



C H I N A A E R O S P A C E
S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

In Their Own Words:

On Maritime Strategic Access

**Translations from Chinese source
documents**

Foreign Military Thought



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In Their Own Words

The “In Their Own Words” series is dedicated to translations of Chinese documents in order to help non-Mandarin speaking audiences access and understand Chinese thinking. CASI would like to thank all of those involved in this effort.

In the “In Their Own Words” series, CASI and its collaborators aim to provide Chinese texts that illustrate thoughtful, clearly articulated, authoritative foreign perspectives on approaches to warfare at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

Project Everest Comments

This text was written by Liang Fang, a Senior Colonel and faculty of the PRC’s National Defense University’s (NDU) Strategy Department with a PhD in the Science of Strategy. He has received multiple awards, and he was assisted by a number of other senior personnel at important institutions including the NDU, Academy of Military Sciences, South Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet, and other naval organizations. *On Maritime Strategic Access* is the text for a new NDU course on Maritime Strategic Access. The author also directed the development of new courses on safeguarding strategic access.

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On Maritime Strategic Access

[海上战略通道论]

{*Haishang Zhanlue Tongdao Lun*}

Author: Liang Fang {梁芳}

- *A Rational Understanding of Maritime Strategic Access*
- *Historical Track of Maritime Strategic Access Development*
- *Basic Laws of Sea-Ocean Strong Nations to Contend for and Control Maritime Strategic Access*
- *Regional Doctrine of Maritime Strategic Access and Its Effects*
- *The International Laws and Standards and Practices Touched Upon by Maritime Strategic Access*
- *Posture Analysis of Maritime Strategic Access From the Perspective of Chinese Security*
- *A Consideration on Administering Maritime Strategic Access*

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TRANSLATORS' NOTES

This translation of the original text aims to accurately capture the technical meanings, in both English and Chinese. This will ensure that the reader will not inadvertently draw the wrong substantive understanding based on inaccurate translations.

NOTE ON TROUBLE TERMS:

Several sets of “trouble terms” in this translation require explanation. The first set is the various terms often rendered as *plan* – *mouhua*, *chouhua*, [*yunchou/tongchou*], *guihua* and *jihua*. The second set is *disposition* – *bushi* and *bushu*. The third set is *group* – *qun*, *jiqun* and *jituan*. The fourth set is *system* – *xitong*, *tixi*, *tizhi*, and *zhidu*. The fifth set is *development* – *fazhan* and *yanzhi*. The sixth set is *needs and requirements* – *xuqiu*, *yaoqiu*, and *xuyao*. Finally, other terms in this note include: *support* – *baozhang* and *zhiyuan*; *building/construction* – *jianshe*; *armed forces/armed strength* - *jundui* and *wuzhuang lilian*; *intervention* – *ganyu* and *ganshe*; and *network* – *wangluo*.

The inconsistencies found in translations for these terms may result in a critical misunderstanding of their intended meaning. The purpose for distinguishing these terms is to preserve and clarify the original intended meaning for the English reader, while another requirement is to finesse these renderings into proper and at minimum, understandable English. This process will result in awkward phrasing at times, but the intent is to make distinctions that are otherwise omitted in non-technical translations.

Mouhua, *chouhua*, *yunchou*, *tongchou*. *Mouhua* refers to the ruminating or thinking process when one works out an approach towards solving a problem in planning. *Mouhua* will be rendered as “working out an approach.” More often, it is used as a verb, to work out an approach. In the noun form, it more often refers to the process of working out an approach, rather than referring to a specific plan as in a specific *mouhua* plan. *Chouhua* was previously rendered as “overall plan,” but this became problematic because for some it may connote “strategic planning” and for others, it may mean Critical Path methodology. *Chouhua* is related to *yunchou*. *Yunchou* is the Chinese term in modern usage to denote the discipline of operations research, that is, the application of mathematical and technical methods to study activities for the purpose of providing theory and methodology to optimize decision-making; it is a contraction of *yunyong chouhua* or using/applying *chouhua*. *Tongchou* is a contraction of *tongyi chouhua* or unified operations research-based planning.

Mouhua – working out an approach

Chouhua – operations research-based planning; planning that uses mathematical or scientific methods

Yunchou – contraction of *yunyong chouhua*; using operations research-based planning

Tongchou – contraction of *tongyi chouhua*; unified operations research-based planning

In contrast, the two other “*hua*’s” – *jihua* and *guihua* – are rendered either with the *pinyin* followed by “plan” or as plan followed with the *pinyin*. The “plan {*jihua*}” or “*jihua* plan” is a step-by-step detailed plan for accomplishing a certain task and a plan that is meant to be carried out to the letter. The “plan {*guihua*}” or “*guihua* plan” is a plan that is macroscopically focused rather than detail focused. The steps used in accomplishing a *guihua* plan are not set in stone and may even change as long as the goal of the *guihua* plan does not change.

Jihua – *jihua* plan [use this when appearing with *guihua* plan]; plan [without *pinyin* assumes *jihua*]
Guihua – *guihua* plan [use this when appearing with *jihua* plan]; plan {*guihua*}

Bushu [disposition] and *bushi* [momentum disposition]. *Bushu* is the positioning of participating force strengths for a fixed time and space on the basis of *mission differentiation* and the *task-based organizational grouping* and in accordance with operational conditions and the enemy’s possible activities and is thus rendered “disposition.” *Bushi* refers to the relationship between one’s own military forces, the opponent’s military forces, and the combat environment (e.g., terrain) and is thus rendered “momentum disposition.” Most frequently applied to campaign, campaign *bushi* is defined as the *mission differentiation*, the *task-based organizational grouping* and the *positioning* [deployment] accomplished for strengths within the campaign task-based organization. Because *bushi* adopts the classical Chinese military concept of “momentum” {*shi*} in its etymology, “momentum disposition” is adopted to highlight this significance.

Bushu – disposition {*bushu*}
Bushi – momentum disposition {*bushi*}

Jituan [group], *jiquan* [task group], and *qun* [grouping]. This set of terms causes problems because any of the terms can be variously rendered as *group*. In order to distinguish between these, this document renders these three terms in this manner: because *qun* appears to be the more basic or smaller unit within this set, *qun* is rendered as “grouping;” *jiquan* is a “concentration of *qun*’s” so it is translated as “task group,” *jituan* appears to be the larger grouping of this set, literally a “concentration of *tuan*’s” with *tuan* being a regiment or fundamental group in military terms, so *jituan* will be “group.”

Jituan – group
Jiquan – task group
Qun – grouping

Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines *system* as “a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.” In Chinese, there are a set of terms all of which can be properly translated as “system” – *xitong*, *tixi*, *tizhi*, and *zhidu*, but they each carry additional specificity of meaning which is lost if it is rendered merely as “a system.”

The system {*xitong*} is an elemental system, one that can operate on its own. The *tixi* system is similar conceptually to a *System of Systems* as often seen in systems engineering; in Chinese, a *tixi* system is understood to be composed of elemental systems {*xitong*} acting together as a larger whole. The *tizhi* system is a large-scale system, typically a national-scale system and understood to be formalized embodiment of a *zhidu* system. The *zhidu* system describes a conformance system, one where all elements of that system conform to how that system is defined.

Clarification with examples: a command system {*xitong*} refers to a single elemental piece of equipment used for command. A command *tixi* system refers to a group of systems {*xitong*} that are linked together to be used in command. A command *tizhi* system refers to a large-scale system used for command such as between Beijing and the other provincial military commands. And the command *zhidu* system refers to a system where all elements within that system comply or conform to what is defined as commanding, or how commanding is accomplished.

The convention introduced here is as follows: system {*xitong*}, *tixi* system, *tizhi* system and *zhidu* system. This convention not only provides a more readable text but also distinguishes between the different systems. Additionally, if there is no discerning *pinyin* applied, it is assumed to be a system {*xitong*}.

Xitong – system {*xitong*} [without pinyin assumes *xitong*]

Tixi – *tixi* system

Tizhi – *tizhi* system

Zhidu – *zhidu* system

In Chinese RDA-related writings, *fazhan* and *yanzhi* are two terms translated as development but they have different nuances in meaning. *Fazhan* almost always refers to equipment development in the broad sense of advancing equipment overall. Examples of *fazhan* usage include: Equipment Development Strategy, weapons and equipment development objectives. On the other hand, *yanzhi* almost always refers to equipment development in the narrow sense of the design, engineering, and testing of an individual model of equipment. Examples of *yanzhi* usage include: model development, development contract, development cycle, development sequence, engineering development phase.

Fazhan – development {*fazhan*}

Yanzhi – development {*yanzhi*}

In Chinese RDA-related writings, the terms *xuqiu*, *yaoqiu*, and *xuyao* are three interrelated terms that are often intermixed in translation. *Xuqiu* most often refers to a need or requirement in a military or operational sense early in the planning stages. Examples of *xuqiu* usage include: military needs, force level needs, military operational needs, operational needs demonstration. Early in the planning stage means it is not yet tied to a particular equipment model or development project. By contrast, *yaoqiu* is used later in the RDA process to refer to more specific operating or technical requirements associated with a specific model or component of a weapon system or other

equipment. Examples of *yaoqiu* usage include: operating requirement, stipulated characteristics requirements, tactical technical indices requirements. The term *xuyao* is used in a more general and varied way either as a verb or noun, and it can include the nuances associated with both the terms *xuqiu* and *yaoqiu*.

<p><i>Xuqiu</i> – need <i>Yaoqiu</i> – requirement <i>Xuyao</i> – need and require; needs and requirements</p>
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Another set of terms seen frequently are *baozhang* and *zhiyuan*, both of which are rendered as support – support {*baozhang*} and support {*zhiyuan*}. *Baozhang* refers to *measures* and *activities* conducted to ensure armed forces missions are carried out such as operational, logistical, technical and political, etc. *Zhiyuan* refers to supporting subordinate organizational entities and friendly forces with *force strengths* and *firepower*.

<p><i>Baozhang</i> – support {<i>baozhang</i>} <i>Zhiyuan</i> – support {<i>zhiyuan</i>}</p>
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Jianshe {建设} can be translated as “building” or “construction.” *Jianshe* will be translated as “building” when it refers to the broad sense understanding of building as in to help improve and promote development or advancement, for example, armed forces building. On the other hand, *jianshe* will be translated as “construction” when it refers to the narrow sense usage of constructing discrete objects, for example, construction of weapons and equipment, a bridge, tunnel, or road.

<p><i>Jianshe</i> – building [when referring to improving something] <i>Jianshe</i> – construction [when constructing discrete things]</p>
--

Another family of terms often causing confusion involves the concepts of strengths and forces. Two terms that create ambiguity when appearing together are *jundui* and *wuzhuang liliang*. *Jundui* is defined by the Chinese as the regular armed organization that a state or political group establishes for the purpose of preparing for and executing war. The modern *jundui* is usually divided into several services and is set up with leadership and command organs, combat units, logistics and equipment support systems, etc. The *jundui* for the PRC is the PLA. The English term “armed forces” most closely corresponds to *jundui*.

On the other hand, *wuzhuang liliang* is defined by the Chinese as an important compositional part of state authority and is the tool of violence for a state or political group to implement ruling of the classes and to pursue internal and external policies. For the PRC, its *wuzhuang liliang* is composed of the PLA, the PAP, and the militia. There is no common English term to refer to such an entity, and here *wuzhuang liliang* will be rendered as “armed strengths.” Of note, rendering *jundui* in other ways results in more problems, e.g., *jundui* as “the military” confuses it with “military” {*junshi*}; *jundui* as “army” confuses it with the service “Army” {*lujun*}. Similar

problems ensue if *wuzhuang liliang* is translated as anything else other than “armed strengths.” Therefore, in this text *jundui* will be translated as armed forces, and *wuzhuang liliang* will be translated as armed strengths.

Jundui – armed forces
Wuzhuang liliang – armed strengths

Two Chinese terms, *ganyu* and *ganshe*, commonly translated as “intervention” or “interference,” will be translated as “intervention {*ganyu*}” and “intervention {*ganshe*}.” Authoritative original source Chinese texts point to a difference in nuance between the terms *ganyu* and *ganshe*: *ganyu* - intervention, in the neutral sense, that which an international body such as the UN or a regional body deems to be a lawful intervention; *ganshe* - unlawful intervention, that a nation or group of nations may accomplish as a pretext to achieve international body unsanctioned actions. However, while this distinction in meaning is consistent in authoritative sources, it is possible for inconsistencies in other Chinese sources. Thus, the use of pinyin here is to distinguish the original terms for the reader and to preserve any possible nuances that may be in play in order to aid in the understanding of the material.

Ganyu – lawful intervention
Ganshe – unlawful intervention

Wangluo is a Chinese term that has traditionally referred to “network.” As topics related to “cyber” have gained more attention, some Chinese authors have utilized the term *wangluo* to refer to and describe broad concepts that in English may be referenced as cyber. From the Chinese perspective, the term *wangluo* describes both broadly the intangible elements of the network domain and also more narrowly the tangible or physical entities of networked systems. Thus, the translation, “network,” for the Chinese term, *wangluo*, encompasses this spectrum from the broader to the narrower context.

Wangluo – network

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On multiple occasions, he participated in over 30 topic critical problems at the national, PLA-wide, and General Department levels, received two 1st-Rank awards in the PLA-wide Military Scientific Research Outstanding Achievement awards, and multiple times received awards for Armed Forces and NDU Outstanding Achievement. He published the academic work, *History of Sea Warfare and Future Maritime War* {*haizhan shi yu weilai haishang zhanzheng*}; he participated in writing close to 10 academic papers and teaching materials such as *Science of Military Service Strategy* {*junzhong zhanlue xue*}, *A Comprehensive Review of 21st Century Asia Pacific Security* {*21 shiji yatai anquan zongheng*}, etc. On multiple occasions, he was invited to lecture at armed forces, local schools and universities, academic exchanges and keynote speeches. He has issued over 60 academic papers in national and PLA-wide core periodicals as well as PLA-wide major strategic conferences.

He was honored with the honorary title of National “3-8” Red Banner Pacesetter, a School Outstanding Middle and Youth Mainstay, and NDU Fifth Party Representative of the National Representative Conference of the CPC. He is currently a Deputy Secretary General of the China Sea-Ocean Society's Science of Military Sea-Ocean Specialty Committee,” and in 2010 he was named by the General Political Department Propaganda Dept. as a “PLA-Wide Always Prepared Foreign Propaganda Expert.”

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INTRODUCTION...1

This ancient and at the same time modern major strategic problem, maritime strategic access, serves as the important content of regional strategy, national strategy, and military strategy. Both in the past of the fierce struggle for hegemonism and in the present day of uninterrupted in-depth expansion of economic globalization, it played and will play a more and more important role. A secure and unimpeded maritime strategic access not only affects a nation to increasingly expand and extend the security of overseas economic interests, it also touches upon national relations, international relations, national strategic position and strategic security in the era of globalization. Consequently, any action is not purely military action in terms of maritime strategic access, but it is also a nation's strategic action, so this is a major strategic problem that a nation and a people must attach importance to and resolve as it enters the global arena.

Due to being subjected to the effects of factors such as social *zhidu* systems, cultural traits and subjective understanding, even though historical China had glorious sailing history and sailing technology that occupied a leading position,¹ with the magnificent feat of Zheng He's Seven Voyages to the Western Seas, but it never formed a corresponding security perspective of maritime strategic access. China truly started to have a rational understanding of maritime strategic access only after reform and opening up. Even though some domestic scholars have conducted study of this and put forth some penetrating insight, but until now, we are still in an exploratory phase of research on maritime strategic access. We have yet to elevate it to the height of maritime strategic access thought or policy and still have not genuinely entered the level of being engaged in it or practicing it. This is very unbecoming for a nation of the new phase of the century faced with increasingly severe threats and challenges from the direction of the seas. The recent eruptions of global economic crisis, high oil prices, and international trade wars have once again **[end of page 1]** warned us that if a nation does not have a far-sighted strategic awareness and crisis awareness, then inevitably it first would be inferior by a notch at the commanding height strategy, and the falling behind in terms of strategy will inevitably result in delays or lagging behind in terms of activities *{xingdong}*. This brings about not only a ten or twenty year gap but an epochal gap difficult to catch up to. This cost will severely affect a nation's rise and even cause the nation to lose its valuable period of strategic opportunity.

Along with the uninterrupted development of world globalization trend, the level of China's foreign dependence on economy and oil has gradually increased, and for the first time in China's history has entered a state of "relying on external economics of maritime strategic access." Safeguarding secure and unimpeded maritime strategic access has already affected national interests and particularly safeguarding and expanding sea interests; it has affected the sustainable development of China's economy, affected the peaceful rise of the Chinese people, and it has become a major strategic problem for the Party and the nation to pay attention to. Chairman Hu Jintao had clearly pointed out: "We must improve the strategic capability to safeguard sea interests,

¹ Sun Guangqi {孙光圻}. *Sea Navigation History of Chinese Antiquity*, Oceans Press, 2005, p. 3.

guard the nation's territorial sea sovereignty and sea rights and interests, and protect the security of the nation's increasing development in sea industry, maritime transport, and strategic access to energy resources." Therefore, putting forth the "Theory on Maritime Strategic Access" has the features of a profound backdrop of being current and distinctively timely. Not only does it share the attention of world's maritime strong nations, it is also China's strategic proposition for the attention of a nation in the new phase of the new century. Conducting a thorough and systematic analysis and study on the security problem of maritime strategic access not only has important theoretical significance, it also has an important real significance.

Based on this, we hope this book can, through the analysis and grasp of the world's sea-ocean strong nations' maritime strategic access thought and practices, summarize from the recesses of history the general laws of contending for and controlling maritime strategic access and thus collate the regional postures and features of China's associated maritime strategic access in order to provide a strategic consideration and recommendations for China to mold its maritime strategic access security. At the same time, we can innovate China's maritime strategic access thought, replenish and perfect the content and framework of China's maritime security theory and the nation's regional strategy, and provide strategic guidance for working out approaches in planning China's maritime strategic access security and expanding China's sea rights in the new era.

Liang Fang {梁芳}
May 2011 in Beijing

[End of page 2]

CHAPTER 1

A RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...3

If we want to establish the foundation for a science that people are even now unfamiliar with, one thing that is very important is to make the names for each component part of that science relatively unified; otherwise, there will be no way to differentiate them and classify them.

- [Antoine-Henri] Jomini

Maritime strategic accesses are not only routes in the natural geographical sense but they are also an important component part of geostrategy in a political sense; together with strategic accesses on land, they form the basic key factors of geostrategy. For a long period of time, although humans have consistently used maritime accesses in their lives and practices, [people] have never had an authoritative definition of that concept. Because they have mostly been an important tool in history that early colonizers and aggressors used for aggression and expansion, for overseas colonies, and for commerce and founding countries, they have often linked to the bitter history of colonized countries; therefore, there have always been fairly major disputes [over them]. Therefore, at the start of this book, we need to first discuss a rational understanding of maritime strategic accesses. In actuality, just like geostrategy and military strategy, maritime strategic accesses not only have been used by imperialism for aggression and expansion but they also can be used by peace-loving countries to protect their lands and pacify their borders. Today, with economic integration, China is facing a rare period of strategic opportunity for peaceful development; its reliance on maritime strategic accesses has become inevitable, and launching studies on maritime strategic accesses has an important theoretical and actual significance.

SECTION 1: THE DEFINITION OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT CONCEPTS...4

In studying the issue of maritime strategic accesses, it is first necessary to comb through and define some concepts that are related to maritime strategic accesses. In recent years, although academic circles have consistently used this concept of “maritime strategic accesses,” there are all kinds of explanations of it. Speaking in a strict sense, no authoritative definition has yet been formed of this concept, and the understanding of maritime strategic accesses has lost its narrow [sense]. Because maritime strategic accesses are inseparable from straits {*haixia*}, waterways {*shuidao*}, and sea lanes {*haishang jiaotong xian*}, these groups of concepts are linked together, and they include each other; when studying maritime strategic accesses, it is necessary to study the many straits, waterways, and sea lanes in the world. Therefore, this entire text will always link maritime strategic accesses to straits, waterways, and sea lanes in its studies, and this will help in forming a complete understanding and in-depth grasp of the issue of maritime strategic accesses.

I. Straits...4

[The term] straits refers to a relatively narrow and long waterway connecting two seas or oceans between two pieces of land. Generally, they are situated between two mainlands, a mainland and an island, or two islands; their water depth goes from several meters to several thousand meters;

their length runs from several hundred meters to up to a thousand kilometers; and their width runs from less than a kilometer to several hundred kilometers. The Mozambique Channel, between the east coast of Africa and the island of Madagascar, is about 1,670 kilometers long, and it is the longest strait in the world. The Drake Passage between the southern tip of South America and Antarctica is 900 to 950 kilometers wide and 5,248 meters deep, and it is the deepest strait in the world.² But the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits, located in Turkey, have a width of only 0.9 to 1.7 kilometers.³ Speaking in general, there are basically two major categories of the geographical characteristics of straits.

The first is that geographically, they are located between two pieces of land. These two pieces of land can be two mainlands, but they can also have a mainland on one side and an island on the other, or both sides can be islands. Straits between mainlands are, for example, the Bering Strait between Asia and North America and the Strait of Gibraltar between Europe and Africa. Straits between a mainland and an island are, for example, the Taiwan Strait, which is situated between the [Chinese] mainland and the island of Taiwan. There are many straits in the world that are situated between islands, such as the Tsugaru Strait between Japan's Honshu and Hokkaido, the Sunda Strait and Lombok Strait in Indonesia, and the Waichangshan Strait within the Waichangshan archipelago in the Waichangshan Islands in Liaoning in the PRC.

The second is the differing sea regions that the two ends link and connect. That is, what the two ends of the strait connect to are one ocean and another, an ocean and a sea, or one sea and another. An example of linking a sea with an ocean is the Bashi Channel's linking the South China Sea with the Pacific Ocean; an example of linking one sea and another is the Taiwan Strait's linking the East China Sea with the South China Sea; an example of linking two parts of one maritime region is the Mozambique Channel, which links two parts of the Indian Ocean; an example of linking a gulf and an ocean is the Bab el-Mandeb Strait's linking the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea; and an example of linking two gulfs is the Strait of Hormuz's linking the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Aden.

Straits are a shortcut, economically, for maritime shipping, a hub for international traffic at sea; in military matters, on the other hand, they are important strategic channels, as well as important battlefields for blockading and countering blockades in operations at sea.

II. Isthmuses {*dixia*} and canals {*yunhe*}...5

[The term] isthmuses refers to narrow lands that connect two pieces of land in an ocean.⁴ Where they differ from straits is that isthmuses are the most narrow spot connecting two pieces of land. Canals that are cut in places where the land is narrow can link two sea areas that originally were separated, becoming traffic thoroughfares and strategic key points. An example is the Suez Canal, which was cut in the place that connects the Eurasian continent and the African continent – the Suez Isthmus (135 kilometers wide) – and which links the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea maritime regions, becoming a traffic hub for the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe.

² *Chinese Military Encyclopedia*, Military Science Publishing House, 1992, p. 90.

³ Zhang Haiwen, *Collection of Interpretations on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 2006, p. 51.

⁴ *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, Commercial Press, 1997, p. 275.

[Another example] is the Panama Canal (seventy-five kilometers wide and about fifty-one kilometers at its narrowest spot),⁵ which was cut in the narrow and long isthmus of Central America, becoming an important channel linking the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. In addition, militarily, isthmuses usually are important regions that two sides struggle over in wartime. Germany's invasion of the Crimea in 1941 and the Soviet military's 1944 campaign to liberate the Crimea first occupied the Perekop Isthmus on the Crimean Peninsula and then afterwards surrounded and attacked Sebastopol at the tip of the peninsula and thus ended the fighting.

III. Sea lanes...6

Beginning in ancient times, mankind traveled on canoes and rafts, using oars to navigate at sea, and this began traffic and communications at sea. As vessels underwent the developments of the age of boats and rafts, the age of sailing ships, the age of steam-powered ships, and the age of diesel ships, capacity continually increased, and routes also developed from [traveling along] the coast to deep-sea [travels] and even [traveling on] the global oceans, so that traffic at sea became an indispensable link in mankind's traffic network, while sea lanes became focal points that two warring parties needed to protect and needed to destroy in naval combat. Whether channels at sea were unimpeded or not had a direct and crucial impact on the economic operations of the various warring parties, on their battlefield postures, and on developments and changes in their campaigns.

The British strategist [Basil] Liddell Hart pointed out that "The secret to all the art of war is to have yourself become the master of traffic lines." The US strategic geographers Louis C. Peltier and [George] Etzel Percy proposed six key factors in the study of strategic geography in their book *Military Geography*: two of these were "accessibility" {*tongdaxing*} and "mobility" {*jidongxing*}, which are closely related to traffic and transportation, and they stressed that "accessibility is their core."⁶ In the book, they also pointed out that "Prior to the Second World War, strategic geography basically was the geography of transportation."⁷ [Alfred Thayer] Mahan pointed out that sea lanes are "lines of movement that navies rely on in order to stay linked to the survival of a nation's actual strength;" they are the lifelines that support combat ships at sea and that have a crucially important role in victory or defeat in naval warfare.⁸ In a book, *Blockade and Counter-Blockade*, which Soviet scholar Bo-ge-lie-bo-fu⁹ was the chief editor for, he pointed out that "sea lanes refer to the overall ocean shipping system that a country (or an alliance made up of several countries) have organized; they include sea roads (routes), traffic hubs, transportation tools, loading and unloading harbors, and vessels, as well as temporary ports, locations for stopping, and all support facilities for escort convoys."¹⁰ Zheng Wenhan's explanation of sea lanes in the *Military Dictionary* for which he was chief editor, was that "Sea lanes refer to international traffic

⁵ Translator's note: This actually is the width of the Isthmus.

⁶ Louis C. Peltier and G. Etzel Percy, *Military Geography*, Wang Qichang, translator, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 41.

⁷ Louis C. Peltier and G. Etzel Percy, *Military Geography*, Wang Qichang, translator, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988,, p. 72.

⁸ Dong Liangqing, *Strategic Geography*, National Defense University Press, 2000, p. 199.

⁹ Translator's note: This is a probably Russian name, possibly "Bogolev."

¹⁰ (Soviet Union) Bo-ge-lie-bo-fu [see above footnote], *Blockade and Counter-Blockade*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1993, p. 8.

and transportation lines or to ones in a country's internal waters."¹¹ The *Naval Dictionary* that the PRC published in 1993 believes that "Sea lanes are also called 'sea transportation lines,' they refer to sailing routes for maritime traffic and transportation. They are composed of coastal (or island) loading and unloading ports and maritime routes."¹²

In the above discourses, the concept of "sea lanes" that the Soviet scholar proposed was a complete system of maritime transport that included channels, traffic hubs, transportation tools, ports, and convoy fleets. But the "sea lanes" concept that the PRC scholars proposed basically was details like sea routes and loading and unloading ports; some definitions were even narrower, especially referring to the sea routes part or especially referring to straits and channels.

IV. Sea passages...7

Sea passages {*haishang tongdao*} are a type of passage, and they inevitably have the ordinary attributes of passages. Looking at history, the use of the term "passages" originated earliest in the role of "roads." China's ancient "roads" were called "stations" {*yi chuan*} or "post roads" {*yidao*}. When the Western Zhou [Dynasty] started [in 1045 B.C.], China had already built a fairly complete road system. In the Qin Dynasty [221-207 B.C.], [China] built the famous *chi* roads that, with Xianyang as the center, extended to each place, forming a network of roads that covered the entire country; even today, some of the *chi* roads still exist and play a role.¹³

There are many scholars, both at home and abroad, who, based on the perspective of their own studies, have given ordinary interpretations of "passages." The *Public Transportation Dictionary* defines passages as "Broad areas in a given region that connect the origins of main traffic flows, that have common directions of flow, and that have several forms of transportation that can be selected from." The *Chinese-English Dictionary* believes that passages are fairly exactly what English translates as thoroughfares, passageways, or passages.¹⁴ The *English-Chinese Dictionary* explains thoroughfares as "transportation routes or places where existing routes pass through;"¹⁵ it explains passages as "passageways that go through a certain area or between two points."¹⁶ Professor Lu Zhuoming states, in *World Economic Geographical Structures*, that "There exist in the world some traffic lines that are distant, that usually go across a number of countries, and that are aligned with each other; they undertake most international transportation. The term 'passageways' is especially used in the regions that this kind of traffic passes through, and any region that long-distance sea, land, and air traffic lines pass through in parallel is a thoroughfare."¹⁷ Li Bing, Ph.D. believes in his dissertation, *International Strategic Passages*, that "Passages are areas where large amounts of material flows are concentrated and pass through; in their distribution, they inevitably must connect and cross over the world's major economic centers and production bases. The distribution of passages is determined by the distribution of the regions of the world's production capabilities and in particular, it is a distribution of major industrial areas, because major

¹¹ Zheng Wenhan, *Military Dictionary*, Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 1992, p. 448.

¹² Zhang Xusan, *Naval Dictionary*, Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 1993, p. 13.

¹³ Li Bing, "Studies in International Strategic Passages," Central Party School doctoral dissertation, 2005, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Chinese-English Dictionary*, Commercial Press, 1978, p. 686.

¹⁵ *English-Chinese Dictionary*, National Defense Industry Publishing House, 1987, p. 5488.

¹⁶ *English-Chinese Dictionary*, National Defense Industry Publishing House, 1987, p. 3811.

¹⁷ Lu Zhuoming, *World Economic Geographical Structures*, China Price Publishing House, 1995. p. 90.

industrial bases are the regions that produce the largest number of products and that absorb the most raw materials.”¹⁸ He defined passages as “the sum total of the areas that passenger flows and materials flows flow through, routes, vehicles and tools, and management systems.”¹⁹ A very important point that must be made here is that regardless of what nature passages have, even though they all have the role of “roads,” they are not entirely equivalent to “roads.”²⁰

In regard to “sea passages,” these clearly evolved from the concept of “passages.” Dao Shulin pointed out in the *Sea Passage Security and International Cooperation* that was compiled by the Sea Passage Security Task Force of the China Modern International Relations Research Institute that “[The term] sea passage refers to the maritime routes that vessels go through from point A to point B. In maritime terminology, it should be transportation lines with routes that are short {*lu duan*}, economical, and secure.”²¹ In world economics and geography, the various countries of the world have a great many concepts related to sea transportation passages, such as seaways {*haishang hangxian*} and waterways {*shuilu, shui dao*}. In addition, there are also corridors {*zoulang*}, lines {*xianlu*}, passageways {*tongdao*}, paths {*lujing*}, routes {*xianlu, lujing*}, and thoroughfares {*tongdao*}.

V. Maritime strategic accesses...9

It can be seen from the above four concepts that although they are linked to maritime strategic accesses, they mostly imply the details of maritime strategic accesses from one given aspect, and they cannot completely explain or be equivalent to maritime strategic accesses. That is to say, maritime strategic accesses should be an extraction and integration of the connotations of these concepts. Looking at the actual meaning that Chinese and Western strategists, military experts, and scholars have given maritime strategic accesses, maritime strategic accesses usually refer to key maritime traffic channels in national strategy and even global strategy that have major strategic significance or key sections of maritime traffic lines; they mostly refer to the chokepoints of maritime accesses and routes. Currently, scholars within the PRC have yet to reach an authoritative concept about maritime strategic accesses; the concepts that involve maritime strategic accesses primarily consist [of the following].

Li Bing, Ph.D., believes in his *Studies in International Strategic Passages* that “There are key chokepoints {*yanhou yaodi*} in only one or two places that play a decisive role in the endless transportation at sea, that is, straits that have a strategic significance, and people usually call these important straits maritime strategic transportation accesses, abbreviated as strategic accesses {*zhanlue tongdao*}... Strategic accesses are not only key chokepoints in military conflicts but they are also controls {*guanka*} over trade and the flow of materials, and they play an important role in the political and economic development of the world.” What Professor Jiang Lei expressed in his text “An Analysis of the Security Issues in the PRC’s Maritime Strategic Accesses” is that “Maritime strategic accesses especially refer to a country’s key maritime channels that have

¹⁸ Li Bing, *Studies in International Strategic Passages*, Central Party School dissertation, 2005, p. 17.

¹⁹ Li Bing, *Studies in International Strategic Passages*, Central Party School dissertation, 2005, p. 17.

²⁰ Li Bing, *Studies in International Strategic Passages*, Central Party School dissertation, 2005, p. 15.

²¹ Sea Passage Security Task Force of the China Modern International Relations Research Institute, *Sea Passage Security and International Cooperation*, Current Affairs Press, 2005, p. 51.

strategic significance. They are important straits and channels that are situated between islands and between islands and mainlands and that are closely related to maritime routes and naval troop strengths' movements between sea regions.”²² Researcher Zhang Wei's definition in his *National Maritime Security* is that “Maritime strategic accesses refer to relatively narrow and especially important sea regions between two land areas that are used for navigation. They are commonly canals, straits, and waterways between islands. In particular, they refer to thoroughfares and chokepoint regions along maritime routes for transporting strategic materials.”²³ Professor Wang Lidong defined this in his *On National Maritime Interests* as “Maritime strategic accesses refer to sea regions between two land areas that are used navigation, that are comparatively narrow, and that are especially important. They usually are canals, straits, and waterways between islands. In particular, they especially refer to thoroughfares and chokepoints along maritime strategic routes.”²⁴

In summarizing the concepts that these experts have about maritime strategic accesses, the author believes that it is possible to understand maritime strategic accesses from the following several aspects.

First, maritime strategic accesses are in no way equivalent to straits. Some experts believe that straits are maritime strategic accesses, but the author believes that this definition is biased. Naturally, speaking in a certain sense, some straits play the role of maritime strategic accesses, but this is in no way an important strategic value that all straits have. There are thousands of straits throughout the world, but only somewhere over 130 of them are truly suited for shipping, and there are only somewhere over forty that are commonly used for international navigation; the vast majority of these are naturally formed, but some are artificially dug, like the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal. However, not all straits can be called maritime strategic accesses. In talking about the major concept of straits, there are extremely few straits that can serve as strategic maritime accesses; only straits between mainlands that are situated in economically developed regions, [only] straits that connect oceans, [only] straits that have just one channel, and [only] straits that are located along important routes have an important strategic significance. Therefore, it is impossible to make a sweeping generalization; straits are only an important component part of maritime strategic accesses, and they in no way make up all of them.

Second, maritime strategic accesses do not mean only sea lanes. It should be said that in the practices of human history, “maritime accesses” and “sea lanes” are two terms whose connotations are extremely close. Ever since mankind has used and controlled the oceans, there have been “sea lanes,” but the time when [the term] “maritime strategic accesses” appeared was quite a bit later; in particular, the two are usually mixed up in economic geography. The reason for this is mainly that some important straits and waterways frequently are strategic accesses that sea lanes must pass through, maritime accesses support sea lanes, and sea lanes also highlight the importance of these accesses. The two complement each other and influence each other.

²² Jiang Lei, “An Analysis of the Security Issues in the PR's Maritime Strategic Accesses,” thesis at the “First Academic Seminar on Innovations and Developments in Military Strategy and National Strategy in the New Century and the New Stage.”

²³ Zhang Wei, *National Maritime Security*, Ocean Press, 2008, p. 394.

²⁴ Wang Lidong, *On National Maritime Interests*, National Defense University Press, 2007, p. 173.

Third, maritime strategic accesses not only have the meaning of [single] points but also of [a broad] area. Compared to the points involved that make up straits and waterways, maritime strategic accesses also have concepts involving areas, like the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the northern Indian Ocean, and the South China Sea; because these are all important sea areas for military traffic and blockades and for petroleum energy routes, they also, speaking from a certain angle, play the role of maritime strategic accesses. For example, the term Persian Gulf sometimes not only refers to the Gulf itself but it also includes the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Aden. That is to say, compared to straits and waterways, these sea areas are a [broad] area, but compared to the vast oceans, they are also [only] a point, and they also should have the nature of maritime strategic accesses.

It can be seen from this that over the endless maritime transportation lines, there are only one or two places, or several key chokepoints, that truly play a decisive role. We usually refer to them as maritime “strategic” accesses. The author believes that maritime strategic accesses can be defined using the following words: maritime strategic accesses are a collective term that refers to the key maritime chokepoint routes, maritime routes, and important sea regions that have an important strategic significance for national security and development. They primarily include three parts: the first especially refers to some important straits, waterways, and canals; the second refers to straits and some important traffic hubs that are close to traffic lines – island nations and islands; and the third refers to important sea regions that have specific spatial limits and that sea lanes pass through.

Speaking overall, “maritime strategic accesses” are sectors that have special value along maritime routes. Their value is shown as first, they are areas that sea routes must pass through, and they have important strategic value; second, they are areas that sea routes use quite frequently and that have major economic value; and third, they are areas that must be fought over at sea, and they have major military value.

SECTION 2: DIFFERENTIATION OF TYPES OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...11

In order to further analyze and study maritime strategic accesses, it is important to carry out a general classification of maritime strategic accesses. Based on the geographical location, hydrography and landforms, value, and roles of maritime strategic accesses, the author believes that it is possible to categorize them in accordance with differing standards, such as geographical characteristics, shipping value, legal relationships, and roles and functions.

I. Differentiating them in accordance with geographical characteristics...12

1. Straits and waterways that are naturally formed

The importance of some maritime strategic accesses benefits from their natural nature; their unique geographical location is the major condition for them to become maritime strategic accesses. For example, the English Channel, the Black Sea channels [composed of the Bosphorus Strait, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles], the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Strait of Malacca, and the Strait of Hormuz are all naturally formed straits, and they have played important roles in the history of mankind’s development.

2. Artificially dug maritime accesses

People have dug canals in some isthmuses in order to improve the environment for traffic at sea, linking the sea regions along the two shores of the isthmuses, such as the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the North Sea-Baltic Sea Canal (the Kiel Canal), and the Corinthian Canal. Artificially dug canals largely have the following kinds of characteristics.

First, the areas are all at the narrowest parts of mainlands; some of them are the dividing lines between mainlands. For example, the Suez Canal penetrates the narrow Isthmus of Suez in a north-south direction, and it is the dividing line between Asia and Africa, while the Panama Canal penetrates the narrow Isthmus of Panama in an east-west direction, and it is the dividing line between South America and North America.

Second, they are all sea canals. That is, they are located in areas close to the sea and are canals that link internal rivers with seas or one sea with another, and they primarily [are used] for carrying ocean-going ships. What the Suez Canal links is the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, making it easy to link the Atlantic coast and the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts with the Indian Ocean; what the Panama Canal links is the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, making it easy for the east coast of America to connect with its west coast and with Asia and the Pacific. The Kiel Canal connects the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, and it is a shortcut from the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic Ocean.

Third, after they are dug, they greatly shorten routes, they reduce the number of remote detours, and they change the geographical distribution of maritime routes. The detour that the Suez Canal avoids is the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of the African continent, reducing the route by about 8,000 to 10,000 kilometers; the detour that the Panama Canal avoids is the Strait of Magellan or Cape Horn at the southern tip of the South American continent, which are narrow and winding, reducing the route by about 5,000 to 13,700 kilometers. Therefore, sailing through these two canals not only reduces the distance of voyages, but it also reduces the dangers of voyages.

Fourth, they all have important economic and strategic significance. Canals that have been dug become extremely important key chokepoints for world sea lanes. For example, the Suez Canal is one of the most important “crossroads” of world sea lanes; it is a traffic hub that links Europe, Asia, and Africa; and its strategic position is quite important. [Karl] Marx called it the “grand channel to the Orient.” Because the Panama Canal “connects South and North America and links the two great oceans,” it has been called the “bridge of the world,” and it has an extremely important strategic significance.

II. Differentiating them in accordance with their geological origins...13

The origins of straits can largely be divided into nine types, such as continental drift, ground subsidence, rift valley expansion, coastal settlement, and glacier erosion. Expansion of the seabed has formed straits between islands and between islands and mainlands, such as the Aleutian archipelago, the Kuril archipelago, the Japanese archipelago, the Ryukyu archipelago, the Philippine archipelago, and the Mariana archipelago. There are a great many of these straits, they are very close to each other, and their importance is not very prominent. But the arc of islands often is the dividing line between two sea areas; the straits between some islands are a region that transoceanic navigation must pass through, and some are important straits. Rather famous ones are

the Soya Strait [between Sakhalin and Hokkaido], the Tsugaru Strait, the Osumi Strait [between the East China Sea and the Pacific, south of Kyushu], the Bashi Channel [between the Philippines and Taiwan], the Sunda Strait [between Java and Sumatra], and the Lombok Strait [between Bali and Lombok]. Straits between the island arc and the mainland frequently are some fairly important straits, such as the Korea Strait, the Taiwan Strait, the Strait of Malacca, the Straits of Florida, and the Yucatan Channel. Straits that were produced by glacier erosion include the Strait of Magellan, the English Channel and the Strait of Dover, and the many straits among Canada's North Pole archipelago. Straits that were produced by ground subsidence or fractures are, for example, the Black Sea straits composed of the Bosphorus Strait, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles; the Strait of Hormuz, and the Mozambique Channel. In addition, islands formed by seabed volcanoes and coral reefs, such as the Hawaii archipelago and the Maldives, also can form straits.

III. Differentiating them in accordance with shipping value...13

If we were to measure the shipping value of maritime strategic accesses solely from the angle of straits, the world would have up to a thousand straits and channels, but these do not all have value for traffic, by any means. The waters of some straits are shallow and cannot be opened to navigation; although some can be navigated, they are abandoned because of nearby straits whose navigation conditions are better. For many reasons, the straits of the world have differing values for navigation, but these can largely be divided into two levels. The first is straits that have very great value for shipping, while the second is straits that do not have much value for shipping, despite being great in number. The latter are, for example, the majority of straits in the various great island arcs and especially some countries that have a particularly large number of coastal islands. For example, Norway has up to 150,000 coastal islands, with tens of thousands of straits among them. Similarly, there are also thousands of straits along Canada's Pacific Ocean coast, Chile's southern Pacific coast, and the Malay Archipelago, which all can come under the category of straits without much value for shipping. Straits that come under maritime strategic accesses, on the other hand, refer to the former, that is, straits with a great [value] and even an especially great value for shipping. The locations of this kind of strait are important, they are used quite a bit, and they are key chokepoint channels for world maritime shipping. The busiest straits in the world are [as follows].

The English Channel and the Strait of Dover – Situated in an economically developed region, with many important routes passing through them. Every year, more than 150,000 ships pass through this strait, with over 600 million tons of goods coming and going.

The Strait of Gibraltar – The key traffic route for Mediterranean coastal countries to leave and enter the Mediterranean Sea, it is a chokepoint for the important Atlantic-Mediterranean-Indian Ocean lines. There are approximately 150,000 ships that pass through each year, with more than 200 large-sized oil tankers alone passing through each day. The vast majority of crude petroleum, raw materials, and industrial products of the various Western European countries go through this to the various places in the world, making up thirty-five percent of the total amount of international ocean shipping.

The Strait of Hormuz – The navigational chokepoint of the Persian Gulf, a petroleum treasure house. There are as many as 110,000 oil tankers that pass through each year, carrying about 1.4 billion tons of petroleum.

The Baltic Sea Strait – The traffic thoroughfare for the various Baltic Sea coastal countries going to the Atlantic Ocean; more than 100,000 ships pass through each year.

The Strait of Malacca – The link between the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and an international shipping chokepoint for East Asia going to South Asia, Africa, and Europe. Over 80,000 ships pass through each year.

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait – The chokepoint for Atlantic Ocean-Mediterranean-Red Sea-Indian Ocean shipping. 20,000 ships pass through each year.

The Suez Canal – A shortcut for the sea lanes between the North Atlantic and the Indian Ocean and western Pacific Ocean; it is 8,000 to 10,000 meters {mi}²⁵ shorter than the southern route that detours around the Cape of Good Hope. Ships from more than 100 nations pass through each year; the passage of oil tankers alone makes up one-quarter of the world's petroleum shipping tonnage.

The Panama Canal – A shortcut for sea lanes between the northern Pacific Ocean and the northern Atlantic Ocean, it is 5,000 to 13,700 kilometers shorter than the route detouring through the Strait of Magellan. The volume of shipping freight makes up about five percent of the world's freight volume.

In addition to these straits, important world shipping chokepoints also include the Straits of Florida, the Black Sea straits, the Makassar Strait, the Sunda Strait, the Korea Strait, the Mozambique Channel, the Strait of Magellan, and the Kiel Canal.²⁶

IV. Differentiating them in accordance with their legal status...15

Within the norms of international maritime law, maritime strategic accesses are also divided into internal waters straits {*neihai haixia*} or archipelagic waters straits {*qundao shuiyu haixia*}, territorial straits {*linghai haixia*}, non-territorial straits {*fei linghai haixia*}, and straits used for international navigation {*guoji hangxing haixia*}, in accordance with their differing legal status.

1. Internal waters straits

[The term] internal waters straits refers to straits that are entirely located within the territorial waters baseline of a coastal state, that is, they are straits that are entirely located in the internal waters of the coastal state. The state to which they belong generally manages them in accordance with the management methods of its internal waters system. In accordance with the specifications of Article 2 of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, internal waters have the legal status of the state's land territory, and the state enjoys exclusive sovereignty and has full rights to prevent foreign ships from passing through its internal waters strait. However, in order to develop foreign trade and to facilitate merchant ships' navigation, coastal states generally permit the passage of foreign merchant ships, while not permitting the passage of foreign military ships. The legal procedures for foreign merchant ships' passage through internal waters straits and the stipulations that they should abide by when passing through are entirely determined by the coastal state.

²⁵ Translator's note: Based on the context, this is a typo for "kilometers" {*qianmi*}.

²⁶ Li Bidong, *Straits*, Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, pp. 13-14.

2. Territorial straits

[The term] territorial straits refers to where the width of the strait does not exceed twice the width of territorial waters (the two sides [of the strait] should not be more than twenty-four nautical miles apart) and where the two shores both belong to the territory of the same state; this strait is then classified as a territorial strait of this state. If the territory on the two shores of the strait belong to two states, then under conditions where there are no other stipulations of a special treaty, it is classified as a territorial strait that the two coastal states have in common. Its borderline passes through the center channel of the strait, and the navigational system of the strait is determined by an agreement between the coastal states.

3. Non-territorial straits

[The term] non-territorial straits refers to straits that, although they are situated within the territorial waters of a coastal state, are wider than the width of the two shores' territorial waters, and the sea area within this strait exceeds the territorial seas parts of the two shores (these could belong to the coastal state that is on one side, but they could also be divided between coastal states on the two sides).

Water areas of differing widths within a non-territorial strait have differing legal statuses. The water area situated in the part that is territorial waters has a legal status equivalent to that of the territorial waters, while the strait's water area that goes outside the territorial waters is a contiguous zone, an exclusive economic zone, or even the high seas, based on differences in its width. Therefore, in the broad sense, this type of strait is viewed as an international strait or a strait that is used for international navigation. The PRC's Taiwan Strait comes under this kind of strait. Because of an increase in the width of territorial waters, there has been an increase in the number of territorial straits and a decrease in the number of non-territorial straits; this has had a pronounced impact on military freedom of navigation in straits.

4. Straits used for international navigation

This concept was first proposed in an international court of law to hear the Corfu [Channel] case. Some straits in the world are located along thoroughfares for international navigation, and they affect the rights of many countries and have an important strategic position. Although the width of the straits does not exceed twice the width of the territorial waters, still, because of historical reasons or the stipulations of international covenants, they have obtained the legal status of a strait used for international navigation. Examples are the Black Sea straits, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Strait of Malacca, and the Korea Strait.

V. Differentiating them in accordance with their functions and roles...16

1. Sole type

If a strait is the only strait channel that passes to another sea area, and if it is irreplaceable, it then has a great strategic value. Its nature of being irreplaceable primarily is determined by factors in three areas. The first is geographical factors. Seventy-one percent of the earth's surface is ocean, and land areas are separated by oceans into several continents and innumerable islands; exchanges among these must rely on maritime transportation channels. The second is the superiority that maritime transportation has. The oceans of the world are connected into one body, the oceans have become a global thoroughfare, and maritime thoroughfares are irreplaceably important nodes for

transportation and navigation. In the world system of maritime transportation, the northern Atlantic, the northern Pacific, and the northern Indian Ocean are the three most important strategic waterways, and the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Strait of Malacca, and the Panama Canal are the most important maritime chokepoints in the world. Were these maritime strategic accesses to be controlled in an illegal or hostile manner, it would be difficult for a time to find new routes. Examples are the sole exit from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean, which is the Strait of Hormuz; the sole exit from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic, which is the Strait of Gibraltar; and the several straits of the Baltic Sea from the Baltic Sea to the Northern Sea (the Oresund Strait, the Great Belt Strait, the Little Belt Strait, the Kattegat Strait, and the Skagrak Strait). The two shores of the PRC's Bohai Strait are also the sole access strait to the Yellow Sea.

2. Substitute type

As the economy has developed, and as some maritime strategic accesses have moved, substitutable straits have appeared; that is, if the value of certain sea areas that [these straits] connect is limited, or if there are substitute straits near the accesses, then the significance of the accesses will be relatively weakened. In addition, there is some terrain in the world where, because of reasons like their unique geographical conditions, people will dig canals in some narrow places in order to improve waterway traffic so that these become shortcuts in maritime transportation. Typical examples are the Panama Canal and the Suez Canal; both canals are manmade canals that have been dug, and they are called "the most important shortcuts in the world." They have important strategic value in international shipping. The Panama Canal's opening for navigation resulted in a relative decline in the status of the Strait of Magellan and the Drake Passage. The opening of the Suez Canal, on the other hand, caused a relative decline in the status of the Mozambique Channel and the Cape of Good Hope waterway. But if the Suez Canal were to be closed, the status of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait would also accordingly decline, while the status of the Mozambique Channel and the Cape of Good Hope waterway would rise. Similarly, once the Kra Canal, which has been proposed for the Malay Peninsula's Kra Isthmus, begins to open, the degree to which the Strait of Malacca is busy will fall. As the world economy develops, the continual rise in status that straits have in shipping will be an overall trend.

SECTION 3: THE STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...17

I. The stability of geographical location...17

The stability of maritime strategic accesses originates from its geographical and geostrategic stability. Just as some experts have proposed, "Although time passes and history evolves, the geographical location of countries is constant."²⁷ Maritime strategic accesses exist naturally and objectively; they are not artificially set up, and even less can they be arbitrarily created by the will of man. Therefore, as regards their natural endowments, the position of maritime strategic accesses cannot be changed and cannot be selected to a certain degree, that is, they have a relative natural stability as society and history have changed, and the impact and role that they have had on the economic activities and security activities of mankind and among nations are characterized by

²⁷ Chen Jiehua, *China's Diplomatic Strategy in the 21st Century*, Current Affairs Press, 2001, p. 3.

being constant and relatively fixed. For example, the land and sea [conditions] that a country's position faces or the spatial conditions of an island country cannot move, and the conditions that maritime strategic accesses have for adjacent or nearby littoral states are also affected by natural factors. Similarly, within the spatial scope defined by geostrategic position to a certain extent, the topographical conditions and shape of maritime strategic accesses as well as their nature, meteorology, and trends also are unchangeable; their differences affect their potential and how they are brought into play. Looking at things from a certain angle, maritime strategic accesses are not unlimited but rather are limited. Because the location of maritime accesses is relatively fixed, ships cannot arbitrarily sail on the ocean; because of the limitations of natural conditions like wind power and sea waves, it is fairly difficult to open additional sea lanes; and the high costs of digging artificial canals has discouraged many countries.

Mahan believed, when studying the key factors of sea power, that the intersection of benefits, no matter how large or small its area is, and no matter whether it is a port or a strait, should have three key factors. The first is location, which primarily refers to the location it occupies in the entire traffic route. The second is strengths, including inherent strengths and acquired strengths. The third is resources, including natural resources and stored resources. Of these, the key factor of location should become the key factor that has priority interest. "If a country can easily enter the high seas themselves and has control over a chokepoint thoroughfare in world shipping, then the strategic value of its geographical location will be quite high."²⁸ People can concentrate strengths and resources in any place whose location is suitable, but they have no ability to change the location of a place that itself is not superior. Strengths and resources can be artificially provided or increased, but moving a port that is outside the area of strategic influence is still not anything that manpower is qualified to do. If Gibraltar were to be put into the middle of the ocean, its strength would be possibly four times greater than what it is today, but militarily, it would be useless.²⁹

It is precisely because maritime strategic accesses are a natural gift and are not manmade, the internal and external activities related to oceans that countries are engaged in always must be restrained and restricted by the innate and inherent locations of maritime strategic accesses.

II. The non-selectivity {*fei xuanze xing*} of geostrategic factors...19

The mandatory nature of maritime strategic accesses originates in the non-selectivity of geostrategy. Why do we say that geostrategy is non-selective?

First, it refers to how the natural geographic distribution of accesses is non-selective, and it thus provide innate advantages and disadvantages to a country's geostrategic security situation; this point is not something that can be artificially selected. The location of maritime strategic accesses is quite inseparable from the relationships with their adjoining countries and is quite stable with them. Because of the specific distribution of geography, certain straits and waterways have become places that world traffic must pass through, and they have an important significance for the various countries of the world. For example, the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, which is a

²⁸ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, China Press, 1997, p. 32.

²⁹ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, China Press, 1997, p. 350.

“petroleum treasure house” of the world, is a route that must be followed to enter the Persian Gulf, as well as a famous international petroleum waterway. The oil tankers of any country that wants to get petroleum from the Persian Gulf must approach the Persian Gulf; this is something that no country has any way to choose. Based on the non-selectivity of maritime strategic accesses, they have an extremely great mandatory impact on the economies and security of countries. Looking at early modern history, under conditions where maritime traffic was not advanced, island countries had greater security than other countries, because of their sea shielding. “By virtue of their location as island nations, Japan and the United Kingdom ensured their security.”³⁰ Apart from its 1945 defeat and its occupation by US forces, Japan has historically never been ruled by a foreign country; this is inseparable from its stable and unchanging geographical location – its sea barriers. Because the United Kingdom has a natural, stable, and irreplaceable “greatest trench in the world” (in the words of former British Prime Minister [Winston] Churchill) – the English Channel (referred to by [Admiral Sir John] Fisher as “a huge breakwater that God created for the United Kingdom”),³¹ it has never been occupied by a foreign enemy in the more than 900 years since the Norman Conquest of 1066; even in the Second World War, even [Adolf] Hitler’s military, which had rampaged across the European Continent, could only look at the sea and sigh. In regard to this, Liddell Hart pointed out in his book *Strategy [The Indirect Approach]* that “The British Empire has never been conquered; the English Channel that lies in front of it has become a huge anti-tank trench . . .”³² [Hans] Morgenthau also commented that “A very small strait separates the United Kingdom from the European Continent – the English Channel. This was a factor that Julius Caesar could not look at lightly; William the Conqueror, Phillip II, Napoleon [Bonaparte], and Hitler similar did not dare take it lightly.”³³ This explains that the stability of geostrategy determines the stability of a country’s security and of the deployment of [that country’s] military strengths. Therefore, “Those points that occupy positions that decisively affect large numbers of traffic lines or [traffic lines] within a very large scope are the most important.”³⁴

Second, it refers to how the space and maneuvering room for subjective choices are relatively small when carrying out geostrategic plans. Some maritime accesses must be followed and must be struggled for; they cannot be avoided. Because of maritime strategic accesses’ unique geographical location and important strategic value, their uniqueness and irreplaceableness are shown to be quite prominent; this has a fatal impact on the way in which many countries survive, and it is a strategic issue that must be considered from the heights of life and death and of survival or destruction. For example, the Strait of Hormuz is a route that must be followed in transporting Middle East oil to the world. The Suez Canal also is one of the most important “crossroads” for world shipping lanes; it is a traffic hub that links Europe, Asia, and Africa, its strategic location is

³⁰ (United States) Louis C. Peltier and G. Etzel Percy, *Military Geography*, Wang Qichang, translator, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 17.

³¹ The United States’ National Defense University, *Naval Strategy*, Naval Publishing House, 1990, p. 71.

³² (United Kingdom) Liddell Hart, *Strategy [The Indirect Approach]*, Soldiers Publishing House, 1980, p. 335.

³³ (United States) Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, translated by Yang Qiming, et al., Commercial Press, 1993, p. 152.

³⁴ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, An Changrong and Cheng Zhongqin, translators, Commercial Press, 1996, p. 184.*

quite important, and Marx called it the “grand channel to the Orient.” The only outlet from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, which is the Strait of Gibraltar; the various Baltic Sea channels from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea, and the Bohai Strait, which is the PRC’s only channel to the Yellow Sea, can all be called chokepoints for controlling maritime traffic. The English Channel separates the United Kingdom from the European continent, and many wars have occurred here in history, but regardless of whether it was Napoleon or Hitler, nobody could ignore this fact. Through its unique geographical location, the English Channel has displayed its importance. The status and role of the English Channel, which 2,000 years ago displayed its crucial importance for the security and development of Britain, have yet to undergo the slightest change, even today. Because of these maritime strategic accesses’ unique geographical locations and important strategic value, they are irreplaceable, no matter from what aspect you look at them.

III. The high-end nature {*gaoduan xing*} of games levels {*boyi cengci*}...21

Because the issue of maritime accesses often involves nations’ lifelines and regional and territorial dominance, and even the core interests of national sovereignty, [these accesses] directly affect the overall situation of national security and development, as well as [these nations’] overall characteristics. Therefore, they come under countries’ high-end politics, and for a long time, they have been major issues in major countries’ diplomacy and military struggles. In many diplomatic struggles in the 18th, 19th, and even 20th centuries, including some famous international treaties, disputes over maritime thoroughfares have been important details and even major details; they have been strategic issues that countries’ high-level and major leaders have worked to pay attention to or that they have personally come forward to organize and handle.

Looking at things strategically, maritime strategic accesses are an integrated political, economic, and military issue. In the broad sense, maritime thoroughfares in peacetime are accesses with political, economic, and trade links, and any country in the world that is integrated into the world economic system is inseparable from maritime accesses. In wartime, they are thoroughfares for mobilizing the world’s military strengths. History has repeatedly proven that guarding these key chokepoint routes means being able to control maritime accesses and maritime supply lines, which creates conditions for winning the overall situation in war. Conversely, loss of control over strategic accesses will lead to problems in material supplies, economic depression, and differences in strategic mobility, thus trapping countries in circumstances where they are passive and where they even lose. Therefore, maritime strategic accesses have an important relationship with geography; the geographical location where they are situated determines their status and role. They are not straits and water channels that have an ordinary significance in sea lanes, but rather are straits and water channels that have major geostrategic value and military strategic value, and they usually are located at intersections of international strategic interests and international competition. During the Cold War period, a focus in US global strategy was controlling sixteen maritime thoroughfares in the world;³⁵ these had a quite important political, economic, and military

³⁵ These were the North American thoroughfares; the Straits of Florida; the Panama Canal; the Bay of Alaska [Translator’s note: possibly Prudhoe Bay]; the Korea Strait; the Straits of Florida; the Makassar Strait; the Sunda Strait; the Strait of Malacca; the Strait of Hormuz; the Bab el-Mandeb Strait; the Suez Canal; the Strait of Gibraltar; the

significance. US Secretary of the Navy [John] Lehman pointed out that the United States needed to have undoubted superiority at sea, and it needed to have the ability to firmly control those accesses that led to areas in which [the United States] had major interests and to let others see that it had the ability to do so. This was not a strategic issue to be argued over but rather an objective of the nation, that is, a security issue that was absolutely necessary.³⁶ Mahan also pointed out that “If a country’s geographical location naturally causes it to be located on an access that enters into the high seas and at the same time also causes it to control a world trade access, it is easy to see that its geographical location has an important strategic role.”³⁷

Looking at things economically, maritime strategic accesses are the corridors and hubs for maritime traffic, as well as shortcuts for international maritime transportation. Even more, they are the lifeline for traffic and transportation at sea and the aortas for freight and trade. For example, the Strait of Malacca is the key chokepoint route connecting shipping between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean; eighty percent of China’s petroleum imports and ninety percent of Japan’s petroleum imports pass through the Strait of Malacca, and it is considered to be China’s and Japan’s “maritime lifeline.” The English Channel-Strait of Dover is called the world’s busiest strait; it is a route that shipping lanes from Europe to the Americas and Africa must go through, and more than 150,000 ships pass through it yearly. The Strait of Hormuz is a chokepoint that connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea, and it is a thoroughfare for petroleum exports by states on the coast of the Persian Gulf. The opening of the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal, on the other hand, greatly shortened the distance of maritime routes, and have major economic value.

Looking at things militarily, maritime strategic accesses that are used in international navigation not only have huge strategic value, but they also have very important military value. Therefore, straits usually are a natural moat for offense, they are relied upon for defense, and they are a key chokepoint place for blockades. Many famous military experts and strategists in the world have paid a great deal of attention to the role in campaigns and tactics of straits that are situated along important routes. For example, the English Channel is an important gateway to the United Kingdom and a strategic screen for maritime defense, and the Black Sea straits are an outlet to the sea for Russia’s foreign relations or expansion. At the same time, the oceans also greatly facilitate the large-scale deployment of troop strengths and logistics support. People cannot carry out prolonged fighting or occupation on the vast oceans, but control over the most crucial parts in them is entirely possible. In war, control over important seaways and strategic thoroughfares has a decisive significance for the free movement of operational strengths at sea, for reducing declines in operational capabilities, for winning precious time, and for thus achieving strategic goals. Therefore, regardless of whether it is wartime or peacetime, maritime strategic accesses have extremely important roles in military matters.

Skagrac Strait; the Kattegat Strait; the route connecting the Greenland Strait, Iceland, and the three British isles; and the route south of Africa.

³⁶ (United States) Lehman, *Command of the Sea: Building a Navy with 600 Ships*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, pp. 150-151.

³⁷ (United States), Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783, An Changrong and Cheng Zhongqin, translators, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 1998, p. 32.*

IV. Conflicts {*duichong xing*} of interests and relationships...23

Conflicts over maritime strategic accesses refers to [the fact that] they are a sphere in which interests are intertwined, and contradictions frequently occur. Here there are contradictions over sovereignty and jurisdiction, contradictions over international public sharing {*gong heng*}, and contradictions over strategic manipulation; complex entanglements of interests exist; and they are a beneficial tool in conflicts between nations. Therefore, although there are reasons for cooperation on issues of maritime accesses, mores' there is even greater temptation for confrontations. History has proven that there has never been an interruption in dueling actions between nations involving maritime accesses. The security of maritime strategic accesses has a significance for ensuring a country's space for survival as it develops and spreads, and the greatest effects that are produced are primarily in the areas of countries' development interests. Since the great geographical discoveries, maritime strategic accesses have always been at the center of endless struggles and wars. The reason is that "Any maritime strategic route and strategic accesses first of all are for one's own country; if the route has a similar important significance for a number of countries, then conflicts of interest will occur among the countries. No country, and especially no sea power, can disregard control over these strategic accesses by [another] country."³⁸ In particular, the existence of superpowers and hegemony has strengthened the geostrategic significance of maritime strategic accesses.

The strategic value of maritime strategic accesses is determined by their ability to sustain themselves and by their ability to support human activities. The more that any factor has strategic significance and the more that human activities rely on it, the more it will be used and the greater the risks will be; the conflicts will also be greater. There are primarily the following several factors for this. First, they are a focus of struggle by sea powers. Speaking in general, the more important the strategic status of a place is and the greater its strategic impact, the number of times it will be fought over will increase, and the level of conflict will also be sharper. And this kind of intense conflict will inevitably bring about great risks. For example, the Black Sea straits are the only accesses between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and their strategic status is quite important. From the 17th century to the first half of the 18th century, after the founding of Czarist Russia's Black Sea Fleet, the straits became an object that was fought over by many nations, such as Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Austria, and Prussia. It can be said that the Black Sea straits were opened and closed a number of times in early modern history; sometimes the same great power would advocate opening them one day but would advocate closing them the next day; several great powers would sometimes simultaneously advocate closing or opening them but could not open them, because of arguments or even fighting. The reason is that the various great powers each had their own needs. Some calls for closing the straits against warships were primarily aimed at closing them against the warships of other countries, while their own [warships] would casually violate [this closing]. Just as France's famous historian and expert on international issues, Lei-na Pinong,³⁹ pointed out, "The issue of opening or closing straits in early modern times was decided by

³⁸ Zhang Wei, *National Maritime Security*, Ocean Press, 2008, p. 62.

³⁹ Translator's note: This is the Chinese rendition of a French name; the first name is probably Leonard or Reynard.

those who were powerful, in accordance with their own interests.”⁴⁰ Around twenty percent of the more than 230 local wars and military conflicts that have erupted since the Second World War were related to struggles and conflicts over maritime accesses. The second is their high frequency of use. This high frequency certainly is accompanied by great risks. For example, the Middle East’s Persian Gulf is located where Asia, Europe, and Africa connect; around it are the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Caspian Sea; it is an important hub for Asia, Africa, and Europe; it has become a major artery for the world’s petroleum trade; and its traffic and transportation are extraordinarily busy, and there is an endless stream of oil tankers coming and going. Some countries have a huge reliance on Gulf oil; for example, two-thirds of the petroleum that Western European countries import, one-quarter of U.S. [petroleum imports], and three-quarters of Japan’s [petroleum imports] come from the Gulf. According to statistics, an oil tanker enters or leaves the Persian Gulf every fourteen minutes, and there are more than two million tons of petroleum transported each day.⁴¹ It is precisely this high frequency of use that causes this maritime region to be filled with variables and risks. Third, they are easily blockaded and damaged, and it is hard to ensure security. Once they have been damaged, this will have a major impact on a country’s security, economic development, and military security. For example, the Second Middle East War [the Suez Canal Crisis] erupted in October 1956; the Suez Canal ceased operating for a year, which caused very great economic damages to many countries. In the Six Days War, which erupted in May 1967, the Suez Canal became the front line for the confrontation between the Egyptian and Israeli militaries, which closed [the canal] for eight years.

Looking at things historically, a great deal of fighting to a very large extent is caused by struggles over key strategic areas. There are struggles over straits and waterways, there are also struggles over important islands, and there are in addition struggles over important sea areas. In summary, these all are struggles over important key chokepoints, and this fully proves the great riskiness and conflict of maritime strategic accesses. Struggles and counter-struggles over strategic accesses and struggles to control them and to counter the control over them have always been important details in disputes and conflicts at sea.

V. The restrictive nature of international laws and regulations...25

Currently, the international use of maritime strategic accesses is covered by a specific international legal system, and it is supported and restricted by this system.

The *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, which was passed in 1982, stipulates the principles of “territorial seas [with a breadth not exceeding] twelve nautical miles” and “exclusive economic zones [with breadths not extending beyond] 200 nautical miles;” it proposes “the principle of the equitable sharing of maritime resources,” “the principle of cooperative exploitation,” and “the principle of peaceful use of the seas.” It has received the recognition and support of the vast majority of countries in the world, and it has destroyed the situation where a minority of developed countries monopolize the seas and sea lanes. The *Convention* gives special stipulations about “straits that are used for international navigation,” and it stipulates two systems for transiting straits:

⁴⁰ Wang Xin, “Historical Changes in the Black Sea System,” *Journal of Beijing Normal University*, 1986, Issue 4, p. 44.

⁴¹ Lou Xichun, *The Gulf*, Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, p. 95.

“transit passage” {*guojing tongxing*} and “innocent passage” {*wuhai tongguo*}. It stipulates that because straits and archipelago sea areas within some nations’ territorial waters are located in international maritime thoroughfares, it is necessary to manage them as “straits that are used for international navigation” and “archipelagic waters.” For example, although certain channels in the various straits of the Baltic Sea come under the territorial waters of Denmark, still, in accordance with international law, they are stipulated as international straits, and the ships of all nations can transit [through them]. The Copenhagen Convention of 1857 eliminated the sound tolls [that merchant ships paid for using Danish channels] and stipulated navigation systems for the Oresund Strait, the Great Belt Strait, and the Little Belt Strait; merchant ships could sail by day or night, without any restrictions. International law has a very great restraining effect on maritime strategic accesses. Currently, the major maritime accesses across the globe are in a state of normal operations, in accordance with the articles of the [UN] *Convention*, but there are still some coastal countries throughout the world that are violating it by adopting a fairly large number of forms, such as struggling for islands, controlling sea areas, exploiting maritime resources, and gaining military superiority at sea, in order to seize control of accesses.

As economic globalization deepens and develops, the feature of world integration will tend to become clear, and countries will more and more be connected to, rely on, and affect each other. Conditions where national interests will be intermingled will become increasingly apparent, and one country’s interests will become ever more inseparable from the interests of other countries, as will national interests and global interests. The various countries must use maritime strategic accesses in a rational, orderly, and peaceful manner, under the restraints of international law.

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CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL PATH OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...27

Case histories can explain all issues; in empirical science, they are the most persuasive, and this is even more so especially in the military art.

- [Carl von] Clausewitz

As a grand practical activity of mankind, the use of maritime strategic accesses has had a long history. This primarily originated in such factors as the geographical environment, cultural background, social structure, and forms of production in which [these activities] exist; coastal states and land states have very different forms of thinking. Early on, in the Mediterranean era, in company with overseas trade, the West began to struggle over and use maritime strategic accesses, and the great geographical discoveries created the rise of one sea power after another. It can be said that the use of, struggle over, and control of maritime accesses have always permeated the entire development process of history. It is not hard for us to find an incontrovertible truth in the long-lasting practices of the rise of Western sea powers: “Whoever controls maritime accesses controls the sea, whoever controls the sea controls trade, whoever controls trade controls wealth, and whoever controls wealth controls the world.” Therefore, control and struggles centered on the sea and maritime accesses have become a most magnificent part of the evolution of world history, and the rise and fall of great nations begins with the sea and also ends with the sea.

SECTION 1: THE DIFFERENTIATION OF STAGES IN THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES ON A WORLDWIDE SCOPE...28

As the needs and environment of mankind’s own existence have changed and as production forces have developed and maritime trade has continually increased, mankind’s understanding of the sea [has constantly changed]. The seas keep the land from being connected, but they also have become the easiest of accesses for linking land. That is to say, maritime accesses have existed since ancient times as natural attributes, but their social attributes are the product of mankind’s prolonged knowledge of them and [mankind’s] practices, and they have gradually risen to become national interests and strategic concepts. Speaking in a certain sense, in accordance with the differentiation of the stages in their historical evolution, maritime strategic accesses can be largely divided into six periods.

I. Early germination – the period of the great river civilizations...28

In ancient times, the main means for humanity’s survival were collecting things in nature, hunting in the mountains, and fishing in the rivers. In its activities in nature, humans, who lacked advanced production tools, usually worried about survival; however, the abundant resources of fish in rivers, lakes, and the sea not only provided humans with sufficient protein, but they also were the food that was easiest for humans to catch. Therefore, “selecting rivers to live along and cutting wood to make boats” became a state in which early humans lived. As rivers expanded, the scope of humans’ activities also expanded toward the regions along the rivers. The four great

ancient civilizations originated in the water accesses of the rivers that led to the sea, and this was no accident of history.

The world's earliest civilizations took shape in rivers and in regions bordering the sea. The Nile River originates in the mountains to the west of Lake Victoria near Africa's equator, and it meanders more than 6,000 kilometers northward before flowing through Egypt into the Mediterranean; the region along the lower reaches of this river, close to the Mediterranean, produced the ancient Egyptian civilization. The Euphrates River and Tigris River in the southwestern part of Asia have been called the two rivers. These two rivers both originate in the Taurus Mountains of the Armenian {*yameiniya*} Plateau⁴² in what is today Turkey, they slowly flow from the northwest to the southeast, and they ultimately converge and flow into the Persian Gulf. In this broad region, surrounded by the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Persian Gulf, were produced the ancient western Asian civilizations. The Indus River and the Ganges River both originate in the Himalayas; one flows southwest and enters the Arabian Sea, while the other flows southeast and enters the Bay of Bengal. Within this broad region, more than 1,000 kilometers from the north to the south and more than 1,500 kilometers from the east to the west, was born the ancient Indus civilization. China is situated in the eastern part of the Eurasian continent. To its west is the Pamir plateau; to its southwest are the Himalayas, which are called the "backbone of the world," and the Qinghai-Tibet plateau; to its northwest are the Altai Mountains; to its north is Mongolia's Gobi Desert; to its northeast are the Hsing'an Mountains and the Changbai Mountains; and to its east and southeast, it is encircled by the ocean. The two rivers in its central part, the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, surge from the west to the east and into the sea; the central and lower reaches of these two rivers produced the ancient Chinese civilization.⁴³

Most of mankind's early civilizations originated in river basins, and the ease of traveling on water expanded the scale of human production activities, it increased the population, and it concentrated [the population]; this promoted leaps forward in production forces and brought about changes in production relationships. The expansion in the scope of commercial exchanges transformed accesses by river into accesses by sea, and overseas trade gradually developed. Ancient maritime accesses took shape in offshore coasts, and their starting points were the points where major rivers emptied into the sea. Mankind's earliest knowledge of maritime accesses were their accessibility and connectivity, and through actual production and life, [humans] understood the important role that water routes have in human life, because further distances could only be reached by water. Rivers, seas, and lakes were connected into a whole, and sea routes and river networks made up a transportation network, making the exchanges of commercial products quite convenient.

