - *China is changing its position to pro-Pakistan*
  
- Tensions between India and Pakistan increased in the 1990s
  - *China, the US and the USSR are urging that tensions be eased and that there should be no war*
  - *at this time, China and India are re-establishing relations -> they want to limit the West's influence through the UN*
  
- During the Kárgil War in 1999, Pakistan requested military and diplomatic support from China
  - *China refuses, advising to withdraw troops back behind the LoC*
  
- Sino-Indian Border Disputes (May 2020 -)
  - *skirmishes on the border of Indian Kashmir and China, along the border with Tibet and along the Line of True Control (LAC)*



# Southeast Asia

- Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam
- No Southeast Asian country is religiously homogeneous
  - Muslims – 240 mil. people
  - Buddhists – 205 mil. people
  - Christians – 156 mil. people
- The region is culturally and ethnically diverse, hundreds of languages spoken by different ethnic groups



## ■ Conflict in the South China Sea

- *Geopolitical conflict over several archipelagos, cliffs and other formations (especially the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands)*
- *A historical conflict over a territory claimed by several states as an impact of decolonization*
- *Economic conflict over oil- and gas-rich lands*
- *Economic conflict over an important maritime route connecting Europe and Africa with Asia*
- *Non-violent conflict - the subject of the dispute is rather diplomatic, yet several military confrontations*





- Geographical delimitation

- A natural link between the Pacific and the Indian ocean = one of the most used transport hubs of the world
- Spratly Islands - over a hundred uninhabited islands with an area of about 5 km<sup>2</sup>
- Paracel Islands - more than 130 islands and atolls with a size of 8 km<sup>2</sup>, uninhabited islands except Woody Island with 450 inhabitants

- Main actors of the conflict

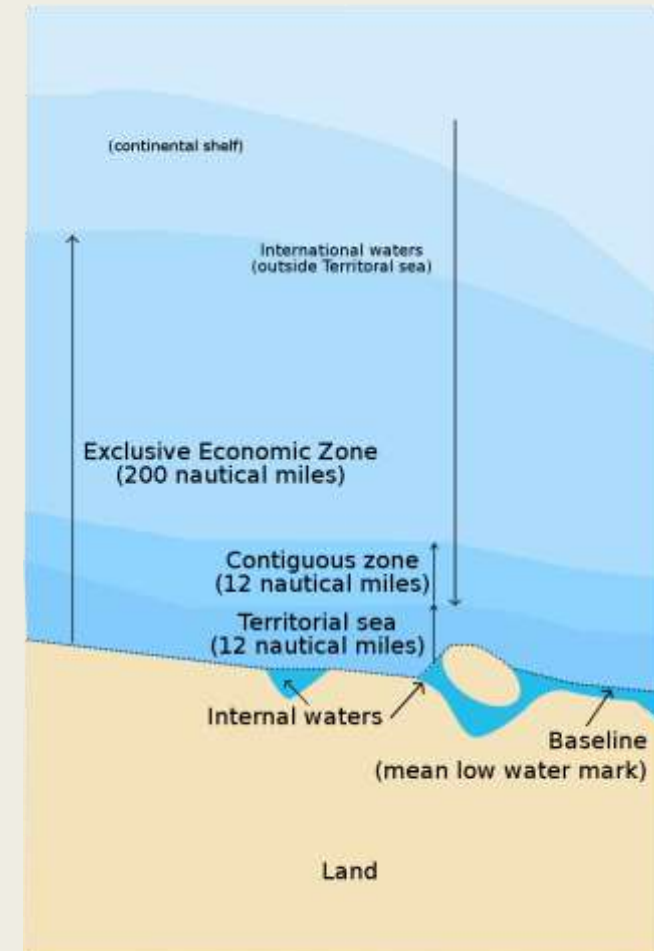
- The South China Sea affects mainland China and Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore
- Primary - China, Vietnam, Taiwan
  - *claim all islands (Spratley and Paracel is.)*
- Secondary - Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei
- demands based mainly on nationalism, strategic location and historical reasons

- General context

- During the colonization period, the South China Sea was influenced by the UK, France, the USA and Japan
- Even before II.WW, the islands of the South China Sea were a controversial part - but the conflict was not active
- 1946 - Spratly Islands and Woody Island were occupied by China and Vietnam occupied Prattle Island in the Paracel Archipelago
- Decolonization meant a struggle for supremacy over the islands in the South China Sea - a conflict arose due to the conflicting demands of the state

- Exclusive economic zone (EEZ)

- according to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, an EEZ is an area of the sea in which the state has special competence for the exploration and exploitation of water resources
- it is located 200 nautical miles from the coast



- China's approach

- 1947 - China has established the so-called Nine-dash Line
- China bases requirements on historical evidence of Chinese Discovery
- The South China Sea is crucial, due to trade trips to India, Africa and Europe
- China is building artificial islands in the region in order to control the local areas and to support the declaration of the islands as its own

