

## **Maritime Expansion by China as it Pursues Changes in Order**

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### Introduction

China's maritime expansions are rapidly increasing. The "Twelfth Five-Year Plan" for economic development from 2011 to 2015, decided by the Chinese government, states that China intends to "exploit and utilize marine resources rationally, and to actively develop the marine oil and gas, marine transport, marine fishing, and coastal travel industries", and has demonstrated China's commitment to promote the development of its marine economy<sup>1</sup>. As if to live up to this policy, China is pioneering the Northern Sea Route by sending research vessels to Iceland through the Arctic seas via the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Strait; at the same time, they are sending a newly-developed deep-sea research vessel to the Mariana Trench off the coast of Guam, successfully diving over seven thousand meters below the surface of the sea and setting the record for the deepest dive in the world.

China's maritime expansion program does not stop at the pursuit of economic interests such as the development of resources and the pioneering of oceanic routes. They are also intensifying their maritime expansion activities for diplomatic and security purposes, such as holding the high ground in disputes over sovereignty and territorial rights with other countries, as well as securing maritime interests. In the East China Sea and the South China Sea, there has been an increase in activity by patrol ships and aircrafts of maritime law enforcement agencies led by those such as "Haijian" and "Yuzheng", and also repeated provocative actions against neighboring nations for maritime interests including territorial rights of small islands and offshore / fishing resources. The Chinese navy is also starting to put more coercive pressure on neighboring nations such as by actively conducting large-scale live-ammunition drills and small-island recapturing drills. Furthermore, it is trying to increase its military presence in the Western Pacific by sending fleets of ships in the area, passing the Nansei Islands and periodically conducting pelagic training with anti-ship assaults, air defense combats, and antisubmarine warfare drills. Such aggressive maritime expansion backed by China's capabilities causes concern both within the East Asian countries faced with

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<sup>1</sup> "Chapter 14: To Promote the Development of the Marine Economy", "Outline of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (full text)", March 6, 2011, [http://www.gov.cn/2011lh/content\\_1825838\\_4.htm](http://www.gov.cn/2011lh/content_1825838_4.htm)

this pressure and countries such as the United States, which sees the maintenance of security order in these territorial waters as a national interest.

China is an emerging superpower that is rapidly increasing not only its economic strength, but also its comprehensive national power that includes military strength. Active advancement into the surrounding territorial waters by this country has a great effect on security in the East Asian region. The main issue here is the kind of approach that China, which is now beginning to gain more power, will take toward the maritime order in East Asia—an area that has been shared by regional countries including Japan and the United States. Based on this mindset, this report first examines factors such as historical backgrounds and China's intentions concerning its recent intensification in maritime expansion to ensure security. Next, it analyzes the characteristics of China's advances into areas such as the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Western Pacific in light of the actual conditions they present. Finally, it considers the measures that Japan and the United States must take upon considering the impact that China's maritime expansion will make on the security in East Asia.

## 1 The background and intentions of China's maritime expansion

### (1) Historical changes in the security environment

Ever since its foundation in 1949, the People's Republic of China repeatedly had disputes over territorial borders with neighboring nations. Soon after its foundation, the Korean War erupted in June 1950 with North Korea invading South Korea. The North Korean forces initially had the advantage, but the U.N. forces led by the United States took the counteroffensive and drove them up to the Yalu River at the Sino-North Korean border. This led to China's setting up of the "Chinese People's Volunteer Army" and entering the Korean War in support of North Korea. Thereafter, China fought a large-scale war with the United States until finally reaching a cease-fire agreement in July 1953. China had been disputing with India over issues such as Tibet and unsettled borders, but military clashes erupted over the Sino-Indian border issue when the People's Liberation Army attacked Indian troops at Kashmir and Aksai Chin in October 1962. China also worsened its relations with the Soviet Union since the 1960's, leading to fierce warfare in March 1969 between the two countries over Damansky Island (Zhenbao Island) on the Ussuri River at the Sino-Soviet border. In February 1979, the Chinese military crossed territorial borders and brought about the Sino-Vietnamese War when it invaded Vietnam, which had increased its influence in the Indochina Peninsula with support from the Soviet Union.

China, which by then had faced many security issues involving territorial borders,

began to place emphasis on its army troops in its development of the People's Liberation Army. In addition, China dealt with its inability to provide itself with expensive and modern equipment due to its lagging behind in economic development by employing "human wave tactics", where huge numbers of armed personnel were mobilized to enemy territories that the People's Liberation Army had invaded. As a result, the People's Liberation Army became the military force with the greatest number of armed personnel in the world, centering on its army troops. At the same time, China made intensive investments of its scarce resources in the development of nuclear weapons in order to increase its deterrent capabilities against the United States and the Soviet Union. After having undergone successful atomic tests in 1964, China also began to develop ballistic missiles, and by the 1980's had acquired status as a nuclear power possessing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICMBs).