In summary, through actual production and life, humans knew very early on that water routes could extend the range of life, they mastered the use of water routes in order to launch trade activities, and they understood the important role that water routes had in human life. This resulted in their earliest understanding of the value of accesses by water flows; not only did it bring about mankind's use of river accesses to launch the everyday behavior of production practices and

⁴² Translator's note: Based on the context, this should be the Anatolian Plateau.

⁴³ Ding Yiping, *A History of the World's Navies*, Sea Tide Press, 2000, p. 7.

activities but on this basis, it also resulted in economic strategic activities that artificially shaped river accesses in order to improve the natural attributes of river accesses. The construction of the Dujiangyan irrigation system during China's Warring States period [475-221 B.C.], the digging of the Hangou Canal in the south during China's Spring and Autumn period [770-476 B.C.], and the Grand Canal project [running from] south to north that was constructed during the period of the Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty [A.D. 569-618] are outstanding representatives of this. Although it was impossible to have an awareness of sea accesses, because human practical activities were still confined to the land during these periods, still, [human] knowledge and use of river waterways were precisely the origin in ancient times of thinking about maritime accesses.

II. Initial activities – the ancient Mediterranean period...30

In the Mediterranean region in early times, with the exchange of commercial products and the development of sea transportation, overseas trade gradually developed in some coastal areas, and it became a region where the medieval economy was relatively developed. At the same time, it also became a place where struggles among coastal states were the most intense. It can be said that humans' ideas about control over sea accesses began in the struggles over internal sea accesses.

1. The Cretan state, which was a center of trade accesses in the Mediterranean, became the earliest sea power state

Early on, in 3500 B.C., ancient Egypt and the ancient western Asia regions were areas whose economies were relatively advanced and whose need for foreign trade was quite pressing. Around 2,000 B.C., ancient maritime commercial and trade activities emerged along the Mediterranean coasts, with the island of Crete as their center. The copper of Cyprus, the gold of Nubia, and the tin of Spain were exchanged among the states of the Mediterranean coasts through maritime transportation and maritime accesses.⁴⁴ The Cretans were the earliest humans to understand the significance of maritime accesses, as well as the earliest to actually use and control maritime accesses. They established fairly complete Mediterranean maritime routes, and they were clear, very early on, about the role that overseas affiliated states and sea islands had in maritime accesses. They organized the world's first naval fleets, and they began the first overseas expansion in the history of the world. Maritime sailing required supplies, and the islands along maritime accesses became the best supply stations; in the process of overseas shipping and trade, from the island of Rhodes in the east to Miletus in Asia Minor and then to the Cyclades Islands in the Aegean, these were all controlled by the Cretans. Mycenae in the Peloponnesian peninsula also had a trade station and garrison that the Cretans set up. For close to 300 years, the Cretans continually controlled the maritime accesses of the Mediterranean.

2. Phoenicia became the earliest explorer of the oceans' maritime accesses

Phoenicia was the next maritime trade power, after Crete. The Phoenicians were second to none among the Mediterranean states in the areas of shipbuilding and navigational techniques; the production of advanced commercial products required having trade exchanges go even farther away, and this resulted in an intense desire to explore new maritime routes. The Phoenicians broke

⁴⁴ Wang Shengrong, *The Historical Impact of Sea Power on the Rise and Fall of Great Nations*, Sea Tide Press, 2009, p. 28.

through the imprisonment of the Mediterranean's internal waters, and they entered the Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, one after the other, so that the Mediterranean became an open sea, a maritime access in the greater sense. In the 6th century B.C., Phoenicians set sail from the Red Sea, entered the Indian Ocean, circumnavigated the continent of Africa, and ultimately returned to the Mediterranean through the Strait of Gibraltar, becoming mankind's first nation to completely sail around the continent of Africa. This opened up a new maritime route connecting the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, and it completed the transformation of maritime strategic accesses from inland seas to the ocean. The deep-sea maritime explorations of the Phoenicians and their opening of maritime strategic accesses resulted in mankind going by river and lake water accesses—coastal maritime accesses—internal sea maritime accesses—deep sea maritime accesses to each place in the world, forming the first light of knowledge about maritime strategic accesses, so that [humans] mastered the basic knowledge for using maritime strategic accesses.

3. The struggle over maritime accesses launched the earliest naval wars in history

Mycenae is located in the southern part of Greece's Peloponnesian peninsula; during the period when Crete controlled the Mediterranean, it was a place that the Cretans had to pass by on their trade routes to the Balkan peninsula. The development of trade resulted in Mycenae's economy becoming ever stronger; it controlled the Peloponnesian peninsula and thus subdued the Cyclades islands. In 1450 B.C., Mycenae invaded the island of Crete, becoming the occupiers of the kingdom of Crete, and Crete's Minoan civilization subsequently disappeared. After getting control over the Cretans' sphere of influence in the various areas of the Cyclades and the eastern Mediterranean, the Mycenaean expanded the trade routes along the Mediterranean separately toward the west and the north. In the west, Italy, Sicily, the southern part of France, and the southeastern region of Spain became Mycenaean colonies; to the north, they passed through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus straits to penetrate the Black Sea coastal states. The Mycenaean did not have powerful land strengths; what they primarily relied on for their expansion outwards was their naval strengths. Through establishing colonies and garrisons in coastal strategic accesses, they ensured that their routes were unimpeded. The people of that time were already aware of the strategic significance of maritime accesses, and they began to have the rudiments of thinking about sea power; in their considerations, they elevated sea power to the status of whether it was possible to gain victory in the wars that states waged. The famous ancient Greek naval admiral Themistokles said, "Whoever controls the sea can control everything."⁴⁵

Mycenae's expansion encountered powerful resistance, and in order to control the traffic nodes going to the Black Sea, Mycenae did not hesitate at all to launch the Trojan War. Troy was situated along the northeastern⁴⁶ coast of Asia Minor, located where the Dardanelles connect with the Aegean, and this strait was also the only maritime access for the Bosphorus strait and the Black Sea. It was a maritime route that controlled the Aegean's and even the entire Mediterranean's passage to the Black Sea, so its strategic status was quite important. The Trojan War was fought for ten years, and ultimately [the Mycenaean] used the Trojan Horse plan to break into the city. The Trojan War was the earliest war in human history for seizing control over a strait, and the ancient

⁴⁵ Ding Yiping, *A History of the World's Navies*, Sea Tide Press, 2000, p. 50.

⁴⁶ Translator's note: Actually, the northwest.

Greek historian Thucydides hit the nail on the head when he pointed out that “The Trojan siege warfare in actuality was a commercial war that was carried out in an attempt to control the Hellespont strait and to thus control Black Sea trade.”⁴⁷ This reflected that the people of that time already had an understanding to a relative degree of the importance of straits and had already reached the level where they used warfare to resolve control. The development of the facts also proved that the only thing that states that lost control of straits could do was decline.⁴⁸

The conclusion of the Trojan War did not cause the various states to cease their struggle for straits accesses; in 492 B.C., the Greek-Persian wars broke out. The Greek-Persian wars were wars between that time’s Greece and the Persian Empire. The Persian Empire arose in the 6th century B.C., and it continually invaded westward, expanding into the Greeks’ traditional sphere of influence in Asia Minor. In 514 B.C., the Persian King Darius crossed the Bosphorus strait westward and occupied Thrace and the Black Sea straits, cutting off traffic between Greece and the Black Sea; this formed a huge threat to Greece’s maritime trade. Having lost the maritime traffic that went to the Black Sea, Greece’s trade was greatly affected. The Greeks realized that only by establishing a powerful navy and by defeating the Persian Empire’s navy could they seize control over maritime accesses to the Black Sea. And the Persians were also quite clear that only by thoroughly defeating the Greek navy could they establish hegemony over the Mediterranean. The two sides put building a navy first. It was hard to avoid a major battle at sea.⁴⁹ The Greek-Persian wars were fought for over half a century; ultimately, the naval battle of Salamis was fought at the strait of Salamis, and the war ended with a major victory by the Greeks. The naval battle of Salamis was a decisive great naval battle in the Greek-Persian wars and was the earliest naval battle in world history. This naval battle not only affected the course of the Greek-Persian wars but it also changed the course of world history. After the naval battle, the Persians retreated to the Asia Minor peninsula. In 449 B.C., Persia and Greece signed the Treaty of Callias; the peace treaty stipulated that Persian fleets would not enter the Aegean, [Persia] would abandon control over the Aegean as well as the straits of the Hellespont and Bosphorus, and it would recognize the independence of the various city-states along the western coast of Asia Minor.⁵⁰ This established Greece’s dominance in the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean, and it also established Westerners’ control over the Mediterranean; the Mediterranean was no longer the Mediterranean of the Easterners but had become the Mediterranean of the Westerners.

The basic reason for the naval battle of Salamis was the struggle between the Persian Empire and the Greek kingdoms {*wangguo*}, these two major Eastern and Western states, over trade accesses, and the most crucial of this was the struggle over the Bosphorus strait. This maritime strategic access, which connected the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, determined the fate of major nations and also became a focus in the course of world history.

⁴⁷ Ding Yiping, *A History of the World’s Navies*, Sea Tide Press, 2000, p. 48.

⁴⁸ Yang Jinsen, *A Brief History of the Rise and Fall of Sea Powers*, Ocean Press, 2007, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Wang Shengrong, *The Historical Impact of Sea Power on the Rise and Fall of Great Nations*, Sea Tide Press, 2009, p. 33.

⁵⁰ Zhang Shiping, *Grand Strategy in Historical Records*, Military Science Publishing House, 2005, p. 136.

4. The rise of ancient Rome, which controlled the maritime accesses of the Mediterranean

Ancient Rome originated in the center of Italy. The Romans were aware that if they wanted to survive in the Mediterranean, they would need to expand trade with the Mediterranean states, and the only way to expand trade was to control the maritime traffic accesses of the Mediterranean. However, acute contradictions arose between the continually strengthening forces of ancient Rome and Carthage, a naval power that controlled the western part of the Mediterranean. In order to struggle over dominating the western Mediterranean and to plunder its resources and slaves, the two sides launched life-or-death decisive wars. Therefore, from 264 B.C. to 146 B.C., a total of three Punic Wars took place between ancient Rome and Carthage. Because the Carthaginian fleet took a major hit in the latter period of the first war and thus lost command of the sea, this caused the Roman rulers to realize that only by establishing a powerful navy and by controlling maritime accesses could they contend with Carthage. The thing that had the most decisive significance in this was the Second Punic War; Rome relied upon its control of maritime accesses to transport ground forces that landed on the coast of Carthage a number of times, directly threatening the security of [Carthage's] capital and leading to the ultimate defeat of Carthage.⁵¹ Rome became a powerful maritime state in the western Mediterranean. Through continual expansion, Rome transformed the Mediterranean from a single international sea region into the Roman Empire's "inner lake," and it firmly controlled all traffic routes in the Mediterranean so that its dominant position at sea was continually maintained until the 5th century A.D.

In summary, instinctive and simple views on maritime accesses were formally initiated alongside the development of practical maritime activities of coastal states in the Mediterranean. The rulers of the various coastal states in the Mediterranean region fully understood the abundant benefits brought about by maritime trade and by overseas possessions, and they began to set their eyesight on the sea; this led to their focus on the security of maritime accesses. In order to control maritime rights and maritime thoroughfares, the various countries, one after the other, established armed maritime strengths, and they frequently did not hesitate to go to war over this [control]. The magnificent ancient Roman scholar [Marcus Tullius] Cicero, from 104 to 64 B.C., was the earliest to propose the doctrine that "whoever controls the sea controls the world." Although the sea that he referred to was nothing more than the Mediterranean, and the world that he referred to was only a corner of the Mediterranean, still, this was indeed a vision that exceeded history. But looking at things in general, during the Mediterranean period, the low levels of production power and the backwardness of science and technology meant that the development process of mankind's navigational levels appeared to be slow and long; in-depth advances toward the oceans had yet to truly begin, and sea accesses with major value had not yet been opened. Therefore, people had nothing more than a hazy consciousness in their views on sea power, and economic strategies for sea accesses were also only proceeding from an instinct to protect commerce and trade; they had yet to rise [to the level] of activities involving rational and conscious awareness.

⁵¹Liu Yijian, *Command of the Sea and Naval Strategy*, National Defense University Press, 2000, p. 44.

III. The opening of new routes – the age of the great geographical discoveries...34

After the end of the 15th century came the “age of great navigation,”⁵² marked by “great geographical discoveries.” The opening of new routes was a new starting point for mankind’s knowledge, exploration, and conquest of maritime routes, and maritime routes were the geographical and historical gates for pushing open new routes. From these, the footprints and perspective of mankind began to extend to the depths of the oceans. The great geographical discoveries, this major event with its epochal significance, for the first time caused the oceans to appear before the face of mankind in all of their aspects. From this, no longer were the oceans barriers that blocked human contacts; rather, they were a golden road that connected the world into one whole, thereby welcoming the huge changes in humanity’s civilization and its ocean activities.⁵³ The world entered a new age of capitalism, filled with blood and colonial plundering. Some capitalist countries in the early period crowded onto the oceans, one after the other, which were a public road that had just appeared before mankind, as they went to each corner of the globe in order to wantonly seize colonies and plunder wealth. In the process of plundering wealth and seizing hegemony, these countries fought with each other, setting off a series of large-scale naval wars and producing one hegemon of the seas after another, so that the awareness of and fights over maritime strategic accesses at this time rose to new heights.

1. Explorations of the world’s oceans and the opening of global accesses

The rudiments of capitalism appeared in Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries, and the development of business and industry led to an inherent need to generate and expand trade and markets. But the very small amounts at this time of European gold reserves and their heavy outflow left the existing regions of the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Baltic Sea far from being able to satisfy the needs of an ever-increasing production and exchange of products. Under these conditions, many Europeans were quite hungry to cross the oceans to the East with its “gold everywhere and its wealth that was like mountains” [as described] in the *Travels of Marco Polo*, in order to collect treasure. But the commercial routes, such as the Black Sea access, across western Asia and Egypt to reach Eastern countries like China and India by land were controlled by the newly arising Ottoman Turk empire, while the Mediterranean–Egypt–Red Sea–Indian Ocean maritime access was monopolized by the Arab empires, so that commercial trade access between the East and Europe was seriously blocked. Under the drive of the intense desire of the various countries of Europe for trade relations with the East, they began to explore new routes. In addition, the rule of absolute monarchs in European countries helped in organizing large-scale navigational activities, and this thereby promoted the advent of the age of great navigation.⁵⁴

⁵² Under the impetus of such objective factors as the development of capitalism in Europe, of advances in the navigation industry of the world, and of new achievements in astronomy and geography, as well as of desires for voyages to the East, a surge of exploration of long maritime voyages was set off among European navigators, from the 15th to the 18th centuries, and this launched a series of activities to open new routes, thus forming an age of great navigation that gave rise to huge changes in the course of world history.

⁵³ Liu Yijian, *Command of the Sea and Naval Strategy*, National Defense University Press, 2000, p. 46.

⁵⁴ Yang Jinsen, *A Brief History of the Rise and Fall of Sea Powers*, Ocean Press, 2007, p. 93.

The Maritime Accesses that were Explored During the Age of the World's Great Geographical Discoveries

Serial number	Access	Time	The Discoverer and his Nationality
1	The Bering Strait	1728	Vitus Bering (Danish)
2	The Strait of Magellan	1520	Magellan (Portuguese)
3	The Drake Passage	1615	Schouten (Dutch)
4	The Sōya Strait	1787	Lapérouse (French)
5	The Torres Strait	1606	Torres (Spanish)
6	The Cook Strait	1769	Cook (British)
7	The Strait of Juan de Fuca	1592	Juan de Fuca (Spanish ⁵⁵)
8	The Florida Strait	1517	Spain
9	The Yucatán Channel	1517	Spain
10	The Windward Passage	1492	Columbus (Spanish ⁵⁶)
11	The Davis Strait	1576	Davis (British)
12	The Hudson Strait	1610	Hudson (British)
13	The Antarctic Sound	1772	Cook (British)

Data source: Compiled by the author himself

Portugal was the first to seek a new route to the East by maritime access, and it opened European routes along West Africa and opened up the Europe–West Africa–Cape of Good Hope–Indian Ocean–India route. In 1492, Columbus set sail from Spain’s port of Palos [de la Frontera] and for the first time crossed the Atlantic to reach the Americas; this opened a new route from Europe to the Americas. [Europeans] discovered such crucial maritime accesses as the South Atlantic routes, the Cape of Good Hope, the Mozambique Channel, and the Arabian Sea. In 1499, [Vasco] da Gama set sail from Lisbon in Portugal and reached the Indian peninsula by means of Africa’s Cape of Good Hope; he connected the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean for the first time, which created conditions for expanding East-West trade. In 1519, a fleet led by Magellan set off from the port of Sanlúcar [de Barrameda] in Spain and completed the first global navigation in human history. From this, maritime accesses going in all directions connected the globe into one whole, and mankind welcomed a new age for the development of world trade.

Western capitalism matured alongside the opening of world routes, the large-scale expansion on the oceans, and the establishment of colonial empires. As more and more maritime accesses were discovered in large numbers, new continents continually appeared, and a yearning for the resources of the new continents impelled the capitalist countries to adopt forms of colonial rule in

⁵⁵ Translator’s note: Actually, a Greek sailing in a Spanish expedition.

⁵⁶ Translator’s note: Actually, Italian.

order to plunder the colonized states. Looking at the gold and silver brought back from the far reaches of the globe, people truly felt that maritime accesses were indeed accesses to riches.

2. Sea powers' overseas trade and colonial plundering set off large-scale struggles for sea power

(1) The struggle between Portugal and Spain for the seas. At the beginning of the 15th century, Portugal used its advantageous geographical location and advanced navigational techniques to take the lead in encroaching on overseas colonies. In particular, it engaged in brutal plundering of the colonies along Africa's western seacoast, taking away large amounts of gold, ivory, and slaves from West Africa and establishing many strongholds, that is, the so-called Gold Coast and Ivory Coast. At the start of the 16th century, Portugal established colonial rule in Brazil in South America. In 1502, a Portuguese fleet went to India, and [Portugal] occupied some islands and ports at the mouth of the Red Sea, in the Persian Gulf, at the Strait of Hormuz, and along the Indian seacoast, thereby controlling the maritime traffic lines from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to India. It monopolized the trade from Europe to the East, and it established a huge network of colonial bases. In 1511, Portugal occupied Malacca, and it established commercial stations along the way. In 1577, it also usurped China's Macau as a colony. At this point, Portugal controlled maritime strategic accesses through occupying and controlling coastal strongholds and sea islands along the periphery of the African and Asian continents, and it thus controlled commercial routes that traversed half the globe; it became the earliest one of the hegemon that were able to control maritime accesses.

However, Portugal's overseas expansion was strongly challenged by Spain. Early on, when Columbus discovered the Americas in 1492, Spain established colonial rule in the Caribbean and the West Indies, and using these as a base, it invaded and expanded in the American continents. By the mid-16th century, much of the area in Central and South America (besides Brazil, which Portugal occupied) had been incorporated into the territory of Spain's vast colonial empire in the Americas. In the Asia-Pacific region, Spain similarly infiltrated Portugal's sphere of influence, reducing the Marianas Islands and the Philippines to Spanish colonies, one after the other. At this point, [Spain] controlled the maritime strategic accesses of the Americas and the Pacific, through occupying and controlling coastal strongholds and maritime islands along the periphery of the American continents, and it thereby controlled the commercial routes that crossed the Americas and Southeast Asia as well as the Pacific; together with Portugal, it simultaneously dominated the oceans of the world. In regard to this, the two countries launched an intense struggle for control, centered on maritime strategic accesses. Portugal and Spain asked the Pope to mediate. Under the arbitration of Pope Alexander VI, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty [of Tordesillas] in June 1494, which drew an important dividing line from the Arctic to the Antarctic, called the "papal bull line;" at the same time, this acknowledged Portuguese and Spanish privileges at sea. In 1494, Portugal and Spain formally signed the Treaty of Tordesillas. This treaty signified that the two countries had divided up the world's oceans and controlled the world's maritime strategic accesses; at the same time, it also declared to the world the two countries' status as overlords of the sea. In 1580, Spain took advantage of Portugal's preoccupation with its own affairs, and used military force to annex Portugal and its expansive colonies; this ended Portugal's status as hegemon, which had lasted nearly a century. From this, Spain depended on its land colonies as a basis and relied on military force to monopolize world trade; it controlled maritime traffic lines by means of

maritime strategic accesses, and it became the first land and sea empire in world history to dominate the entire globe.

(2) The United Kingdom's rise in the struggle to dominate the seas. At the end of the 15th century, with the great geographical discoveries, the center of world trade shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic; because of its unique geographical location, the United Kingdom became the center of world maritime commercial routes. The United Kingdom, with its rising capitalist class, urgently needed to expand overseas. In the second half of the 16th century, the United Kingdom used the convenient conditions of the opening of the northern route in the Atlantic to engage in colonial activities in North America, and it established its thirteen colonies. The United Kingdom engaged in robbery-type plundering of the overseas colonies; large amounts of gold, silver, spices, woods, skins, foodstuffs, and ores were continually transported in a steady stream from overseas to the United Kingdom. This provided powerful material support for the rise of British capitalism, it sped up the primitive accumulation of capital, and it rapidly strengthened the United Kingdom's economic and military strengths. And the maritime accesses that linked the British homeland with its overseas colonies became more and more important for the strategic value of the United Kingdom's national development. "In an age of commerce, winning the seas is even more important than winning the land."⁵⁷ These words became a universal consensus in British society. Early on, by the early 17th century, the United Kingdom's colonial and aggressive activities in the East had already begun. With India as its military and trade center for invading the East, the United Kingdom occupied such countries as Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Burma, Fiji, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga. In 1840, the United Kingdom launched the Opium War, and this opened the gates of China, this ancient major Eastern nation.

The United Kingdom dominated the seas for 400 years; in its most powerful period, it controlled almost all maritime accesses apart from the Panama Canal, and it ultimately became "the empire on which the sun never sets." The United Kingdom's maritime strategy also underwent several stages – a strategy for developing overseas trade, a strategy of controlling the world's oceans, a strategy of maintaining maritime superiority, and a strategy of controlling regional seas; these wars at seas were reflected in a concentrated form as wars that struggled for maritime accesses. The British knew that keeping maritime accesses unimpeded directly affected whether the state's machinery operated normally or not, and it decided the fate of the United Kingdom, which is a sea island-type nation. The United Kingdom struggled with a number of maritime hegemonic nations over maritime strategic accesses, and it engaged in a series of wars to seize hegemony.

The first was the war between the United Kingdom and Spain. Spain's engagement in overseas expansion was because it could fully utilize its advantageous geographical location, its shipbuilding industry, its navigational techniques, and its superior maritime strengths. From the end of the 16th century, Spain showed signs of decline. Spain's monopolization of the seas and colonies and its excessive overseas expansion – and particularly its control over the world's maritime strategic accesses – provoked dissatisfaction in the United Kingdom, which was rising

⁵⁷ (United Kingdom) [J. F. C.] Fuller, *A Military History of the Atlantic World*, Niu Xianzhong, translator, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2004, p. 37. [Translator's note: This possibly is Fuller's *The Decisive Battles of the Western World and Their Influence upon History*.]

because of its industrial development; [Spain] blocked the United Kingdom's expansion outwards. The United Kingdom carried out organized piracy and plundering at sea against Spanish ports and [Spanish] ships transporting the gold and silver of the Americas, destroying their maritime routes and challenging Spain's maritime dominion. At the same time, the United Kingdom vigorously developed its naval strengths, and by 1587, it had launched a great fleet with 160 ships, it had used technical equipment that was first-rate for its time, and it had gradually gained military superiority at sea over Spain.

Faced with the repeated provocations of the United Kingdom, Spain's King Phillip II resolved to send troops to attack the United Kingdom, in order to protect the Catholic Church, and to defend Spain's colonies and resources, to protect Spain's accesses to maritime resources, and to thoroughly destroy the United Kingdom's piratical behavior. In 1588, Spain organized the "invincible Armada" for an expedition against the United Kingdom. The two countries' fleets met in the English Channel. Following around half a month of naval warfare, the United Kingdom largely destroyed the "invincible Armada." The defeat of the "invincible Armada" marked the end of the age of Spanish maritime domination. The United Kingdom's victory allowed it to become a naval power in one leap, to seize partial command of the sea in the Atlantic, and to begin to follow the path toward seizing maritime hegemony over the entire world.

The second was the war between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. After Spain and Portugal, the Netherlands was another country that engaged in colonial aggression. The Netherlands is coastal, and its navigational industry was advanced. In particular, in the 16th and mid-17th centuries, the Netherlands' capitalist economy developed quickly; in this, the commercial and maritime shipping industry predominated. The Netherlands had 16,000 merchant ships,⁵⁸ its tonnage made up three-quarters of total European [tonnage], its shipbuilding industry was first in the world, Amsterdam had become the international trade center of that time,⁵⁹ and the Netherlands was acknowledged to be the "sea coachman" because of its outstanding ocean transportation capability. At the same time as this, the Netherlands used its maritime superiority and commercial hegemony to carry out large-scale maritime expansion. The Netherlands defeated the navies of Spain and Portugal in this area, one after the other; it occupied Java, Sumatra, and Taiwan; and it controlled the Strait of Malacca. At the same time as this, it also expanded its maritime influence to the Americas and Africa. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Netherlands established the United East India Company and set up a transfer station at the Cape of Good Hope. Through its powerful maritime strength, the Netherlands continually pushed Portugal and Spain out of their overseas colonial territories, becoming the world's biggest overseas colonial empire; it occupied and controlled the eastern and southern parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, and coastal strongholds and sea islands on the periphery of the Central American continent. It controlled the maritime strategic accesses of the Atlantic and Pacific, and thus it struggled with the United Kingdom over maritime hegemony.

The 17th century was a period in which the Netherlands reached its heyday in such areas as navigation, colonies, and trade; it became the greatest overseas colonial empire in the world, after

⁵⁸ Li Yongcai, *A History of the World's Navies*, The Huaxia Publishing House, 1996, p. 54.

⁵⁹ Wang Shengrong, *The Historical Impact of Sea Power on the Rise and Fall of Great Nations*, Sea Tide Press, 2009, p. 57.

Spain. The Netherlands' overseas colonial activities led to a fight between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands over seizing maritime hegemony. At that time, the Netherlands had ten times as many ships as the United Kingdom did, and it had fifteen times the overseas investment that the United Kingdom did; not only did it blockade the United Kingdom's trade with the Baltic Sea coast, but it also pushed British influence everywhere out of the Mediterranean and West African coast. Even in the United Kingdom's colonies, Dutch ships and the total amount of its ocean shipping far exceeded those of the United Kingdom.⁶⁰ For this reason, the United Kingdom drafted the famous *Navigation Acts* in 1651. The *Acts* stipulated that any goods being shipped from Europe, Asia, and the Americas to the United Kingdom and its colonies had to be shipped on British ships or on the ships of its colonies. These acts were a heavy blow against the Netherlands' maritime shipping and trade enterprises, and the Netherlands did not recognize them.⁶¹ Therefore, from 1652 to 1674, three naval wars erupted between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, which lasted twenty-two years. Through controlling straits and trade, the United Kingdom led to a recession in the Netherlands' economy, and through its navy's advanced technology and equipment, it ultimately overthrew the Netherlands' status of maritime domination and seized hegemony over maritime trade and colonies. After the 18th century, the maritime powerhouse of old that was the Netherlands had lost its overseas superiority and its monopoly status for maritime trade, and it had also lost control over most of its maritime strategic accesses; from being a major commercial nation, it had been reduced to a second-string country that relied on the United Kingdom; the Netherlands' colonial system had gradually dissipated.

The third was the wars between the United Kingdom and France. France's colonial expansion was later than that of countries like Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands; this was determined by its geographical location. The French homeland's two maritime directions, to the east and to the west, are blocked by the Iberian Peninsula, and they can only be connected through the Strait of Gibraltar, so that for a long time France always in the final analysis faced two difficult choices, whether to put its strategic focus on developing "land power" {*lu quan*} or on developing "sea power" {*hai quan*}. By the 1620s, France had gradually become aware of the importance of the oceans, of the abundant profit brought about by a sea power controlling maritime strategic accesses and establishing overseas colonies, and that the struggle for colonies needed to rely upon a powerful navy's opening and controlling maritime accesses. Therefore, at the same time that it possessed powerful ground forces, France also established a powerful navy that was far stronger than that of the United Kingdom, both in terms of numbers and in terms of scale. The French navy immediately carried out colonial aggressive activities in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, one after the other, and it struggled over colonies with the old-school colonialists.

However, faced with the United Kingdom's maritime drive, France made a choice between maintaining its hegemony in the European continent or struggling with the United Kingdom for maritime hegemony. From 1667 to the early 18th century, France launched wars a number of times against Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, one after the other. Therefore, up until the mid-18th century, France's contradictions with the United Kingdom and

⁶⁰ Wang Shengrong, *The Historical Impact of Sea Power on the Rise and Fall of Great Nations*, Sea Tide Press, 2009, p. 58.

⁶¹ Li Yongcai, *A History of the World's Navies*, The Huaxia Publishing House, 1996, p. 56.

with some other European countries were already becoming increasingly acute. From the 17th century until when the French Revolution erupted in 1789, the United Kingdom and France went through four large-scale wars: France's war with the League of Augsburg (1688-1697), the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713), the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), and the British-French Seven Years War (1757-1763). In the British-French Seven Years War, the United Kingdom blockaded several French ports with its powerful fleet, and it launched a destructive attack against the French fleet, greatly weakening France's maritime sphere of influence. The United Kingdom basically achieved its goals of seizing France's colonies and establishing complete command of the sea. After the Seven Years War, France not only lost its dominant status in Europe but its sphere of influence at sea was also greatly diminished; its fleet had basically been annihilated. The United Kingdom from this had established complete command of the sea and become the most powerful overlord of the seas in the world.⁶² During the period of the subsequent French revolutionary wars and the Napoleonic wars, the two countries again engaged in two contests. Each contest between the United Kingdom and France either openly or covertly manifested the two countries' struggle over maritime interests and for control of maritime strategic accesses or for countering control over these. In October 1805, the United Kingdom and France fought the sea battle of Trafalgar, and the United Kingdom again defeated France and forced her to relinquish her plans for landing on Britain. This major sea battle marked the United Kingdom's thorough defeat of France at sea, and it ultimately established more than 100 years of maritime hegemony. In the mid- and late-19th century, the United Kingdom and France began to struggle for control over maritime accesses between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. In 1859, France obtained the concession for digging the Suez Canal and subsequently for close to a century continuously launched struggles with the United Kingdom for dominance centered on the eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal. That same year, France occupied Djibouti, on the western bank of the southern tip of the Red Sea, and it launched a struggle with the United Kingdom for control of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. In 1886, France occupied the main islands in the Mozambique Channel, the Comoros, and it thus controlled the strategic key from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. Although wars occurred during this period, these all had the British ultimately winning and declaring an end. The British proudly declared that "On the race course for colonies, they never had a true enemy."⁶³ The British deeply knew that the basis for maintaining the Pax Britannica was having a powerful maritime advantage.

(3) Czarist Russia's impulse to expand in order to seek an outlet to the sea. [Karl] Marx pointed out that "for a regional system that gobbles things up, land is sufficient; for a global system of aggression, water has become indispensable."⁶⁴ Taking an overall look, the history of Russia is a history that sought access to the sea. Just as Russian historian Liu-qie-si-ji⁶⁵ said, the history of Russia is the history of continual colonization outwards and of carrying out territorial expansion.

⁶² Chen Yuemin, *A History of Western Diplomatic Thinking*, China Social Sciences Press, 1995, p. 64.

⁶³ (United States) Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: [Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000]*, People's Publishing House, 1989, p. 113.

⁶⁴ Marx, *Revelations of the Diplomatic History of the 18th Century*, People's Publishing House, 1979, p. 80.

⁶⁵ Translator's note: This is the Chinese rendition of a Russian name, possibly Ljudski.

When Peter I (1682-1725) succeeded to the throne, Russia was still an inland country. Its north bordered on the Arctic Ocean, which was frozen almost all year, while its south and west were close to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. Marx made an evaluation: “There has never been a great nation that has existed under the inland conditions that the national forebears of Peter the Great had, nor could it thus exist. Similarly, there has never been any country willing to see its own seacoasts and river mouths be taken away.”⁶⁶ Ever since its founding, Russia has dreamed of having an outlet to the sea. It had a famous saying: “Territorial waters – this is what Russia needs.”⁶⁷ In order to carry out his policies of outward expansion, Peter I proposed that Russia needed to seek an outlet to the sea; only by opening and occupying the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Japan to the north, south, and east could Russia develop its national trade, move toward the oceans, and become a world sea power, and only thus could it be ranked as the center of the Eurasian continent and establish itself as a world hegemon. For this reason, it was necessary to build a powerful navy. Peter the Great said, “Any ruler that has only an army can only be considered as having just one hand, but at the same time, only a ruler who also has a navy can be considered as being complete, with two hands.”⁶⁸ In order to struggle for an outlet to the Baltic Sea, Peter the Great and Sweden engaged in the Northern War, which lasted twenty-one years (1700-1721); he won control over an outlet to the Baltic Sea and a maritime access, and he squeezed [Russia] into the ranks of the European powers.

During the period when Russia’s Czar Catherine II (1729-1796) ruled, Russia launched two wars against Turkey in order to achieve Russia’s dream of seizing the Black Sea waters. After the first Russo-Turkish war (1768-1774), Russian merchant ships obtained the right to navigate on the Black Sea and to pass through the Dardanelles strait. But Czarist Russia was not satisfied with this, and through the second Russo-Turkish war (1787-1792), it occupied all of the vast territories on the northern shores of the Black Sea, in order for Russia to seize an outlet to the Black Sea to the south. It also won the right of free trade from the Black Sea into the Aegean and the Mediterranean and temporarily won the status of hegemon over the Black Sea. Marx said, “For such a great empire of the Czar to have only one port serve as outlet to the sea, and for this outlet to the sea to only be on a sea that could not be navigated for half the year and for the other half of the year could be easily attacked by the British, caused the Czar to feel dissatisfied and annoyed; she thought strongly about how to achieve the plans of her ancestors and to open a route to the Mediterranean.” Once Russia opened these accesses to the sea, it would truly be as [Halford] Mackinder said, “This would enable [Russia] to use its huge continental resources to build a navy, and at that time, this world empire also would be in sight.”⁶⁹ Catherine II ultimately achieved Peter the Great’s desire of gaining an outlet to the sea in the south. In 1799, Russia forced Turkey to sign a *Treaty of [Defensive] Alliance* between Russia and Turkey. Secret articles in the Treaty stipulated that Russia’s warships could freely enter the Mediterranean from the Black Sea and return from the

⁶⁶(Soviet Union) [Sergey] Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, Fang Fang, translator, Ocean Press, 1985, p. 87.

⁶⁷ Zhao Kezeng, *Studies on the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 112.

⁶⁸ (Soviet Union) Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, Fang Fang, translator, Ocean Press, 1985, p. 5.

⁶⁹ (United Kingdom) Halford Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, Lin Erwei and Cheng Jiang, translators, Commercial Press, 1985, p. 61.

Mediterranean, and it prohibited the warships of other nations from entering the Black Sea through the straits. In this way, Russia for the first time obtained the right to freely pass through the two [Black Sea] straits, and it exclusively had the privilege of warships passing through the straits. Subsequently, under the pressure of the United Kingdom, it in 1807 again withdrew to the Black Sea. At the same time, it established the port of Petropavlovsk[-Kamchatsky] in 1740 on the Kamchatka Peninsula, thereby extending the tentacles of the Russian Navy to the Pacific. This period was one of the periods when Russia was most powerful and prosperous.

(4) Japan's awareness of the sea, and its sea-going practices. Japan is a typical island country; prior to the Meiji Restoration, Japan was a country that was split up among feudal lords and that was closed and defended itself. A pioneer in Japan's naval defense theory, Hayashi Shihei, faced with encroachment from the European sea powers, understood the fatal problems of a closed-door policy, and in his book *Discussion Concerning Military Matters of a Maritime Nation*, he advocated lifting the sea restrictions and developing naval defense. "What is a maritime nation? A maritime nation is a country that has no neighboring countries on its borders and that has seas all around it, and therefore, this maritime nation must have arms that are commensurate with a maritime nation, unlike the military thinking in China's art of war and in the various types of military doctrines that have been passed down in Japan since ancient times. If we do not understand this one point, it will be hard for us to establish a national defense of Japan."⁷⁰ Up until the mid-19th century, when the development of Japan's feudal society had entered the final period of rule by the [Tokugawa] Shogunate, the Western powers relied upon their gunboats in order to invade Japan by sea so that after exercising a prolonged closed-door policy, Japan was forced to open its doors; its understanding of the seas and of maritime accesses and its hopes to develop a navy gradually grew stronger. After the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Japan began to implement a policy of a "rich country and a strong military," and it gradually followed the path of capitalism. The development of Japan's navy began in 1867, in the Meiji Restoration era. The navy was founded on 17 January 1868. From the start, when the military was being built, the Japanese navy focused on fostering persons of talent, and in a memorial to the throne from the Ministry of War, [it stated], "Your glorious majesty's power was based on nothing other than not having a navy overseas; now, we should work hard to have a navy."⁷¹ Subsequently, the arising capitalist-class regime engaged in a policy of aggressive expansion outwards, and it actively sought overseas markets and colonies. The Japanese navy defeated the Qing Dynasty's Northern Fleet, and ten years later, in the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese navy again defeated the Russian navy, whose troops had been tired by their long expedition. From then on, Japan created a powerful navy, and Japanese capitalism developed into imperialism, and it also therefore caused Japan to follow the path of militarism.

(5) The United States' awareness and practices of sea power. After the end of the Civil War, as the United States' industrial and agricultural production recovered and grew, and with the ending of the development of the West, there was an urgent need to expand markets. The US economy was developing more and more, and the scope of its overseas trade was also increasingly expanding

⁷⁰ (Japan) Saburo Toyama, *A History of the Japanese Navy*, Gong Jianguo and Fang Xihe, translators, Chinese People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 1.

⁷¹ (Japan) Saburo Toyama, *A History of the Japanese Navy*, Gong Jianguo and Fang Xihe, translators, Chinese People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 13.

to each place in the world; the oceans undoubtedly became the optimal access for going to overseas markets. [Alfred Thayer] Mahan believed that for the United States, the nation's survival depended on control of the seas. For a long period of time, if American trading ships were not captured by British warships or privateers, then they suffered extortion by pirates; the building of its navy also was always stagnating, with no way to ensure that maritime traffic lines were secure and unhindered. In order to protect maritime trade interests that were far from the US homeland, the US Navy dispatched fleets at differing times and in differing batches to sea regions where its maritime trade interests were fairly concentrated; these would be quartered there for long periods of time. From 1815 to 1843, the United States dispatched a Mediterranean squadron, a West Indies squadron, a Pacific squadron, a Brazil squadron, an East Indies squadron, and an African squadron, one after the other, to attack pirate activities that posed a serious threat to US maritime trade in order to protect US interests. From the Pacific to the Caribbean, from the Americas to Asia, the United States completed to suitable degrees its plans for overseas expansion. By the 1890s, the United States' gross industrial output was close to the total of that of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany; its industrial production made up one-third of the world's total production; and the entire national economic strength had leapt into first place among the various countries of the world.

However, as the United States prepared to expand abroad, the biggest problems that it encountered were that the world's colonies and spheres of influence had already been carved up, early on, by the powers and that the various maritime strategic accesses going to the outside world were almost entirely controlled by the old-school Western European empires. If a rising maritime empire wanted to expand outwards, it would first need to open up and do its utmost to control the maritime strategic accesses for going out to the world; only afterwards would it be able to seize colonies from the hands of the old-school colonial empires and to redraw spheres of influence. Mahan more than once proposed that maritime traffic dominated warfare. He believed that maritime traffic lines are an unmatched factor that is most important for a nation's strength and strategy and that having the ability to ensure your own traffic lines while at the same time cutting off the enemy's traffic lines is the basis for a country's armed forces, as well as a natural gift and privilege of a maritime power. He pointed out that "The only thing that should be remembered is that secure maritime traffic involves the superiority of the navy; in particular, when the distance between the homeland and forward bases is fairly long, this is even more so."⁷² And in selecting a forward position, "It is not only necessary to consider the traffic lines that will be situated to its rear but it is also necessary to consider the traffic lines coming from the enemy; it is not only necessary to consider those traffic lines that it shields but it is also necessary to consider those traffic lines that it threatens."⁷³ As Mahan saw it, what is referred to as command of the sea means control over maritime traffic lines.⁷⁴ This is the way it can be put, that control over maritime traffic lines means control over the oceans and thus control over maritime trade. Mahan's theory of

⁷² (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1994, p. 188.

⁷³ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1994, p. 258.

⁷⁴ Shi Diansheng, *An Introduction to the Military History of the World's Navies*, Sea Tide Press, 2003, p. 153.

control over maritime traffic lines accelerated the process of the United States' expansion abroad and its seizing of overseas bases. The Spanish-American War that broke out in 1898 was the start of the United States' overseas expansion. Through this war, the United States included Cuba as a US protectorate, and it seized Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. Afterwards, the United States also annexed Hawaii, Samoa, and Wake Island. At the same time, and based on Mahan's vision, the United States also seized control over the Panama Canal, whose strategic location was extremely important, thereby achieving his vision of controlling the Caribbean and advancing into the Pacific. It was precisely through this series of contests at sea that the United States gradually controlled the various major maritime strategic accesses and achieved hegemony over the oceans in the western hemisphere. This had a profound impact on later US internal policies and diplomacy.

Taking an overall view of this period, because of the opening of global routes and the establishment, one after the other, of colonies in each continent, mankind's ocean activities expanded on a great scale, and this truly was significant for world history. As sea-going practices advanced in ways that were more profound and extensive, mankind had a completely new understanding of maritime accesses, from the overall situation, and struggles at sea also developed from local maritime struggles to comprehensive struggles on the world's oceans; struggling for maritime accesses directly affected the strategic setup of the entire world, and this shows that struggles over maritime accesses became struggles that were strategic in nature. Looking at the various countries of the world, controlling maritime accesses meant supporting countries as they expanded overseas, seized overseas resources, engaged in overseas trade, and expanded their national domains, and this became an important premise for maritime hegemony. Therefore, whether it was possible to win victory in maritime struggles was determined to a very great extent by their control and use of maritime accesses. The awareness of maritime accesses had become one of the most important awarenesses of strategy and security that sea powers and even land powers had.

IV. Strategic struggles – the period of the two world wars...47

During the 31 years from 1914 to 1945, mankind underwent two world wars. Although the main battlefields of the wars were on land, still, looking at the course of the wars, sea battlefields played a decisive role in victory or defeat on the land battlefields.

1. The struggle for maritime strategic accesses in the First World War

In the world war from 1914 to 1918, the Entente countries had rich resources in the area of major raw materials. It can be seen by looking at the following table that the Entente countries held a slight advantage over the Central European powers in the areas of major raw materials and products.

The Major Capitalist Countries' Coal, Petroleum, Steel, and Iron Production in 1914 (in Thousands of Tons)⁷⁵

	UK	France	Russia	Entente Countries	Germany	Austria Hungary	Central European Powers
Coal	265665	26140	35142	326947	241488	33498	274986
Petroleum	285	—	9574	9859	142	—	142
Steel	9067	2690	4252	16009	14389	1353	15742
Iron	7960	2656	4733	15349	13813	2191	16004

But speaking of the United Kingdom and Germany, both countries were nations lacking in natural resources, and the huge war consumption had resulted in the scale of the two nations' maritime transportation reaching levels that were unprecedented in history. In food alone, the United Kingdom could only ensure one-third [of its needs] each year, while the other two-thirds had to be imported. Prior to the war, the United Kingdom had the world's largest merchant fleet, with total tonnage of 21 million tons; at that time, the total tonnage of the world's merchant ships was about 56 million tons, so the United Kingdom made up 37.5 percent of total tonnage of the world's merchant ships. And prior to the war, Germany's total food stockpiles were 4.1 million tons, so it could only ensure twenty-five percent of domestic needs; the remaining seventy-five percent needed to be imported. In addition, ninety percent of copper and cotton, eighty percent of petroleum and rubber, and seventy percent of nickel and leather had to be imported. However, the total tonnage of German merchant ships at that time was only 5.7 million tons, three-quarters of the tonnage of the British merchant fleet.⁷⁶ These huge imports that the United Kingdom and Germany required resulted in the two sides realizing the importance that maritime traffic lines had for victory or defeat in the war. This also impelled the two sides to treat ensuring the security of their own country's maritime accesses and destroying the enemy's maritime accesses as an important operational task of their navy, and control over maritime traffic line chokeholds was especially important. Blockade and counter-blockade and protecting traffic and destroying traffic at maritime strategic accesses became an important form of sea warfare for the United Kingdom and Germany.

During the period of the First World War, the main task of the British navy was to protect maritime traffic lines; using the thinking of "blockade plus decisive battles," its overall strategic intentions at sea were first, to cut off German maritime accesses, to sink all of [Germany's] overseas ships, and to try to maintain command of the sea; second, to escort British expeditionary forces and strategic materials bound for battlefields on the European continent; and third, to ensure

⁷⁵ (Soviet Union), Bo-ge-lie-bo-fu [Translator's note: This is the Chinese rendition of a Russian name, possibly Bogolepov], editor, *Blockade and Counter-Blockade*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1993, p. 13.

⁷⁶ *Bogolepov, editor, *Blockade and Counter-Blockade*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1993, p. 13.

the security of the overseas routes going to the various overseas colonies and of the home islands' coasts. Under the guidance of this kind of thinking about operations, the United Kingdom relied upon its own powerful fleet to carry out long-distance blockades at sea and to cut off Germany's maritime traffic lines; to weaken German's war potential through strangling its economy; and to cooperate strategically with strategic actions on the battlefields of the European continent. However, at that time, Germany's navy and its merchant ships were trapped in the Kiel Canal and were unable to enter the Atlantic for operations. They were almost cut off from world markets, the input value of their maritime trade suddenly declined, and the import of materials from the United States was only equivalent to 0.68 percent of what it was prior to the outbreak of the war;⁷⁷ this struck a great blow against Germany's highly developed industries so that the German fleet, which was blockaded deep in secondary German bays {*ya de wan*}, had nothing it could do. Because of the United Kingdom's tight blockade against Germany, which put it under economic pressure, Germany decided to break the United Kingdom's maritime blockade and to reverse its passive situation; in order to ensure Germany's freedom of action at sea, the German navy sought an opportunity for a decisive battle with the British navy. On 31 May 1916, the United Kingdom and Germany engaged in the largest as well as the only major sea battle in the First World War, at Jutland. However, this battle did not allow Germany to break the naval blockade; strategically, the United Kingdom still firmly held command of the sea. Not only did it complete its predetermined strategic task but it also made major contributions for deploying ground forces on the European continent and for cooperation with operational actions on land battlefields. At the same time as this, Germany opened underwater battlefields in order to destroy the United Kingdom's maritime traffic lines. At the beginning of 1917, part of Germany's submarines hunted in the North Sea and the English Channel; the other part of the submarines passed through the English Channel, where naval mines were thickly laid, and entered the western waters in order to attack merchant ships, using unrestricted submarine warfare in order to gain immediate success in underwater command of the sea. The number of Entente merchant ships that were sunk rose in a straight line. In the entire war, German submarines participated in 1,700 fights and sank a total of 13.72 million tons of their opponent's transport ships so that the United Kingdom's maritime traffic lines were in a dangerous state of being almost paralyzed; the British economy and war potential began to shrivel. Finally, the United Kingdom adopted large numbers of anti-submarine measures. In their fight with German submarines, the United Kingdom and the other Entente countries used and consumed large amounts of war materials so as to protect their maritime accesses; they deployed more than 5,000 ships of various kinds and over 2,000 aircraft, they laid 138,800 naval mines in the North Sea, and the United Kingdom's maritime traffic lines underwent unprecedented tests in this war that was unprecedented in history.

2. The struggle over maritime strategic accesses in the Second World War

In mankind's history of the oceans, the greatest struggles over maritime accesses occurred during the period of the Second World War. Although these struggles did not involve commerce or humanity opening up continents, they still caused people to deeply understand the major impact

⁷⁷ Zhao Kezeng, *Studies on the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 14.

that maritime accesses have on national strategy, the status of major nations, the course of warfare, and even the survival of mankind; the attention that was paid to maritime strategic accesses also therefore rose to new circumstances.

(1) The two sides in engagements on the Atlantic battlefield struggled over maritime strategic accesses. The European battlefields in the Second World War were mainly on land; because the United Kingdom is not linked to the European continent, because the Mediterranean separates Europe from North Africa, and because the Atlantic also separates the United States from the European continent, the struggle over strategic accesses on the ocean front became an important factor in determining victory or defeat in war. Through a study of the struggle over strategic accesses by the two combatants on the Atlantic battlefield in the Second World War, the author believes that [this struggle] primarily had the following characteristics.

The first was the full use of maritime strategic accesses to carry out strategic defense. At the beginning of May 1940, the Germany army was preparing to attack France and Belgium; German Army Group A on the western front broke through the Ardennes region, and in three days, it crossed the natural barrier of the Ardennes pass. Subsequently, it forced its way across the Maas River, seized Amiens, attacked Boulogne, and occupied Calais, encroaching on the English Channel; it compressed close to 400,000 joint British-French forces into a very small triangular area at Dunkirk so that the situation was quite critical. It was at this time that Hitler issued an order to pause in the attack, and this allowed the survivors of the joint British-French forces to gain three days in which to construct defensive fortifications and shield their withdrawal. The British-French forces carried out Operation Dynamo for withdrawal by sea. They mobilized over 1,000 ships of various types, including civilian craft, while the German air force launched over 300 bombers and more than 500 fighters to wantonly bomb the coast of the English Channel and the Dunkirk region. With the cooperation of the [British] air force, the joint British-French forces speedily crossed the strait, and finally, before 4 June, more than 338,000 men had been withdrawn to the United Kingdom, and only 40,000 French troops, who had served as a rear guard, were taken prisoner.⁷⁸ This major evacuation has been called “the miracle of Dunkirk;” it allowed the United Kingdom to preserve its actual strengths and to continue operations while at the same time, it also planted the seeds for Germany’s defeat. A famous Nazi tank commander, [Erich von] Manstein, said painfully in his memoirs after the war, *Lost Victories*, that “Dunkirk was one of the most decisive errors that Hitler committed.”⁷⁹

Similarly, the English Channel also successfully blocked Hitler’s Operation Sea Lion. On 16 July 1940, Hitler issued an order to invade the United Kingdom, that is, the Sea Lion plan of operations, and the Germans believed that crossing the strait would not be more difficult than crossing a broad river. The German air force carried out bombardments against British targets at sea and on land for three continuous months, hoping to gain command of the air and command of the sea as quickly as possible and to occupy the British home island. Compared to Germany, the United Kingdom not only had fairly strong maritime troop strengths but it also had rather powerful

⁷⁸ Li Qingshan and Liang Yue [Chinese character unknown, probably “gui” or “kui”], *The Century of Warfare: A Screenshot of Military Matters in the 20th Century*, Economic Science Press, 1999, p. 119.

⁷⁹ Li Bing, “Studies on International Maritime Strategic Accesses,” Central Party School Ph.D. dissertation, 2005, p. 48.

aerial troop strengths; at the same time, it also fully utilized favorable weather conditions. Saying that the United Kingdom had the English Channel as a shield and that it had naval and aerial troop strengths as its main means, [the British] launched desperate major naval and air engagements with the German military on the sea's surface and in the air in the English Channel. From July until October 1940, Germany never had a way to win command of the air and command of the sea. Finally, Hitler had to indefinitely postpone the operation to cross the Channel and attack the United Kingdom; the Sea Lion plan of operations was aborted.⁸⁰

It was precisely the United Kingdom's favorable sea geographical conditions and its strong naval and air force strengths, which restrained the German military's invasion by sea and completed the task of strategic defense, that protected the security of the United Kingdom's homeland, and this became a classic case of success in maritime strategic defense in the Second World War. Former British Prime Minister [Winston] Churchill proudly said that the English Channel was "the best moat in the world."

The second [characteristic] was protecting its own and destroying the enemy's maritime lifeline. Because the United Kingdom is an island nation, a great deal of strategic materials, raw materials, and foodstuffs need to be imported. At that time, the manpower and materiel assistance that the United States, the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, and other countries provided the United Kingdom with relied almost entirely on maritime strategic accesses, and especially on the Atlantic access. Therefore, keeping maritime traffic lines unimpeded became the number-one strategic mission of the British navy in the Second World War. From the start of the war, Germany believed that "Maritime traffic lines are the lifeline of the United Kingdom; not only its military and naval power but even its economic lifeblood and its national survival are related to the security of maritime traffic lines and to its solidarity and its joys and sorrows; the basic troop strengths of the German navy should be used to break the maritime traffic lines of its adversary."⁸¹ After the start of the war, Germany assembled large numbers of surface ship troop strengths in order to attack the United Kingdom's maritime traffic lines. For four months, from the start of the war until the end of 1939, Germany's few submarines sank 114 Allied commercial ships, with total tonnage of more than 420,000 tons; in particular, they sank the British battleship *Royal Oak* and the British aircraft carrier *Royal Ark*, which greatly shook the United Kingdom. Churchill even believed that "Submarine attacks are the greatest scourge."⁸² In order to protect its maritime traffic lines, the United Kingdom immediately organized a ship detachment, called the "Channel force;" these deployed naval mines in the main channel of the English Channel and in the North Sea, in order to control the western accesses that German ships had to use to enter the English Channel and the Irish Sea, so that German submarines would touch these mines and be sunk when passing through the Strait of Dover. Germany had to temporarily stop dispatching submarines through the English Channel and instead went around Scotland. Subsequently, the commander of the Germany navy, [Karl] Dönitz, adopted the famous "wolf pack tactics," which sank large numbers of commercial

⁸⁰ Lyu Shengzu, *The Sea and Military Matters*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 142.

⁸¹ (Soviet Union) *A History of the Second World War* (Volume 2), Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1974, p. 623.

⁸² Zhao Kezeng, *Studies on the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 20.

ships at a very small price. In only 1942, the German navy sank more than 1,000 Allied ships, with more than six million tons, at the cost of sixty-four submarines. Because of the extremely large number of commercial ships that were lost, the materials that the United Kingdom imported faced the danger of becoming completely cut off. Under these conditions, the United Kingdom mobilized all of its resources to launch large-scale anti-submarine convoy warfare. Churchill proposed “leasing eight bases along the western coast of the Atlantic to the United States for ninety-nine years, in exchange for fifty old US destroyers left over from the First World War,”⁸³ in order to increase the vigor of convoys. At the same time, the United Kingdom stationed long-range aircraft in Iceland and combined aerial anti-submarine activities with surface ships’ anti-submarine convoy activities. It also convoyed Canadian transport ships going to the United Kingdom along the entire voyage. In addition, the US and Canadian navies also participated in the escort actions and provided new technical equipment.

Because of this, the Atlantic became the Allies’ strategic link to the European battlefield, and it was a strategic lifeline for the war against Fascism. Protecting and destroying maritime traffic lines became major strategic struggles for both combatants on the European battlefields.

The third [characteristic] was the struggle for command of the sea in the Mediterranean. During the period of the Second World War, the traffic lines in the Mediterranean were indispensable for both the British and the Italian combatants, and it was an important theater of war that the two sides’ navies struggled over. Protecting the Mediterranean traffic lines was crucially important for the United Kingdom, because a fairly large part of the United Kingdom’s main strategic materials, like petroleum, ferrous metals, wood, cotton, and foodstuffs, had to be brought in from the Middle Eastern and Near Eastern countries and from India and Australia. If it lost the Mediterranean traffic lines, these [materials] would have to go around Africa, and the voyage would virtually need to add more than 8,000 kilometers. The rotation rate for the ships would be decreased by one-half to three-quarters, which inevitably would affect the United Kingdom’s supplies of strategic materials. In addition, the United Kingdom had contact with the British colonies in North Africa by means of the Mediterranean, and it struggled with Germany and Italy over strategic points such as North Africa and the Balkans, thereby threatening the southern flank of Germany and Italy on the European battlefields. At that time, the United Kingdom controlled two strategic accesses, Gibraltar and the Suez Canal, thereby controlling the eastern and western entrances to the Mediterranean, and it occupied the port of Alexandria as well as the port of Malta in the Mediterranean so that it held the advantage strategically.⁸⁴

The Mediterranean traffic lines were similarly important to Italy. A fairly large part of some strategic materials that were extremely important domestically for Italy had to be brought in from other countries. Italy’s colonies in North Africa also needed to rely on contact by sea. In the struggle over the Mediterranean, Italy’s advantages were that it lay in the middle of the Mediterranean and that it had the islands of Sicily and Sardinia as its shield; its disadvantage was that its outlets to the ocean on both sides of the Mediterranean were controlled by the United

⁸³ Zhao Kezeng, *Studies on the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, People’s Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 22.

⁸⁴ Scott C. Truver, *The Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean*, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands; Germantown, MD: Sijthoff and Noordhoff, 1980.

Kingdom. [Benito] Mussolini said that Italy was a “prisoner” in the Mediterranean and that only by breaking open the two keys to the prison – Gibraltar and the port of Alexandria – could Italy obtain freedom.⁸⁵ Therefore, the two sides launched an intense struggle centered on the Mediterranean.

At the beginning of the war, the United Kingdom’s basic strategy was defensive in nature. It primarily ensured the security of the Strait of Gibraltar and of the Suez Canal and kept the maritime accesses from the Allies to North Africa and the Red Sea unimpeded. At the same time as this, the United Kingdom also cut off Italy’s maritime traffic lines to East Africa and North Africa. In order to ensure its security in the Mediterranean and the Strait of Gibraltar through western waters, Germany dispatched submarines to cut off the United Kingdom’s traffic lines. Most of the time, there were forty to fifty submarines, equivalent to almost half of the submarines that the German military deployed to the Atlantic. The German military’s submarines that entered the Mediterranean sank a total of 432 transport ships of the Allied military, for a total of 2.172 million tons of materials; to a certain extent, this supported the struggle over the important strategic access in the North Atlantic region by constraining part of the British military’s convoy strengths. At the same time as this, because the Italian air force was too weak and had no way to resist the British military’s fleet at sea, supplies for [Erwin] Rommel’s Afrika Korps, which was fighting fiercely in North Africa, encountered extreme difficulties. By 1942, the Axis nations’ logistics transportation network to North Africa had in actuality been cut off, and the loss rate for the Axis countries’ materials being transported by sea reached sixty-six percent at this time, severely impacting the North African war situation. Marshal Rommel later confirmed that the reason his units lost in the El Alamein region was because they lacked supplies.⁸⁶ Victory in cutting off traffic [lines] had a crucial impact on the North African battlefields.

(2) The two combatants on the Pacific battlefields struggled over maritime strategic accesses. On 8 December 1941, Japan launched the Pacific War against the United States without a declaration of war. At the beginning of the war, Japan depended on the advantage of its surprise attack to gain command of the air and command of the sea in the Pacific theater of war; it made a major strike to the south, in an attempt to seize the basic materials needed for an aggressive war, by controlling the maritime traffic lifelines in the Pacific, while at the same time cutting off maritime traffic between the Western countries and China as well as the maritime accesses from the Western countries to the Far East area. As for the United States and its allies, their operations in the Pacific region were operations over the ocean that were far from [the US] homeland, and maritime traffic was similarly extremely important. Whoever could cut off its opponent’s maritime traffic lines should then be able to ultimately win victory in the war.

Through a study of the struggles between the two combatants in the Pacific battlefields of the Second World War, the author believes that there were primarily the following several characteristics.

⁸⁵ Li Bing, “Studies on International Maritime Strategic Accesses,” Central Party School Ph.D. dissertation, 2005, p. 40.

⁸⁶ Zhao Kezeng, *The Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 23.

The first was that Japan won the battlefield initiative in the early period of the war through controlling maritime thoroughfares. In order to obtain Indonesia's abundant petroleum, rubber, tin, iron, coal, and other important strategic materials, and to control the maritime traffic key points in the Pacific and the Atlantic, Japan engaged in an intense struggle with the Allies. For example, the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, the Lombok Strait, and the Strait of Makassar were not only thoroughfares for maritime traffic but they were also straits that relevant countries used in order to transfer troop strengths south and north and important places that supported one another; after the start of the war, these straits were always the focus of struggles by the various countries. In order to struggle for control over these straits, the combined Japanese fleet engaged in intense combat with the Allies in the straits. The Japanese military first invaded and occupied the Malay Peninsula and won command of the air so that the British military retreated to Singapore. Afterwards, Japan again divided into two routes and crossed the Straits of Johor to land at Singapore, driving away the old-school colonial empire – the United Kingdom – and seizing control over the Strait of Malacca. Subsequently, in the fight that continued southward, it also dispatched naval and air troop strengths to carry out a large-scale attack against the Sumatra and Java areas, it launched an intense battle at sea with the Allies in the maritime areas east of Sumatra, and one after the other, it carried out the famous “naval battle of Makassar” with the Allies in Makassar and seized control over the Java region and command of the sea there. Based on the geographical location of that time and on the strategic situation of the Allies, the Japanese military tightly blockaded the maritime accesses between the western part of this island and the Indian Ocean and between the [island's] eastern part and Australia so that the Allies were entirely annihilated, under conditions where they had no route to retreat along and no troops to assist them. The victory in the “naval battle of Makassar” allowed Japan to hold the initiative for these maritime accesses.

But Japan's battle lines were stretched too long, north to the Korea Strait, south to the Strait of Makassar, and east to Hawaii; Japan deployed transport ships with a total tonnage of 5.3 million tons.⁸⁷ Faced with maritime traffic lines that were this long and with this many transport ships, all that Japan hoped to use was the general method it had of seizing command of the sea in order to protect these various traffic lines; it did not establish even the most elementary direct convoy system. All that it did was lay defensive naval mine barriers along one side of the Pacific Ocean, near the Taiwan and Kyushu straits, close to the Philippines Islands, and in the Tsushima Strait, the Soya Strait, and the Tsugaru Strait. At the same time, the troop strengths that the Japanese navy dispatched in order to participate in destroying maritime traffic lines were even fewer, and [Japan] gradually lost the battlefield initiative [that it had had] in the early part of the war.

The second [characteristic] was that the United States won important strategic support at sea through its operations against Japanese[-held] islands. Japan's aggressive expansion in the Pacific inevitably seized islands in the Pacific to serve as bases for strategic attacks. In order to resist Japan's aggression and thus defeat Japan, the United States and its allies also inevitably had to defend and seize a series of islands, to serve as strategic key points for defense and counterattack. Thus, thousands of islands in the Pacific became the focus of strategic struggles in the Pacific War, and the islands and reefs in the Pacific became the focus of strategic struggles in the Pacific War.

⁸⁷ Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Lines*, Ocean Press, 1998, p. 58.

In May 1942, the United States fought its first major naval battle against Japan, in the Coral Sea; this was the first battle between aircraft carriers in the history of mankind. In June, the United States again relied on its aircraft carriers to win the Battle of Midway, and the aircraft carriers' powerful offensive and defensive capabilities resulted in Japan's maritime strengths suffering a serious hit. In the Battle of Guadalcanal, which marked the beginning of the final days of Japan in the South Pacific, the US military always controlled maritime accesses, leaving the Japanese military's follow-up units and operational materials with no way to move to the island, while the US military's personnel and materials were delivered to the island in a steady stream. The loss of maritime traffic lines led to Japan's defeat in the Guadalcanal operations. After the Battle of Guadalcanal, in 1943, the US military began its strategic counterattack in the Pacific. From New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Kiribati Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Bismarck islands, and the Philippines straight to the Ryukyus and Okinawa, which were called the "gates" to Japan, the United States engaged in a series of island-landing operations. Most of these islands were located along maritime routes and close to maritime strategic accesses. By controlling these islands and using them as "relay stations" and "stepping stones" for US forces, they could make up for ships' insufficient endurance and self-sustainability, and [these islands] played an important supporting role for the US military's operations in the Pacific. Speaking in a certain sense, controlling the islands was equivalent to grabbing the chokepoints of the Pacific's maritime strategic accesses and maritime routes, and they played an important role in controlling the overall Pacific war situation.

The third [characteristic] was that the United States blockaded maritime accesses and cut off Japan's lifeline. In 1940, Japan imported 22.1 million tons [of goods], but by the end of 1943, this had been reduced to 16.4 million tons. At the same time, Japan's total maritime transport tonnage was only around 4.9 million tons, which was far from being able to meet the needs of its economic and campaign transportation. At this time, a report from Japan's General Mobilization Bureau to the war cabinet said that "If we stop importing things from the southern direction, and especially if we stop importing petroleum, then after a period of time, we will lose any ability to resist." This report not only reflected the circumstances of operations at maritime traffic lines but at the same time, it also showed the crucially important impact that maritime transportation had on the course of the war.⁸⁸ At that time, eighty percent of Japan's oil, eighty percent of its iron ore, twenty-four percent of its various types of coal (ninety percent of which was coking coal), and twenty percent of its foodstuffs all relied on supplies by sea.⁸⁹ In particular, [this importing] needed to be done through the Shimonoseki Strait, the Sea of Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and China's coasts. If Japan's maritime traffic lines were cut off, this could "starve" its war machinery, and Japan's industrial production would also halt; this would certainly impel [Japan's] complete defeat at an early period. In view of this, the United States carried out its world-renowned "Operation Starvation" from 27 March to 15 August 1945, and it carried out a large-scale naval mine blockade warfare against the main straits and gulfs that led to the Japanese homeland, such as accesses like the Shimonoseki Strait and Osumi Strait. By maritime blockades of Japan's internal lines over a period of four and a half months, the amount of transportation through the Shimonoseki Strait was reduced by ninety percent, and the amount of shipping at several important industrial ports fell by

⁸⁸ Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Lines*, Ocean Press, 1998, p. 64.

⁸⁹ Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Lines*, Ocean Press, 1998, p. 17.

seventy-nine percent; this led to serious shortfalls in strategic materials that Japan urgently needed, like petroleum, coal, and foodstuffs. A large number of Japan's factories ceased production, which greatly weakened Japan's war potential, put its national civilian economic on the verge of collapse, and basically accelerated and changed the course of the war, speeding up the destruction of the Japanese Empire.⁹⁰

In summary, the history of the two world wars proves that the struggle over national interests developed into total war between nations or alliances. Just as the British Prime Minister during the time of the First World War, [David] Lloyd George, pointed out, "What currently will decide the outcome of the war is which side will be exhausted, and in the end, which side will first consume its actual strength, morale, foodstuffs, manpower, war materials, and transportation capabilities; the group of combatant nations that first is defeated in a given area of these basic key factors will inevitably be defeated in the war itself."⁹¹ This greatly highlighted the strategic value of maritime accesses. Whoever's hand controlled maritime strategic accesses had the nature of determining the course of the war as well as victory or defeat. For some countries that severely relied on the supplies of overseas materials, winning command of maritime transportation meant winning time, gaining vitality, and winning victory; contrariwise, if they lost command of maritime accesses, this meant losing the war, losing hope, and ultimately losing victory. Similarly, regardless of whether it was the Atlantic battlefield or the Pacific battlefield, blockades at sea and countering blockades, attacks and countering attacks, and protecting traffic {*bao jiao*} and guarding traffic {*hu jiao*} became important forms of modern warfare, and fights to control maritime traffic lines and struggle for islands tended to become white-hot. The use of such new equipment as aircraft carriers and aviation troops resulted in naval warfare evolving toward being three-dimensional, and it made struggles over maritime accesses and the destruction of traffic {*po jiao*} and protection of traffic along maritime routes even more intense and even more fruitful. In particular, the strategic decisive battles on the Pacific battlefield were accomplished by aircraft carriers, and this more fully showed the powerful aerial attack capabilities that modern navies have, going from two dimensions to three dimensions. The practices of warfare informed all the combatants that the age of relying upon just a single service to attack everything had already passed. "Naval warfare requires various types of weapons."⁹² Whoever can use advanced weapons and equipment to protect traffic and destroy traffic and whoever controls maritime traffic lines and maritime strategic accesses will be able to hold the initiative in warfare and even directly have a decisive impact on the course and outcome of a war.

V. Confrontation between East and West – the Cold War period...58

After the Second World War ended, a world strategic setup appeared where two major camps confronted each other and two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – struggled for global supremacy. The fight between the United States and the Soviet Union for the land tended

⁹⁰ Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Lines*, Ocean Press, 1998, pp. 17-20.

⁹¹ Yang Yue, *500 Years of Struggling for Hegemony on the Ocean – The Rise and Fall of the British Royal Navy and the British Empire*, Military Science Publishing House, 2007, p. 161.

⁹² (United Kingdom) J. R. Hill, *The British Navy*, Wang Hengtao and Liang Zhihai, translators, Ocean Press, 1987, p. 1. [Translator's note: This is probably Hill's *The Royal Navy, Today and Tomorrow*.]

to be quite limited, but their struggle for the oceans gradually escalated, and their key focus was on maritime strategic accesses. The practical activities of maritime accesses rose to [new] heights, resulting in a historic leap, that is, they rose from being purely commercial activities and from opening routes to new heights of competition over maritime strategic accesses. During the several decades from the end of the Second World War to the end of the Cold War, the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, launched a full-scale confrontation as they struggled over maritime strategic accesses.

1. The Western camp, headed by the United States, controlled important maritime strategic accesses

(1) It determined the Soviet Navy to be its main adversary. After the Second World War, because of the Vietnam War, the US Navy used a great deal of its funding for dealing with the needs of warfare, which frustrated the shipbuilding program and resulted in [the program's] rapid decline. In contrast to this, after the Soviet Navy was humiliated by the United States during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, "this stimulated the Soviet military into a decision and conviction about the large-scale development of its military strengths,"⁹³ and it began to vigorously develop its navy. By the 1970s, [the Soviet Navy] had developed into an offensive-type blue-water navy on the high seas that could challenge the US Navy on the various oceans of the world, and this expanded the Soviet Union's influence in the world. The rise of the Soviet Navy ended the situation where the US Navy dominated the oceans, and [the world] entered a new stage where the two hegemonies, the United States and the Soviet Union, restrained each other and contended with each other. The US Navy discovered that its freedom to use the seas had encountered serious restraints and that the United States no longer monopolized command of the seas. What was particularly hard for the United States to accept was that the Soviet Navy's nuclear submarines frequently engaged in activities in US coastal waters, lying low close to some important US naval bases. "Now, surface ships of the Soviet Navy are regularly stationed at traffic hub points like the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, which leads to disputes and could easily come under attack. Soviet Navy ships are also regularly found along important routes and traffic hub points that Western merchant ships must pass through."⁹⁴ Therefore, the US Navy needed to have the ability to deal with the threat that the Soviet Navy would cut off its maritime strategic accesses.

(2) Control over key points was focused on crucial points in front-line regions. Not long after US Secretary of the Navy [John F.] Lehman took office, he proposed a new maritime strategy and three pillars of maritime strategy: deterrence, forward defense, and alliance solidarity. These three pillars subsequently became important means by which the United States controlled maritime strategic accesses on a global scope. For example, during the [Jimmy] Carter era, it only emphasized protecting maritime routes, and it opposed having the US Navy pass through various straits and thoroughfares to the Soviet coast (the so-called "high threat areas" {*gao weixie qu*}) for operations. The United States' maritime strategy pointed out that if the United States did not go beyond straits and go to the Soviet coast for operations, then inevitably nothing would be

⁹³ Xing Guangcheng, *Seventy Years of Decision-Making at the Highest Levels of the Soviet Union*, Volume 3, World Knowledge Publishing House, 1998, p. 403.

