

Diaoyu islands essay sample



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Occasion

Part of the China Minor are the courses of GHP, which is short for Geography, History and Politics. At this course we have to learn all kind of things relating to these subjects like the time of the dynasties and the journey of Marco Polo to China.

Part of our mark for GHP is to write an essay about a certain subject relates to China. The subject we got was the conflict between China and Japan about the Diaoyu islands.

The islands were a lot in the media last few week. For example BBC news wrote a lot about this conflict. That is the reason why this conflict is so interesting; it goes back in history for many year, but at the same time it is still actual.

Last development of this conflict dated from the beginning of this month, when Japan spotted Chinese warships near to these islands. They called it “ dangerous” and “ regrettable”. But why undertook China this action? What precedes to this and why can’t both parties come out this conflict? These are some examples we wanted to know and researched.

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Introduction

The well-known Diaoyu Islands in China, also known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan and Tiaoyutai Islands in Taiwan, are a group of uninhabited islands controlled by Japan. Either China as Japan considers these islands belongs to them. Both parties have their own arguments why they think so. You will find an overview of these arguments later on this essay.

Figure 1

Figure 1

China discovered these islands in the 14th century, while Japan claimed them since the late 1800's. Officially the islands belong to Japan.

They are located in the East China Sea. About 330 kilometres off the coast of Wenzhou, China, around 170 kilometres away from Taiwan and around 170 kilometres north of Ishigaki, Japan, like you can see on figure 1.

Both the names Japan and China gave to these islands mean fishing.

Early history of the Diaoyu Islands.

The first records found of these islands date back to the 15th century. The islands were mentioned in different Chinese books from 1403 and 1534. For example the book: ' Voyage with a Tail Wind'. These books describe that China had already discovered and adopted the islands on the imperial map of the Ming Dynasty. In this century they already named the islands Diaoyu Dao. In this time the imperial courts of the Ming and Qing Dynasties sent imperial envoys to Ryukyu twenty-four times. The Diaoyu Islands were exactly located on their route to Ryukyu. Different records were found of these islands in various reports written by Chinese imperial envoys in that time.

The waters surrounding Diaoyu Dao are traditionally Chinese fishing ground. For generations Chinese fishermen have engaged in fishing activities in these waters. Also in the past the Chinese people used the Diaoyu Islands as a navigation marker when they came back from a voyage.

At the same time these islands were used as a coastal front line in the battle against Japanese pirates. The islands were under supervision of China's

coastal defence. The first published description of the islands in Europe was in a book imported by Isaac Titsingh in 1796. The text of this book was published in Japan in 1785. The map of East China Sea created by the French cartographer Pierre Lapie and others in 1809 coloured the Diaoyu Islands and the Taiwan islands as the same. Maps such as a new map from China from the latest authorities published in Britain in 1811, and a couple of other of these maps, all marked the Diaoyu Islands as part of China's territory.

In 1884 Japan did secret movement to intervene Diaoyu Dao. In this year a Japanese man claimed that he first landed on Diaoyu Dao and he found the islands to be uninhabited. After this the Japanese government did secret facts-finding missions to the Diaoyu Islands. They attempted to invade and occupy the islands. In the Chinese news there were reported: " Recently, Japanese flags have been seen on the islands, revealing Japan's intention to occupy these islands."

Additionally, the Japanese government did not dare to take any further action for fear of reaction from China. The attempting to occupy Diaoyu islands was clearly described in Japan diplomatic documents. The documents showed that Japan was fully aware of the intended occupy of the islands. Japan had consistently acted in secrecy without making its moves public.

At the end of the Sino-Japanese War, were the Qing court was defeated, Japan forced China to sign the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki. They forced China to cede all the so-called ' Formosa islands' to Japan. The Formosa islands were in fact the Diaoyu Islands. In 1900 Japan changed the name Diaoyu Islands to Senkaku Islands.

Recent history of the Diaoyu Islands or Senkaku Islands.

Japan controlled the islands from 1895 and named them the Senkaku Islands. Around 1900 the Japanese constructed a fish processing plant on the islands with 200 workers. The fishing business failed and the islands were desolated again. The Japanese controlled these islands until it surrender at the end of World War II. The islands came under United States occupation from 1945 until 1971.

Just after they discovered in 1968 that there might be found oil reserves under the sea near these islands, the United States gave in 1971 the transfer of administration to Japan. This reversion was called the Okinawa Reversion Treaty. The Chinese and Taiwanese government have officially disputed the reversion of these islands in 1972. The Chinese claim they first discovered, named and exploited them in the 14th century. Now China wants control over the islands.

Since the islands reverted to Japanese government control in 1972, Japan has been given civic authority over the territory. However, the central government of Japan has not allowed to start working on or developing the islands. The islands are an issue between the relations of Japan and China and the relations of Japan en Taiwan. Despite the hard relations between China and Taiwan, they both agree that the islands belong to the Toucheng Township in the province Taiwan that belongs to the Republic of China. Japan does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state and does not accept the claims of China and Taiwan to the islands.

