

International Law Advantage - SCS

Uniqueness

China is attempting to make Asia a zone outside international law through island building

Patrick M. **Cronin and** Alexander **Sullivan**, MARCH **2015**, Preserving the Rules: Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia, Patrick M. Cronin is a Senior Advisor and Senior Director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security. Alexander Sullivan is a research associate at the Center for a New American Security, www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS%20Maritime%20Strategy%20Series%20Capstone.pdf

No responsible official desires war. Policymakers in Washington, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, Taipei, Canberra, and throughout Southeast Asia are unanimous on this point. Yet between war and peace there is an ever-widening no man's land of assertiveness, coercion, and distrust. Especially within the gray zones of maritime Asia there is increasing competition over the rules, rulemaking, and rule enforcement. The United States has been at the center of regional post-World War II order-building and security maintenance, but it appears to be experiencing a slow erosion of its credibility. A re-emerged China is recasting itself as a maritime power, calling at times for an exclusionary "Asia for Asians" architecture, and using its comprehensive instruments of power to unilaterally change facts on the ground, in the sea, and in the air. Left unchecked, rising maritime tensions will further undermine American influence, jeopardize the sovereignty of neighboring states, and sink the general postwar regional order. This study is meant to contribute to thinking about how to preserve a peaceful system based on the rule of law.

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South China Sea island building kills International law

Ryan **Pickrell**, October 26, **2015**, The Tipping Point: Has the U.S.-China Relationship Passed the Point of No Return?, The National Interest, Ryan Pickrell is a translator, editor, writer and researcher for Changjiang Daily Press Group based in Wuhan, China, nationalinterest.org/feature/the-tipping-point-has-the-us-china-relationship-passed-the-14168

In the aftermath of this meeting, China began investing heavily in island construction and land reclamation activities in disputed waters. As these activities have stirred up a lot of dust in the region, the United States has demanded that China abandon its present course of action, insisting that it is provocative and negatively impacting regional peace and stability. Not only has China dismissed America's demands, it has also increased its military presence in contested areas in order to establish anti-access zones. While China claims that its actions are within the scope of international law, the United States asserts that Chinese actions are in violation of the law of the sea and laws for the regulation of the international commons. China argues that the South China Sea issue is a territorial sovereignty issue, yet the United States regards this issue as a freedom of navigation dispute, as well as a fight for the preservation of the international legal system—a cornerstone for the American-led liberal world order.

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International law is vitally important to a peaceful and equitable future

John Scales **Avery**, May 8, **2015**, THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, John Scales Avery is a theoretical chemist noted for his research publications in quantum chemistry, thermodynamics, evolution, and history of science, <https://www.wagingpeace.org/the-future-of-international-law/>

Can we abolish the institution of war? Can we hope and work for a time when the terrible suffering inflicted by wars will exist only as a dark memory fading into the past? I believe that this is really possible. The problem of achieving internal peace over a large geographical area is not insoluble. It has already been solved. There exist today many nations or regions within each of which there is internal peace, and some of these are so large that they are almost worlds in themselves. One thinks of China, India, Brazil, the Russian Federation, the United States, and the European Union. Many of these enormous societies contain a variety of ethnic groups, a variety of religions and a variety of languages, as well as striking contrasts between wealth and poverty. If these great land areas have been forged into peaceful and cooperative societies, cannot the same methods of government be applied globally? Today, there is a pressing need to enlarge the size of the political unit from the nation-state to the entire world. The need to do so results from the terrible dangers of modern weapons and from global economic interdependence. The progress of science has created this need, but science has also given us the means to enlarge the political unit: Our almost miraculous modern communications media, if properly used, have the power to weld all of humankind into a single supportive and cooperative society. We live at a critical time for human civilization, a time of crisis. Each of us must accept his or her individual responsibility for solving the problems that are facing the world today. We cannot leave this to the politicians. That is what we have been doing until now, and the results have been disastrous. Nor can we trust the mass media to give us adequate public discussion of the challenges that we are facing. We have a responsibility towards future generations to take matters into our own hands, to join hands and make our own alternative media, to work actively and fearlessly for better government and for a better society. We, the people of the world, not only have the facts on our side; we also have numbers on our side. The vast majority of the world's peoples long for peace. The vast majority long for abolition of nuclear weapons, and for a world of kindness and cooperation, a world of respect for the environment. No one can make these changes alone, but together we can do it. Together, we have the power to choose a future where international anarchy, chronic war and institutionalized injustice will be replaced by democratic and humane global governance, a future where the madness and immorality of war will be replaced by the rule of law. We need a sense of the unity of all mankind to save the future, a new global ethic for a united world. We need politeness and kindness to save the future, politeness and kindness not only within nations but also between nations. To save the future, we need a just and democratic system of international law; for with law shall our land be built up, but with lawlessness laid waste.