⁹⁴ Naval Equipment Proving Research Center's Science and Technology Section, *U.S. Maritime Strategy*, 1986, p. 62.

accomplished, and this was precisely just what the Soviet Union's "strategy of blocking" {*lanzu zhanlue*} wanted.⁹⁵ The United States emphasized control of forward areas and that only by dispatching troop strengths forward and even to the doors of the Soviet Union for activities would it be able to fully bring into play the United States' advantage of powerful high-seas offensive capabilities, to more effectively protect the security of allies and maritime traffic lines, and to force the Soviet Navy's region of activities to shrink in the direction of its own territorial waters; in particular, [the Soviet Union] would use its offensive nuclear submarines to protect its weak points – ballistic missile nuclear submarines – and it would have no leisure to take into consideration and attack the United States' maritime strategic accesses, and this would thus have the effect of relieving [US forces] by besieging [their opponents].

(3) [The United States] announced that it would control sixteen maritime strategic accesses. It should be said that the strength and weakness and the number of maritime strategic accesses that are controlled not only has an impact on the issue of the jurisdiction of land territories, but it also could have a major impact on global strategy. If the US-Soviet struggle over global strategy is viewed as a grand board for the game of *go*, maritime strategic accesses are several crucial "live eyes" {*huo yan*} for the overall game situation. People of old said, "Those who are skilled at planning, plan things [overall], while those who are not skilled at planning, make plans for [individual] pieces." Having a mastery over these "eyes" requires wisdom and actual strength; the "eyes" seek guidelines for all activities over the entire board, otherwise, everything is lost throughout the board.

The sixteen maritime strategic accesses that the United States rolled out precisely identified the key points on the world's oceans. In 1986, the United States, based on the need to dominate the world's oceans, drafted a plan to control the sixteen maritime chokehold routes in the world. Among these sixteen maritime strategic accesses throughout the world, there were seven in the Atlantic: the Caribbean and North American route, the Florida Strait, the Skagerrak Strait, the Kattegat Strait, the Cape of Good Hope route, the Panama Canal, and the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom straits. There were two in the Mediterranean: the Strait of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. There were two in the Indian Ocean: the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. [Finally,] there were five in the Pacific: the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, the Strait of Makassar, the Korea Strait, and northern route in the Pacific through the bays of Alaska. Not only were these strategic routes traffic lines for commercial sailing that connected the world's oceans, but in addition, control over these chokepoint accesses had a great impact on the "ocean strategy" {*haiyang zhanlue*} that the United States pursued, and they played a decisive role in thoroughly "fending off" the Soviet Union's ocean expansion on the global oceans. Thus, they became important details for the United States in using its naval strengths globally to achieve its "ocean strategy." It can be said that these sixteen maritime accesses are a typical maritime edition of global strategy.

(4) Using military allies to carry out global strategic deployments. One of the three great pillars in the United States' national and military strategies was alliance solidarity. After the [Second World] War, the United States pursued a series of plans for weaving a network of military alliances

⁹⁵ Zhao Kezeng, *Studies on the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, People's Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 257.

along the “rimland.” This was primarily aimed at the Soviet Union, which was located at the center of the Eurasian continent, and it used the allies that were situated along the broad “rimland” of Eurasia and South Asia to form an encirclement around the Soviet Union and China. In the Cold War period, the United States concluded alliance and treaty relations with more than forty countries, and it set up military bases or facilities in over 400 places in more than thirty countries or regions. Based on agreements with its allies, the United States could use naval bases and facilities that filled up each ocean in the entire world, gradually establishing a global military “network of bases” {*jidi wang*}, which relied on military bases in its homeland and which had overseas military bases as its forward defense, thereby guarding the maritime chokepoint thoroughfares; these military bases were spread over every place in the world. For example, the chokepoints of the sixteen maritime routes in the world that the United States controlled went south to Africa as their southern route, and they were as close as the Florida Strait and the Panama Canal and as far as the Strait of Malacca in Southeast Asia. The points that were listed extended throughout the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Arctic Ocean, and the points that were farthest away were thousands of miles away from the US homeland. The United States’ geostrategic objective was that control over maritime routes was a major step in strengthening control over the “rimlands.”

In the Atlantic, NATO, which was headed by the United States, established a program to “ensure that these extremely important regions in the world promoted the expansionary policies of imperialism,” and under the guidance of the United States, it occupied extremely favorable strategic locations in each important sea region in Europe, thus building an arc-shaped encirclement against the Soviet Union, as well as controlling the outlets to the sea in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea and occupying the central position in the Mediterranean. In the Pacific, the United States used the offensive system of the large number of military bases and island chains that it has constructed in the Pacific in order to build a “crescent-shaped maritime encirclement.” In addition to besieging the socialist countries [by using] the island chains, the United States focused on controlling the important maritime strategic accesses for entering and exiting the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, in order to carry out a strategic siege of the Soviet Union and China, level by level.

2. The eastern camp, headed by the Soviet Union, broke the United States’ maritime hegemony

(1) The theory of offense on the high seas. In the [Vladimir] Lenin and [Josef] Stalin periods after the founding of the Soviet Union, its navy basically followed the offshore defensive strategy of the Czarist Russian period. In the twenty-nine years that [Sergey] Gorshkov served as commander of the navy, the actual strengths of the Soviet Navy rapidly rose, and naval strategy switched from “off-shore defense” {*jin hai fangyu*} to “offense on the high seas” {*yuanyang jingong*}. The navy had large numbers of new-type weapons and equipment, and its overall strength was entirely capable of comparison with the US Navy. As the navy’s strength grew stronger, the Soviet Navy began to infiltrate each ocean in the world. However, in the late 1980s, under the influence of Gorshkov’s “new thinking,” the Soviet Union underwent a strategic contraction globally; one after the other, it withdrew from overseas military bases so that Russia’s

strategic borders were pulled back by up to a thousand kilometers, and its accesses for entering and leaving the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Caspian Sea became narrow.

(2) Expanding toward the sea and struggling with the United States and controlling maritime strategic accesses. It should be seen that the Soviet Union's geographical location had its innate inadequacies. Although the Soviet Union was a great country that overlooked the sea, its coastline basically did not directly border on the ocean, apart from its Arctic Ocean coast, and only through peripheral seas was it able to communicate with the oceans. But most of these straits and accesses were surrounded by neighboring countries' lands, with only narrow accesses to the ocean. Historically, most of these countries were the Soviet Union's traditional enemies, and so [the Soviet Union's] accesses to and from the ocean were not smooth at all. Therefore, if the Soviet Union wanted to break through the US Navy's blockade at sea and move toward the ocean, it primarily had to concentrate on three points.

The first was the Baltic Sea straits for the Atlantic. If the Baltic Sea Fleet wanted to enter or leave the Atlantic, it had to go through the Baltic Sea and the Kattegat Strait in order to enter the North Sea, and then afterwards pass through the English Channel before it was able to enter the Atlantic. And if it wanted to ensure that these accesses were unhindered, it needed to face the navies of Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom, which were powerful countries. The second was the Black Sea straits. Only by passing through the Bosphorus strait and the Dardanelles strait could the Black Sea Fleet enter the Mediterranean. If it wanted to enter the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, it also needed to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar, which was controlled by the British, and the Suez Canal; this was extremely difficult, as may be imagined. The third was the Soya Strait and the Tsugaru Strait. The Pacific Fleet was almost entirely sealed within the Sea of Japan; if it wanted to enter the Pacific, it needed to pass through the Soya Strait, the Tsugaru Strait, and the Korea (or Tsushima) Strait. The Soviet Union expanded its bases on the four northern islands [north of Japan], and it linked the four northern islands with Vladivostok, Sakhalin Island, and the Kamchatka peninsula. Internally, it could turn the Sea of Okhotsk and the Tatar Strait into an inner sea of the Soviet Union, while externally it could form strengths for breaking through the Soya Strait, the Tsugaru Strait, the Tsushima Strait, and the Sea of Japan. Only the northern fleet directly bordered the Arctic Ocean, with very few geographical restraints from neighboring countries, but floating ice in this region often affected the safety of ships' paths, and if they wanted to approach the main routes in the North Atlantic, they still were restrained by the English Channel and the United Kingdom's navy. Russia had fought an excessive number of wars since early modern times, but its strategic goal of opening these paths to the ocean had consistently been hard to achieve. Even now, this situation had yet to change very much. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the issue of Russia's outlets to the ocean in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea almost regressed to the situation 400 years before, and struggling for an outlet to the sea and for maritime accesses is still an important task that Russia has a long way to go in fulfilling.

In addition, the Soviet Union also struggled worldwide with the United States over maritime strategic accesses. It contended intensely with [the United States] in various strategic key points, such as the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean, and it frequently launched proxy wars. The Suez Canal was consistently the focus of Soviet-US struggles,

and by developing a relationship with Egypt, the Soviet Union gained the freedom to enter and leave the Suez Canal and the Red Sea.

(3) It established overseas forward bases in order to control and struggle for maritime strategic accesses. After the Second World War, in order to struggle with the United States worldwide for maritime strategic accesses, the Soviet Navy established a large number of naval and air force bases overseas. Early on, in the late 1960s, the Soviet Navy gradually began to gain the right to use some military bases and ports in several countries and regions. For example, the Soviet Navy won the right to use some important straits and ports, through its assistance to some African countries, so that it controlled the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and Cam Ranh Bay, and it established strategic strongholds near these straits and along routes. For example, it occupied Cam Ranh Bay so that the forward presence of the Soviet Union's Pacific Fleet was pushed more than 2,000 nautical miles to the south. [Using Cam Ranh Bay,] it could form an offensive to the north against China from the Tonkin Gulf and the South China Sea; to the east, it advanced to Subic Bay on Luzon Island so that it could monitor the US Navy's activities in the Philippines; and to the south, it could enter the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Malacca, which provided the Pacific Fleet with the easiest conditions for supporting its Indian Ocean squadron. After the 1980s, the Soviet Union had gotten the right to use close to seventy air force bases and over thirty naval bases in sixteen countries in the world. It was precisely these bases that vigorously supported the Soviet high seas fleets' activities in important strategic sea regions around the globe and which would have provided helpful conditions for contending with the US Navy for command of the sea in wartime.

In summary, the struggle at this time over maritime strategic accesses was one of the strategic focuses of the US-Soviet confrontation. As the US and Soviet camps engaged in a struggle for supremacy on the world's oceans, the core of their fight was always focused on maritime strategic accesses. The Western camp, headed by the United States, established a strategy of encircling the Soviet Union, in a vain attempt to block the Soviet Union so that it could not freely enter and leave the Arctic Ocean. And the Soviet Union, in order to keep its exits to the sea unimpeded, engaged in a worldwide struggle for supremacy; it inevitably had conflicts with the interests of the United States, which was a strong maritime country. One needed to go out, while the other would not let it go out; wars and struggles were unavoidable, and a great many of a series of local wars and proxy wars were launched centered on maritime strategic accesses. During the struggles between the two superpowers, the nations' overall strength was the basis for deciding whether control over maritime strategic accesses could be achieved. The reason that the United States was able to control almost all the important maritime strategic access in the world and was able to prevent any other great nation from challenging this status was that the United States possessed the world's most powerful overall strength; this was the basis by which the United States dominated the world. And Russia's advances and retreats and its gains and losses in struggling for an exit to the sea were closely related to Russia's political and economic strength at that time.

VI. Internationalized great competitions – the period of economic globalization...64

The globalization of the economy in today's world has made the linking role of the ocean even more important. If any nation wishes to quickly develop its economy, it cannot close its doors in

self-defense; it must strive to develop the economy's exchanges of science and technology and its exchanges of resources and commodities. This complementary nature and circulation of the economy place even greater demands on internationalized competition and on the various countries' use of the oceans.

1. The globalized economy has caused each country to focus more on cooperation in maritime accesses

Currently, against a background where globalization has quickly advanced and the world's security situation is rapidly changing, the security of maritime accesses is becoming something that people are paying more and more attention to; particularly in some important chokehold thoroughfares, this problem is even more prominent. First, as the economy has rapidly expanded and as contacts with the outside have accelerated their development, each nation's reliance on sea transportation has continually deepened, and maritime accesses have become an "economic lifeline" for a very large number of countries. Ensuring the security of maritime accesses not only involves the various nations' survival and development but it also directly affects the stability and prosperity of differing regions; the consensus that the various nations have about the need to protect the security of maritime accesses, and their need to do so, have simultaneously increased, and launching cooperation in the security of maritime accesses has become the focus of concern for the various countries and various regions. Although the United States has powerful overall strength, still, ever since entering the 21st century, unlike its direct control and active control of the past, what the United States' control over maritime strategic accesses is showing and stressing even more is indirect control, in the form of cooperation. Of course, the idea of cooperation by no means shows that the United States is abandoning its control over maritime strategic accesses. On the contrary, the United States is trying to establish a global system and game rules that the United States manipulates in the name of cooperation. It is using the countries that participate in this to assist the United States in controlling maritime strategic accesses, and its strategy is even more excellent. Because an international setup is gradually becoming clear, in which there is one superpower and many powers, it is hard to eliminate non-traditional threats and asymmetrical threats. What can be foreseen is that the United States in the future will have no way to rely merely upon its power as a single country to control all maritime strategic accesses; it must get help from its allies and partner countries as these jointly cooperate in fulfilling [this task]. Second, for some historical and current actual reasons, coastal countries and especially countries close to maritime accesses unavoidably have disputes over the sovereignty and jurisdiction of islands and over the delineation of the ocean, as well as many other problems left over from the Cold War period, which seriously restrain the development of regional security and cooperation. Because there are many countries in the world that border on the oceans, because their differences are great, and because security interests are interlocked and complicated, it clearly will not do to merely rely upon armed strength or on threats of using armed force to satisfactorily handle and resolve these disputes. It is necessary to resolve them peacefully, through consultations [on the basis of] equality.

As international links and international cooperation have become increasingly tight, peace and development have become the themes of today's world. And upholding the security of maritime accesses and transportation lines requires establishing a complete set of systems and mechanisms for promoting international cooperation. Only by strengthening their mutual confidence and

cooperation can the various countries of the world handle some prominent incidents in an effective manner and respond to various challenges. Therefore, developing maritime security and cooperation is becoming an irresistible trend.

2. Nontraditional threats have highlighted the necessity for cooperation on maritime strategic accesses

After the emergence of the maritime transportation industry, piracy also came into being. Important maritime accesses have been places that pirates have haunted since ancient times; for example, the Arabian Sea has been a place where pirate activities have been rampant since very early on. In the 21st century, as the economy has become globalized, economic links among the various countries have become ever closer, and ninety percent of the world's freight has been done by sea; this has always been the number-one target of attack by pirates. Piracy threatens world trade; according to US estimates, piracy has caused losses of about \$450 million in one year for the shipping business.⁹⁶ Under modern conditions, piracy has been transformed from the historical "national organizations" and "national behavior" into purely non-national organizations and non-national behavior. Although its scope has been greatly diminished, and its activities greatly reduced, it still is the main security threat to maritime accesses. The intensified Somali piracy and Malacca piracy issues of the 21st century have their specific factors of the age, which have primarily been determined by globalized trade and the chokepoint nature of maritime accesses. For example, there are up to 22,000 ships that pass through the Gulf of Aden each year; sixteen percent of the world's trade, thirty percent of its petroleum traffic, thirty-three percent of its container ships, and fifty percent of its bulk cargo ships must pass through this sea region. It is precisely this kind of globalized and highly concentrated shipping, along with the unprecedented boom in maritime trade, that has multiplied the role and value of maritime accesses. Since the 1990s, piracy activities in the sea regions near Somalia have increased more and more; together with the Strait of Malacca and the coast of Nigeria, these are now said to have become the world's three most dangerous straits. And piracy has selected strategic chokepoints that are in nearby waters and are also narrow and easily controlled, in order to engage attacks and hijackings; this is not unrelated to the present rapid development of the globalized economy.

Similarly, since the 1980s, terrorism has rapidly spread; incidents of terrorist attacks have repeatedly occurred in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, North America, and Oceania. In 2002, a senior reporter for *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Ed Bu-lan-qi,⁹⁷ issued an article that said: Attacks on maritime transportation lines and especially on oil tankers, and the use of these to attack the global economy and to destroy the economic development and social stability of countries that produce petroleum and natural gas, will be the next target of international terrorists. Looking at the situation of international energy flows, if an oil tanker is blown up in the Strait of Hormuz, in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait at the southern mouth of the Red Sea, or in the Strait of Malacca that connects the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, this may paralyze oil refineries and depots and will greatly damage global energy supplies. Therefore, non-traditional security at maritime accesses is becoming of ever-greater concern to the various countries.

⁹⁶ Hong Kong *Asia Wall Street Journal*, 5 July 2001.

⁹⁷ Translator's note: This is a Chinese rendition of a Western name, possibly Blanche or Branch.

In summary, today, with its globalized economy, there is no country that can independently resist the risks brought about by maritime strategic accesses nor is there any country that can disregard them. The demands of common interests have impelled each country in the world to comprehensively cooperate and support each other on the security of maritime strategic accesses, and new cooperative mechanisms for the security of maritime strategic accesses should come into being. Therefore, protecting the security of maritime strategic accesses is a common interest of many countries and regions, as well as a necessary premise and basis for the growth of the global economy, for social progress, and for the prosperity of life.

SECTION 2: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF AND REFLECTIONS ON CHINA'S PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES AT SEA...66

China is a major country that has both land and sea; since ancient times, the oceans have been related to the survival and development of the Chinese people, to the unity and power of the state, to the stability and prosperity of society, to the production of the people, and to the joys and sorrows of life. In particular, the navigation enterprises of ancient China reached relatively advanced levels; through a comparison of Chinese and Western ancient shipbuilding and navigation accomplishments, the author of *A History of Chinese Science and Technology*, Dr. John Lee, believed that “The Chinese have consistently been called a people without navigation; this truly is quite unjust. Their originality itself is displayed in the area of navigation, just as in other areas.”⁹⁸ Ge-lei-ni-e⁹⁹ also believed that the maritime expeditionary fleets led by Zheng He in the 15th century were “the most powerful maritime power in the world.”¹⁰⁰ However, China’s navigational enterprises definitely did not keep their leading position in the world; although there were ocean practices fairly early on, it was not until the 19th century that these were forcibly incorporated into a world system by the West, and [China] had become a large but weak country in the world.¹⁰¹ China’s rational understanding of maritime accesses and its formation of certain ideas were even farther behind those of the West. When the world entered the age of great navigation, China did not seize the opportunity; it closed its doors and became a closed country, it avoided international trade and international contacts, and it fell behind the tides of historical development, becoming a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country that had oceans but no defense. This could not but leave people gazing at the oceans in despair. Looking at things in general, China’s maritime strategic accesses practices can largely be divided into three stages.

I. The historical limitations of an agricultural society’s “emphasis on farming and suppression of commerce”...67

Since ancient times, China has been seriously influenced by its agricultural economy. Starting with [the mythical emperors] Shennong and the Yellow Emperor, and especially after Confucian thinking became mainstream thinking, [China] was mainly characterized economically as an

⁹⁸ Quoted from *A History of Chinese Thinking on Naval Defense*, Sea Tide Press, 1995, p. 23.

⁹⁹ Translator’s note: This is the Chinese rendition of a probably Western name, possibly Greenuex.

¹⁰⁰ (United Kingdom) Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, Zhang Keda and Xiong Menghua, translators, People’s Liberation Army Naval Military Studies Research Institute, 1991, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Cheng Guangzhong, *On Geopolitics*, National Defense University Press, 1999, p. 29.

agricultural country and as a self-sufficient smallholder economy; thinking that “emphasized farming and suppressed commerce” held a dominant position. “China’s economy emphasized farming, while Western economies emphasized trade.”¹⁰² Looking at the history of the development of the various countries of the world, the thinking of an agricultural economy inevitably leads to thoughts and ideas that put more emphasis on the land than on the sea. Although China has a very long seacoast as well as some practical experience in navigation, still, [the Chinese] have been a typical self-sufficient agricultural people since ancient times, with more than eighty percent of the population being farmers. Farmers are accustomed to protecting the land, and they do not like risks; they are content with being conservative and are afraid to forge ahead. The characteristics of a culture that hates to leave a place where it has lived for a long time causes farmers, even when they lose their land and are displaced, to still have getting new land as the objective that they struggle for, and in no way will they view the sea as a way to make a living. The superior living environment on land and the historical and geographical conditions where threats primarily came from the northwestern land frontiers formed a way of social production in which agriculture predominated, with a core system of values that was represented by the concept of “harmony.” This was the basic policy for ruling the country, in the Confucian doctrine that successive rulers followed, where “food and clothing are the basic things, while industry and commerce are secondary.”

The policies that “emphasized farming and suppressed commerce” that successive governments adopted artificially blocked the development of China’s ancient commerce. In particular, after the 13th century, rulers believed that the development of industry and commerce and of science and technology threatened the basis for their feudal, authoritarian, and centralized system, and they began to vigorously suppress the development of industry and commerce and to suppress the rudiments of capitalism. As a result, when Western capitalism was rising more and more, China’s industrial and commercial development was still in a state of stagnation, and the country’s vitality gradually became exhausted. At the same time as this, maritime activities whose goal was to develop commerce and trade gradually became energetically obstructed by ruling cliques. [Georg] Hegel said, “As China saw it, the sea was only an interruption of the land, while land was limitless. [The Chinese] did not develop an active relationship with the sea.”¹⁰³ After the Qing Dynasty invaded China and was founded in 1644, the focus of concern for the Qing rulers was “still placed on improving the basis of a self-sufficient feudal smallholder economy that feudal rule depended upon. Its ideology naturally basically followed the Ming Dynasty rulers’ mode of thinking that emphasized agriculture and suppressed commerce and that put more emphasis on the land than on the sea.” Without economic interests involving the outside, it is unlikely that the requirements of overseas interests will emerge, and there is no need to talk about a focus on, development of, and use of the sea and maritime accesses. It is even less likely that the concept of sea power will emerge. Admittedly, there have been too many times in Chinese history when there have been campaigns by sea, and there has been no shortage of offensive maritime actions. But these “feats” have mostly

¹⁰² Feng Youlan, *A Brief History of Chinese Philosophy, New Edition*, (Volume 2), People’s Publishing House, 1999, p. 430.

¹⁰³ (Germany) Hegel, *Historical Philosophy*, Wang Zaoshi, translator, Shenghuo Dushu Xinzhi Joint Bookstore, 1956, p. 135. [Translator’s note: Possibly Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*.]

had the goal of restoring the original political order and have not had the high-level goals of gaining ocean resources and of opening up or preserving maritime trade. That is to say, the political goals of early people in history as they managed *{jinglue}* the seas were greater than their economic goals. Under the conditions of a self-sustaining economy, they lacked the vision of an ocean economy, and they did not view the ocean as an important source for the means of subsistence. In this kind of understanding where there was a self-imposed closing, China's security and development were separated from other countries' security and development. Its understanding of the sea was quite indifferent so that China again and again lost opportunities for turning toward the world by means of the ocean, and it paid a heavy price.

Moreover, the long-standing policy that "emphasized farming and suppressed commerce" also caused China's economy to lack lasting power. Although Zheng He's voyages to the western seas were vigorous for a while, still, in reality, these lost money and were unsustainable; building huge ships and mobilizing military power and civilian power in order to display its power overseas made the Ming Dynasty [A.D. 1368-1644] pay a huge price, while what it got back was not even half [of what it paid]. Only an economy where the commercial economy dominates could support and promote the development of maritime strengths, and the characteristic of China's economy was precisely that it emphasized farming and suppressed commerce. In the Ming Dynasty, it was impossible to change the characteristics of the agricultural economy, and it also was impossible to provide vigorous power for developing maritime strengths.

II. The concept since early modern times of ruling the country by "emphasizing the land more than the sea"...69

China is a great country that has vast land areas; at the same time, it also is a large maritime country that has a long coastline of more than 18,000 kilometers. The *History of the Ming* said it [went] "north beyond the Yin Mountains, west as far as the drifting sands, east to the end of Liaodong, and south beyond the sea's surface." Historically, although the mainland was the center, still, according to the records in historical books, China's ancient sea civilization was not a blank; no matter whether it was knowledge of shipbuilding and of the aspects of navigation, or it was sea transportation and experiences in naval warfare, ancient and early modern China did not lack in these. The sea civilization of the Chinese people by no means came later than that of Western countries along the shores of the Mediterranean, to the point where the activities of its sea civilization in certain historical stages led those of other peoples, but relative to the land, sea activities were still secondary activities.

The Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou periods from the 21st century B.C. to 770 B.C. are considered to be the initial stage of navigational enterprises. The Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties periods from A.D. 589 to 960 were a period when China's navigational enterprises flourished. Particularly in the Tang Dynasty [618-907], a "maritime silk road" flourished comprehensively; its tracks not only reached Southeast Asia, the Arabs of South Asia, and the shores of the Persian Gulf but they also extended to the Red Sea and the shores of East Africa, opening high seas routes of a world nature that stretched more than 10,000 nautical miles, for direct contact with Asia and Africa. It is recorded in the *Geographical Records of the New Book of Tang* that there were seven lines of the most important contacts between the Tang Dynasty and foreign states, of which five

were land lines and two were sea lines. Of the two sea lines, one was the Bohai route that sailed from Dengzhou (Fenglai in Shandong) to Korea, while the other was the Yi route that sailed from Guangzhou, that is, it departed from Guangzhou and went past Vietnam, the Malay Peninsula, the Strait of Malacca, Sumatra, and other places to India and Ceylon, and then to Arabia (the Seljuk Turks).

China's earliest explorations that entered the high seas were undoubtedly those of the great traveler of the Yuan Dynasty [1271-1368], Wang Dayuan. From A.D. 1330 to 1339, Wang Dayuan made two trips onboard merchant ships to Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia, North Africa, East Africa, and other places along the seacoast, studying and experiencing on the spot the customs and practices of other countries and other lands, and he compiled *A Brief Account of Island Barbarians*. From 1405 to 1433, the Ming Dynasty navigator Zheng He, in the status of imperial commander and chief envoy of the Great Ming, commanded a huge imperial fleet that began grand navigational activities that lasted twenty-eight years; "with sails as high as the clouds, they sped with the stars, day and night." [Zheng He] passed through Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea and Africa; his fleets, which sailed seven times, passed through such maritime accesses as the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca, and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. This was the first time that Chinese, on a scale unprecedented in history, went beyond their country and toward the ocean. For comparisons, Zheng He's voyages to the western seas were eighty-two years earlier than those of the Portuguese navigator and explorer [Bartolomeu] Dias, who discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1487; they were eighty-seven years earlier than the great geographical discoveries of the Italian sailor and Spanish navigator [Christopher] Columbus, who arrived in the Americas in 1492; they were ninety-three years earlier than those of the Portuguese navigator and explorer da Gama, who reached India; and they were 116 years earlier than those of the Portuguese knight and Spanish navigator and explorer [Ferdinand] Magellan, who reached the Philippines in 1521. What is even more important was that Zheng He's voyages to the western seas established and solidified Chinese overseas trading centers that were centered on Malacca; the Strait of Malacca was a necessary path for Zheng He to go to the western seas. In 1405, a Singaporean who occupied Malacca, a robber named Bai-li-mi-su-ce, quaked before the power of the Great Ming Dynasty and submitted a message to the court that he "was willing to attach himself to the court and to serve as a prefectural [official];" on Zheng He's first voyage to the western seas, [Zheng] helped [this Singaporean] to establish the state of Malacca, which is what is now Singapore, and he treated Malacca as a distribution center for materials for the Ming Dynasty's imperial fleets. Moreover, he established the status of his Ming Dynasty maritime trade center and promoted the formation of an east-west trading center.¹⁰⁴

Zheng He's voyages to the western seas opened maritime channels for Asia's contacts with Europe and Africa; these should have been earlier than the West's use of maritime strategic accesses to expand their strategic spaces, but China at that time was still an agricultural society, and the traditional thinking, which relied on the land for food, limited [China's] understanding of the sea. It even had no way to understand the essential significance and real value of the sea and of maritime strategic accesses. In addition to this, [China's] national strength was fairly strong, its

¹⁰⁴ Wang Shengrong, *The Historical Impact of Sea Power on the Rise and Fall of Great Nations*, Sea Tide Press, 2009, p. 328.

resources were rich, and it was self-sufficient; high-seas navigation was not for commercial goals but only for friendliness with neighbors and for showing off imperial power. It was precisely because the goal of China's voyages was political rather than commercial that these [voyages] could not be kept going. After Zheng He, there was no more ocean navigation, and there was even a "ban on the seas;" China missed its opportunity with the oceans, and it lost its historic opportunity to become a sea power. It also planted the seeds for the late Qing Dynasty's repeated encounters with Western powers' invasions from the sea and for the history of a hundred years where [China] lost its power and dishonored the nation. The factors that achieved these results were primarily in the following several areas.

First, [China] was affected by the geographical and political environment. China's geopolitical environment, where it has land to the north and sea to the south, is relatively closed and self-contained. Since ancient times, the social activities of the Chinese have always primarily been an agricultural economy on land; the sea economy has never been given an important status. In ancient times, when science and technology were not advanced, this geographical obstacle was difficult to overcome, but at the same time, it was also a security; no country along China's periphery was able to pose a lethal threat to China. For China's ancient rulers, the threats that they faced primarily were posed by domestic uprisings by farmers or invasions and harassment by minority peoples to the north. Successive dynasties put a fairly large amount of their vigor and wealth into keeping the north stable, and political centers were therefore always situated inland; this result inevitably did not help in fostering and developing an awareness of the sea by all of society. "China is a continental country, the main living space that people have is the land, unlike the Greeks who lived on the seas."¹⁰⁵ Prior to the Ming Dynasty, the impact of the outside world on China was negligible. Just as Hegel said, among the many civilizations and ancient countries in the world, "only the Chinese Empire, through which the Yellow River and the Yangtze flowed, has been the sole lasting country. Conquest cannot affect this kind of empire."¹⁰⁶ This was created by the closed [nature] of [China's] geographical environment; at the same time, it was also a major difference between the Chinese civilization and the other civilizations of the world.

Second, [China's] understanding of the sea was shallow. In Chinese history, there have been reforms to policies involving the sea, such as Guan Zhong's [a prime minister of a feudal state in the 7th century B.C.] "Keep all the mountains and waters under official control," [the 1st century B.C. official] Sang Hongyang's "Discussion on Salt and Iron," the "City Shipping Division" in the Tang Dynasty and Song Dynasty [960-1229] periods, and the trade on the distant oceans during successive dynasties that was quite brilliant played an active role of encouragement for social and economic development, but in the activities of society overall, China's maritime activities were always subsidiary activities for land-based ones.

Zheng He's voyages during the years of the Ming Dynasty made him realize the importance of the seas and of sea power. He explained to the Renzong Emperor of the Ming Dynasty that "If you wish the state to be wealthy and strong, do not disregard the seas. Wealth is obtained from the seas,

¹⁰⁵ Sun Xiaoquan, "On the Geopolitical Predicaments of the Late Qing," *The Journal of Historical Science*, 2005, Issue 7.

¹⁰⁶ (Germany) Hegel, *Historical Philosophy*, Wang Zaoshi, translator, Shenghuo Dushu Xinzhi Joint Bookstore, 1956, p. 160.

and danger also comes from the seas.” “Once their lords have gained the southern seas, there will be danger to the Chinese people.” Regrettably, this did not gain the attention of the rulers at court. After Zheng He’s seventh voyage to the western seas, in order to attack the remnants of the Yuan Dynasty’s power that had retreated to the sea islands, and subsequently in order to prevent interference from Japanese pirates, the Ming Dynasty rulers began to carry out their “ban on the seas,” and [the Qing Dynasty] stipulated that “boards were not permitted to enter the seas;” the goal was to carry out an economic blockade of the anti-Qing forces led by Zheng Chenggong. Afterwards, the Qing Dynasty also carried out a policy of “moving the boundaries,” that is, coastal inhabitants were withdrawn to inland areas thirty *li* (fifteen kilometers) from the sea; the regions where the boundaries were moved became zones that were desolate and uninhabited. Although “banning the seas” and “moving the boundaries” played a certain role in maintaining the rule of the feudal rulers in the short term, still, the negative effects created by these sorts of policies were extremely profound. “Banning the seas” and “moving the boundaries” caused China to become a “secluded country;” it itself closed the doors for exploiting and using the seas, which greatly limited and isolated China’s participation in the history of world trade and in the development of capitalism, so that the idea of using maritime strategic accesses gradually became weakened and distant in China, until it became unfamiliar; [China] thus lost a historic opportunity for development.

It should be said that prior to the Ming and Qing dynasties, Chinese society basically was a continental-style form of self-sufficiency, its relations with the sea were not close, and security threats primarily came from the direction of the continent, and especially from the nomadic herding peoples of the northwest and north. There were no sea powers on the periphery, and there basically were no threats coming from the direction of the sea. Chinese society gradually formed deep-rooted thinking that “emphasized the land rather than the sea,” and its understanding of the sea remained at the level of contacts and trade. Just as Andrew Nathan pointed out in his book *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China’s Search for Security*, prior to the arrival of the Europeans who sailed in the 19th century, what China mainly feared in the security aspect was the Central Asia region, not the coastal regions. Originally it was the threat from the north and the west, that is, from the direction of the land; subsequently it was the threat from the direction of the sea; and next it was a dual threat. China merely relied on its “population, frontiers, and geographical position to form a Great Wall” in order to defend against outside enemies.¹⁰⁷

Third, [China] viewed the seas as a natural shield. Historically, China not only saw the maritime economy as a dispensable supplement to the land economy and in its concepts on national defense viewed the sea as a natural shield; the mainstream consciousness about national defense was to “guard the house.” Before the Song and Yuan dynasties, China basically had no threats coming from the sea, and the self-sufficient mainland economy had no need to demand resources from the seas or to develop overseas. The setup of “having armor in the west and the north” and “having wealth in the east and the south,” which began with [the Emperor] Qin Shihuang [in the 3rd century B.C.], gradually caused China’s ruling class to seek security more and more in the fertile soil of the mainland, and even if it opened up the “four seas,” this was primarily to seek “submission”

¹⁰⁷ (United States) Andrew Nathan, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China’s Search for Security*, Ke Xiong, et al., translators, Xinhua Publishing House, 1997, pp. 23, 186.

and “obedience,” as well as ordinary economic trade, in order to guarantee the security of the mainland. This led to China historically viewing the resources of the seas as things for other people, and maritime accesses as the routes for other people. Historically, the Chinese mostly dealt with other people’s exploitation of the seas’ resources and their control of maritime accesses using the moral principles of “charity” and the “Golden Mean” as well as the assertion that “China is a superior country.” Although China historically had also had a very large number of campaigns at sea, and among them there had been no lack of aggressive maritime actions, most of these feats had had the goal of restoring the previous political order or the goal of “defending the state;” very few had had the goal of obtaining maritime resources or of opening up or protecting maritime accesses. That is to say, in the management of the seas, the political goals of the Chinese have historically been greater than their economic goals. Therefore, even though China had already set foot on the oceans when, early on, the Western European countries were limited to the Mediterranean, and [even though] there had been the feats of Zheng He’s “seven voyages to the western seas,” still, [China] never truly went out to the world through the seas the way that some Western countries and peoples did; even less had it conquered the world by means of the sea. The basic thinking in China’s military actions involving the sea had always been “maritime defense” and not “sea power.”¹⁰⁸

The fourth was the effect of Chinese civilization’s traditional culture. Early on, in the Zhou Dynasty [1045-221 B.C.], China’s political regions were called the “five zones.”¹⁰⁹ That is, it constructed a ring-shaped geopolitical structure with the court at the center, it emphasized the core status of the central regime within the circle in which the Chinese people lived, it stipulated the relationships between the core region and the regions extending outwards, and it established a system of political control whereby the core region controlled the regions extending outward; this laid the foundation for a fixed and unchangeable form for ancient China’s model of rule. The sole dominant ideology after the Qin and Han dynasties gradually formed a structure in which Confucian thinking was the orthodox ideology. The Confucian school advocated using “benevolent government” and “moralization” to achieve the responsibilities of “benefiting everything and having benevolence for the people.” Before Western culture came into China, Chinese civilization, in which Confucian culture predominated, very rarely was challenged by a higher-level civilization; in the course of a history that lasted 2,000 years, China formed a “circle of Chinese civilization” in Northeast Asia, around its own periphery, where Confucian culture was the center. The ancient Chinese rulers believed that there was only one center in the world, which was China. China was the heavenly kingdom, and only China was the greatest in the world; only the Chinese were people, while the others were “barbarians;”¹¹⁰ all that there was were various

¹⁰⁸ Wei Shujie: “Studies in China’s Strategy for Maritime Trade and Development,” Central Party School Ph.D. dissertation, 2009, p. 65.

¹⁰⁹ Ye Zicheng, *Geopolitics and China’s Foreign Policy*, Beijing Publishing House, 1998, p. 144.

¹¹⁰ In ancient times, China only had such concepts as “the central court and the feudal states,” “the Chinese and the four barbarians,” or “China and the Rong and Yi barbarians,” but it did not have the concept of China and foreigners. Following a number of mergings in history, the minority peoples who were called the “four barbarians” and the “Rong and Yi barbarians” became a part of the Chinese people. Just as the philosopher Wang Chong of the Eastern Han Dynasty [A.D. 25 to 220] said, “Anciently, they were the Rong and Yi barbarians” [but] today they are

countries coming to the [Chinese] court, and there was no need to study and have exchanges with these various countries. The conservatism and defensive nature that China's traditional culture had intangibly fettered the development of the Chinese people in the direction of the sea.

Therefore, Chinese culture was basically still a river culture or land civilization; the rulers lacked the strategic vision to operate overseas. China's advanced agricultural civilization also was able to basically fulfill the requirements of life for the people; ordinary people knew very little about the sea, and saw it as a dangerous road. The main interests of the rulers and the ruled were mostly far away from the sea, and the sea had no link to the customs of life and the needs of life; therefore, [people] basically had no deep interest in the sea's production.

Fifth was the effects of traditional military thinking. Looking at history, China's ancient military thinking had rich details, it was broad and profound, and it held an important place in the history of the world's military thinking. In particular, China's *Sunzi's Art of War* was the world's earliest military book, and even today, it still is a gem in the world's military library. But in this military book, there are extremely few studies in such areas as the sea, naval warfare, and sea power; it lacks naval military thinking and theory. This situation is by no means accidental; military thinking serves warfare, and for China, the wars that occurred in ancient times were mostly on land. Very few occurred at sea, and so the records regarding fighting by ships in the histories mostly concentrated on naval fights on rivers, with very few involving sea warfare. In this way, China's ancient military experts' energy naturally was concentrated on the land, and they did not form any ideas about maritime operations. And given China's ancient security situation, the geographical environment where China's back was to the land and it faced the sea, as well as the backward weapons and traffic tools of the era of sword and spear, resulted in ancient military experts very rarely studying sea warfare; they viewed the seacoast as a natural shield and believed that the vast sea made it impossible for a large-scale invasion, that the ocean to a certain extent played a "defensive" role, and that by closing the coast or carrying out simple and necessary military defenses against small-scale harassment, they would be able to sit back and relax. In history, ancient China's northern and southern seacoasts indeed did not have foreign aggression by powerful enemy countries. On the other hand, foreign aggressions from the west and the north came one after the other, such as the Xiongnu during the Qin and Han times, the Tujue during the Sui and Tang times, and the Qidan, Jurchen, and Mongols during the Northern and Southern Song periods. Therefore, ancient China's focus in national defense was the land and not the sea, and its direction was the west and the north and not the east and the south. Up until the Qing Dynasty, there were still many ministers who believed that defense to the west and the north was more important than along the east and south coasts, and they even proposed to abandon Taiwan, believing that Taiwan was still "a piece of barren soil, without any land, and it could be let go," and that "it did not have enough land for farming, and it did not have enough people to be vassals." It was precisely these fetters on traditional military thinking that left China without sufficient knowledge about threats coming from overseas; even more, [China] had not engaged in systematic studies about naval warfare. Ultimately, this led to China not having any theory and to its having

China (Wang Chong, *Critical Essays - The Xuanhan Chapter*). After early modern times, [the term] Yi primarily referred to external forces that threatened and invaded the security of China, especially the Western colonial forces.

even less practice when it responded to threats and invasions from maritime directions, and this disregard for the sea changed the fate of the Chinese people.

Because China is a country that is a combination of land and sea, this has determined that it often faces two difficult choices geostrategically. Imperialism used gunboats to open China's closed doors so that China lost control over many important trading ports, and China's major coastal trading ports became targets that the Western powers struggled over. After the two Opium Wars, faced with a serious situation where "the Japanese were forcing themselves on the southeast and Russia was ringing [China] in on the northwest," [China's] countrymen had to recognize that "The border defense since ancient times was nothing more than a single outlying place, and what we had to worry about was no more than a single country. Now, however, the Westerners have come over the oceans from thousands of *li* away, they throng about China, and there are traders from not less than several dozen countries."¹¹¹ "The danger of the oceans" and the "nation's defense" along China's southeastern coastal areas became the main direction for incursions by foreign enemies, and the coastal region and land regions simultaneously had emergencies; the two dilemmas ultimately became major worries. The fight over sea defense and frontier defense that subsequently occurred left the Qing Government with no option but to make a choice between two difficulties, even though this choice was dangerous.

Zuo Zongtang of the Qing Dynasty proposed a strategic program where "To the east is defense against the sea, while to the west is defense against the land; the two are both important." As regards defense against the sea, Zuo Zongtang believed that first, China needed to construct a powerful maritime force as quickly as possible, one that would be sufficient to contend against the various Western countries. Second, he stressed that the key to building sea defense was to develop [China's] own shipbuilding enterprises, and he believed that developing shipbuilding enterprises was the basis for strengthening maritime strengths. Although Zuo Zongtang was not the first person in Chinese history to advocate paying attention to both land and sea defense, he was the first person to implement an equal emphasis on land and sea defense, and at least at that time, he elevated an understanding of the sea and the navy to a certain height. However, because he lacked the idea of command of the sea, and he made mistakes in the strategic use of the navy, the main thinking about the navy at that time was still to emphasize defense. [The commander of the navy] Li Hongzhang believed that "Our shipbuilding itself has no idea about galloping outside our domain but is just to defend territory and to preserve a peaceful situation."¹¹² This led to the Qing Dynasty's navy still being a navy that guarded the house; it could not go to the high seas in order to provide important support for protecting the nation's maritime trade.

During the Nationalist period [1911-1949], imperialism used maritime accesses to continually dump commodities into China, thereby plundering a great deal of profits and amassing wealth. The capitalist class's nationalist revolutionary faction, as represented by Sun Yat-sen, summarized the experiences and lessons of the Chinese navy's repeated defeats since the First Opium War [in 1839-1842] and engaged in profound reflections about China's awareness of command of the sea and the issues of building a navy and using it; they proposed some important ideas about

¹¹¹ The Chinese Society of Historical Studies, editors, *The Westernization Movement*, (Volume 3), Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2006, p. 155.

¹¹² Zhang Xia, *Historical Materials for the Navy in the Late Qing*, Ocean Press, 1980, p. 192.

revitalizing the Chinese nation and about rebuilding the navy. For example, Sun Yat-sen proposed the idea that “those who control the seas can control the world,” and he proposed that “if we hold sea power, we will survive, but if others hold it, we will die.” From many years of revolutionary practices, Sun Yat-sen felt that without a powerful navy, not only would China frequently lose sovereignty over the oceans but it also could at any time see the country destroyed and the nation annihilated. Therefore, at the same time that he advocated recovering sea power, he also advocated the need to build a powerful Chinese navy. These positions still have important actual guiding significance, even today. But because China at that time was trapped in an age of warlords and tangled warfare, and because the navy also was rent by disunity, nobody basically was taking into account the security of maritime accesses. In 1937, the War to Resist Japan broke out, and in order to cut off China’s trade with the outside and especially its import of materials for operations, Japan ordered that China’s coast be closed, and it forbade Chinese ships from entering and leaving ports, so that the security of Chinese maritime accesses was greatly threatened. The corrupt Nationalist Party Government caused a major retreat in China’s naval defense and its building of a navy.

Looking at things overall, the Chinese nation’s understanding of the seas was never able to go beyond the scope where [all that it was] was rich in fishing, salting, and shipping; “over successive generations, the rulers and the people” disregarded the seas, and “they all abandoned the seas and paid attention to the land.”¹¹³ Even Zheng He’s voyages to the western seas did not have overseas trade and economic benefits as their goals but were only to raise prestige overseas, in exchange for so-called “submission by thousands of states and vassals.” As a nation with both land and sea, even though it tried to experiment with an overall transformation from a national defense of the mainland to having both land and sea [defense], still, the tradition of a doctrine of land power that had taken shape over thousands of years, where “emphasis was on the north rather than the south, on the land rather than the sea, and on farming rather than commerce” still seized and imprisoned people’s minds, and the maritime concept of struggling for “sea power” never emerged. Compared to the land, sea activities were still auxiliary activities.

III. In the process of the grand revival of the Chinese nation, going toward the sea is a historical inevitability...77

At the start of the War of Liberation, because the people’s navy had yet to be organized at that time, the US Navy and the Nationalist navy controlled the coastal maritime accesses, so that the Nationalist navy was able to quickly flee in the end period of the war. In June 1949, the Nationalist Government, which had retreated to Taiwan, blockaded all the mainland’s coastal ports and offshore routes that they were able to, in order to destroy the mainland’s economy, and they announced to the world that they would “strictly prohibit all foreign-flagged ships from sailing in and all foreign commercial transports” in these sea regions. This led to an interruption for a time of Chinese shipping from Fujian and Zhejiang to the South China Sea, Indonesia, and Hong Kong and Macao; the routes to Qingdao, Shanghai, and other such places were also very insecure, making it hard to circulate materials.¹¹⁴ During the period of the Korean War in the early 1950s, because China had no way to control the maritime accesses along the Korean Peninsula coast, the

¹¹³ *The Collected Works of Yan Fu*, Volume 2, Commercial Press, 1981, p. 257.

¹¹⁴ Lu Ruchun, *A History of the Navy*, Chinese People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 1989, p. 17.

Chinese People's Volunteer Army had to deploy even more troop strengths into defending against the sea in the latter part of the war so that they had no power to expel the US forces from the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, the US military's 7th Fleet was stationed in the Taiwan Strait and also cut off China's maritime access for crossing the sea for operations, which forced the plan to liberate Taiwan to be set aside. Given the many challenges that the security of maritime accesses faced, Chairman Mao Zedong specifically wrote "ensure the security of sea transportation"¹¹⁵ into the overall tasks in building the navy, at an expanded meeting of the Central Committee's Political Bureau in December 1953. In order to implement the Central Committee's instructions, the people's navy cooperated with the ground forces along the coast of southern China in liberating the Wanshan Islands, in breaking through the blockade at the mouth of the Pearl River, and in restoring the security of the maritime accesses along the southern China coast; along the coast in eastern China, it cooperated with the ground forces and the air force in liberating all the islands except for Taiwan, the Penghus, Kinmen, and Matsu, thus basically restoring the security of the coastal accesses along the coast of eastern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu.

During the period of the Cold War, China not only faced the United States' strategic containment of China along the two island chains but at the same time, it also faced threats from the Soviet Union's Pacific Fleet against the PRC's Beijing-Tianjin region. The navy pointed out that it was necessary to blockade the main maritime accesses in the Bohai Strait and to protect the security of the Beijing-Tianjin area and the battlefields on the coast's land side. Up until the late 1970s, as PRC-US relations warmed, the two sides [of the Taiwan Strait] gradually ended their confrontation, and the Taiwan Strait also carried out the first south-north commercial navigation; the security of China's coastal maritime accesses improved quite a bit. In 1986, the navy, on the basis of the military strategy of "active defense" *{jiji fangyu}*, proposed a strategy of "offshore defense" *{jinhai fangyu}*," treating "protecting our own maritime traffic and transportation lines" as an operational task for the navy; it recognized that "protecting coastal traffic lines is quite important for supporting the wartime economy of coastal regions and for supporting the movement of troop strengths among coastal regions and the transportation of materials for operations," and it believed that guarding the security of China's high seas traffic and transportation lines had a quite major significance in struggling for assistance from the world's friendly nations that upheld justice and in struggling for victory in wars to counter aggression.

Following the founding of New China [in 1949], the threats that the nation faced primarily came from the land. At that time, China's strategic focus and direction mainly was on the northeast, northwest, and southwest land directions, such as the Korean War, the Sino-Indian border war, the Vietnam War, the Sino-Soviet border military confrontation, and the Sino-Vietnamese border military conflict, which took place between the 1950s and the 1980s. The longstanding border issues involved much of China's energy, and [China] did not pay enough attention to the seas; in addition, the PRC's economic development was limited and relatively backward. Although it engaged in trade contacts with some countries, China's maritime links with the outside world were quite limited. Therefore, China's needs for and concerns about maritime strategic accesses were not at all prominent. However, concerns over the sea, use of the sea, and management of the sea

¹¹⁵ Lu Ruchun, *A History of the Navy*, Chinese People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1989, p. 31.

were always an unending cry in the history of the Chinese nation's development. The core of the third generation of [Chinese Communist] Party leadership similarly also paid quite a bite of attention to the issue of the sea; from the "management of the sea" {*jinglue haiyang*} of the 1980s to today's building of a powerful maritime country, these have all reflected that the grand revival of the Chinese people is closely related to the sea. In the 1980s, with the formal promulgation of the UN *Convention on the Law of the Sea*, maritime contradictions and differences began to multiply, and confrontations between China and the countries on its periphery over maritime rights and interests also increased alongside this; some traffic thoroughfares began to have threats and challenges.

Compared to sea powers, it should be said that China's understanding of the sea and of maritime strategic accesses came comparatively late, and there basically were no operations to speak of. China's true understanding of the sea and of maritime strategic accesses began with the process of transitioning from a planned economy to a marketplace economy. In the more than thirty years of reform and opening up, as the economy has become globalized, the size of China's import and export trade has continually grown, and its energy requirements have also constantly increased. In the process of the Chinese people's grand revival, [China's] reliance on the sea has clearly increased, and its understanding of the sea has also markedly grown; China's maritime security situation is becoming increasingly complex, and the importance of maritime strategic accesses has become more and more prominent. As China's contacts with the outside have continually developed and as it has used the world's maritime strategic accesses more and more, it has established a broad system of maritime trade, through trade with the outside, contacts among personnel, and friendly cooperation, and it has formed a network of strategic accesses involving the coast, offshore sea regions, and the high seas. Coastal and off-shore maritime strategic accesses have connected the PRC's various great ports, from the south to the north, and it has built bridges of friendly contacts with peripheral countries; several dozen strategic accesses on the high seas are bearing the weight of mercantile contacts with over 600 ports in more than 150 countries and regions in the world, and maritime strategic accesses have become an important factor in the revival of the people and the development of the nation. Speaking overall, in comparing things vertically, the PRC's sea enterprises have achieved great progress and development over the past fifty years, but in comparing things horizontally, the PRC has a gap of at least twenty years compared to the world's developed maritime powers.¹¹⁶ In the more than thirty years of reform and opening up, as we reflect on the experience and lessons of history today, one of the important factors in our success has been that our country has finally turned its gaze away from the mainland, where it has traditionally been, and toward the deep oceans, and through the oceans, it has cast [its gaze] toward the world. Economic globalization has caused the PRC for the first time in history to enter a situation where it has "an export-oriented economy that relies on maritime accesses." It can be said that maritime strategic accesses have played an irreplaceably important role in the rapid development of the PRC's economy, and that China's understanding today of the importance of the sea and of maritime accesses cannot be compared to what it was in the past.

¹¹⁶ Gao Zhiguo, *A Collection of Works on Studies in Maritime National Policies*, Ocean Press, 2007, p. 4.

IV. Deficiencies in China's management of maritime strategic accesses and calls [for improvements]...79

Looking at history, the rise and fall of the Chinese nation, along with its humiliations, are closely connected to the sea. The unification [of China] by the Qin Dynasty, the power and prosperity of the Western Han [Dynasty], the prosperity of the Tang Dynasty, the “ban on the seas” during and after the Ming Dynasty, and the thrashing that the Qing Dynasty [suffered] in its latter period, as well as the naval defense crisis in early modern times and the struggle over maritime rights and interests in modern times without exception injected the major impact of the sea on the course of the Chinese people's history. Although China faces broad seas, its economic activities, which are primarily agricultural, have affected the nature of the people of the Chinese nation and their cultural choices; over the long evolution of history, this agricultural civilization has gradually held a dominant status, and [the Chinese] understanding of sea power has clearly been insufficient, to say nothing of their use and employment of maritime strategic accesses. For China, maritime strategic accesses are a thing that is both familiar and unfamiliar. We say that they are familiar, because in the thousands of years of history in which China has used the seas, it has consciously or unconsciously repeatedly used important world maritime accesses in an instinctive and simple manner. For example, Zheng He's voyages to the western seas passed through such maritime accesses as the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca, the Persian Gulf, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, and the Red Sea a number of times. We say that they are unfamiliar, because although China has used these maritime straits many times, it has never managed these straits. That is to say that on this basis, although the Chinese nation has had a sea civilization emerge, although it has had Zheng He's feats of his seven voyages to the western seas, and although these show that China has had glories in the area of the sea, still, the effect that these short-lived glories had on the entire culture of the Chinese nation were in the final analysis limited. Moreover, the results of the navigational activities that China's navigators engaged in merely transmitted their own highly developed civilization to other peoples in areas where civilization was relatively low, and in a way that went in just one direction. This inequality of civilizations resulted in China's navigation and trade inevitably becoming trade that went in one direction, from the side that was doing the patronizing, so that the transmission of the navigational culture inevitably became behavior that went in a single direction, from the party that was doing the instilling; for China's navigators, this indeed was unprofitable. Therefore, there was also no way to understand, from a strategic vantage point, the true significance that the seas and maritime accesses have for a country and for a people, to say nothing of engaging in focused management and use from a strategic vantage point of maritime strategic accesses. In China's several thousand years of nautical history, the concept of maritime strategic accesses was always unfamiliar and distant for China so that China lacked the practice of maritime strategic accesses, which has led to its not having the strategic practices and ideas of maritime accesses.

“Using history as a mirror, it is possible to know what will rise and what will fall.” History has repeatedly proven that [countries] that face the seas will rise, while those that turn their backs on the sea will decline. The experience and realities of history both inform us that for a country that borders on the sea, the sea is both the gateway to the country as well as a path by which [the country] goes out to the world. Only with a strong naval defense is it possible to have [the sea] be

a shield for the land, and only by having control of the sea is it possible to use the sea in an effective manner and to enjoy widespread maritime rights. The attitude of a country and even of a people on how to approach the sea will to a certain extent reflect the attitude of this country and these people on how to approach the world; at almost the same time, this also determines the direction in which their own fate moves. The rise and fall and the honor and disgrace of the Chinese people are determined in a certain sense by how strong or weak its awareness of the sea is. And one important link in the focus on and use of the sea is to see whether [a country] has control over and use of the world's important maritime strategic accesses. In other words, maritime strategic accesses are the core of a country's views on sea power; the security of [these accesses] is closely related to the country's rise and fall and its honor and disgrace, and it is tightly linked to the country's fate. Any country that vigorously develops the seas can have the country tend to become strong; contrariwise, it may be reduced to a condition where it is backwards and takes a beating. A country that does not possess the sea and that cannot move toward the sea will in the end not have any way out. In China's history, the periods when the country thrived and developed were the times when the country had effective use of maritime strategic accesses. Whether it is possible to have effective use of maritime strategic accesses has important strategic significance for the country's economic development, its powerful national strength, and the image of the country. Therefore, in the new century and the new stage, as a rising power, China should grasp this rare historical turning point and face its challenges. We believe that the day of China's development into a world sea power inevitably will be the time of the Chinese people's grand revival!

SECTION 3: A COMPARISON OF THE WEST'S AND CHINA'S THINKING ON MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...81

Through an evaluation and study of China's and the West's thinking and practices involving maritime strategic accesses, historical differences can be seen in the development process of China's and Western countries' ideas and practices involving maritime strategic accesses; these [differences] were created for a number of differing historical reasons, such as the geopolitical environment, the nature of peoples, their economic basis, and their cultural traditions.

I. Differences in the orientation of their strategic cultural values...81

Looking at things historically, the characteristics of China's strategic cultural traditions have stressed and emphasized "harmony" and have advocated peace; they have always valued harmony, and as long as peripheral countries have not harassed China, China has advocated peaceful coexistence with them. Sun Yat-sen evaluated the Chinese people in this way: "The essence of the Chinese is that they are a people that is industrious, peaceful, and law-abiding, and that is not fond of aggression." He believed that China's intrinsic morality is loyalty and filial piety, love and charity, acting in good faith, and peace. Even in Zheng He's seven voyages to the western seas, where his course touched on thirty-seven countries and regions in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, and Africa's eastern coast, his goal was only to promote economic and cultural exchanges between China and the various Asian and African countries. It can be seen from this that China has been very deeply affected by Confucius's thinking about righteousness and the golden mean so that China's geopolitics have a very prudent attitude toward war, and they have a clear tradition of military defense. Over the several thousand years of its domination of Asia, China

never established its own colonial system. Ever since the Middle Ages, Western powers have formed traditional concepts of expanding themselves and beggaring their neighbors, with profits as their basis, where they have opened their frontiers and expanded their territory, where they have advocated being utilitarian, where they have used force to subdue people, where they have been strong but with no peace, and where their riches have never been enough. The Western countries went toward the sea in order to seek wealth; they used military power to control maritime accesses, and then they controlled the sea and subdued the world. In particular, after the great geographical discoveries, they seized colonies in a crazy manner throughout the world, and they established a colonial system; this struggle had the nature of an intense plundering, and military power became their customary means for struggling for world power. In summary, the Chinese nation's customary strategic thinking had upholding unity and being a good neighbor as its aim, while the Western countries sought hegemony and had clear aggressive expansion; the two differing strategic cultural values naturally had differing requirements regarding their understanding of maritime strategic accesses. The formation of these differences in Chinese and Western strategic cultural values meant that the two ways of thinking were irreversible; the huge historical inertia that this created determined that over a fairly long period of history, Chinese and Western strategic cultural values developed in diametrically different directions, and it thus stipulated the inevitable directions in which these two cultures went.

II. Differences in social and economic structures...82

Because of differences in their geopolitical environments, China and the West had somewhat differing attitudes toward the land and the sea, and the models of their economic development also differed. China has plateaus to the west, it borders on the sea to the east, and the vast oceans became the country's natural shield so that China became a relatively independent geographical region. The prominent characteristics of China's geographical conditions were the vastness of its territory, the isolation in its relations with the outside, and the concentricity of its internal relations. This vast and abundantly rich geographical space was able to satisfy the basic needs of the survival and development of the Chinese people. This geopolitical environment not only caused the Chinese people to form a self-sufficient social and economic structure of agriculture and handicrafts but it also constrained social and political life and the people's spiritual life. But unlike China, the characteristics of the natural geographical environment that Western countries along the Mediterranean coast had on land were that this had many hills and few plateaus; the land was barren, there were droughts and little rain during the spring and summer, and so it was not suitable for farming. Without the kindness of natural sources of wealth for the materials of life, they went to seek new sources of wealth. They sought the sea, but the Mediterranean was an "inner sea" that was almost isolated from the oceans, and the large and small islands that dotted it were like maritime "relay stations." For a nautical civilization, the broad seas replaced the land to become the main direction of civilization's development. This determined that the economic development of many Western countries had to be export-oriented, and expansion overseas became the principal means for gaining wealth. They relied on the sea and on maritime accesses to expand overseas, they developed their own countries' economies by establishing colonies and expanding overseas markets, and they viewed expansion abroad as the best rule for maintaining their survival. Western

geostrategic theory was bred in an environment of brutal competition and frequent wars, and [the West] viewed relations between nations as a relationship where there was the law of the jungle, and it viewed struggles for the sea and for maritime accesses as an important way to achieve maritime supremacy.

III. Differences in nations' security needs...83

As a seacoast country that has broad sea regions, China historically has consistently viewed the sea as a natural shield. Limited by a relatively isolated geographical environment and backwards technology, China's geostrategy for a long period of time kept its eye on the periphery and the land, and it did not pay sufficient attention to the sea and maritime accesses. The Ming Dynasty had the world's best military, both in terms of numbers and equipment, but this military was entirely used for defense, and it had no intention of invading other countries. The "ban on the seas" that China has historically promoted only looked at the mainland and did not look at the seas; it did not focus on developing and maintaining maritime interests, and this was an important reason for the turning points in the rise and fall of China's ancient people. When foreign enemies invaded, [China] only wanted to use the method of "building fortifications" on land in order to passively resist invasions by Japanese pirates, and it did not think to develop maritime strengths in order to annihilate the invading enemy or to cross the seas in order to attack the invaders. This kind of "territorial defense lines" of China's ancient people firmly built China's national interests on the land; [the people] did not think to cross these "lines" in order to prevent and keep their own national interests from being damaged; even less did they think to cross these lines in order to develop their own nation's maritime interests. When foreign powers wantonly expanded overseas and plundered [other countries], China's Ming and Qing rulers engaged in an act that ran contrary to world trends – "banning the seas" – and this led to a closed door policy; sovereignty became sidelined, and national power gradually weakened. It was not until after imperialistic invasions in early modern times that China had an understanding about protecting national security from the sea. But Western countries from the start did not have a clear characteristic of focusing on the land more than on the sea, and after the great geographical discoveries, Western theories on geostrategy took the lead in having a global perspective, from protecting maritime routes to controlling maritime accesses and then to command of the sea; afterwards, they also formed a relatively systematic theory of land and sea power. This global perspective primarily served in seeking world hegemony, but it is not enough to merely understand this point. If a people with both land and sea and that is constantly developing only considers things from a single aspect, the land or the sea, and if it is not skilled at planning its own security development from a global angle, this will have a negative impact on its own development.

IV. Differences in strategic theory and practices...84

Although China since ancient times has consistently, either consciously or not, used maritime accesses, both those that are nearby and those that are far away, it has never had a concept of maritime accesses, and its understanding of them was no more than the single points of Zheng He's path to the western seas. Nor did it truly understand the importance that maritime accesses had for national security and for developing overseas trade. Therefore, in glancing over China's history, it is very difficult to find practices where China has opened up maritime accesses through

armed force; there have been no practices and understanding of this, to say nothing of theory. It can be said that since ancient times, China has had no systematic theory of sea power, and even less has it had systematic thinking about maritime accesses. But Western countries early on, after the great geographic discoveries, understood that the sea is a “flowing highway” that connects the land, and this resulted in the generation of a powerful awareness of making progress by the sea, by those peoples who paid attention to the sea’s accesses and who advocated building their nation through trade. Western countries’ economic structures and forms of production determined that their strategic cultural values orientation had the characteristic of being oriented to the outside. This strategic cultural characteristic of being oriented to the outside and of expansion determined the choices in their ways of thinking and in the strategic directions of their movement, [it determined] the definition of their strategic structures, and [it determined] the strategic means that they used. In particular, early modern capitalist economies paid more attention to struggles over benefits; in the course of their practices to subdue the seas, they gradually generated the idea of maritime accesses, and this became an important basis and guide for their dominating the oceans and dominating the world.

To summarize, in the history of human development, the East and the West have each had their sea civilizations. Prominent characteristics in Western sea civilizations were their exploration of, ventures into, expansion into, and conquest of the outside; their basic goal was to find and open up overseas markets and colonies. In other words, Western sea civilizations in essence were outwardly oriented. China’s ancient sea civilization was an extension onto the sea of its land culture and agricultural consciousness; its characteristic was have a closed door and self-defense, and its main goal was to maintain and advocate feudal rule and culture in which China predominated. The difference between China’s and the West’s sea civilizations was that the former used the land to determine the sea {*yi lu ding hai*}, while the latter used the sea to determine the land {*yi hai ding lu*}. Speaking in a certain sense, this difference laid the foundation for the world’s setup, and it influenced [the world’s] subsequent development. In our study today of Western countries’ use and control of maritime strategic accesses, we not only need to have our own characteristics but we also need to be skilled at overcoming our shortcomings by learning from others’ strong points, in order to establish thinking about maritime strategic accesses that will truly have Chinese characteristics.

CHAPTER 3

THE BASIC PATTERNS OF SEA POWERS' STRUGGLES FOR AND CONTROL OVER MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...86

No matter how other factors have changed their importance in the course of history, what was important 2,000 years ago is still important today, and all people who are concerned over diplomatic activities must take these factors into consideration.

- [Hans] Morgenthau

Since the great geographical discoveries, each period in human history has generally produced world powers. Regardless of whether these powers were great nations or small ones, they all have had one feature in common, which is that they have been great world trade nations and sea powers. As an important conduit by which great maritime nations have engaged in global movement, the oceans have had the attribute of global access; therefore, occupying the oceans and controlling the oceans became a major way for great nations to rise. And if great maritime nations wanted to engage in global trade, to occupy overseas markets, and to plunder and seize overseas resources, maritime strategic accesses were important chokeholds that they first needed to control. Speaking in a certain sense, the world's great maritime nations certainly were sea powers. Because the historical backgrounds, military power, and economic influence of the various countries differed, their ideals and practices regarding maritime strategic accesses also had some differing focuses. Studies and comparisons of these countries' ideas and practices about maritime accesses have important theoretical and actual significance for exploring new practices in the use of maritime strategic accesses.

SECTION 1: THE THINKING AND PRACTICES OF WORLD SEA POWERS ON MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...87

In analyzing the effects of maritime strategic accesses on the rise and fall of great nations, it is necessary to analyze and study the thinking and practices of great maritime nations on maritime strategic accesses. Because maritime strategic accesses are stable, non-selective, public, high-end, conflictive, and international in nature, having a clear understanding of the historical evolution of great maritime nations' thinking about maritime strategic accesses is done to make it easy to get a grasp on great nations' current and future strategic trends, to more comprehensively and more accurately analyze the environment of China's maritime strategic accesses, and to more accurately get a grasp on the favorable factors and unfavorable factors that China's security and development face; it will help China to seek and uphold its own national interests.

I. US thinking and practices for maritime strategic accesses...87

From the founding of the United States on 4 July 1776 until today, over more than 200 years, the evolution in its thinking about maritime strategic accesses can largely be divided into three stages.

1. The first stage (1776-1890): Offshore defense, defending the homeland, and protecting traffic {shou tu bao jiao}

During this period of time, the United States blindly believed that the two oceans were its natural protective barriers, and it had no worries at sea; its understanding about the oceans was still in an initial, shallow stage. On 4 July 1776, the United States declared its independence. However, the United Kingdom was not reconciled to this, and it attempted to use armed strength to rule the American colonies. At that time, the United Kingdom was the most powerful military and economic country in the world, and it had a population of 11 million, while the thirteen American colonies' total population was only 2.5 million. The British Navy was the most powerful navy in the world; it used almost half of its troop strengths to wage the North American war,¹¹⁷ while America still did not have a navy in a real sense, and it only had militia armed forces that belonged to the various colonies. In addition, after the war, the United States engaged in an isolationist policy, blindly believing that the two oceans were the United States' natural protective shield, and it did not have any worries at sea. Even less did it realize the importance of maritime accesses, and it did not engage in effective control over relevant straits so that British ships could drive straight in and attack Washington and New Orleans from the sea. Moreover, [the British] burned down the US capital, Washington, in 1814, leaving Americans with bitter memories.

At the same time as this, what the United States engaged in was a policy of "paying more attention to the land than to the sea;" it paid little attention to building its navy. After the War for Independence, on 30 April 1798, the United States formally established a Department of the Navy, and [the Navy] obtained the status of an independent service. But the issues of what kind of a navy would be built and how the navy would be used were never clarified, with the result that the Navy's missions were only to protect fortresses, to protect traffic lines at sea, and to assist the Army in occupying land and expanding; the Navy's building had its ups and downs, and its development was slow. It was not until 1815 that militia organizations were abolished and that a standing Navy was established; the building of naval equipment often became an excuse for economic development, going up or down many times, and therefore, there was no use talking about understanding and using maritime strategic accesses. In addition, maritime directions were suppressed by the sea powers of the United Kingdom and France, and the US Navy was still an "offshore defense" type of navy; its ships were also mostly small ships, and they basically had no way to contend with the British Navy at sea. Although [the US Navy] crossed the Atlantic several times for coastal actions against the United Kingdom, these [actions] were very small in scale, and they did not have much of an effect.

2. The second stage (1890-1914): [Alfred Thayer] Mahan's theory of "command of the sea," and expansion to the oceans

In this period, the United States gradually transformed from being a country that "paid more attention to the land than to the sea" to being a country that "paid attention to both the land and the sea." The prolonged period of warfare that it had gone through and especially the attacks the United Kingdom had launched from the sea caused the United States to realize more and more the importance of the oceans and to understand the profound significance of controlling the oceans;

¹¹⁷ Xu Jia, *Studies in American Strategic Thinking*, Military Science Publishing House, 2003, p. 2.

the United States gradually transformed from being a country that “paid more attention to the land than to the sea” to being a country that “paid attention to both the land and the sea.” After the end of the Civil War, as American industry and agriculture recovered and expanded, as the end to the development of the west urgently required expanding markets, and as the American economy developed more and more, the scope of its maritime trade also increasingly expanded toward the various places of the world, and the oceans undoubtedly became the best accesses for overseas markets. Mahan believed that for the United States, the nation’s survival relied on control of the oceans. For a long period of time, if American trading ships were not captured by British warships and privateers, they suffered extortion from pirates. The building of [the US] Navy also was always stagnating, and it had no way to ensure that the security of sea lanes was unimpeded. In order to protect the long-range maritime trade interests of the American homeland, the US Navy dispatched fleets in batches for prolonged quartering in sea areas where [US] maritime trade interests were relatively concentrated. From 1815 to 1843, the United States dispatched a Mediterranean squadron, a West Indies squadron, a Pacific squadron, a Brazil squadron, an East Indies squadron, and an African squadron, in turn, in order to fight against pirate activities that posed a serious threat to US maritime trade and to protect US interests. From the Pacific to the Caribbean, from the Americas to Asia, the United States completed to a considerable extent its plans for overseas expansion. By the 1890s, the United States’ industrial output approached the total of that of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, and its industrial production made up one-third of the world’s total; the entire national economic strength had catapulted into first place among the various countries of the world.

However, when the United States prepared to expand outwards, the biggest problem it encountered was that world colonies and spheres of influence had already been carved up by the powers, and almost all the various maritime strategic accesses going to the outside world were under the control of the old empires of Western Europe. For a rising maritime empire that needed to expand outwards, it was first necessary to open up and do its best to control the maritime strategic accesses going toward the world; only afterwards would it be possible to seize colonies from the hands of the old colonial empires and to re-divide spheres of influence. In the process of the United States’ expansion overseas, the theory of “sea power” of the US Navy’s thinker, Mahan, was the first theoretical work in the history of mankind to comprehensively expound on sea power. After this work analyzed the old sea powers – the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Spain – it systematically and comprehensively noted the important position that the seas had in human activities, it noted the important effect that maritime trade had in the development of national economies, and it noted the important significance that control of maritime accesses had in becoming sea powers; this laid a theoretical foundation for the United States to follow a path of expansion overseas. The proposal of this theory enabled the United States to first occupy the theoretical high ground in sea power; what was even more important was that under the guidance of this theory, the United States quickly put this theory into practice, it gained experience in the Spanish-American War, and it treated a struggle with the old sea power Spain for sea islands as an important objective in the war. It ultimately swept the seas, it drove the Spanish out of the Pacific, it occupied all important islands in the Pacific, including Guam and Hawaii, and it achieved

comprehensive control over the Pacific. “The United States of America had left its old anchorage and sailed toward the seas, becoming a world power.”¹¹⁸

After the proposal of Mahan’s “sea power,” it immediately was recognized by US political and military circles, who recognized that control of the seas required building a navy; the United States’ naval strategy also began to switch from “offshore defense” to “blue water operations.” Then-President Theodore Roosevelt drafted a huge plan of military expansion, for building 200 warships, and the Navy developed rapidly. In particular, [the United States] energetically developed new technologies, it took the lead in using steam-powered ships, and it seized the lead position in the technological revolution. It thoroughly revised the previous naval strategy where the navy was small in scale, where most ships were wooden and wind-powered, where it engaged in coastal and white-water defense, where single ships operated, and where attacks on merchant ships at sea were the goal. It began to use steel ships, to rely on steam power, and to carry out the strategy of a blue-water navy. Through innovations in advanced theory and the application of advanced technology, the United States quickly caught up to and surpassed the old Western great maritime nations, becoming a new sea power; this brought about huge commercial benefits for the United States so that the US economy rapidly developed.