In 1979 an official delegation from the Japanese government composed of 50 professors camped on one of the islands for about four weeks. They analysed the local ecosystem, studied the local marine life, and examined whether the island would support human habitation.

Current disputes

In this chapter you can read information on different positions of the main stakeholders. The stakeholders about which you can read are: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (Japanese government), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (Chinese government), government of Taiwan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China), the China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands, the Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands and the United States. This chapter will end with a short paragraph which describes an effect of inter alia this dispute.

NOTE: the terms ' Senkaku Islands', ' Diaoyu Islands' and the ' Diaoyutai Islands' all refer to the Diaoyu Islands. The different governments use their own term, which you will read in following paragraphs.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan – General point of view The general point of view on the Senkaku Islands dispute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan can be described by the following five statements. 1. Japan has always supported the reform and door-opening policies China has undertaken. Japan put a lot of effort in her relations with China. Japan has made great contributions by taking the lead in providing assistance for China and by promoting investment in China after China pursued its economic openings.

2. Based on historical facts and international law the Senkaku Islands are inherent territory of Japan. 3. The Japanese government is against changing the current state by using coercion, intimidation, any acts of violence or any publicity offending the national sentiment. 4. The Senkaku Islands are under control of the Japanese government. 5. The United States are the ally of Japan and are, in accordance with Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treat, fully committed to the defence of the Senkaku Islands.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan - Short-term history

In this paragraph you will read the short-term history of the Senkaku Islands dispute from the point of view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Last year's China has intensified her maritime activities around the islands, especially since 2008. Last April 2012 former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara announced his plan to purchase the Senkaku Islands and develop a variety of facilities on them. To minimize any negative impact on the relationship between China and Japan, the Japanese government decided to purchase the islands and transferred the ownership of the islands from a private citizen to their government under domestic civil law. The perception of the Japanese government is that the Chinese government reacted very exaggerated on this purchase.

Their reaction was the sending of Chinese government ships to waters surrounding the islands. The ships have repeatedly intruded into Japan's territorial waters. It is regrettable that China has not fully understood how the relationship between Japanese central and local governments functions,

nor how private property is secured, due to the differences between the two countries.

Recently large-scale anti-Japanese protests occurred in regions throughout China, which resulted in violence towards Japanese nationals, arson, destruction and the looting of Japanese-affiliated companies. Currently the Chinese government makes the argument that Japan is defeated in the World War 2 and not the right has to overthrow the post-war international against the will of the victors. 7

During the period between September 11 (2012) and December 15 (2012), Chinese government vessels navigated the Japanese waters off the coast of the Senkaku Islands nearly daily. They have intruded Japanese territorial waters as many as 18 times using a total of 62 vessels. 7 The vessels sometimes stayed in the Japanese territorial waters for more than seven hours. On December 13 (2012), a Chinese State Oceanic Administration Aircraft intruded Japan's airspace by flying over the Senkaku Islands. This is the first intrusion of this kind. Following the international law, every state has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory. This means that the act of the Chinese government is unlawful. 7

The government of Japan intends to deal calmly with the matter under any circumstances, but they will take firm response to airspace incursions under domestic law and regulations. Japan is concerned that the relations between the two countries could be harmed if China further escalates the current situation. Japan strongly hopes that China will prove its diplomacy of "peacefully dealing with issues" by its own actions.

Japan sees itself as a peace-loving nation which will continue to contribute to peace and prosperity in Asia. On January 30, 2013, a Chinese Navy ship directed a radar to an escort ship of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force, which is able to guide weapons. The situation in the waters surrounding the islands became even more tense on February 4 (2013) when China's intrusion into Japan's territorial waters lasted more than 14 hours, the longest period yet. 7

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China - General point of view
The general point of view on the Diaoyu Islands dispute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China can be described by the following three statements. 1. The Diaoyu Islands are following the Chinese government China's sacred territory since ancient times, supported by historical facts and jurisprudential evidence. They say that Chinese people first discovered, named and exploited the islands. Chinese fishermen would have long been engaged in production activities on and in these islands and their adjacent waters.