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Impact

International law key to stop cultural misunderstanding and war

Christopher **Weeramantry** and John **Burroughs**, July 2005, International Law and Peace: A Peace Lesson, Hague Appeal of Peace, Sri Lankabhimanya Christopher Gregory Weeramantry is a Sri Lankan lawyer who was a Judge of the International Court of Justice from 1991 to 2000, serving as its Vice-President from 1997 to 2000 and is currently an Emeritus Professor at Monash University; John Burroughs is Executive Director at the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, lcnp.org/global/Law_and_Peace.pdf

International law is an essential tool for the abolition of war. War has been a part of the human condition for thousands of years, but its abolition is now a necessity. With weapons of mass destruction becoming ever more readily available to state and non-state actors, the threat to a peaceful world being dragged into catastrophic conflict is so great that civilization itself is in peril. Misunderstanding and cross cultural ignorance are among the root causes of war. While global forces demolish geographical barriers and move the world toward a unified economy, clashes among cultures can have damaging impact on peace. International law draws upon the principles of peace expressed by great peacemakers and embodied in ancient writings, religions, and disciplines, and places them in the social and political context of today to dissipate the clouds of prejudice, ignorance and vested interests that stand in the way of world peace and harmony.

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Solvency

Hard power key to uphold international law

Daniel **Twining**, November 22, **2015**, Time for America to Step Up in the South China Sea, Foreign Policy, Daniel Twining is senior fellow for Asia at the German Marshall Fund, foreignpolicy.com/2015/11/22/time-for-america-to-step-up-in-the-south-china-sea/

Soft power aside, the primary instrument for defending Asia's fragile status quo must be American military strength. The United States must be more creative with its superior military toolkit in defending the existing liberal order. First, Washington must back its words with action. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter says U.S. forces will operate wherever international law allows. American forces must systematically challenge China's self-declared Air Defense Identification Zone over the East China Sea, and its "Nine-Dash Line" in the South China Sea, challenging China's ability to enforce its questionable claims. Second, the United States should encourage its allies to undertake similar patrols through Southeast Asia's maritime commons. Japan and Australia are considering doing so; India's increasingly powerful navy should do the same as part of its ambitious "Act East" policy. The United States and its allies should undertake joint exercises in the South China Sea's international waters, challenging China's claims to control access to them. Third, the United States should work with its allies to help them deploy the same kind of anti-access and area-denial capabilities that China is developing to exclude foreign forces from Asia's regional commons. These include missile defenses, anti-submarine warfare capabilities, and more sophisticated patrol and combat aircraft. The goal is not to present China with an offensive military threat, but rather to cast doubt on the viability of aggressive Chinese military operations. Fourth, the United States must focus more intently on the military dimensions of its pivot to Asia. American forces are concentrated in Japan and South Korea, a legacy of 20th-century conflicts; they should be dispersed across the region. This could include permanent bases in the Philippines and Australia, a more active rotational presence in countries like Vietnam and Malaysia, and an increase in the operations tempo of submarine and surface patrols.

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Solvency

US military presence is necessary to stop China and uphold international law

Thuc D. **Pham** January 17, **2016**, Deterring Chinese Coercion in the South China Sea, The Diplomat, Thuc D. Pham is a SCS researcher at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, thediplomat.com/2016/01/deterring-chinese-coercion-in-the-south-china-sea/

Militarily, if Beijing uses paramilitary and maritime militia vessels to harass the operations of American oil giants, Washington with the host countries' consent could dispatch its coast guard with the navy on the horizon and aircraft in the sky to protect its economic interests. On the one hand, this would give the U.S. Navy more toeholds in the region, but would avoid sparking international confrontation with the use of warships. On the other hand, this action would uphold the international law in practice, and effectively demonstrate that the 9-dash line is invalid and inconsistent with UNCLOS. To be able to make this real, however, the U.S. Coast Guard needs to be expanded at appropriate levels to afford missions in the SCS, because most USCG vessels are already tasked with surveillance over the vast American EEZ and in the Arctic. In sum, if it is to deter Chinese coercion in the South China Sea, the U.S. needs to be strong and act more comprehensively.