However, the Cold War brought about great changes in the security environment that surrounded China. General Secretary Gorbachev's visit to China in May 1989 greatly improved Sino-Soviet relations. Pressure on China from the north significantly decreased in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Indochina Wars were coming to an end and China normalized relations with Vietnam. Thenceforth, China was able to define territorial borders with neighboring nations in a steady stream. In the late 1990's, China concluded border agreements with Central Asian countries that had become independent nations with the collapse of the Soviet Union. 1999 saw the border demarcation between China and Vietnam, followed by demarcations of all borders between China and Russia in 2004. As a result, the only disputes over territorial borders that China was facing were with India. Thus, the threats to China on land had greatly decreased, as the nation solved most of the territorial border issues that it had been facing since its foundation and had been major security issues.

However, many of the remaining issues surrounding sovereignty and territory that China faced were on the sea. The main issues are the unification of Taiwan, territorial disputes over small islands in the South China Sea, and the dispute over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. During the Cold War, China was unable to tackle maritime issues head-on and solving them was not necessarily an urgent matter as the major threats it directly faced on land were more important. However, coping with remaining oceanic sovereignty and territorial disputes emerged as a major issue for China as a result of resolving disputes over territorial borders with neighboring nations. These are the historical changes of the security environment surrounding China, which underlies the intensification of maritime expansion by the Chinese navy and maritime law enforcement agencies.

## (2) New national interests rising from economic development

China's rapid economic development is a major factor that prompts China's maritime expansion. China, pursuing an economic policy of reform and opening doors since the end of the 1970's, became the second strongest economy in the world by making a transition to a market economy. China's economy, which has grown through abundant investments and technology from overseas along with expanded trade with other countries, is furthering its ties with the global economy on an unprecedented scale. China's export and import values of 2012 rose to 2,049 billion dollars and 1,818 billion dollars respectively. China's export value was number one in the world and its total import and export values combined was number two; second only to that of the United States<sup>2</sup>. The Chinese economy's degree of dependence on foreign trade also rose to 47% that year<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, China is consuming more resources and energy with the rapid growth of its economy and is depending more on imports from overseas to meet this demand. For example, China was once a net exporter of crude oil but became a net importer in the early 1990's, and has been increasing its import volume ever since. China imported 2 trillion 71.09 million tons of crude oil in 2012 and its degree of external dependence reached 56.4%. Considering its external dependence of crude oil consumed in 2005 being 42.9%, this was an increase of 13.5 points in just seven years<sup>4</sup>.

As a result of rapidly continuing to improve its economy while increasing mutual dependence with the global economy, China is expanding its maritime-related "national interests". It is especially vital for China to secure a steady supply of resources and energy in its effort to ensure the continued growth of its economy. Though China's degree of external dependence on resources and energy supplies are rising, risks cannot be ignored, such as sudden increases in prices and decreases in supplies that may result from sudden changes in international market conditions and tense international relations. The increase of domestic resource and energy supplies presents itself as a major challenge in China's economic security. From this standpoint, securing abundant oil and gas resources in the East China Sea and the South China Sea that seem promising for the future are extremely important national interests to China. It is also both economically and politically important for the Chinese government to secure the fishing resources in these waters for the sake of its own fishermen.

The securing of "maritime interests" such as petroleum, natural gas, and fishing resources in the ocean is also an important role of the People's Liberation Army. China's

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<sup>2</sup> "Continued Promotion of the Position of Chinese Trading", "People's Daily", April 11, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> "External Dependence Last Year Dropped 3.1% From the Preceding Year", "People's Daily", February 8, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> "Our Nation's External Dependence of Crude Oil Last Year: 56.4%", "People's Daily", February 6, 2013

defense white paper, “The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces”, stated in April 2013 that “The seas and oceans provide immense space and abundant resources for China’s sustainable development”, and that “It is an important role of the People’s Liberation Army to protect the maritime interests of our nation”. Furthermore, it has specified its policy that the navy shall provide security in areas such as marine law enforcement, the fishing industry, and petroleum and gas development conducted by China<sup>5</sup>.

The majority of the shipping involved in China’s increasing foreign trade including the import of resources and energy and the export of products manufactured in China relies on marine transportation. It is essential for the Chinese economy’s stable growth to secure safety in the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) routes, which are the main marine traffic routes that China heavily relies on. Most of all, the SLOC routes, which lead from the Middle East to the Indian Ocean, the Straits of Malacca, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea, serve as main arteries in China’s foreign trade. Approximately 80% of the crude oil that China imports allegedly passes through the Straits of Malacca. The SLOC routes, however, are not necessarily safe for China. On the SLOC routes between the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea are military influences of countries including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, which are disputing with China over territorial rights of the Spratly Islands. In the East China Sea are the established military presences of Japan, which China is disputing over the Senkaku Islands with, and Japan’s ally, the United States. Furthermore, India, which is disputing over territorial borders with China, is increasing its military presence in the Indian Ocean.

China is aware that the SLOC routes, which are extremely important to its economy, are besieged by many countries that are not necessarily friendly, and that adverse relationships with these countries have the risk of obstructing the navigation of Chinese-related ships. In order to decrease this risk, China sees it necessary to intensify its maritime expansion by its navy and maritime law enforcement agencies. The above-referenced Chinese defense white paper indicates that “With the gradual integration of China’s economy into the world economic system, overseas interests have become an integral component of China’s national interests”, and points to the safety and securing of overseas resources and energies, SLOC routes, and national citizens and corporate businesses located overseas, as concrete examples of “overseas interests”<sup>6</sup>. Director Chen Zhou of the National Defense Policy Research Center of the Academy of

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<sup>5</sup> “The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces”, “Chinese Military Network”, April 16, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Same as above.