Taking an overall look at this period, the opening of global routes and the successive establishment of colonies on each continent resulted in mankind’s maritime activities undergoing large-scale development, and they truly were significant in world history. As practices at sea advanced in a profound and broad manner, people had an understanding of the overall situation of maritime accesses, and the struggles for the sea developed from local maritime struggles to a comprehensive struggle for the world’s oceans, and struggling for maritime accesses directly affected the strategic setup of the entire world; this shows that the struggle for maritime accesses had become a struggle that was strategic in nature. Looking at the various countries of the world, control over maritime accesses was an important premise for ensuring a nation’s expansion overseas, for plundering overseas resources, for engaging in overseas trade, for expanding the nation’s domain, and for becoming a maritime hegemon. Therefore, victory in maritime struggles was determined to a very great extent by the control and use of maritime accesses. The awareness of maritime accesses had become one of the most important [parts of] being aware of strategy and security that a sea power and even a land power had.

3. The third stage (1914-1945): The two world wars and the struggle for hegemony at sea

During this period, the United States’ thinking and practices for maritime strategic accesses primarily had the following features. The first was that the Pacific War in reality was a war that struggled over maritime strategic accesses. At that time, Japan’s strategic goal was to get through the maritime accesses to the south, to control the Straits of Malacca, to go forward into the Indian Ocean, and to obtain the petroleum resources of the Middle East and the mineral resources of Australia, in order to develop Japan’s economy. But the US Navy was also the biggest obstacle to its carrying out this strategy, and after [Japan’s] success at Pearl Harbor, Japan launched a series of offensive operations at sea in order to prevent a US counterattack; their goal was to eliminate

¹¹⁸ (United States) [Steven] Howarth, *History of the US Navy*, World Knowledge Publishing House, 1997, p. 322. [Translator’s note: Possibly Howarth’s *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1998.*]

threats to maritime accesses. History often cannot make assumptions, but if Japan had won at the Battle of Midway, it would have completely controlled the Pacific and threatened the US homeland; therefore, it would have been hard for the United States to deploy heavy troops in Europe, open a second front, and destroy [Adolf] Hitler. The outcome of the war would have been a different scene. The second was that islands in an ocean are the key points for controlling the ocean. Because the United States occupied crucial islands in the Pacific, such as Hawaii and Midway, this made it easy for ships to anchor and move, while Japan, which lacked maritime bases that could serve as a reliable support, only could rely on its aircraft carriers and on long expeditions that would tire its troops as these went on long journeys so that their effectiveness in operations was greatly reduced. This allowed the United States to hold a geographical advantage. It can be seen how important control over crucial islands at sea is to controlling the ocean; even aircraft carriers cannot completely replace the role of islands. The third was that it continued to carry out the idea of sea power and to expand onto the ocean. In the war, the United States further strengthened its occupation of strategic accesses and islands; by the end of the Second World War, most of the islands in the Pacific and most of the countries in Southeast Asia had been occupied by the United States. For the first time, the United States had effective control over the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the Atlantic; this laid the foundation for it to control Asia and the Pacific and to surround the socialist camp.

4. The fourth stage (1945-1989): Expanding sea power and controlling the oceans

After the end of the Second World War, the United States relied on the political and military advantages it had gained from being a victorious nation to intensify its influence and expansion throughout the world; it adopted a “strategy of peripheral encirclement” {*bianyuan baowei zhanlue*} around the Eurasian continent from the land and a “strategy of encirclement by sea” {*haishang baowei zhanlue*} in order to control the East Asian mainland.

The “strategy of peripheral encirclement” of the Eurasian continent primarily referred to a “heartland belt” {*xinzang didai*} that existed from the Black Sea and the Mediterranean eastward to Mongolia and Siberia; whoever controlled this “heartland belt” would control the world. The “strategy of encirclement by sea” of the East Asian mainland believed that the founding of New China [in 1949] posed a threat to the United States’ encirclement of global forces, and it was necessary to “contain” [the PRC]; in January 1950, US Secretary of State [Dean] Acheson gave a speech at the United States’ National Press Club in which he pointed out that the Aleutian Islands-Japan -Ryukyu Islands-Philippines Islands were a US “security line that it needed to absolutely defend;” this was the so-called “Acheson defense line.” [The United States] subsequently signed “common defense treaties” with countries and regions like South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, forming the first blockade line against China, from the Sea of Japan to the Taiwan Strait to the Straits of Malacca, and the second blockade line, from the Aleutian Islands to the Mariana Islands to New Zealand to Australia. By 1955, the United States and its allies had established a system of military alliances aimed at surrounding the socialist countries, along the periphery of the Eurasian continent, thus completing its strategic encirclement of the Eurasian continent. It can be clearly seen geographically that these two encirclements fully used the ocean’s geography, including sensitive sea areas like the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, the East China Sea, and the Yellow

Sea; in particular, [it used] a large number of maritime accesses, like the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Bosphorus Strait, the Suez Canal, the Straits of Malacca, and the Taiwan Strait. It can be seen that the end of the Second World War was the beginning of the US-Soviet struggle over maritime strategic accesses.

Looking at things in general, regardless of whether it was the Cold War period or the 21st century of today, the United States' struggle for, control over, and use of maritime strategic accesses primarily took the following several forms.

First, it used bases to control maritime strategic accesses. When studying the history of the British Navy, Mahan discovered that the reason the British Navy was powerful was not the might of its fleets but the many maritime bases that the United Kingdom controlled. When conflicts occurred, the United Kingdom could quickly mobilize its Navy by means of these bases, thereby winning huge superiority in time and space. Subsequently, the United States absorbed Mahan's thinking about sea power, and ever since the Second World War, it has established a network of military bases in each place in the world, which are spread all over. The United States uses these bases mainly to control the important maritime accesses, relevant sea regions, and strategic islands in the world. It thus controls some crucial regions in the world, thereby vigorously supporting the United States' global strategy.¹¹⁹ There are primarily four main characteristics.

They mostly are close to strategic opponents. The US military engages in "forward deployment," using the Asia-Pacific and the island chains as a support; in the first island chain, it has constructed a group of Northeast Asian bases and a group of Southeast Asian bases, mostly selecting locations that are near strategic opponents. The US military uses its powerful military strength to engage in stringent monitoring and control over the maritime accesses and important sea areas in these sea regions. Examples are the group of Northeast Asian bases, which primarily are aimed at such strategic opponents as North Korea, Russia, and China. Relying on the Korea Strait, the US military not only can support land operations in the Korean Peninsula, but it can also assist maritime operations in the northwest Pacific. And if it moves troop strengths southward along the strait, it can then have effective control over the Taiwan Strait, which is equivalent to controlling China's strategic access to the sea. At the same time, by relying on its group of bases in Southeast Asia and its base in Diego Garcia, the United States primarily controls China and contains India.

They mostly are close to strategic accesses. The places, the countries, and the strategic points that the US military selected in the first island chain all have very strong natures of being strategic, being focused, and having goals. For example, to use the words of former US Secretary of State [John Foster] Dulles, Japan "is a crucial factor in the chain of coastal islands along the mainland."¹²⁰ The United States uses its Seventh Fleet, which is stationed in Japan, to control the vast majority of accesses in Northeast Asia that enter and leave the Pacific, the Korea Strait, and the straits and waterways among the Ryukyu Islands. For example, the Korea Strait is a channel that is frequently traveled by China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and Russia; controlling this strait is equivalent to grabbing the maritime transportation lifelines of these several countries. And the Changi [Naval] Base in Singapore in the group of Southeast Asian bases directly controls the Straits of Malacca. Looking at the range of its sea transportation, it is possible to travel north from

¹¹⁹ Da Wei, "The United States' Main Military Bases and Facilities in the World," *Global View*, Issue 8, 2004.

¹²⁰ Wu Xuewen, *Japan's Diplomatic Orbit*, (1945-1989), Current Affairs Press, 1990, p. 18.

Singapore to the Kuril Islands or west to the Arabian Sea and reach them in seven days, while sailing to Okinawa and the seas surrounding Taiwan only takes four days, and it takes two days to reach the center of the South China Sea. If necessary, warships deployed in Singapore can control the entire Straits of Malacca within twenty-four hours. In its *2007 Annual Report to Congress on China's Military Power*, the United States pointed out that "China currently not only cannot protect its own foreign supplies of energy but it also cannot protect the accesses for its energy supplies, including the roughly eighty percent of China's imports of petroleum crude that pass through the Straits of Malacca; this weak point is called the 'Malacca dilemma.'" In accordance with the United States' global strategy, the Straits of Malacca are undoubtedly a crucial sea region where the United States holds a geostrategic advantage and contains the rise of great nations, as well as where it controls the flow of world energy; it is one of the sixteen global key chokepoint routes that the United States must control in wartime. In recent years, the US military has deployed large numbers of advanced naval and air force equipment to its bases in Southeast Asia and on Guam, in order to carry out focused reconnaissance of these straits and waterways and to carry out military exercises, so as to display more and more its actual and potential threats against such strategic waterways as the Straits of Malacca and the Sembawan Strait.

They mostly are close to important maritime traffic lines. Mahan pointed out that "Generally speaking, the value of a situation is determined by how close it is to a maritime access, and it is determined by how close it is to those trade routes; when these trade routes are drawn in the sea area, they become what seem to be hypothetical lines on sea charts, but these lines indeed exist and are extremely useful."¹²¹ Sea lanes are for a naval power what throats are for a person. Asia and the Pacific have many important sea lanes; regardless of whether it is from an economic angle or from a military angle, they have an important role in the economic development of the various coastal countries along sea lanes in Asia and the Pacific. In order to firmly control these sea lanes, the United States' military deployments mostly are close to sea lanes, and these sea lanes not only are the maritime lifelines of peripheral countries but they also are important routes for the United States in Asia and the Pacific. Several groups of large bases completely control the lifelines of sea lanes.

They are mostly close to places where strategic energy resources are concentrated. Since the first oil crisis, which took place in the 1970s, the United States has begun to strengthen its control over important maritime accesses, from the angle of ensuring the security of petroleum supplies for the United States and its allies. In November 1998, the United States' *East Asia Regional Security and Strategy Report* pointed out that ensuring freedom of navigation and protecting maritime accesses, and especially the security of the Straits of Malacca and other energy supply routes, corresponds to the United States' economic and security interests.¹²² US decision-makers believe that wherever world energy resource lines are, that is where the United States' diplomatic and strategic lines will be. After the Cold War, the United States launched new global strategic deployments in its counterterrorism operations; this strategy had a close, inherent relationship with

¹²¹ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy: Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practice of Military Operations on Land*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1994, p. 128.

¹²² The White House, *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, November 1998, <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/easr98/>.

its objectives of protecting and controlling global petroleum strategic accesses. In actuality, readjustments and deployments in the United States' global strategy are done centered on energy sources and energy transportation lines; the powerful intentions behind this are to control petroleum resources. Currently, the United States already treats protection of maritime strategic accesses and especially of petroleum transportation lines as an important mission for the US military, and it includes maritime chokeholds within the track of its "militarization of energy policies" {*nengyuan zhengce junshihua*}. The US military's distribution of military bases in important world petroleum-production regions such as the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia can provide it with important maritime security guarantees.

Second, it uses "strategic islands" {*zhanlue dao*} as nodes for controlling maritime strategic accesses. After the Second World War, the US military consistently focused on paying attention to and running eight strategic islands in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. These islands are mostly spread along maritime traffic and transportation lines, and their geographical locations are quite important.¹²³ In peacetime, they undertake the duties of logistics supply and stockpiling bases for aircraft and ships, while in wartime, they assume the roles of relay stations and supply bases for military transfers; to a very great extent, they can accelerate the course of a war and seize the initiative in warfare, and so they have extremely great military and strategic value. In particular, Guam, which guards the Asia-Pacific regional throat, is a route that the US military's various types of ships and especially its aircraft carrier groups must follow on their routes to the western Pacific to carry out their duties. Starting in 2008, the United States spent \$12.8 billion to comprehensively upgrade the naval and air base at Guam; it built [Guam] into a strategic hub base for the western Pacific region and a center for deploying strengths, in order to support and strengthen the military forces for the first island chain. This was called the largest military base expansion project in the western Pacific since the Second World War. If ships depart from here, they can reach Japan, the Philippines, northern Australia, and the Straits of Malacca within four days. Northwards, they can control the Tsushima Strait, while southwards, they can blockade the Straits of Malacca; in wartime, they can control the strategic initiative at their leisure. For another example, Diego Garcia is located at the key to the Indian Ocean routes, and it is the only US military base in the Indian Ocean. By guarding this base, it is not only possible to attack to the north and defend to the south but it is also possible to attack to the right and to the left, making it extremely convenient for the United States to reach a number of maritime strategic key places. This base is less than 3,000 kilometers from the Straits of Malacca, and the US military can use troop strengths like aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and strategic bombers to radiate out to the entire Straits of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz, so that it can control all petroleum transport routes from the Middle East to Asia.

Third, it uses its powerful maritime military strengths as the primary means for controlling maritime strategic accesses. For a long time, the United States has consistently maintained the world's most powerful, first-rate navy, and it has used this as an important tool to promote US national policies and to control the world's oceans. Currently, even though the United States' overseas military bases are gradually declining in number, their strategic control over the globe

¹²³ The eight islands that the United States refers to as "strategic islands" are Guam, Saipan, Wake, the Hawaiian Islands, Midway, the Marshall Islands, Diego Garcia, and Greenland.

has not weakened but instead has grown stronger. This is mainly because the status of US aircraft carrier groups is more pronounced; these play an important role in attacks and support and in deterrence and actual warfare so that the US Navy can control any maritime strategic accesses at any time and in any place. This has reduced [the US Navy's] reliance on coastal logistics support and has made it more flexible; it is an important premise and support for the US military in carrying out its "forward deployment" and "preemptive" military strategy. For example, in order to control the Asia-Pacific maritime strategic accesses, the United States has deployed its aircraft carrier the *George Washington* to Japan, it has deployed advanced F-22 [Raptor] fighters and strategic missile nuclear submarines to Guam, and in the future it is also preparing to deploy sixty percent of its aircraft carriers and submarines to Asia and the Pacific. This equipment will enable the United States to control and use the strategic accesses in Asia and the Pacific and to respond to various unexpected incidents. The US Navy perennially deploys mobile troop strengths like aircraft carriers to crucial sea areas like the Arabian Sea, the western Pacific, and the Caribbean, in order to ensure its control over the world's three main strategic accesses: the Straits of Malacca, the Suez Canal, and the Panama Canal.

Fourth, it links control over maritime strategic accesses with the establishment of a maritime counterterrorism system. After the 9-11 incident, the United States' strategic thinking about control over maritime strategic accesses underwent a major and noticeable change, which was that it closely combined control over maritime strategic accesses with the establishment of a counterterrorism system, and by means of this combination, it had more effective control over maritime strategic accesses. Beginning in 2002 and up until 2004, the United States proposed three counterterrorism and anti-proliferation proposals, one after the other, which were the "container security initiative" (CSI), the "proliferation security initiative" (PSI), and the "regional maritime security initiative" (RMSI). Through the "container security initiative," the United States required that its trade partners that had important world ports, together with the United States, to carry out security inspections and sealings of high-risk containers that were going to the United States, prior to their shipment, in order to prevent terrorists from concealing weapons of mass destruction in them. This plan began in the world's twenty busiest ports, and it ultimately was expanded to include 100 percent of container ships.¹²⁴ Through the "proliferation security initiative," the United States, together with its allies and those countries that were willing to participate, could intercept and inspect at sea ships that were suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction; this primarily targeted North Korea and some Middle Eastern countries.¹²⁵ Through the "regional maritime security initiative," the United States began to carry out patrols in the Straits of Malacca, in order to prevent this waterway, the busiest in the world, from coming under a terrorist attack.¹²⁶ It was precisely through these domestic and foreign stratagems that the United States secured the security of its ports, transportation lines, and maritime accesses and kept them unimpeded.

In summary, the United States is controlling "strategic islands" that have important strategic significance in the oceans, through a huge network of maritime bases that it has established in key

¹²⁴ *CSI in Brief*, http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/international_activities/csi/csi/in/brief.sml-37k.

¹²⁵ Remarks by President Bush to the People in Poland, Wawel Royal Castle, Krakow, Poland, May 31, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/print20030532-2.html>.

¹²⁶ *Agence France Presse*, Washington, 3 April 2004.

countries or regions where its global interests are at stake; it is using its powerful sea power; and it is establishing a maritime counterterrorism system, in order to achieve its goals of protecting its global maritime interests and security and keeping its maritime strategic accesses unimpeded and of ensuring its status as a maritime hegemon.

II. Russia's thinking and practices about maritime strategic accesses...97

The Russian historian Liu-qie-si-ji¹²⁷ has said that the history of Russia is a history of unremitting colonization of the outside and of territorial expansion. Russia's thinking and practices about maritime strategic accesses is primarily divided into three main periods.

1. The Czarist Russian period

It pursued an outlet to the sea and struggled for important maritime strategic accesses to the Mediterranean and the Pacific. At the end of the 15th century, Russia was still a backward, closed inland country that was far from the ocean. It wanted to obtain outlets to the sea, to the west and the south, and so it needed to launch wars against Sweden, which at that time ruled all of the Baltic Sea and most of the territory along the coast of the Baltic Sea, and which was powerful, as well as against the Ottoman Turkish Empire, which controlled the Black Sea.

After Czar Peter I (that is, Peter the Great) assumed the throne in 1682, he proposed that Russia must seek an outlet to the sea, in order to exist among the European powers. Only by opening up and occupying the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Japan, to the north, south, and east, could Russia expand outwards, develop the nation's trade, move toward the oceans, and become a world sea power. And only thus could it locate itself in the heart of the Eurasian continent and establish itself as a world hegemon. He first selected the gateway that was in the south – the Black Sea – as the target of attack, and he tried to change the Black Sea into an inner lake of Russia. Afterwards, he [intended to] seize the exit from the Black Sea toward the Mediterranean, in order to grip this strategic access for east-west trade and transportation and to lay the foundation for comprehensively controlling Europe. In July 1696, Peter the Great obtained a foothold for expansion toward the Black Sea, and he seized an exit to the Baltic Sea; this only completed the first step in the Czar's expansion to the sea. Peter the Great believed that only by wresting victory at sea could he ultimately solidify the land victories that he had won in successive wars. He said, "Any ruler who merely has an army can only be considered as having one hand; only a ruler who at the same time also has a navy can be considered as being complete with two hands."¹²⁸ To do this, he needed to build a powerful navy. The Russian Navy was established on 20 October 1696; three fleets were established – the Baltic Sea Fleet, the Sea of Azov Fleet, and the Black Sea Fleet – and [Russia] became a powerful nation with a navy that had 646 ships and boats of varying types. In 1769, Catherine II ascended the throne; during the period of her rule, she always placed the Navy in a fairly important place for ruling Russia. In addition to vigorously strengthening the Baltic Sea Fleet, she also established a Black Sea Fleet, so that Russia entered the ranks of the world's naval powers, and so that "more than half of Europe felt panic;" this was the period when Russia's maritime strengths were strongest. [Karl] Marx said that Russia, which was such a great empire, only had one port that acted as a seaport, and this seaport was on a sea where half the time

¹²⁷ Translator's note: This is the Chinese rendition of a Russian name, possibly Ljutski.

¹²⁸ (Soviet Union) [Sergey] Gorshkov, *Sea Power of the State*, translated by Fang Fang, Ocean Press, 1985, p. 5.

it was impossible to sail and where half the time it was easily attacked by the English. This situation left the Czar feeling dissatisfied and annoyed. Therefore, she strongly wanted to achieve her predecessor's plans and to open a route going to the Mediterranean. And the key to entering the Mediterranean was to seize the Balkan Peninsula; in particular, this meant occupying Constantinople and controlling the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles. Therefore, advancing to the Black Sea and seizing Constantinople as well as the Black Sea straits was always the dream of successive Russian rulers. Once Russia opened these accesses to the sea, it would truly be what [Halford] Mackinder said, that "This would enable it to use its huge continental resources to establish fleets, and at that time, this world empire would be in sight."¹²⁹

In order to seize the Black Sea's exit to the sea, Russia declared war against Turkey. In June 1770, the Russian Baltic Sea Fleet set out from the Baltic Sea. It passed through the English Channel and the Strait of Gibraltar in order to enter the Mediterranean and directly thrust at Turkey. It won victory at the Battle of Chesma, thus enabling the Russian fleet to blockade the Dardanelles Strait and to achieve its goal of destroying Turkey's traffic at sea. Turkey was trapped in passivity militarily, and it successively lost more than twenty islands and some coastal cities.¹³⁰ In 1774, Russia and Turkey signed a treaty in Küçük Kaynarca. This treaty not only allowed Russia to seize a large swathe of land on the north shore of the Black Sea and to control the outlet from the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea but it also obtained freedom of navigation on the Black Sea and the right of passage through the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles. By the end of the 18th century, through a series of wars with Turkey, Russia basically had seized hegemony over the Black Sea. Catherine II ultimately had achieved Peter the Great's desire of winning access to the sea in the south. And *the Russian-Turkish Treaty of Alliance* that Russia forced Turkey to sign in 1799 also allowed Russia for the first time to have the right to freely pass through the two straits. At the same time as this, Catherine II also launched three wars to carve up Poland; she seized a broad stretch of territory from Latvia through Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, to the Crimea; and she solidified Russia's ruling position in the Baltic and Black Sea outlets to the ocean. In 1740, she founded the port of Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka peninsula, and thus extended the tentacles of the Russian Navy to the Pacific. But even so, she was still unable to satisfy the appetite of Czarist Russia for expansion. Czarist Russia ultimately wanted to occupy Istanbul and to turn the Black Sea into a Russian lake, in order to achieve its goal of completely controlling the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles Strait. However, given the complex and changing international setup of the late 18th century and the early 19th century, the ambitions of the Czarist Russian government was restrained on many sides and basically had no power to achieve this. For example, the United Kingdom, in order to protect its own status of maritime hegemon, found ways to restrain Russia's naval strengths for spreading to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean; in particular, it prevented Russia from obtaining the right to freely pass through the straits.

¹²⁹ (United Kingdom) Halford Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, translated by Lin Erwei and Chen Jiang, Commercial Press, 2007, p. 61.

¹³⁰ Li Bing, "An Analysis of Russia's Thinking and Policies about Maritime Strategic Accesses," *Northeast Asia Forum*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 94.

2. The Soviet Union period

As it competed and contended with the United States for maritime strategic accesses, [the Soviet Union] frequently launched proxy wars. Although when the 1905 Russo-Japanese War ended, the Russian Navy had fallen from third place in the navies of the world to sixth place, its trend toward overseas expansion and struggling for control over maritime accesses did not diminish in the least. In 1913, the commander of the Czarist Russian Navy said in a report that he gave the Czar, that “As regards the task of protecting Russian sea routes, speaking in general, there have always been three things in the past, and these still exist: keeping sea routes unimpeded from the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic, from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific, and from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.” After the October Revolution, the Soviet Union became the first socialist country in the world; the Soviet Navy, which was established on the basis of the old Russian Navy, caused heavy losses for the Germany Navy during the Great Patriotic War, through destroying the enemy’s sea lanes, and it thereby vigorously supported the ground forces’ operations and their actions in each theater of war. And by [keeping] overseas sea lanes unimpeded, it ensured the smooth transportation of more than 17 million tons of Allied strategic materials that supported the Soviet Union; this made a major contribution to the Soviet Union’s victory in the Great Patriotic War.

Not long after the Second World War ended, the United States launched the Cold War against the Soviet Union and the East European bloc, in order to seek world hegemony, and it continued its trajectory of a struggle for strategic accesses. The dispute between the Soviet Union and Turkey over relevant straits was one of the causes of the Cold War, and it also drove the confrontation between the two large military blocs to expand into even broader spheres. During the Second World War, out of strategic needs, the Soviet Union proposed to Turkey that [Turkey] permit the Soviet Union to participate in the supervision of the straits region, that the Soviet Union have the right to establish naval bases in the straits region, and that it revise the *Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits*; Turkey resolutely refused, and the two countries’ relations suddenly worsened. On 8 August 1946, the Soviet Union demarched Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom, reiterating its demands to jointly manage the straits and to establish naval bases in the straits region. At the same time, using military exercises as an excuse, [the Soviet Union] concentrated heavy forces along the Soviet-Turkish border, trying to force Turkey to yield to them. The United States consistently believed that the Soviet Union wanted to take advantage of this opportunity in order to control Turkey and to thus advance into the Middle East; the United States immediately dispatched the aircraft carrier *Franklin D. Roosevelt* and organized a task force for entering the eastern Mediterranean sea region, in order to assist Turkey. The Soviet Union’s behavior not only forced Turkey to entirely seek shelter with the West but it also allowed the United States to take advantage of the opportunity to extend its influence into this region. An even more direct and serious consequence was that the United States viewed this incident as a reflection of the Soviet Union’s expansionist nature, and it incubated and launched the Cold War against socialist countries like the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.¹³¹

During the period of the Cold War, the Soviet Navy engaged in a blue-water strategy of global offense. Not only did it engage in an intense naval arms race with the United States but it also

¹³¹ Li Bing, “An Analysis of Russia’s Thinking and Policies about Maritime Strategic Accesses,” *Northeast Asia Forum*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 96.

launched an intense contention in various strategic key places like the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean, and it frequently launched proxy wars. As the power of the Soviet Navy increased, the Soviet Navy began to penetrate the various oceans of the world, and it engaged in hegemonism in order to seize dominance over maritime strategic accesses. In 1967, the Soviet Navy was stationed in the Mediterranean, and it established a Mediterranean squadron; in 1968, the Soviet Navy advanced into the Indian Ocean, and it organized an Indian Ocean squadron; and in 1979, the Soviet Union sent ships to Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. The Soviet Union also deployed ships along the West African coast and regularly dispatched ship formations to places like the Caribbean. From the 1970s to the mid- and late 1980s, the Soviet Union launched a surging undercurrent of a contest with the United States in each ocean in the world. The Soviet Navy was unobstructed in the various maritime strategic accesses of the world, and it used its national maritime power to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, seeking its own interests. In the course of its struggle with the United States for dominance, although the gunpowder of warfare was never seen, there were confrontations everywhere; the Cuban Missile Crisis and the struggle for the right of passage in the Suez Canal were both related to the struggle for control over maritime strategic accesses.

3. The Russian period

It vigorously developed the navy, returned to the world's oceans, and protected the security of maritime accesses. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a decline in the national strength of Russia, which inherited the mantle of the Soviet Union, meant that its actions to strive for control over maritime strategic accesses in the world's oceans had to die down, and it withdrew the permanent troop strengths of its Indian Ocean squadron, its Mediterranean squadron, and its South China Sea squadron, one after the other. In addition, at the end of 1992, it retreated from the various sea areas of the world, and its naval strengths were pulled back to its homeland harbors. Faced with an overbearing NATO's eastward expansion and revisions to the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, and with the former member states of the Warsaw Pact and the former republics of the Soviet Union joining NATO, Russia's maneuvering room was greatly reduced, and its peripheral political situation in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea clearly worsened. At the same time as this, the United States and Japan strengthened their military alliance, they strengthened their war machine, and they strengthened their military control over strategic accesses that the Russian Navy would have to pass through. Against this background, after [Vladimir] Putin took office, he attempted to use the development of the navy as a breakthrough, he revived the military's prestige, and he earnestly upheld the security of maritime accesses that were related to Russian interests; comprehensive control over the global strategic oceans became the focus of Russian security strategy. In November 1999, the Russian Ministry of Defense issued *The Naval Strategy of the Russian Federation*, which determined the building and development strategy of the Russian Navy at the beginning of the 21st century. The new naval military strategy especially emphasized the status and role of traffic lines at sea, and it believed that a major ocean country would deploy the majority of its strategic nuclear strengths at sea and that a modernized navy would be able to monitor the ocean situation and to threaten sea lanes, thereby affecting world stability. [The strategy believed that] Russia's foreign trade and economic development were inseparable from [keeping] maritime traffic lanes unimpeded, and

therefore it treated protecting the security of traffic lanes as an important strategic task for the Russian Navy.¹³² At the same time, the new military strategy also clarified the navy's development objectives: from 2007 to 2020, it would comprehensively upgrade the navy's weapons and equipment and establish a completely new and powerful modernized navy. In March 2000, Putin proclaimed in the form of a presidential decree the *Basic Policies for the Russian Federation's Maritime Military Activities Prior to 2010*. Subsequently, documents like the *Development Plan for the Russian Federation Navy over the Next Ten Years* and the *Russian Federation Maritime Doctrine* also appeared, one after the other. These documents, which had the nature of being laws, drafted a development strategy for the Russian Navy at the beginning of the 21st century, and they sketched a vision and blueprint for the future Russian Navy, from the organizational structures of personnel, ships and equipment, and its organization and command. The focus of its naval development will be to produce large ships and the fourth generation of strategic missile nuclear submarines, in order to greatly increase the proportion of sea-based nuclear weapons. The *Russian Federation Maritime Doctrine* meant that Russia would scientifically demonstrate the tasks and characteristics of its maritime activities, and it would determine the methods and reliability guarantees for Russia to engage in maritime activities based on the economic strengths of the country, on the state of the shipbuilding industry, on the nation's basic interests, and on relevant international law. On 29 July 2000, Putin emphasized at the Russian Navy Day that "The Russian Navy, historically and in the future, is an emblem of the nation's strength, and it is necessary to ensure the combat capabilities of the Navy and to equip the Navy with advanced weapons. The power of the Navy will help solidify national security and uphold Russia's national interests in the 21st century." That same month, Putin approved of *Russia's Maritime Policies Until the Year 2020*, which comprehensively elaborated on the basic principles of Russian's maritime policies. Russia's maritime policies believed that the main regions and directions of the Russian Federation's national maritime policies could be divided into the Atlantic direction, the Arctic Ocean direction, the Pacific direction, the Caspian Sea direction, and the Indian Ocean direction. Of these, the Atlantic direction would bear the brunt. Russia believes that only by maintaining sufficient naval power is it possible to eliminate threats and to ensure the national interests and security on the world's oceans of the Russian Federation and its allies. [It believes that] a combination of military strategic actions in accordance with [the Navy's] regional configuration – that is, the Northern Fleet, the Baltic Sea Fleet, the Black Sea Fleet, and the Caspian Sea Fleet – is the basis of real strengths for carrying out the tasks of national maritime policies in their corresponding regions. Under the guidance of this strategic thinking, and in order to ensure the navy's combat capabilities, under the circumstances where the Russian Government's finances were quite strained, [the government] still appropriated huge amounts of military funding, with a focus on supporting the plans for rebuilding the navy. On 13 December 2010, Putin announced, in a high-profile manner, that Russia would spend twenty trillion rubles over the next ten years in order to upgrade the Russian military's weapons and equipment and that by the year 2020, the rate of upgrades to equipment would reach seventy percent; in this, the focus would be on developing equipment like nuclear attack submarines. On 5 February 2011, Russia introduced the *Nuclear Military Doctrine*

¹³² John Lewis Gaddis, "Grand Strategy in the Second Term," *Foreign Affairs*, February 2005.

of the Russian Federation, reserving the right to use nuclear weapons for counterattacks. Through the developments and building over these years, the Russian Navy has gradually restored its vitality and come out from underneath a shadow, and it is now advancing toward being a great maritime nation. Just as [former] Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov stressed, “Russia will always be a great naval nation, in the past, present, and future; the flag of the Russian Navy will flutter, as always, over the world’s oceans.”¹³³

In order to further enhance the survival capabilities, mobile capabilities, and rapid-reaction capabilities of nuclear weapons, Russia greatly increased the percentage of sea-based nuclear weapons; one important reason that it focused on the role of strategic nuclear submarines was that sea-based strategic nuclear strengths played a major role in the Cold War period. When the Cold War-period Soviet Union differed from its opponent in overall strengths, it relied on vigorously developing its nuclear submarines in order to contend with the United States at sea; its power to control the seas was thus greatly increased. In 2007, Russia launched its fourth-generation (model 955) strategic nuclear submarine; this was the first Russian-built nuclear submarine since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In accordance with Russia’s ten-year plan for developing submarines, it is estimated that by 2015, Russia’s sea-based nuclear strengths will exceed fifty-seven percent. The Russian Navy will build eight nuclear submarines. The submarine-launched ballistic missiles that these carry will be able to carry ten nuclear warheads, with a maximum range of up to 8,000 kilometers; they will be able to attack targets in any region in the world, and they will be “trump card” equipment by which Russia will deter the West and revive its military prestige. In recent years, as Russia’s economy has recovered, Russia, which has powerful maritime strengths that are listed as number two in today’s world, has again gradually resumed its activities in the world’s oceans; guarding the security of its maritime strategic accesses will inevitably become a key point that it is concerned about. Russia is particularly focusing on keeping its outlets to the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Pacific unimpeded and secure; it is adding new types of ships to its naval order of battle; and it has dispatched formations of combat ships a number of times to sail the South China Sea and up to the Straits of Malacca. It has also dispatched reconnaissance ships to various sea areas in the western Pacific to reconnoiter the US military’s activities, maintained the strategic stability of its subordinate sea-based nuclear strengths, carried out nuclear deterrence at sea, and defended the security of the Sea of Okhotsk, the sea areas in the waters north of Japan, and Russia’s Far East region. For Russia, the Black Sea is a fairly important sea region; it is a link connecting Russia’s four great fleets.¹³⁴ Russia is continually strengthening the power of its Black Sea Fleet, in order to defend Russia’s security interests in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea straits.

III. Japan’s thinking and practices about maritime strategic accesses...104

Japan is an island nation, surrounded on all four sides by the sea; it primarily consists of four large islands – Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu – and several hundred small islands. To

¹³³ Li Bing, “An Analysis of Russia’s Thinking and Policies about Maritime Strategic Accesses,” *Northeast Asia Forum*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 94.

¹³⁴ Oleksandr Pavliuk and Ivanna Kyumpush-Tsintsadze, *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, M.E. Sharp, 2004.

the north, Japan and Russia look at each other across the Sea of Okhotsk and the Soya Strait; to the west, [Japan] overlooks the Sea of Japan and it looks at Russia and the Korean peninsula; to the southwest, it borders on the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea on the far side from the Chinese mainland; in the south, the Ryukyu Islands are close to China's Taiwan Island; and to the east, it faces the Pacific. Japan's unique geographical position and exported-oriented economy have determined that it is always concerned over the security of its transportation lines at sea; it pays a great deal of attention to the development of its navy, and it particularly focuses on the struggle for relevant straits, water routes, and islands. Starting with the Meiji Restoration's development of a navy to conquer the seas and up until today, when [Japan] has gradually broken through the Constitution and moved overseas, Japan's thinking and practices about maritime strategic accesses have had the following several aspects.

1. A change from relying on the seas to paying a great deal of attention to the seas

Japan is a typical island nation with a large population and a great lack of natural resources; its economic model is a typical export-oriented economic model, and this situation has determined that Japan relies seriously on the seas, and it has also determined that Japan pays a great deal of attention to maritime accesses. Prior to the Meiji Restoration, Japan was a country with feudal lords and was separated, closed, and self-protecting. Up until the mid-19th century, when the development of Japan's feudal society entered the final period of the shogunate's rule, the Western powers relied on their gunboats to intrude on Japan from the sea so that following the prolonged policies of a closed country that Japan had engaged in, it was forced to open its doors; its understanding of maritime accesses and its desire to develop a navy gradually grew stronger. Faced with encroachments by European sea powers, a pioneer in Japan's theory of maritime defense, Hayashi Shihei, was aware of the fatal problems that existed in a closed-door policy. In his book *Discussion Concerning Military Matters of a Maritime Nation*, he advocated opening up to the sea and developing a maritime defense. "What is a sea country? A sea country is a country that has no neighboring states adjoining it and that is surrounded by the sea on all four sides; therefore, sea countries must have military equipment commensurate with a sea country and that differs from the military thinking of China's arts of war and the various Japanese military doctrines that have been handed down since ancient times. If we do not understand this point, it will be hard to establish Japan's national defense."¹³⁵ It was precisely under this kind of thinking that Japan followed the path of being founded on the ocean.

Around the periphery of the Japanese archipelago are many maritime strategic accesses. Briefly, these are the Soya Strait, the Tsugaru Strait, the Tsushima Strait, the Korea Strait, and the Osumi Strait, and [Japan] uses these to control the maritime strategic accesses from the East Asian mainland's peripheral accesses to the Pacific, such as the Sea of Okhotsk, the Sea of Japan, the Yellow Sea, and the East China Sea. In order to find out as quickly as possible the conditions of the world's maritime strategic accesses, the Japanese navy paid quite a bit of attention to studying and becoming familiar with maritime strategic accesses. In the eighty year after the founding of the military, the Japanese navy began blue-water navigation, using the deep-sea practices of

¹³⁵ (Japan) Toyama Saburo, *Japan's Naval History*, translated by Gong Jianguo and Fang Xihe, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 1.

schools' students. In 1875, a blue-water navigation exercise that a graduate student from the navy's school was in charge of used the warship *Tsukuba* to cross the Pacific by following the northern Pacific route to Hawaii and San Francisco. In 1878, the warship *Tsukuba* followed the western Pacific route south, and it followed the equator until it reached Australia. In 1879, the warship *Tsukuba* sailed along the sea lane from China to Singapore. In 1883, the warship *Ryujo* reached Chile and Peru along the western coast of South America. In particular, the warship *Seiki*, which Japan had itself built, paid a long-distance visit to Europe, a voyage that lasted ten months and 26,300 miles; it stopped in sixty ports. Against a background where Westerners were surprised at Japan's naval strengths and the level of their training, the Japanese did field investigations and completed their inspection of the world's maritime strategic accesses, and they basically got a grasp on the conditions of maritime accesses.

After the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Japan began to pursue a policy of "a rich country and a strong military," and it gradually followed the path of capitalism. Because Japan's national strategy was a strategy for plundering the world's resources, China's coal and wood, the Middle East's petroleum, and South Asia's ore and foodstuffs became the target of its plundering. Therefore, just as the Japanese emperor said, "The building of a navy is an urgent task for today." The Japanese navy was established on 17 January 1868, and in a memorial from the Ministry of War, [it was stated that] "His Glorious Majesty is greater than overseas [potentates] that do not have navies; we should now greatly build our navy."¹³⁶ At that time, eighty percent of the country's finances were used for military matters, forming a situation where the entire country's strength was used for the navy. Japan's early modern navy was established against this kind of a background. And the navy therefore also became a pioneer in overseas expansion. And in order to ensure that the national strategy would be achieved, the Japanese military cabinet believed that it was necessary to resolve the issue of maritime accesses security so that transportation fleets would be able to [operate] on the seas without hindrance. There were primarily three maritime routes that played an important role in Japan's economic development. The route to the west along the East China Sea and the South China Sea passed through the Straits of Malacca and entered the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, reaching the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea; this was the access for importing petroleum energy from the Middle East. The route to the south went overseas to the south along Taiwan and passed through the Sembawan Strait and the Strait of Makassar to enter Southeast Asia and Australia; this was a major access for importing wood, coal, and foodstuffs from Southeast Asia. The route to the east followed the Pacific to reach North America; this was a major access for importing steel from North and South America. But the Qing Empire, Russia, and the United States were entrenched in these three maritime accesses; if Japan wanted to control maritime strategic accesses, these three major countries could not be bypassed. If [Japan] were to get control over the Pacific, it would have to eliminate the three countries' maritime forces. Therefore, in Japan's national and naval strategies, it treated the Qing Empire, Russia, and the United States as three hypothetical enemies and actively engaged in preparations for war. The Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Pacific War between Japan and the United States broke out under these guiding thoughts, and Japan at this point followed the path of militarism.

¹³⁶ (Japan) Toyama Saburo, *Japan's Naval History*, translated by Gong Jianguo and Fang Xihe, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 13.

2. Learning from history, it paid a great deal of attention to protecting the maritime lifelines of the country's economic lifeblood

As an island nation whose energy resources were extremely poor and that depended a great deal on maritime transportation, Japan's economy relied heavily on the outside; its strategic resources and product markets all relied strongly on maritime transportation accesses. Historical and current actual reasons, as well as Japan's unique geographical location and export-oriented economy, determined that it needed to constantly pay attention to the security of maritime transportation lines and to pay attention to keeping maritime accesses unimpeded; Japan viewed keeping maritime accesses unimpeded as a "major issue where its life and death were at stake." Japan's sources of strategic materials primarily were concentrated in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, and three main transportation accesses took shape over a long period of time. The first started out in the Persian Gulf; passed through the Straits of Malacca or the Sunda Strait and the Lombok Strait; entered the South China Sea and the East China Sea; and ultimately arrived at Japan. The second was a southeast route that connected Japan with the United States and Australia. The third was a northeast route. Of these, the first route made up eighty percent of [Japan's] maritime transportation, and thus this transportation line was also called the "lifeline" of Japan's maritime transportation. In wartime, once maritime traffic and transportation lines had been severed, the national economy would collapse and [Japan] would panic. Japan's lessons in the Second World War were very profound. After the Pacific War broke out, Japan ignored the changes in the age, and it still stuck to the theory that "ships decide battles;" it did not pay enough attention to protecting its traffic and transportation lines, and up until its defeat, it had not organized presentable convoy fleets for protecting its maritime transportation lines. But the United States, based on Japan's characteristic of relying too much on overseas resources, stayed clear of Japan's strong points and attacked its weak spots; it attacked Japan's transportation fleets, and it repeatedly succeeded. In just the beginning of 1945, the US military sunk forty-eight Japanese ships in the sea areas of Vietnam's Saigon and China's Hong Kong and Kaohsiung, keeping Japan from the timely resupply of strategic materials that it urgently needed.¹³⁷ Particularly in the latter period of the Second World War, the US military launched a blockade operation against Japan, which was also called a "battle hunger," and which struck a lethal blow against Japan. The United States carried out an encircling blockade of the Sea of Japan; in particular, it blockaded an access that played an important role in Japan's transportation of materials – the Shimonoseki Straits – so that Japanese imports of raw materials were completely cut off. This seriously damaged Japan's domestic economy; several million people suffered the torment of hunger, they thoroughly lost the will to resist, and this basically sped up and changed the course of the war. For historical and current actual reasons, ever since the war, Japan has always treated protecting the security of its maritime transportation lines as the primary task of the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

¹³⁷ Li Bing, "An Analysis of Japan's Thinking and Policies for Maritime Strategic Accesses," *Japanese Journal*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 95.

3. In the Cold War period, the Japanese navy primarily had blockades and anti-submarine monitoring and convoys as its main thing, and it ensured the security of maritime routes for 1,000 nautical miles

After the war, Japan and the United States signed the *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security*. The United States would unconditionally guarantee Japan's maritime security in the following three areas: first, it would guarantee the security of petroleum sources and maritime oil transportation accesses; second, it would guarantee continuous petroleum supplies; and third, it would resist threats coming from the mainland and ensure Japan's regional security. Up until the 1960s and 1970s, the security of Japan's maritime accesses relied entirely on U.S. protection.

Early on, at the end of the 1970s, every circle in Japan, which was emerging from the oil crisis, profoundly realized the importance for Japan's economy of ensuring the security of resource supplies. National security was no longer merely territorial security; it was necessary to consider protecting the security of maritime accesses. At the same time, the United States was on the defense in the Cold War with the Soviet Union and was carrying out the "Nixon doctrine;" US strengths were withdrawing from Asia, and this required that Japan undertake maritime defense, under the framework of Japanese-US cooperation on security guarantees. This intensified Japan's sense of crisis and drove Japan to consider using its own military strengths to protect maritime accesses.¹³⁸ In 1981, Japanese Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki visited the United States and formally agreed to a US request, wherein he promised that the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force would undertake the responsibility for protecting its two 1,000 nautical mile-long maritime routes. In the Japanese *Defense White Paper* that was published in 1983, it was expressly written for the first time that "The sea areas for several hundred nautical miles around Japan and along the sea routes to the left and the right 1,000 nautical miles long were the geographical scope of Japan's defense."¹³⁹ The focus of the "several hundred nautical miles around Japan" was the sea area east of Japan's Honshu, the offshore sea area from Tokyo Bay to the Bungo Channel, and the sea area close to Tsushima and Tsugaru. As Japan saw it, only by being able to ensure the security of these two maritime transportation routes [to the east and to the west] was it possible in wartime to ensure the minimal requirements of national life and of materials for operations. The reasons that Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force drafted this maritime accesses defense plan [were as follows]. First, Japan's limited military forces were unable to protect all maritime accesses, and so the focus of defense was Japan's peripheral sea areas north of 20 degrees north latitude. Second, in the areas south of 20 degrees north latitude, Japan expected protection from US maritime strengths. At the same time, the access from the Middle East and through the Indian Ocean, the Straits of Malacca, and the South China Sea was the United States' petroleum route on its western side, and the United States had the responsibility to ensure the security of this sea route. The Australian and North American maritime accesses south of 20 degrees north latitude were entirely defended by the United States. Third, Japan's maritime defense zone was limited to a triangle with the homeland at its apex. The left side of the triangle was a sea route from the Bashi Channel through Japan's southwestern islands to Shikoku, while the right side was a route going north from the Marianas through the

¹³⁸ Robert C. Christopher, "America and Japan: A Time for Healing," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1978, pp. 26-27.

¹³⁹ Liu Shanxu, et al., editors, *Contemporary Foreign Military Thinking*, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1993, p. 144.

Ryukyus, the Ogasawara Islands, and the Izu Islands up to the sea side of the main islands. The southwest route was 840 nautical miles long, while the southeast route was 1,000 nautical miles long.

Japan adopted differing strategic countermeasures for the maritime strategic accesses in the differing sea areas. As for the Tsushima Strait, the Soya Strait, and the Tsugaru Strait in the north, as well as the Ryukyus Islands straits, in addition to their economic uses, what they did even more was to strategically block Russia, China and Korea. These three main straits were routes that the Soviet Pacific fleet had to pass through on their way to the ocean; and early on in the Cold War period, the United States and Japan on the one side and the Soviet Union on the other launched an intense struggle over the blockade and counter-blockade of these straits. For Japan, only by preventing Soviet ships from entering the Pacific could it achieve its goal of keeping maritime accesses unimpeded.¹⁴⁰ In 1978, a famous Japanese naval strategist, Hideo Sekino, proposed the so-called “Sekino concept,” based on Japan’s geographical characteristics and on the specific conditions for convoys and anti-submarine operations, which outlined the blueprints for building maritime strengths.¹⁴¹ In this, the details involving protecting the security of strategic accesses consisted of [the following]. [First was] opening the southwest and southeast routes and allocating a protective formation or even more troop strengths along each route; engaging in anti-submarine patrols in partitions; and searching for and destroying intruding submarines so as to establish a triangular security sea area with Guam to the west, the Philippines to the north, the Bashi Channel to the east, and the Japanese homeland to the south. [Second was] strengthening the land, sea, and air troop strengths for the Tsushima Strait, the Soya Strait, and the Tsugaru Strait; in peacetime, closely monitoring ships that pass through, and in wartime, closing the straits through conducting anti-submarine operations, surface combat, and laying mines. Currently, Japan is still following this “concept” and is continuing to strengthen its control and blocking of the Osumi Strait and the Miyako Strait among the Ryukyu Islands. The US Navy is responsible for blockading the Korea Strait, while the US Navy undertakes blockades of the Soya Strait by itself or jointly with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force; the protection of these two routes is undertaken by the US Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, in separate sections. Finally, military control over blue-water ships that is carried out in wartime is concentrated on navigation along two security routes and on escorting important ships. Japan has now extended the 1,000 nautical-mile routes to 2,000 nautical miles, and the scope of naval activities has been greatly expanded. For Japan, ensuring the security of these two maritime transportation lines is what is most important in its national security and development.

4. After the Cold War, Japan vigorously developed its military power and reinforced the monitoring and blocking of its southwest islands and its maritime accesses

As its economic power has rapidly grown, Japan’s desire to strive to become a great political and military nation has increasingly expanded. With the overt and covert support of the United States, Japan’s military power has constantly expanded; in the building of its maritime strengths, Japan has focused on optimizing the development of attack-style and blue-water intervention-style

¹⁴⁰ Zhao Kezeng, chief editor, *Studies in the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, pp. 338-339.

¹⁴¹ Stephen Biddle, “The New Way of War?” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2002.

troop strengths. The Japanese navy is currently developing toward large-scale and blue-water maritime strengths that are “relatively large for Asia” and whose “combat strength is strong.” Currently, the minesweeping capabilities of Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force are number one in the world, its anti-submarine capabilities are second only to those of the United States, and its overall strength is the greatest in Asia and third in the world.¹⁴²

Since entering the 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War, the world situation has undergone profound changes, and Japan’s national strategy has also had modifications. Japan believes that the threat that is posed to it is no longer the Soviet Union and Russia but instead includes “all kinds of dangers,” including “the destruction of maritime traffic lines, violations of territorial air space, illegal occupations of territory, terrorist actions, and the influx of armed refugees.” It stresses the “extremely opaque and uncertain factors that exist in the Korea Strait and the Strait of Taiwan.” It lists the Korean peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea region as the areas that are most likely to set off conflict and to have some kind of crisis occur. [Finally,] it believes that once an unexpected issue appears in these areas, and especially an issue [involving] the security of traffic lines in the western Pacific, this would pose a serious threat to the security and stability of Japan.

Currently, Japan considers China to be its main target of operations, and the deployments for its naval strategy are constantly being transferred to the southwest direction. In 2010, Japan for the first time included the defense situation of the southwest islands (primarily the Ryukyus) in its *Defense White Paper*. The southwest islands are the general term for the islands south of Japan’s Kyushu Island and east of China’s Taiwan Island; they include a number of external islands, such as the Okinawa islands, the Miyako Islands, and the Diaoyu Islands.¹⁴³ In these islands, Japan’s focus is on stressing the importance of the Okinawa bases, and with Okinawa as the center of a circle, the main areas of the Chinese mainland, Korea, and Taiwan are all situated within a range of 1,500 kilometers of Okinawa; if [this center] is moved to some other candidate base, such as Guam or Saipan Island, the distance from this area would be more than 2,000 kilometers. Therefore, Japan primarily has the following considerations in shifting this strategic focus to the southwest. First, the southwest islands are the closest to the Chinese coast; the main areas of the Chinese mainland, Korea, and Taiwan are all situated within 1,500 kilometers of Okinawa, that is, within the range of attacks by US and Japanese cruise missiles. Second, it is an important sea area for containing China’s exit to the Pacific. Third, and this is also extremely important, they are important strategic accesses for blocking China’s movements toward the Pacific.

First, Japan strengthened its monitoring and reconnaissance of the main southwestern maritime strategic accesses. For example, it established advanced radar reconnaissance stations on Miyakojima and Miju Island, in order to comprehensively control the southwest direction, to control the various straits and waterways among the Ryukyus, and [to get a grasp] on the military capabilities of the Diaoyus and the Taiwan Strait. At the same time, it established underwater monitoring systems off Ishigaki Island, in order to watch the movements of submarines and to collect underwater acoustic data about submarines. Second, it established multi-layer three-

¹⁴² Lu Kuiyuan, “Development Trends in the Japanese Navy that Are Worth Being Vigilant Against,” *Naval Academic Studies*, 2001, Issue 1, p. 9.

¹⁴³ Translator’s note: The Chinese term for the Senkakus.

dimensional blocking lines. It primarily set up three-dimensional blocking lines along three routes: the first route was to block the three main straits, the second blocking line was set up in the Kuril Islands, and the third route was set up in the sea areas outside the second route's defensive line. Of these, the second defensive line was jointly defended by Japan and the United States, while the third defensive line had mobile patrols carried out by maritime mobile units of the two parties within key sea areas. Japan treated blockading the three main straits as key to struggling for the initiative. If a blockade was successful, it would then be possible to block most of the ships and submarines of an invading enemy within the Sea of Japan, thus reducing pressure on maritime traffic lines and mastering the battlefield initiative. Second, it dispatched additional military forces to the southwest islands, in order to strengthen the defensive capabilities of the outlying islands {*lidao*}¹⁴⁴ in the southwest direction. In July 2010, Japan sent troops to Yonaguni Island at [Japan's] westernmost end, which is separated from Taiwan by only a strip of water. Yonaguni Island is less than 110 kilometers from Taiwan, and it is separated from the Diaoyus by about 120 kilometers; it has a good natural harbor and airfield, and it has important strategic significance. Japan's primary goal in sending troops to this island was to reinforce its monitoring and intelligence collection against the Diaoyus and the sea areas, straits, and waterways close to [the Diaoyus] so that Japan's strategic containment moved forward by 500 kilometers. The Japanese government has also declared that within the coming decade, it will deploy 20,000 members of the Ground Self-Defense Force to the southwestern islands, it will strengthen the defensive system of the southwest islands, and at that time, it will cooperate with the United States in forming a tighter chain of southwest operations and will tighten the blocking of maritime strategic channels along the southwestern direction.

5. It is using such opportunities as “counterterrorism” {*fankong*} and “aid” {*jiuyuan*} in order to gradually infiltrate the Straits of Malacca

Statistics from international authoritative organs show that ninety percent of the crude petroleum that Japan imports and close to half of the other materials that it imports and exports must pass along a line through the Straits of Malacca, the South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait; in 2007 alone, the amount of Japan's daily petroleum imports exceeded 45 million tons. Therefore, Japan has always paid a great deal of attention to the issue of security in the Straits of Malacca. Compared to the United States' tough methods of going straight in, Japan has adopted infiltration policies of indirect {*quxian*} participation that are more conciliatory and more covert, that is, it has increased aid and striven to increase its right to speak about the Straits of Malacca. Japan has also expressed to the three countries bordering the Strait its hope to participate in protecting the security of the Straits of Malacca, and it has taken the initiative to sponsor certain activities to protect security in the Strait and has taken the initiative to hold joint exercises at sea with Southeast Asian countries, in order to strengthen its presence in this region. Japan has also set up special agencies to analyze and study the Straits of Malacca. In the process of participating in the Straits of Malacca, a corporation with a government background has played a crucial role; this is Japan's Malacca Strait Council. The aim of this council is to ensure the security of ships navigating in the

¹⁴⁴ The outlying islands refer to islands that are distant from the main body [of islands]. Japan refers to the islands beyond its four main islands as the outlying islands. Japan currently has around 6,800 outlying islands; only 315 of these outlying islands have people living on them on a daily basis.

Straits of Malacca and to engage in the building and maintenance of strait facilities. Its principle work includes surveying waterways, building navigational facilities, promoting cooperative relationships with relevant countries, and analyzing and sorting out intelligence and information about the Straits of Malacca. Up until now, the funds that this agency has used in enterprises related to the Straits of Malacca have reached around 10.6 billion yen. In addition to this, the agency has also increased its technical investment in the Straits of Malacca through various ways, such as assisting Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore in building forty-five lighthouses and buoys in the sea areas along the strait; installing ship automatic identification devices in the Singapore Strait and in Indonesian sea areas; and participating in the work of investigating and salvaging sunken ships in the Indonesian sea area. In the area of domestic legislation, Japan passed “some related bills” in 2004, in order to deal with “emergency situations that occur in peripheral regions;” this “periphery” not only included the Strait of Taiwan but it also for the first time included the Straits of Malacca. In 2007, the Japanese Government proposed a bill for “regional agreements for countermeasures against Asian pirates;” a “piracy intelligence center” established by relevant countries has exchanged intelligence about piracy activities in the Straits of Malacca area and intensified its prevention of and attacks on pirate activities. The main function of this center is to engage in unified management of such things as information about piracy that comes and goes in the Straits of Malacca, tracking intelligence, and management measures that are adopted by the various countries.

In summary, Japan is slowly “marching on” the Straits of Malacca, through various types of intangible infiltration and tangible aid. Its ultimate goals are first, to control the Straits of Malacca and to thus ensure Japan’s oil transportation lines and, second, to promote Japan’s military expansion through controlling the Straits of Malacca. Its military presence in Southeast Asia will then become institutionalized and long-term, and its control over maritime strategic accesses will also become increasingly unyielding, and it will have more and more right to speak [about the Strait].

IV. India’s thinking and practices about maritime strategic accesses...113

India is a major South Asian country that borders the sea on three sides. The coastline of the seas on the three sides reaches 6,083 kilometers; since ancient times, it has been a major maritime traffic hub and strategic key that connects Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Europe. Its strategic position is quite important, and it has historically been a battleground between the new and the old colonialism and military commanders.

1. Control of the Indian Ocean has always been something that India has unremittingly pursued

India has always considered itself to be a great maritime nation, and it views the ocean and especially the Indian Ocean as a place where its basic national interests lie. The founder of the country, Prime Minister [Jawaharlal] Nehru, said, “If India wants to become powerful on land, it must become more powerful at sea.” The famous Indian historian, strategist, and senior diplomat K. M. Panikkar believed that “India’s path forward will not be determined by its land borders; rather, it will be determined by the broad ocean that surrounds India on three sides.” He believed

that “Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will control India.”¹⁴⁵ In his book *India and the Indian Ocean*, he explicitly pointed out that “How India goes forward is closely related to what degree it gradually develops into a strong sea power.”¹⁴⁶ Ever since its independence, India has consistently striven to carry out a policy of controlling the Indian Ocean; it dreams of becoming a great maritime nation of the world. Ever since the great geographical discoveries, the Indian Ocean and its northern coastal region have always been a core area where the great nations of the world have struggled for supremacy; geopolitical grandmasters and famous strategists alike have regarded this region as a core area of the world. The grandmaster of the theory of land power, Mackinder, believed that the Middle East and Central Asia were the “heartland” of the world;¹⁴⁷ the grandmaster of the theory of naval power, Mahan, also believed that “Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will control Asia. The Indian Ocean is the ‘key to the seven oceans.’ It is in the Indian Ocean that the 21st century will determine the fate of the world.”¹⁴⁸ Regardless of whether we look at this from the theory of land power or the theory of sea power, India holds a core position in world geopolitics. Whoever holds the subcontinent and has a powerful naval strength will have hopes for dominating the world.

The admirals of the Indian Navy also believe that “The navy is the symbol of a great nation. We want to be a world-class great nation, and therefore, we should have a world-class navy.”¹⁴⁹ India’s first prime minister, Nehru, said in his book *The Discovery of India* that “Because of the status that it now holds, India is unable to play second fiddle in the world. Either it will be an impressive great nation or it will disappear.”¹⁵⁰ In the latter part of the 1960s, the United Kingdom was engaged in a strategic retrenchment globally and was gradually withdrawing from some overseas military bases; the Indian government proposed a strategy of “having the Indian navy fill the empty zones left by the United Kingdom in the Indian Ocean,” and it occupied some strategic key points in the Indian Ocean. In 1971, during the Third India-Pakistan War, the Indian navy not only used the aircraft carrier *Vikrant* to blockade Pakistan’s main ports and waterways in an effective manner but it also seriously attacked Pakistan’s navy, and it played an important role in gaining victory in the war. What was even more important was that through the Third India-Pakistan War, India dismembered Pakistan, thus eliminating [one of] its worries. This created a favorable environment for the vigorous development of India’s navy, and India’s eyes turned toward the Indian Ocean; it began to carry out a “strategy for controlling the Indian Ocean,” which was “on the one hand, to deprive the enemy of an opportunity to use the sea, while on the other hand, to defend our own right to use the sea.”¹⁵¹ Through this war, the Indian government

¹⁴⁵ (India) K. M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: an Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, World Knowledge Publishing House, 1966, pp. 1, 81.

¹⁴⁶ Panikkar, p. 89.

¹⁴⁷ (United Kingdom) Halford J. Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, translated by Lin Erwei, Commercial Press, 1985, p. 13.

¹⁴⁸ Sun Shihai, *The Development of India, and its Foreign Strategy*, China Social Sciences Press, 2000, p. 284.

¹⁴⁹ Sandy Gordon, *India’s Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, St. Martin’s Press, 1995, p. 320.

¹⁵⁰ Li Bing, “India’s Thinking and Policies about Maritime Strategic Accesses,” *South Asian Studies*, 2006, Issue 2, p. 16.

¹⁵¹ Cao Yongsheng, *The Elephant of South Asia – The Development and Current Status of India’s Military Strategy*, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 2002, p. 213.

transformed its “concept of continental defense” {*dalu fangyu guan*} and paid more attention to the status and role of the navy in modern warfare.¹⁵²

2. Through a strategy of “regional control,” it controls five great strategic waterways, thus ensuring the security of energy accesses

Early on in the early 1970s, India proposed a strategy of “regional control” {*qiyu kongzhi*}. Nehru explicitly demanded that India must have the ability to control the key chokehold routes of the Indian Ocean waters, such as from the Suez Canal to the Strait of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca. Rajiv Gandhi also pointed out that “India’s defense requires that we must firmly control the maritime accesses going to the Indian Ocean.” India believes that “India’s safety is tied to the Indian Ocean,” that “India’s future greatness lies in the Indian Ocean,” and that “The key to the success of the Indian Navy lies in its ability to control the Indian Ocean.”¹⁵³

Upon entering the 1980s, India’s naval strengths achieved marked development. With the development of the Navy, and based on the differences in potential threats, the Indian Navy drafted a “strategy of layered defense” and extended its sea defense from coastal to blue-water regions.¹⁵⁴ This strategy divided the Indian Ocean into three different regions: an “area of complete control,” an “area of moderate control,” and an “area of soft control.” The scope of the “area of complete control” was the sea area from the Indian Ocean coastline to [an area] 500 kilometers from [the coast]. Within this scope, India carried out a program of “maritime denial” {*haishang juzhi*}; prior to an encroachment by the enemy, [the Indian Navy] would first attack targets. The scope of the “area of moderate control” was a sea area from 500 kilometers away from the coast to 1,000 kilometers away from the coast. In this area, India’s maritime strengths’ primary tasks were to defend its deep-sea islands, maritime accesses, and merchant fleet, and to engage in “moderate control and surveillance” over the broad sea areas; this required that the Navy have the ability for deep-sea military deployments so that it could act as an international policeman in the Indian Ocean and so that in wartime it could control the five accesses that enter the Indian Ocean. “The area of soft control” was the rest of the Indian Ocean’s waters; within these broad waters, the Indian Navy also needed to “have a certain ability to deploy at sea” and to engage in “maritime deterrence” against the navies of great nations from outside the region.¹⁵⁵ In order to achieve its strategic goal of comprehensive control over the Indian Ocean, India has proposed the need to control the Suez Canal, the Palk Strait, the Strait of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca, and the Sunda Strait.

In recent years, as India’s economy has rapidly developed, India’s need for energy has also become more pressing. Therefore, apart from ensuring the nation’s strategic security and seeking a status of regional dominance, protecting transportation accesses and ensuring energy security have become new and important links in India’s maritime strategy. Starting in the 1970s, about seventy percent of India’s yearly consumption of petroleum and ninety percent of its foreign trade had to pass through the Indian Ocean. Not only this, but the resources of the Indian Ocean region

¹⁵² Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, *News Review on South Asia/Indian Ocean*, IDSA Press, Vol. 17, 1984, pp. 78-80.

¹⁵³ Yi Ye, “Will the Northern Indian Ocean Reignite the Flames of War?” *Ship Knowledge*, 2005, Issue 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, April 21, 1984, p. 12.

¹⁵⁵ Sanjay J. Singh, “India’s Maritime Strategy for the 90s,” *USI Journal*, July-September 1990, pp. 352-354, 362.

are also quite rich; India's offshore [area] provides fifty percent of the petroleum and eighty percent of the natural gas that [India] produces domestically. It can be said that India views the Indian Ocean as the "sea of its fate" and that the Indian Ocean is a strategic waterway for India's survival and development. At the same time as this, as India has risen, India's security needs for the Indian Ocean have continued to grow; India believes that should command of the sea come under the control of a peripheral great nation or of external forces and particularly of a hostile country, this would not only greatly weaken India's shielding and its use of the accesses but it even could become a base by which the hostile country would blockade India and become an access for invasion. Therefore, defending these natural accesses is quite important for India. As a result, India continues to pursue this strategy of "regional control," controlling the five great strategic waterways and defending against the enemy on the high seas, in order to ensure its control over the Indian Ocean.¹⁵⁶

3. Revising the Navy's strategy and advocating having an "offensive strategy" replace a "defensive strategy"

For a long period of time, India has always viewed itself as a global important strength, or at least it has considered itself to be a power in Asia. After the end of the Cold War, India started out from the strategic objective of ranking early on among the major countries of the world. It drafted a military strategy of "defending against China to the north, of attacking Pakistan to the west, of connecting with the Indian Ocean to the south, and of expanding its sphere of influence to the east," and in addition, of nuclear deterrence. Of these, "expansion to the east" meant enlarging its influence and the scope of its activities to the South China Sea and part of the Pacific region. India has consistently treated controlling the Indian Ocean and defending relevant maritime transportation accesses as necessary links and steps in pursuing the status of a major country; it has transformed its "views on continental defense" and focused on the status and role of the Navy. In 2000, India issued a *New Strategic Concept of the Seas*; it explicitly pointed out the need to prevent the influence of other sea powers from entering the Indian Ocean, through establishing a powerful blue-water navy, in order to ensure its superior position in this region. In May 2004, the Indian Navy issued a new military doctrine; this indicated that today's world situation is increasingly complex, that the Navy's mission in the 21st century will satisfy even more variables, and that an unprecedentedly complex situation has appeared both in the region and in the entire world. The roles of the Navy are increasing, and it is becoming increasingly important; particularly in regard to India, the vast majority of energy resources depends on imports, and so security guarantees for maritime transportation lines put India's life or death at stake.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, in order to adapt to changes in its own role, the Indian Navy's operational thinking has also been switched from a "defensive strategy" to an "offensive strategy." That is, it has leaped from "regional deterrence and control" to "blue-water offense" and taking actual control over the Indian Ocean; this is an important change that the Indian Navy's strategy has made.

Based on the *2005 Outlook and Plans for Naval Capabilities* that India officially issued, the Indian Navy will purchase more than 160 ships within the next ten years, including two aircraft

¹⁵⁶ G. V. C. Naidu, "India's Navy and Southeast Asia," *Knowledge World*, February 2000, p. 27.

¹⁵⁷ Deba R. Mohanty, "Coming of Age: The Indian Navy in the 21st Century," *Military Technology*, July 2004, p. 93.

carriers, eighteen submarines, and more than forty large-scale surface combatant ships. At that time, [the Indian Navy] will form a “blue-water navy” with three aircraft carrier groups as its core and with long-range force deployment capabilities. Currently, India is developing Indian-made aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines in full swing; by then, its blue-water mobile operations capabilities and troop strength deployment capabilities will be greatly enhanced, and it will pose an extremely great threat to important chokehold routes that control the Indian Ocean and to the large number of ships that pass through it. Currently, eighteen percent of US petroleum imports, eighty percent of Chinese petroleum imports, and more than ninety percent of Japanese petroleum imports must go through the Indian Ocean; at the same time, the foreign trade and energy of India itself, as a great maritime nation, must be transported by sea. Therefore, regardless of whether we are looking at it cutting off other countries’ maritime strategic transport routes in wartime or in times of emergency, or we are looking at it from its need to protect its own maritime trade, India has to speed up the development of its maritime strengths, adjust its ocean strategy, complete its deployment of troop strengths, and comprehensively control the relevant straits and accesses of the Indian Ocean.

4. India is engaged in a “strategy of advancing to the east” and is continually exercising military influence on the Straits of Malacca

India views the Straits of Malacca as a doorway for entering the Pacific from the Indian Ocean and as a necessary way by which it comprehensively engages in a “strategy of advancing to the east,” {*dong jin zhanlue*} politically, economically, and diplomatically. Looking at this from the military angle, the Straits of Malacca are the foremost of the five great straits for entering and leaving the Indian Ocean, which the Indian Navy must control; once it wins control over the Straits of Malacca, India will be able to build a maritime security screen. In recent years, India has vigorously constructed forward bases close to the Indian Ocean’s northern route in order to expand its influence on maritime strategic accesses.

First, it has established an eastern naval command in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands close to the Straits of Malacca, in order to guard the route from the Strait of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca. In the western exit of the strait, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, made up of 244 islands, are like a “chain” that closely locks this strategic waterway. In 2001, India organized the Andaman and Nicobar Command (abbreviated as the eastern naval command). By establishing a fairly powerful military presence in the Andaman Islands, India is able to exert influence on the major naval transportation routes in the Indian Ocean. In particular, this is a route that giant oil tankers going to and from the Persian Gulf region and East Asia and China and Japan must follow, and so its strategic significance is even greater. Currently, the military strengths that India has deployed to this place far exceed those of other countries. According to reports, the eastern naval command has fourteen large-scale ships, and it has allocated Russian-made [Ilyushin] Il-38 [Dolphin] and German-made Dornier maritime reconnaissance aircraft to the Nicobar Islands. The Indian Air Force has expanded its Campbell airfield on the Nicobar Islands, and it is preparing to deploy a squadron of fighters; at the same time, it has also deployed eight helicopters for use in logistics supplies and delivery of troop strengths. In order to strengthen its ability for ground attacks, a brigade of the Indian Army, with about 3,500 men, is stationed on the islands; in the future, the size of this unit will be expanded to 8,000 men.

Second, India has constructed large-scale forward bases. Currently, India has built a completely new large-scale naval base on its eastern seashore, and it has deployed an aircraft carrier and nuclear-powered attack submarine primarily at this base in order to be able to quickly blockade accesses from the Straits of Malacca into the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the Indian Navy has also built an unmanned aerial vehicle base at Port Blair in the Andaman Islands, using Heron unmanned aerial vehicles purchased from Israel to monitor foreign military activities in such areas as the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, and the Straits of Malacca. India's construction of these several bases has greatly extended the strategic depths of the Indian Navy, and it has provided the Indian Navy with an important forward platform for controlling and passing through the Straits of Malacca in order to enter the South China Sea. Currently, after several years of painstaking operations, India's eastern naval command has begun to take shape, and it no longer is satisfied with "deploying troops" {*chenbing*} to the Straits of Malacca. Instead, it has continually intensified its activities; it is constantly engaged in joint military exercises and maritime patrol activities with countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Japan in the Strait of Malaysia and the South China Sea region; it has gradually extended its strategic tentacles to the Straits of Malacca and strategic accesses in the South China Sea; and its military influence around the Straits of Malacca has greatly exceeded that of other countries in that region. India is using its favorable geographic location and naval superiority in the Indian Ocean, and its impact on the security of maritime strategic accesses in the Indian Ocean is not easy to ignore.

V. The United Kingdom's thinking and practices about maritime strategic accesses...119

The United Kingdom is composed of the island of Great Britain, the northeastern part of Ireland, and many nearby islands. To the east and south it is separated by the North Sea, the English Channel, and the Strait of Dover, as it and the European continent look at each other; at its narrowest, it is only thirty-three kilometers from the European continent. The United Kingdom's territory is narrow, and its resources are limited. Since ancient times, the sea has been an important English access for expansion to the outside, for foreign trade, for participating in international contacts, and for dominating the world.

