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“WHY CHINA ABSOLUTELY NEEDS THE SOUTH CHINA SEA FOR ITSELF ALONE:

A PROSPECTIVE AND INDEPENDENT VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

Mister president, ladies and gentlemen,

All my thanks to the organisers of this 3rd international workshop on *“The South China Sea: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development”* for inviting me to express myself on the following topic: *“Why China absolutely needs the South China sea for itself alone”*

This presentation is a prospective view and a completely independent one. I stress upon that. It is based on the analysis of different pieces of information I gathered not only on the situation in the South China Sea but also in the East China Sea, and even in the near area of the Pacific Ocean. This paper, too, is a near repeat of what I introduced, in Taipei, on the 7th of October, on the occasion of the international conference organised by the Institute of European and American Studies of the Academia Sinica, on *“Major Law and Policy Issues in the South China Sea: European and American Perspectives”*

Because of the aggressiveness China recently showed in defending what it considers as its legitimate rights in the South China Sea according to the nine dashed line principle, as for example by cutting the Vietnamese ships' seismic survey cables on the 26th of May and on the 9th of June, or by pressuring the Indian oil company ONGC Videsh not to operate with Petrovietnam on two blocks off the Vietnamese coast but astride the nine dashed line, all such incidents being related by the international press, everybody in the World believes that this Chinese assertiveness is based on economical reasons only.

Because every year China unilaterally imposes a moratorium on fishing activities in the disputed areas of the South China Sea, a decision which is relayed by the international press, everybody in the World believes that this Chinese assertiveness is based on economical and environmental reasons only.

All these obvious reasons are not, of course, groundless. They are genuine ones. But they above all are the front reasons which are hiding far deeper Chinese intents and interests. These intents and interests are above all related to the Chinese defense

posture facing what China considers to be the US containment against it, if not the US threat. In such a consideration, the South China Sea is no more than one piece, an important one certainly, but only one piece however in the general defense scheme China is building to put in check a presumed US threat. This Chinese general defense scheme is based on three stages:

1 – ensuring for the Chinese navy the full secure freedom of navigation all over the South China sea, especially for its strategic submarines (SSBNs)¹, without any other foreign navy interfering by sailing over the basin. It is the main reason why, in order to fulfill its strategic purposes, China absolutely wants to make the South China Sea a sanctuary. This explains why China is so keen in wanting the US Navy not to continue coming across this maritime area any more.

2 – recovering Taiwan so as to enjoy full free genuine territorial waters for its ships may sail freely to the high sea, at least during peace time, or even on the occasion of low intensity crises, or even more as the second cold war seems to begin appearing. War is another question because on such a kind of situation all the principles laid by the UNCLOS concerning countries' governances over maritime areas adjacent to their coasts are blown up because the operational considerations and needs may prevail without any other considerations.

3 – forwarding its strategic submarines at missile range of the US coasts, including Hawaiï at first.

To demonstrate these hypotheses, I departed from three facts:

1 – the first one is that China-US relations are not confident at all. Mistrust between the two countries could be the master word, even if both are trying to do their utmost to keep a kind of dialogue, including in the field of defence so as to avoid incidents that could degenerate into clashes.

2 – The second one is that it is quite normal that any country in the World wants to ensure its defence as best as possible. However, it may happen that the defensive concerns may become aggressive towards the neighbours because the concerned country feels itself obstructed in the implementation of the general scheme it has elaborated to organise its defence.

This is right the case for China which, beyond the exchanges of courteous visits, good occasional words, considers the USA as a potential hostile party as well as the USA is not confident at all in a future Chinese peaceful behaviour.

3 – The third point is that, except North Korea, all the neighbouring countries of the two China seas are deeply concerned by the Chinese rising military power.