Military Science, who is a major contributor to the writing of defense white papers, points out that “Unyielding security must be provided by building more on the capacity to act overseas in order to protect the nation’s overseas interests.” At the same time, Director Chen stated that “China’s security interests have extended from safety of territories to safety of the ocean, outer space, and cyber space, and from safety of the national land to safety of overseas interests”, asserting the importance of the role that the People’s Liberation Army plays in protecting “maritime interests” and “overseas interests”<sup>7</sup>.

## 2 Intensification of pressure on neighboring nations

The situations in areas such as the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea must eventually change if China’s advances into the ocean are to help settle disputes in the ocean over sovereignty and territories advantageously, or to protect growing maritime and overseas interests. In other words, Taiwan must be unified under China, all territorial rights and maritime interests in the small islands of the South China Sea must be vested in China, and the territorial rights to the Senkaku Islands along with the maritime interests in the East China Sea must all be under China’s control from China’s point of view. In recent years, China has been ignoring universal values such as freedom and democracy, the rule of law, and existing rules in addressing these issues, and is reinforcing its stance on using force to apply pressure on the nations concerned.

### (1) Taiwan

The unification of Taiwan is an extremely major issue for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime that involves its legitimacy in the global community. Taiwan is a land that was ceded to Japan in 1895 as a result of Qing China’s defeat in the Japanese-Sino War. The Communist Party, which sees itself as the embodiment of Chinese nationalism, sees the recovery of Taiwan as a major role in its own significance. In addition, unification with Taiwan, which was split away due to the defeat of the Kuomintang (KMT) in the internal war with the Communist Party on the continent, would validate the justness of the one-party rule by the CCP. Therefore, the Taiwan issue is a “core interest” of China, just as Chinese leaders had repeatedly pointed out.

During the Cold War, Taiwan was under control of the KMT which upheld the unification with China as a party principle; thus there was no need for the Communist Party to worry about Taiwan seeking political autonomy from the continent. However, Taiwan rapidly progressed toward political democratization when Lee Teng-hui became

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<sup>7</sup> “Decoded White Paper <The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces>”, “Chinese Military Network”, April 16, 2013.

president in 1988. He was re-elected in a direct presidential election held in 1996. A change of government to the Democratic Progressive Party was achieved when Chen Shui-bian was elected president in the 2000 election. The KMT regained control when Ma Ying-jeou was elected president in the 2008 election. The people of Taiwan strengthened their own political identity, different from that in the continent, under a one-party rule while freedom and democracy were being firmly established in Taiwanese politics. Opinion polls released by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council show that seventy to eighty percent of the people of Taiwan for the last decade or so have been wanting the current situation to be maintained without unification or independence<sup>8</sup>. This means that most of its citizens are passive about unification with China.

Facing Taiwan's progressions toward political democratization and tendencies of autonomy from the continent, China decided to put an end to Taiwan's tendency of segregation from China by intensifying its military pressure on Taiwan. This is because forgetting about Taiwan's unification is not an option for the CCP, and neither is watching Taiwan attain political autonomy as it embraces democracy. From 1995 to 1996, China took aggressive action by shooting short-range ballistic missiles into the waters near Taiwan. China possesses over eleven hundred short-range ballistic missiles and is working on upgrading their capabilities<sup>9</sup>, thereby making this the key to its military pressure on Taiwan. Its number of fourth-generation fighters such as Su-27s, Su-30s, J-10s, and J-11s is rapidly increasing and greatly outnumbers those of Taiwan. The military balance on the Taiwan Strait between China and Taiwan is shifting to China's favor<sup>10</sup>. In 2005, China enacted its "Anti-Secession Law" and specified that it will use "non-peaceful" means if peaceful unification with Taiwan proves impossible<sup>11</sup>.

When President Ma Ying-jeou, who had been advocating improved relations with China, assumed office in 2008, China expressed its willingness to promote cooperation with Taiwan such as by resuming talks with Taiwan and concluding the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). On the surface, it appears that current relations between China and Taiwan are stable, but this is largely due to political compromise on the part of the people of Taiwan, who are faced with military pressure from China. In other words, the options that the Taiwanese people have for the future of Taiwan arising from a democratic election are greatly limited due to China's military

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<sup>8</sup> Mainland Affairs Council "民衆对当前两岸關係之看法" March 22, 2013, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=104149&ctNode=6332&mp=1>

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013," May 6, 2013, p. 42, [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2013\\_China\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2013_China_Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Defense "2012 White Paper on Defense" (Ministry of Defense, 2012), Page 46.

<sup>11</sup> "The Anti-Secession Law (full text)" Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Japan website, March 14, 2005, <http://www.china-embassy.or.jp/jpn/zt/www12/t187198.htm>

pressure. The Xi Jinping administration shows signs of intentions to hold political discussions that involve unification in the future<sup>12</sup>. China may even try to forcefully hold political discussions while disregarding Taiwan's democratic political system and intensifying military pressure upon Taiwan.