International Law Advantage Answers - SCS

Uniqueness Answers

Non-Unique: China's South China Sea claims are correct and long standing – the problem is with International law's ambiguity not China

Zheng Zhihua June 12, 2015, WHY DOES CHINA'S MARITIME CLAIM REMAIN AMBIGUOUS?, Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, Dr.

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China has an unequivocal and consistent territorial claim on the islands and other land features in the South China Sea. As a matter of fact, it has unequivocally stated its claim in three official documents: the 1947 Location Map of the South China Sea Islands released by the Kuomintang government in Nanjing, the 1958 Declaration of the Government of New China on the Territorial Sea, and the 1992 Law on Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone. These documents state that the Dongsha (Pratas) Islands, Xisha (Paracel) Islands, Zhongsha (Macclesfield Bank/Scarborough Shoal) Islands, Nansha (Spratly) Islands and other islands are part of the sovereign territory of China. Some countries view China's maritime claim in the South China Sea as ambiguous for historical reasons. The first reason is that the UNCLOS does not properly address the issue of historic rights. Despite the reference to historic title in Articles 15 and 298(1)(a), the provision on historic bays in Article 15(6), and the recognition of traditional fishing rights in Article 51, it does not have any provision for the definition of historic rights or their specific connotation and denotation. The second is that no consistent understanding has been reached in international law on historic rights. For example, Yehuda Z. Blum, an Israeli professor of law and diplomat, has observed: The term "historic rights" denotes the possession by a state, over certain land or maritime areas, of rights that would not normally accrue to it under the general rules of international law, such rights having been acquired by that state through a process of historical consolidation ... Historic rights are a product of a lengthy process comprising a long series of acts, omissions and patterns of behavior which, in their entirety, and through their cumulative effect, bring such rights into being and consolidate them into rights valid in international law." A state acquires historic rights through effective exercise of these rights by one or more states, a practice followed by relevant states. The concept of historic rights is almost equivalent to that of historic water. In this vein, Leo Bouchez, a renowned international law professor, says the concept of "historic rights" has evolved from the concept of "historic water" and "historic bays". The development from "historic bays" to "historic water" and from "historic title" to "historic rights" indicates the evolution of legal concepts with the development of state practice, and that such concepts have not been finalized. From the point of view of China, one of the world's oldest civilizations, the South China Sea is part of the traditional Asian order and, hence, it would be inappropriate to comprehend the Nine-Dash Line by relying solely on the Westphalian nation-state system. As Keyuan Zou, Harris professor of International Law at the University of Central has observed, the South China Sea Nine-Dash Line map was officially released by the Chinese Kuomintang government half a century before the UNCLOS, and one decade before the 1958 Four Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea. Thus, China's historic rights within the Nine-Dash Line cannot be ignored. The Nine-Dash Line drawn by the Chinese government in 1947, at approximately the median position between China's South China Sea islands and reefs and the coastlines of bordering states, reflects the scope of China's claims. The consistency of the claims has been maintained by China after 1949, and the claims have been recognized or acquiesced to by bordering states over a long period of time. Therefore, the Nine-Dash Line has probative force and weight under international law. The so-called ambiguity in China's Nine-Dash Line map and its claim on the waters within that line mainly stems from the imperfection of the UNCLOS. To some extent, international law on historic rights is defective in theory and doctrine and lacks a unified standard. China has been striving to clarify its claim in the South China Sea. But the joint efforts of the international community are also needed to complement and improve the UNCLOS by agreeing to a new international convention or protocol in order to clarify the understanding of historic rights.