Japan just recently expressed it, in measured words, in the yearly white paper on its defence, disseminated on the 2nd of August, as it is noticeable in the following abstracts: *“in regards to the issues on conflicting interest with the surrounding countries, including Japan, China’s response has been criticized as assertive, and*

¹ Submersible Ship Ballistic missile Nuclear powered.

there is a concern over its future direction". "China has been expanding and intensifying its activities in its surrounding waters. Lack of transparency in its national defence policies, and its military activities are referred to as a matter of concern for the region and the international community, including Japan, which should require prudent analysis". But, because of such writings, China considers that Japan is spreading the "Chinese threat theory". For that, the Japanese white book was greeted with a strong but expected rebuff from China on the 4th of August.

South Eastern countries, because of the conflicting territorial interests existing in the South China Sea, are afraid that China wants to impose its own solutions by force to solve the problem in order to satisfy its own interests only. The countries directly involved in the dispute as Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei or those which feel genuinely concerned as Indonesia and Singapore are trying to resist the Chinese hegemonic ambitions by seeking peaceful solutions to the situation without giving up their own, even sometimes conflicting, interests. Such a situation helps to create a division between the South East Asian countries involved, a division from which China is trying to draw profit. And it partly succeeds in that since Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, even if they do not disapprove their other partners in their confrontation with China, stay mute on the question of the South China Sea because they do not want to displease China.

In such conditions one of the problems that make the South East Asian nations feel not quite so easy is that, if on one hand China is aggressively defending what it considers its sovereign rights in the South China sea, on the other hand it is meanwhile forwarding apparently peaceful proposals. Among them, as professor Su Hao demonstrated it in Ho Chi Minh City in November 2010, are Chinese proposals for huge multifarious common economical development schemes, among them the Nanning – Singapore corridor development, Greater Mekong Subregional cooperation programme, the Pan-Beibu Gulf Economic Cooperation, all promoted to make the South China sea a lake of harmony. All these programmes genuinely sound interesting. But behind them is lying the Chinese will to bind the different countries involved to China the same way as, in the imperial era, some of them were vassals of the emperors of the Kingdom of the Middle. We might call that the Kingdom of the Middle syndrome.

Another example is the sudden acceptance in principle from China, last year, to negotiate in order to transform "*the ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties (DOC 2002)*" into a code of conduct. Presently the very question is why such a sudden change when we know that, when negotiating the DOC, the Chinese never wanted to hear anything about building a code. And if we consider that up to now, in the East China sea, the frame agreement that was passed in June 2008 between China and Japan to exploit in common the Chunxiao / Shirakaba gasfield has not yet been followed by implementation programmes (unless I missed some pieces of information), we may imagine how long the negotiations between China and the South East Asian nations shall be supposed to last before finally reaching a code of conduct. This question was indirectly answered by Mr Yang Jiechi, the Chinese minister of foreign affairs, on the occasion of the discussions that occurred with the foreign ministers of the ASEAN countries in Bali at the end of last July when he said: "*when the conditions are ripe, we are willing to discuss with ASEAN to set up the code of conduct on the South China Sea*". Such a declaration is cutting short the

speculations according to which some analysts think that the Bali guidelines issued on the 29th of July are a start towards negotiations for a code of conduct. As a matter of fact the guidelines only aim “*at ensuring concrete implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)*”².

All these introduction words to stress upon the fact that, in order to ensure its full defence scheme against the presumed hostile forces that could be those of the USA and its allies, especially Japan, China absolutely needs to make the South China Sea a sanctuary. But, in the Chinese full general strategic scheme to ensure the defence of China, the South China Sea appears to be only one piece, a major one certainly, but only one piece however, on the wide board of the “*play of go*” (Wéiqí / 圍棋) that China is playing to encircle Taiwan and make it later fall back into the fold of the motherland. The purpose of such, not so visible presently, an encirclement is that, if the reunification does not occur peacefully, China remains free to use the military force to succeed in its aim while keeping the US forces away and preventing them from supporting Taiwan. Beyond the official speech advocating the coming back into the folds of the motherland, the main reason that leads China to the recovery of Taiwan is that China wants to enjoy a full access, without any restraint, to the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean. The aim is to enable its navy to near the US territories, Hawaiï and CONUS, at ballistic missile range. Therefore it is the reason why reversely the USA, in order to ensure its own security against a presumed threat from China, absolutely needs Taiwan to remain independent. How to justify all these points?