## (2) The South China Sea

The South China Sea has over two hundred islands, reefs, sandbanks, sunken rocks, and so on of various sizes, and China is disputing over its territorial rights with other countries including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia. When Japan waived territorial rights to the small islands in the South China Sea after losing in the Pacific War, it was unclear who they belonged to. However, various countries began to actively claim territorial rights when the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) released a report pointing out possibilities of resources such as petroleum and natural gas in the South China Sea during the late 1960's. Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia immediately took control over the small islands, most of which are close to their respective countries, and promoted development in areas such as resources and tourism. Despite this, China was left behind in advances into the South China Sea as its naval capacities were insufficient and its domestic affairs were in turmoil.

China has adopted on its own dotted U-shaped broken lines ("nine dotted lines") that cover most of the waters in the South China Sea and is claiming territorial rights to all the small islands as well as jurisdiction over all the waters in this area. However, China's claims are mostly based on the ambiguous contents of materials such as ancient documents, and its evidence to back these claims up is weak in the light of modern-day international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Above all, China's definitions of regions such as the continental shelves and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) that it claims jurisdiction over are not consistent with those stipulated by the UNCLOS. China has yet to officially announce its opinion on the significance that the "nine dotted lines" have in international law, and this is apparently because it is unable to find reasonable grounds to justify its claims in the light of international law.

China, which is in a weak position under international law and was left behind in advances into the South China Sea, has applied the use or threat of force to change how other countries take control of small islands. In 1974, China attacked the South Vietnamese Army and took over the entire Paracels. In 1988, it attacked Vietnamese

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<sup>12</sup> For example, Spokesman Yang Yi of the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office presented a way to initiate dialog where the interests of people on both sides of the Strait take precedence, while pointing out that "cross-Straits political issues exist objectively" ("Taiwan Affairs Office 举行例行新闻发布会", "People's Daily" March 28, 2013).

troops and occupied six of the Spratly Islands. In 1995, it used threats of military force to wrest control of the Mischief Reef from the Philippines. Thereafter, there was a time in the early 2000's when China showed a cooperative stance on the South China Sea issue such as by opening dialog with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). China showed a proactive stance in creating rules shared by the nations concerned for stability in the South China Sea such as by signing the "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" in 2002 and agreeing to work towards abiding by the code of conduct in the future<sup>13</sup>.

However, China later rejected concrete negotiations aimed at forming the code of conduct and returned to its attempts at changing the situation from around 2009 by pressuring the nations concerned with force. At the vanguard are maritime law enforcement agencies in China led by "Haijian" and "Yuzheng". "Haijian" and "Yuzheng" are now periodically conducting patrol activities in the South China Sea and have intensified their obstructive actions towards fishing vessels and resource research vessels of other countries in an attempt to secure maritime interests. In addition to the series of Chinese patrol ships seizing Vietnamese fishing vessels, there has been an incident where a Chinese ship obstructed the operations of a Vietnamese fishing vessel with water cannons<sup>14</sup>, and also where a Chinese ship opened fire on a fishing vessel, thus causing an onboard fire<sup>15</sup>. Obstructions of Vietnamese research vessel activities by Chinese patrol ships are quite frequent along with repeated cases of Chinese patrol ships and fishing vessels cutting resource observation cables of Vietnamese research vessels.

"Haijian" and "Yuzheng" are claiming sovereignty over small islands that are controlled by other countries and intensifying new activities directed at extending control over these small islands. In March 2010, a "Yuzheng" patrol ship approached the Swallow Reef, which is under the control of Malaysia, and started a confrontation with Malaysian Armed Forces ships and aircraft that lasted for eighteen hours. In April 2012, "Haijian" and "Yuzheng" patrol ships obstructed Philippine law enforcement on Chinese fishing vessels that were conducting illegal operations on the Scarborough Shoal, which is located two hundred kilometers west of Luzon Island and claimed by the Philippines. The confrontation between the patrol ships on both sides then continued over a period of two months until China finally drove the Philippine patrol ships out of the waters. Since then, Chinese patrol ships have constantly been surveying the Scarborough Shoal and have established effective control over the area. This signifies

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<sup>13</sup> "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea," November 4th, 2002, <http://www.asean.org/news/item/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea>

<sup>14</sup> "中国漁政在南海打击侵權漁外国船只" "广西新聞網" May 6, 2013 <http://military.people.com.cn/n/2013/0506/c1011-21376447.html>

<sup>15</sup> "Remarks by Foreign Ministry Spokesman on March 25th 2013," [http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/tt\\_baochi/pbnfn/ns130326202046](http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/tt_baochi/pbnfn/ns130326202046)

China's success to change the control of the Scarborough Shoal by the Philippines by employing China's maritime law enforcement agencies.