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Uniqueness Answers

Non-Unique: Chinese island building in the South China Sea is legal

GARY **Leupp**, NOVEMBER 4, **2015**, Fishing in Troubled Waters: the U.S. "Pushback" Against China's Claims in the South China Sea, Gary Leupp is Professor of History at Tufts University, and holds a secondary appointment in the Department of Religion, www.counterpunch.org/2015/11/04/fishing-in-troubled-waters-the-u-s-pushback-against-chinas-claims-in-the-south-china-sea/

But there is in fact nothing illegal about building up maritime possessions you claim as your own. Another nation may challenge you, as when PRC warships clashed with Vietnamese transport ships in the Spratlys in 1988. (Right was established by might; 70 Vietnamese died and some reefs changed hands.) But if you can acquire control over reefs you can surround them with as much concrete as you want.

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Impact Answers

Turn: International law is used as a cover for US imperialism

James **Petras**, December 03, **2012**, "Legal Imperialism and the international Law: Legal Foundations for War Crimes, Debt Collection and Colonization", Global Research, James Petras is a writer at Global Research, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/legal-imperialism-and-international-law-legal-foundations-for-war-crimes-debt-collection-and-colonization/5313891>

Introduction By now we are familiar with imperial states using their military power to attack, destroy and occupy independent countries. Boatloads of important studies have documented how imperial countries have seized and pillaged the resources of mineral-rich and agriculturally productive countries, in consort with multi-national corporations. Financial critics have provided abundant data on the ways in which imperial creditors have extracted onerous rents, royalties and debt payments from indebted countries and their taxpayers, workers, employees and productive sectors. What has not been examined fully is the over-arching legal architecture which informs, justifies and facilitates imperial wars, pillage and debt collection. The Centrality of Imperial Law While force and violence, especially through overt and covert military intervention, have always been an essential part of empire-building, it does not operate in a legal vacuum: Judicial institutions, rulings and legal precedents precede, accompany and follow the process of empire building. The legality of imperial activity is based largely on the imperial state's judicial system and its own legal experts. Their legal theories and opinions are always presented as over-ruling international law as well as the laws of the countries targeted for imperial intervention. **Imperial law supersedes international law simply because imperial law is backed by brute force;** it possesses imperial/colonial air, ground and naval armed forces to ensure the supremacy of imperial law. In contrast, **international law lacks an effective enforcement mechanism.** Moreover, international law, to the extent that it is effective, is applied only to the weaker powers and to regimes designated by the imperial powers as 'violators'. The very judicial processes, including the appointment of judges and prosecutors who interpret international law, investigate international crime and arrest, sentence and punish 'guilty' parties are under to the influence of the reigning imperial powers. In other words, the application and jurisdiction of international law is selective and subject to constraints imposed by the configurations of imperial and national power. International law, at best, can provide a 'moral' judgment, a not insignificant basis for strengthening the political claims of countries, regimes and people seeking redress from imperial war crimes and economic pillage. To counter the claims and judgments pertaining to international law, especially in the area of the Geneva protocols such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, imperial legal experts, scholars and judges have elaborated a legal framework to justify or exempt imperial-state activity. The Uses of Imperial Law Empire-building throughout history is the result of conquest – the use or threat of superior military force. The US global empire is no exception. Where compliant rulers 'invite' or 'submit' to imperial domination, such acts of treason on the part of 'puppet' or 'client' rulers usually precipitate popular rebellions, which are then suppressed by joint imperial and collaborator armies. They cite imperial legal doctrine to justify their intervention to repress a subject people in revolt. While empires arose through the direct or indirect use of unbridled force, **the maintenance and consolidation of empires requires a legal framework.** Legal doctrines precede, accompany and follow the expansion and consolidation of empire for several reasons. Legality is really an extension of imperial conquest by other means. A state of constant warfare raises the cost of imperial maintenance. Force, especially in imperial democracies undermines the sense of civic virtue, which the rulers and citizens claim to uphold. Maintaining 'law and order' in the conquered nations requires a legal system and doctrine to uphold imperial rule, giving the facade of legitimacy to the outside world, attracting collaborator classes and individuals and providing the basis for the recruitment of local military, judicial and police officials. Imperial legal pronouncements, whether issued directly by executive, judicial, military or administrative bodies, are deemed the 'supreme law of the universe', superior to international law and protocols fashioned by non-imperial authorities and legal experts. This does not imply that imperial rulers totally discard international law: they just apply it selectively to their adversaries, especially against independent nations and rulers, in order to justify imperial intervention and aggression – Hence the 'legal bases' for dismantling Yugoslavia or invading Iraq and assassinating its rulers. Legal rulings are issued by the imperial judiciary to force states to comply with the economic demands of multi-national corporations, banks, creditors and speculators, even after the local or national courts have ruled such claims unlawful.