The Diaoyu Islands have been put under the jurisdiction of China's naval defence as affiliated islands of Taiwan since the Ming Dynasty. Chinese and some foreign maps show that the Diaoyu Islands belong to China. 2. Following the Chinese government have the Diaoyu Islands never been terra nullius (= no man's land) and are they the indisputable owner of these islands. 3. The Chinese government has always attached importance to developing relations with Japan. Their mutual benefitting relationship serves the fundamental interest of the two countries, citizens and conducts to peace stability and development of the region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China - Short-term history In this paragraph you will read the short-term history of the Senkaku Islands dispute from the point of view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

On 10 September 2012 the Japanese government announced the purchase of the Diaoyu Islands and the implementation of their nationalization of these islands. The Chinese government sees this action as a gross violation of China's sovereignty and as offensive to the 1.3 billion Chinese people. The purchase of the Diaoyu Islands by the Japanese government is conflicting with the goal of upholding the larger interest of the relations between China and Japan. The Chinese government states that the purchase of the islands is totally illegal and invalid and won't alter China's territorial sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands.

The Chinese government says that they won't sit idly watching its territorial sovereignty being infringed upon. They strongly urge the Japanese government to immediately stop all actions that may undermine China's territorial sovereignty. Following their opinion Japan should come back to the understanding and common ground reached between China and Japan, and that they should return to the track of negotiated settlement of the dispute. Japan has to bear all serious consequences arising if they insist on going its own way. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China - General point of view The general point of view on the Diaoyu Islands dispute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China can be described by the following two statements.

1. The Taiwanese government demands that the Japanese government refrains from taking any unilateral actions which violate the ROC's (Taiwanese) sovereignty over the Diaoyutai Islands. 2. The Taiwanese government takes the view that Japan lacks historical and legal grounds to claim sovereignty over the Diaoyutai Islands. Following them Japan has not the grounds to nationalize the islands because: several historical Chinese documents indicate that the islands were first discovered, named and used by the Chinese; the fact that Japan has argued that the Diaoyutai Islands were terra nullius (no one's land). ,

China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands

The China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands is a non-governmental organisation which maintains that Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands) are a part of Chinese territory. This organisation carries out several actions to make their statement and regain media attention. In the next paragraph you'll read an example of such actions.

In the early morning of March 24, 2004, seven activists from the group landed on the islands, planning to stay for several days. That afternoon, they were detained by the Japanese coast guard. The incident gave the territorial dispute renewed media attention and worsened Sino-Japanese relations. 12

Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands

Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands is an activist organisation that asserts Chinese sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands. The group regularly sends expeditions to the islands and would make landing on them to assert Chinese sovereignty. In addition to its goals regarding the Diaoyu

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Islands, the group has also called for the Japanese government to apologise for its wartime atrocities and to stop distorting the history of World War II. This organisation compared with the China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands carries out actions which are more excessive. You'll read an example in the next paragraph.

On 22 October 2006, 22 activists (from Hongkong, mainland China, Macau, Canada and Australia) set sail to the islands. They did this despite warnings from the Japanese government that they would expel them from entering waters around the islands. The expedition marked the tenth anniversary of the group's first expedition to the islands and to commemorate the death of a member of the first expedition (who drowned while trying to land on the islands). The crew reached the islands but was unable to actually make a landing, due to interception by the Japanese coast guard. Despite having failed to land they declared the expedition as an "absolute success". 13

United States - General point of view

The United States take no position regarding the dispute of the Senkaku Islands. Victoria Nuland, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United States, said the following about the dispute: "With regard to the islands that you mentioned, which the United States calls the Senkakus, we also take no position on the ultimate sovereignty of those islands. We want to see the dispute settled among the parties peacefully and in conformity with international law." Anti-Japanese sentiment in China

In this final paragraph of this chapter we'll short describe an effect of inter alia this dispute, the anti-Japanese sentiment in China. The anti-Japanese

sentiment in China is an issue with modern roots (post-1868). This is rooted in the conflicts which include concessions in areas of China (towards the end of the Qing Dynasty), dissatisfaction with the settlement and the Twenty-One Demands by the Japanese government, atrocities of the Second Sino-Japanese War and Japan's post-war actions and some issues related to Chinese people in Japan.

The anti-Japanese sentiment was manifested in several actions during several events. These are different sporting events (e. g. Beijing Olympics) and also protests after Japanese claims and actions regarding the sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands. In other words, the anti-Japanese sentiment in China is reflected in the behaviour of Chinese people according to the Senkaku Islands dispute. 15

Conclusion

As you can see, both parties have their own reasons why the islands belongs to them. In our opinion the Islands belongs to China. We think this country has the most convincing arguments.

China has evidence they discovered the group of islands first. Pictures that goes back to the 15th century. Besides of this, Japan admitted this by publishing a book where they painted the islands just like China in the late 18th century. Later on Japan changed their minds and captured these islands, secretly! They made up the official administration in secrecy and not made their actions public. They did, afterwards. We think it is a unfair and mean trick.

It is difficult to solve this problem. This conflicts runs for years. Several attempts to made it up failed because both governments are too stubborn to admit. Our solution to this problem is to let an independent party take a look to this case and made a judgment. A suitable option is the International Court of Justice, located in The Hague, The Netherlands. The decision of this court binding and everybody has to follow it.

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