The People's Liberation Army is also applying pressure on neighboring nations and indirectly providing more support for the activities of the law enforcement agencies by increasing its presence in the South China Sea. In 2009, the Chinese Air Force displayed its power projection capabilities to neighboring nations when its J-10 fighters conducted flight training while being refueled by a refueling plane all the way down to the James Shoal, which is at southernmost portion of the South China Sea claimed by China. In 2010, the Chinese Navy conducted large-scale live-fire exercises in the South China Sea that included the firing of seventy-one missiles. In recent years, remote island recapturing drills with large-scale, two-ton-class landing ships that carry hovercraft and helicopters are repeatedly being held in the South China Sea. In September 2012, China commissioned the aircraft carrier, the "Liaoning". The "Liaoning" has just recently been put to use in carrier-based takeoff and landing training drills, but this does not cause much concern for military forces such as the U.S. military and the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), which possess highly advanced capabilities. However, it may very well bring about military pressure that cannot be ignored by Southeast Asian nations that are in territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea.

### (3) The East China Sea

The Senkaku Islands are Japanese islands that were established under international law in January 1895 as "pre-occupied" by Japan, upon confirmations by the Japanese national government that they were unclaimed islands and not governed by any other country. These islands are in no way related to the territories ceded to Japan by the Qing Dynasty of China when the "Treaty of Shimonoseki", a treaty of peace, was concluded after the Japanese-Sino War in April of the same year. Therefore, the Senkaku Islands are not included in the territories that Japan had to return to China under the "Cairo Declaration". To this day, Japan has maintained territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands ever since they were established under international law. Aside from during the period of administration by the United States after World War 2, the Japanese government has consistently exercised administrative rights over the Senkaku Islands through the supervising and taxing of economic activities on the islands by Japanese people, and has thus effectively controlled the islands. For over seventy years since the Senkaku Islands came under Japan's possession in January 1895, neither the Republic of China nor the People's Republic of China objected to this. Taiwan and China suddenly started to claim territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands only after the

ECAFE pointed out the possibility of oil and gas resources at the islands in 1969.

China first officially claimed territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands at the end of 1971. In April 1978, China had over a hundred armed fishing vessels intrude Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands and applied political pressure on Japan, but for long did not use force in trying to change the status quo of Japan's possession of the islands. Since the late 1970's, China had unilaterally promoted its "setting aside dispute and pursuing joint development" principle in regard to the Senkaku Islands, but abandoned this principle when the Territorial Waters Act, which stipulated China's territorial rights concerning the islands, was enacted in 1992. It goes without saying that Japan has consistently retained territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands, and never agreed to shelve territorial disputes with China.

At around the time China started to pressure neighboring nations over territories and maritime interests with marine law enforcement agencies in the South China Sea, it also started taking the same actions in the East China Sea. In December 2008, "Haijian" patrol ships appeared in the territorial waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands and intruded territorial waters of Japan despite warnings from Japan Coast Guard (JCG) patrol vessels. This was the first intrusion of territorial waters by Chinese government vessels around the Senkaku Islands. Since then, China has stiffened its defiance of Japan's control over the Senkaku Islands such as by having patrol ships of maritime law enforcement agencies intrude Japan's territorial waters. After the captain of a Chinese fishing vessel was arrested for colliding against a JCG patrol vessel in September 2010, "Yuzheng" patrol ships started to periodically appear around the Senkaku Islands and intrude the surrounding waters in the name of protecting Chinese fishermen. As of September 2012, "Haijian" patrol ships have been frequently sent around the Senkaku Islands to intrude Japan's territorial waters as a pretext for the nationalization of the islands by the Japanese government. In December 2012, Japan's airspace over the Senkaku Islands was violated by "Haijian" planes, forcing Air Self-Defense Force fighters to scramble them. China relied on force by maritime law enforcement agencies in an attempt to change the situation where Japan had control over the Senkaku Islands.

The People's Liberation Army is also intensifying military provocations against Japan by increasing activities around the Nansei Islands. As of 2008, the Chinese Navy has been passing through Japan's Nansei Islands, which are included in the so-called "first island chain", and conducting pelagic training in the Western Pacific by sending over fleets of ships, and there has been an increase in the numbers of drills and ships involved. There have especially been a significant number of cases where fleets of Chinese ships navigate the contiguous zone of Japan's Nansei Islands and approach the

Senkaku Islands since September 2012. In January 2013, a Chinese Navy ship took an extremely provocative action by directing a fire-control radar at a Maritime Self-Defense Force escort ship. Aircrafts of the People's Liberation Army have also been intensifying activities in the airspace around the Nansei Islands along with their increased intrusions of Japan's air defense identification zones. The number of times that Chinese planes were scrambled by the Air Self-Defense Force has been growing rapidly as of September 2012, and reached three-hundred and six times during the year 2012, which far outnumbered the number of times of which Russian planes were scrambled that year. Many of the Chinese planes that put Japanese forces in scramble mode were fighters that were approaching the airspace around the Nansei Islands<sup>16</sup>.

By increasing the presence of maritime law enforcement agencies and the People's Liberation Army around the Senkaku Islands, and intensifying pressure on Japan with advanced capabilities, China has clearly demonstrated its intention to change the situation with the Senkaku Islands. At the moment, it appears as though China's agenda includes trying to have Japan enter negotiations on the territorial rights of the Senkaku Islands and agreeing on joint control of the islands.