- Vietnam's approach

- during the colonization period, both archipelagos were administered by France - Vietnam claims it as a French colonial heritage
- The main rivalry takes place between China and Vietnam
  - *the biggest line of conflict is fossil fuels*
  - *Vietnam is expanding oil fields to China's territory, largest oil producer in South China Sea*



- Taiwan's approach
  - claims the same territories as China on the basis of the same historical documents
  - a significant advantage is the dominance over the largest island of the Spratly Islands, Itu Aba
  
- Philippine approach
  - the philippines claim only the Spratly islands based on the discovery journey of the philippines Tomas Clomy
  - Scarborough shoal – dispute with China
  
- Malaysia approach
  - claims area according to its EEZ, claims 12 islands from the Spratly Islands
  - Malaysia's demands conflict with those of the Philippines and Brunei
  
- Brunei approach
  - Brunei is the only one not demanding any part of Spratly or Paracel Islands
  - It claims only one reef in its EEZ, collides the most with Malaysia
  - Brunei has its oil fields near the mainland – no need to fight for the islands



*China and Taiwan*   *Malaysia*   *Vietnam*   *Brunei*   *Philippines*

- ASEAN as an actor in the conflict
  - Regional international organization founded in 1967
  - ASEAN's goal in the South China Sea is to be a counterweight to China
  
  - 1992 Declaration on the South China Sea - ASEAN's first active act without the signature of China and Vietnam
  - In 1996 ASEAN negotiates with China on rules of conduct in the region
    - *important point in cooperation in the area*
  - Official Declaration on the conduct of the parties in the South China Sea was signed in 2002 (without China and Vietnam)
    - *legally non-binding -> the perpetrator cannot be punished*
    - *culmination of cooperation between actors*
  - 2007 – since then ASEAN-China relations have deteriorated
    - *ASEAN has responded by deepening relations with the USA*



- Current state of the conflict

- 2002 Deklarace o chování v Jihočínském moři - Čína několikrát porušila
  - *relations between countries are beginning to deteriorate*
- 2011 Escalation of the Sino-Vietnam Conflict - Chinese patrol boats disrupt Vietnamese resource exploration in the area
  - *there have been several other similar clashes*
  - *resulted in anti-Chinese protests in Vietnamese cities*
- The Philippines file a lawsuit against China at the international tribunal in The Haag in 2013
  - *The Haag declares China's disruption in the Philippine EEZ as illegal*
- 2014 conflict between China and Vietnam
  - *China built an oil well at 120 nautical miles from the Vietnamese coast*
  - *Anti-Chinese protests in Vietnam occurred immediately*
- Tensions between China and both the Philippines and Vietnam have recently eased
  - *even as China increased its military activity in the area by conducting a series of naval exercises in 2018*
  - *It continues to build military and industrial outposts on artificial islands*

- The United States has also increased its military activity and naval presence in the region, including freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) in 2018
  - *FONOPs are closely linked to the concept of freedom of navigation, and in particular to the enforcement of relevant international law regarding freedom of navigation.*
  
- in recent years, satellite imagery has shown China's increased efforts to reclaim the land
  - *physically increasing the size of islands*
  - *creating new islands*
  
- the United States has challenged China's territorial claims by conducting FONOPs
  - *to protect its political, security, and economic interests in the region*
  - *to bolster support for Southeast Asian partners*

# East Asia

- China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan
- interesting region because of China's behaviour in the region and in the world
  - *Conflicts with many countries in the South China Sea and with India on Sino-Indian borders*



## ■ Korean conflict

- territorial conflict based on the division of Korean peninsula between North Korea and South Korea
- After the II. World war after Japan surrender, Korea was given independence and was divided into two occupation zones (North – USSR, South – US)
- In 1948 the two states were founded (South Korea and DPRK)
  - both parts of the peninsula claimed to be the legitimate government of all of Korea
- Even before the Korean War, relations between the two newly formed states were very tense
  
- Korean war
  - 1950 – 1953
  - North Korea was supported by USSR and China
  - USA and UN supported South Korea
  - The war ended with Korean Armistice Agreement
    - Established the Korean Demarcation Zone
    - No declaration of peace, divided political views



- *The Korean Demilitarized Zone was established on the 27 July 1953*
  - divides the peninsula in half around the 38th parallel
  - serves as a buffer zone between North and South Korea
  
- *Since peace was not declared, the Korean War de facto continues to this day*
- *Even though the armistice agreement was signed, North Korea announced it would no longer abide it*
  - at least six times
  
- *Since the division of Korea and establishing the two states, the situation has been very unstable*
- *Important role of nuclear weapons*
  - in 1991 DPRK agreed with South Korea on the absence of nuclear weapons on the peninsula
  - in 1985, the DPRK signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
  - in 2005, Kim Jong-il announced ownership of a nuclear weapon, preceded by two arms development crises
  - over time, there were nuclear tests in the DPRK, which resulted in a direct attack on South Korea in 2010
  
- *Despite all the peace negotiations, it has not been reached and the region is still unstable*



# Videos and sources

## ■ Videos

- Kashmir conflict [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyayif\\_nla8&ab\\_channel=Vox](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyayif_nla8&ab_channel=Vox)
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