As far as making the South China Sea a Chinese sanctuary is concerned, I demonstrated last November 2010, in Ho Chi Minh City, how, by leaning on the nine dashed line, China is artificially building a justification of its ambitions on the area. Let me resume that here.

The departing point is that China is interpreting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) its own way. As a matter of fact, Chinese are applying the rule of the straight baselines to the different archipelagos they are claiming, even though such a rule is applying to archipelagic States only (Part IV of the UNCLOS) and never to any other kind of archipelago. Any country which would be recognized as the final genuine sovereign over any of these claimed archipelagos should apply the only available regime to them, i.e. the regime of the islands (article 121 of the UNCLOS).

But, in the present case, we can see that China is applying the regime of the archipelago states to the disputed archipelagos. It does it in the following way:

- Concretely to the Paracels islands, as it is described in the “*Declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the baselines of the territorial sea*”, made public on the 15th of May 1996
- Virtually to the Spratlys for the moment being; that is confirmed however by the text of the verbal notes introduced by China to the United Nations on the

² Dr Jian Junbo, *China averts collision in South China Sea*, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/MG29Ad01.html>

14th of April 2011 to oppose the Philippines verbal note through which Manila is claiming what it considers as its sovereign rights over the Kalayaan area, part of the Spratlys Islands. As a matter of fact the note says: “China’s Nansha³ Islands is fully entitled to Territorial Sea, EEZ and Continental Shelf”.

- Virtually too for the Macclesfield bank that China is claiming, even though not any single country may voice any right on Macclesfield bank. Because it is a shoal. Because it is a permanently submerged feature by waters at any time of the tide. But claiming sovereignty over a shoal is in contradiction with the UNCLOS since UNCLOS does not establish any statute for shoals but only for “low-tide elevations” (article 13). Macclesfield bank is not a “low-tide elevation”. China knows that. It is the reason why, to circumvent the difficulty China has elaborated the Zhongsha qundao (中沙群岛) concept⁴. How that?

To do that, China is simply encompassing the following features in a single entity: 1 - the geographical Macclesfield bank; 2 - Truro shoal, which is never emerging either; and 3 - Scarborough reef which is a feature made of some small rocks scattered all over an area roughly measuring 150 km² (19km by 13km). These rocks, which are the remains of a sunken atoll, are emerging at low tide. Therefore they are entitled to generate territorial waters around them but not any EEZ, since these rocks cannot sustain any kind of life of their own. And this is thanks to Scarborough reef, by the way disputed with the Philippines, that China considers such an intellectual gathering of disparate features as an archipelago around which, for the moment being, it virtually draws straight baselines. This is the Zhongsha qundao (中沙群岛) concept. Moreover, what it adds to the inconsistency of this concept is that there is not any single geomorphologic continuity linking the three features. As a matter of fact, there is a 4000 meters deep trough between Macclesfield bank and Truro shoal.

This is the first series of points or elements to be taken into account

The second element is related to the rules of crossing the territorial waters and the EEZs of one country by foreign navies. As far as the crossing of its territorial sea is concerned, contrarily to article 17, Part II, section III of the UNCLOS China denies the innocent passage to foreign navies unless the foreign ships get the agreement from Peking at first. By the way, Vietnam and Indonesia apply the same kind of rules for foreign navies before being allowed to cross their territorial waters.