### 3 Challenges to U.S. military presence

#### (1) Commitment of the United States constituting an obstacle

To China, which has been trying to change the situations in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea as described above; the biggest barrier is the United States. The Republic of China became an ally of the United States when the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty was concluded in 1954. The alliance between the United States and Taiwan ended when the United States established diplomatic relations with China in 1979, and the obligation to provide Taiwan with defensive weapons was imposed on the U.S. Government with the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act by the U.S. Congress. Now, the United States continues to sell weapons to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act, which plays a critical role in the maintaining and upgrading of Taiwanese military capabilities. Furthermore, the United States strongly advocates peaceful resolutions to the issues surrounding the Taiwan Strait, and is restraining China's changing of the situation backed by its capabilities.

The Philippines are an important ally to the United States in the Southeast Asian region. The U.S. military troops stationed in the Philippines during the early 1990's were pulled out with the end of the Cold War, but the security cooperation between the

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<sup>16</sup> Joint Staff Office "2012 Status Report of Scrambles Executed" April 17, 2013, [http://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2013/press\\_pdf/p20130417\\_02.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2013/press_pdf/p20130417_02.pdf)

two countries was strengthened again upon entering the 2000's such as through the active executing of joint drills. The cooperative security relationship between the United States and Vietnam is also deepening. U.S. Navy ships including aircraft carriers are periodically stopping at Vietnamese ports, and frequent military exchanges and joint drills are being held between the two countries. The United States, which is growing more concerned about the rising tension in the South China Sea, has clearly expressed its intentions on deepening its involvement in finding peaceful resolutions to the issues there. During the "Two-Plus-Two" meeting of late April 2012, held between the United States and the Philippines in the midst of the Scarborough Shoal standoff, the United States clearly expressed its policy of strengthening the U.S.-Philippines alliance. This is to be achieved through focus on maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and finding a peaceful resolution to disputes, and also through cooperating to enhance the Philippine military's information-gathering capacity<sup>17</sup>.

Japan is one of the United States' most important allies. U.S. military bases in Japan, which are provided under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, are an essential foundation for the smooth operation of the U.S. military's Asian-Pacific activities as well as the maintenance of its presence in the region. The U.S. military and the SDF have established high interoperability and mutual complementarity upon having built a cooperative relationship that has lasted for half a century. They play a central role in not only Japan's defense, but in maintaining safety and prosperity in the Asian-Pacific region as well. The United States has repeatedly announced that it is obligated to defend the Senkaku Islands under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. In reference to the Senkaku Islands, Defense Secretary Hagel stated during his meeting in April 2013 with Minister of Defense Onodera that "the United States opposes any unilateral or coercive action that seeks to undermine Japan's administrative control"<sup>18</sup>.

China is apparently aware that such involvement and commitment of the United States in areas including the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea makes it difficult for China to change the situations there by force. This is because China would have a better chance to relatively raise its international position with force and change the situations advantageously if the United States were not behind Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Japan. If China is to ultimately settle territorial and sovereignty issues remaining in the ocean in a favorable manner and intensify maritime expansion activities to secure maritime and overseas interests, it is essential to find a

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<sup>17</sup> "US-PHS 2+2 Meetings," US Embassy News and Events 2012, <http://manila.usembassy.gov/meeting2.html> and "Joint Statement of the United States-Philippines Ministerial Dialogue," Media Note, Office of the Spokesperson, April 30, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/188977.htm>

<sup>18</sup> "Press Conference with Secretary Hagel and Defense Minister Onodera from the Pentagon," April 29, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5230>

way to undermine the United States' advantage in East Asian security order. China must decrease or eliminate U.S. military presence in the surrounding waters, as the advantage that the United States has in East Asia is sustained by its immensely powerful military presence.

## (2) Challenges to U.S. military presence

China has already begun acquiring the necessary capabilities to constrain U.S. military actions in its surrounding territorial waters, and the U.S. is cautious of these actions, viewing this as a means to increase China's "Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2AD)" capabilities against the U.S. military<sup>19</sup>. For example, the Chinese Navy has been fortifying its submarine force since the late 1990's. In addition to the ultra quiet Kilo-class submarines purchased from Russia, China is constantly commissioning domestically-produced Song-class and Yuan-class submarines, which are new types of conventionally-powered submarines that are allegedly equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP) systems. Furthermore, its commissioning of nuclear-powered attack submarines in addition to the Han-class submarines involves two Shang-class submarines, which are new types. It has also been pointed out that another new type of submarine to succeed the Shang-class submarine is now in development. Submarines armed with highly destructive weapons such as torpedoes and anti-ship missiles can be difficult to detect as they dive in very deep waters, and are the greatest threat to surface ships. China is attempting to obtain the ability of constraining actions of U.S. Navy ships in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, and the Western Pacific by deploying large numbers of advanced submarines.