1. It understands the nature that the ocean has as a shield and as an access, and it has continually developed its navy

Since ancient times, England has been invaded many times by other peoples; in the practices of combat, the English gradually understood that the ocean and especially the English Channel is not only a barrier for preventing invasion, but it is also a necessary access for invasion. If they wanted to keep the enemy outside the gates of the country, they needed to resolutely defend the ocean and control accesses. The nature that the ocean has of a shield means using the role of the sea as a shield, in order to keep the enemy outside the gates of the country; the nature that the ocean has of being an access means using the role of the ocean as an access, in order to transport the wealth of colonies. The newly rising capitalist class of the United Kingdom urgently required expansion overseas. By 1733, the United Kingdom had occupied the entire narrow zone [of North America] east from the Atlantic coast and west to the Appalachian Mountains, establishing a total of thirteen colonies, and it had plundered several million kilograms of gold and up to a hundred million kilograms of silver. Large amounts of wood products, skins, tobacco, and foodstuffs also were

being transported in a steady stream from America to the United Kingdom. This caused the United Kingdom to feel from several wars that “The ocean was a way for national prosperity, to engage in trade with the outside world, to expand influence, and to bring influence into play – before the aviation industry appeared, the ocean was the only natural access for connecting with the outside world.”¹⁵⁸ In looking at the dual aspects of the sea, the shielding role of the sea is declining, while its role as an access is rising. In particular, with the development of science and technology, the reciprocating steam engine appeared, and the steamboat replaced the sailing ship for sea transportation. The opening of the Suez Canal greatly shortened the voyages to Asia, the costs of sea transportation markedly declined, and this provided the preconditions for further developing sea transportation. From the beginning of the 19th century, British colonialists turned their attention toward overseas investments, and the large amounts of wealth that they obtained overseas were again invested overseas, forming a rising spiral; this not only made the United Kingdom increasingly wealthy but it also constantly promoted global trade and contact. Therefore, whether the sea and accesses were unimpeded directly affected the normal operations of the state’s machinery, and their role was quite important. The United Kingdom’s understanding of sea accesses during this time was manifested in two aspects. The first was the use of maritime traffic lines to transport the raw materials that the homeland needed for production and to export finished products. The second was the use of the uniting role of the sea to expand [the United Kingdom’s] sphere of influence, to exert political influence, and to defend colonial interests. The role of the sea and maritime accesses caught more and more attention from British leaders.

But as it obtained these colonies and wealth, then in addition to needing to rely on maritime accesses being unimpeded, it was also necessary to have a navy that would play a crucial role in protecting the accesses. The English navy was formally established in 1546; when England defeated the “invincible Armada” of Spain, the master of the sea, it treated command of the sea as the lifeblood of an island nation, and in its past wars, it strove to seize and hold command of the sea. From the 17th century to the 18th century, during almost a century, the United Kingdom relied on its powerful navy to defeat, one after the other, the Netherlands, Spain, and France, which were masters of the sea, and by the end in 1805 of the wars between the United Kingdom and France, the British Navy had gradually developed into a maritime force that could not be ignored. It became an unmatched “maritime overlord” of the 19th century world, and it established a colonial empire that covered the five oceans and was called “where the sun never sets.” The [British] Navy was continually expanded and upgraded during this period, both from numbers to the quality of equipment and from operational thinking to forms of operations. For example, the thinking of “blockading plus decisive battles” {*fengsuo + jue zhan*} and the strategy of “blockading plus interception” {*fengsuo + lanjie*} that it proposed became a magic weapon {*fabao*} by which the British Navy defeated its enemies. Just as [Winston] Churchill said, “The British Navy is necessary for us, and the power of the Navy directly affects the life and death of the United Kingdom itself; it is the guarantee of our survival.”¹⁵⁹ In the history of the United Kingdom, the role that the Navy

¹⁵⁸ (United Kingdom) J. R. Hill, *The British Navy*, translated by Wang Hengtao and Liang Zhihai, Ocean Press, 1987, p. 1. [Translator’s note: This probably is Hill’s *The Royal Navy, Today and Tomorrow*.]

¹⁵⁹ (Soviet Union) [Vladimir] Trukhanovski, *The Life of Winston Churchill*, translated by Zhang Deguang, Beijing Publishing House, 1982, p. 421.

played at this time and the influence that it brought into play was much greater than at any other previous time; thus, maintaining the Navy's superiority became a set national policy of the United Kingdom. In his book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History [1660-1783]*, Mahan described the United Kingdom in this way: "If a country has this kind of geographical advantage, then compared to a people that has land boundaries, it will have a kind of advantage, because its objectives will be wholeheartedly aimed at the sea." British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Sir Edward] Grey said, "What has truly decided our foreign policies is the issue of dominance at sea."¹⁶⁰ Successive British governments have treated maintaining naval superiority as a set policy.

2. The United Kingdom's strategic thinking of "combining preservation with destruction, with an emphasis on preserving traffic" {bao, po jieye, bao jiao wei zhu} during the two world wars

The famous British admiral Horatio Nelson proposed the thinking of "blockade + decisive battle" at the Battle of Trafalgar; this thinking was fully manifested at the Battle of Jutland during the First World War, and it can be said that this was a typical battle example of the "blockade + decisive battle" strategy. In this sea battle, although British losses were greater than those of Germany, Germany still was unable strategically to break a maritime blockade, and the United Kingdom still firmly held command of the sea. In the Second World War, the United Kingdom had gradually changed from being a self-sufficient country to being a country that relied heavily on imports of foodstuffs and raw materials from abroad. The English pointed out that "The emergence of special problems in the area of our country's national defense is primarily because our country relies upon the current maritime transportation for foodstuffs and raw materials. Second, it is because of the position of the British Empire, which is out of the ordinary; it is dispersed throughout the entire world. Also, it is because all of its territory depends, more or less, on maritime traffic in order to maintain its affluent life. Moreover, each part of the Empire must rely upon transporting quite a number of troop strengths and upon providing these with supplies by sea, which is a final means, in order to resist invasion and to keep its own interests and territory from being violated."¹⁶¹ "If peace is broken, the Navy will stand at the front lines of the maritime traffic lines that are at stake for supporting our life or death, just as it did before."¹⁶² Therefore, focused on the naval strategy Germany was employing with the objective of using submarines to cut off traffic, the British Navy established a naval strategic program of "combining preservation with destruction, with an emphasis on preserving traffic." Preserving traffic and cutting off traffic became the focus of an intense struggle between the navies of the United Kingdom and Germany. The British Navy treated anti-submarine operations as the focus of its strategy to preserve traffic. [Chester] Nimitz said, "It was necessary to put anti-submarine warfare in first place."¹⁶³ Therefore, the United Kingdom laid mines in the main routes of the English Channel and in the North Sea at the beginning of the war, in order to block German submarines. At the same time as this blockade,

¹⁶⁰ Fudan University Writing Group, *A History of the First World War*, People's Publishing House, 1974, p. 42.

¹⁶¹ (Soviet Union) [Vasily] Morozov, *History of the Second World War* (Volume 2), Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1974, p. 664.

¹⁶² Morozov, p. 665.

¹⁶³ Overseas Anti-Submarine Warfare Writing Group, *Overseas Anti-Submarine Warfare*, Beijing Publishing House, 1986, p. 71.

the United Kingdom also organized escort convoys. There were usually two methods of escorts, which were territorial escorts and accompanying escorts. At the same time as its operations to preserve traffic, the United Kingdom also actively destroyed Germany's maritime traffic lines; what was most representative of this was the Mediterranean battlefield. The United Kingdom's primary objective was to cut off maritime links between the Axis countries and the German Afrika Korps. Victory in operations to destroy traffic had a crucially important impact on the African battlefield. In addition, the United Kingdom and its allies paid attention to the development of weapons and equipment, and they stressed the added value that new technological equipment had in the material foundation of warfare. Being a bit better than the enemy technologically also was one of the major reasons for victory in the Battle of the Atlantic in the Second World War.

Therefore, for the United Kingdom, the sea is an expanded frontier; through the sea, it seized overseas colonies leading to the prosperity of the British Empire. In warfare, the sea was not only the front lines but was also the rear area; it was precisely the sea and the natural gift of the English Channel that allowed the British Isles to keep from being ravaged by Germany.

3. During the Cold War, the United Kingdom engaged in “a strategy of nuclear deterrence and preserving traffic” {he weishe yu bao jiao zhanlue}

For the United Kingdom, the Second World War was victory in a war, but it was also the loss of a world; that is to say, at the same time that the United Kingdom won the Second World War, its maritime strengths were greatly weakened by the decline in its overall national strength, and it thus lost maritime dominance. During the period of the Cold War, as one of the founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Kingdom's primary interests were concentrated in Western Europe; at the same time, the United Kingdom had also been the “Empire on which the sun never sets,” and the interests of its many colonies that were dispersed overseas required that the Navy guard those interests. Therefore, the British Navy shouldered dual functions; not only did it need to complete NATO operational tasks but it also needed to have a certain ability for blue-water operations. As a staunch ally of the United States, the United Kingdom always viewed the Soviet Union as the major threat to itself, and it believed that “The Soviet Navy was a serious threat to the West's maritime traffic lines.”¹⁶⁴ In order to defend against the Soviet Union's possible attacks in an effective manner and to protect maritime traffic and transportation lines, the United Kingdom proposed a “strategy of nuclear deterrence and protecting traffic.” The core detail of this was “To have the Soviet Union as the primary target of operations, to have Europe and the Atlantic as the main battlefields, and to also pay attention to regions outside of NATO; to rely on the United States' nuclear deterrence strengths and its own country's limited nuclear weapons, and together with NATO member states, to jointly promote a strategy of forward deployment and flexible reaction, in order to ensure the security of NATO's maritime traffic lines and protect the United Kingdom's interests.” Looking at protecting the security of maritime accesses, the [British] Navy's missions and tasks primarily were manifested in the following two areas.

The first was ensuring the security of traffic lines in the North Atlantic. The North Atlantic is a bridge that connects North America and Europe, and it had a strategic significance for the NATO alliance in which life and death are at stake. The British military consistently treated protecting the

¹⁶⁴ *Anti-Submarine Warfare*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1989, p. 8.

North Atlantic maritime access as an important strategic task. British maritime strategy, whose core was “protecting traffic,” was characterized by being regional, defensive, and an alliance. In the area of protecting maritime accesses, the British Navy commonly drew support in two forms: seizing command of the sea and escorts. The British Navy believed that command of the sea is a three-dimensional space that includes the air, the surface, and underwater. Struggles for command of the sea use many types of troop strengths, and they use a number of means, including forms of operations like blockades and raids, in order to struggle for the freedom of action of troop strengths in the eastern North Atlantic. At the same time, it also maintained a fairly large number of aircraft carrier groups in order to increase its abilities for blue-water attacks so as to provide an anti-submarine escort for large-scale merchant ships when necessary. At the beginning of the 1980s, the British Navy was ordered to patrol in the Persian Gulf and Oman Bay in order to keep the flames of war of the Iran-Iraq War from further spreading and endangering its own country’s shipping. The second was to protect the United Kingdom’s overseas interests. As an old-school colonial country, the United Kingdom had various kinds of overseas political, military, and economic interests. Currently, there were still forty-three countries in the world that have the British Queen as their head of state; there were instability factors in these colonies and in the British Commonwealth states, and as soon as it was necessary, the British Navy had to go to the battlefield, using armed strength to resolve issues. In addition to this, the United Kingdom also had large numbers of overseas bases in various places in the world; these bases could ensure that the British Navy would react rapidly at the first instance in major actions. Therefore, bases also were an important British overseas interest. In particular, after the Falkland Islands War, the United Kingdom made partial revisions to its naval missions and tasks, with an emphasis on strengthening its ability for blue-water operations. For example, it strengthened its stationing of troops overseas in Gibraltar, Diego Garcia,¹⁶⁵ and the Falkland Islands, in order to respond to unexpected events and to protect the United Kingdom’s overseas interests.

4. The British Navy has determined an “emergency choice” strategy for the new century

After the end of the Cold War, based on profound changes in the world setup, the British Navy made strategic adjustments to its main tasks; from having the Soviet Union as a hypothetical enemy, it switched to dealing with non-traditional security threats. More often, it joined with allies in handling some crises that could occur in various places in the world that touched on national security interests; these crises and conflicts endangered the United Kingdom’s widespread overseas interests and the security of overseas territories that stretched throughout the world, and they were actual threats that the United Kingdom faced. In order to adapt to changes in the international security situation, the United Kingdom decided in 1998 to no longer retain air-based nuclear weapons, and it thus became the only one out of four nuclear weapons states – the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France – to maintain a single sea-based nuclear strength; this sea-based strategic nuclear strength also became all of the United Kingdom’s strategic nuclear strengths. In the transformation of the British Navy, it will completely eliminate over the next ten years its outdated surface operations warships, submarines, and ships that were to be used for

¹⁶⁵ Diego Garcia was originally British; in 1966, the United States and the United Kingdom reached an agreement to use Diego Garcia in common for fifty years. From this, Diego Garcia gradually developed into the United States largest and most important modernized naval and air force base in the Indian Ocean.

North Atlantic operations as planned for during the Cold War, and it will have less equipment, but [it will have] new types of ships that are suitable for deploying strengths throughout the world, whose tonnage is greater and whose combat capabilities are greater. The United Kingdom is creating its own multi-use fleets, in accordance with a new “from the sea to the land” {*you hai xiang lu*} strategy; this “global fleet” {*quanqiu jiandui*} was going to have two large-scale aircraft carriers as its core, it would further expand the size of nuclear attack submarines and surface fighting ships, and under the premise of ensuring the ability to control the seas, it would focus on enhancing its ability to attack the land. The United Kingdom’s London Institute for Strategic Studies predicted that by around the year 2020, the British Navy hoped to surpass Russia and Japan, continuing the brilliance of the past 200 years.

However, in recent years, the economic crisis has led to a recession for multiple years in the British economy, and this has directly or indirectly affected the development of the British Navy. On 20 October 2010, the United Kingdom announced a huge savings plan, and the national defense budget was also greatly cut; the Royal Navy, which had been the final symbol of the British Empire, would “no longer have aircraft carriers in active service for at least ten years,” and the flagship of the British Royal Navy, the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal*, would be retired early. Although plans to launch two new-generation aircraft carriers that had been newly built would continue, once the work was completed, the aircraft carriers would not be equipped with shipborne aircraft until at least 2019. That is to say, for the first time since the Second World War, within the international aircraft carrier club, the United Kingdom will no longer be able to deploy aerial troop strengths from the sea. The United Kingdom will bid farewell to the “age of being a great nation” and become a “quasi-small nation;” this is a milestone for thoroughly bidding farewell to its “dream of dominance” and “dream of being a great nation.” Afterwards, the United Kingdom will only be a “US ally with quite a bit of power,” and the United Kingdom’s great-nation status will no longer exist. A 21 October 2010 report from the United States’ *Wall Street Journal* memorialized the British Empire: “In 1588, England defeated Spain’s invincible armada to rise to become a world power. In 1815, following the defeat of Napoleon [Bonaparte], the United Kingdom became the strongest nation in the world. In the First and Second World Wars that subsequently occurred, the United Kingdom rushed into battle and began to go downhill, and in the thirty years after 1945, it lost almost all the colonies that it had conquered over several centuries. Despite this, the United Kingdom remained the world’s eminent military power, and it still retained the ability to deploy troop strengths globally. In 1982, the United Kingdom sent sixty-five ships and 7,000 Royal Marines to drive the Argentines from the Falkland Islands. But now, the age of the United Kingdom’s powerful military seems to be about to end.”¹⁶⁶ This means that the United Kingdom is no longer a powerful maritime nation, and its ability to control the world’s maritime accesses will be greatly reduced.

¹⁶⁶ “The United Kingdom Is Reduced to a ‘Quasi-Small Nation’ Without an Aircraft Carrier,” *Global Times*, 22 October 2010, p. 16.

SECTION 2: THE BASIC LAWS BY WHICH THE WORLD SEA POWERS STRUGGLE FOR AND CONTROL MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...125

Since the 15th century, the sea has become an important link that connects the various continents of the world, and the strategic value of maritime accesses has grown. Through controlling key maritime chokehold routes, sea powers achieved control over the sea, and they then achieved their goals of expanding global trade, of squeezing out overseas resources, of maintaining the strength and prosperity of their national power, and even of dominating the world. Sea powers' struggle for and control of maritime strategic accesses had their characteristics and laws, and just like other laws, what they reflected was essential links of materials. Through a historical study and analysis of the activities of the powers as they struggled for and controlled maritime strategic accesses, we find things that have the nature of being laws, in order to guide current actual practices of maritime strategic accesses and to better explore the laws of the development of sea powers in history.

I. Maritime strategic accesses were the focus where the powers' strategic interests converged and collided...126

In opening up history, it is not hard for us to find that regardless of whether it was in the past or now, and regardless of whether it was the West or the East, when great maritime nations used books on plunder to write history, the sea powers never ceased to pursue benefits and to engage in a number of clashes; these most frequently occurred in several crucial strategic points. Looking at the makeup of geography, these points primarily were maritime accesses, and the scope included monitoring the islands and lands that affected the security of the accesses. Looking at their strategic value, these points choked and controlled world maritime traffic, and they had an irreplaceable function in supporting maritime nations as these expanded their interests and formed a global strategic setup; therefore, they became key chokepoint areas for maritime strategy. Strategists and military experts have always paid a great deal of attention to places that are able to have a major impact on the overall strategic situation. For example, the “lock and key locations” {*suoyao didian*} that Austria's Archduke Charles proposed, the “strategic decisive points” {*zhanlue jue ding dian*} that Switzerland's [Antoine-Henri] Jomini proposed, the “national territory lock and key” {*guotu suoyao*} that Prussia's [Carl von] Clausewitz proposed, the “decisive locations” {*jue ding didian*} that [Vladimir] Lenin proposed, the “fundamentally important places” {*genben zhongdi*} and “strategic hubs” {*zhanlue shuniu*} that Mao Zedong proposed, and the explanation that the *Chinese Military Encyclopedia* gives of “strategic hubs” are all places that have a fairly strong impact geographically on the overall strategic situation.¹⁶⁷ At the same time, they were also the places where struggles were the most intense, and they have always become the turning points and the key to the rise and fall of the powers. Maritime strategic accesses undoubtedly are this kind of crucial point. For the past several hundred years, struggle for and control over maritime strategic accesses have always been a top priority for sea powers in managing the seas.

The strategic value of maritime strategic accesses is determined by their geographical location and by their ability to support human activities. Speaking in general, the more advantageous maritime accesses' geographical locations are, the more human activities will rely upon them; their

¹⁶⁷ Dong Liangqing, *Strategic Geography*, National Defense University Press, 2000, p. 139.

strategic value will continually rise, and the chances that sea powers' interests will converge and collide will accordingly grow. An example is the Black Sea straits, which since ancient times have been places where military commanders inevitably fight over. Over a hundred years ago, competition by relevant countries to fight over and control the Black Sea straits intensified more and more. The Crimean War, which erupted in 1845, in essence was a fight that Czarist Russia had with the United Kingdom and France for control over the Near East; in particular, it was a struggle to seize the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles Strait between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, so the Black Sea straits have always been a focus of attention by sea powers from ancient times until today. [Friedrich] Engels pointed out that whoever controls these two straits can open and close at will the route in this distant corner to the Mediterranean. The Strait of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca, the English Channel, and the Suez Canal have also changed hands in history and become the focus of struggles by the powers, because of their extremely important strategic locations; Marx called the Suez Canal the "grand channel to the Orient." During the Second World War, the Allies' control over the English Channel turned the English Channel into a chasm against the German Nazi military, saving the United Kingdom, and it also thoroughly changed the war situation. Since the end of the Second World War, local wars that have occurred in some regions to a very great extent were because sea powers struggled for and controlled strategic key points. Examples were the war that the United Kingdom and France had with Egypt to struggle for the Suez Canal, the war where the United States struggled for control over the Panama Canal,¹⁶⁸ the war between the United Kingdom and Argentina over the Falkland Islands, and the Gulf War. Upon entering the 21st century, the United States still treated control over the world's sixteen strategic straits and waterways as a major strategic measure for engaging in its global strategy and for maintaining world hegemony.

Morgenthau wrote in *Politics Among Nations* that "Regardless of how the importance of other factors have changed in the course of history, what was important 2,000 years ago is still important today, and people who are concerned over diplomatic activities must take this factor into account."¹⁶⁹ The history of the world's oceans has confirmed this kind of law: the times develop and situations change, but the role of key points that have major geopolitical value will not change, and maritime strategic accesses are still the points where sea powers' strategic interests converge and collide.

II. Control over maritime strategic accesses and winning command of the sea are necessary conditions for the rise of great nations...128

Sea power is an important factor that affects the rise and fall of great nations as well as their success or failure. The highest form of competition or struggle among nations over the use and control of the seas is often manifested as war. Up until today, "The history of sea power is primarily a military history."¹⁷⁰ Mahan went at length to explain that only by relying on the superiority of

¹⁶⁸ Translator's note: Possibly referring to the 1989 US invasion of Panama.

¹⁶⁹ (United States) Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, translated by Xu Xin, et al., Chinese People's Public Security University Press, 1990, p. 152.

¹⁷⁰ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan *The Influence of Sea Power upon History (1660-1783)*, *An Changrong and Cheng Zhongqin, translators*, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1998, p. 1.

its sea power could the United Kingdom ensure that its nation was victorious, while because France and the Netherlands had lost their sea power, they could not recover; this reflected the profound effect that sea power has had on history. Although Mahan did not explicitly point out that the heart of command of the sea was control over maritime accesses, it is seen from many maritime practices that command of the sea was exhibited to a very great extent as control over maritime accesses and that control over maritime accesses is also the heart of control over maritime traffic. That is to say, the key to whether military struggles can win victory in warfare is determined by two capabilities: the first is a country's war potential, and the second is its military's actual war capabilities. And in order to transform war potential into actual war capabilities, it is necessary to rely on military traffic. Otherwise, military struggles will become water without a source, and war will become dried-up canals that have been cut off. Whether maritime accesses are unimpeded or not will have a direct and crucial impact on the security and development of sea countries and on the economic operations and battlefield situation of the various combatant countries. During the process by which the powers struggled to dominate the world, victory or defeat on the sea battlefield, and especially control over maritime chokepoint routes, had a decisive impact on the outcome of wars. This was so for all of them, regardless of whether it was the United Kingdom's victory over the Netherlands or it was the United Kingdom's victory over France or even the subsequent Spanish-American War and the Russo-Japanese War; what was on display was a struggle between "protecting traffic" and "disrupting traffic" {*po jiao*} and between "blockades" and "countering blockades" {*fan fengsuo*}. Just as Mahan pointed out, ensuring its own traffic lines is an important ability for a nation as it cuts off its enemy's traffic lines; it is the root of a country's armed forces as well as a natural prerogative of a sea power. In Mahan's view, what is referred to as command of the sea is control over maritime traffic lines.¹⁷¹ Control over maritime traffic lines means control over the sea and thus control over maritime trade. And the key to control over maritime traffic lines is occupying the key locations, strategic points, or bases that are close to the traffic lines. It can be said that the key to control over maritime traffic is control over key maritime chokepoint routes.

Starting from its use of the sea, mankind has consciously or unconsciously used maritime accesses, and the struggle for command of the sea can be traced back to ancient times. Early on, from 431 to 404 B.C., in the Peloponnesian War, which lasted twenty-seven years, the Spartan navy cut off Athens' routes to the Black Sea coast for transporting food by seizing the Hellespont Strait (today's Dardanelles Strait), destroying the Athenian navy at one blow and seizing command of the sea; this determined victory or defeat for the entire war. As a typical sea country, the United Kingdom was separated from the European continent by the English Channel, which was the key to controlling Europe's contacts with the various oceans of the world. This favorable geographical position enabled it to escape the endless fires of war on the European continent and to concentrate its national defense resources for use in developing its navy, thereby winning command of the sea in major sea regions. Thus, in the prolonged conflicts for supremacy at sea with Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and other sea powers, it always held the upper hand; in going forward, it could

¹⁷¹ Shi Diansheng, *Introduction to the Military History of the World's Navies*, Haichao Press, 2003, p. 153.

attack, and in retreat, it could defend. Since early modern times, control of straits and waterways became the focus of the sea powers' struggle for command of the sea.

In the Second World War, the United Kingdom's struggle with Germany and Italy over the Mediterranean was displayed in a concentrated manner in control over straits. The US and British militaries' effective aerial patrols and maritime interceptions in the Strait of Sicily turned any efforts by the Italian military to cross the strait into suicidal acts of rashness. The thorough interdiction of German and Italian maritime supply lines ultimately led to the complete defeat of the German and Italian militaries in North Africa. In operations along Mediterranean traffic lines over three years, the Italian and German navies lost a total of 389 ships of various kinds, with about 300,000 tons, and they lost 132 merchant ships, with about 2.1 million tons. The British and American Allies' navies lost 349 ships of various kinds, with about 500,000 tons, and at huge cost, the Allies won victory in operations along the Mediterranean maritime traffic lines.¹⁷² Similarly, in the Pacific sea warfare, the United States and Japan treated maritime strategic accesses as the direct objectives of sea warfare. In the latter period of the Second World War, the United States launched the world-renowned "hunger program," where it carried out a large-scale battle of blockades using naval mines against the main straits and bays of the Japanese homeland, which greatly weakened Japan's war potential and basically changed the course of the war, accelerating the death of the Japanese Empire.¹⁷³ After the [Second World] War, in the Yom Kippur War, the Egyptian Navy controlled command of the Red Sea, through naval mines blockades and [a blockade of] the use of the Port of Eilat and through facilities provided by the countries around the Persian Gulf maritime traffic lines; it blockaded the Strait of Tiran and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, thus carrying out a plan in an effective manner to cut off Israel's southern maritime traffic lines. According to what an Egyptian Navy official said, "Prior to the signing of an agreement to withdraw troops, not a single enemy ship was able to enter the Port of Eilat."¹⁷⁴

Facts prove that in the rise of sea powers, there is not one that has not taken command of the sea and established maritime dominance, through controlling important maritime traffic lines and maritime accesses in the world, and thus ruled the world. Control of maritime strategic accesses involves the rise and fall of sea countries, and it is a crucial link in the development of sea powers' strengths.

III. Ensuring energy security often is a behavioral impulse for struggling for control over maritime strategic accesses...130

The energy strategy of a country often is closely combined with its political and military strategies, forming a unified global energy geopolitical strategy. After the Second World War, developed countries' consumption of strategic resources grew rapidly, and their reliance on foreign resources, and especially on the Middle East's petroleum resources, constantly increased. At the same time that sea powers strengthened their control over the petroleum resources of the Middle East region, they also increased their control over strategic accesses like the Strait of Hormuz and the Straits of Malacca, and even did not hesitate to resort to armed force. According to relevant

¹⁷² Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Warfare*, Ocean Press, 1998, p. 51.

¹⁷³ Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Warfare*, Ocean Press, 1998, pp. 17-20.

¹⁷⁴ Li Jie, *Maritime Traffic Warfare*, Ocean Press, 1998, p. 93.

data and statistics, more than sixty percent of local wars since the Second World War were related to resources. Many “wars that were conducted on the ground were because of petroleum that was under the ground.”¹⁷⁵ The first petroleum crisis, in 1973, triggered the most serious global economic crisis since the Second World War, and the petroleum crisis, which lasted three years, created a serious impact on developed countries’ economies. US industrial production declined fourteen percent and Japan’s fell more than twenty percent; the economic growth of all industrialized countries clearly slowed, and so it is possible to see the huge power of petroleum resources. Global security and defense analyst Michael T. Claire, who is internationally qualified, predicted in his 2002 book *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* that there is no resource that can give rise in the 21st century to conflicts among nations more than petroleum can. Needless to say, struggles for and control over strategic resources, and especially over energy as represented by petroleum, that are vital to national security and economic development have become an important motive for launching wars, and ensuring the security of maritime strategic accesses is an important aspect in the struggle for and control over strategic resources.

Because energy is mostly distributed in countries whose economies are not at all developed or in developing countries, such as regions like the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, and South America, there is a serious separation between energy resources production and consumption in terms of area; oil-producing countries primarily control the exploitation of petroleum, while petroleum refining and sales are mostly controlled by Western transnational petroleum companies, so that the transportation of energy has become necessary. The United States on the one hand controls the supply sources of energy, while on the other hand, it also tries to control the transportation accesses of the world’s energy. Currently, the transportation thoroughfares for the world’s major energy sea route are all directly controlled or indirectly influenced by US military strengths, and they have become the lifeline of energy-importing countries. These thoroughfares include the Strait of Gibraltar, the Strait of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, the Panama Canal, and the Suez Canal. In the Persian language, “hormuz” means “the god of light,” and once it is blockaded or affected, the Western world will be trapped in darkness. For this reason, developed countries have engaged in a prolonged and intense competition and confrontation in the oil-producing regions in order to obtain petroleum, and they have strengthened their military deployments in oil-producing regions and their struggle for and control over maritime strategic accesses. In the past twenty years, the Persian Gulf has had the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the Iraq War break out, one after the other, and although the successive conflicts in the Gulf have had differing origins, almost every turbulence has been enveloped in the dense hue of petroleum, which has affected the normal exports of petroleum and created serious shortfalls in market supplies and intense fluctuations in international oil prices; this has served to contrast the importance and complexity of the Middle East region. During the Iran-Iraq War, the Strait of Hormuz was reduced to a battlefield where the two sides attacked oil tankers.

The focus of the United States’ global energy geopolitical strategy lies in controlling the sources of energy supplies and the energy transportation accesses. During the Cold War, the United States adopted major strategic measures against the Soviet Union’s intentions to control Middle East oil,

¹⁷⁵ Dong Liangqing, “The Wars over Resources and International Security,” *World Economics and Politics*, 1995, Issue 11, p. 37.

and it announced that in wartime, it needed to control the sixteen important straits and waterways in the world; the purpose of this was to blockade and isolate Soviet fleets, thereby having command of the sea for global waters. To do this, former US President [Ronald] Reagan said very bluntly, when responding to why it was necessary to control these thoroughfares, that it was “Because Soviet navies at these points could prevent the transport of the United States’ petroleum, foodstuffs, and raw materials in wartime,” and “Once any hostile action occurs, [the Soviets] would want to cut off and close these sixteen chokehold points.”¹⁷⁶ Former US Secretary of Defense [Harold] Brown even believed that “If the Soviet Union gains the right, politically, to control the Persian Gulf and the petroleum of the Persian Gulf, this would be equivalent to occupying the territory of Western Europe and Japan. This is because these countries rely to a very great degree on the petroleum of this region... Japan relies on the Middle East for eighty percent of its oil, Western Europe for fifty percent [of its oil], and the United States for fifteen percent [of its oil].”¹⁷⁷ The Gulf War of 1991 also was a war that struggled over petroleum resources. Former US President [Richard] Nixon frankly stated that the United States’ launching of hostilities against Iraq “was not for democracy, nor was it for liberty, but for oil.”¹⁷⁸ Therefore, former US National Security Advisor [Zbigniew] Brzezinski stressed that “The Persian Gulf countries, which have fifty-six percent of the world’s proven oil reserves, will continue to be an area of the West’s major strategic interests,” and “Any foreign influence’s desire to control the Persian Gulf will be viewed as an attack against the United States’ major interests.”¹⁷⁹ In August 1999, the US Department of Energy listed six major “chokeholds for world oil transportation,” these were the Straits of Malacca, the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bosphorus Strait, and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait; the total amount of transportation along these six major petroleum chokehold transportation accesses exceeded forty percent of the world’s total transportation throughput.¹⁸⁰ Currently, only the United States exerts effective control over these petroleum strategic accesses, by relying upon its powerful military superiority. In recent years, a series of US strategic activities in Kosovo, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, South Africa, and the Taiwan Strait have been inseparable from its control over petroleum strategic accesses.

Therefore, the struggle over petroleum and ensuring the security of petroleum has always been a top political, economic, and military priority for the various countries, and energy transportation accesses have had an even more important strategic status. The importance of energy transportation accesses is not less than that of energy stockpiles and production centers; at specific times, they are even more important. This is because future international conflicts and wars will not definitely occur in energy centers but are more likely to occur at energy transportation accesses, by adopting actions to blockade or intercept [ships], or forcing them to change the direction of

¹⁷⁶ Yan Jiatai, *Strategy and Resources*, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 201.

¹⁷⁷ Dong Liangqing, “The Wars over Resources, and International Security,” *World Economics and Politics*, 1995, Issue 11, p. 37.

¹⁷⁸ Dong Liangqing, “The Wars over Resources, and International Security,” *World Economics and Politics*, 1995, Issue 11, p. 37.

¹⁷⁹ Dong Liangqing, “The Wars over Resources, and International Security,” *World Economics and Politics*, 1995, Issue 11, p. 37.

¹⁸⁰ (United States) Michael T. Claire, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*, translated by Tong Xin’geng and Zhi Ye, Shanghai Translation Publishing House, p. 47.

their flow. This often is more convenient or more effective than directly attacking energy centers where there is a focus on defense. Therefore, “Controlling the world’s important petroleum production areas, monopolizing the international petroleum markets, and establishing so-called ‘petroleum hegemony’ not only can ensure US petroleum supplies for maintaining economic growth but they also can indirectly control countries that rely on importing petroleum; this is crucial for the United States’ establishing and maintaining global hegemony.”¹⁸¹

IV. Powerful maritime strengths are a necessity for controlling maritime strategic accesses...133

Mahan declared at the outset in his famous work *The Influence of Sea Power upon History (1660-1783)*, that “The history of sea power has primarily, although not totally, been the description of struggles between one nation and another, of competition between nations, and of violent behavior that ultimately often leads to war.” Mahan also pointed out that “Sea power first engages in commerce, and commerce advances along routes that are the most convenient. Consequently, military control also promotes and protects trade.”¹⁸² Max Weber also said that “Deploying a ship at a given time is more valuable than controlling a trade agreement that can be abrogated.”¹⁸³ The history of the development of sea power shows that navies from their birth have accompanied overseas trade and overseas expansion. Having military strengths that can keep maritime strategic accesses unimpeded not only can obtain overseas benefits but it can also promote the development of the domestic economy; its principle of “reciprocity” is that powerful military strengths can win wars, and wars can win territory, resources, and indemnities; the economy, and especially light and heavy industrial systems, also can provide a material basis for wars. The two complement each other. Throughout the history of the development of sea power, both in China and overseas, facts have been precisely thus. In the 5th century B.C., the Athenian politician and military expert Themistokles pointed out that Athens’ basic strategy was to develop its navy in order to establish a dominant position in all sea areas that could be controlled. At the beginning of the 16th century, the development of navigational technology allowed mankind to enter a global age, and the global age was a sea system; it provided spaces for Europe’s expansion and colonies. For example, the Netherlands established its own powerful fleets in order to protect its maritime trade throughout the world; it had heavy equipment and armed troops on its merchant ships on the far-off oceans, and once there was something that was unexpected, its merchant ships became warships. As for the United Kingdom, which had coastlines that were ten times longer, almost all maritime transportation was undertaken by rich Dutch. Portugal in the 16th century, the Netherlands in the 17th century, the United Kingdom in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the United States in the 20th century depended respectively on dominating naval innovations in their respective ages in order to become global powers.

¹⁸¹ Wang Dong, “Leading-Edge Issues of Concern to Current Geopolitical Studies,” *Leading-Edge Issues on International Relations Theories and Strategies*, Social Science Academic Press, 2007, p. 173.

¹⁸² (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy: Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practice of Military Operations on Land*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1996, p. 128.

¹⁸³ David Beetham, *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics*, translated by Xu Hongbing, Zhejiang People’s Publishing House, 1989, p. 46.

Looking at history, when the same access has two or more masters, and when the same market has two or more sellers or buyers, an instinctual request is ready to come out, which is to develop the navy to control the maritime access, to occupy overseas markets, and at the same time to prevent an opponent from controlling and occupying these; this is a consistent idea and action of sea powers. Prolonged competition has formed this kind of rule for survival at sea: whoever's sea power is strong will be able to hold the advantage in the struggle over control of the sea, and the sea rights and interests that he enjoys will be greater.

The history of sea power has repeatedly proven that everyone who dominates the sea will be a naval power. The reason that the United Kingdom was able to control the sea and to dominate Europe, for two centuries and more than a hundred years, respectively, and that it also became the most powerful world empire at that time, was that the United Kingdom at that time possessed the premier powerful navy in the world, and it relied on its powerful maritime strengths to seize large numbers of overseas colonies, with 111 times its own territory and more than eight times its own population, thus becoming the world's largest colonial empire. To use Mahan's words, "For many centuries, the development of British commerce, the security of its territory, the existence of its rich empire, and its position as a major world nation can all be directly traced back to the rise of the United Kingdom's maritime strengths."¹⁸⁴ When former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill summarized the role and status of the British Navy during this period, he pointed out that "The status of the Navy was solidified to an unprecedented degree; there is nobody who doubts anymore what the Navy can in the final analysis do, and in actuality, there is almost nothing that the Navy cannot do."¹⁸⁵ British historian Professor [Christopher] Lloyd also believed that it was possible to see that the United Kingdom's maritime strengths had a broader impact than any previous maritime empire. Every time that the edifice of the Empire underwent turbulence, it dispatched the Navy for protection.¹⁸⁶ For another example, in Czarist Russia, Peter I declared that "Any ruler who only has an army can only be considered as having one hand; only a ruler who at the same time also has a navy can be considered as being complete with two hands."¹⁸⁷ "When Russia can freely enter the Indian Ocean, it then can build its own military and political rule throughout the world." Therefore, after Czarist Russia seized the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, it still continued to vigorously develop its navy and to launch global expansion.

The US Navy, which came from behind, also proved this historical law. Mahan analyzed the digging of the Panama Canal and the building of the Navy's strengths, and he believed that once the canal was dug, it would have an important impact on the United States. He also gave a warning that if the United States did not have sufficient military strengths and naval strengths to deal with things, the opening of the Canal would undoubtedly be a calamity for the United States. He called

¹⁸⁴ Zhang Shiping, *China's Sea Power*, People's Daily Press, 2009, p. 80.

¹⁸⁵ (Soviet Union) Trukhanovski, *The Life of Winston Churchill*, translated by Zhang Deguang, Beijing Publishing House, 1982, p. 131.

¹⁸⁶ (United States) Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, translated by Wang Baocun and Chen Jingbiao et al., Qiushi Publishing House, 1988, p. 225.

¹⁸⁷ (Soviet Union) Sergey Georgiyevich Gorshkov, *Sea Power of the State*, translated by Fang Fang, Ocean Press, 1985, p. 5.

on the United States, that “When it unearthed the first spadeful of earth for the Panama Canal, it needed to begin building a new type of navy,” and when the Canal became an established fact, the strengths of the United States’ navy must be at least a match for the United Kingdom’s naval strengths. This shows that it is far from enough to merely have a convenient access; it is also necessary to have powerful maritime strengths for controlling [the access]; this is a necessary prerequisite for keeping the maritime access unimpeded and the maritime traffic line secure. The Soviet Union’s Gorshkov believed that the Navy was “one hand” of the Soviet Union; the role of its strategic nuclear strengths in peacetime as a means of restraint and for maintaining a strategic balance of power could not be taken lightly. As one of the state’s tools, the navy’s strengths have advantages that the other services do not have; it “can be used in peacetime to display a country’s economic power and military power, and among the various services, the navy is most able to protect in an effective manner the state’s foreign interests.” Its “military presence” on the world’s oceans is also a quite important means for achieving [the country’s] foreign political goals.¹⁸⁸ Possession of a powerful navy is an important tool and means in peacetime for exploiting the seas, using the seas, protecting the security of routes, and keeping maritime accesses unimpeded. In 2006, Russian President Putin emphatically pointed out at the first government work conference that “Russia urgently needs to build powerful naval units in order to meet the needs of the country’s interests and development. If we abandon the building of the navy, Russia will lose its right to speak on the international stage.”¹⁸⁹

Therefore, upholding the nation’s sea interests is a realistic choice for a coastal nation. Speaking in a certain sense, the history of the development of sea power is a history of activities for struggling for control over maritime accesses. In today’s age, in order to become a sea power, it is still necessary to first be a naval power. Just as Robert Keohane has pointed out, “Hegemony in the world’s political economy is first superiority in material resources; second, it must have sufficient military strengths and have the ability to protect the international political and economic order that it dominates.”¹⁹⁰

V. Advanced science and technology provides effective means for controlling maritime strategic accesses...136

Scientific and technological progress is a material [impetus] and the number-one impetus for all military development. Several thousand years of the history of naval warfare have shown that science and technology is always one of the primary factors driving the building of naval strengths and the development of the struggle for command of the sea. In the process of the historical evolution from the development of oared vessels to fleets with sails and then to mechanically powered fleets and nuclear fleets, it is possible to clearly see the historical track of the driving role of science and technology.

¹⁸⁸ (Soviet Union) Sergey Georgiyevich Gorshkov, *Sea Power of the State*, translated by Fang Fang, Ocean Press, 1985, p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ Yang Jinsen, *A Brief History of the Rise and Fall of Sea Powers*, Ocean Press, 2007, p. 426.

¹⁹⁰ (United States), Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, translated by Su Changhe, et al., Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 2001, pp. 37-46.

During the period of oared vessels, the level of people's science and technology was low. They mostly used swords and spears, and in wars to seize straits, people mostly used close-in battles where they threw things, boarded ships, and rammed ships; the sea areas of operations took place in offshore sea areas within the line of sight. After the 16th century, with the development of the Industrial Revolution, the various European countries entered the age of capitalism, one after the other; social production forces rapidly developed, and the levels of science and technology constantly rose, while the navies of the world welcomed the age of sailing fleets. The advancement by leaps and bounds of navigational technology and shipbuilding technology, the daily improvements in the performance of naval artillery, and the great increase in ships' mobility and firepower changed the face of struggles for command of the sea. Navies moved from the coasts and offshore waters to the sea, and from this, sea power had fairly strong military functions, economic functions, and certain diplomatic functions, becoming a powerful tool in the struggle to dominate the sea. It also mounted the stage of history as an independent strategic strength, and it had a broad impact worldwide. Because 15th-century Portugal took the lead in mastering advanced navigation technology, and because it had advanced weapons for that time, it became the world's first sea power in the early modern sense. Its "cannon carriers" held an absolute advantage. It was the first to depart the narrow spaces of its land territory, and it built a huge network of colonies from Gibraltar and the Cape of Good Hope to the Indian Ocean and the Straits of Malacca, and then to the Far East, becoming a global maritime master that ruled the world's seas for a century. From the 16th to the 18th century, the British Navy also relied on its equipment, which was constantly being upgraded and improved, to defeat Spain's "invincible Armada" and to win the "sea battle of Trafalgar" against France, in succession; it defeated one opponent after another, becoming the unparalleled "master of the sea" in the 19th century for the entire world. Afterwards, the expansion of sea power functions relied more on progress in technology; with the appearance of mechanized fleets composed of ironclads and battleships that used steam engines and internal combustion engines for power, the competition for sea power was expressed in a more concentrated manner in a competition over ships' technological performance. Whichever side's ship tonnage was greater, whose cannon caliber was greater, which had larger numbers, and which had longer range, that side's sea power held the advantage.

Upon entering the Industrial Age, the great rise in the levels of science and technology touched off a revolution in naval warfare. The invention of new types of weapons and equipment, such as torpedoes and naval mines, and the emergence of new types of ships, such as cruisers, battleships, destroyers, submarines, and aircraft carriers, resulted in maritime operational actions extending to multidimensional sea spaces, including the surface, the air, and underwater. This greatly enhanced the power of navies' operations, and it provided new means and forms for seizing command of the sea and controlling key maritime chokepoint routes. During the First World War, Germany used part of its newly invented submarines as sea wolves in the North Sea and the English Channel in order to break the United Kingdom's maritime blockade, while another part of the submarines passed through the English Channel, which was densely covered with mines, in order to enter western waters and attack merchant ships. The number of Entente merchant ships that were sunk rose in a straight line, causing the British economy and war potential to begin to wither. During the Second World War, Italy's participation in the war put all British maritime traffic lines, from

the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, under attack from Axis countries' navies. In order to reverse this unfavorable situation, the British Navy's Mediterranean fleet used aircraft carrier groups to create a precedent where aircraft carrier-based aircraft were used to raid enemy naval bases, forcing the Italian fleet to leave its base at Taranto and to withdraw from the port of Naples. After this, the ratio of British and Italian naval strengths in the Mediterranean underwent a major change.

After the Second World War, the emergence of strategic nuclear submarines expanded the struggle over maritime strategic accesses to include the entire sea space, including underwater and the surface as well as the sea and the air, becoming an important means for struggling for command of the sea and for control over key maritime chokehold routes. The development of maritime weapons and equipment, and especially the emergence of long-range precision guided weapons, caused the security of maritime strategic accesses to face new threats. At the same time, satellite reconnaissance devices and other intelligence technological equipment also made maritime strategic accesses more transparent. The impact brought about by this advanced technology on the one hand threatened the security of maritime accesses, while on the other hand, it also became an effective means to expand sea power functions so that sea powers' ability to control maritime strategic accesses was markedly enhanced.

Today, when advanced and new technology is daily advancing by leaps and bounds, we must see that faced with distant attacks by missiles and long-range aircraft, it is not impossible to get around the geographical limitations of maritime strategic accesses. But although the influence of sea geography on military actions is weakened, military actions still cannot entirely evade the limitations of geographical conditions.¹⁹¹ Only those major countries that hold an advantage in maritime shipping technology and maritime military technology can display their strengths and prestige in sea regions and can have opportunities in the area of command of the sea and in using maritime strategic accesses. Command of the sea and authority over accesses in the new age must combine technological factors and respond to these; technological conditions will always be a necessary means that highlights a nation's sea power and status.

VI. Ensuring the security of maritime strategic accesses requires relying on maritime bases...138

In accordance with the geographical laws of distance attenuation, the greater the distance from a target that is being controlled, the weaker the ability to control it will be; contrariwise, [the closer the distance,] the stronger [this ability] will be. The characteristic of the law of distance attenuation is that the effect between geographical key factors is inverse to their distance, but it is proportional to technological progress, alliance relationships, and overseas bases. The closer a country is to a maritime strategic access, the greater its ability to control and influence [this access] will be; conversely, the smaller [this ability] will be. "When a country's navy is active on a battlefield that is distant from that country, it will unavoidably have to take a permanent position in this region; whether the navy's activities are effective or not is closely related to this position."¹⁹² "A government that possesses large numbers of overseas interests must adopt a deterrent strategy (in order to prevent threats to these interests) and a strategy of stationing troops overseas (so as to

¹⁹¹ Li Yihu, *Geopolitics: Dichotomy and Beyond*, Peking University Press, 2007, p. 226.

¹⁹² Zhang Xiaolin, *A Summary of Mahan's "Naval Strategy" Reader*, Naval Command College, 1989.

protect its interests when deterrence fails).”¹⁹³ As Mackinder saw it, “Sea powers basically are decided by their suitable bases, by bases where products are rich and that are also secure,” and “The world promontory (the continent that extends south between Britain and Japan) is surrounded by sea powers; it can engage in foreign trade along the coast, but it also can come under attack by sea. Maritime people select small islands along the coast of the continent to serve as their bases for trade or operations in those areas. The reason is that these places can provide them with ship anchorages and shelter from the wind, and let their warehouses get secure support.”¹⁹⁴ Mahan believed that “If a country that wants to ensure its control over a given important water region does not seek some strategic stronghold in this water region, it will have nothing to base itself on.”¹⁹⁵ If it wants to control the seas, it needs to have fixed bases, that is, “a permanent fortress similar to one established along the country’s border.”

Historically, in the history of the development of sea powers, they have all launched unequal trade with other countries or regions after using armed force to subjugate these other countries or opening treaty ports, and the prerequisite condition for this was to carry out necessary military deployments in key points on land or at sea. Portugal was the earliest country to benefit by controlling maritime accesses. As new maritime routes were opened, Portugal controlled the main accesses on the world’s seas. In Europe, it controlled the English Channel; in Africa, it controlled the Cape of Good Hope; in Asia, it controlled the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Straits of Malacca; and in the Americas, it controlled the Atlantic route and the Strait of Magellan. The places that Portugal went to became Portugal’s colonies, and it used the geographical advantage of its colonies to control the maritime accesses. Following this, the old-school colonial countries of the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom were all this way. In the mid-17th century, if the United Kingdom and France wanted to achieve dominance in the Mediterranean region and to ensure maritime trade and colonies, they needed to struggle for some important spots, like Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus, and to deploy troop strengths in these places and establish permanent military fortresses. And the existence of these bases had a direct supporting role for the overseas trade of these old-school imperialist countries and for the economies of their colonies.¹⁹⁶ In particular, in the process of the United Kingdom’s gradual domination of the world, it established overseas bases or trade relay stations of differing sizes and differing distances in the world’s major sea areas. It was precisely these bases that allowed the United Kingdom to win an overseas colonial system that extended throughout the world so that the United Kingdom became a powerful and prosperous empire that dominated the world for close to three centuries.

In the mid-19th century, the European powers engaged in geopolitical expansion in East Asia from their bases and key points, again engaging in development, and they established buffer zones

¹⁹³ (United States) Ashley Tellis, *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age: Resources - Performance - Military Capabilities*, translated by Men Honghua, et al., Xinhua Publishing House, 2002.

¹⁹⁴ (United Kingdom) Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality [A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction]*, Wu Yuan, translator, Commercial Press, 1965, pp. 43, 45.

¹⁹⁵ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy: Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practice of Military Operations on Land*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1994, pp. 259, 189.

¹⁹⁶ Ouyang Wei, “On Strategic Deployments,” National Defense University doctoral dissertation, 2006, p. 87.

and breakwaters. Based on geopolitics, the European powers and the United States carried out a strategy for winning, in which they seized stations for storing coal, established naval bases, controlled important routes, used small-scale fleets for threats, or concentrated maritime strengths to defeat their opponents' navies. Mahan pointed out that the United States should establish coaling stations in a widespread manner in key regions, in order to control Asia, the Pacific, the Atlantic, and major straits and accesses.¹⁹⁷ A naval officer, Mai-ken,¹⁹⁸ on the other hand, proposed a broader naval strategy, using Guam as a basis: If Guam was integrated into a first-class US naval base, it would be able to protect and deter the entire strategic region, from Vladivostok to Singapore, thus protecting and deterring the strategic key areas along the flank of the traffic lines from Australia to Esquimalt.¹⁹⁹ After the Second World War, the two major military blocs of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, founded with the United States and the Soviet Union at their heads, each established large numbers of overseas military bases; many of these military bases, spread all over the world, were located in maritime accesses or in sea areas close to them. The military base that the Soviet Union established in Egypt had effective control over the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, and it controlled the strategic initiative in the Middle East region. Through the more complete network of bases that the United States established in the world's oceans, the United States achieved control over maritime accesses thousands of miles away, even though most of the accesses were distant from the US homeland.

From ancient times until now, sea powers have needed to establish military bases overseas in order to protect the interests of maritime direction, to get command of the sea, and to control maritime accesses. Although great risks, great investment, and great threats existed in the establishment of bases, their geographical location, richly endowed by nature, and the huge deterrence resulting from their strategic layout, as well as the rapid reaction capabilities of their flexible movement, still [made them] realistic choices that were indispensable for sea powers in order to control maritime strategic accesses.

VII. Islands are important nodes for controlling maritime strategic accesses...141

Speaking in general, continental countries primarily have three forms for gaining command of the sea: the first is to rely on land bases, the second is to rely on island bases, and the third is to rely on aircraft carriers. Of these, island bases have the dual effects of land bases and aircraft carriers; not only are they unsinkable aircraft carriers but they also are an extension of the continent toward the depths of the sea, and they can greatly expand the range of sea control.²⁰⁰ When invaders attack the mainland, they mostly first occupy islands, and islands are also sentry posts for sea defense, in order to prevent invaders from attacking from the sea. Just as Mahan said, when maritime routes only have value for use after they have passed by certain strongholds in the sea,

¹⁹⁷ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, translated by Xiao Weizhong and Mei Ran, China Press, 1997, p. 307.

¹⁹⁸ Translator's note: This is the Chinese rendition of an American name, probably McCain; this could be Vice Admiral John McCain.

¹⁹⁹ Yu Zhisen, *A General History of the United States* (Volume 4), Beijing People's Publishing House, 2002, pp. 111-113.

²⁰⁰ Lou Xichun, *Sea Islands*, Beijing Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, p. 21.

[these strongholds] will have an effect on these routes. This effect becomes very great in places that these routes pass through, sufficient to control everything.

Most of the sea powers in history have paid a great deal of attention to islands whose geographical location is important, and they have used these islands to control maritime accesses. During the United Kingdom's period of colonial expansion, it relied upon its maritime superiority and continually occupied islands and peninsulas that were traffic hubs, in order to have these be naval bases and commercial strongholds. When using the theory of sea power to plan US national interests, because Mahan paid a great deal of attention to the strategic significance of places like the Isthmus of Panama, Hawaii and the Philippines, he vigorously called on the United States to expand toward the Pacific region. He believed that control of the seas primarily was determined by superiority in the naval aspect, but it was also partially determined by control over crucial key points, and the Isthmus of Panama and the Hawaiian Islands were this kind of strategic stronghold. Mahan believed that the unique location of Hawaii "emphasized the strategic importance of these kinds of islands;"²⁰¹ "They can directly boost our country's commercial security, and its control over the sea," and "Obtaining Hawaii prevents any other power from occupying these islands, which would create an unfavorable and threatening situation for our country."²⁰² Similarly, Malta, which is situated in the Mediterranean, was an important naval and air base for the British military during the Second World War, which "the enemy must attack and we must defend." The British navy and air forces that were stationed there frequently attacked the German and Italian Mediterranean supply lines, so the Germans and Italians who were engaged in logistics supply through the Mediterranean to [Erwin] Rommel's North African groups of group armies were trapped in a great predicament. The Pacific War of the Second World War was carried out almost entirely centered on struggling over islands. Intense and brutal engagements took place on Saipan, Wake, the Hawaiian Islands, Midway, the Marshall Islands, and their environs; struggling over islands and shoals played a crucially important role in controlling the important routes in the Pacific and in changing the situation of engagements. As the United States smoothly carried out its strategic counterattack on the Pacific battlefields, Japan very quickly lost its bases on the Gilbert Islands, the Marshall Islands, Saipan, and the Palau Islands, thereby turning assumptions [the Japanese had] about convoys that depended on islands for the overall shielding of their traffic lines into a bubble.

After the Second World War, the United States occupied many islands in the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the Atlantic whose geographical location was important, and it used these islands as "relay stations" and "stepping stones" that could achieve its strategic goals of global attack, global engagement, and global reach. Among the maritime strategic accesses that the United States stressed and was concerned over, apart from accesses like the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Black Sea straits, which were quite narrow, and where the land on the two coasts could control the accesses, and also apart from sea areas south of the Cape of Good Hope and the bays of Alaska, which have broad sea regions without islands that hold a strategic

²⁰¹ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, translated by Xiao Weizhong and Mei Ran, China Press, 1997, p. 316.

²⁰² (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, translated by Xiao Weizhong and Mei Ran, China Press, 1997, p. 307.

point, most of the other key chokepoint routes have islands that can act as fortresses in the water for blockading maritime strategic access. [The United States] established a naval and air force base in 1972 on the island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago in the northern part of the Indian Ocean, based on a British-US agreement, and this controlled a large swath of sea territory and routes in the northern Indian Ocean. In the southwest mouth of the Korea Strait is South Korea's Cheju Island, where South Korea's Cheju naval base has been built; this has an important military value for controlling the exit at the southwest end of the Korea Strait. To the north is South Korea's Cheju Island, in the center is Japan's Tsushima Island, and to the southeast is Japan's Iki Island and Fukuoka Island; these are strategic points that control this strait. Of them, Tsushima Island is located in the center of the strait, and it is known as "the front line of Japan's national defense;" it is a strategic military point by which Japan controls the Korea Strait, and it has Japan Self-Defense forces stationed there.²⁰³

With the implementation of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, coastal countries' economic, political, and military understanding about islands grew. By occupying islands, it was not only possible to obtain wide swaths of sea regions surrounding the islands as well as the resources of the sea regions but it was also possible to control straits and waterways. Thus, confrontations over islands became a focal point in conflicts over national interests and in geostrategy. For a number of years, Iran has been consistently confronting the United Arab Emirates over the ownership of three islands at the northern mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. The northern mouth of the Strait of Hormuz has Qeshm Island as well as Abu Musa Island, Greater Tunb Island, and Lesser Tunb Island; whoever has these islands will be able to control the key chokepoint route from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. Yemen and Eritrea have had intense armed conflicts arise involving struggles over the disputed Hanish Islands in the Red Sea sea region; to a great degree, this is because these islands are situated in the northern mouth of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, controlling the main channel of the Red Sea, and so their strategic status is important. In the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait is the island of Perim, which divides the strait into an eastern and a western channel; although this island is small and its resources are not plentiful, it has historically been a key military point. Currently, Yemen has built a naval base on the island. Among the several straits that empty out onto the Baltic Sea are more than 400 islands of varying sizes in their center and nearby areas, so blockades are extremely easy. Although the Mozambique Channel is quite broad, the Comoros are spread across its northern mouth; if these are defended in wartime, crossing the channel will be no easy thing. In the Taiwan Strait are the Penghus; the Magong naval base has been built on these islands. The Straits of Florida are the southern gate to the United States. The Florida islands in the strait are a key military point that controls these straits, and the United States has built the Key West naval base at the southwestern tip of the islands.

Although the status and role of islands differ because of the background of the age and because the various countries' needs for sea power change at differing periods, what can be affirmed is that islands whose geographical location is important and that are struggled over and occupied are important targets in sea powers' control over maritime strategic accesses. Relying on these islands,

²⁰³ Lou Xichun, *Sea Islands*, Beijing Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, p. 23.

sea powers can control the initiative over maritime strategic accesses in an effective manner and can maintain the security of maritime strategic channels by being nearby.

VIII. Weak countries that are near maritime strategic channels are mostly controlled by major countries...143

The geopolitical location that each country has is specific, and they probably will produce specific geopolitical features and potentials, either giving this country a certain natural advantage or giving this country a certain natural disadvantage, thereby affecting the country's survival and development. If a country's geographical location is superior, this can let it have a strategic superiority in international relations and have a status that takes the initiative in international relations, but a country whose geographical location is not favorable will often result in it being inferior strategically, and it will be in a passive status in international relations. Looking at history, very few countries that are located close to maritime strategic accesses are major countries; this is primarily because their unique geographical location often turns them into the focus of fights by great maritime nations, and they are ill-fated. For example, an obscure peripheral small country that was originally beside a canal could have a major change in its strategic status because the canal transverses the country. Some of them are dismembered, such as Panama, which was "a country that was created because of digging the canal;" or they are occupied, like the Suez Canal, which was a colony of the powers from its start right up until 1967; or they are leased, as with the Philippines, Japan, and other countries. Some also have their worth increase sharply.

In essence, national interests are perpetually the starting points and end points of strategy; alliances with other countries are done to expand or promote their own interests. Doing things for the sake of interests is a law in countries' alliances. Because a great maritime nation is distant from some important maritime strategic accesses, it often attaches its strengths and influence to a small or weak country that is close to the maritime strategic access so that even though [the great nation] is a thousand miles away, it will be able to achieve its goal of controlling the maritime strategic access and maritime traffic hubs. In this area, the United States' actions have been the most notable; in the United States' global strategy, in addition to continuing to maintain relations with some traditional European allies, the United States also pays a great deal of attention to alliances with small countries that are close to maritime strategic accesses in order to achieve its goals of controlling maritime strategic accesses and maritime traffic hubs. In the Asia-Pacific region, the United States has forged alliances with such countries as Japan, Singapore, and the Philippines. In regard to Japan's geographical role, to use the words of former US Secretary of State Dulles, "It is a crucial factor in the coastal chain of islands on the margins of the mainland."²⁰⁴ Japan controls crucial thoroughfares in the Ryukyu Islands, such as the Miyako Strait and the Osumi Strait; these play an important role in the United States' strategy for an island chain that contains China, and they place a serious restraint on the PRC navy's going beyond the island chain. Although Singapore is not a formal US ally, still, because it controls the Singapore Strait and the Straits of Malacca, it is viewed by the United States as a strategic outpost for monitoring and controlling the South China Sea and for entering the Indian Ocean, and it is also considered by many US officials to be the United States' most active and reliable partner in Southeast Asia. Latin America has

²⁰⁴ Wu Xuewen, *Japan's Diplomatic Orbit*, (1945-1989), Current Affairs Press, 1990, p. 18.

always been viewed as the United States' backyard; strategically, it can "help to defend traffic and sea transportation lines, including the Panama Canal," and it "provides a logistics base for the military strengths" of the United States. A US ambassador to Panama, Simon Ferro, said that "The three factors why Panama is attractive to us are: location, location, location."²⁰⁵ In the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Middle East crisis, and the Gulf War, the Panama Canal was the main transportation access for US military personnel and war materials. Currently, although the Canal has been returned to Panama, the United States still considers that it has established a "duty" to defend the Canal. Similarly, in the 1970s, the Soviet Union developed a strategic cooperative relationship with South Yemen and Ethiopia, in order to control the Middle East and enter the Indian Ocean. Prior to Eritrea's 1993 independence, Ethiopia extended east to Djibouti, and it bordered the Red Sea to the north; together with the South Yemen of that time, they controlled the north and south of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, which was a chokehold for the three continents of Asia and Africa.²⁰⁶ Controlling the South Yemen of that time and Ethiopia meant "clamping down the key chokehold route that the West passed through going north through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden into the Persian Gulf."²⁰⁷ For the Soviet Union, it was an important step in its "advance to the Indian Ocean" strategy and for sending troops to Afghanistan.

Great nations control small countries close to maritime strategic accesses for the sake of the needs of their strategic interests, while small countries close to maritime strategic accesses ally with great nations in order to draw support from the great nations' strengths and to provide shelter for their security needs. These small countries whose strengths are insufficient often will strengthen their own strengths through the alliance and even will abandon temporary interests and local interests for the sake of the alliance, in exchange for the great nations' support. Therefore, most of these kinds of small countries cannot dictate their own fate and are manipulated to a lesser or greater degree by the great nations, becoming a spokesperson for sea powers in their region. The Suez Canal opened in 1869, and the United Kingdom and France monopolized ninety-six percent of the shares of the Suez Canal Company; they obtained huge profits each year, and it was not until 1956 that Egypt formally nationalized the Canal. The building of the Panama Canal was finished in 1914, and the United States continually controlled navigation on the Canal; through the Panamanian people's unremitting efforts, Panama recovered the Canal at the end of 1999. Of course, the most typical is still Singapore. Because Singapore is restrained by such factors as population and land area, it is hard for it to compare in terms of its status in Southeast Asian matters with other great nations, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. For this reason, Singapore has molded itself into an "intermediary" in the relations of the world's great nations so that each party has a need for it, and it has thus continually raised its international status. Ever since its founding, Singapore has actively participated in US military actions in Southeast Asia. Its naval and air force bases have been provided to the US military for its perpetual use, and Singapore has become the only permanent foothold for the US military in Southeast Asia; apart from Japan, there are not many countries in the world that permit US aircraft carriers to be stationed in them under

²⁰⁵Quoted from *Wen Wei Po*, 15 December 1999.

²⁰⁶ Translator's note: The third continent probably was Europe.

²⁰⁷ Zhang Wenmu, *On China's Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, p. 59.

emergency conditions. For the United States, Singapore's importance is not merely shown in its Asia-Pacific strategy, but even more, it appears in [US] global strategy.

The history of the sea has repeatedly had this kind of asymmetrical national relationship: most of the countries that are close to maritime accesses that have strategic significance are small and weak, while the ones that control maritime strategic accesses are sea powers. Small and weak countries become the allies and forward fronts of sea powers and are used by them to control thoroughfares, contend for hegemony over the sea, and thus control the world, thereby becoming important nodes in the key chokehold routes in the various oceans of the world.

CHAPTER 4

THE GEOPOLITICAL DOCTRINE OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSSES AND ITS IMPACT...147

In the structure of each type of interests, objectives, theory, concepts, and school of thought, it is possible to conceive of innumerable strategic combinations.

- John Collins

In the course of the development of human history, the status and role of maritime strategic accesses have changed as history has developed. People's understanding of maritime strategic accesses has also continually deepened, forming some geopolitical doctrines that were representative in nature and forming a consensus about their status and role and about geostrategy, as well as the pursuit of interests.

As an important and applied system of strategic theory, geostrategy guides the security practices of the various countries, and it affects the course of the world's development. From [Alfred Thayer] Mahan's "theory of sea power" to [Halford] Mackinder's "theory of land power" and [Emilio] Douhet's "theory of air power;" from the British school's "doctrine of the continental heartland" to the American school's "doctrine of the rimland," and from [Bernard] Cohen's "efforts at world division" and [Immanuel] Wallerstein's "world systems theory" to [Zbigniew] Brzezinski's "grand chessboard" and [Samuel] Huntington's "clash of civilizations," these all reflect the angle of geopolitical relations, as they consider and plan national security and interests. They all describe in-depth the complicated relations that geographic factors have with national politics, economics, and military matters, and to differing degrees, they touch more and more deeply on the issue of the status and role of maritime strategic accesses. It can be said that regardless of whether it is Mahan's "theory of sea power" or [Nicholas] Spykman's "theory of the rimland," these all have profoundly revealed the impact that maritime strategic accesses have on geostrategy, that is, the logical relationship of command of the sea – the rimland – control of maritime strategic accesses. Therefore, they have also formed some influential strategic thinking.

SECTION 1: THE GEOPOLITICAL DOCTRINE OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSSES...148

I. The thinking about maritime strategic accesses in "the theory of sea power"...148

From the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century was the period when the United States was transitioning from free capitalism to monopoly capitalism and moving toward expansion outward. The need for the monopoly capitalist class to seek overseas markets was quite intense; they hoped to be able to engage in an overseas policy of expansion, to expand overseas markets, and to seek maximization of profits, and the ocean undoubtedly was the best channel for going to overseas markets. During this period, the US Navy's strategic geographer and historian Mahan wrote a series of treatises – *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*; *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793–1812*; *Sea Power in Its Relation to the War of 1812*; and *Naval Strategy: [Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practice of Military Operations on Land]* – and he fully utilized and learned from the results

of studies on Napoleon [Bonaparte], [Carl von] Clausewitz, and [Antoine-Henri] Jomini; in particular, the theories and thinking of Jomini had the greatest impact on Mahan. Jomini's military theory had land warfare as its basis; Mahan successfully transferred these to naval warfare. Mahan believed that as for the United States, the nation's survival relied upon control of the oceans. In ensuring the sea power of a country, it was first necessary to ensure its power over peripheral maritime traffic thoroughfares and key sea regions. "That is, a country that gains command of the sea or control over maritime hubs has mastered the historical initiative."²⁰⁸ [He believed that] whoever can have effective control over maritime accesses and straits that have strategic significance, can control the seas, and the focus of world power will be concentrated in the hands of those countries that possess the seas and that can control the seas; those countries that possess straits and accesses and that can control those accesses quite naturally will possess the benefit of the opportunity to seize command of the sea. Taking an overall look at the history of naval warfare, [he said that] we find that the true connotation of command of the sea refers to [the fact that] the targets that we constrain are the enemy ships or merchant fleets that are active on the seas and not the seas themselves; in actuality, it is control over maritime traffic lines. It can be said thusly, that control of maritime traffic lines means control of the sea, and thus control of maritime trade.²⁰⁹ Maritime traffic lines are the lifeline of fleets for maritime operations, and Mahan pointed out more than once that traffic dominates warfare. "The strategic key factor that is traffic submerges all other key factors."²¹⁰ The ability to ensure your own traffic lines while simultaneously cutting off the enemy's traffic lines is the basis for a country's armed forces, as well as an innate privilege of a maritime power,²¹¹ and it plays a decisive role in victory or defeat in naval warfare.

Therefore, on the basis of investigations and studies in the history of the rise and fall over 300 years of such countries as Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France, Mahan believed that the rotation of domination among these countries in essence was that sea power changed hands and was transferred; if a country wanted to become a power, it needed first to control the seas. Control of the seas was equivalent to control of trade, control of trade required control over maritime traffic lines as well as control over the straits and maritime accesses that have important strategic significance, and control over maritime strategic accesses primarily appeared in the form of control over maritime traffic lines. At the same time, Mahan repeatedly demonstrated the new viewpoint that maritime hegemony was superior to land hegemony, and he summed this up as a tenet that had the nature of a law, that "The decisive factor in the rise and fall of all empires is whether they control the seas or not."²¹²

And mastery of the command of the sea is not hollow; it must be manifested through concrete strategy and substantive behavior. In order to protect maritime traffic lines and control maritime strategic accesses, it is necessary to establish a powerful navy. Mahan pointed out that "The only

²⁰⁸ (United States) Robert Seager, *Alfred Thayer Mahan: [The Man and His Letters]*, Liu Juncheng, et al., translators, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1989, p. 194.

²⁰⁹ Liu Yijian, *Command of the Sea and Naval Strategy*, National Defense University Press, 2000, p. 4.

²¹⁰ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1994, p. 239.

²¹¹ Zhao Kezeng, *Studies in the Military Thinking of Foreign Navies*, 1991, p. 220.

²¹² (United States) Nathan Miller, *The US Navy: A History*, Lu Ruchun, translator, Ocean Press, 1985, p. 3.

thing we should remember is that secure maritime accesses mean naval superiority; this is particularly so when the homeland is very far from forward bases.”²¹³ In history, the United Kingdom set a standard in 1817: it is necessary to build a navy that is stronger than those of any other two naval powers. By relying on this navy, the United Kingdom controlled almost all of the world’s important maritime accesses, apart from the Panama Canal, including such important sea regions, straits, and accesses as [the Strait of] Dover, Gibraltar, Malta, Alexander {*yalishanda*}, the Cape of Good Hope, [the Strait of] Malacca, the Suez Canal, and the entrance to the St. Lawrence [Seaway], and it used these as fulcrums for controlling the world’s oceans, thereby supporting its world hegemonic status as the “empire where the sun never sets.”

And when the United States expanded outwards and struggled for hegemony of the world’s oceans, it also especially emphasized and focused on the importance of developing a navy, and a powerful navy became an important tool by which the United States controlled naval traffic lines and naval accesses. The Spanish-American War, which broke out in 1898, was the start of the United States’ expansion overseas; through this war, the United States incorporated Cuba as a US protectorate, and it seized Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam; afterwards, the United States also acquired Hawaii, Samoa, and Wake Island. At the same time, based on Mahan’s ideas, the United States also seized control over the Panama Canal, whose strategic status was extremely important, and it thus achieved his idea of controlling the Caribbean Sea and advancing into the Pacific. Precisely through this series of contentions at sea, it gradually controlled each major maritime strategic access; the United States won maritime hegemony over the western hemisphere, and this had a profound impact on the United States’ subsequent domestic and foreign policies. Prior to the First World War, President [Woodrow] Wilson demanded that the Congress approve of building a navy that “would be the most powerful in the world,” and at the 1921 Washington Conference, the proportions of tonnage for the capital ships of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan were 5:5:3, so the United States kept pace with the world’s preeminent naval power at that time, the United Kingdom. By the Second World War, the US Navy had developed into the world’s strongest.

Therefore, it is precisely the indivisibility of the oceans that determines the impossibility of establishing fixed defensive lines at sea, and that the primary form in which command of the sea is struggled for is manifested through developing powerful navies and protecting or destroying maritime traffic lines and maritime strategic accesses. It is not hard to realize that command of the sea is the core of the theory of sea power, while seizing and controlling maritime strategic accesses is an important link in this core and that it is an important strategic issue that any country or any people going out to the world must focus on, answer, and resolve.

II. Thoughts about maritime strategic accesses in the “rimlands theory”...150

The person who extended and developed Mahan’s idea of the “theory of sea power” was the American geographer Nicholas Spykman; he believed that “Although geography is not a decisive factor, it forms conditions. It provides mankind with possibilities. Man’s sole freedom is to make

²¹³ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, Cai Honggan and Tian Changji, translators, Commercial Press, 1994, p. 188.

good or bad use of these possibilities, to make them better or worse.”²¹⁴ He proposed the “rimlands theory,” which had a major impact on US strategy during the Cold War period. Spykman believed that the true world center was not the European continent at all but rather was situated in the Eurasian “rimlands” between the “heartland region” and the coastal region; it was only this region where the key to the struggle for world power lay. The rimland possessed maritime accesses that were densely covered with convenient traffic, it had large populations, rich natural resources, and human wealth {*renlei caifu*}, so its status in a future world political setup would continually rise. Around it was a “traffic line that encircled the ocean and that was linked to an area in which all the so-called naval powers were grouped together” so that its sea and land traffic were developed. At the same time, this region also had a dual amphibious role; “it was an intermediate region, and in the conflicts between sea forces and land forces, it played the role of a vast buffer zone.” Based on this analysis, Spykman pointed out that in order to meet the needs of strategic expansion, a country generally needed to seek to enter maritime accesses, to dominate the strategic key points of nearby accesses, and to control the continent’s “rimlands.” And in order to prevent one country’s expansion, other countries similarly also needed to control the “rimlands.” Because the United States was surrounded geographically by the Eurasian continent, Africa, and Oceania, if the Eurasian continent or either the eastern or the western end of it was controlled by a given power, this would pose a huge threat to the security of the United States. Therefore, the zone where there was a combination of land and sea was most probably where there was a risk of conflict breaking out between a land power and a sea power, and in order to control the world, it was necessary to control these rimlands. Spykman’s conclusion was that “Whoever dominates the rimlands will control the Eurasian continent, and whoever dominates the Eurasian continent will control the fate of the world.”²¹⁵ As he saw it, this also was the true goal of the United States’ participation in the Second World War,²¹⁶ that it could not let any power rule the rimlands by itself.