Moreover China develops some tendencies to apply to its Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) the rules normally dedicated to territorial waters only. At least one incident with the United States is at reach to prove that. The incident happened on the 1st of April 2001. It involved a US EP-3 Orion surveillance aircraft. On that day, two Chinese J-8 interceptors harassed the American plane by dangerous maneuvers which led to the loss of one J-8 and to the damage of the American plane which was compelled to make an emergency landing on Hainan island. The incident occurred

³ Spratlys in Chinese

⁴ Zou Keyuan, "Scarborough reef : a new flashpoint in sino-philippine relations ?", International Boundaries Research Unit, *Boundary and Security Bulletin*7, no 2, (Summer 1999): 71-81

some 70 miles off the Southern coast of Hainan Island, that is to say not over the Hainan territorial waters but over the Hainan EEZ. That means that the incident was deliberately provoked by the Chinese fighters, exactly as if they were performing their task of forbidding an intrusion by a foreign plane into the Chinese airspace. That means that the Chinese are considering that the rules of navigation into their EEZs must be identical with those applying for military navigation in their territorial waters. What is a wrong interpretation of the law of the sea, since the part of sovereignty that one country may enjoy in its EEZ is related to economical exclusive rights only and law enforcement attached to the respect of these economical rights only.

As a matter of fact, article 56 says:

"1. In the exclusive economic zone, the coastal State has:

(a) sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds;

(b) jurisdiction as provided for in the relevant provisions of this Convention with regard to:

(i) the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures;

(ii) marine scientific research;

(iii) the protection and preservation of the marine environment;

(c) other rights and duties provided for in this Convention".

And article 73.1 says: *"The coastal State may, in the exercise of its sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve and manage the living resources in the exclusive economic zone, take such measures, including boarding, inspection, arrest and judicial proceedings, as may be necessary to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations adopted by it in conformity with this Convention".*

In these texts, there is nowhere question of any kind of restrictions opposed to the foreign navigation in the EEZ of one country, included when the ships are military ones. Therefore the overflight of the EP-3 Orion was not, in any case, performed in contradiction with the UNCLOS. The Chinese considered it as the contrary.

Another example is given by another incident which happened on the same month of April 2001, in the international waters of the Taiwan Strait, more exactly in the Taiwanese side of the median line which divides the Taiwanese and the Chinese Mainland EEZs. At that time three Australian navy ships, which were heading their way to Hong Kong after an exercise in South Korea where harassed by a Chinese vessel which radioed to the Australian flotilla that it was sailing in China's territorial waters.

More recently, on the 29th of June of this year 2011, in an incident which could somewhat be comparable with the EP-3 Orion incident, two Chinese Sukhoi-27 fighter aircraft were shadowing a US U-2 spy plane over the Taiwan Strait, with one of the two even crossing the median line.

And, if we may draw a parallel between the South China Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, we have to remind that during the Cold war, a lot of Soviet warships were

coming and sailing all over the Mediterranean Sea to perform intelligence gathering over the NATO forces deployed there. At that time, if the different coastal countries of the Mediterranean Sea internally expressed their concerns over such a Soviet presence, none tried to expel these ships out of the area either by force or by word, thus respecting the Law of the Sea outside their respective territorial waters. The only activities that the coastal states were performing against these intruding ships were spotting and tracking them, without exerting any constraint for them to leave the Mediterranean Sea. Why such a way of dealing with such difficult and tense situations could not inspire the behaviours of the different claimants around the South China Sea?

From the two main general elements hereabove analysed, we may draw the following consequences:

- 1 - From the application of the straight baselines to the disputed archipelagos (that are not archipelagic states), China draws the fact that the nine dashed line is the median line between what it considers as its insular territories and the adjacent countries of the South China Sea. Wang Xiguang, a researcher who participated in 1947 in the compilation of maps at the Geography Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the then Republic of China, under the Kuomintang rule, did say: “*the dotted national boundary line was drawn as the median line between China and the adjacent states*”⁵.
- 2 - The area encompassed inside the nine dashed line is considered by China either as an EEZ or as a territorial sea. China is claiming the latter interpretation by following two different schools of thinking. One is considering the area as a territorial sea. Another one is considering it as a historical sea under the pretext that the nine dashed line is now more than sixty years old and that nobody had expressed any opposition to its existence since then, when The Geography Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the then Republic of China, under the Kuomintang rule, printed *The Location Map of the South China Sea Islands (Nanhai zhudao weizhi tu)* in 1947⁶