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Turn: US international policy cloaked in mindset of superiority – leads to violence and destruction

Glenn **Greenwald**, February 18, **2013**, "The premises and purposes of American exceptionalism", The Guardian, Glenn Greenwald is a former columnist on civil liberties and US national security issues for the Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/18/american-exceptionalism-north-korea-nukes>

This belief in America's unparalleled greatness has immense impact. It is not hyperbole to say that the sentiment expressed by Cooke is the overarching belief system of the US political and media class, the primary premise shaping political discourse. Politicians of all types routinely recite the same claim, and Cooke's tweet was quickly re-tweeted by a variety of commentators and self-proclaimed foreign policy experts from across the spectrum. Note that Cooke did not merely declare America's superiority, but rather used it to affirm a principle: as a result of its objective superiority, the US has the right to do things that other nations do not. This self-affirming belief - I can do X because I'm Good and you are barred from X because you are Bad - is the universally invoked justification for all aggression. **It's the crux of hypocrisy**. And most significantly of all, it is the violent enemy of law: the idea that everyone is bound by the same set of rules and restraints. This eagerness to declare oneself exempt from the rules to which others are bound, on the grounds of one's own objective superiority, is always the animating sentiment behind nationalistic criminality. Here's what Orwell said about that in Notes on Nationalism: "All nationalists have the power of not seeing resemblances between similar sets of facts. A British Tory will defend self-determination in Europe and oppose it in India with no feeling of inconsistency. *Actions are held to be good or bad, not on their own merits, but according to who does them*, and there is almost no kind of outrage — torture, the use of hostages, forced labour, mass deportations, imprisonment without trial, forgery, assassination, the bombing of civilians — which does not change its moral colour when it is committed by 'our' side . . . The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them." Preserving this warped morality, this nationalistic prerogative, is, far and away, the primary objective of America's foreign policy community, composed of its political offices, media outlets, and (especially) think tanks. What Cooke expressed here - that the US, due to its objective superiority, is not bound by the same rules as others - is the most cherished and aggressively guarded principle in that circle. Conversely, the notion that the US should be bound by the same rules as everyone else is the most scorned and marginalized. Last week, the Princeton professor Cornel West denounced Presidents Nixon, Bush and Obama as "war criminals", saying that "they have killed innocent people in the name of the struggle for freedom, but they're suspending the law, very much like Wall Street criminals". West specifically cited Obama's covert drone wars and killing of innocent people, including children. What West was doing there was rather straightforward: applying the same legal and moral rules to US aggression that he has applied to other countries and which the US applies to non-friendly, disobedient regimes. In other words, West did exactly that which is most scorned and taboo in DC policy circles.

International Law Advantage Answers - SCS

Solvency Answers

Turn: FONOPS hurt International law and expose US hypocrisy

Xinhua, January 31, **2016**, Commentary: The international-law irony of U.S. provocations in South China Sea, Xinhua News Service, Xinhua is one of the major international and Chinese news providers, news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-01/31/c_135061532.htm

Washington has long claimed that the so-called freedom of navigation operations by the U.S. military aims to safeguard public access to waters and airspace as allowed by the international law. However, citing seemingly lofty motives will not obscure the fact that the U.S. maneuvers in South China Sea threaten China's sovereignty and security interests, endanger regional peace and stability and constitute a grave violation of the international law. As ironic as it is, Washington has always defended its arbitrary move by referring to international law, but it has so far not approved the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which establishes legal order and regulations on international waters. The calculation behind such a move is crystal clear: The United States is unwilling to be bound by an international treaty, which it claims as severely flawed, because the sole superpower has already controlled such maritime resources as oil and gas deposits through military power. Another irony is that Uncle Sam asserts that it maintains freedom of navigation in the South China Sea on the legal basis of international law, but it applies standards unilaterally defined by itself. In a document issued in 2015 regarding the so-called freedom of navigation program, the U.S. government said the foremost target of the U.S. action is "excessive maritime claims that are defined by the U.S. side." The document reveals that Washington substitutes its own standard for international law and attempts to unilaterally impose its own idea upon other countries. Moreover, the U.S. action itself to maintain so-called freedom of navigation under international law is a threat to the principles of international law.