In order to prevent dangers coming from the Eurasian heartland, the United States needed to control the rimlands and especially Western Europe and East Asia, and the United States’ naval strategy and overall strategy needed to draw in the peripheral countries around the Soviet Union.²¹⁷ This directly contributed to George Kennan’s 8,000-word cable from which came the “Truman Doctrine,” and the President’s Special Assistant Clark Clifford’s [report on] “American Relations with the Soviet Union” was drafted based on Mackinder’s and Spykman’s geostrategic theories. From [Harry] Truman’s “containment” and “encirclement” policies to [Richard] Nixon’s policy of balance, and then to [Ronald] Reagan’s “strategy to push back” against the Soviet Union, as well as [George H. W.] Bush’s attack against Iraq and the policy of using the 9-11 incident to have the US military enter the Central Asian region, these were all done to seek absolute control over the “rimlands.” In particular, the US announcement that it needed to control the world’s sixteen maritime chokepoints showed that the United States’ strategic objective was to strengthen its

²¹⁴ Niu Xianzhong, *Strategic Studies*, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2003, p. 114.

²¹⁵ (United States) Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, Liu Yuzhi, translator, Commercial Press, 1965, p. 76.

²¹⁶ (United Kingdom) Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the 20th Century*, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 1992, p. 133.

²¹⁷ (United States) N. J. Spykman, *America’s Strategy in World Politics: [The United States and the Balance of Power]*, Shoe String Press, 1942.

control over the “rimlands” and to prevent the expansion of the eastern camp and the Soviet Union through its control over maritime accesses, in order to ensure the security of the Western free world and the United States’ domination of the world.

It can be seen from this that Spykman’s rimlands theory was a countermeasure that focused on what the land-centric [theory] said; [it spread] from the theory of land power’s control over the central continent {*zhongxin dalu*} to control over continental peripheral waters, and ultimately to control over maritime strategic accesses. Geostrategic thinking continued and developed in this. The rise of nations and the games of national power no longer were immutably starting from continents but rather went around [the continents] by controlling the continents’ peripheral flanks and offshore routes, thus increasing the pressure that countries in the continents’ central regions faced, while maritime countries that were situated in peripheral regions, that is, in the maritime directions that flanked the land, won unique spaces and opportunities to develop. This theory is more directly manifested today; in 2001, the US Department of Defense clarified in the *Defense Review Report* that it puts out every four years that there is a “huge and uncertain arc-shaped region” from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia and South Asia.” In recent years, US strategy has gradually turned toward Asia; one of its strategic objectives is to control the land peripheral regions of East Asia and South Asia. It seems that if it controls this uncertain arc-shaped region where the European and Asian continents combine, it will be able to better get a grip on the historic mission of US hegemony.

III. The maritime strategic access thinking in the “theory of maritime superiority”...153

After the Second World War, because of the emergence of nuclear weapons, the thinking of the “theory that navies are useless” had a serious impact on the development of the US Navy, and the number of naval ships was further reduced. By the end of the 1970s, the total number of the US Navy’s capital ships had fallen to 479, a decrease of over fifty percent from the more than 1,000 ships [that it had] in 1968. In the competition for resources [that it engaged in] with the other services, and especially with the Air Force, it did not have superiority. At the same time as this, the Soviet Navy was gradually developing, and the number of its ships reached 1,700, so that the Soviet Navy switched from strategic defense on the oceans to strategic offense, and it displayed an aggressive posture against the US Navy. In addition, the Soviet Union also established a modernized permanent naval facility in Cuba and provided Cuba with submarines, new types of frigates, and aircraft; it would have the ability to cut off US maritime traffic nodes in an effective manner by using these units to blockade the Caribbean. Because the Soviet Union possessed the bases that the United States had built at Cam Ranh Bay and Danang in Vietnam, it had obtained new and extremely valuable advantageous conditions for operations in the Pacific region, and it could thus control the Pacific as well as strategic hubs along all the maritime traffic lines in Southeast Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Suez Canal that connected with [the Pacific].²¹⁸ Therefore, US maritime security at that time, and especially the security of its maritime strategic accesses, came under severe threat.

²¹⁸ (United States) John [Francis] Lehman, Jr., *Command of the Seas: Building the 600-Ship Navy*, Fang Baoding, He Jingzhu, et al., translators, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 165.

Faced with the rise of the Soviet Navy, the United States felt pressure. In 1981, the thirty-eight-year-old Lehman became the United States' sixty-fifth Secretary of the Navy; as soon as he took office, he proposed that "The United States must have undisputed maritime superiority. We must have the ability – and let people see that we have the ability – to firmly control those maritime accesses that lead to the areas of our major interests. This is not a strategic issue that can be debated but rather a national objective, that is, a security issue that absolutely must be guaranteed."²¹⁹ Lehman's thinking was accepted by President Reagan. Upon taking office, President Reagan proposed the slogans of "restructuring war-readiness" {*chongzheng junbei*} and "keeping superiority at sea" {*baochi haishang youshi*}, and he clarified maritime superiority, that is, that if the United States wanted to have the ability to keep maritime commercial routes clear to regions in the world where the United States had major interests and relationships, and to maintain navigational security there, it would need to establish a Navy and Marines that could militarily defeat actions that would disrupt the maritime strategic accesses that it controlled; the proportion of funding for the Navy would be increased by about one-third.²²⁰ At the end of 1982, Lehman pointed out in a speech he gave at a ceremony marking the return of the battleship *New Jersey* to service, which President Reagan attended and which was held at Long Beach Naval Base in California, that "The United States should be a sea power, and it relies to a very great extent on the sea to import its extremely important strategic materials. More than ninety percent of our trade with the other continents is transported using ships, and whether it is possible to freely use the seas affects the great enterprise of our national fate. Therefore, our Navy must ensure that the United States is unimpeded on each ocean, and this is more arduous than the task of closing those maritime routes along strategic thoroughfares. Naval superiority is indispensable for us. We must have the ability to exercise control over the air, surface, and undersea regions using effective forms under emergency conditions, in order to ensure that we can use each ocean in the world."²²¹ Based on the United States' need to dominate the world's oceans, Lehman developed Mahan's thinking about "sea power" {*hai quan*} into the thinking of "maritime superiority" {*haishang youshi*}, and he developed Mahan's thinking about "naval strategy" {*haijun zhanlue*} into the thinking of "ocean strategy" {*haiyang zhanlue*}. He proposed "eight great principles," that is, that naval strategy originates in and is subordinate to the overall strategy of national security, that national strategy specifies the basic tasks of the Navy, that the completion of the Navy's basic tasks determines maritime superiority, that the drafting of naval strategy must have a realistic evaluation of threats as its basis, that naval strategy must be a global concept, that it is necessary to combine the naval troop strengths of the US Navy and its military allies into a whole, and that naval strategy must be a forward-deployed strategy. These eight great principles clearly showed the US Navy's strategy and its thoughts about development. For example, in the seventh principle, the United States would use naval bases and installations spread all over each ocean of the globe and would

²¹⁹ (United States) John [Francis] Lehman, Jr., *Command of the Seas: Building the 600-Ship Navy*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 150.

²²⁰ (United States) John [Francis] Lehman, Jr., *Command of the Seas: Building the 600-Ship Navy*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 152.

²²¹ (United States) John [Francis] Lehman, Jr., *Command of the Seas: Building the 600-Ship Navy*, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 152.

draw support from external forces to deploy at sea globally; in this way, the United States could respond freely and be active in each ocean region in the world and could control important sea regions and accesses in the world. At the same time as this, Lehman emphasized that if [the United States] wanted to ensure its maritime superiority, it would need to have command of the seas; for this, Lehman proposed his famous plan to “build a 600-ship navy,” including fifteen aircraft carrier groups, 100 nuclear attack submarines, and four surface ship battle groups whose core were battleships, using its powerful maritime strengths to ensure its free use of maritime strategic accesses. In 1986, under Lehman’s presiding, the US Navy drafted its plan to control the sixteen maritime chokeholds in the world. These strategic routes and accesses that the United States wanted to control were not only the commercial shipping lanes that connected the world’s oceans but in actuality were also places that the Soviet Navy would inevitably struggle for; controlling these chokeholds had a great impact on the “ocean strategy” that the United States was carrying out. Through seeking to control these in peacetime, the United States essentially was creating a favorable strategic situation for itself, and it would be able to ensure in wartime that the United States and its allies would use the seas without hindrance, at a relatively small cost; at the same time, it would block the enemy from using them, and it would thoroughly “drive off” {*ji tui*} the Soviet Union’s expansion at sea, forcing the Soviet Union to pull back to its own territorial waters.

It can be said that [the United States] was the first country in the world to nakedly propose the need to control the important maritime strategic accesses in the world, and that this was the first time that it did so. Looking at it from a certain angle, controlling these maritime chokeholds is a continuation and development of Mahan’s “theory of sea power,” and even more, it is the core of the “theory of maritime superiority.” It is concentrated in strategic key points that are more specific, and it is more targeted. It is possible to combine these points into lines and to form them into slices {*pian*} so that they become important nodes by which the United States controls the oceans and dominates the globe; they have had a major and profound impact on the subsequent international strategic setup, economic globalization, and the building and development of the Navy.

Apart from these sixteen maritime chokepoints that the United States has proposed that it needs to control, upon entering the 21st century, scholars at the United States’ National Defense University in 2002 gave a new list of names of maritime chokeholds, based on the needs of national strategy; there were a total of twenty-two of these.²²² In this way, the United States has adjusted and supplemented new strategic nodes in order to further expand its maritime superiority, to control even more maritime strategic accesses, and to thus have command of the sea.

²²²Sam J. Tangredi, *Globalization and Maritime Power*, National Defense University Press, 2002, p. 146.

The World's Major Maritime Chokeholds, as Proposed by the United States' National Defense University

The Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf	The Western Pacific	Europe	Africa	The Americas
Bosporus Strait	Straits of Malacca Sunda Strait Lombok Strait Luzon Strait Singapore Strait Strait of Makassar	Great Belt Strait	Mozambique Channel	Panama Canal
Dardanelles Strait		Kiel Canal		ke-bo Strait
Suez Canal		Strait of Dover		Cabot Strait
Strait of Hormuz		Strait of Gibraltar		Straits of Florida
Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb				The Windward Passage
				The Mona Passage

IV. The thinking about maritime strategic accesses in the “Great Chessboard”...156

In Brzezinski’s *The Great Chessboard*, he asserted that the reason that the British Empire was unable to control world hegemony was that the United Kingdom had not subjugated the European continent. Land power was still an important restraining force for maritime hegemony. An island nation was in a state of inferiority, regardless of whether this involved land hegemony or sea hegemony; both the United Kingdom and Japan had tried to first subjugate the mainland that faced each of them in order to serve as a rear area in establishing hegemony, but they ultimately were forced to withdraw to their original islands. But the United States’ powerful maritime hegemony has the broad North American continent as its support, and relying upon its powerful military strengths, it has gradually expanded toward the sea. The United States’ expansion first began from a continental expansion; it was not until the 19th century, when the continental expansion was complete, that its large-scale maritime expansion was put on the agenda. It was not until the right moment that Mahan and other military theorists proposed the “theory of sea power;” in actuality, the situation where prior to this, the United States had focused on continental expansion and had not paid enough attention to sea expansion, gives a warning.

Especially after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States became the world’s sole superpower; this was a “new model of hegemony” {*xin xing de baquan*}. This “new model of hegemony” went beyond the strategy of mutual restraint during the Cold War period, with its bipolar opposition and “zero-sum” competition. Although no country was able to threaten the United States after the Cold War, there were still a series of potential challengers, and former US Presidential National Security Advisor Brzezinski believed that the key to maximizing US national interests was ensuring its control over the Eurasian continent. This new type of hegemonic thinking was primarily manifested in two areas. The first was that rule over the Eurasian continent was not by a country of the Eurasian continent itself but by a country outside the Eurasian continent. The

second was that the United States no longer had a single hegemony but rather a comprehensive and composite political, economic, military, and cultural hegemony. Against the background of a world under the manipulation of this almighty type of hegemony, Brzezinski objectively designed a US strategy in his *The Great Chessboard*; he advocated using the US-European relationship to solidify the expansion of the European Union and NATO and to promote democratic liberalism in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States; he believed that the prospects of China becoming a regional great power and a world great power were unavoidable, and that moreover, “China’s regional sphere of influence was taking shape” and that as China’s national power grew stronger, it would further expand. He viewed Japan as an extension of US power in East Asia, and he believed that a close US-Japan relationship not only benefited Japan in positioning its international status but it also directly affected the role of the United States in Asia and the Pacific and the balance of power in the Eurasian continent.

In order for the United States to have a dominant position in the Eurasian continent and the world, Brzezinski listed five geostrategic players and five geopolitical pivotal states {zhi zhou guo} involved in the Eurasian “great chessboard” and the world’s overall strategic situation. He pointed out that “determining which Eurasian states had geopolitical importance” had to be based on “the geographical location of this kind of country and/or the things existed in that country that would play a catalytic role for more dynamic geostrategic states or for the regional situation.”²²³ He especially mentioned that it was necessary to focus on and pay attention to geopolitical pivotal states – Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan – and pointed out that their “importance did not come from their strengths and their motivations but from the sensitive geographical locations that they occupied and from the impact that their potentially fragile states could have on the actions of geostrategic players. What he most commonly used to differentiate geopolitical pivotal states was their geographical locations. Because of these locations, they sometimes could play a special role in determining whether a given important player could enter an important region or in preventing that player from gaining certain resources.”²²⁴ Most of these states are adjacent to and have channels that get to the sea, and speaking in a certain sense, they have important roles where the land and the sea are interrelated. Looking at this from the United States’ current geopolitical angle, adjustments to the United States’ security strategy after the Cold War not only manifested “traditional geopolitical views, but they also manifested new geopolitical characteristics under the new situation.” Containing the rise of Eurasian powers, keeping the rimlands stable, and keeping regional strengths from becoming imbalanced are important details in the United States’ security strategy. The United States has maintained a superior status for a long period of time in the rimlands of the Eurasian continent; this includes certain geographical shields and accesses leading to coastal regions that the Soviet Union and now Russia have coveted for a long time, such as the Persian Gulf in the Middle East region and many maritime strategic accesses in the first island chain [in East Asia]. The United States relied upon its geopolitical superiority to continually surround and squeeze the Soviet Union’s geopolitical strengths, and this

²²³ (United States) Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard*, China Institute of International Studies, translator, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1998, p. 53.

²²⁴ (United States) Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard*, China Institute of International Studies, translator, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1998, p. 55.

geopolitical region is the basic geopolitical factor whereby the United States won victory in the Cold War.

As for Russia, looking at history, the line of strategic interests that Russia has pursued is primarily concentrated in the land strategic accesses of the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific.²²⁵ Mahan always stressed that “Traffic conditions determining success or failure in warfare.”²²⁶ And Ukraine’s separation from the Soviet Union caused Russia to lose its dominant status in the Black Sea, because Odessa on the Black Sea had been an important access for Russia’s national trade with countries in the Mediterranean and even farther away.²²⁷ Similarly, states like Iran and Turkey control the Caspian Sea petroleum and gas resources and the strategic access to the Black Sea, and this also has an important impact on the United States. But as for the United States, its strategic interests are global in nature. After the 9-11 incident, the United States launched the Afghanistan War and the Iraq War; its true goal was to insert its military for a long period of time in the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf regions, which are the heart of world petroleum; to firmly control the Central Asian and Middle East regions within its own hands; and by controlling the oilfields of Central Asia and the Middle East, to continue to prevent Russia from gaining access to the sea, to seal it within the Eurasian continent, and to achieve its goals of controlling the Indian Ocean and thus control the world. A famous US expert on international relations and diplomatic affairs, Robert Kaplan, issued an article in 2009 in the bimonthly *Foreign Policy*, which treated the Indian Ocean as center stage in the 21st century. He believed that the situation in the Indian Ocean will affect changes and trends in the future world setup. Kaplan proposed that this region not only has rampant activities by extremist forces but it also has such issues as Somali pirates, the Iranian nuclear issue, the Iraq issue, and the Pakistani and Afghan al Qaeda organization. The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and the Straits of Malacca that are in [this region] also are important world petroleum transportation accesses. Therefore, looking at things from various security aspects, such as politics, economics, military matters, and culture, the Indian Ocean has become a region that the United States must focus on and pay attention to in the 21st century. Thus, for a fairly long period of time in the future, the United States’ core interests will be in the Indian Ocean, and the Asia-Pacific region’s maritime traffic from the North American west coast to the Strait of Malacca and through the Indian Ocean will be the key to its achieving its core interests.

Because of this, we can clearly see that the several important pivotal states that are emphasized in the “great chessboard” are situated in either the “heartland of the world’s energy supplies” or along important energy accesses that go toward the cycle of energy demand. As for the reason that the United States defines these countries as pivotal states, the point they have in common is that most of these states are states that are adjacent to and have channels that get to the sea. Speaking in a certain sense, they have an important role in the interrelationship of land and sea, they have

²²⁵ Zhang Wenmu, *On Chinese Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, pp. 122 and 115.

²²⁶ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, Xiao Wei[zhong] and Mei Ran, translators, China Press, 1997, p. 260.

²²⁷ (United States) Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard*, China Institute of International Studies, translator, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1998, p. 121.

significance in linking energy regions to each other, and their importance in energy access is far more important than their role as energy export countries or energy demand countries.

SECTION 2: THE IMPACT THAT MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES HAVE ON GEOPOLITICS...159

The *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia* states that geopolitics are “the analytical study of the effects that geographical location in international politics has on how the various countries’ political relations will develop. Geopolitics points to the importance of certain factors in determining countries’ policies, such as gaining national interests, controlling sea and land traffic lines, and occupying key strategic points.” The factors that affect international politics are many and complicated, and geographical factors are only one factor among them. However, geographical factors are relatively stable while at the same time are also closely tied to international relations, so they are worth paying attention to. In the 21st century of today, geopolitics has a profound impact on such international powers as the United States and on countries or regions that are rather clearly affected by geopolitics. In the diplomatic and security strategy thinking of these countries, geographical and geopolitical factors always become the cornerstone for the various countries’ drafting of their national security and diplomatic policies. The reason that maritime strategic accesses hold an important pride of place in geostrategic theory is that they have major geopolitical value. From the age of the great geographical discoveries to the period of economic globalization, regardless of whether it was the replacement of old capitalism by new capitalism or it was the struggle by the powers for dominance, this has always developed by being centered on expanding overseas trade, on controlling maritime accesses, on struggling for maritime interests, and ultimately on achieving the intentions of dominating the world.

I. Maritime strategic accesses are an important support for nations’ strategic resources and international status...160

Mackinder’s *The Geographical Pivot of History* and Spykman’s *The Geography of the Peace* both treat geographical location as the starting point and focus for studying great-power relations and the geopolitical setup. Spykman believed that “In order to measure a country’s diplomatic policies, it is first necessary to base this on this country’s location in the world,” and “A country’s geographical location in the world has a basic importance in determining its security issues, and geographical location restricts and affects all other factors.”²²⁸

Maritime strategic accesses’ specific geostrategic locations not only affect the internal developments of the various countries to a very great degree but they also affect their relations with the outside world. They give the various countries advantages, strengths, and weaknesses in the geostrategic environment. In a certain sense, they are a most valuable strategic resource, and for countries that rely heavily on maritime strategic accesses, the natural and inherent nature of maritime strategic accesses plays a decisive role in the way in which [these countries] survive. For example, Russia, as a land power that straddles the Eurasian continent, has always treated seizing outlets to the sea as an objective that it assiduously pursued in achieving its dream of being a world empire. Speaking in a geostrategic sense, an empire whose accesses to the sea are controlled in the

²²⁸ (United States) Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, Liu Yuzhi, translator, Commercial Press, 1965, pp. 41-44.

hands of other countries in actuality is not a power in the true meaning of the word; its world dominance can also only be viewed as incomplete.

And historical changes in maritime strategic accesses also to a relatively great extent affect the status of relevant countries and change the setup of international strategic strengths. For example, before the great geographical discoveries, the Mediterranean had always been a major access by which Europe went to other regions and that linked the East and the West, and thus the countries along the Mediterranean coast played an important role in international politics in the latter part of the Middle Ages and the seminal period of capitalism. But the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope resulted in the Mediterranean subsequently losing this natural advantage, and it thus pushed Portugal and Spain, which were navigational and colonial powers along the Atlantic coast, to the peaks of history. And the geopolitical and geoeconomic {*diyuan jingji*} value of the Cape of Good Hope, as a key strategic point, also suddenly dropped because of the digging of the Suez Canal, injecting new blood into the old colonial powers, like the United Kingdom and France. The opening of the Panama Canal and the United States' control over it in reality extended America's frontier by several thousand miles, and it drew the political system of the countries of the Americas closer; the United States' strategic status was greatly improved because of this.²²⁹ In the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, closing of the Suez Canal seriously affected maritime navigation through this canal, but it greatly improved the geographical status of European coastal countries in the west and the north; in contrast, the southern part of Europe suffered a major negative impact.

II. Gains and losses of maritime strategic accesses affect how countries achieve their interests...161

Regardless of what angle you look at things from, whether maritime strategic accesses are smooth or not directly affects whether countries' mechanisms operate normally or not, so their role is quite important. Looking at history, the national interests of the world's maritime powers have almost all been worldwide in nature, and the strategic lines by which they have pursued their national interests have mostly been launched along maritime routes; the achieving of national strategic interests has also been directly connected to their gaining maritime accesses. The United Kingdom of the 19th century believed that "The seas are the nation's prosperity, commerce and trade with the outside world, and a way to expand power and bring influence into play – prior to the appearance of the aviation industry, the oceans were the only natural access for communications links with the outside world."²³⁰ Understanding of maritime accesses also further deepened, which was primarily manifested in two areas. The first was the use of maritime access transportation lines to import the raw materials needed for production and to export finished products, while the second was the use of the sea for connections and the chokehold role of maritime accesses, the expansion of spheres of influence, exerting political influence, and defending colonial rights. It was its control over maritime accesses that allowed the United Kingdom to continually promote its global trade and exchanges; it can be said that maritime

²²⁹ Li Yihu, *Geopolitics: Dichotomy and Beyond*, Peking University Press, 2007, p. 44.

²³⁰ (United Kingdom) J. R. Hill, *The British Navy*, Wang Hengtao and Liang Zhihai, translators, Ocean Press, 1987, p. 1. [Translator's note: This is probably Hill's *The Royal Navy, Today and Tomorrow*.

accesses connected this empire where “the sun never sat.” And the decline of the United Kingdom first began with its loss of control over maritime strategic accesses.

Historically, the line of strategic interests that Russia pursued, observing it from a global geopolitical perspective, was primarily centered on land and sea strategic accesses to the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific. As regards Russia in the 17th century, when it did not have outlets to the sea, first seeking outlets to the sea was an issue that was the most urgent as well as the most important in Russia’s rise, and it was the greatest national interest of Russia at that time. Through the Northern War, which lasted twenty-one years, Russia finally gained an outlet to the Baltic Sea, and from being an inland country, it became a coastal country. It should be said that it was precisely because Russia controlled an important access to the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea that entering the Baltic Sea to the west became the most successful part of Russia’s Baltic strategy; it directly promoted the rise of Russia, and also made it possible for Russia to maintain regular contact with all the countries of Europe. In particular, it established a relationship with the maritime powers where it relied materially upon them to a fairly great extent, and from this it rose in the list of world powers.

The United States’ national interests are also global in nature and are primarily centered on maritime strategic routes. When the United States’ monopoly capitalist class was seeking overseas trade, the oceans became the best accesses for it to engage in policies of expansion overseas, in expanding overseas markets, and in seeking the maximization of benefits. From the Pacific to the Caribbean and from the Americas to Asia, there were extremely important key lines of benefits, and the goal was to ensure that the United States could gain the resources of the Middle East and Asia. Through the two world wars, the United States established its status even more of being the world hegemon. But in the 1970s, the Soviet Union’s rapid rise launched a powerful challenge to the situation where the United States dominated the oceans, and the US-Soviet competition over the world’s maritime strategic accesses became increasingly intense. In order to ensure its status of hegemon at sea, the United States used various means to control the world’s important maritime strategic accesses. After the end of the Cold War, the United States became the world’s only superpower, it fully controlled many strategic accesses in the world’s oceans, and it thus firmly kept its dominant status in the world’s oceans.

It can be seen from this that maritime strategic accesses are an important way for achieving national interests, and countries that do not have control over maritime strategic accesses have no way to control the fate of their country. The objective laws of history have repeatedly proven that maritime strategic accesses have a major strategic significance for the fate of nations and especially for that of maritime powers. If they want to protect their national interests and promote national development, they must control and use maritime strategic accesses in an effective manner.

III. Planning and controlling {*jing lue*} maritime strategic accesses is an important detail in geosecurity games {*diyuan anquan*}...162

Geopolitical studies show that the international political, economic, and security setup up until even today has always been restrained by geographic location; to a certain extent, it has even determined the fate of nations. Since early modern and modern times, the great nations’ concern over two geographical locations has never slackened in the slightest; these are key strategic points

and maritime accesses. Taking an overall look at the territory of current world energy, the major countries' energy security strategies all face the problem of whether maritime accesses are secure. Because of the important strategic value of maritime strategic accesses politically, economically, and militarily, some maritime strategic accesses that have important geostrategic significance, such as the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean, and the South China Seas, as well as the Straits of Malacca, the Straits of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and the Panama Canal, have always been important points that the world's maritime powers have struggled over and controlled. The geosecurity games that have been played around them have, even more, always lasted until today, ever since the start of the great geographical discoveries. In peacetime, concern over maritime accesses has primarily been based on considerations about the security of international trade routes or maritime energy transportation. In wartime or in crisis situations, this concern has been based on ensuring the security of energy accesses and on how to ensure the continuous and effective supply of energy in case maritime access is cut off. In view of this, the various countries' considerations on their energy security strategies have all placed the security of transportation and especially the security of maritime transport routes in a prominent and important position; this is also true for the dual aspects of supply and demand of international energy. In this, the geosecurity games between the United States and the Soviet Union are the most representative.

Mahan's theory of sea power pointed out the important significance of controlling the oceans and the methods for controlling the oceans; based on the characteristics of the United States where it borders on two oceans (the Atlantic and the Pacific) and one sea (the Caribbean), he pointed out that control over the isthmus of Central America and the opening of the Panama Canal were "strategic centers where life and death were at stake," and they were strategic hubs for the United States' control over the two oceans. The United States needed to occupy Hawaii, the Philippines, and other important islands in the Pacific, to serve as "stepping stones" in the march toward Asia. [Finally, Mahan pointed out that the United States] needed to ally with the United Kingdom and Japan, in order to form a firm defensive line from the Black Sea straits to the Korean peninsula that would prevent Russia from expanding outwards. Facts prove that these strategic nodes that the United States needed to control to a very great extent were reflected in control over maritime strategic accesses and that it used these to achieve the goals of engaging in strategic games at sea with the other maritime powers and of dominating the globe. And after the war, the US and Soviet struggle for supremacy also was mostly launched centered on maritime strategic accesses. The United States seized and filled the empty regions left by the United Kingdom's and France's withdrawal from the Suez Canal, "and it eliminated the Soviet Union's influence in this region."²³¹ After [Leonid] Brezhnev took power, he launched a worldwide offensive against the United States for supremacy, and he attempted to go through Central Asia in order to control the Persian Gulf and march on the Indian Ocean. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union intensified its control over Ethiopia and what was then South Yemen, because these two countries clamped down on the West's chokepoint going north from the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden to the Persian Gulf. After the Cold War, the United States used one color revolution after another in its strategy to quietly deprive the Soviet Union of its treasured outlets to the sea so that the scope of [the Soviet

²³¹ Zhang Wenmu, *On Chinese Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, p. 56.

Union's] geopolitical influence was greatly diminished. "Since the 18th century, Russia had consistently controlled the various Baltic Sea countries. Now it had lost the harbors of Riga and Tallinn so that Russia's entry and exit from the Baltic Sea was more restricted, and it had suffered the loss of harbors that did not freeze in winter." "Ukraine's independence also caused Russia to lose its dominant status in the Black Sea, because Odessa on the Black Sea had been Russia's important access for trade with the Mediterranean region and with countries that were even farther away."²³² On the issue of using outlets to the sea, Russia had almost been reduced to its territory of the 18th century so that Russia's free use of outlets to the sea and the geosecurity of its corresponding maritime strategic accesses had become extremely grim and filled with challenges. On the other hand, the United States and other Western countries completely dominated the geosecurity of maritime strategic accesses, which posed a new geosecurity threat to Russia.

Therefore, geopolitics and geoeconomics are major strategies and means for upholding and determining national interests, and maritime strategic accesses are also important details in geosecurity games. In accordance with Mahan's doctrine of geopolitics, control of the world is not determined by how much territory [a country] occupies but by its control of key areas. Previously, because of limitations to technical means and economic strength, there were almost no countries prior to the Second World War that were able to control these "key regions," but now, in accordance with this form of thinking, the United States controls and has a grip on all key channels in the world; this control has greatly ensured the United States' national interests and national security.

SECTION 3: THE INFLUENCE OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES ON GEOECONOMICS...164

Speaking from the angle of economics, maritime strategic accesses are the corridors and hubs of maritime traffic, as well as shortcuts for international maritime transportation. Some chokepoints that are located on or near to maritime routes have had an important impact on the development of world economics, and have played a decisive role.

I. In the age of commercial states {*shangye liguo shidai*}, maritime strategic accesses were links for "free trade" {*ziyou maoyi*}...165

[Karl] Marx pointed out that economic interests are the ultimate goal of all social activities. "In an age of commerce, winning the oceans has greater benefits than winning the land."²³³ The development of maritime powers had a close relationship with commercial states. Looking at history, the natural objective nature of the sea has made it easy for mankind to travel, and it has made it possible for people to go anywhere in the world. At the same time as this, the geographical structure of the oceans has also limited the number of maritime accesses quite a bit, while the ones that used maritime strategic accesses the most and the most frequently, and that gained the greatest benefits, were maritime powers; maintaining the security of maritime routes and keeping maritime

²³² (The United States) Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard*, China Institute of International Studies, translator, Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1998, p. 120.

²³³ (United Kingdom) J. F. C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Atlantic World*, Niu Xianzhong, translator, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2004, p. 37. [Translator's note: This possibly is Fuller's *The Decisive Battles of the Western World and Their Influence upon History*.]

accesses smooth were the original intentions { *chuzhong* } of the various maritime powers' overseas plundering as well as the home that they returned to.

Looking at history, the development of maritime powers has been closely related to commercial states. The “maritime expeditions” that Portugal’s Prince Henry [the Navigator] organized, beginning in 1419, opened the curtain on exploring the world’s oceans and opening maritime accesses; subsequently, explorers from Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom engaged in arduous explorations of the world’s oceans, one after the other. At the end of the 15th century, the great geographical discoveries had opened a new chapter in the history of mankind. Maritime powers sought maritime routes on each ocean, and they established maritime trade accesses. [Friedrich] Engels pointed out that the discovery of gold- and silver-producing areas in the Americas, the exploitation and enslavement of the indigenous peoples and their entombment in mineshafts, the conquest and squeezing of the East Indies that began to be done, and places that became the commercial hunting of Negroes, all marked the dawn of the age of capitalist production. This dawn switched the attention of Europeans away from the Mediterranean coast and such places as the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, which had long been the centers of trade and the birthplace of attempts at conquest, and to a global scope. The world entered an age of capitalism that was filled with bloody colonies and plundering. “In an age when the first Dutch spice ship made a profit for its owner that was twenty-five times [his costs], it was no wonder that Europeans began to fiercely compete with each other over exploiting the resources of Asia, and in order to protect their investments, they gradually took over the land regions that maritime trade needed to reach.”²³⁴ Under the drive of huge benefits, Western capitalist countries began to draw support from maritime accesses that connected each place on the globe, and they flocked to Asia, Africa, and other places in order to exploit their wealth and to engage in brutal colonial plundering.

The opening of maritime routes in order for the West to take the lead in going from feudal to capitalist countries opened the doors for convenience in large-scale expansion on the oceans and colonial plundering, and Portugal used its superior geographical location to become the earliest sea power. In the close to a hundred years from the mid-15th century to the mid-16th century, it engaged in comprehensive expansion toward Asia and Africa so that the maritime strategic accesses that it occupied, such as the Cape of Good Hope, the Gulf of Aden, the Straits of Hormuz, and the Straits of Malacca, became the fulcrum for its expansion abroad. Through the sea, it obtained overseas colonies, it plundered overseas resources, and it developed its domestic economy; this model allowed Portugal to become the world power of its time, and it also stimulated other Western countries to follow it, one after the other. The role and value of maritime strategic accesses was recognized by more and more countries. The subsequent rise of such maritime powers as Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan was all done in accordance with the model of maritime hegemony, and [these countries] all became world commercial empires and maritime powers. The country that was most representative of these was the United Kingdom; following the destruction of Spain’s “invincible Armada,” the defeat of the Netherlands’ “sea coachman” opened the path for the maritime hegemony and colonies of the United Kingdom’s “empire where the sun never sets.” By the 18th century, the area of the United

²³⁴ (United Kingdom) Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, Zhang Keda and Xiong Menghua, translators, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 3.

Kingdom's overseas colonies made up one-quarter of the world's entire surface, almost 100 times as big as the surface of the United Kingdom's homeland, and the population of its colonies reached more than 400 million. One important factor in this was that the United Kingdom controlled the oceans as well as the most important maritime strategic accesses in the world. During the United Kingdom's strongest and most prosperous period, it controlled almost all strategic accesses apart from the Panama Canal. It was only its control and use of the globe's maritime strategic accesses that allowed the United Kingdom to become the true maritime hegemon of the world.

It can be seen from this that the rise of maritime powers all developed by following the path of "unification of the country, the establishment of a centralized capitalist country, the development of a manufacturing industry and shipbuilding industry, the establishment of overseas colonies and the opening of overseas markets, the plundering of overseas resources, the development of overseas trade, the establishment of a navy to protect maritime commercial routes, and the occupation of important maritime accesses in the world." In particular, some countries in 17th-century Europe carried out mercantilist policies, and they actively developed foreign trade, using imports and exports to promote business and industrial development, which triggered even more competition to struggle for world trade markets. In this, a series of wars occurred at maritime strategic accesses among several powers, in turn; ultimately, the countries that had strong navies defeated their opponents and controlled the oceans. Just as Mahan concluded, "Command of the sea brings about victory in warfare and wealth in peacetime."²³⁵ Therefore, a sea power that was a commercial state, at the same time that it strode toward the world, first had to resolve the issue of maritime accesses that affected its own maritime routes; this was a major strategic issue for maritime powers and commercial states and was also an indispensable premise and condition for the development and strength of a maritime power.

II. In the age of an energy economy, maritime strategic accesses are the lifeline of countries' export-oriented economies...167

Looking back at the development process of international politics, it can be said that energy has consistently been the focus of competition that countries and international organizations have launched and is an important component part of the system of international political and strategic objectives of countries and especially of large countries; in particular, petroleum resources are the lifeline for maintaining the development of national economies. Generally speaking, there is a positive relationship between economic growth and petroleum resources. The geological distribution of petroleum resources is not balanced, which has led to a separation of resources and requirements, that is, the places where there are petroleum resources and the places where these are consumed are not in the same space; there is little consumption in areas where petroleum is richly concentrated, but there is a heavy need for it in areas where there are relatively few petroleum resources. This inequality between distribution and consumption has resulted in the primary places of demand and the areas of supply being far apart, and it has brought about security issues for transportation. In modern international relations, confrontations, conflicts, and even wars that have occurred in struggles over and control of petroleum resources have never stopped; the fact, that petroleum is nonrenewable and the inequality in the setup of distribution and

²³⁵ The China Oceanic International Symposium, *Research Materials for Maritime Issues (1)*, 1983, p. 2.

consumption will intensify competition among the various countries and could lead to confrontations among major states, thereby increasing regional tensions. Areas where petroleum resources are rich and whose strategic location is important have always been the focus of struggles among world powers. Nixon said, “Wherever is the center of resources, that is the center of geopolitics.”²³⁶ Because the world’s energy centers have simultaneously become the focus of struggle by the various political forces, the world’s energy centers have one after the other gone from the Gulf of Mexico period (the 1950s) and the Persian Gulf period (the 1950s to the 1980s), to today’s Middle East period and Caspian Sea period; it can be said that each transition in the world’s energy centers has led to corresponding changes in the world’s geopolitical setup, thereby forming geopolitical prospects for the new sites of world energy.

During the First World War, the goal of the United Kingdom’s participation in the war was to control the petroleum resources in the Arabian Gulf in the Near East. France and Germany fought fiercely in Europe, while the United Kingdom deployed more than 1.4 million troops on the battlefields to its east. The Entente and the Central Powers were trapped in the mud of a protracted war, and it was difficult for either side to suppress its opponents and win victory. The United States’ participation in the war caused the Entente to gain sufficient fuel supplies, and [the Entente] thus could more fully utilize the favorable conditions of automobile transportation, ultimately gaining victory over the Central Powers. Therefore, there were people who said that “The Entente moved toward victory by floating on the waves of petroleum.” The First World War resulted in the world’s various major countries gaining a profound understanding of the importance in international political struggles of energy, as represented by petroleum; therefore, the important detail of energy was added to the international political and strategic objectives of the various great nations.

During the Second World War, the Middle East oil-production region became a focus of attention by the various great nations; the two sides in the war understood the importance of energy for victory or defeat in the war. But defeating their opponents on the vast oceans was quite difficult, and so the two sides locked their eyes on maritime accesses, and they engaged in a war of preservation and destruction {*bao jiao po jiao zhan*}, whose scenes took place centered on maritime traffic lines, in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. After occupying Poland, [Adolf] Hitler explicitly pointed out that “If we are unable to seize the petroleum of Maikop or Grozny, we should end this war.”²³⁷ Seizing petroleum resources was one of the important strategic objectives in Nazi Germany’s invasion of Romania and the Soviet Union. On the Pacific battlefields, the objective of Japan in not hesitating to have the United States as an enemy and in sending troops to Southeast Asia was to seize the petroleum of Burma and the East Indies, and what supported Japan in waging the Pacific War sea war was the steady stream of petroleum that Japan transported from the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz; the location and role of maritime strategic accesses were highlighted.

In the Cold War period after the Second World War, the maritime powers launched an intense struggle centered on energy; any area that was rich in oil was the focus of struggle by the maritime powers. As the energy centers changed, the status of maritime strategic accesses for transporting energy continually rose, becoming a top priority for the powers’ struggles. Under the conditions

²³⁶ Zhang Shiping, *Major Affairs of State*, Military Science Publishing House, 2004, p. 384.

²³⁷ Ge Jiatai, *Strategy and Resources*, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 1988, p. 10.

of hostility with the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc, energy security became just as important for the United States as military security, and it could even be said that energy security was a prerequisite condition for military security. Therefore, the Western bloc, headed by the United States, raised energy security to the height of national security, and it struggled at any cost for a share of the international energy market, thus ensuring its supplies of energy. A US national security report in 1983 pointed out that “Once the Soviet Union had control over the petroleum lifeline of this region, the Western alliance would be forced to its knees and would surrender without a single soldier entering the West.” Former US Secretary of Defense [Harold] Brown even believed that “If the Soviet Union gained the right to dominate the Persian Gulf and the Persian Gulf’s oil, politically, then this would be equivalent to its occupying the territory of Western Europe and Japan. The reason is that these countries rely to a very great degree upon the oil of this region.”²³⁸ Therefore, former US Presidential National Security Advisor Brzezinski stressed that “The Persian Gulf countries, which have fifty-six percent of the world’s proven oil reserves, will continue to be where the West’s major strategic interests lie.” “Any outside force’s intentions to control the Persian Gulf will be viewed as an attack upon the United States’ major interests.”²³⁹ It can be seen from this that petroleum in reality is always associated with money, power, war, and accesses, and it is closely related to international politics. Petroleum and politics are twins; petroleum that does not include politics is almost non-existent.

Currently, maritime trade transportation makes up two-thirds of all of world trade transportation; in particular, almost all of the bulk commodities of resources such as petroleum, coal, and iron ore are transported by sea. Because maritime traffic lines are still the lifelines of the various countries’ economic development and the links of the world economy, the importance of the issue of the sea, that is to say, the issue of sea power, in geopolitics has not declined but rather has tended to rise in new forms. Currently, international contradictions that occur centered on struggles for petroleum and other maritime resources, and international contests that appear centered on controlling maritime accesses have become hotspots in international relations.²⁴⁰ Economic accesses have always been places that military commanders have had to struggle over, and energy transportation accesses are strategic places that are even more important. The people who draft strategy in many countries all soberly realize that energy transportation accesses are just as important as energy reserves and production centers and, at specified times, are even more important. This is because future international conflicts and wars will not necessarily occur at energy centers but will be more likely to be actions that are taken along energy transportation accesses in order to block or intercept [energy] or force it to change its flow. This will often be more convenient and more effective than a direct attack against energy centers that are the focus of defense. Currently, the Middle East, Russia, Africa, and Latin America are the main exporting regions of world petroleum, while the United States, Europe, China, and Japan are the main importing regions of world petroleum; the world’s oil tankers frequently travel between the

²³⁸ Dong Liangqing, “International Security and the Struggle for Resources,” *World Economy and Politics*, Number 11, 1995.

²³⁹ Dong Liangqing, “International Security and the Struggle for Resources,” *World Economy and Politics*, Number 11, 1995.

²⁴⁰ Li Yihu, *Geopolitics: Dichotomy and Beyond*, Peking University Press, 2007, p. 152.

petroleum production regions and consuming countries, and because of this, many maritime petroleum transportation accesses have been established, such as the Persian Gulf–Cape of Good Hope–Western Europe and North America route; the Persian Gulf–Lombok Strait and Strait of Makassar (or Strait of Malacca)–China and Japan route; and the Persian Gulf–Suez Canal–Mediterranean, Western Europe, and North America route. It can be seen from oil tanker routes that the important key points on these routes – the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca, the Andaman Strait, the Bosphorus Strait, the Panama Canal, and the Suez Canal – are all among the sixteen maritime strategic accesses that the United States has announced it controls, and when former US President Reagan responded why it was necessary to control these key points, he said, “Because the Soviet Navy in wartime could use these points to block US transportation of petroleum, foodstuffs, and raw materials,” and “As soon as any hostile action occurs, they will cut off and close these sixteen chokeholds.”²⁴¹ Controlling these accesses means controlling the world’s petroleum energy and thus controlling the world’s lifelines. Just as Henry Kissinger said in the 1970s, “If you control the oil, you control entire nations.”²⁴² This is sufficient to explain the important impact that maritime strategic accesses have upon economic production.

In recent years, as new energy sources have been discovered, the value of some routes has become newly recognized and used. For example, Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and other countries that border on the Gulf of Guinea have discovered oilfields with rich reserves, and major US petroleum companies, like Exxon and Esso, have preemptively signed contracts with these countries for up to several decades. Other examples are oil-producing countries like Gabon, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, and Congo; West Africa has become an important source of overseas energy supplies for many Western countries, including the United States. At the same time, in regard to certain straits whose channels are congested, like the Strait of Malacca, it is also possible to open new routes and to dig new canals. Currently, there are primarily three scenarios fermenting for replacing forms of transportation and accesses for transportation: digging a canal on the Isthmus of Kra, preparations for an “intermodal land bridge for sea and land” along Thailand’s southern coast, and going directly across Burma to open an outlet to the sea that goes to the Indian Ocean.²⁴³ China has scholars who have proposed that under the new world situation, changes in the international state should primarily be viewed from the angle of world economic accesses and not from the impact that world economic centers have on the various countries’ interests. They believe that future international conflicts will not definitely occur in the regions of economic centers but more likely in the channels of a “fluid economy” {*liuti jingji*}. Therefore, the more that economies develop, the more they will pay attention to [keeping] maritime traffic lines secure and unhindered and to the control of accesses and to countering the control [of accesses].

In summary, looking at history, the value of maritime accesses is inseparable from economics, and economic prosperity presents a positive relationship with the focus on and use of maritime

²⁴¹ (United Kingdom) Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, Zhang Keda and Xiong Menghua, translators, Naval Military Academic Research Institute, 1991, p. 98.

²⁴² (United States) William Engdahl, *Oil Wars*, Zhao Gang, Kuang Ye, et al., translators, Intellectual Property Press, 2008, p. 2. [Translator’s note: This could be Engdahl’s *Myths, Lies, and Oil Wars*.]

²⁴³ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, Routledge, 2001.

strategic accesses; the more prosperous that economies are, the more frequently maritime strategic accesses will be used, while contrariwise, the weaker they will become. Economic development has raised the status and role of maritime strategic accesses, and the use of maritime strategic accesses has also sped up and promoted economic development; the two complement each other. As the world's political and economic situation develops and changes, differing world economic centers have taken shape during differing historical stages, and the differing world economic centers will also influence the changes that the status and role of maritime strategic accesses undergo.

III. In the age of marine industry, maritime strategic accesses are an important support for the expansion of national interests...172

In the 21st century, humanity faces huge pressure brought about by the depletion of land resources and by environmental destruction, and it is irreversibly relying on the ocean for its survival and development, thereby pushing the traditional marine commercial civilization to advance toward a modern marine industrial civilization. After humanity underwent the three great waves of the Industrial Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution, and the Information Revolution, there were experts who predicted that the “fourth wave” would be a marine industrial revolution.²⁴⁴ If it is said that the opening of new routes historically has let people engage in overseas trade by the sea, then, today in the 21st century, mankind is again turning its eyes toward the sea, this time not for risky exploration and opening but to use scientific and technological means to exploit the oceans and to transform the results of marine industry into important capital for national development, through maritime accesses. The rise of marine industry will result in the role of maritime strategic accesses rising further.

First, the geoeconomic setup of the sea-land relationship promoted the strategic value of maritime accesses. When countries are in a relatively stable state, what these countries need is to get the capital, markets, and trade accesses necessary for their development; national interests will develop and change in accordance with how many resources the countries have, how large their markets are, and whether their trade accesses are unhindered or not. The oceans contain huge profit in the production of materials, and compared to the modernization of continental economies that are almost saturated, ocean economies still are in a backward state. Although the shipbuilding industry has greatly developed, the oceans are primarily treated as traffic lines between the continents, and they serve the continents' economies; the rich treasures of the fishing industry, marine animals, and mineral, petroleum, and gas resources are almost in a state of idleness. Breakthroughs in demanding riches from the oceans and in seeking marine production have become a trend in today's age. When US President [Barack] Obama consulted with the chairman of the Federation of Marine Enterprises on “creating an age of commerce under the American flag,” experts and eighteen congressmen responded with “Seeking a Revolution: Crucially Important Interests at the Door,” [which stated that] the engine for future large-scale economic development is in ports, inland waterways, and facilities that support maritime activities; in providing magnificent shipbuilding plans and budgets for the Navy and for commercial enterprises; and in

²⁴⁴ Lin Dong, “Steering History: The Movement to Open the Seas and the Rise of the Marine Industrial Revolution,” *Chinese Journal of Military Science*, Issue 1, 2010, p. 60.

the development of superhighway and railroads that will draw close to the development of the oceans. This answer demonstrated that the future virtual economy and real economy will comprehensively turn toward the state of development of coastal regions. Currently, the marine industry market has already become a hotspot of concern in the global shipbuilding industry, and each year there is an influx of close to \$300 billion in investment. Future coastal economic zones will be [zones] extending 350 kilometers inland from the seacoast and 350 nautical miles outward toward the sea in each ocean in the world. And within this scope, not only will there be sea areas where maritime strategic accesses are most intensive but they will also be sea areas where the world's various great ports, terminals, and islands are most concentrated, and they will be major issues that coastal countries' economic development must first of all pay attention to and resolve. And the transformation of this kind of coastal economy will place very heavy requirements on maritime strategic accesses so that the economic value and status of the maritime strategic accesses will further rise.

Second, the movement to open the seas {*tuo hai yundong*} started the process of modernization for the marine economy, and social production has had a major division of labor between the continents and the oceans, so there was production of new materials in which coastal commodities predominated. And this kind of large-scale marine industry has caused the global flow of materials to rely more on strategic accesses. This is because no matter how advanced modern exchanges were, out of the three major transportation systems – land, sea, and air – sea transportation is still characterized by being convenient and inexpensive. It has become the most important transportation path and location for today's international trade, and the amount of maritime trade transportation still makes up two-thirds of the total amount of world trade. Moreover, ocean transportation has superiorities that land transportation and air transportation have no way of replacing, and it still holds a dominant position in the transportation of goods worldwide, and especially the transportation of crucial energy such as petroleum. With today's world economic development tending toward globalization and as many countries' tentacles spread toward the various places of the world, their national interests will unavoidably increase their reliance on maritime strategic accesses, and this inevitably will cause the status and role of maritime strategic accesses to rise to an unprecedented extent.

Third is the establishment of a new strategy of geopolitical control {*diyuan zhiquan*}. Currently, the various countries' expansion by sea and by land has become a set situation; the importance of defending the sea and land has rapidly increased, but the importance of defending sea transportation has not declined. The architecture of key factors in sea power, with control over maritime accesses at its core, is still an important framework of key factors for the new sea power. For a number of years, the US-Japanese military alliance has constrained the PRC by sea; it has artificially created obstacles for the PRC's maritime security and development and has strengthened the PRC's maritime “geographical dilemmas” {*dili kunjing*} (such as the Taiwan issue and the Diaoyu Islands issue). In regard to this problem, we should leap over the fixed thinking of “a country cannot simultaneously have land power and sea power, plan out coastal security domains {*bantu*} that link the sea with the land, establish a new strategy for geopolitical control, and change the “geographical dilemmas” to “geographical advantages” {*dili youshi*}. Using the opportunity of reorganizing various interests under the “fourth wave” {*disici langchao*},

[we should] create an offshore environment, change the island chains into security links, and treat control of offshore waters as a strategic hub that links offshore waters defense with deep-sea defense.

Expansion by water and land represents a new situation for national competition; the emergence of ocean boundaries will remold national concepts, rewrite the historical fate of the nation and the people, and ultimately smash the history of the land as its center and open a history that has the ocean as its center of gravity. For example, in regard to the struggle over some small reefs, apart from treating ocean rights and interests as maritime national territory where every inch must be fought for, an extremely important reason is the strategic value that the reefs themselves have. If a small reef is located in an important route or close to an access, it could act as an important base point for controlling the surrounding accesses. Again, if its surroundings have rich resources, then its value will increase. This has a major relationship with the survival and development of the nation and the people, and it reflects that the age where the ocean is a core value concept has advanced.

SECTION 4: THE IMPACT OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES ON GEOMILITARY MATTERS ...174

Speaking from the military angle, maritime strategic accesses are a natural moat for offense, a basis for defense, support and containment for concealment and ambushes, and chokepoints for blockades. Regardless of whether it is wartime or peacetime, maritime strategic accesses have major geostrategic value and military strategic value, and they have an extremely important role for military struggles. There are experts who analyze the military value of the various parts of the ocean from a strategic angle and who believe that offshore waters are more important than the deep sea, that islands are more important than sea regions, and that sea chokepoints are more important than reefs. Therefore, the military value of maritime strategic accesses can be said to be the most important of all.

I. Maritime strategic accesses affect the structure and scale of military strengths...174

The structure and scale of the military strengths that a country develops are very much related to the geographical location where [that country] is and to its national strategic thinking. If a land country advocates that “the land comes first and the sea second,” the structural development of its military strengths will be relatively unitary, and its ground forces inevitably will be the focus of its development. But because of the special geographical location of a coastal country, if it advocates “the sea comes first and the land second,” then considering things from the angle of security, it will pay a great deal of attention to developing its maritime military strengths. The greater its seacoast is, the stronger its scale of naval construction will be. Coastal countries not only have land neighbors but they also border the sea; in seeking space for survival and development, they face two aspects, the land and the sea, and security threats also can come from two directions. Therefore, because its vigor and resources often are separated, which leads to its having no way to devote itself to developing sea power, this requires making appropriate adjustments to the structure of its armed forces and to their scale (primarily the navy and the ground forces), based on changes in the main threats. For example, Spain, France, and Italy have greater coastlines than Germany does, and therefore the scale of their navies is much greater than that of Germany’s. Although Russia’s coastline is relatively great (its coastline reaches 44,309 kilometers;

it is third place in the world, coming in after Canada and Indonesia), part of its coast is mainly icebound year-round, and the Arctic Ocean's use value is very low; this has become a major consideration in determining its scale and its structure, both historically and today (during the Soviet Union period, it had fewer naval troop strengths than the United States, which has excellent coastal conditions, but it was equipped with more submarines, whose total number exceeded that of the United States). And although Germany is a coastal country, because its coasts are fairly small, it should develop its navy in an appropriate way under the premise of ensuring the safety of the German homeland. However, Germany ignored the geographical background of Mahan's thinking on sea power and it ignored Germany's own geostrategic environment; it unrealistically wanted to become a powerful sea power country, and it vigorously developed its navy. The result caused the great navy that Germany had vigorously built prior to the First World War to not play much of a role; on the contrary, this weakened its ground forces. For another example, France also has an innate disadvantage in its geostrategic environment; the Strait of Gibraltar divides its two fleets naturally, thereby dispersing their naval strengths, and historically, France's navy therefore has suffered huge losses.

It is generally believed that the geostrategic environment that maritime nations and especially island nations occupy must be more favorable than that of coastal countries and that they therefore pay more attention to developing their maritime strengths. The reason is that the survival and development of maritime nations (with the United Kingdom and Japan as the most typical) rely on the ocean, the sources of their wealth and threats to their security both come from the sea, and they do not have the constraints of powerful land neighbors; therefore, they can make an all-out effort to develop their maritime strengths. And powerful navies are the main strengths for seizing and holding sea dominance, so maritime nations pay a great deal of attention to establishing and maintaining powerful navies. The United States borders on two oceans, and it also has weak neighbors as partners, so the United States' focus is not on its neighbors but on the entire world. The US Navy arose in the 18th century, the US Navy became world's strongest during the Second World War, and after the war, the United States viewed maritime strengths as an important support for maintaining its supremacy. In 1975, US President [Jerry] Ford proved the importance of controlling the seas, by looking back at American history: "One of the priceless keys leading to the gates of peace is powerful and modernized US fleets. The Navy is still a quite important tool for eliminating crises without the use of war. Its actual presence at points where situations occur can have the effect of deterring these."²⁴⁵

Therefore, speaking from a certain angle, near the world's important maritime strategic accesses, there generally will be guards of heavy troops from sea powers or from countries bordering these accesses; maritime strategic accesses not only affect the structure of countries' military strengths, but even more, they affect their scale. The greater the effect that maritime strategic accesses have on a country's geopolitics, geoeconomics, and geomilitary matters {*diyuan junshi*}, the larger the scale of this country's navy will be, the stronger its actual strengths will be, and the greater the level of their deployment.

²⁴⁵ Cheng Guangzhong, *On Geostrategy*, National Defense University Press, 1999, p. 115.

II. Maritime strategic accesses affect the focus and direction of military deployments...176

Looking at history, the focus of military strengths' deployment is identical with the focus of military strategy. Usually, a country that poses the greatest threat to a given country is the key geostrategic direction, as well as the key direction of strategic military deployment. Maritime strategic accesses are the most important thing in the world's military setup; in particular, energy transportation accesses have always been places that military commanders must struggle for, and they have an even more important strategic status. Therefore, the struggle for and control of maritime strategic accesses has become an important task for the navies of sea powers. Regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, the degree of control over maritime accesses is determined by the degree to which military strengths are stationed at these maritime accesses. Those maritime strategic accesses that affect the entrance and exit of maritime powers have always been the focus of their deployments.

“Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.” Mahan gave quite a bit of emphasis to the importance of the peacetime deployment of maritime strengths. He believed that most people in the Army understood military activities related to wartime activities to be war but that the Navy, on the other hand, believed the scope of strategy to be broader and that it also includes peacetime deployments and their non-military measures. During the period when the United Kingdom dominated the oceans, the focus and direction of military deployments was the ocean; the Navy's peacetime deployments almost turned the world's main channels into the internal traffic lines of the British Empire. The United States similarly paid a great deal of attention to the ocean; starting with the Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States continually practiced Mahan's theory of sea power and Spykman's subsequent “rimlands” theory. Up until now, the United States has carried out forward military deployments on both ends of the Eurasian continent, forming a forward deployment zone and ad hoc region {*te she diqu*} from Europe to Northeast Asia, the East Asian coast, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia, in order to protect the United States' important geostrategic interests throughout the world.²⁴⁶ In this process, where a strategic situation has been formed by over a hundred years of deploying military strengths, the United States has been able to occupy in advance “thoroughfares,” “intersecting highways” {*qu di*}, and “accesses” everywhere in the world and to gain topographical advantages, and to thereby win the situation and capability where it today can control the world overall, fairly reliably ensuring that it obtains its political and economic interests and that it has become the current sole superpower. Japan is an island nation that relies on the outside quite heavily. The maritime accesses to the southeast and southwest of the Japanese islands are its maritime lifeline. In order to protect these two routes, Japan has established a series of naval and air force bases from the north to the south along the Japanese islands, and it has deployed heavy troops and advanced weapons and equipment; this geostrategic influence has left it so that it will not change the focus and direction of its maritime military strengths' deployment.

²⁴⁶ Huang Baifu, Chief Editor, *Selections in U.S. National Security Strategy Documents after the 9-11 Incident*, Military Yiwen Publishing House, 2002.

Energy reserves and production centers are the focus of military conflict by the various great nations, and they occupy a special status in world military deployments. During the US-Soviet Cold War period, the Middle East region was the focus of conflict by the two sides, as well as the focus of the two countries' military deployments. In order to more directly exert its influence on the Middle East, the Soviet Union sent troops to occupy Afghanistan; this act by the Soviet Union destroyed the regional balance, leading to a major adjustment in the world military layout. Compared to the Soviet Union, the United States was at a disadvantage geostrategically, because it was 12,000 miles from the US homeland to the Gulf, and there was only one maritime access that was reliable militarily. If a crisis occurred in the Middle East, the United States would at a minimum need to employ all of its long-range air transport strengths and rapid sea transportation strengths. In addition, all of the United States' anti-submarine and air defense strengths [would have] to protect this route. The United States would need to transport a unit of 165,000 men within fourteen days, and this clearly was not too possible. Therefore, on the one hand, the United States strongly supported Israel, turning it into a regional military power and putting a wedge into the Middle East region, while on the other hand, the United States strengthened its garrisons in South Korea and Japan, forming a powerful constraint against the Soviet Union in Northeast Asia and the northern Pacific. After the end of the Cold War, the United States used the heaven-sent opportunity of the Gulf War to maintain sanctions against Iraq, keeping a large garrison in this region in the name of protecting regional security in the Gulf, so that it became an important component part of the United States' global military deployment.

The United States has stationed troop strengths near most of the sixteen chokeholds that it has proposed; for example, after the United States withdrew from Subic in the Philippines in 1992, it returned to Southeast Asia in 2001 in a big way, stationing [forces] in Singapore's Po Leung Port, which it had coveted for a long time. Although the area of Singapore is less than 700 square kilometers, its militarily strategic location is quite important; it guards a strategic channel – the Strait of Malacca – that links two oceans, and it is one of the international maritime transportation and traffic hubs. The presence and deployment of US Navy troop strengths in Singapore could control a chokehold for two oceans in an effective manner – the Strait of Malacca. US Navy aircraft carrier groups stationed there can reach the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea by going west, in order to reinforce US forces stationed in the Gulf, while they can go east at any time to monitor and control the South China Sea and the situation around Taiwan, and they can also make the chain-style containment situation built by the US military in Asia and the Pacific along the Japan–South Korea–Okinawa–Taiwan–Philippines–Singapore line more complete. In particular, after Singapore's Changi aircraft carrier military port was put into use, this was even more helpful for quickly and effectively supplying US Navy aircraft carrier combat groups stationed in this region, for them to engage in combat.

Therefore, as regards military deployment, the importance of maritime strategic accesses is primarily reflected in the combination of the various key factors of the military deployment and the geoenvironmental {*diyuan huanjing*} factors. In other words, when planning military deployments, it is necessary to consider the effect that maritime strategic accesses' geostrategic conditions have on military deployment in such areas as offense and defense, flexibility, a lack of

obstacles, and time, which will cause the spatial relationship among military strengths to have a particular form and details.

III. Maritime strategic accesses affect the stability of nations' maritime stability...178

National maritime security is an important condition for modern nations' survival and development, and whether maritime nations can achieve maritime security is affected by many factors. Of these, the effects of maritime strategic accesses are especially prominent. In fact, the focus on ocean security, to include accesses, should be said to precede industrial civilization; it could even be said that it started in the age of the bulk mercantile economy. Moreover, the theory of land power has a relationship with the oceans that is difficult to separate. Although 11th-century China (the Yuan Dynasty) held the indisputable status of a land power, still, in Europe, the prosperity of trade in ports like Italy's Genoa was closely related to the security of maritime accesses, and this became the basis for geoeconomic development. Mahan said, "The commercial achievements of the Netherlands were by no means merely determined by its shipping at sea; it was also determined by its many channels with their smooth sailing, which made its entry into its own and Germany's hinterland both easy and convenient. Compared to the land, the advantage of shipping by waterways was that there was a shortage of highways and that these had very bad conditions; wars frequently occurred, and it was a period of social turbulence. What was even more obvious, this was the same as the conditions 200 years before this."²⁴⁷ As for Europe, the impact of maritime accesses was far greater than the effects of the Silk Road. Historically, England has had very few experiences where it was subjugated by other peoples; one important reason for this was that it was separated from the European continent by the English Channel so that it had a natural geographical advantage. [The English Channel] became the best moat for protecting England. For another example, although a country's area may not be large, if it is located near a crucial strait or waterway, then these favorable factors for national maritime security will be greatly increased. Just as Mahan pointed out, "If a country's geographical location...has naturally caused it to be located along an access that is convenient for entering the open seas and at the same time also allows it to control a major world trade access, it is obvious that its geographical location has an important strategic role."²⁴⁸ Similarly, the United States opened its frontiers and expanded on the oceans, under the drive of the theory that whoever controlled the oceans would control the world; Mahan urged Americans to first clearly understand that guaranteeing "the freedom of transoceanic traffic is determined by control over the Caribbean, which all routes that pass through the isthmus must cross."²⁴⁹

However, when a country does not have actual maritime power but it has many maritime accesses, then for this country, maritime accesses at certain times will turn it into an access and springboard for invasion by enemies, and it will bring about calamities for this country. In 1824,

²⁴⁷ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, Xiao Wei[zhong] and Mei Ran, translators, China Press, 1997, p. 322.

²⁴⁸ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, An Changrong and Cheng Zhongqin, translators, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1998, p. 32.

²⁴⁹ (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, Xiao Wei[zhong] and Mei Ran, translators, China Press, 1997, p. 25.

the United Kingdom defeated the Netherlands and gained complete control over a strait; this turned Malacca into a springboard for the United Kingdom to expand in Southeast Asia. After the United Kingdom controlled the Strait of Malacca, it began to follow the road of invading China. It was fifteen years later, just as ships that had assembled in the Strait of Malacca sailed toward the Chinese coast to launch the Opium War against China, that the calamities of the Chinese people began. Around the Japanese islands there are many maritime accesses, and in the 19th century, the Western powers relied on their gunboats to open the doors to Japan; this was an invasion of Japan from maritime accesses. Therefore, it is precisely this innate stability or unchangeableness that has an important impact on the ways in which coastal countries exist that is a major strategic issue that must be taken into account from the vantage point of the life or death of these countries.

Therefore, the security and development of a country that is rich in maritime strategic accesses are a two-edged sword. Speaking in a certain sense, they are the natural basis of that country's survival and development, and most of the country's activities are carried out based on these maritime accesses. But at the same time, they also have a mortal impact on this country, and it can be said that they are both a security shield and a thoroughfare for invasion. This is the important impact that this innate stability or unchangeableness has on the way in which many coastal countries exist, as well as a major strategic issue that these countries must pay attention to from the vantage point of the countries' life or death.

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CHAPTER 5

THE INTERNATIONAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND PRACTICES THAT MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES TOUCH ON...181

The role of international law as a source of conflict and as a regulator may not have been fully taken into consideration by the people responsible for planning and organizing maritime strengths.

– Geoffrey Till

International maritime law is the overall term for maritime sovereignty and jurisdiction and for the system of rules involving the exploitation and management of the sea. Ever since humans began to use the sea, they have produced principles, rules, and regimes for maritime activities. Ancient slave societies already had concepts of law as well as laws and regulations related to the sea. But because primitive forms of production have very low abilities to exploit the sea, these did not engender any contradictions and competition; the ancient Romans thought that the sea, just like the air, was “a thing that everyone had in common” or “a public thing;” later, they also advocated that “it was possible to freely use the sea,” that the sea “had no owner,” and that whoever first found things could occupy them. By the beginning of the 17th century, [Hugo] Grotius’s “freedom of the seas” {*haiyang ziyou lun*} and [John] Selden’s “closed sea” {*bi hai lun*} had emerged, and these created precedents in early modern maritime laws. Subsequently, through the practices of Western sea powers’ prolonged struggles for the sea, traditional international maritime laws took shape by the beginning of the 19th century, and they established a system of laws regarding territorial waters and the high seas, which had the principle of the freedom of the seas as its foundation; this continued straight until the 1970s.

The Third UN Conference [on the Law] of the Sea, which lasted nine years, passed the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* (below abbreviated as the *Convention*) in 1982, and this formally went into effect on 16 November 1994. By March 2007, 153 countries had formally acceded to the *Convention*.²⁵⁰ The *Convention* has a total of seventeen parts and 320 articles, with nine appendices that have a total of 446 articles;²⁵¹ its details touch on various aspects of maritime law, and compared to traditional international maritime law, it has the following breakthroughs and developments. First, the details are comprehensive and broad. There are detailed provisions in more than twenty areas, such as territorial seas and contiguous zones, archipelagic states, island regimes, exclusive economic zones, continental shelves, the high seas, enclosed or semi-enclosed seas, the right of access of land-locked states to and from the sea and freedom of transit, international seabeds, and methods of resolving maritime international disputes. Coastal states have twelve nautical miles of territorial seas and archipelagic sea territory, but maritime powers have receive the right of innocent passage and the right of transit passage through these sea regions. Second, it has made major progress and evolution as regards the overall principles of maritime

²⁵⁰ Shu Zhenya, “A Brief Discussion on Certain Development Trends in Maritime Law,” *Studies on Developments and Trends of International Maritime Law*, Ocean Press, 2007, p. 187.

²⁵¹ *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, <http://222.un.org/chinese/law/sea/>.

management. An example is the establishment of a system of 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zones so that 35.8 percent of the world's ocean surface is incorporated into coastal countries' jurisdictions, thereby expanding the maritime rights and interests of coastal countries.²⁵² The establishment of the principle that "The international seabed and its resources are the common heritage and assets of mankind" helps all of mankind to peacefully continue to use the seas and their resources. These two points have basically shaken the foundation of traditional international law. Third, it has made fairly great developments and innovations as regards some important maritime laws and regulations. For example, it resolved the issue of the width of territorial seas, which the 1958 and 1960 Conferences on the Law of the Sea had not resolved; it established a system of transit passage of straits in international navigation; it established a system of water areas for archipelagic nations; and it stipulated new legal concepts for continental shelves and made further clarifications for coastal states' rights and interests. Fourth, it made compromises and harmoniously handled some complicated issues. For example, it made new stipulations on such issues as a system for the exploitation of international seabeds, innocent passage of warships in territorial seas, navigation on continental shelves, freedom of overflight, and transit passage through international straits, which the vast majority of nations were able to accept. The *Convention* also stipulated that coastal states had sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting and conserving and managing the natural resources of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and the right of jurisdiction over a series of specific matters. Each coastal state has the right to establish corresponding laws and regulations in order to protect its maritime rights and interests. Therefore, each coastal state has the inalienable right to protect that state's maritime rights and interests, to pay attention to and participate in the world's maritime matters, and to develop its maritime economy.

Because of rapid developments in military technology, modern naval warfare or maritime armed conflicts are no longer only limited to being overseas, but they have been expanded to outer space and foreign states' territories and territorial airspace. Besides the areas of operations consisting of territorial seas, archipelagic waters, contiguous zones, and exclusive economic zones, most of the peacetime or wartime operational actions and military crises that occur are still in maritime chokepoint thoroughfares that are used for international navigation as straits and international canals.

On 15 May 1996, the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress ratified this convention, and [the PRC] became a member state of this convention. The *Convention* is an international maritime code; its birth and its coming into effect signify the major and far-reaching impact that the new international maritime order will have on the world's economic, military, and social order. In this, the relevant stipulation that modern maritime law has for transit systems in differing sea regions and straits will have a direct impact on the security of maritime strategic accesses.

²⁵² Gao Weinong, "The Maritime Activities of Southeast Asian Countries under the General Trend of International Exploitation of the Seas," *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2001, Issue 4, p. 46.

SECTION 1: THE *UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA*'S STRAIT TRANSIT REGIME...183

The maritime transit regime is the overall term for the navigational regulations that have taken shape over a long period of time in maritime legislative practices and fights by each country in the world, related to such special sea areas as territorial seas, archipelagic waters, and straits channels.²⁵³ The system of maritime transit has a direct impact on the use and security of maritime strategic accesses, and it is therefore necessary to fully understand the various transit regimes in international maritime law and in the maritime legislation of coastal states bordering maritime accesses.

I. Innocent passage regimes in relevant territorial waters' straits...183

The *Convention* explicitly stipulates that "Subject to this Convention, ships of all States, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea."²⁵⁴ Territorial straits generally permit the innocent passage of merchant ships, and "Passage is innocent so long as it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of the coastal State."²⁵⁵ The *Convention* explicitly stipulates that all ships enjoy the right of innocent passage through territorial seas, but there is no differentiation between warships and merchant ships. Currently, the various states have differing ways of handling things in their legislative and management practices as regards foreign military ships' right of innocent passage; there are twenty-six countries in the world that carry out systems of innocent passage through territorial seas, such as the United States, France, and Italy, and there are more than forty-five that require that warships get permission and notify [these countries] prior to innocent passage through their territorial seas, fifteen of which are in Asia, like China, Vietnam, Yemen, Somalia, and India. In addition, there are five coastal states (Djibouti, Egypt, Oman, Pakistan, and Yemen) that carry out special requirements for the passage of nuclear-powered warships and auxiliary ships that carry nuclear weapons.

Moreover, in regard to the issue of whether warships enjoy the right of innocent passage through territorial seas, each country's position or practices are certainly not the same. There mainly are two viewpoints. One represents the viewpoint of naval powers, headed by the United States, which advocate that warships, just like merchant ships, have the right of innocent passage in other countries' territorial seas, and they present diplomatic protests to those countries that require permission and notification in advance, including China. The other is the viewpoint of developing countries, as represented by China, which advocate that warships must notify countries in advance when transiting their territorial seas or get coastal countries' permission. In actuality, this innocent transit that the *Convention* stipulates is certainly not unrestricted, and when foreign ships exercise this right, they must respect the sovereignty of coastal states over their territorial seas and abide by their various stipulations regarding innocent passage. In practice, most of the signatories of the

²⁵³ "The Transit System in a Rational Use of Maritime Law Ensures the Security and Smoothness of Maritime Troop Strengths' Actions," *Collection of Documents from the Navy's 2006 Academic Symposium on Maritime Law and the Nation's Maritime Security* (Volume 2), August 2006, p. 72.

