



China, Japan Set Up Military Hotline

For Prelims: Senkaku island, Diaoyu island, East China Sea

For Mains: Impact of Territorial Disputes in Geopolitics

Why in News?

Recently, China and Japan set up military hotlines (a direct phone line set up for a specific purpose) to manage maritime, air incidents over disputed islands (Senkaku Island).

- China and Japan **have a long-festering dispute over uninhabited** [East China Sea](#) islands controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

Why was the Hotline Established?

- This move was made to strengthen their capability of managing and controlling incidents arising due to their aggressive patrolling of the disputed waters.
- The **hotline will enrich** the **communication channels** between the defence departments of China and Japan, strengthen the capabilities of the two sides to manage and control maritime and air crises, and help maintain regional peace and stability.
- This move will further **maintain regional peace and stability.**

What is the Senkaku Island Dispute?

- **About:**
 - The Senkaku Island dispute concerns a territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands known as:
 - **Senkaku** Islands **in Japan,**
 - **Diaoyu** Islands **in China,** and
 - **Tiaoyutai** Islands **in Taiwan.**
 - Both Japan and China claim ownership of these islands.
- **Location:**
 - Eight uninhabited islands **lie in the East China Sea.** They have a **total area** of **about 7 sq km** and lie northeast of Taiwan. [//](#)



▪ **Strategic Importance:**

- Islands are close to strategically **important shipping lanes**, offer **rich fishing grounds** and are thought to contain **oil deposits**.

▪ **Japan's Claim:**

- After World War II, Japan renounced claims to a number of territories and islands including Taiwan in the 1951 [Treaty of San Francisco](#).
- But under the treaty, the Nansei Shoto islands came under USA trusteeship and were then returned to Japan in 1971.
- Japan says that Senkaku islands are part of the Nansei Shoto islands and hence they also belong to Japan.
- Besides, **China raised no objections to the San Francisco deal**.
- **Only since 1970s**, when the issue of oil resources in the area emerged, **Chinese and Taiwanese authorities** began pressing their **claims**.

▪ **China's Claim:**

- These Islands have been part of its territory since ancient times, serving as important fishing grounds administered by the province of Taiwan.
- When Taiwan was returned in the **Treaty of San Francisco**, China said the islands as part of it – should also have been returned.

▪ **Taiwan Claims:**

- Taiwan claims the islands **but has forged agreements** with Japan to avoid any conflict as Japan maintains close defence ties with Taipei.
- Despite the ongoing dispute, Japan maintains close defence ties with Taiwan.

Other Recent Island Disputes:

- Kuril Island: Located in North Pacific Ocean.
 - Dispute is between Russia and Japan
- The Chagos archipelago: Located in North Indian Ocean.
 - Dispute is between Britain and Mauritius.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which one of the following statements best reflects the issue with Senkaku Islands, sometimes mentioned in the news?

- (a) It is generally believed that they are artificial islands made by a country around South China Sea.
- (b) China and Japan engage in maritime disputes over these islands in East China Sea.
- (c) A permanent American military base has been set up there to help Taiwan to increase its defence capabilities.
- (d) Though International Court of Justice declared them as no man's land, some South-East Asian countries claim them.

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- Senkaku island is not an artificial island but a natural occurring island. It is a group of Eight uninhabited islands. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- The Senkaku Island dispute concerns a territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands known between China and Japan. Both Japan and China claim ownership of these islands. Senkaku island lies in the East China Sea. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The US did not establish the permanent military bases over the senkaku island but joint military exercises have been conducted between the US and Japan Military forces. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.
- International court of justice has not given any verdict like No man's land regarding Senkaku Island. Hence statement 4 is not correct.

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