By the way it must be reminded here that until the 7th of May 2009 China never introduced any genuine official claim over the area delineated by the nine dashed line. The first genuine Chinese official gesture was that of the 7th of May 2009, when China extended a verbal note to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to protest against the two claims that Malaysia and Vietnam introduced to the CLCS for their extended continental shelves in the South China sea. Malaysia and Vietnam extended their

⁵ Li Jinming and Li Dexia, "The dotted Line on the Chinese Map of the South China Sea : a Note", *Ocean Development and International Law*, Taylor & Francis, Londres, 3 janvier 2003, pp. 287 – 295. In their issue the authors say that “For the purpose of specifying China’s territorial sphere in the South China Sea, the Geography Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (of the then Republic of China under the Kuomintang rule; ndlr) printed *The Location Map of the South China Sea Islands (Nanhai zhudao weizhi tu)* in 1947. On this map, the Pratas Islands, the Paracel Islands, the Macclesfield Bank, and the Spratly Islands were shown as being part of China with the use of an 11-dotted line. The southernmost boundary was marked at 4° northern latitude. According to Wang Xiguang, who participated in the compilation of maps at the Geography Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, “the dotted national boundary line was drawn as the median line between China and the adjacent states.”

⁶ Ibid.

common claim on the 6th of May 2009 for an extended continental shelf situated in the Southern part of the sea. Vietnam extended its own one on the 7th of May 2009 for a second area lying South of the Paracels islands.

Whatever the interpretation may be, that does show China wants to rule the whole area as its own territorial waters, even though, for the moment being, China has not yet really the military means, neither the political power to definitely forbid foreign navies, especially the US one, to cross the area. This is the reason why presently China is only performing time to time naval manoeuvres in the contentious area, is trying to exert full police operations all over the area such as the yearly unilateral moratoria it imposes on the fishing activities, such as leading police patrols as the Maritime Surveillance Agency performed recently with the Haixun 31. Between the 15th and the 23rd of June 2011, the ship went on sea patrol in the disputed maritime area before paying a six days' courtesy visit in Singapore. It is also the reason why China resorts to a relentless verbal pressure against the USA to deter them from meddling in the litigation over the South China sea.

- 3 - Should one day China succeeds in having these different interpretations internationally recognized:
 - That would mean that a country might therefore exert claims over the high sea, what is contrary to article 89 of the UNCLOS which clearly stipulates that *"no State may validly purport to subject any part of the high seas to its sovereignty"*.
 - That would confer China with the capacity to forbid foreign navies to sail over that sea since, in these conditions, the part of the sea encompassed inside the nine dots line would be considered as the Chinese territorial sea.
 - Consequently that would give China the possibility to forbid the crossing of a Paracels – Zhongsha qundao line to foreign navies, so that its submarines, following an East oriented route from Sanya, could safely sail to their deployment areas, either in the deeper Northerner part or in the deeper Southerner part of the South China Sea, in the latter case crossing through the Macclesfield bank - Truro shoal trench.
 - In the Northern part of the South China Sea which, according to the International Hydrographical Organisation, includes the Taiwan Strait, that would, since Mainland and Taiwanese EEZs are connecting, give China the possibility to forbid foreign navies to cross the Taiwan Strait in case they have not first request the authorisation from Peking to do so.
 - Moreover and what is of the utmost importance, a full part of the UNCLOS would be, in these conditions, completely questioned, with all the damageable consequences that could follow in other parts of the World.

