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Confronting The Dragon In The South China Sea



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By Alexander Baron

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China is the rising super-power, and is currently enjoying good relations with the West; that includes Australia. In October, the Chinese leader Xi Jinping made a [state visit to the UK](#) which included the signing of a massive trade deal, one which is good for both countries. Nevertheless, the activities of the Chinese military in the South China Sea are causing some consternation with Western governments.

For some time, the Chinese have been in the process of building islands in this area, over which China claims sovereignty. The Spratly Islands are not quite the most remote archipelago in the world, but they're a long way from your nearest supermarket. The Chinese have been dredging up sand and piling it on partly submerged coral reefs. The scale of the operation is impressive, but both China's neighbours and the United States find it alarming.

There are fears that this will escalate tensions and even result in military action against them; the main protagonist is the Philippines, which is unfortunate, because the Philippines is virtually an outpost of the United States.



The Chinese military at work on Mischief Reef

So why is China building these artificial islands, and what is the problem? There are issues here related to international law, but the main one is that China with its close to 1.4 billion population is seeking to dominate the region militarily. The big question for us is not what should we do to stop it, but why should we care?

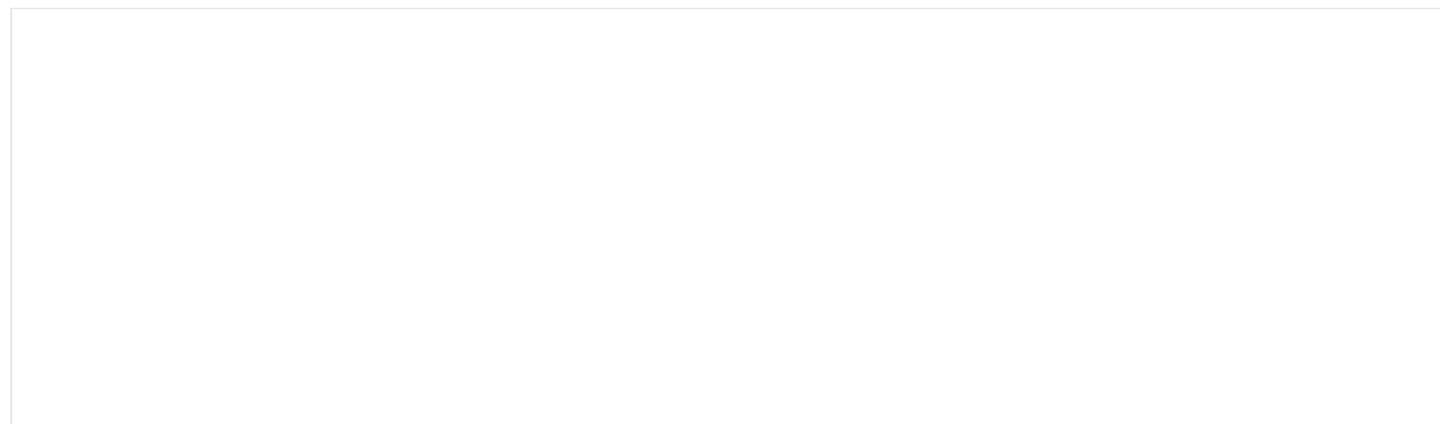
The British Empire conquered the world bringing civilisation to darkest Africa (and don't let any left wing idiot tell you otherwise), railways and the rule of law to India, and a *lingua franca* to all. By contrast, the American Empire, even if it is an empire by proxy, has been an unmitigated disaster. As Randy Newman [wrote in 1972](#): "No one likes us..."

Since the rule of Henry VIII and before, European nations have striven to effect a balance of power to prevent any one nation's dominance. That didn't stop England in effect conquering the world, not that this ever did ordinary people any good. The point is, the United States is no longer the force it was, it has massive internal problem including infrastructure drastically in need of repair, millions of illegal immigrants, and over well over two million people in prison thanks largely to the war on drugs. Why should the US or any other nation bother if the Chinese dominate the Far East, or even if they take over the world? If they did that, they'd have to run it, and that is where their problems would really begin.

The United States especially should stay out of this; the one genuine cause we should all have for concern is the damage being done to the coral reefs as can be seen in this [short but alarming video](#). Trying to take on China militarily would be a disaster for all, but the Chinese people and indeed their Government are acutely aware of environmental issues. The West and conservation

organisations must use not pressure but reason to persuade China at least not to cause anymore damage to one of the wonders of the natural world. Before it is too late.

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