²⁵⁴ The Third UN Conference [on the Law] of the Sea, *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1983, p. 12.

²⁵⁵ The Third UN Conference [on the Law] of the Sea, *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1983, p. 13.

Convention have adopted forms of domestic legislation, and they carry out orderly restrictions on transit regimes by foreign warships in the sea areas that they have jurisdiction over. Most countries, including China, require that foreign military vessels must notify coastal countries in advance or get permission when transiting their territorial seas.

II. The straits passage regime used for international navigation...184

The straits passage regime {*haixia tongguo zhidu*} used for international navigation first appeared in the 1949 international court's judgment in the Straits of Corfu case. The judgment pointed out that foreign warships enjoy the right of innocent passage when in straits that are used for international navigation. This viewpoint was confirmed in the *Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone* of 1958. The third part of the 10 December 1982 *Convention* further defined the straits passage regime used for international navigation, but it did not provide a specific definition of straits used for international navigation {*guoji hangxing de haixia*}. Based on practices, straits used for international navigation must have two key factors. The first is that these straits have important value for international shipping and navigation, while the second is that these straits are sea accesses that are linked at their two ends with the high seas or with exclusive economic zones. Therefore, straits used for international navigation should refer to sea accesses that have important value in international shipping and navigation and whose two ends connect to the high seas or to exclusive economic zones. Based on the stipulations of the *Convention* and of other relevant rules, passage regimes for straits used for international navigation are divided into four regimes: straits where regimes of innocent passage apply, straits with regimes of transit passage {*guojing tongxing zhidu*}, straits with a freedom of navigation regime {*ziyou hangxing zhidu*}, and straits where special treaties apply.

1. Regimes of innocent passage

Based on the *Convention*, innocent passage refers to the right to transit territorial seas in a continuous and expeditious manner, on the surface of the sea. Without the agreement of coastal states, aircraft overflight and underwater passage are not permitted in territorial seas. Innocent passage applies to two types of straits. The first is straits used for international navigation between a part of the high seas or exclusive economic zone and a foreign country's territorial sea. The second is straits used for international navigation that exclusively connect one part of the high seas or exclusive economic zone with another part of the high seas or exclusive economic zone. These kinds of straits should be suited to a transit passage regime, but because these straits are situated between an island of a state bordering the straits and the mainland of this state, if there exists seaward of the island a route through the high seas or through an exclusive economic zone of similar convenience with respect to navigational and hydrographic characteristics, the transit passage regime and the innocent passage regime are not suited to this strait.

Practices in maritime navigation over the past few years have shown that the stipulations of the *Convention* regarding innocent passage have had a very great influence on the practices of maritime navigation. Many countries have accepted these stipulations in the *Convention*, and these stipulations in the *Convention* have been duplicated in the domestic laws of these countries. [But] the maritime navigation practices of many countries do not support this conclusion. For a long period of time, the international community has disputed whether the right of innocent passage in

territorial seas applies to warships. Sea powers stress their suitability, while coastal states are not willing to permit the passage of warships under circumstances where [these ships] have not received authorization or [provided] notification in advance. In actuality, prior to the Second World War and before the United States became the preeminent sea power, the United States was one of the many countries that held a negative attitude [toward innocent passage of warships]. As the United States became a world sea power, it changed its position and approved of warships having the right of innocent passage through territorial seas. Currently, there are thirty-nine countries in the world that require warships to [provide] advance notification when passing through their territorial sea; these include Bangladesh, Burma, India, Indonesia, South Korea, North Korea, and Pakistan. Vietnam even “denies innocent passage to warships not only in its territorial sea but even in its contiguous zone.”²⁵⁶

In the legislation of some countries, these generally require that foreign submarines should sail on the surface of the sea and display their flag within [these countries’] territorial seas, but in regard to the right of innocent passage for submarines and other submerged craft, some countries have adopted ways of doing things that are similar to warships; some simply believe that submarines are included among warships.²⁵⁷ Therefore, “An innocent passage regime must always maintain a subtle balance between the various coastal countries’ right to control their contiguous sea zones and the right of sea powers to freely navigate these sea zones.”²⁵⁸ Maintaining this balance is no easy matter.

The Chinese Government formally declared its position in a 1958 statement regarding its territorial sea, that all foreign military vessels must have permission to enter its territorial sea. When signing the *Convention* in 1982, it did not dispute the third part, “Straits Used for International Navigation.” In 1996, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress reiterated in its decision to ratify the *Convention* that “The *Convention*’s stipulations regarding innocent passage within territorial seas do not hinder the right of coastal states to require that foreign warships’ passage through territorial seas receive permission from these [coastal] states or that they inform these states prior to the event, in accordance with [the states’] laws and regulations”²⁵⁹ and that it did not involve the issue of straits passage. In actuality, there are no straits used for international navigation within the PRC’s territorial sea, nor are there any contradictions between the PRC’s existing relevant legal systems and the straits transit navigation regime as stipulated by the *Convention*.²⁶⁰

2. Transit passage regimes

The *Convention* acknowledges that the vessels and aircraft of all states enjoy the right of transit passage in straits used for international navigation, including narrow straits that are entirely located

²⁵⁶ Epsy Cooke Ferrell, *The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Law of the Sea: An Analysis of Vietnamese Behavior within the Emerging International Oceans Regime*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1998, p. 83.

²⁵⁷ Gao Zhiguo, *Collection of Papers on International Maritime Law*, Ocean Press, 2004, p. 24.

²⁵⁸ Donald R. Rothwell, “Navigational Rights and Freedoms in the Asia Pacific Following Entry into Force of the Law of the Sea Convention,” *Virginia Journal of International Law*, Spring 1995.

²⁵⁹ State Oceanic Administration Office of Policies and Regulations, editors, *Selections from the People’s Republic of China Maritime Laws and Regulations*, Ocean Press, 1998, p. 3.

²⁶⁰ Zhang Haiwen, *Collection of Interpretations of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 2006, p. 57.

within the territorial seas of states bordering the straits. The transit passage regime {*guojing tongxing zhidu*} only applies to straits used for international navigation between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone. During transit passage, vessels and aircraft can transit in a “normal manner” {*zhengchang fangshi*}, that is, vessel and aircraft formations are permitted to sail and fly, and submarines are permitted to transit on the surface of the water. This was the first time that aircraft’s right to overfly straits was stipulated. For straits whose width is smaller than twenty-four nautical miles, some straits that are used for international navigation are transformed from non-territorial sea straits into territorial sea straits. However, transit passage does not mean complete freedom of navigation; under the premise of not denying and not obstructing transit passage, states bordering straits have the right to draft laws and regulations in order to limit the transit of vessels that pose a threat to their security, such as warships, oil tankers, and nuclear-powered vessels. The issue is to what degree states bordering straits can exercise certain controls over transit passage. Given the dangers that their national security faces of a serious accident, Indonesia and Malaysia believe that the right of transit by various countries’ vessels for passing through their straits is not absolute. However, the proposals that the regional straits states have made “exceed the security regulations of international maritime organizations and the stipulations for sea lanes or for separating traffic, and they add additional restrictions to transiting vessels, including tolls for these generally acknowledged straits,”²⁶¹ and they have encountered resistance from other countries.

Because the *Convention* does not specifically describe to what degree states bordering straits can monitor and control sailing, there are fairly great differences in the degree to which states bordering straits exercise control over vessels passing through international straits. Sea powers, as represented by the United States, hold that straits that are used for international navigation should carry out a freedom of navigation and overflight regime; the core of their position is that all vessels and aircraft that must be used for international navigation, regardless of whether they are located within the scope of coastal territorial seas, can freely pass through and overfly these. But the vast majority of states bordering straits and developing countries believe that in any straits within territorial seas, foreign vessels enjoy the same rights of innocent passage as they do within territorial seas. Ultimately, the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* adopted a compromise method, and it implemented a special passage regime for this kind of strait, that is, in “straits which are used for international navigation between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone,” a regime is carried out for transit passage.²⁶² Its rules fall between “freedom of navigation” and “innocent passage,” and the targets it applies to are all vessels and aircraft, including submarines and military vessels. When vessels and aircraft are passing in transit, it is not necessary to first inform the states bordering straits or to obtain their agreement, and it is possible to sail and overfly in accordance with normal forms, that is, vessels can maintain an alert status and other navigational customs, formations [can]

²⁶¹ Stanley B. Weeks, “Sea Lines of Communication Security and Access,” in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, eds., *Shipping and Regional Security*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 129, Australian National University, 1998, p. 50.

²⁶² The Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1983, p. 13.

sail, submarines [can] pass submerged, and aircraft [can] take off and land. In regard to transit passage, states bordering straits “shall not hamper” and “shall not suspend” transit passage of vessels and aircraft, and “shall give appropriate publicity to any danger to navigation or overflight within or over the strait of which they have knowledge.”²⁶³

The Strait of Malacca also carries out a transit passage regime. On 16 November 1971, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore issued a joint statement that adopted a common position on the Strait of Malacca and the Singapore Strait; the three states’ governments announced that they took responsibility for the security of navigation in the straits and that they would jointly cooperate to ensure the security of navigation in the straits. The three countries would do all they could to build up an organization for cooperation and coordination in ensuring the security of navigation in the straits. However, in November 1971, Indonesia and Malaysia issued a joint statement that the Strait of Malacca is not an international sea lane, but they would permit “innocent passage.” In 1972, Indonesia unilaterally announced that vessels exceeding 200,000 tons and especially oil tankers would not be permitted to pass through the Strait of Malacca, and that these should pass through other straits. Indonesia and Malaysia also have studied a demand that warships must give advance notification of passage through the Strait of Malacca. These positions reflected the justifiable demands of states bordering straits in order to uphold their sovereignty and security, but they encountered opposition from the Soviet Union, the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

3. Freedom of navigation regimes {ziyou hangxing zhidu}

These straits only apply to straits whose two ends connect to the high sea or exclusive economic zones and whose width exceeds twenty-four nautical miles, that is, straits that are not territorial seas. If among them there are sea lanes that pass through the high seas or exclusive economic zones and whose navigation and hydrographical characteristics are equally convenient, then the freedom of navigation regime and freedom of overflight as stipulated in the *Convention* apply. There are forty-two straits of this kind in the world; in some, both sides belong to one country, while in some, the two sides belong to two or more countries.²⁶⁴ Examples are the Straits of Yucatán between Cuba and Mexico, the Mozambique Channel between Madagascar and Tanzania, the Soya Strait and Tsugaru Strait in the Japanese islands, the Tsushima Strait and Busan Strait between Japan and South Korea, the Osumi Strait and Miyako Strait in the Ryukyu Islands, and the Taiwan Strait in Taiwan’s northeast²⁶⁵ and the Bashi Channel in its south.

4. Navigation regimes that are stipulated by special international conventions {zhuanmen guoji gongyue guiding de hangxing zhidu}

International straits generally refer to straits that are commonly used for international navigation and that thus become world sea lanes.²⁶⁶ Because of differing situations, these straits apply

²⁶³ Zhang Haiwen, *Collection of Interpretations of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 2006, p. 54.

²⁶⁴ Shen Zhongchang and Wu Tianxi, “Issues Involving Straits and Their Regimes of Passage,” *Selected Papers on Issues Involving the Navy and International Law*, The Navy’s Military Academic Research Institute, 1997, p. 123.

²⁶⁵ Translator’s note: This should be “northwest.”

²⁶⁶ Liang Shuying, *International Public Law*, China University of Political Science and Law Press, 1995, p. 141.

differing navigation regimes. Under normal conditions, they implement transit passage regimes (a passage regime that is freer than innocent passage), but based on the stipulations of Articles 38 and 45 of the *Convention*, there are two situations that apply to innocent passage regimes. We might as well refer to international straits under these two conditions as specific international straits {*teding guoji haixia*}. They primarily include straits that are used for international navigation where one part connects to the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and the other part is the high seas or an exclusive economic zone; if this strait consists of an island of the state bordering the strait and the mainland of this state, and if there is a sea lane through the high seas or exclusive economic zone seaward of the island that is of similar convenience with respect to navigational and hydrographical characteristics, then an innocent passage regime shall apply. Examples are the Strait of Messina, which is situated between the Italian mainland and the island of Sicily and which connects the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Ionian Sea, and the Pemba Channel, which is situated between Pemba Island and the Tanzanian mainland. Another situation is straits where one part connects to the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and [the other part is] the territorial sea of a foreign state. Examples are the Kerch Strait, which connects the Sea of Azov with the Black Sea, and the Straits of Tiran between Saudi Arabia and Egypt; these types of international straits are situated within territorial seas, and they generally implement an innocent passage regime. However, innocent passage in these special international straits differs from the innocent passage in the straits that were described earlier; states bordering the straits cannot halt innocent passage in these kinds of straits. In other words, in these straits, it is not permissible to delineate any part of the strait and temporarily halt the innocent passage of foreign vessels; this is a special right of innocent passage.

Clause 3 of Article 35 in the third part of the *Convention* establishes an exception to transit passage; certain straits are not affected by the stipulations of the *Convention*, and special legal regimes will continue to be implemented. These passage regimes only apply to straits “in which passage is regulated in whole or in part by long-standing international conventions in force specifically relating to such straits.”²⁶⁷ The *Convention* does not list specific straits that fit these exceptions, but the phrase “long-standing” hints that only those conventions and regimes that have been recognized for a long period of time can be considered to be of this sort. In accordance with the stipulations of the *Convention*, the width of these straits is mostly fairly narrow, the two sides of such a strait belong to one state or several states, they are extremely important to international navigation, and they are principal straits that are important sea lanes in the world’s seas. Because of the importance of their geographical location and the effects they have on some states’ interests, special international treaties have been separately drafted under the historical conditions of past times, which have specified the legal status and passage regime of these kinds of straits, and they have been guaranteed. Therefore, the *Convention* still retains the effectiveness that the original international treaties had for these straits passage regimes, and this is not affected by the *Convention*. These straits primarily consist of the Turkish Straits, the Danish Straits, the Strait of Magellan, the Bosphorus Strait, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Black Sea straits. The legal status

²⁶⁷ The Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1983, p. 24.

and passage regimes of these straits are all stipulated by bilateral or multilateral treaty.²⁶⁸ For example, the regime for the Strait of Magellan was stipulated by an 1881 bilateral treaty between Chile and Argentina; the treaty declared that the strait was made neutral and that all states' merchant ships and military vessels can freely navigate it. The regime for the Strait of Gibraltar was a new agreement that the United Kingdom, France, and Spain signed in 1907 for the demilitarization of the Strait of Gibraltar; they undertook the responsibility for not changing the freedom of navigation of all states' vessels within the strait.

III. Passage regimes for the waters of relevant archipelagos...191

Article 54²⁶⁹ of the *Convention* stipulates the passage regime for archipelagic sea lanes {*qundao haidao tongguo zhidu*}. The passage regimes for archipelagic sea lanes in actuality are a transplant of transit passage regimes to the archipelagic waters of archipelagic nations, and they are applied to archipelagic sea lanes and their air routes as specified by the archipelagic states. In circumstances where archipelagic states do not designate archipelagic sea lanes or air routes, other states can pass through routes that are normally used for international navigation within the archipelagic states' archipelagic waters, exercising the right of archipelagic sea lanes passage.

Archipelagic waters are the waters that are formed within base lines after an archipelagic state uses these straight base lines to connect the islands that belong to it, along with their waters, into a whole. Outside of the base lines, the archipelagic state can also delineate a territorial sea, an exclusive economic zone, and a continental shelf. The establishment of an archipelagic waters regime allows the archipelagic state to extend the scope of the waters under its jurisdiction. But in return, the archipelagic state agrees that the vessels of all states have the right of innocent passage through the archipelagic waters and that all vessels and aircraft enjoy the right of passage through archipelagic waters within sea lanes and air routes designated by the archipelagic state. Based on the *Convention*, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia can exercise innocent passage regimes within the archipelagic waters beyond the archipelagic waters designated by these three archipelagic states.

Archipelagic sea lanes refer to sea lanes whose two ends separately connect to a part of the high seas or of exclusive economic zones, and to the air routes in the air above them. These kinds of sea lanes or air routes should pass through archipelagic waters or a contiguous territorial sea, and they include all normal sea lanes of international routes that are used to cross archipelagic waters. Archipelagic states should clearly plot the center lines of the archipelagic sea lanes that have been delineated and [should] publish this.

Archipelagic sea lanes passage means that vessels and aircraft navigate and overfly archipelagic sea lanes using normal modes, for the purpose of continuous, expeditious, and unobstructed transit. Vessels and aircraft transiting archipelagic sea lanes shall not deviate more than twenty-five nautical miles from the center line of the sea lane during the process of their transit, or excessively deviate from the center line and approach islands on one side of the sea lane (they shall not deviate ten percent of the closest distance between the islands and the center line of the sea lane). Under

²⁶⁸ Shen Zhongchang and Wu Tianxi, "Issues Involving Straits and Their Regimes of Passage," *Selected Papers on Issues Involving the Navy and International Law*, The Navy's Military Academic Research Institute, 1997, p. 125.

²⁶⁹ Translator's note: This is actually Article 53.

conditions where the archipelagic state has yet to designate sea lanes or air routes, vessels and aircraft can exercise the right of archipelagic sea lanes passage through routes normally used for international navigation. Based on the *Convention*, we can carry out an archipelagic sea lanes passage regime when sailing in the following straits, such as the Balintang Channel, the Babuyon Channel, the Mindoro Strait, the Balabac Strait, and the Makassar Strait in the first island chain.

IV. Freedom of navigation regimes related to exclusive economic zones...192

The *Convention* stipulates that exclusive economic zones are waters outside territorial waters and that connect to territorial waters and have specified legal regimes; their widths are not to exceed 200 nautical miles starting at the base lines of the territorial seas. They include bodies of water, the seabed, and its subsoil. Exclusive economic zone regimes {*zhuanshu jingji qu zhidu*} are a new concept in modern maritime law; their establishment broke through the traditional concepts in old maritime law that “what is beyond territorial seas is the high seas” {*ling hai zhi wai ji gong hai*}. In this region, coastal states enjoy sovereign rights whose objective is to explore and exploit natural resources and to conserve and manage them, as well the jurisdictional rights to build and use artificial islands, facilities, and structures; to scientifically study the ocean; and to protect and preserve the ocean environment. Other states, on the other hand, enjoy the freedom to sail, overfly, and lay and manage submarine cables. However, the *Convention* also has other limitations and imperfections; as a peacetime code of international maritime law, it very rarely directly touches on details in the military aspect; in regard to the issue of military use of exclusive economic zones, it has already triggered contradictions and conflicts internationally in theory and in countries’ practices. The United States insists on carrying out reconnaissance and survey activities in other countries’ exclusive economic zones, and it has even carried out military exercises; it has exercised the rights of the high seas; and it has in practice violated and challenged the PRC’s maritime rights and interests a number of times. For example, the large number of military hydrographic surveys and maritime scientific research activities that the US Navy has carried out in the PRC’s East China Sea and South China Sea regions have not only seriously violated the PRC’s maritime rights and interests in its exclusive economic zone but it has also greatly infringed on the PRC’s national interests. Based on relevant stipulations of the *Convention* and of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf*, other countries should be prohibited from carrying out military exercises, armed tests, and military reconnaissance activities in the PRC’s exclusive economic zone and the air above it, unless these have the PRC’s permission. Military marine scientific studies and survey activities that the military vessels and flight vehicles of other countries carry out in the PRC’s exclusive economic zone in the name of non-military objectives also are not permitted, and the PRC should exercise its rights in a righteous and self-confident manner, and prevent these or expel them. On the other hand, when the PRC’s vessels exercise their right to freedom of navigation in other countries’ exclusive economic zones, they not only need to respect the laws of the coastal countries but at the same time they also need to correctly exercise their own rights.

The above several types of passage regimes are passage regimes for island sea lanes that are stipulated by existing international law. Of course, these regimes are only some stipulations in principle; their actual implementation also requires the drafting of relevant domestic laws by

coastal countries. Therefore, after getting a grasp on straits passage regimes in international law, it is also necessary to become familiar with the specific passage regimes that relevant states bordering on straits and sea lanes draft for specified straits.

SECTION 2: THE LEGAL STATUS OF INTERNATIONAL STRAITS IN WARTIME...193

Both merchant ships and warships enjoy the freedom to transit international straits. On the one hand, the *Convention* retains the right of innocent passage in straits, while on the other hand it also sets rules for the transit passage of certain international straits. But what must be pointed out is that regardless of whether it is the 1958 *Convention* or the 1982 *Convention*, these are only applicable to peacetime and do not have rules for passage in wartime. Today, when the world's political, economic, and military situations are rapidly developing and changing, straits have become strategic key points that blocs and nations with differing interests struggle over because of [the straits'] major economic and strategic significance. Dispatching military vessels to cruise in international straits or to have a "forward presence" in states bordering straits is also a special non-war military activity by some countries in peacetime. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the legal use of international straits in wartime.

I. The legal status of international straits when states bordering straits are in a state of neutrality...193

In wartime, when states bordering straits are neutral, their neutrality results in the neutral states enjoying a series of rights and duties. As regards their rights, states bordering straits have the right to uphold their own security, but as regards their duties, justice and non-discrimination are the primary tasks of states bordering straits. Both merchant ships and warships enjoy the freedom to pass through international straits. The question that must be first answered at this time is, are the duties that a neutral status produces in conflict with the right of passage that all countries enjoy in peacetime? If the answer is negative, we then must seek out the types of ships that have the right to pass through, based on relevant international practices, regardless of whether they belong to belligerent states or to neutral states.

1. Permission by states bordering straits for the vessels of belligerent states to pass through in no way affects their neutral obligations

Article 10 of the 1907 *Convention Concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in Naval War* stipulates that the neutrality of a Power is not affected by the mere passage through its territorial waters of warships or prizes belonging to belligerents, that is, this cannot be considered as violating international law. In wartime, neutral states have many rights and obligations; in all these obligations, peace is the most important. A neutral coastal state's not prohibiting vessels of a belligerent state (regardless of whether these are warships or merchant ships) to pass through an international strait does not constitute a violation of the neutral state's obligations. The reason is that this rule permits a belligerent state to pass through a neutral state's territorial seas, to say nothing of passing through international straits. Therefore, merely passing through a neutral state's international straits can in no way be considered a violation of international law. This thesis has already been proven by the Permanent Court of International Justice in the [S.S.] *Wimbledon* case. Although what this case involved was the issue of passage through a manmade canal, the court equated this canal to an international strait whose two parts were connected to the high seas, and

it said, “Even though this was the passage of a belligerent state’s warship, it will not cause harm to the neutral status of a coastal state.” Therefore, we can find that warships of belligerent states can pass through international straits without violating the laws of neutrality. Since the passage of a belligerent state’s warship cannot be considered a violation of neutrality, then by the same token, the passage of a belligerent state’s merchant ships will also not violate neutrality. The reason is that merchant ships will cause even less damage to the neutrality of coastal countries than warships will. Based on similar reasons, it is also impossible to consider the passage of neutral countries’ merchant ships or even of neutral countries’ merchant ships carrying prohibited goods, as violating neutrality laws. The focus of the dispute in the *Wimbledon* case was on the issue of the passage of a neutral merchant ship carrying weapons and other goods for a belligerent state; after comparing the Kiel Canal to a neutral international strait, the court ultimately reached this conclusion: the passage of vessels carrying prohibited military items also cannot be considered an act that violated the rules of neutrality. For example, during the Crimean War of 1854-1856, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Denmark and Sweden opened the Baltic straits. What should be pointed out is that at that time, Denmark stressed that opening the straits to the warships of belligerent nations was done to accordance with international law; this behavior did not arouse any arguments at that time. At The Hague Peace Conference, Denmark announced that “The right of coastal states to prohibit the warships of belligerent nations from entering their territorial waters cannot be extended to the straits part of the high seas.” During the First World War, Chile permitted the warships of belligerent nations to pass through the Strait of Magellan, although at that time, this strait was still not inside the scope of its territorial waters. During the First World War, although the United Kingdom strongly demanded that Denmark close its straits, Denmark still refused to close the straits. Finally, Denmark closed the Great Belt strait, and it only opened the northern part of the Little Belt strait. Although the use of judgments about the neutrality laws for the legality of this way of doing things was still questionable, because it benefited Germany in the final analysis, still, it could prove that neutral states at least have the right to permit the vessels of belligerent nations to pass through their international straits. During the First World War, Sweden opened the Sang-de Canal.²⁷⁰ In 1938, Denmark and Sweden issued [a statement] that the neutrality laws permitted the warships of belligerent nations to pass through straits. During the Second World War, the Allies used the Strait of Gibraltar to attack North Africa. In 1966, Swedish legislation permitted the vessels of belligerent nations, including submarines, to pass through straits that Sweden controlled. Of course, these passages had to abide by special rules that these coastal states drafted.

Compared to the practices of these nations, there are also some examples of countries’ practices that prove the opposite viewpoint, that is, that belligerent nations do not enjoy the right to pass through neutral straits. During the First World War, Denmark closed its straits for the first time, at Germany’s request, and it laid naval mines in the Øresund strait, the Great Belt Strait, and the Little Belt strait, in order to block the passage of belligerent nations’ warships.

It can be drawn from this that belligerent nations in wartime have the right as well as reason to dispatch their warships to pass through neutral straits. First, there are more practices by states

²⁷⁰ Translator’s note: This is the Chinese rendition of the name of a Swedish canal, possibly the Södertälje Canal.

supporting this right of passage. Second, if coastal states are given the right to close the straits under their control, many of the collective security actions under the UN system will have no way to develop normally or will basically have no way to be implemented. And third, if coastal states close straits, it is quite possible that they will be trapped into the conflict, even if this [closing] involves carrying out fair neutral policies. The reason is that use of these straits could be crucially important for certain belligerent nations. Of course, at the same time that we support opening neutral international straits to belligerent nations' warships in wartime, we must also recognize that coastal states have the right to adopt some compulsory measures in order to protect their own security, such as mandatory patrols. However, these measures must be fairly implemented for each side among the belligerent nations. Injustice or discrimination means that these coastal states have violated their duty of neutrality, and it is quite possible that they will be drawn into armed conflict.

If belligerent nations' warships are permitted to pass through neutral straits, then this same right of passage should also be applied to belligerent nations' merchant ships, by the same reasoning. This conclusion is proven by the practices of countries during the Crimean War period. At that time, Denmark and Sweden opened their straits to the merchant ships of belligerent nations. This was also the situation during the periods of the Franco-Prussian War and the Russo-Japanese War. During the time of the First World War, Denmark laid naval mines in the straits under its control, but it permitted merchant ships to pass through the mine zones, under its escort. Similarly, Sweden also permitted merchant ships to pass through the Sang-de canal, but it did not undertake compulsory escorts. The single practice by a country that did not accord with this conclusion was a memorandum issued by Germany in June 1940; this memorandum recognized that coastal states could close international straits to the merchant ships of belligerent nations.

2. Do coastal states have the obligation to permit passage of belligerent nations' vessels?

Because the passage of belligerent nations' warships are not considered to be behavior that violates neutrality, the question of whether coastal states have the obligation during times of armed conflict to permit belligerent nations' vessels to pass through neutral straits has become an issue. Most scholars of international law believe that the warships of belligerent nations have the right to pass through neutral international straits, and that moreover, coastal states have the obligation to permit this passing. This viewpoint is supported by the practices of many nations; for example, Denmark and Sweden opened the Baltic Sea straits during the Crimean War (1854-1856), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Compared to this behavior, there also have been instances where belligerent nations' ships were not permitted to pass through neutral states' straits, such as in 1914, when Italy closed the Strait of Messina during the period of its neutrality. In 1980, after the Gulf oil tanker war erupted, Oman always patrolled its own territorial sea in the Strait of Hormuz, in order to prevent Iranian and Iraqi warships from passing through.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Zhang Zhaozhong, *Introduction to Methods of Naval Warfare*, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1995, p. 85.

3. Belligerent nations are not to use the internal waters and territorial seas of states bordering straits in order to engage in acts of war

A general tenet of international law is that belligerent nations are not to use neutral waters, like internal waters and territorial seas, for the purposes of war. Of course, this tenet similarly applies to international straits, because they make up a component part of coastal states' internal waters and territorial seas. Although passage is crucially important, at the same time it also means forbidding belligerent nations from engaging in acts of war while in neutral waters. This principle has been proven by the most recent international practices. During the period of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz multiple times, many Arab states participated in the war against Iran, and Iraq also launched a war to attack formations transporting petroleum. These acts inevitably involved closing the straits part of the territorial waters of Oman, which was a neutral nation. However, Oman's views at that time were that the center of the Strait came under the waters of Oman's territorial seas, and it was not to be used for the purposes of engagement. In 1980, a large number of Iranian warships violated Oman's territorial sea, and Oman protested Iran's threats, believing that the Iranian warships had violated Oman's territorial waters in order to identify passing vessels. In addition, what is similarly worth noting is that Iran's threat to close the Strait was not put into practice, although Iraq's air force carried out large-scale aerial attacks against neutral nations' oil tankers coming from the port of Kharg.

4. Issues involving neutral merchant ships' and neutral warships' passing through straits

Neutral nations' merchant ships enjoy complete freedom to pass through neutral straits, but whether neutral nations' warships can pass through has given rise to disputes. However, countries' practices have shown that the right of passage applies to all ships of neutral nations, including warships. For example, in the 1991 India-Pakistan war, a US naval formation entered the Strait of Malacca. This passage was not blocked by Indonesia, but it also indicated that the commander of the US formation informed [Indonesia] of this passage prior to the event. The theory of neutrality and relevant countries' practices also prove that neutral vessels, regardless of whether they are warships or merchant ships, enjoy the freedom to pass through international straits of states bordering straits, given that these are neutral nations. Belligerent nations' merchant ships similarly enjoy this freedom. The warships of belligerent nations also enjoy the freedom to pass through the international straits of neutral nations. There are many more country practices and judicial precedents that support this viewpoint than there are ones that prove the contrary viewpoint. Moreover, the preface to the 1907 Hague Peace Conference also pointed out, extremely explicitly, that "Belligerent nations' warships have the right to pass through international straits."

Although the neutrality of states bordering straits is not injured by belligerent nations' vessels purely passing through, we also cannot therefore reach the conclusion that this right of passage must not come under any restrictions in wartime. A fairly rational conclusion could be that states bordering straits should have the right to adopt rational measures in wartime, such as forced pilotage or laying naval mines in order to protect their own security. But of course, these measures are not in reality done to create results that obstruct or prohibit passage. If neutral nations prohibit passage in neutral straits, the results of this would quite likely be that neutral states bordering straits will be dragged into the conflict. In other words, prohibiting the passage of straits is far from being

able to increase the security of states bordering straits, and it will only drag them into war and expand the conflict.

II. The legal status of international straits when states bordering straits are in a state of engagement...198

When states bordering straits are neutral, the legal status of their international straits are more or less equivalent to [the straits'] legal status in peacetime. However, when states bordering straits are also in a state of war, this status is very hard to guarantee.

1. Issues regarding the passage of neutral countries' vessels

There are roughly two viewpoints regarding this issue. The first viewpoint believes that when a state bordering a strait is in a state of war, warships of neutral nations are still permitted to enjoy the right of free passage in international straits. But this passage should be innocent, and states bordering the straits should have the right to draft and implement relevant rules regarding this passage. In the famous Straits of Corfu case, the International Court of Justice pointed out in its judgment that "States in time of peace have the right to send their warships through straits used for international navigation between two parts of the high seas without the previous authorization of a coastal state, provided that the passage is innocent." The Court believed that "Unless international treaties have converse stipulations, there is no right for a coastal state to prohibit such passage through straits in time of peace." In a debate, the Court recognized that Albania and Greece "do not maintain normal relations," and it noted that Greece had declared that it believed that it was technically in a state of war with Albania. The Court believed that "In regard to those exceptional situations (referring to Albania and Greece being in a state of war), Albania's declaration regarding warships' passage through the straits had a rational basis." However, the Court ruled that Albania could not prohibit or require requests that it authorize passage. Another viewpoint believed that coastal states could exercise the authority to inspect and search neutral ships during the time of passage. A contrary viewpoint believed that there was no right to inspect and search in international straits, because this would affect passage. In 1951, Egypt announced that it would exercise the right to inspect and search neutral ships and that it would seize prohibited items. When British merchant ships sailed the Gulf of Aqaba and when they were searched at the Suez Canal, the United Kingdom immediately declared that Egypt had no right to adopt such actions, because no state of war existed. Therefore, the United Kingdom seemed to acquiesce that when this kind of state exists, its ships would accept legitimate searches.

Unless a belligerent nation should permit neutral nations' merchant ships to pass through straits, belligerent coastal states also should be permitted to carry out certain restrictions against this kind of passage. However, viewpoints regarding the issue of the level of restriction are not the same, regardless of whether it is international practices or the viewpoints of scholars. Some scholars believe that states bordering straits are only able to carry out this kind of restrictions on passage under the most urgent and most pressing conditions, as an ultimate means. An example is the prohibition of laying naval mines to block free passage in straits waters. In international practices, such as in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan stipulated that the Tsugaru Strait, which connects the Pacific and the Sea of Japan, would be open to neutral states' vessels, but that the passage had to be done in daylight, and it was necessary to accept compulsory pilotage. In the conflict between

Iran and Iraq, Iran announced on 1 October 1980 that the Iranian part of the Strait of Hormuz would be open to non-hostile states. But in the end, Iran changed its policy, and it closed the Iranian territorial sea part of the Strait of Hormuz. The straits waters under Iranian jurisdiction were declared to be a war zone, with the result that foreign neutral vessels were only able to sail along the part of the straits that belonged to Oman's territorial sea.

2. The issue regarding one hostile party blockading a strait

When a state bordering a strait is in a state of engagement, there has never been a unified standard in international practices regarding the issue of whether a hostile party can blockade straits; relevant practices are determined to a very great degree based on the specific geographical environment of the straits. It seems that straits that belong to a hostile state and that connect the high seas with a closed sea that is surrounded by an enemy state's territory can be legitimately blockaded. In 1915, the United Kingdom and France announced a region that would be blockaded, which included the Dardanelles strait. The issue of whether a strait like this, which connects two parts of the open sea, can be blockaded currently has yet to have a precise answer. Scholars' viewpoints also are not the same; some believe that this kind of strait, as an international sea lane and "the common heritage of all mankind," cannot be blockaded. The 1909 London Declaration [on the Laws of Naval War] did not make any special stipulations on the issue of straits blockades. But Article 18 of the Declaration stipulated that "The blockading forces must not bar access to neutral ports or coasts." This stipulation usually is considered to be a declaration of customary international law, and it restrains the freedom of belligerent parties to blockade straits at will. This is because blockades would deprive the neutral state of the right to enter and exit its ports and coasts.

Launching a war in the waters of straits is a risky activity, and it affects the freedom of navigation; in particular, this is even more so at the exits to straits under especially narrow conditions. However, international customary regulations do not have details for prohibiting the launching of a war in straits. The waters of straits, just like the other waters of neighboring coastal states, have similar risks of war. Nations' practices also show that straits under the sovereign jurisdiction of a belligerent nation usually are a sea battlefield. In February and March 1915, a British fleet attacked the Dardanelles strait, and Iran in the Iran-Iraq conflict also declared that the Iranian part of the Strait of Hormuz was a war zone; engagements in straits will create pollution disasters and will seriously harm vessels' freedom of sailing. As regards ocean pollution, straits waters have the same risks as all the other seacoasts of adjacent coastal states' coasts. Environmental concerns certainly place some constraints on engagements in straits. However, we currently still have no way to determine the stipulations for methods of warfare that war must take into account environmental harm. For example, the 1977 Protocol 1 amendment [to the Geneva Conventions has] has special stipulations regarding protecting the environment and to what extent it is possible to prohibit or restrain naval warfare actions in specific sea regions, such as attacking nuclear submarines or destroying supertankers that intend to evade capture. At the same time, we must also see that in wartime, the freedom of passage in international straits will be seriously harmed. On the one hand, enemy countries' vessels must run the risk of attack or capture by the hostile side. On the other hand, neutral nations' vessels must continue to exercise their right of passage. However, there are differences between neutral sides' right of passage in wartime and

their right of passage in peacetime; in wartime, there are dangers to passing through straits because neutral nations' vessels can be boarded and inspected. This is particularly so when passing through shallow waters because it is only possible to pass through one narrow exit in these sea regions.

Operations to blockade straits during the Gulf War were another example of blockading straits, after the Second World War, the Vietnam War, and the Falkland Islands War. In the Gulf War, the main waters for naval actions by the multinational forces were the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Gulf of Oman. In order to blockade Iraq by sea in an effective manner, the US military deployed its blockading troop strengths in a ring shape in the various sea regions of the Persian Gulf, the northern Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean. The sea areas of the blockade were distributed over more than 4,000 nautical miles, with an area [covering] several tens of thousands of square kilometers, much greater than the sea area where a blockade by sea was carried out against Vietnam. The entire Gulf blockade operation went through three stages, alternating between peacetime and wartime, and it continued for seven months. In this, the blockade before the war went on for more than five months and the blockade in wartime went on for more than forty days, equivalent to the United States' blockade of Vietnam in 1972; it was one of the maritime blockades that lasted the longest after the Second World War. Throughout the entire blockade operation, the United States' maritime blockade troop strengths not only blockaded the Iraqi and Kuwaiti ports and beaches that connected to the sea as well as their maritime accesses, but it also blockaded Jordanian coastal ports that could be used to import and export Iraqi commodities and the terminals of Iraq's oil pipelines going toward the sea. This achieved a three-dimensional blockade of Iraq from all sides, the west, south, and east, and it completely cut off Iraq's maritime accesses to the three seas, so that Iraq's imports and exports could only be done by road; this caused serious economic difficulties for Iraq, and it greatly weakened Iraq's war potential.

III. The forms of passage for international straits in wartime: innocent passage and transit passage...201

The freedom of passage in international straits is still in effect in wartime. When coastal states are in a state of neutrality, this freedom is more or less basically the same as the right of freedom that countries enjoy in peacetime. However, when a coastal state is in a state of war, its freedom of passage is strictly limited. The problem now is what kind of right of passage do neutral nations enjoy in international straits during wartime; is it an unobstructed right of innocent passage or is it a more convenient right of transit passage? The right of innocent passage only applies to the passage of surface vessels and submarines on the surface of the water, while the right of transit passage not only includes the right of overflight for aircraft, but it also includes the passage of submarines in a submerged state.

1. Regarding aircraft flying over international straits

Regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, the right of overflight over straits has consistently been an issue of unending dispute. Certain scholars believe that customary international law does not give states any right to overfly international straits; the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* proposed this kind of rule [allowing overflight] only recently. Some other scholars hold a contrary viewpoint; they believe that aircraft, regardless of whether they are

civilian or military, have the right to overfly straits. There is also a cautious viewpoint that stresses that civilian aircraft have the right of overflight, while military aircraft do not have the right of overflight. During the period of the Iran-Iraq War, Oman allegedly consistently patrolled its territorial waters in the Strait of Hormuz, from the start of the war, in order to prevent passage by Iran's and Iraq's warships.

When states bordering straits have differing conditions for belligerent nations and for neutral nations, there basically is no way to unify the modes for handling the issue of aircraft's right of overflight. When straits are under the sovereign jurisdiction of a belligerent nation, then clearly, the belligerent nation's military aircraft encounter the danger of being shot down when passing through the enemy nation's straits and the air above these, and even the enemy's civilian aircraft must run a serious risk when entering the air above straits under the enemy country's jurisdiction. On the other hand, neutral nations' civilian aircraft can legitimately be intercepted, forced down, or captured, if these aircraft violate relevant bans and orders or other wartime orders. In regard to the military aircraft of neutral nations, the situation is currently extremely unclear. In April 1986, during the conflict where the United States bombed Libya, countries on the European continent, such as France and Spain, refused a US hope that [these countries] would permit its military aircraft in military bases in the United Kingdom to have transit flight as these went to Libya to carry out bombing missions; all that the United States could do was to go to the air space of operations through the Strait of Gibraltar. On 3 June 1966, the Swedish Government announced that it would allow belligerent nations' aircraft to overfly the Øresund strait, but these would have to abide by Sweden's rules of neutrality. However, at the same time, this declaration also makes us have to wonder whether this paper declaration would have been of any use if Sweden had been in a state of war. Of course, there are also Western scholars who have proposed a method of resolving this, that is, a neutral nation that intends to send its aircraft through a strait under the control of a belligerent nation can use aircraft carriers as much as possible to carry out this task, because aircraft carriers, just like any other surface ships, have the right to pass through international straits in wartime.

2. Regarding submarines' passage through international straits

Based on our preceding analysis of the situation of aircraft overflight over straits, when states bordering straits are in a state of war, what can be affirmed is that it is very difficult for other neutral nations' submarines to have the freedom of submerged passage in straits sea areas. But the issue of submarines' submerged passage is relatively complex, because states bordering straits have no way to differentiate whether a submarine belongs to a neutral nation or an enemy nation. Transit passage (connoting submarines' passage through straits in a submerged state) is a new maritime law regime; we are still unable to believe that it has already become customary international law. Even less are we able to affirm that it can be applied to wartime; based on customary international law and regulations that have been produced by traditional international law, submarines have the obligation to float on the surface when passing through international straits. When a state bordering a strait is a neutral nation, the straits' passage regime is more or less equivalent to its passage regime in peacetime; it is only that the state bordering the strait must maintain its neutrality when implementing its passage regime, and if belligerent nations' submarines are only passing through the strait (the form [in which they do so] probably is

determined by the specific circumstances), this in no way affects the neutrality of the state bordering the strait. Looking at things from a certain angle, the passage regime for international straits in wartime, regardless of whether it is an innocent passage regime or a transit passage regime, seems to only be purely a legal academic issue and is not an international legal regime that can be simply and clearly applied to any future armed conflict. Even if international law gives a nation the right for transit passage through international straits, we must regularly prove in wartime that this regime does not merely apply to peacetime but also applies to wartime. Transit passage regimes imply major restrictions on the rights of states bordering straits. Although international practices show that when a coastal state is in a state of neutrality, this regime tends to be accepted, still, when a state bordering a strait is in a state of war, it appears that the right of transit passage is inconsistent with the scope and nature of the rights given by customary international law to belligerent nations, or that it has no way of being coordinated with these [rights]. Therefore, the writer believes that there are two methods that can be used. [First,] international straits apply their peacetime passage regime, that is, when coastal states are in a neutral status, there can be transit passage. [Second,] when coastal states are in a state of war, there can be innocent passage.

SECTION 3: STRAITS COASTAL STATES' LEGAL POSITION THAT IS USED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SAILING STRAITS...203

I. Management that is done in accordance with international treaty...203

Fairly typical examples of this are the Black Sea straits, the Danish straits, the Strait of Magellan, and the Ao-lan Strait.²⁷²

The third clause of Article 35 in Part 3 of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* established exceptional circumstances for transit passage, that is, "Passage in these straits are regulated in whole or in part by long-standing international conventions in force specifically relating to such straits." This convention does not list the specific straits that accord with these exceptions, but the term "long-standing" hints that only conventions and regimes that have been recognized over a long period of time will be considered in this way. There are some straits for international sailing where coastal states' management of them is a continuation historically of some treaties. These straits consist of the Turkish straits, the Danish straits, the Strait of Magellan, and the Ao-lan strait.

The case of the Black Sea straits. In 1453, Turkey took over Istanbul, turning the Black Sea into a Turkish inner sea; that is, the two sides of the Bosphorus strait and the Dardanelles strait that led from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, as well as the [land] that surrounded the Black Sea, were all Turkish territory. At this time, apart from special treaty restrictions, Turkey could refuse [to let] foreign vessels sail into the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. In 1774, Russia defeated Turkey, and Russia and Turkey signed the *Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca*, where [Turkey] acknowledged that Russia was a Black Sea coastal state, and thus the Black Sea was no longer an internal Turkish sea; Russian merchant ships could freely sail in the Black Sea, the Bosphorus strait, and the Dardanelles strait. Following this, Russia emerged as a Black Sea coastal power. At the same time, Turkey concluded a series of treaties with some other countries, permitting foreign merchant ships the freedom of navigation through these two straits, but it always adhered to the

²⁷² Translator's note: This is the Chinese rendition of a place name, possibly the Strait of Oranto.

principle of not permitting foreign warships to sail into the straits. In 1829, Turkey and Russia's *Treaty of Adrianople* declared that the straits were open to the merchant ships of all countries that were at peace with Turkey. In July 1841, the *London Convention* that Turkey, the United Kingdom, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia signed stipulated that in peacetime and when Turkey was in a state of peace, the straits should be always closed to foreign warships, to include Russian warships, but that the straits should still be open to all foreign merchant ships. The 1856 *Treaty of Paris* confirmed this rule. This kind of straits regime that was stipulated by international treaty was consistently maintained until the First World War. The *Treaty of Lausanne*, which was concluded in 1923, added restrictions to Turkey, which was a defeated country, and to its original right of jurisdiction over the straits; this included a ban on constructing defenses in the area of the straits, the setting up of an international commission that was responsible for monitoring and managing [the straits], the abolishing of most of the limitations that were not favorable to countries that were not on the shores of the Black Sea, and the stipulation that no matter whether it was peacetime or wartime, the merchant ships of all countries, including warships, could enjoy the right to freedom of navigation in the straits. This was stipulated in accordance with the principles of the United Kingdom's consistent demands, and it severely harmed Turkey's sovereignty; it also was not beneficial for the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union at that time did not ratify the *Treaty of Lausanne*. The *Montreux Convention* [Regarding the Regime of the Straits], which was signed in 1936, cancelled the two stipulations that harmed Turkey's sovereignty – that it not set up defenses and that the international convention monitor and administer [the straits] – and it confirmed that the merchant ships of each state had the freedom to pass through and navigate [the straits] in peacetime and in wartime. It made differing provisions for the conditions under which the warships of countries bordering on the Black Sea and countries that did not border on the Black Sea would pass through the straits, and it added differences for the passage in peacetime and wartime. In peacetime, at the same time that the total tonnage of warships in the Black Sea of countries that did not border on the Black Sea was not to exceed 30,000 tons, this could reach 45,000 tons under special conditions. At the same time that the total tonnage of warships of countries that did not border on the Black Sea was not to exceed 15,000 tons when passing through the straits, submarines were not to pass through the straits. There were no limitations on the tonnage of the warships of countries bordering on the Black Sea in passing through the straits, but capital ships had to pass through one at a time, and there could be no more than two destroyers escorting them; submarines of countries bordering the Black Sea could pass through the straits on the surface of the water. In wartime, if Turkey was not a belligerent, no belligerent country's warships could pass through the straits; if Turkey was a belligerent or if Turkey believed that it was directly threatened by war, the convention authorized Turkey to decide to permit or completely prohibit any warships from passing through the straits. However, if the Council of the League of Nations believed that Turkey's decision was inappropriate, it could by a two-thirds majority resolution cancel Turkey's decision. After the Second World War, the Soviet Union Government proposed revising this convention and establishing a new Black Sea strait regime; however, this was not accepted by Turkey.²⁷³ Prior to the Cold War, the Soviet Navy's ships regularly passed

²⁷³ Liu Nanlai and Wang Keju, *International Maritime Law*, Ocean Press, 1986, p. 125.

through the Black Sea straits into the Mediterranean, and US warships also would enter the Black Sea to cruise, every once in a while. In 1968, the US destroyers *Dyess* and *Turner* entered the Black Sea; because the *Dyess* had ASROC anti-submarine rocket-launched torpedoes, whose diameter was greater than 203 millimeters, this exceeded what the *Montreux Convention* stipulated, and Soviet newspapers protested that the United States had violated the convention, while the US Navy responded that the rocket-launched torpedoes that it carried were not artillery and so their diameter was not restricted by the *Montreux Convention*. The argument ended up with nothing definite.²⁷⁴

It can be seen from this that the essence of early modern struggles over the Black Sea straits was that the powers (that is, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Austria, and Germany) relied on their own strength, in accordance with their own interests and requirements, to impose the closing or opening of the straits upon the master of the straits, Turkey. Because of conflicts of interest and confrontations among the powers, a small number of powers set the rules and imposed them on other countries, in accordance with their own interests and requirements, or they interpreted these rules in accordance with their own needs. This inevitably gave rise to disputes and conflicts among the various countries, and it brought about serious damage to the international order.

The case of the Danish straits. The Danish straits – that is, the Øresund Strait and the Great Belt and Little Belt straits, collectively called the Baltic straits or Danish straits – are maritime passages that must be followed from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea and the Atlantic, as well as a navigational thoroughfare that six countries regularly use: Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Russia, and Finland. Very early on, Denmark possessed the seacoasts of these three straits, and it believed that it enjoyed the right to authorize foreign vessels to pass through the straits and that foreign military vessels had to receive its permission to pass through the straits. When foreign merchant vessels passed through the straits, Denmark levied special taxes on them, which were the Sound Dues {*songde haixia tongxing fei*}. But after the principle of the freedom of maritime navigation became universally accepted by the various Western countries, they believed that this kind of passage dues was not allowed, and they protested to Denmark. In March 1857, the *Copenhagen Convention* was concluded between Denmark and some European maritime nations; this convention declared the principle of the freedom of commercial navigation within the various Baltic Sea straits, it abolished the Sound Dues, and the various signatory states paid a large compensation of 3 million British pounds to Denmark. In May of that year, the United States and Denmark also entered into the Washington special convention, which stipulated that US vessels had the right to free passage; the United States also paid compensation, to be used as the price whereby Denmark undertook to maintain and repair necessary service facilities for straits navigation, such as the costs for establishing buoys, digging out sand and mud, maintaining lighthouses, and pilots. The *Copenhagen Convention* made no explicit stipulations regarding the issue of passage through the straits by the warships of signatory states, but it was tacitly recognized by Denmark over a long period of time that even in wartime, Denmark would permit belligerent nations' warships to pass through the straits. The Soviet Union Government proposed closing the

²⁷⁴ Hu Chengjun, "Passage Regimes that are Used for International Sailing in Straits," *Legal System and Society*, 2009, Issue 9 (Volume 1), p. 50.

Øresund Strait and the Great Belt and Little Belt straits to non-Baltic Sea nations' warships, but this was not accepted by the Western nations.²⁷⁵

II. Archipelagic nations manage things in accordance with their domestic legislation...206

Given that the [UN] *Convention [on the Law of the Sea]* recognizes the right of archipelagic states to declare territorial sea baselines for them and their outer islands and reefs, then the waters of the high seas where freedom of navigation is ensured also began to have restrictions; currently, the main transportation lines in the world are all situated within archipelagic waters. Although archipelagic states have sovereignty over the waters within their archipelagic baselines, their rights are also restrained by certain recognized principles of the freedom of navigation. The *Convention* gives all vessels the right of innocent passage in archipelagic waters, as well as the right of transit through sea lanes that the archipelagos specify, or although these sea lanes are not yet specified, through archipelagic sea lanes that can serve as sea lanes that are normally used for international navigation. Vessels can only exercise their right of passage through sea lanes within a fifty-nautical mile corridor; they exercise the right of innocent passage beyond this region.²⁷⁶ There are clear differences between these two types of corridors, and their impact on warships is extremely serious. Because this is a new regime, it has to a certain extent given rise to an intense situation among some archipelagic states and maritime powers. Based on the *Convention*, the sea lanes that archipelagic states set up must be the same as those of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), but some archipelagic states in practice have yet to act in accordance with this stipulation. The most representative of these are Indonesia and the Philippines, among the archipelagic states of Southeast Asia.

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic state; it consists of 13,667 islands, large and small, among which are six large islands. Indonesia announced a government declaration on 13 December 1953, rescinding a decree drafted by the Netherlands that every island and reef had its own territorial sea, and it held that the entire archipelago should be viewed as a whole and not divided; all the waters among the various islands of Indonesia are the natural appurtenances of these islands, and they all come under the sovereignty of the Indonesian Government.²⁷⁷ This declaration was called the "Internal Waters Declaration" {*neishui hua xuanyan*}.^{278 279} In actuality, prior to the promulgation of the *Convention*, the Java Sea and the broad waters among Indonesia's many other islands belonged to the high seas. In accordance with the *Convention*, these waters now have become the internal waters of the Indonesian archipelagic state and are controlled by Indonesia. In waters that regularly serve for navigation by foreign vessels, the law of innocent passage is applied. In this regime, "Submarines entail having to sail on the surface and displaying their national flag. Some countries require the warships to close their surveillance radars and

²⁷⁵ Hu Chengjun, "Passage Regimes that are Used for International Sailing in Straits," *Legal System and Society*, 2009, September (Volume 1), p. 50.

²⁷⁶ Li Guoxing, "Disputes over Navigation Regimes, and the South China Sea," *Focus on the South China Sea – Geopolitics, Resources, and Channels*, China Economic Publishing House, 2009, p. 94.

²⁷⁷ Liu Nanlai, *The International Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1986, p. 153.

²⁷⁸ Translator's note: This probably is the Djuanda Declaration.

²⁷⁹ Zhang Yongqing, "Studies on Archipelagic States Regimes," 2003 master's thesis, Dalian Maritime University, p. 22.

weapons sensors and not make any broadcasts that have not been approved, or radio contact between the warships that are sailing and land-based transmitters, in order to prevent espionage behavior. Military aircraft have no right to overfly internal waters without the permission of coastal states; states bordering straits also can terminate innocent passage and close some areas to foreign aircraft and vessels, based on security calculations such as holding military exercises.”²⁸⁰

Indonesia has stipulated that foreign vessels can have innocent passage through the waters of its archipelago, but it holds that innocent passage by foreign vessels through territorial seas is a right stipulated by international law, while Indonesia’s permission for foreign vessels to pass through its archipelagic waters is an offer especially provided by the Indonesian Government, and that Indonesia can rescind this offer through a unilateral decree.²⁸¹ Indonesia has taken it upon itself to reduce the scope of the access.²⁸² Indonesia has proposed restricting foreign vessels to three south-north sea passages. One is between Sumatra and Java, one is between Bali and Lombok Island, and one goes through the Molucca Sea to the Timor Sea and the Arafura Sea.²⁸³ That is, it would be possible to implement an archipelagic sea route passage regime in the first island chain’s Balintang Channel, Babuyan Channel, Mindoro Strait, Balabac Strait, and Makassar Strait. Foreign vessels, including military vessels passing through Indonesia, would not need to get permission in advance, and they could have freedom of navigation through these three designated sea lanes. However, they could no longer navigate on routes outside those three sea lanes. Indonesia’s proposal for the three archipelagic sea lanes was formally adopted on 19 May 1998 by the International Maritime Organization. However, the United States held an attitude opposing this proposal, believing that it would harm international trade and that it would restrict the strategic actions of warships to pass through Indonesian waters, including [US] submarines and aircraft carriers. The United States hopes to expand the number of sea lanes for passing through archipelagic sea lanes as much as possible. Australia proposed adding archipelagic sea lanes for passage in an east-west direction, to be provided for its vessels’ use under possible emergency situations, and Japan and some other Asia-Pacific countries have requested that Indonesia open even more waters, in order to provide vessels with freedom of navigation.²⁸⁴

Similarly, the Philippines has also carried out a strict regime for internal waters. The Philippines is composed of 7,104 islands; of these, eleven major islands make up ninety-four percent of the total area of its land.²⁸⁵ On 17 June 1961, the Philippines drafted *Bill Regarding the Determination of the Baseline for the Philippines’ Territorial Sea* Number 3064. In accordance with its domestic constitution, the Philippines “considers all waters within the baseline as well as all waters surrounding the archipelagic islands, in between them and contiguous to them, to be part of the

²⁸⁰ International Herald Tribune, 16 May 1996.

²⁸¹ Liu Nanlai, *The International Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1986, pp. 154-155.

²⁸² Yang Mingjie, *The Security of Maritime Accesses, and International Cooperation*, Current Affairs Press, 2005, p. 72.

²⁸³ Li Guoxing, “Disputes over Navigation Regimes, and the South China Sea,” *Focus on the South China Sea – Geopolitics, Resources, and Sea Lanes*, China Economic Publishing House, 2009, p. 94.

²⁸⁴ Li Guoxing, “Disputes over Navigation Regimes, and the South China Sea,” *Focus on the South China Sea – Geopolitics, Resources, and Sea Lanes*, China Economic Publishing House, 2009, p. 94.

²⁸⁵ Dong Degong, *Modern international Maritime Law*, China Social Sciences Press, 1988, p. 104.

Philippines' internal waters;"²⁸⁶ they are not restricted to archipelagic sea lane passage, and vessels and aircraft do not enjoy the right of innocent passage. Moreover, [the bill] holds that the Philippines has the right to draft laws and regulations in order to protect its sovereignty, independence, and security. Because the Philippines would be implementing a strict interior waters regime, foreign vessels would not enjoy the right to innocent passage and the right to archipelagic islands passage; the United States and other countries have also protested against this. Up until now, the Philippines has yet to designate its sea lanes.²⁸⁷

Looking at the practices of these two countries over archipelagic waters, the author believes that in regard to the specialized issue of warships' passage through straits that are used for international navigation, the primary issue is that the archipelagic legal positions of these two countries clearly do not accord with the *Convention*. The *Convention* stipulates that archipelagic waters are waters where there is national sovereignty, but they are not internal waters. However, the Philippines and Indonesia refer to the waters within their baselines as internal waters. Because of reasons like the legislation of these two countries being [being promulgated] fairly early on, there are a rather large number [of instances] where their archipelagic legislation violates the *Convention*; the *Convention* formally went into force on 16 November 1994, but these countries have yet to adjust their archipelagic legislation, and this has brought about a series of practical problems.

III. The right of exclusive jurisdiction over straits...209

States bordering straits mostly manage these straits in accordance with their own security and interests, and they mostly have exclusivity against other countries' interference and intervention.

An example is the Strait of Malacca. On 16 November 1971, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore issued a joint statement where they adopted a common position regarding the Strait of Malacca and the Singapore Strait. The three countries' governments announced that they would undertake responsibility for the safety of navigation in the straits and that they would jointly cooperate to ensure the navigational safety of the straits. The three countries did all they could to organize cooperation and coordination agencies that would ensure the safety of navigation in the straits. The *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* that was signed in 1982 also further confirmed and delimited the "principle of island states' internal waters," meaning that the international community recognized that the Strait of Malacca did not come under the international legal status of "international straits," and that [it recognized that] the three straits nations had sovereignty and the right of jurisdiction over the safety of the Strait of Malacca. In regard to this, the three states that bordered on the straits also became the possessors of sovereignty over the straits and the principal protectors of the safety of the straits.²⁸⁸ Looking at this overall, although the three countries have for a long period of time disagreed about the US military's direct involvement in

²⁸⁶ Jorge R. Coquia, "Some Legal Aspects and Constitutional Issues on Archipelagic Sea Lanes," *Ocean Law and Policy Series*, Manila, No. 1, January-June 1997, p. 54.

²⁸⁷ Li Guoxing, "Disputes over Navigation Regimes, and the South China Sea," *Focus on the South China Sea – Geopolitics, Resources, and Channels*, China Economic Publishing House, 2009, p. 95.

²⁸⁸ Qian Zhongli, "The Safety Mechanism of the Strait of Malacca, with an Analysis of Its Characteristics," *World Economic and Political Forum*, 2010, Issue 3, p. 118.

the defense of the Strait of Malacca, they have agreed to engage in multifaceted cooperation and to accept assistance, joint exercises, and cooperative patrols. Starting on 13 September 2005, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand began their first joint aerial patrols of the Strait of Malacca. In actuality, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have achieved a consensus on inviting Thailand to participate in security guarantees for the Strait of Malacca, and the security of the Strait of Malacca will be dominated by these four ASEAN states; they have agreed to have the United States and Japan participate in security cooperation for the Strait of Malacca, but this will be limited to exchanging intelligence and to providing assistance in the areas of communications devices and technical equipment.

Similarly, the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal also have exclusive right of jurisdiction over these canals. In 1888,²⁸⁹ nine countries, including the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, signed the *Constantinople Convention* in Turkey. This convention stipulated that regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, the [Suez] Canal is free and open to all nations' merchant ships and warships; all combat actions are prohibited within 5.5 kilometers (three nautical miles) of ports of access, rivers, and nearby waters. Based on this convention, the Suez Canal became internationalized and was open to the merchant ships and warships of all nations in accordance with conditions of equality. The state of Israel was founded in 1948, and Egypt did not permit any of [Israel's] ships to navigate the Canal. Currently, the legal status of the Canal has undergone basic changes; it is not only an internal water of Egypt, with Egypt exercising complete rights of exclusive jurisdiction but, at the same time, it is also an important access linking the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, where Egypt guarantees freedom of navigation. In regard to the navigation of the Suez Canal, there are some specific requirements, which are that prior to transiting the Canal, it is possible to inform the Canal Authority by cable or in written form of the ship's name, its nationality, its port of departure, and the time that it will arrive. All ships of the various nations that are passing through must abide by the rules of navigation; when foreign warships transit, they should inform the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at least ten days prior to when they are scheduled to arrive at a port of access for the Canal. If Egypt is in a state of war with a certain country, that country's warships and vessels have no right to request passage through the Suez Canal. When sailing south from Port Said, warships generally are placed at the head of the fleet; when sailing north from the Suez Port, warships generally sail to the rear of tankers.

The Panama Canal. In 1901, the United States and the United Kingdom signed the *Hay-Pauncefote Treaty*, which stipulated that the Panama Canal must be open to all merchant ships and warships, based on the principles of equality and freedom, and that it must be made neutral. The United States enjoyed exclusive rights of management of the Canal, and in order to ensure the Canal's neutrality, it could mobilize military strengths when necessary. The Panamanian people engaged in a protracted struggle for the sake of recovering the Canal and sovereignty over the Canal Zone and of abrogating the Panamanian-US [Hay-Bunau-Varilla] Treaty. On 7 September 1977, they signed a new *Panama Canal Treaty* and the *Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal*, which became effective on 1 October 1979. The

²⁸⁹ Translator's note: This should be 1888.

treaties stipulated that starting on the day on which they went into effect, until 31 December 1999, management and defense of the Canal would be jointly undertaken by the two countries. On 30 July 1999, the United States began to withdraw its troops, one after the other, and these were entirely withdrawn by 31 December ending the eighty-eight years of the United States' military presence at the Canal. Currently, Panama entirely undertakes management and defense of the Canal.

IV. Analysis of relevant cases of passage through straits internationally...211

The Straits of Corfu case. On 15 May 1946, when the British military dispatched two surface ships through the Straits of Corfu, which are situated between the Albanian mainland and the northern part of the island of Corfu, they came under artillery fire from Albania. The British Government pointed out in a note that it had the right to pass through these straits without obtaining permission or giving notice in advance. However, the Albanians explicitly indicated that foreign vessels passing through these straits needed to inform [Albania] in advance and get permission. In order to uphold its own rights, the United Kingdom on 22 October 1946 sent two cruisers and two destroyers to continue passing through the Straits of Corfu; in the northern part of the straits, the two destroyers hit mines, were seriously damaged, and suffered casualties among their personnel. The United Kingdom subsequently launched a mine-clearing operation in the straits, under conditions where it informed the Albanians in advance, but it encountered opposition from Albania. On 22 May 1947, the United Kingdom brought suit against Albania in the International Court of Justice, requesting that the Court judge whether Albania bore responsibility for the naval mine explosions in the straits and whether the United Kingdom had violated Albania's sovereignty. Although Albania protested the United Kingdom's unilateral action, it agreed to appear in court and respond to the suit.

The court made three judgments about this case. The first was that the British warships' act of passage through the Straits of Corfu on 22 October 1949²⁹⁰ did not violate Albania's sovereignty. The reason for this was that in peacetime, each nation does not need to get permission from coastal countries prior to the event, and they have the right to send warships through straits that are used for international navigation and that are between two high seas. If this passage is innocent, the states bordering the strait have no right to prohibit this passage in peacetime. The Straits of Corfu are this kind of strait that is used for international navigation, and the United Kingdom's act of passage was also innocent. Second, the Albanians should bear the responsibility for the mine incident of 22 October 1946. The reason was that given the interests of ordinary navigation, Albania, as a coastal state along straits that are used for international navigation, "had the responsibility to report a minefield within Albania's territorial waters and to warn the British warships that were then in proximity to this minefield," but the Albanians had not carried out this duty. At the same time, the court also recognized that the United Kingdom's subsequent mine-clearing operation violated Albania's sovereignty. However, it believed that the court's decision itself had formed a suitable compensation for this act that violated [Albania's] sovereignty. Third, the court believed that Albania should compensate the United Kingdom for its losses; based on the amount of reparations requested by the United Kingdom and on experts' estimates, the court

²⁹⁰ Translator's note: This should be 1946.

decided that Albania should pay 843,947 British pounds. Because Albania did not attend the final litigation, it also did not pay this compensation.²⁹¹

The Straits of Corfu case was the first case where an international court refereed an international dispute. This case had a profound impact on the development of innocent passage regimes and straits passage regimes. In regard to the specialized issue of warships passing through straits that are used for international navigation, the judgment in this case had at least three points of enlightenment. First, warships have the right in peacetime of innocent passage through foreign countries' territorial seas and straits sea lanes used for international navigation. Second, states bordering straits in territorial seas that are used for international navigation cannot block foreign warships' innocent passage through this kind of strait. Third, in regard to how to use the weapon of law in a struggle with relevant peripheral states, [we] hold to our own right to pass through the various straits channels in the first island chain. Through this case, it is possible to see that regardless of whether [a country is] a sea power or a developing coastal state, they all actively maintain their own rights, based on the national security interests and needs of their own country, and through various ways and by using various means.

²⁹¹ Zhang Zhaozhong, *Introduction to Methods of Naval Warfare*, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1995, p. 322.

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CHAPTER 6

AN ANALYSIS OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...213

It can be imagined that whatever has already appeared may come again.

- Mahan

Looking at the scope of the world, some important maritime strategic accesses have always been of great concern to the various countries of the world and especially to sea powers; some of these straits are famous because of their huge traffic volume, some are famous because of their important strategic value, and some have attracted concern because of their impact on the world's economic development. Among the many straits and access, the following several maritime strategic accesses are the most representative, that is, the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and the Black Sea straits. These several maritime strategic straits not only have important geopolitical value, strategic value, economic value, and military value in common but they also each have their unique status and role, and they face differing problems and predicaments. They highlight the serious dependency that the world's economy has on these maritime strategic accesses, as well as the important impact that they have had on international politics and international relations. It can be imagined that whatever has already appeared may come again.²⁹²

SECTION 1: THE STRAIT OF MALACCA...214

I. The important status of the Strait of Malacca in the world economy...214

The Strait of Malacca is situated between the Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra in the center of Southeast Asia; it is an important maritime access that links the South China Sea and the Andaman Sea and that connects the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Its strategic status is quite important, it is one of the most important maritime strategic accesses in the world, and it is known as the "Gibraltar of the East" and the "strategic corridor" of the two oceans. The Strait is about 1,080²⁹³ kilometers long; together with the Singapore Strait that it connects with at its exit, it is 1,188²⁹⁴ kilometers long. It is 370 kilometers wide at its northwest mouth, and at its narrowest, at the southeast mouth, it is only thirty-seven kilometers [wide]. There are not many islands in the center of the Strait, and there are many shallow shoals along its coasts; comparatively speaking, it is relatively narrow and shallow, and the passage is comparatively difficult. Dangers occur easily, and thus it is not easy for submarines to hide and for huge oil tankers to pass through. The navigational aids in the Strait of Malacca are complete, the current is slow, and [the Strait] generally can be open to 200,000-ton class ships (usually, ships larger than 200,000 tons choose the Lombok-Makassar straits, which are relatively deeper).

²⁹² (United States) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *On Sea Power*, China Press, 1997, p. 366.

²⁹³ Translator's note: This should be 850.

²⁹⁴ Translator's note: This should be 955.

The Strait of Malacca is one of the three busiest straits in the world, and it is the world's most important access for transporting petroleum. According to statistics, one quarter of the world's traffic volume and one-half of its petroleum transportation passes through this strait; more than 80,000 ships transit it each year, for an average of over 220 each day. Moreover, this is increasing at a rate of eight percent each year. Most of these are huge oil tankers. This is second only to the English Channel and the Strait of Dover between the United Kingdom and France, where shipping is the busiest in the world. One-third of the world's goods pass through the Strait of Malacca, and goods worth \$500 billion go through there each year. There are three times as many oil tankers passing through the Strait of Malacca into the South China Sea as there are in the Suez Canal, and five times as many as in the Panama Canal.²⁹⁵ In particular are the petroleum transportation routes that must pass through it [to get to] the East Asia region; for example, close to 450 million tons of the petroleum that Japan, South Korea, China, and the Taiwan region need to import each year must pass through the Strait of Malacca. Almost half of the export goods of Japan alone, [worth] over \$200 billion, must be shipped through here every year to reach the Middle East and Europe, and seventy to eighty percent of the petroleum that Japan needs, as well as large amounts of the raw materials that it imports from Africa and South Asia, must be transported through the Strait of Malacca. Therefore, [this strait] is called Japan's "lifeline." There are as many as 14,000 times that Japan's oil tankers pass through the Strait of Malacca each year; according to statistics, the expenses for transporting petroleum alone will increase \$100 million to \$200 million each year. The Strait of Malacca also is a channel that the United States' Seventh Fleet commonly uses; its aircraft carrier task forces go through here to the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, eighty-five percent of the petroleum that US forces stationed in the western Pacific consume comes from the Middle East through this waterway, and the petroleum that is transported from the Middle East to Guam and other places, as well as the natural gas, rubber, tin, and other strategic goods that are imported from South Asia to the United States, all pass through this strait.

II. Strategic games that center on the Strait of Malacca...215

The geographic location of the Strait of Malacca is important and is also easy to seal off, and it has always been a place that military commanders must fight over. In about the 4th century A.D., Arabs opened a route from the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Malacca and then through the South China Sea to reach China. They transported China's silk and porcelain and the spices of the Maluku Islands to Rome and other European countries. From the 7th to the 15th centuries A.D., Chinese, Indian, and Arab countries' ships for maritime trade had to pass through the Strait of Malacca. In particular, after the 16th century, Western colonialists began to invade the East, and the Strait of Malacca became a key area that the powers struggled over; historically, the Strait of Malacca was occupied and controlled by Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Japan, in succession,²⁹⁶ consistently becoming a focus of the sea powers' games. In 1511,

²⁹⁵ Du Chaoping, "The Strait of Malacca – China Must Make a Difference," <http://military.china.com/zh-cn/jzwq/01/11028429/20050328/12200465.html>.

²⁹⁶ In 1511, Portuguese colonialists invaded, occupied, and dominated the strait. In 1641, it was also occupied by the Netherlands, which controlled it for more than 180 years. In 1824, after the United Kingdom gained colonies in

Portuguese colonialists invaded Malacca and were the first to dominate the Strait. In 1641, it was also occupied by the Netherlands, which controlled it for more than 180 years. In 1824, after the United Kingdom gained colonies in Malaysia, it controlled the Strait. In 1941, Japan launched the Pacific War, and it seized control of the Strait from the hands of the United Kingdom. After the Second World War ended, sovereignty over the Strait again returned to the hands of the peoples of the coastal countries, and the coastal countries' governments engaged in continual conflict with the Western sea powers for the Strait. Because the positions of the three coastal countries along the Strait – Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia – differed, the issue of delimiting the sea regions in the Strait suffered a number of disputes. In these, Indonesia was the earliest country to focus on the Strait. In 1957, Indonesia issued an Archipelago Declaration, in which it first claimed that based on the “principle of archipelago inner waters,” the Strait of Malacca should come under the scope of its territorial waters, and that it possessed sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Strait. Subsequently, Malaya (now Malaysia) announced, based on the 1958 *UN Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone* and the 1958 *Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf*, that it possessed sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Strait of Malacca, which was located within the scope of its territorial waters and contiguous zone. After Singapore was founded, it refused to be outdone, and it did not yield in the slightest on the issue of sovereignty over the Strait's sea region. Therefore, the three countries had disputes over the issue of the Strait. After the founding of ASEAN, the coastal countries began to engage in talks over the issue of delimiting the sea regions, within an ASEAN framework. In 1960 and 1969, Indonesia and Malaysia declared, in succession, that they would engage in a twelve-nautical mile territorial seas system, thereby turning the Strait of Malacca into a territorial strait. In November 1971, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore issued a joint statement in which they determined to establish a three-country cooperative agency that would jointly manage strait affairs. They declared that the Strait of Malacca was not an international strait but fully recognized the right of each country's ships to innocent passage; when aircraft flew over the Strait, they would need to get agreement from these countries; and on the issue of warships passing through the Strait, Indonesia and Malaysia required prior notice. In February 1977, the three coastal countries signed an Agreement on the Safety of Navigation in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. Currently, the Strait is jointly managed by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, and based on stipulations of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* and in accordance with “straits that are used in international navigation,” they carry out a system of “transit passage.”