Furthermore, the Chinese Navy is sending fleets of ships into the Western Pacific via the first island chain and is constantly conducting pelagic training with practical drills that involve anti-ship attacks, air defense combat, and antisubmarine warfare. This pelagic training is conducted with vessels including modern-class destroyers with advanced anti-ship attack capabilities, as well as Jiangkai-2 class frigates and Luyang 2-class destroyers with stealth technology and high air defense capabilities. Therefore, the objective may be acquiring the ability to engage approaching U.S. Navy ships in the Western Pacific areas such as the U.S. mainland and Hawaii in the event of military conflicts, far from mainland China. There may also be plans to enhance capabilities to move carrier strike forces in the future, considering the recent pelagic training with large-scale landing ships.

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<sup>19</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013," May 6, 2013, pp. 32-33.

The various conventional warhead missiles that China has been promoting the development and deployment of in recent years also play an important role in China's A2AD capabilities against the U.S. military. China acknowledged that it is developing anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) that can directly attack moving ships, but the United States believes that they have already been deployed<sup>20</sup>. ASBM warheads pose large threats to U.S. aircraft carriers as they fall on targets at extremely fast speeds from high altitudes and are difficult to intercept. If China succeeds to increase the capacities of their ASBMs, this would mean greater A2AD capabilities against the United States. China is enhancing the capabilities of its medium-range ballistic missiles such as the DF-21 and deploying long-distance DH-10 cruise missiles. These missiles are thought to possess the capability of being used for precise attacks on targets such as U.S. military bases in Japan and SDF bases. Military conflicts, if they occur, may result in constraining U.S. military actions in China's neighboring areas by attacking U.S. military bases in Japan, or obstructing the SDF's support for the U.S. military by attacking SDF bases.

China has already taken concrete actions in obstructing U.S. military actions in its surrounding waters. In May 2009, Chinese Navy intelligence-gathering vessels, "Haijian" and "Yuzheng" patrol ships, and two fishing trawlers approached the U.S. Navy acoustic surveillance ship, the USNS Impeccable, which was carrying out information gathering activities in the waters a hundred and twenty kilometers off the southern shore of Hainan Island. The passengers of the fishing vessels obstructed the safe navigation of the Impeccable through actions such as throwing pieces of wood at the bow and trying to snag its towed sonar array<sup>21</sup>. The Chinese Navy has constructed a new subterranean submarine base on Hainan Island and is working on the deployment of a new type of submarine. It is suspected that China took concrete actions in trying to deter surveys of submarine movements with the Impeccable around Hainan Island.

Furthermore, China is objecting the principles of free navigation shared by regional countries and interpretations by the UNCLOS, as part of its attempts to constrain information gathering activities that the U.S. military is conducting in waters surrounding China. The United States criticized China's obstructive actions toward the navigation of the Impeccable as violations of the principles of free navigation, which broadly grants free navigation by ships including navy ships. China asserted its position that the Impeccable's information gathering activities are being held in China's EEZs, and that it cannot allow actions by foreign ships within its EEZs that impair China's

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> "Chinese Vessel Shadow, Harass Unarmed U.S. Surveillance Ship," March 9, 2010, [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=43294](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=43294)

security. China presented its own interpretations of the EEZ provisions by the UNCLOS, stating that coastal nations reserve the right to regulate the actions of foreign ships; they reject the positions held by many countries including the United States and Japan that free actions of foreign ships in EEZs are not regulated.

#### 4 The role that the Japan-U.S. alliance plays in maintaining security order

##### (1) The new hard-line leadership

The disputes between China, the Philippines, and Vietnam in the South China Sea, which have been growing tense over the past few years, are by no means unrelated to the dispute over the Senkaku Islands between China and Japan. They are results of China's intensification of maritime expansion in an effort to advantageously settle territorial and sovereignty issues and to change the situations in its surrounding waters to obtain maritime and overseas interests. Without respect for the rules of law or existing rules, China intends to change these situations with its military strength and maritime law enforcement capabilities, which are rapidly growing in strength along with its economic power. The security order that the United States has maintained in East Asia with its solid military presence is China's biggest obstacle in achieving these goals. Therefore, China's ultimate goal is to set back the U.S. military's presence in East Asia by intensifying its maritime expansion, and to take the place of the United States in holding the high ground in regional order. We must perceive the coercive actions in areas such as the South China Sea and the East China Sea by Chinese maritime law enforcement agencies and the People's Liberation Army as the first steps in China's mid-and-long term goal of obtaining a hegemonic position in East Asia.

A new leadership was established in China when Xi Jinping took the place of Hu Jintao as General Secretary at the 18th Party Congress, held in November 2012. The Xi Jinping Leadership announced its policy of further intensifying its maritime expansion backed by force. The political report at the Party Congress stated that China intends to "firmly protect the nation's maritime interests and build a powerful maritime nation" and established the building of this "powerful maritime nation" as one of its future goals<sup>22</sup>. When speaking to the press for the first time after becoming General Secretary, Xi Jinping pointed out that achieving "the great revival of the Chinese people" was his great responsibility<sup>23</sup>. When visiting an exhibition called "Road to Revival" on November 29th, Xi Jinping mentioned that "realizing the great revival of the Chinese people" was "the Chinese dream"<sup>24</sup>. Xi Jinping also inspected the Guangzhou military theater of operations for three days in December and visited ships in the Nanhai Fleet.