Going farther, we must consider that, even if China would succeed in securing the South China Sea for itself only, its overall strategic security disposition facing the presumed US threat would be a lame one. It is the reason why the South China Sea is only one piece, certainly a major one, but only one, in the Chinese general strategy of the naval encirclement of Taiwan.

Because, in its project, China has to manage two difficulties: the resistance of Taiwan, the US presumed support to Taiwan in case of aggravation of the relations between Taiwan and Mainland China. In this overall configuration, the main problems that China and the USA are respectively facing are the following ones: for China, it is how to contain the US from approaching and from threatening the Chinese territory; for the US it is how to contain the Chinese strategic expansion ambitions and moreover to prevent China to forward its naval forces too closely to the American territories.

In that prospect, the global Chinese strategy is:

- 1 - To ensure its forward defence by leaning on the blue line as defined in 1985 by admiral Liu Huaqing, the former commander of the Peoples's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), this blue line roughly stretching itself along the Mariana island chain
- 2 – Consequently, to be able to bring its naval means, especially its SSBNs, presently two units at least (when they genuinely have come of age), five in a near future, at a possible reach of the American territory.
- 3 - To prevent the US navy to near too closely the Chinese territory.

Therefore, to answer this last point, that is to say how to prevent the US navy to come at reach of the Chinese territory, including Taiwan, China has, among other means as its nuclear attack submarines, as its aircraft carrier programme under building, started building up an anti access/area-denial capacity. This anti-access/area-denial capacity partly rests on the use of the aircraft carrier killer missile DF-21C, the range of which is in excess of 1,500 km, and which is guided onto the mobile targets by mean of an overhead and over-the-horizon targeting system to locate and track the moving ships.

But that is not enough. As a matter of fact, to ensure its forward defence by leaning on the blue line and consequently enjoy the capability to push its naval means farther enough from China and close enough to the American territory China must enjoy the most secured accesses to the high sea.

- This is one of the reasons why China wants to make the South China Sea a sanctuary, so as to be able to ensure a secured deployment of its submarines from Sanya up to the deepest part of the South China sea as I already explained that.
- But this is also one of the reasons, and this is certainly the point, the main one, why China at all costs wants to reunify Taiwan with the mainland. It does want it because Taiwan is the bolt which closes the two China seas, two semi-enclosed seas structurally barred by some chains of islands that constitute as many obstacles to the navigation and that compel ships to cross through the passes between these islands:
 - o The East China sea is closed by the Ryukyus chain (Nansei in Japanese), up to the Senkakus which, morphologically, do not belong to the Ryukyus.
 - o The South China sea is closed by the Philippines, Borneo island, and Indonesia

- Therefore, when we look at the morphology of this area, any navy which wants to leave one of these two seas to reach the Pacific Ocean is compelled to cross the different straits that are as many holes into the string of these marginal islands. Some of these straits are large, as the Okinawa-Miyako straits, which is roughly 150 miles large. But most of them are narrow. Therefore, in crisis time or in wartime, all these different passes may be easily blocked or ambushed, provided the number of submarines and other naval means is enough to fulfill the task. This is the problem to which the Chinese navy is presently confronted when it wants to sail to the blue waters. And in peacetime, the Chinese navy cannot move but being spotted on any occasion of its crossings through these chains of small islands. Peter Dutton already told that better than I in its February 2009 booklet titled : “*Scouting, Signaling, and Gatekeeping*”
- Such a morphological disposition of the islands surrounding the two China seas explains why China is so keen in getting back Taiwan, with the Senkaku islands attached. As a matter of fact, recovering Taiwan would provide the PLAN with secure genuine Chinese territorial waters because the Taiwanese waters would thus have fallen under Beijing’s full control: in the North of Taiwan these waters would extend up to the Senkakus; in the South they would cover half of the Strait of Bashi. The Chinese navy would consequently enjoy a free way to the Pacific Ocean through what would have become its territorial waters. If these passages would be free in peacetime, in an atmosphere of declared hostilities, that would not prevent hostile forces to display an exit denial strategy in order to forbid the Chinese naval means to sail to the free waters of the Pacific Ocean.
- All this indeed clearly explains why, in its global strategy of counter containment of the USA, China absolutely wants to recover Taiwan, the bolt which closes or which opens the accesses to the high sea.
- And this is the reason why China has started a large scale strategy of naval encirclement of Taiwan, a strategy in which the making a sanctuary of the South China sea is only one piece, as I already said, on the board of that huge wéiqi, the game of which has already started. The other pieces, some strongly, some less convincing however, are the following ones:
 - The aggressive Chinese behaviour in the South China Sea in order to settle its full domination over the area
 - The aggressive Chinese behaviour about the sovereignty over the Senkaku islands
 - The multifarious passages of the Chinese navy through the Japanese straits or naval exercises conducted in waters close to Japan, or monitoring Japan-US naval exercises. The 2011 white book on the defence of Japan is relating 10 Chinese activities of such kind between November 2004 and June 2011. Before that, Peter Dutton, in its February 2009 booklet titled: “*Scouting, Signaling, and Gatekeeping*” relates some of these activities, but also two similar crossings by Chinese ships through Japanese straits other than Okinawa-Miyaki, in May 2000 and in November 2003.

