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Abstract

Die Volksrepublik China und die ASEAN im Streit um die Inselgruppe der Spratlys

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The continuous struggle for sovereignty over the Spratly islands, located in the South China Sea, still remains to be a potential flashpoint for conflict in Southeast Asia. Although the Spratly group mainly consists of uninhabited islets, reefs, and shoals, the surrounding seabed presumably contains large deposits of raw oil, natural gas, and minerals, thus being at the focus of the claimant states' interest. In recent years it has been particularly difficult for the claimants to deal with the Peoples' Republic of China who claims the whole Spratly area due to - alleged - historic evidence. Some years ago, the evolution of a closer cooperation and stronger sense of unity within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has contributed to moderating the PRC's behaviour. However, in these days ASEAN seems to be preoccupied with internal problems so that it remains to be seen whether the organisation can mediate the territorial disputes and elaborate solutions like a joint development, hence reducing the risk of armed clashes or even conflict in the region.