<sup>22</sup> "堅定不移沿着中國特色社會主義道路前進 為全面建設小康社會而奮鬥", "People's Daily" November 18, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> "人民對美好生活嚮往就是我們的奮鬥目標", "People's Daily" November 16, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> "承前啓後 繼往開來 繼續朝着中華民族偉大復興目標奮勇前進", "People's Daily" November 30, 2012.

During his visit to the Military District Command Center, he stated that achieving the great revival of the Chinese people “lies in our strong nation dream and our military forces are the key to our strong army dream”. He then asserted that China “must strive to build a strong national defense system and powerful military forces”<sup>25</sup>. Xi Jinping therefore says that “the great revival of the Chinese people” is “the Chinese dream” and that the “strong army dream” is a vital part of enhancing military forces and achieving the “strong nation dream”, which embraces the building of a “powerful maritime nation”.

This patriotic stance of General Secretary Xi Jinping is beginning to reflect on China’s basic policy of foreign diplomacy. Until now, China has promoted its “road of peaceful development” as its basic policy of foreign diplomacy. The essential point here is that China, which needs to be in a peaceful international environment in order to attain development, had to work to maintain peace such as by peacefully solving disputes through dialog and not take hegemonial actions such as threatening other countries by force after attaining development<sup>26</sup>. However, Xi Jinping emphasized at the Group Study Committee of the Central Politburo themed on the “road of peaceful development” that “China will firmly adhere to the road of peaceful development but will never give up its legitimate rights and will never sacrifice its national core interests”, and that “no country should presume that China will trade away its core interests or that China will allow any undermining of its sovereignty, security, or development interests”<sup>27</sup>. This means that protecting China’s “core interests” is a precondition in its “road of peaceful development”.

China has repeatedly stated that the Taiwan issue is a part of its “core interests”. In recent years, these “core interests” also include the South China Sea issue and the Senkaku issue. During a visit to China by top U.S. officials in March 2010, it was reported that top Chinese officials named the South China Sea issue a “core interest”. Since then, there have been numerous comments referring to the South China Sea issue as a “core interest” posted in official media such as the “People’s Daily”. The Senkaku Islands have also been associated with “core interests” in the official media, and in April 2013, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry went as far as to declare, “The Senkaku Islands are a “core interest” of China”<sup>28</sup>. Judging from this situation, China is unlikely to follow the “road of peaceful development” when it comes to issues in the South China Sea the Senkaku Islands.

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<sup>25</sup> “堅持富國和強軍相統一 努力建設巩固国防和強大軍隊”, “People’s Daily” November 13, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> The Information Office of the State Council “China’s Road of Peaceful Development”, “People’s Daily” December 23, 2005 and the Information Office of the State Council “China’s Peace Development”, “People’s Daily” September 7, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> “更好統籌国内國際兩個大局”, “People’s Daily” January 30, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> “Yomiuri Shimbun” April 27, 2013.

## (2) The role of the United States in maintaining order

In the future, China may attempt a gradual change in the situations of the South China Sea and the East China Sea, by intensifying pressure on countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and Japan with the rapidly growing power projection capabilities of the People's Liberation Army and maritime law enforcement agencies. China will not, for the time being, take rapid and drastic measures in changing the situations through the exercise of military strength, which would result in explicit intervention by the United States. This is because although China is coming close to possessing sufficient power projection capabilities to threaten neighboring nations, it does not have the A2AD capabilities to make the U.S. military hesitate to intervene. Such actions would also result in decreasing trust that regional countries have in the United States' commitment. The faith that regional countries have put in the United States will diminish if China could change the situations concerning territories, sovereignty, and maritime interests up to the point where the United States does not intervene. It will be difficult for the U.S. military to maintain its presence in the area if a sense of distrust towards the United States' commitment heightens among regional countries.

The roles that Japan and the United States must play to prevent East Asia's security order from crumbling at its foundation are extremely important. Japan and the United States must make China realize that the two important powers maintaining the current order in the region will by no means tolerate China's attempts to change the order through maritime expansion. In order to do this, information sharing and joint drills between the U.S. military, the Japan Self-Defense Forces, the Coast Guard, and the Japan Coast Guard must be intensified, and the abilities that Japan and the United States can demonstrate must be constantly superior to the increasing abilities of China. Support for countries such as the Philippines and Vietnam that are vulnerable against pressure from China must also be drastically strengthened. It may be time to consider taking actions such as expediting the reinforcements of the navies of both countries by providing equipment and holding practical joint exercises, patrols in the South China Sea by the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, and concluding treaties on maritime security between Japan, the United States, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

At the same time, Japan and the United States need to work on encouraging China to acknowledge the current security order. After having achieved economic development under the policy of reform and opening doors, China would greatly benefit from a peaceful regional environment and a stable marine order. Aside from the political

benefits that the CCP would enjoy, it would also be of great benefit to China to maintain the current order. Japan and the United States must pursue a more trilateral dialogue with China as well as talks with more nations involved, and continue trying to persuade China into understanding the benefits of maintained order. Efforts like these would lead to deepening the Chinese people's awareness of the Japan-U.S. alliance and preparedness for the possibility of fluctuations in Chinese politics.