- The Chinese opposition, on the 6th of February and on the 24th of August 2009, to the request that the Japanese introduced on the 12th of November 2008 to the Division of Ocean Affairs and of the Law of the Sea of the United Nations for an extended continental shelf around Okinotori island, an island situated right at midway between Okinawa and Guam. The Chinese fright is, should the Japanese claim be accepted, that Japanese and therefore Americans consequently enjoy the largest possibilities of checking the PLAN movements on their way up to the blue line and to Guam.
- Finally, when we put all these Chinese naval activities altogether, we cannot help but determine that the general aim is to isolate Taiwan, to exert a strong indirect pressure on the island so that it finally falls into the Mainland nets without opposing too much resistance and without suffering too many damages, if possible.

Mr president, ladies and gentlemen,

The strategic hypothesis and prospective view I just proposed to you needs of course to be verified, consolidated, deepened or, reversely, denied by proofs other than those I have brought. Through such a presentation, I just wanted, in the general scheme presently under elaboration by China to prepare its overall defence against a presumed hostile posture from the United States and its allies, especially Japan, to cast a beam of light onto the strategic reasons for which China absolutely needs to recover Taiwan. And in this scheme, the reasons for which China consequently absolutely needs the South China sea for itself alone. That is why, despite some peaceful proposals from China dedicated to temper the mistrust against it in the region, the international community as a whole, not only the United States, must remain aware that, unless a huge common diplomatic and political pressure is exerted on China, China will firmly want to extend and reinforce its grasp over the South China sea.

Fortunately, I am not alone to think that. Professor Tetsuo Kotani, Special Research Fellow at the Okazaki Institute, in Tokyo reached a large part of the same conclusions and published them on the 18th of July of this year in the magazine *The Diplomat* in an issue titled "*Why China Wants South China Sea*"⁷

We may, of course, understand the Chinese concerns for its defence. But these concerns cannot be the reasons dedicated to make the South China Sea a Chinese sea, as Mussolini tried to make the Mediterranean Sea a *mare nostra* during the Second World War. Some, as China does, consider that the question of the South China Sea is an internal problem to be solved between Far Eastern countries. That is wrong. Because the South China Sea is an international waterways. Therefore it cannot, in any case, be placed under the rule of a single country which could rule it according to its own will, even if such a country, its hand on its heart, is promising that the international navigation would never be compromised. How, considering the present behaviour of China over this area, how to be confident in such a promise? The South China Sea is an international waterways and such a statute must remain as such in its full integrity and not under the control of a single nation only.

⁷ <http://the-diplomat.com/2011/07/18/why-china-wants-the-south-china-sea/>