International Law Advantage Answers - SCS

Solvency Answers

Turn: FONOPS hurt International law – 3 reasons

Hu **Bo**, November 17, **2015**, The Hypocrisy of US Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea, The Diplomat, Hu Bo is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Ocean Research of Peking University, thediplomat.com/2015/11/the-hypocrisy-of-us-freedom-of-navigation-operations-in-the-south-china-sea/

The truth is, however, these two accusations are both unfounded and inconsistent with the long-standing U.S. policy on the South China Sea issue. On the one hand, the U.S. declares that it holds no position on the sovereignty issue in the South China Sea, but on the other, it openly challenges China's sovereignty claims in the area. The mismatch of its words and deeds is a violation of the principle of estoppel in international law. The U.S. accuses China of endangering freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, but instead of providing evidence to prove its point, it only keeps clamoring that China's island and reef construction in Nansha is "too quick, too much." The Lassen's operations in Nansha constitute a grave violation of many principles of international law and norms that the United States has supported over the years, mainly in the following three aspects. First, the U.S. act was an abuse of the rules on freedom of navigation. The U.S. intrusion within 12 nautical miles of China's Nansha Islands was a typical act of "hazardous passage." To avoid escalation of conflicts, China has remained restrained on the South China Sea disputes, refraining from publishing the base points and baselines of territorial sea of the Nansha Islands. But China is entitled to its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, whether the base points and baselines are published or not. Even if we endorse the U.S. claim that Zhubi Reef, as a low-tide elevation, does not enjoy the right of 12-nautical-mile territorial limits, Zhongye [Thitu] Island near Zhubi obviously does, and that island is also part of China's territory. The United States repeatedly drew an analogy between the U.S. intrusion in the waters close to the Nansha Islands and a Chinese naval vessel's passage within 12 nautical miles of the Aleutian Islands in September, claiming that its activity was "innocent passage." The fact is, under international law, the Tanaga Pass of the Aleutian Islands is open to international navigation, so "transit passage" rather than "innocent passage" applied to the Chinese warship. The 12 nautical miles of the Nansha Islands, on the other hand, are not part of international pathways. Why did the U.S. vessel choose to take this detour when the international waterway was wide enough for its passage? The U.S. act was obviously an abuse of the rules on freedom of navigation under international law. Second, the U.S. show of force was a breach of its international obligations concerning no use or threat of force. Due to the complicated hydrological regime around the Nansha Islands and diversity of the naval strengths of different countries, China has all along been tolerant to vessels that mistakenly entered waters close to the Nansha Islands. The United States itself also recognizes that it once entered within 12 nautical miles of the Nansha Islands before 2012. But this time, the United States identified a 12-nautical-mile line before declaring its challenge. Its action was intended to negate China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests over the islands and reefs in the area, and no doubt posed a blatant military threat to China. It is natural that China and the United States have disputes when it comes to the rules of maritime navigation, but the differences should be resolved through negotiations and consultations. This is the normal international practice for dispute settlement. The U.S. use of force apparently ran counter to the principle of resolving international disputes by peaceful means and its obligations under international treaties, and constituted a gross infringement of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other international rules and norms. Third, the U.S. act violated China's territorial sovereignty and eroded the basic principles of international law. Sovereign states are main players in today's international system, and respect for sovereignty is the basic principle of international law. Previously, the United States had repeatedly emphasized that it held no position on the sovereignty of the Nansha islands and reefs. But this time, by conducting the so-called freedom-of-navigation operations, the United States intended to negate China's sovereignty and maritime interests over its long-garrisoned islands and reefs where extension projects were carried out recently. This was a direct provocation against China's sovereignty. If countries were allowed to willfully challenge the sovereignty claims of other countries, wouldn't the entire international system be pushed to the verge of collapse? The U.S. act was not only a violation of the principle of estoppel in international law, but also a grave challenge to the sovereignty principle of the international system. In a nutshell, the United States was actually engaged in hegemony and power politics, a prevailing pursuit in the world in the 19th century, under the cloak of the 21st century endeavor of safeguarding freedom of navigation and international justice. This

is sheer hypocrisy. The United States might as well make clear its real intention to the world that it does not want to see any increase of Chinese power in the South China Sea.