However, during the Cold War period, the United States and the Soviet Union intensified their struggle for the Strait of Malacca, in order to fight for spheres of influence, and they proposed “internationalizing” the Strait of Malacca; this came under vigorous opposition from the Strait's coastal countries. The Strait of Malacca held quite important value in the Soviet Union's global strategy. If it were able to control the Strait, it would then be able to exclude and attack US influence in this region, sever Western European and US supplies of important strategic materials, and cut off a maritime access that Japan depended on for its survival. For these reasons, the Soviet Union vigorously developed its Pacific Fleet after the 1970s, with the total number of warships

Malaysia, it controlled the strait. In 1941, Japan launched the Pacific War, and it seized control of the strait from the hands of the United Kingdom.

increasing from 750,000 tons in 1965 to 1,520,000 tons in 1980s. After 1979, it also treated Vietnam's naval and air force bases at Cam Ranh Bay, Danang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Haiphong as well as Cambodia's deep-water harbor at the port of Sihanoukville as outposts for expanding toward Southeast Asia and controlling the Strait of Malacca. After invading Afghanistan, groups of ships from the [Soviet] Pacific Fleet would pass through the Strait of Malacca into the Indian Ocean, and by 1980, the Soviet Union had more than thirty warships in the Indian Ocean, forming a pincer force against the Strait of Malacca. At the same time, it also posed a serious challenge to the United States' global hegemony. However, the United States refused to be outdone, and in 1986, it declared that the Strait of Malacca was one of the sixteen maritime access chokeholds in the world that it needed to control. Former US Presidential Security Advisor [Zbigniew] Brzezinski hit the nail on the head when he pointed out that the Strait of Malacca is a key waterway that controls the rise of great nations in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States has sought opportunities a number of times in an attempt to station troops in Malacca. Currently, the United States has received the right to use part of Singapore's naval base, and it continues to help build some military facilities on the shores of Malacca; the US military also has continually held discussions in recent years with countries like the Philippines on such matters as its return to the Philippines bases and ports. It can be said that whoever controls the Strait of Malacca, which is equivalent to controlling the strategic petroleum accesses of the East Asian region, can threaten the energy security of China, Japan, and South Korea at any time.

III. The security dilemmas that the Strait of Malacca faces...217

Because of the existence of disputes in the South China Sea, the situation of the Malacca access is extremely complicated. At the same time, because of the influence of politics, history, and geography, many uncertainty factors exist in the maritime security of Southeast Asia. In particular, the thousands of small islands, narrow straits, and concealed currents scattered in the Malay archipelago and its surrounding waters are ideal spots for criminal elements to conceal themselves, and this has turned carrying out effective maritime patrols in this region into a tricky task. Moreover, the new conditions that have appeared in Malacca and its surrounding waters since the 9-11 incident have made the security situation of this strait even less optimistic.

First, the problem where pirate incidents affect the security of shipping in the Strait troubles the coastal countries. The geographical environment of the Strait of Malacca and its nearby waters is complex, and it is easy for pirates to come and go. From the beginning of the 19th century up until now, this has always been a region where there is a high occurrence of pirate attack incidents. Based on a report from the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Center in Kuala Lumpur, half of the close to 800 attack incidents that occurred at sea in 2003 and 2004 occurred in the ports and sea regions of Southeast Asia, and the rate at which these attacks occurred as well as the level of their violence have been continually increasing. For example, there were eighty-eight attack incidents that occurred in Southeast Asia in 1991, but in 2005, this soared to 187. Of the many sea regions of Southeast Asia, the waters of Indonesia are the most dangerous region in the world. More than forty cases of piracy incidents have occurred in these straits in recent years; although this number has been gradually declining in the past two years, the losses they cause are still constantly growing.

Second, terrorist activities pose a huge threat to the security of the Strait. The biggest latent security danger in the Southeast Asia region where the Strait of Malacca is located is terrorist activities that are linked to radical Islamist organizations and to domestic violence that originates in separatist rebellions, in ethnic and religious conflicts, or in other forms. The United States and [other] Western countries believe that the Strait of Malacca quite possibly could become the target of attack by terrorists, and they are concerned that if pirates and terrorists reach some kind of deal, the terrorists could use money to bribe the pirates and have the pirates launch an attack. Among the three coastal countries, Indonesia has become one of the targets of terrorist attack. After the 9-11 incident, three terrorist attack incidents occurred that shocked the world. Indonesia's Muslims make up eighty-five percent of its total population, and Islamic extremism and separatism have existed for a long period of time, with rampant activities. Indonesia has 13,000 large and small islands, its coastline is long, and there is a quite serious threat that it would be easy for international terrorists to sneak in and join hands with Indonesian terrorists in creating a terrorist attack incident. If terrorists use flammable, explosive, highly toxic, or contaminated materials that are transported by boat to create a terrorist incident, the impact that this would cause on the security of the Strait of Malacca would greatly exceed pirate terrorist incidents, the difficulty of preventing this would be greater, and it could even make it hard for the coastal countries to protect themselves. If terrorists adopt suicide forms to attack an oil tanker filled with several hundred thousand tons of crude oil, this could be enough to shut down the Strait of Malacca for a year or more. Blowing up a merchant ship in a bottleneck, especially a merchant ship carrying liquefied natural gas, could bring this global economic supply line to a standstill in an instant.²⁹⁷

Third, disputes over sovereignty among the coastal countries affect management of the Strait. Currently, there are a fairly large number of disputes in the Southeast Asian region over territory and territorial waters. Contradictions between Vietnam and Malaysia, between Vietnam and the Philippines, and between the Philippines and Malaysia are intricate and complex. Frequently, the cross-border fishing industry's production will lead to disputes between countries, and disputes over sea regions that are pending between coastal countries have lowered to a certain degree the effectiveness of their joint management of the Strait.

Fourth, the three coastal countries each have differing positions in the area of safeguarding the Strait, and this has brought about certain difficulties in managing the Strait. Currently, although Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia jointly manage the Strait of Malacca, differences in the three coastal countries' histories and cultures, the size of their national power, and their geographical locations mean that the deep interests and internal considerations that they each pursue in the Strait are not quite the same. Because Indonesia and Malaysia have similar histories of being colonized and of arduous nation-building experiences, they subjectively are not willing to accept intervention and penetration in this region by outside influences, and they believe that the United States is using counterterrorism to station troops in the Strait of Malacca and that its goal is to control this maritime access, so they resolutely oppose foreign countries stationing troops in the Strait of Malacca. But in contrast to the clear attitude of Malaysia and Indonesia, which oppose the United States getting involved in Strait affairs, Singapore, which is situated between Indonesia and

²⁹⁷ Qiu Laiqun, "Breaking Through the Malaccan Dilemma," *China Petroleum Enterprises*, 2006, Issue 4, p. 6.

Malaysia, which are two major Southeast Asian powers, has expressed support for the United States' sending troops to protect the Strait of Malacca. In 1992, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States, permitting the United States to use Singapore's naval and air force installations; the US naval base moved from Subic to Changi. Changi Naval Base has become the heart of the United States' Southeast Asian bases, and this has formed various mechanisms with multiple levels and multiple forms for creating security around the Strait of Malacca.²⁹⁸ Therefore, because the three coastal countries along the Strait have differing focuses and have adopted differing attitudes and ways of doing things on the issue of upholding the security of the Strait and in the process of exploring the construction of mechanisms for the Strait, they have cooperated on security interaction but have also had conflicts and struggles.

Fifth, it is worth paying close attention to the tendency for the United States, Japan, and India to insert themselves into Strait affairs. Control over the Strait of Malacca has always been an extremely important component part of the United States' East Asia [strategy] and even its global security strategy. After the 9-11 incident, in order to ensure its own absolute security and to contain and pressure other countries, the United States strove to exaggerate the threat of piracy and terrorism in the Strait of Malacca. After getting the right to use Singapore's Changi Port, it tried to use "assistance in opposing terrorism" to send the Marines and Special Forces to occupy the Strait of Malacca. In recent years, it has held a series of military exercises with neighboring countries, focused on the Strait of Malacca. By controlling the Strait of Malacca, the United States would be able to have an influence on and control China's and Japan's "lifeline at sea," restrain India's "Look East Strategy," delay the pace of Russia's return to the ocean, and ensure the United States' dominant position in international competition and potential international conflicts. Japan has used various opportunities and means to penetrate the Strait of Malacca and to increase its right to speak, for the sake of its own energy security and the expansion of its power. India views the Strait of Malacca as the foremost of the five great straits for entering the Indian Ocean that its Navy needs to control; if it gained the right to control the Strait of Malacca, India could then build a maritime security screen.

Looking at things in general, the security situation of the Strait of Malacca currently is staying relatively stable; under the huge pressure of world opinion and the possible direct interference by outside forces in the Strait's affairs, the coastal countries of the Strait have adopted measures to increase the intensity of their fight against pirate and terrorist activities, but given the limitations of their own strengths, there is no way in the near term to completely eliminate pirate incidents or terrorist activities that affect the security of the Strait. And the security of shipping in the Strait will still face a threat. The intentions of countries outside the Strait region to still continue to insert themselves into Strait affairs and the lack of unity in coastal countries' attitudes could lead to a deepening of infiltration by the great powers, but because this involves sensitive issues of sovereignty, the concessions that the coastal countries make will still only be limited to accepting financial, technological, and equipment assistance, and dominance in the Strait will not undergo major changes.

²⁹⁸ Ju Hailong, "The Impact that the United States' 'Return' to Southeast Asia Has Had on the South China Sea Security Situation," *World Economic and Political Forum*, 2010, Issue 1.

SECTION 2: THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ...220

I. The strategic value of the Strait of Hormuz in world petroleum resources...220

The Strait of Hormuz is situated between the Arabian Peninsula and Iran, and it connects the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. The length of the Strait of Hormuz from east to west is about 150 kilometers, and its breadth from north to south is 64 to 97 kilometers. At its narrowest, it is only 48 kilometers; at its greatest depth, it is 219 meters and at its shallowest, it is 70 meters.²⁹⁹ Most of the sea region is shallow, with many shoals; in just the territorial waters of Oman in the southern part of the strait, there are two channels, each two nautical miles wide, with a deep-water channel of two nautical miles between them, but given the steady stream of supertankers with their huge volumes, it would be very easy for them to be accidentally blocked or artificially blockaded.

Currently, forty to fifty percent of the world's petroleum is in the Persian Gulf and in the region around the Persian Gulf; the Strait of Hormuz is the only outlet for the Persian Gulf's maritime shipping. Most of the petroleum that the Gulf produces must pass through this narrow waterway in order to be transported to the various places in the world, so it is the most important economic chokehold in the world and is also the strait where transportation of petroleum is busiest, with one tanker passing through every eight to ten minutes on average. Each day, there are four million tons³⁰⁰ of petroleum passing through here to each place in the world; there are more than 300 ships passing through, the amount of petroleum flowing through the Strait is about 16.5 million to 17 million barrels, and the output of petroleum has reached more than one billion tons, making up fifty percent of the world's petroleum needs. There therefore are people who call this a "petroleum strait" {shiyou haixia}, that it has become the "valve" {famen} for a "petroleum treasure house," and that it is a "world petroleum chokehold" {shijie shiyou yanhou} filled with risks. Currently, the Strait bears sixty percent of the supply for Western petroleum-consuming countries; it is the only maritime access for Persian Gulf petroleum going to Western Europe, the United States, Japan, and each place in the world, and so it has become the "maritime lifeline" of the Western countries. If there were just a single ship sunk in the Strait, transportation would have to stop for a good many weeks. Therefore, the Strait of Hormuz has a decisive strategic status, both in the world's economic development and in energy strategy.

II. Historically, the Strait of Hormuz has gone through several hands...221

Because of the special geographical location of the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Hormuz went through several hands in history and it became a focus for the Western colonial powers to take turns occupying. In 1509, Portugal occupied the Strait of Hormuz and controlled the Strait region. In 1622, the British captured Gershm Island, and from there the British controlled the Strait. In 1640, Dutch colonialists occupied Gershm Island and the port of Amas on the northern shore of the Strait. In 1891, the United Kingdom again incorporated the southern shore of the Strait into its sphere of influence. By 1908, the United Kingdom had opened its first oil well in the southern part of Iran, and in 1938, after the United States drilled the first oil well in Saudi Arabia, Gulf petroleum

²⁹⁹ The Chinese People's Liberation Army General Staff Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, *Chinese Military Encyclopedia – Volume on World Military Geography*, Military Science Publishing House, 1994, p. 35.

³⁰⁰ Li Bidong, Lou Xichun, and Ling Yong, *Straits*, Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, p. 100.

was discovered. By the 1960s, the right to exploit Persian Gulf petroleum was basically in the hands of Western oil companies, and the Strait became a key area that they struggled over. However, during the Cold War period, this channel in actuality was defended by nobody. After the Shah [Mohammad Reza] Pahlavi was overthrown, Iran in actuality abandoned its responsibility to protect the security of the Gulf, and Amman also lacked sufficient military strength to take over this task; this gave the Soviet Union an opportunity it could take advantage of to expand in this region. The Soviet Union vigorously wanted to control the petroleum of the Persian Gulf as its own oil depot, and it tried to obtain strategic control through its agents in the Gulf. Faced with the Soviet Union's overbearing offensive, the United States at that time listed the Persian Gulf as a "primary area of threat" {*yideng weixian qu*}, in order to contain the Soviet Union from going southwards, and it vigorously put the Middle Eastern countries together into a regional military bloc.

As the number-one petroleum consuming country, which has five percent of the world's population but which consumes twenty-five percent of global energy, the United States relies quite strongly on overseas energy and especially on petroleum, and for a number of years it has consistently tried to establish a new order of international energy in which the United States would dominate. If the United States were able to control Middle East petroleum, then on the one hand, it would be able to ensure a secure supply of its own petroleum needs, while on the other hand, it also would be able to maintain or further solidify its status as the world's sole superpower. As the United States sees it, the only major country left in the Middle East region to confront the United States is Iran. Historically, the Strait of Hormuz has twice witnessed the United States coming to grips with Iran. The first was in 1979; Iran had undergone the Islamic Revolution, US-Iranian relations had worsened, and the United States carried out its Operation Evening Light to rescue the [US] hostages [in Iran]. The second fight occurred in the latter part of the Iran-Iraq War, when the United States carried out Operation Praying Mantis against Iran. In the two operations, the United States had control over the Strait of Hormuz. The US Secretary of Energy said that "Wherever the world's energy lines are, US foreign policy and diplomatic lines will be there."³⁰¹ Iran's petroleum resources similarly were a target that the United States pursued, and Iran is the greatest anti-US country in today's Middle East region. If Iran came under its control, the United States would be able to dominate the Middle East region and completely control petroleum supplies so that it could manipulate petroleum prices in order to attack its competitors and draw in cooperative partners. In recent years, the United States has frequently made demonstrations to Iran over the Iranian nuclear issue, and faced with continuous economic and military pressure from Western countries because of the nuclear issue, Iran has frequently held large-scale military exercises near the Strait of Hormuz and has often threatened that it could blockade this strategic access for the world's petroleum transportation, in order to display its ability and resolve to control the West's "petroleum lifeline." Iran has announced that as soon as a conflict that is unfavorable to Iran occurs, Iran would treat blockading the Strait of Hormuz as a "trump card" {*sashoujian*}; apart from laying naval mines, it also could use such means as missiles and coastal artillery to blockade [the Strait]. At the same time, [it could] launch large numbers of speedboats and small

³⁰¹ Jiang Xiaoqing, "Comparing the Geopolitical Factors in the Iran and North Korean Nuclear Issues," master's thesis at Qufu Normal University, 2008. p. 23.

submarines in order to cut off the access between the Persian Gulf and the outside world so that major petroleum countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait would have no way to transport their petroleum and gas overseas; this would be tantamount to cutting off “the West’s lifeline.” In 1987, during the Iran-Iraq War, Iran turned 240,000 square kilometers of sea area into “the most dangerous sea area” merely by secretly laying over 100 old-style naval mines, and crews called this the “corridor of death.” The Persian Gulf’s petroleum transportation routes were seriously blocked, leading to extreme panic and a soar in the price of oil; some major countries even put warships to use as escorts for oil tankers. Currently, the United States and Iran have both declared the need to keep the Strait unimpeded, thus adding new variables to secure passage in the Strait of Hormuz.

III. Three major latent dangers that exist in the Strait of Hormuz...223

Currently, there are three most important latent dangers in the Strait of Hormuz.

The first is that the Middle East is the focus of international conflict. Because the Middle East is rich in petroleum and is an area where the important economic interests of the entire world intersect, various conflicts and wars have continued for a long period without stopping, and there have been frequent clashes. Since 1951, there have been sixteen incidents throughout the globe where petroleum supplies were partially cut off, of which ten were related to conflicts in the Gulf region.³⁰² There have been four large-scale wars just between Arab countries and Israel. In the past twenty years, the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf War, and the Iraq War occurred in the Persian Gulf, one after the other, and although the successive conflicts in the Gulf had differing roots, almost every upheaval was enshrouded by a strong hue of petroleum. They affected the normal output of petroleum, which created serious shortcomings in market supplies and intense fluctuations in the international price of petroleum; this resulted in serious obstacles to regular shipping in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, and the average daily shortfall in the supplies of world petroleum reached 3.3 million barrels, 4.6 million barrels, and 2 million barrels [during the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf War, and the Iraq War], respectively. The price of petroleum greatly soared, and the economies of the main petroleum importing countries declined, thus again setting off the importance and complexity of the Middle East region. In particular, during the Iran-Iraq War, the Strait of Hormuz was a battlefield where the two sides attacked oil tankers. Iran also deployed surface-to-ship missiles, putting the Strait of Hormuz within the range of the missiles. It was precisely the Iran-Iraq War that highlighted the “bottleneck” role of the Strait of Hormuz in constraining the global supply of petroleum and that let each country in the world universally recognize that the Strait of Hormuz is by no means a peaceful and tranquil shipping access but rather one that is filled with serious risks and hidden dangers. This strait is one of the key chokehold maritime passages in the world that the US Navy has announced it needs to control; the United States’ goal is not merely that it hopes to be able after the [Iraq] War to control Iraqi petroleum resources, which hold the world’s second-largest reserves but it also hopes to further control the Middle East’s petroleum and gas supply lines through controlling the Strait of Hormuz. The security of the Strait of Hormuz access has consistently influenced the political, economic,

³⁰² Wang Hai, “Building an International Access that Opens the Strait of Hormuz,” *World Economy and Politics*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 48.

and spiritual centers of the petroleum-producing countries in the Gulf and of the main petroleum-importing countries. During the Iran-Iraq War, in order to avoid war, Saudi Arabia urgently laid the East-West Pipeline from the main oilfields of the Gulf to the port of Yanbu on the Red Sea, and subsequently also constructed an oil pipeline from the oilfields of Iraq to the port of Yanbu; these oil pipelines have a yearly capacity of up to 300 million tons. The petroleum that is exported to Europe and North America can go north from here to the Suez Canal, with no need to again detour around the Arabian Peninsula; even more, it avoids the great risks of the Strait of Hormuz. In contrast, the [countries] that currently rely the most on the petroleum access of Hormuz are the European and American countries of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States and the East Asian countries of China, Japan, and South Korea; the amount of petroleum that these transported each year reaches more than 400 million tons. Moreover, this reliance is continuing to grow, so for the East Asian countries and particularly for China, the risks are becoming ever greater. Currently, the conflict between the United States and Iran over the nuclear issue is also quite acute; if the contradiction intensifies, the Strait of Hormuz, which is a strategic access in the Persian Gulf and the belly of Iran, will be trapped in intense turmoil.

The second is the continuing threat of terrorism. The Middle East is a region with frequent terrorist activities. In October 2002, the French-flagged oil tanker *Limburg* suffered a terrorist bombing in Yemeni waters; in April 2004, the Iraqi port of Basra was forced to close because of suicide attacks by speedboats. The Strait of Hormuz, which is a thoroughfare for the output of petroleum, is even easier to threaten; if an oil tanker is hijacked or attacked, normal petroleum transportation will be cut off. Given that terrorism in the Middle East's Gulf of Aden is becoming increasingly rampant, the shipping registry department of the Marshall Islands in 2010 reminded all ships that pass through the Strait of Hormuz of the need to increase vigilance; in particular, ships that pass through this strait in the night certainly need to prevent the occurrence of terrorist attacks.

The third is that the Strait's channel can suffer unexpected blockages. There are many shoals within the Strait of Hormuz, which at its narrowest is only forty-eight kilometers wide; the currents are swift, the winds constantly change directions, and sandstorms frequently occur; and apart from rapids and reefs, the channels that are suitable for navigation for oil tankers and large-scale ships are only several kilometers wide. An official from Iran's port of Abbas has said that "The true channels in the Strait of Hormuz do not exceed 600-odd meters. But they are a chokepoint thoroughfare for more than seventy percent of the petroleum output in the entire Gulf region."³⁰³ The sinking of a large ship would be sufficient to cut off traffic in the Strait for several months. If a navigational accident occurred, such as a collision between large ships, it is quite possible that this aorta of petroleum would be seriously blocked.³⁰⁴ If the Strait of Hormuz access were cut off, international supplies of petroleum would be reduced by more than one-third, inevitably creating intense turmoil in petroleum markets and striking a serious blow against the global economy.

³⁰³ "Iran Wants to Use 'a Dense Array of Missiles' to Seal Off the Strait of Hormuz," http://news.yorkbbs.ca/world/2010-04/382850_1.html.

³⁰⁴ Wang Hai, "Building an International Access that Opens the Strait of Hormuz," *World Economy and Politics*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 48.

Just as the American scholar La-ma-zha-ni³⁰⁵ has pointed out, “No matter how safe the Cape of Good Hope access, the various waters of the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal, or any other maritime access is, as long as potential insecurity factors still exist in the Strait of Hormuz, transportation of petroleum to world markets will not be truly secure.”

SECTION 3: THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR...225

I. The West’s maritime lifeline...225

The Strait of Gibraltar is located between the southern end of Europe’s Iberian Peninsula and the northwest corner of Africa; the Strait is about forty-eight nautical miles long. The Strait is broad in the west and narrow in the east; at its broadest, it is twenty-three nautical miles, while at its narrowest, it is only 6.5 nautical miles. The Strait of Gibraltar is the only access linking the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Ships from the various countries of Western and northern Europe [going] to the coastal countries of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific generally follow a route from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean to the Suez Canal to the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, and ships carrying petroleum from the Persian Gulf also pass through the Strait of Gibraltar to the various countries of Western Europe and northern Europe. Currently, the Strait of Gibraltar has become one of the busiest maritime accesses in the world. According to statistics, there are up to 55,000 ships that pass through the chokehold that is the Strait of Gibraltar each year, making up twenty-five percent of the world’s shipping volume; should the Strait be closed, all of Western Europe’s economy could be paralyzed.³⁰⁶ Therefore, it has been hailed as the West’s “lifeline.”

II. The Strait of Gibraltar is an area that successive military commanders have had to fight over...226

Because of its unique geographical location, the Strait of Gibraltar is not only a traffic line but is also a strategic thoroughfare; it has always been something that strategists have paid attention to, and it has become a place that the two sides in contests have had to fight over. In the 8th century A.D., when the Arabs invaded the Iberian Peninsula, they landed at Gibraltar. It was not until 1410 that the Spanish recovered it. In 1501, Gibraltar was formally incorporated into Spanish territory. In 1704, the United Kingdom occupied the Strait of Gibraltar, and it established a military fortress there. In 1713, Spain signed a treaty with the United Kingdom, and it ceded the Strait of Gibraltar to the United Kingdom. During the two world wars, and especially during the Second World War, the United Kingdom constructed sixteen kilometers just of underground tunnels, in order to strengthen its defensive fortifications. Spain has never abandoned its demands of territorial sovereignty over Gibraltar. In 1805, the United Kingdom and France fought a naval battle at the Cape of Trafalgar at the western mouth of the Strait. During the period of the two world wars, Germany’s submarines entered the Mediterranean through the Strait a number of times. During the period of the Second World War, the Strait became an extremely important access for military transportation. In September 1939, six German submarines entered the Mediterranean through the Strait, and in November they sank the only British aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean at that time,

³⁰⁵ Translator’s note: This is the Chinese rendition of an American name, probably Ramadhani.

³⁰⁶ Howard S. Levie, *The Status of Gibraltar*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983.

the *Ark Royal*.³⁰⁷ In 1975, the United States and Spain cooperated in constructing a naval station at Rota, about sixty kilometers northwest of the western mouth of the Strait, which has now become a major base of the US Navy's 6th fleet; the US military can use it to control and blockade the Strait of Gibraltar at any time. In wartime, if the US military can completely control the Strait of Gibraltar, it will then trap the Russian Northern Fleet³⁰⁸ in the Mediterranean, leaving it with no way to enter the Atlantic. In recent years, the US military has repeatedly emphasized the role of the naval strategic station of Rota in the Atlantic, and it has deployed large numbers of strategic weapons, thereby strengthening [the base's] military role and its effectiveness in strategic deterrence. The strategic significance of Naval Station Rota is that units stationed there are eight hours closer to Europe than the military of any other US base. The port area of Gibraltar has a military base in its west and an airfield in its north; it is a naval and air force base by which the United States and the United Kingdom control the Strait. NATO has established its Gibraltar regional command here, and it has organized a joint command with the US military. The two bases echo each other, forming a defensive system that controls the Strait. In 1986, the US Navy announced that the Strait of Gibraltar is one of the sixteen maritime access chokeholds in the world that it needs to control. From a military angle, the Strait of Gibraltar is a thoroughfare by which the US Navy's 6th Fleet and the navies of the various NATO countries exit and enter the Mediterranean. Spain's Rota military station is a base for the United States' Mediterranean fleet, and the US military can use this to control and blockade the Strait of Gibraltar at any time. At the same time, the Strait of Gibraltar also is a route that Russia's Black Sea Fleet must use to exit and enter the Atlantic.

The issue of jurisdiction over the Gibraltar region is a problem that has been outstanding between the United Kingdom and Spain for a long period of time. Gibraltar is the last colony on the European continent, situated at Spain's farthest southern end, with an area of about 5.8 square kilometers. It is connected to the Gibraltar region in southern Spain by an isthmus, and it is on the edge of the Strait of Gibraltar. Early on in 1959, Spain demanded that the UN urge the United Kingdom to retrocede sovereignty over Gibraltar. The United Kingdom indicated that Gibraltar was its non-self-governing territory. In 1964, the UN Special Committee on Decolonization demanded that the United Kingdom and Spain negotiate in order to reach a method of resolution through talks, with the result that the majority of citizens approved of Gibraltar continuing to belong to the United Kingdom. In 1969, Gibraltar announced a self-governing constitution. The Spanish Government reacted strongly and closed the border going to the Spanish homeland, cut off communications and traffic links, and prohibited British aircraft from flying in Spanish territorial airspace. In 1976, the UN General Assembly again urged the two countries' governments to hold negotiations. In November 1984, the British Government for the first time indicated that it agreed to begin holding negotiations on the issue of Gibraltar's jurisdiction, after which the two countries reached the Brussels Agreement on Gibraltar. The Spanish Government restored contacts with Gibraltar in February 1985 and opened the border, and in response to a British demand, it proposed two transitional programs for restoring Gibraltar's sovereignty: the first was a British-Spanish lease lasting twenty years, while the second was that the two would jointly rule Gibraltar

³⁰⁷ Translator's note: This actually was sunk in November 1941.

³⁰⁸ Translator's note: Based on the context, this should be the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

politically and would share sovereignty. In March 1991, the United Kingdom formally transferred regional defense to the locals, ending 287 years of a British military presence, but the dispute between the United Kingdom and Spain over sovereignty was by no means resolved. Subsequently, through prolonged multilateral talks, they reached a “consensus on some issues of principle” in 2002, that is, “the two countries would share Gibraltar’s sovereignty;” however, Spain still hopes to recover full sovereignty. Because the two sides each has its own rationale on the issue of Gibraltar’s sovereignty and have not yielded to each other, the dispute is continuing even now.

III. The return of sovereignty affects future trends in the Strait of Gibraltar...228

Because Gibraltar is closely connected to the Strait of Gibraltar, the issue of Gibraltar’s sovereignty is an important factor that affects future trends in the Strait of Gibraltar. Therefore, it is receiving a great deal of attention internationally from sea powers.

First is the issue of the United Kingdom’s attitude toward Gibraltar’s sovereignty. Looking at history, the United Kingdom has consistently adopted an attitude that delays and shirks its responsibility on the issue of Gibraltar’s sovereignty. Upon entering the 21st century, and especially after the 9-11 incident, the United Kingdom has made a 180-degree turn on its urgency in resolving this issue, which is one of the most contentious, primarily based on the following considerations. First are the needs of management. Gibraltar is far from the United Kingdom, and first, it has no natural resources, and second, it has no fertile farmland. Since the 1980s, a new world has taken shape there, a “financial heaven.” Following this was the tourist industry’s rapid development, with 5.5 million trips by tourists being allowed in each year. Port construction and services have continually improved, becoming an ideal “relay station” {*yizhan*} for passing ships, ship inspection and repair, and adding supplies and fuel. However, this busy free port has gradually become a “secure base” {*anquan jidi*} and drug transfer station for drug smugglers, the underworld, terrorist organizations, and other illegal gangs to smuggle and launder money. In order to attack criminal activities, Spain set up a customs outpost on the traffic thoroughfare going to Gibraltar so as to prevent smuggling activities, but this was opposed by the United Kingdom and Gibraltar. Faced with increasingly severe and chaotic conditions, the United Kingdom seemingly felt things were beyond its reach, and that only through joint management with Spain would it be possible to control the spread of iniquity in that region in an effective manner and to control the Strait of Gibraltar. Second are the needs of counterterrorism. The United Kingdom is one of the advocates that closely follows a counterterrorism alliance with the United States, and as the war on terror has continually intensified, the West has treated closing down international terrorists’ funding as an important means for attacking terrorism. According to what has been verified, London has Taliban funds, and each year it provides funding worth up to several tens of millions of US dollars to [Osama] bin Laden; because of Gibraltar’s unique location, it is even more favorable than London for transferring funds. Moreover, funds for the Islamic jihad organization and Hamas also have funding networks that are distributed in various places in the world, and Gibraltar is suspected of being involved in these secret money transfers. If controls are not strengthened and if this is allowed to develop, the situation will be difficult to clean up. Under these conditions, the United Kingdom is willing to switch from being passive to being active in order to promote resolution of the Gibraltar issue. Third is pressure coming from the European Union. In April 2000, Spain and

the United Kingdom reached an agreement on the issue of the United Kingdom's and Gibraltar's request to partially enter the Schengen Agreement; Spain said that this "eliminates barriers for implementing some international and European Union basic guidelines in Gibraltar," and it believed that "this agreement will very quickly unfreeze European Union motions that have been awaiting passage and that have major significance for development in the process of building Europe." What [Spain] stressed was "how, in order to keep the Gibraltar issue from again interfering with the passage of some motions and proposals by the European Union" and "how, when actions that are taken by some local authorities as empowered by European Union guidelines have unexpected effects, to implement these guidelines for Gibraltar."

All of this has had a direct impact on the United Kingdom as regards resolving the issue of Gibraltar. It can be said of Spain and the United Kingdom, that whichever one has sovereignty over Gibraltar will be able to actually control the right to speak on and the right to control the Strait of Gibraltar; this is where the crux lies in the prolonged games that the two countries have played on this issue.

Second is the issue of how to change a natural moat into a thoroughfare. The Strait of Gibraltar is not only a chokehold for maritime sailing but it is also a natural moat for land route traffic between Europe and Africa; how to change this natural moat into a thoroughfare is another grand engineering project that holds the world's attention following the completion of the English Channel tunnel project. For this reason, a Spanish-Moroccan committee has been established and wide-ranging investigations into the Strait have been made. Because the Strait is both wide and deep, building a bridge and digging a tunnel would both be very difficult. Therefore, the necessary funding would be very large and the time used [in the construction] would be very long. As science progresses and as the economy develops, and as the people of Morocco and Spain and the people of Europe work together, the day when this natural moat becomes a thoroughfare will definitely arrive.

SECTION 4: THE SUEZ CANAL...229

I. The major economic value of the Suez Canal...229

The Suez Canal is situated in the northeast part of Egypt's territory, it is a dividing line between Asia and Africa, and it is a famous international access that connects the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. It is the hub for traffic from Asia, Europe, and Africa; it is a maritime navigational shortcut for the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean in the northern hemisphere; and it also borders on the western Asian region where petroleum abounds. It has major traffic significance and economic value, and it was called "the grand channel to the Orient" by [Karl] Marx. Because the Suez Canal links the Atlantic with the Indian Ocean, greatly shortening the route from east to west (see the chart [below]), it has promoted the development of international trade and shipping enterprises. Compared to going around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, [the route] from the various Atlantic coastal countries to the Indian Ocean has been shortened by 5,500 to 8,009 kilometers; [the route] from the various Mediterranean countries to the Indian Ocean has been shortened by 8,000 to 10,000 kilometers; and for the coasts of the Black Sea, [the route] has been shortened by 12,000 kilometers. It is an international ocean shipping channel that has important strategic significance

in international shipping, and it bears fourteen percent of the entire world's ocean shipping and trade each year.

The Impact of the Suez Canal on East-West Voyages

	Around the Cape of Good Hope (km)	Through the Suez Canal (km)	Reduction in the route (%)
London to Mumbai	17000	10100	42
Marseilles to Mumbai	16000	7400	51
New York to Mumbai	19000	13200	31
Odessa to Mumbai	19000	6800	64

Data source: Compiled by the author

In passing through the Suez Canal, most of the way is either inland waters or off-coast waters; the channel's conditions are good, and the sailing is safe. The Suez Canal began to be dug in 1858 and was completed in 1869; at first it was managed by the United Kingdom and France, but in 1956, Egypt announced that it was taking the Canal back and nationalizing it. After the 1967 Middle East War, Egypt closed the Canal. In order to adapt to an increase in the Canal's volume of freight, the Egyptian Government in January 1976 began to engage in a project to expand the Canal. The first stage of construction was completed in 1980, and the Canal's navigation waters were expanded from 1,800 square meters to 3,600 square meters (that is, the Canal's [wet] cross section was adapted to the sailing part); the draft depth of ships passing through was increased from 12.47 meters to 17.9 meters so that 150,000-ton freighters with full loads could pass through. The second stage of the project was completed in 1983; the sailing area was expanded to 5,000 square meters, and the draft depth of ships passing through was increased to 21.98 meters. This could allow freighters with a load capacity of 250,000 tons to pass through. The third stage was from 1982 to 2000; the Suez Canal underwent eight renovations and expansions, one after the other. On 14 February 1993, Egypt decided to widen and deepen the Suez Canal in order to increase its foreign exchange earnings. The Canal was widened by thirty meters and deepened by one to seventeen meters; this engineering project was completed that year. On 24 July 1996, the Suez Canal Authority decided to further increase the depth of the Canal in order to attract more large-scale oil tankers and freighters into using the Suez Canal so as to ensure that the income that Egypt depended on from the Suez Canal would not decline. Currently, the draft in the Suez Canal is 23.5 meters; it can accommodate fully loaded 260,000-ton supertankers and empty 700,000-ton [supertankers]. According to statistics, up until now, there have been about 180,000 ships from more than 100 countries and regions in the world that pass through the Suez Canal each year, the volume of freight makes up twenty percent of the world's maritime trade, and about twenty-five percent of the world's oil tankers and about eighty percent of Europe's and Asia's ocean freight passes through the Suez Canal. In 2010, the freight volume reached more than 400 million tons so that it was first among the world's canals, making up one-eighth of Asia's and Europe's maritime freight volume and one-quarter of the world's maritime oil shipments. According to estimates by the US Department of Energy, about one million barrels of crude oil and refined petroleum

products follow the Suez Canal north each day. In addition, the Sumed oil pipeline that connects the Red Sea and the Mediterranean can carry 1.1 million barrels of crude oil and related products each day. Together, these basically make up two percent of global petroleum production. Among the manmade canals in the world that are suited to sea transportation, the large number of countries that use it, the many ships that pass through it, and the large volume of freight all put it among the best.

The income from the Suez Canal is the third largest source of foreign exchange income for Egypt, behind remittances from overseas Egyptians and tourism; a statistics report from the Suez Canal Authority shows that during the twenty-five years from when the Suez Canal was put back into use until June 2000, collection of the transit tax on ships reached \$30 billion, which was six times the total received from transit fees during the close to 100 years from when the Suez Canal was formally built and put into use in November 1869 until when it was closed in June 1969 because of the Middle East war. According to a yearly report published by the Suez Canal Authority, there were 13,986 ships of various types transiting the Suez Canal in fiscal year 2001-2002, and the foreign exchange earnings for ships' passages reached \$1.9 billion. The Suez Canal foreign exchange earnings for fiscal year 2004-2005 reached \$3.3 billion. And in fiscal year 2007-2008, they reached \$5.2 billion.³⁰⁹

II. The strategic struggle between the United Kingdom and the United States over the Suez Canal...231

From the exploration and digging of the Suez Canal to its operation and management, these all reflected the hegemonic countries' struggles for this canal and changes in countries' power; also, from one aspect, they reflected changes in the world's setup. With the discovery of a new route, the United Kingdom became the center of the world's new routes, and Englishmen's overseas activities became more frequent. In 1588, the United Kingdom defeated Spain's "invincible Armada," established its maritime supremacy, and actively engaged in overseas colonial expansion. In the 18th century, the United Kingdom and France intensified their struggles, and their objectives were concentrated in the opulent Orient; but to reach the Orient, it was necessary to pass through the Cape of Good Hope channel. At this time, the Cape of Good Hope channel was controlled in the hands of the United Kingdom. Therefore, France sought to begin digging a canal on the Isthmus of Suez in order to connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, directly reaching the Orient, in order to break the United Kingdom's control over the Cape of Good Hope and strive for a monopoly on east-west trade. In order to protect its interests in the Orient and especially in India, the United Kingdom opposed digging the Suez Canal. Finally, France gained Egypt's trust by cheating, and it obtained the authority to dig the Suez Canal. Starting in 1882, the United Kingdom established its biggest overseas military base in the Canal region, where it stationed close to 100,000 troops. In 1895, a French colonial company invested in and used Egyptian manpower to dig the Suez Canal; after ten years, the Canal went through, for which the Egyptian people paid with the lives of 120,000 men. The opening of the Suez Canal greatly shortened the route from east to west, and at the same time that it promoted the development of international trade and shipping enterprises, it also pushed capitalism to expand toward the Orient, it intensified the British

³⁰⁹ "Egypt's Suez Canal Income Greatly Decreases Year on Year," quoted from <http://finance.wz.zj.com>.

and French invasion of Egypt, and it reduced Egypt to a semi-colony of the United Kingdom and France. Ever since the opening of the Canal, it was always under the control of the United Kingdom and France; the United Kingdom and France monopolized ninety-six percent of the shares of the Suez Canal Company, and each year, they obtained huge profits from the Canal.

During the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War, the United Kingdom did not permit Russia's Baltic Fleet to pass through the Suez Canal, because of its alliance with Japan, so they had to circle the Cape of Good Hope; the result was that it muffed a chance for battle and by the time it arrived in the East, Port Arthur had already fallen. The First World War erupted in 1914, and the United Kingdom and France announced that Egypt was a "protectorate;" Germany supported the Turkish army in attacking Egypt in order to seize the Canal, but they were not successful. In 1922, the United Kingdom recognized Egypt's independence, but it still retained the authority to station troops in the Canal zone. In the 1930s, the United Kingdom adopted an appeasement policy toward Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, and the Suez Canal was provided for the use of the Italian military, as usual. After the Second World War broke out, the United Kingdom and France lost repeatedly on the European battlefields, and most of Europe fell into the hands of Germany and Italy. The strategic status of the Middle East and North Africa suddenly rose, and the two sides engaged in the El Alamein campaign, which was unprecedented in scale. The German military's aim was to seize the Suez Canal and the Middle East, in order to cut off the United Kingdom's ties with India and its other overseas colonies. In the fall of 1942, British General [Bernard] Montgomery led troops in a counterattack and won victory in the El Alamein campaign, thus laying a situation for Allied victory in North Africa.

After the Second World War, the Egyptian people resolutely demanded the return of sovereignty over the Suez Canal and for this purpose engaged in an unremitting struggle. In October 1954, the United Kingdom was forced to agree to completely withdraw its troops prior to 13 June 1956. On 26 July 1956, the final group of British troops withdrew from Egypt, ending the United Kingdom's occupation of Egypt, which had lasted seventy-four years. The Egyptian Government announced that it was taking back the Suez Canal Company and nationalizing it, and it established the Suez Canal Authority. The United Kingdom was not willing to lose this huge benefit, and in October 1956, the United Kingdom and France, together with Israel, invaded Egypt, in an attempt to overthrow the [Gamal Abdel] Nasser government and re-occupy the Canal. This was the Second Middle East War, also called the Suez Canal War; ultimately, the United Kingdom and France were defeated, and Egypt regained sovereignty over the Canal.

In actuality, the United States very early on began to penetrate the Middle East region, and by supporting its own country's petroleum monopoly capital's entering the Middle East and by fostering the Zionism movement, it expanded its political and economic influence in the Middle East, thereby continually excluding the United Kingdom. In the 1956 Canal War, proceeding from strategic considerations for controlling the Middle East, the United States did not support the United Kingdom in using force, but rather did its utmost to oppose the United Kingdom and to use political, economic, diplomatic, and other means to exert pressure on the United Kingdom, which directly led to the United Kingdom's defeat. The United States primarily had two major goals in doing this. The first was to exclude British and French influence in the Middle East and to prevent the Soviet Union from inserting itself into Middle Eastern matters. After the Cold War started, the

two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, not only had tensions and confrontations in Europe, but they also launched an intense struggle for an expanded “neutral zone” {*zhongjian dai*} in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Middle East became a region they focused on in the struggle. The United States tried to establish an alliance system in the Middle East for encircling the Soviet Union – the Middle East Defense Organization – and it used Egypt’s special strategic status and its fairly great influence among the Arab countries to resist the influence that the Soviet Union already had in Egypt and the Middle East. As for the United States, it did not want to launch a war; if it could resolve things through peaceful forms, not only would it be possible to quickly expand the United States’ influence in the Middle East region but it would also be possible to have it very naturally further insert itself into Middle East affairs, thereby establishing its leading status in the Middle East. Therefore, the United States treated this as a good opportunity to further infiltrate its influence into the Middle East and to replace the United Kingdom in contending with the Soviet Union. Second, the Suez Canal’s importance for the United States was much less than it was for the United Kingdom. For a long period of time, the United Kingdom was always the biggest user of the Canal. Taking just 1956 as an example, close to one-quarter of the United Kingdom’s imported goods had to come through the Canal; of the 70 million tons of petroleum that was transported through the Canal, 60 million tons were transported to Western Europe, making up two-thirds of [Western Europe’s] petroleum supplies. In addition, the United Kingdom also had forty-four percent of the stock in the Suez Canal Company, and traffic and trade between the United Kingdom and such member states of the British Commonwealth and [British] colonies as Australia, India, and Southeast Asia also relied on the Canal. Therefore, if the United Kingdom wanted to exist as a world power, it needed to rely to a certain extent on the support of the Canal. But the United States owned only a few shares of the Suez Canal Company, and only fifteen percent of the petroleum it imported went through the Suez Canal. In actuality, the United States did not care about how the rights of stockholders were affected after the Canal’s retrocession and nationalization; its only concern was whether it would be possible to continue to freely navigate the Canal. Therefore, the main objectives of the United States’ Middle East policies were to bring Middle East petroleum under its own control, to expel the British and French colonialist forces and replace them, and to then include the Middle East in its global strategic planning. It can be said that the Suez Canal incident was one of the major historical incidents that affected the overall world situation after the Second World War. In this incident, the contradictions and struggles between the new and old colonialists, the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union for hegemony, the liberation movement of the Third World countries and peoples, and ethnic entanglements were all intertwined; the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union became involved, one after the other; and this produced a profound impact on the evolution of the setup of post-Second World War international relations.

III. The major problems faced by the Suez Canal...234

First is the problem that the Canal situation is constantly changing. Given that Egypt is an important energy transportation access in the world and that it is a rapidly developing country that produces petroleum and natural gas, any sign of trouble in its politics will affect international political and economic nerves, and it will affect the interests of the major nations, so the sea powers

will pay close attention. In 2009, after Israel launched an all-out attack against the Gaza strip, the United States' attitude became more and more concerned. In January 2011, riots occurred in Egypt, which not only seriously attacked its own economy but it also caused a small-scale "earthquake" in world petroleum markets. Although Egypt itself is by no means a major petroleum supply country, the geographical location of Egypt is extremely special, and the situation in Egypt has an impact on Middle East economics. If it, as an existing transfer station for energy transportation, is affected or even interrupted, this will have an impact on the supply and demand situation of petroleum and changes in the price of petroleum. The size of the turmoil in the Egyptian situation has already affected shipping in the Suez Canal; although there are heavy troops guarding the Canal, there is no way for the ports to operate. Half the freighters that would have sailed through the Canal had no way to rely on the coast for supplies, and crew members had no way to board. And the owners and shipping agents that had already sent goods to Egypt were worried that there was no way to retrieve payments and shipments; this has affected the several billion U.S. dollars' worth of income from transit fees that Egypt receives each year. Egypt is by no means a major petroleum state, but data released by the Egyptian Government in January 2011 showed that about eight percent of the world's shipping trade, including the transportation of petroleum, must be routed through the Suez Canal. Therefore, the turbulent situation that occurred in Egypt in 2011 caused a ten-percent rise in international petroleum prices in a single day, exceeding \$100. If the petroleum transportation line that is routed through Egypt is interrupted, Europe's supplies and global petroleum prices will be hugely affected. If the Suez Canal is closed, this will force oil tankers to go around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, thereby greatly increasing the time for shipping and putting pressure on oil tanker traffic. Therefore, the situation in the Suez Canal is always a focal point that the major nations pay close attention to.

Second is the problem that Canal tolls are rising. In order to increase its income, starting on 1 February 2005, Egypt's Suez Canal Authority raised transit fees for ships passing through by an average of three percent; starting on 15 March 2006, Egypt's Suez Canal Authority again raised the transit fees for ships passing through by an average of three percent. The increases to a certain extent have directly added to the shipping costs of many countries' export enterprises. Economists are consistently concerned about changes in the income from Suez Canal transit fees, because this reflects the impact that the global financial crisis and the Somali pirate issue in the waters of the Gulf of Aden has on European and Asian trade. In the past two years, the amount of transportation along the Suez Canal has shown a tendency to drop each year because of the reduction of the petroleum needs on the European market. From 2008 until now, the amount of petroleum shipped through the Suez Canal has declined by close to forty percent. Moreover, the oil tankers passing through the Suez Canal primarily are small and medium oil tankers; there now are probably 35,000 ships passing through each year, with fewer than 3,000 oil tankers. Egypt's income in fiscal year 2009-2010 was less than \$4.74 billion, a decline of 4.2 percent from the previous fiscal year.

SECTION 5: THE PANAMA CANAL...235

I. The strategic intentions of the United States in occupying the Panama Canal...235

The Panama Canal is situated in the narrowest part of South and North America, that is, the center of the Republic of Panama, across the Isthmus of Panama. The total length of the Canal is

81.3 kilometers, and it is a lock-type {*shuizha xing*} canal. Out of the two manmade waterways in the world, the Panama Canal is the one that has the greatest strategic significance; navigation on this canal makes it much easier for maritime links between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Sailing through this is 5,000 to 13,700 kilometers shorter than the route around the Strait of Magellan, so it is a shortcut for international shipping and an important military strategic access.

The Panama Canal is the world's largest lock-type canal. It was first dug by the French, in 1881, but they abandoned it in 1889 because of financial difficulties. In 1903, the United States obtained the rights to dig and use the canal zone. In 1904, digging recommenced on the Canal. After the United States instigated and supported Panama's independence in November 1903, the United States and Panama for a very long time consistently relied upon the Canal and the US dollar to maintain a "special relationship." In name, Panama was an independent country, but in reality, its political life and economic lifeline were entirely controlled in the hands of Americans. The *Hay-Bunao-Varilla Treaty* [between] the United States and Panama that the United States and Panama signed in 1903, at the cost of a one-time payment of \$10 million and a lease with an annual payment of \$250,000, established the United States' comprehensive rule over Panama; Panama became an affiliated state for the United States, and the United States obtained "permanent use, occupation, and control of the Canal Zone" as well as various other privileges. Work on the Canal formally ended on 15 August 1914, and it opened to traffic; it was formally opened internationally in 1920. During the more than half a century from 1914 to 1979, the United States alone controlled the use of the Panama Canal, and [the Canal] had important strategic significance. This is primarily reflected in three great values [that the Canal had].

First, it has important strategic value. Currently, there are 13,000 to 14,000 ships that pass through the Panama Canal each year, and freight volume reaches about 200 million tons, making up five percent of the world's freight volume. The United States is the primary user of the Canal; seventy percent of the ships in the Canal's freight depart from the United States or have the United States as their goal. During the times of the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Middle East crisis, and the Gulf War, the Canal was the main transportation access for US military personnel and war materials. Although US aircraft carriers have no way to pass through the Canal, because the locks are too small, US materials that were revealed at the end of the 1970s show that about ninety-eight percent of the US Navy's ships can pass through the Canal.³¹⁰ Therefore, regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, the Canal has an important strategic value for the United States.

Second, it has important economic value. Speaking in a certain sense, the United States' occupation of the Panama Canal was equivalent to wanton plundering of Panama's economy. The huge economic benefits that the United States obtained from the Panama Canal and the ruling status that various American monopoly capital groups held in Panama's economic activities monopolized all of the transportation industry, businesses, and service industry within the Canal Zone. According to statistics, almost two-thirds of the goods in the trade that passed through the Canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific originated in the United States. During the ten years from 1960 to 1970, cost savings in trade between the east and west [coasts] of the United States reached about \$5 billion because of the shortened route. During the seven years from 1970 to 1976, the

³¹⁰ Wu Deming, "A Brief Analysis of US-Panamanian Relations after the Return of the Canal," *Latin American Studies*, 2001, Issue 2, p. 34.

United States collected as much as \$1.5 billion in transit fees, but during the same period, the “lease” that it paid Panama was only \$13.5 million, less than one percent of what it received. In the more than sixty years after the Canal was opened to traffic, the United States received revenues of about \$50 billion from the Canal, but what Panama got was only \$67.3 million, less than one percent of the revenues that the entire Canal should have. Currently, according to statistics, about seventy percent of the flow of US maritime goods passes through the Panama Canal.

Third, it has important military value. The Canal also has an important role in US military strategy. Its greatest role is to facilitate links and coordination between the US fleets on the two oceans. During the Spanish-American War, which began in 1898, the US warship *Oregon* took sixty-six days to go around South America, from the United States’ West Coast, with a route of 21,500 kilometers, before it reached Cuba. But in 1938, the US fleets on the two oceans held an exercise; all of the fleet only took two days to pass through the Panama Canal. During the Second World War, US warships passed through the Panama Canal 13,880 times. In 1962, during the Caribbean Crisis [that is, the Cuban Missile Crisis] where the United States confronted the Soviet Union, the US Pacific Fleet quickly passed through the Panama Canal, sailed to the Caribbean, and participated in military operations for blockading Cuba. During the US invasion of Vietnam, one US warship passed through the Panama Canal each day. In order to better control the Panama Canal, the United States proposed that a region extending 8,000 meters from the center line of the Canal to the two sides, with an area of 1,432 square kilometers, would be a Canal Zone; the United States would appoint a governor to be in charge within this zone. Within the Canal Zone, the United States had military bases in fourteen places, and it also established its Southern Command here; the Canal Zone became the United States’ “country within a country” in Panama.

II. The strategic intentions of the United States in returning the Panama Canal...237

The Panamanian people engaged in a protracted struggle in order to regain sovereignty over the Canal, and finally, on 7 September 1977, the United States’ [Jimmy] Carter administration signed a new *Panama Canal Treaty* and a *Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal* with General [Omar] Torrijos, President of Panama, which specified that starting in 1990, the Canal would gradually be turned over to Panamanian management, and by the end of 1999, sovereignty over the Canal would be entirely returned to Panama. Panama would guarantee the permanent neutrality of the Canal, and it would ensure the security of the Panama Canal, regardless of whether it was peacetime or wartime, and would open it to the ships of all nations. At the same time, all of the US troops that were stationed in the sixteen bases in the Canal Zone would be withdrawn. The Panamanian Government especially established a commission to manage the Canal, which carried out unified management over the Canal.³¹¹ On 14 December 1999, the two countries’ governments also held a transfer ceremony, and sovereignty over the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone was formally returned to the hands of the Panamanian people. But during the transition period of more than twenty years from 1977 to 1999, developments in the two countries’ relations were not smooth sailing, because of US obstructions; they were filled with contradictions, struggles, and frictions, and a phenomenon appeared where they even seriously

³¹¹ G. Harvey Summ and Tom Kelly, *The Good Neighbors: America, Panama, and the 1977 Canal Treaties*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Latin American Studies Program, 1988.

worsened. In December 1989, the United States brazenly dispatched troop strengths that were twice the size of Panama's national defense forces, for large-scale armed incursions into Panama. Facts prove that the United States' return of the Panama Canal was a one-time "reluctant cooperation" with Panama; the United States will not overlook Panama, this strategic key point, and it will not willingly abandon this international waterway.

The Panama Canal holds an irreplaceably important position in the United States' global strategy. The return of the Canal has become a fact, but the United States has by no means abandoned its hopes of controlling Panama. For the United States, the return of the Canal did not mean any change in the importance of Panama's strategic location and the value of the Canal. In the United States' global strategy, Panama's important status is irreplaceable, and Panama's important role is something that Puerto Rico and the military bases that the United States has established there is far from being able to compare with. In actuality, what the United States is obsessed with is the right that the *Treaty Concerning Permanent Neutrality* gives the United States to interfere when the Canal's security is threatened, where it can adopt measures (including military actions) in accordance with US constitutional procedures. Former US President Carter again mentioned this during the ceremony for handing the Canal over, and he again tied the Canal to US national security. In actuality, Carter's speech in reality was a declaration that he again made, that the United States in the future would again interfere in Panamanian domestic affairs at any time, that is, that the United States "made it clear beforehand that there was an agreement it could abide by." Of course, what is most interesting is a phrase that Carter especially emphasized at that time, that the United States' actions must be at the request of Panama and must be in the form of cooperation. This foreshadowed and provided an excuse for the United States' subsequent interference in Panama's internal affairs and control over the Panama Canal. Early on, in 1978, the words of US Secretary of State [Henry] Kissinger, when he was persuading Members of Congress to ratify the *Panama Canal Treaty* and the *Treaty Concerning Permanent Neutrality*, were unforgettable: "We leave Panama, but we still control it."

Therefore, looking at things from the surface, the United States had to abandon its permanent occupation of the Canal Zone and increase the rent that it pays, based on the new treaty, but the United States therefore obtained a relatively long transition period; through a gradual transfer, it avoided loss of control, and after the transition period ended, it was still responsible for the Canal's defense. In actuality, in exchange for returning sovereignty, it obtained permanent control over the Canal Zone, and this was the United States' most important goal in returning the Panama Canal.

III. The current situation of the Panama Canal...239

First, the United States is still the country with the most influence on the Canal. Currently, the United States again controls the Panama Canal through various forms. Because of Panama's long-term "special relationship" with the United States, even though Panama's independence was strengthened somewhat after the return of the Canal, its reliance on the United States did not immediately disappear. In 2009, the Panamanian Government announced that the United States would establish four naval and air force bases in Panama. Public opinion universally believes that this official statement was to cover up an agreement that Panama has already signed with the United States whereby the United States would establish military bases in the Isthmus of Panama.

The reason is that early on in 2002, then-Minister of the Interior and Justice [Anibal] Salas signed an agreement with US Ambassador Bei-ke,³¹² determining that the ports and airfields of Panama could be “generously used” by the US Armed Forces. Based on the agreement signed by the two countries, in the war to oppose terrorism, narcotics, and other international crimes, the United States could invite other countries to enter Panamanian territory in order to cooperate with Panama. Since 2003, the United States and Latin American countries and member states of NATO have engaged in a number of military exercises in Panama; their objective is to “pay attention to and protect” the Panama Canal and Panama. The exercises have been commanded by the general of the United States’ Southern Command. Also, the United States treats threats to the Panama Canal as threats to the United States, and it believes that it can take action unilaterally. Therefore, the United States is using its great military power and Panama’s special relationship where it relies upon the United States to newly control the Panama Canal through various forms and means.

Second is the problem that the Canal is old and its equipment is aging, so its transport capabilities are no longer able to meet the needs of current developments in the world sea transport industry. As globalization and the world economy have developed, world trade contacts are becoming increasingly frequent. The great increase in freight volume has led to more and more extremely large ships being put into use; freighters carrying about 4,000 containers are reluctant to pass through the Canal, and a number of deep-sea freighters carry more than 8,000 containers. Currently, because the Panama Canal’s current locks are only thirty-three meters wide, many huge freighters have no way to pass through. About seven percent of the huge ships in the world have no way to pass through [the Canal] because the canal’s locks are narrow and small. Despite this, the Canal up until now has not lost its importance as an international navigational waterway. About ninety-two percent of the ships in the world’s sailing fleets can smoothly pass through the Panama Canal. After measuring things, the greatest capacity of the existing canal is 330 million to 340 million tons each year. In 2005, the tonnage passing through the Canal was 279 million tons, reaching eighty-five percent of its maximum capacity. The maximum capacity of the Canal will reach its limit between 2009 and 2012. As the existing locks’ operating capability has tended to peak, the tonnage passing through the Canal has also gotten close to saturation so that it is far from being able to satisfy the continually increasing demands of the marketplace; the only way to meet the demands of the marketplace is to expand the Canal. In 2006, a referendum by the people of Panama passed an engineering plan for expanding the Canal; it will primarily use a form where a third set of locks is built in order to enhance the Canal’s capacity. This engineering project will consume \$5.25 billion, and work will start from 2007 to 2008; it is planned that the work will be completed in 2014, on the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal.

The most direct change that expansion of the Panama Canal will bring about is that the capacity of the Canal will be increased a good bit; larger ships will be able to pass through the Canal, including container ships with 12,000 TEU,³¹³ Cape of Good Hope-type bulk carriers, and

³¹² Translator’s note: This is a Chinese rendition of an American name, probably Baker. Linda Ellen Watt became US Ambassador to Panama in late 2002; prior to this, there was no ambassador to Panama in 2002.

³¹³ TEU is an abbreviation in English of Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit. It is the international unit of measurement for containers, whose length is twenty feet; it is usually used to indicate a ship’s ability to hold containers, and it is also an important statistical and conversion unit for containers and for ports’ throughput capacity.

VLCC³¹⁴ tankers. Freighters loaded with 12,000 containers will be able to transit smoothly, and therefore the number of ships passing through the Panama Canal each year will increase from the current approximately 14,000 to 17,700. At the same time as this, the expansion project will vigorously promote Panama's economic development; it is estimated that by 2025, the Government of Panama's income that it gets from the Canal will increase to more than \$4 billion (it currently is \$1.2 billion, making up 6.4 percent of [Panama's] gross national product).

Third is concern that it will be replaced by nearby canals. The biggest characteristic of a canal is that it can be dug manually; once a given isthmus has just the right time, the right place, and the right people, it will be possible to dig a new canal. If the Panama Canal is not widened in a timely manner, it could be replaced by other countries' canals. Nicaragua, which like Panama is situated in Central America, is actively considering constructing a new canal that would cost \$18 billion and whose shipping capability would far exceed that of the Panama Canal. A Nicaraguan official has said that work on the new canal will be completed within twelve years, and that after its construction, it will provide a convenient access for huge freighters that have no way to pass through the Panama Canal. This truly would be a challenge for the Panama Canal.

SECTION 6: THE STRAIT OF BAB-EL-MANDEB...241

I. "The heart of world strategy" ...241

Ever since ancient times, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb has been a busy commercial route from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, and it has been called "the heart of world strategy" by Westerners. The importance of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb appeared after the Suez Canal was opened to traffic in 1869, making the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb a maritime traffic thoroughfare for the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the Atlantic; it also is a major petroleum access internationally. Merchant ships can pass through the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb from the Suez Canal and the Red Sea and then enter the Indian Ocean, and then pass through the Strait of Malacca into the Asian coastal region in the western Pacific. The route that passes through the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal is a shortcut from the Persian Gulf to Europe and North Africa; it is several thousand to up to 10,000 kilometers shorter than the Cape of Good Hope route. According to statistics, in going from the Persian Gulf to London, it is 8,709 kilometers shorter to go by the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal than it is to round the Cape of Good Hope. Calculating an oil tanker's speed to be thirty kilometers per hour, it can only make five round trips a year around the Cape of Good Hope, but by going through the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal, it can make nine round trips. The Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb affects Western European countries' economic and military interests, and controlling it is like controlling the lifelines of these countries. Thus, it is called "the heart of world strategy" by Westerners.

II. Major countries' disputes over the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb...242

First is the games by sea powers. During the period of the Cold War, the Soviet Union actively established bilateral relations that involved military alliances with Southern Yemen, Ethiopia, and

³¹⁴ VLCC is Very Large Crude Carriers in English (with tonnage from 200,000 tons to 300,000 tons).

Somalia, which are located around the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, in order for it to expand to the Middle East, Africa, and the Red Sea region and to control the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb.

During the period of the Yom Kippur War, the Egyptian Navy blockaded the Straits of Tiran, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Red Sea exits, in order to contain the Israeli military and block the United States from shipping armaments and other materials to Israel, and it carried out maritime landing operations in the Sharm El Sheikh region in order to attack the Israeli military. In the Gulf War, the United States and other allies sent close to 100 ships to Iraq to engage in a maritime blockade. In the east, the United States focused on blockading the Gulf region; in the west, it blockaded the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea; and in the south, it focused on blockading the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb at the southern tip of the Red Sea. In 1992, the United States sent troops to Somalia, in the name of so-called humanitarian assistance, and to a very great extent this also was done in order to control the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. The reason was that if the United States controlled Somalia, it not only could control the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb but it also could control the Suez Canal route; this would have an important strategic value for interfering in East African and the Middle East region's affairs.³¹⁵ The Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is one of the sixteen important global chokepoint thoroughfares that the United States needs to control, and the depths of its waters can ensure passage of US aircraft carriers. By relying on Yemen's Perim base, the United States can pay attention to the Suez Canal by going north, it can stare at the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa by going south, and it can participate in Arabian Peninsula affairs in a timely manner by going east. Therefore, controlling the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb has an extremely important significance for the United States' geopolitics. Apart from the United States, the Republic of Djibouti and France signed a military agreement in 1977, permitting France to station 4,150 men here, and it now has more than ten ships stationed here. Japan also began to build a military base in Djibouti in 2010, in order to attack piracy and to protect its overseas interests, so that this sea region has continual action from the major nations' games.

Second is struggles by the Strait's coastal nations. There are three countries on the two sides of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb: Yemen, Djibouti, and Eritrea. Of these, Eritrea and Yemen are situated on the eastern and western sides at the southern end of the Red Sea, and together they guard the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, which is a key location at the southern exit of the Red Sea. The Hanish Islands are situated in the center of the sea area at the southeastern end of the Red Sea, forty kilometers away from the two countries. These islands consist of Great Hanish Island, Little Hanish Island, and several dozen small islands and shoals. They are close to the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and their strategic location is quite important. The stability of the situation in this sea area has an important impact on international shipping. It can be said that the gain or loss of the Hanish Islands affects how whoever occupies the Hanish Islands will be able to completely blockade the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb; it also directly affects how whichever Eritrea or Yemen can occupy the sea area, which makes up three-quarters of the southern mouth of the Red Sea, as well as its seabed resources. After the First World War, sovereignty over the Hanish Islands was never determined. Yemen has troops and inhabitants stationed on the islands, and it possesses actual control. After

³¹⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, "Securing the Gulf," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2003.

Eritrea split from Ethiopia and declared independence in 1993, it made a demand for sovereignty, as regards the issue of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Hanish Islands.

In November 1995, Eritrea demanded that Yemen immediately withdraw its troops from the Hanish Islands, but this was rejected by Yemen. Subsequently, the two countries launched a sea battle in order to seize Great Hanish Island. Ultimately, Eritrea controlled the sea area around Great Hanish Island. With intervention from the Arab League, the two countries agreed to a ceasefire and to withdraw troops, and they submitted their dispute to the UN for arbitration. On 9 October 1998, the court of arbitration made a ruling on the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the islands; it ruled that the Hanish Islands belong to Yemen. The Government of Eritrea indicated that it would respect the decision made by international arbitration, and it began to withdraw its troops from the islands and to hand over the islands that it occupied to Yemen. Yemen and Eritrea immediately indicated that they would accept the results of the ruling unconditionally, and the two countries' relations were also immediately normalized. But after 2001, Yemen and Eritrea engaged in a dispute over the details of the international ruling, which again resulted in this issue becoming confused.

III. The piracy issue affects the security of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb...243

First, the domestic political situation in Somalia has been turbulent for a long period of time, and pirate activities have become an important way by which some residents survive and even develop. The Gulf of Aden, which is linked to the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, is a sea region in which Somali pirates are often active; ever since the 1990s, pirate activities in sea regions close to Somalia have increased daily. In recent years, the scope of Somali pirate activities has expanded on a daily basis. From the off-shore activities on 2008, they have developed south toward Tanzania and the Seychelles seacoast on the western shore of the Indian Ocean and north toward the international sea regions of the Red Sea, like the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. Yemeni officials believe that in contrasting these two, Somali pirates are more willing to select the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, which is closer to their homeland, for committing their crimes. In only the first half of 2010, pirates attacked at least ten Yemeni ships and the oil tankers of other nations; the chances of a similar incident occurring in this sea region have greatly increased. At the same time, terrorism is also staring at the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb; in February 2010, a branch of the al-Qaeda organization in Yemen declared that it was combining with the Somali pirates, and it called for blocking the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, taking over the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and cutting off the route for American ships to go to Israel. The al-Qaeda organization believes that control over the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb would be equivalent to closing the doors of the West, which would have a major impact worldwide. Currently, the Gulf of Aden along with the Strait of Malacca and the Nigerian coast have become the world's three major dangerous sea regions. The Government of Yemen has constructed a coastal defense base on Perim Island, which has primarily brought into play a certain amount of monitoring and control over the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb.

Second, checks and balances by the international community have not been strong. Since ancient times, the harm created by piracy has not merely been limited to any given country; countering piracy must involve international checks and balances and international cooperation. Looking at the causes of Somali piracy, this to a very large degree originated in the consequences

created by interference from certain major countries in the world. Looking at the existing international checks and balances mechanisms, there are many blind spots and loopholes in the current *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* as regards the issue of fighting piracy. For example, there are no explicit norms presented for such things as whether maritime plundering activities that occur within a country's territorial waters come under acts of piracy and where after pirates commit a crime on the high seas, they flee into a given country's territorial waters, and this country temporarily has no ability to control the situation, whether other countries can enter its territorial waters to arrest the pirates. As soon as foreign ships enter Somali territorial waters in order to pursue and arrest pirates, [these ships] could be labeled as "invaders." It was not until August 2008 that the UN's 150th Joint Task Force established a "maritime security patrol zone in the Gulf of Aden waters in order to protect passing ships from harassment by pirates. At the same time, the international community has not attacked Somali pirates' coastal nests enough; to a certain degree, that has also encouraged the pirates' illegal behavior. Currently, although the UN has one after the other, through certain resolutions, called on various countries to participate in fighting Somali piracy actions and has authorized the various countries to enter Somali territorial waters in order to fight piracy, under conditions where [these countries] have sought the agreement of the Government of Somalia, no comprehensive international political, economic, military, or diplomatic mechanisms for cooperation have been established for upholding maritime security.

Third, the security of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb has affected the routes to the Suez Canal and even to Western Europe. The relationship of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal is quite close. After the Suez Canal was opened to traffic, 22,000 ships passed through each year; sixteen percent of the world's trade volume, thirty percent of its petroleum transportation, thirty-three percent of its container ships, and fifty percent of its bulk cargo ships must pass through this sea region. But if control over the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is lost, the role of the Suez Canal will also be reduced by ninety percent, and ships will be forced to circle the Cape of Good Hope at the farthest southern tip of Africa before they can reach their target areas. In order to avoid pirate attacks, many freighters no longer pass through the Suez Canal, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and the Gulf of Aden, but rather circle South Africa's Cape of Good Hope. In this way, it on the one hand lengthens the voyage, and it on the other hand also increases costs. The voyage from the various Atlantic coastal countries of Europe to the Indian Ocean will add 5,500 to 8,000 kilometers, the voyage from the various Mediterranean countries to the Indian Ocean will add 8,000 to 10,000 kilometers, and the voyage from the various Black Sea coastal countries to the Indian Ocean will add 12,000 kilometers. A large ship needs to consume twenty tons of fuel a day, and the current price of one ton of fuel is more than \$600; detouring for one day means having to spend \$12,000. An ordinary detour requires adding twelve to fifteen days of travel time, thus increasing transportation expenses by about twenty-five to thirty percent. This not only increases the time and costs of transporting petroleum but it also seriously restrains how oil tankers' reserve storage and transportation capabilities are brought into play. For example, in 1995, Yemen and Eritrea launched an intense struggle over to whom Great Hanish Island belonged; because the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb bore the brunt of the impact, oil tankers had to detour around the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. As regards the transport of petroleum north, it was still possible to instead use Saudi Arabia's East-West petroleum pipeline, whose capacity for transporting petroleum is about five

million barrels a day. But the transportation of petroleum south was completely blocked because of this. Moreover, the war also blocked other ships that were not transporting petroleum from transiting the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb toward the Suez Canal. Therefore, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal rely upon each other and affect one another for their security and remaining unhindered.

SECTION 7: THE BLACK SEA STRAITS...246

I. The strategic location with which they have been richly endowed by nature has turned them into a strategic focal point...246

The Black Sea straits that are commonly spoken of include the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles Strait, as well as the Sea of Marmara that connects them. They are the dividing line between Asia and Europe as well as the only access for going from [the Black Sea and then from] the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. The Black Sea straits' strategic position is important, and they have been lands that military commanders have had to fight over since ancient times. When King Darius I of the Persian Empire led an army west to invade Europe in the 5th century B.C., he constructed a pontoon bridge over the Bosphorus. During the Crusades in the time of the Eastern Roman Empire, [Crusader forces] took ship here to cross, in order to press on to Jerusalem. By the 7th century B.C., the Black Sea straits had become a commercial waterway between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. In 1841 and 1871, Turkey drafted, one after the other, rules for handling commercial ships and warships passing through the straits. During the First World War, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France reached a secret deal, that if they were victorious in the war, Turkey's Istanbul and a large swath of land on either side of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, as well as the islands in the Sea of Marmara between these two straits, would belong to Russia; one of the conditions of the exchange was that British and French ships could freely pass through the straits. With the victory of Russia's October socialist revolution in 1917, [Vladimir Ilyich] Lenin announced the abrogation of this secret treaty.

At the straits' narrowest place, their width is only half a mile, turning them into the waterway that is the busiest and hardest to sail through in the world. Around 50,000 ships pass through the Black Sea straits each year, of which close to 5,500 are oil tankers; the flow of petroleum through the Bosphorus strait each day is about 3.1 million barrels, basically all of which flows south. This is primarily crude oil; refined petroleum makes up several hundred barrels, and the target places of the petroleum exports are primarily Western Europe and Southern Europe. The largest class of oil tankers passing through the Bosphorus strait is the Suezmax class of oil tankers, which carry 120,000 to 200,000 tons. The Black Sea and the Baltic Sea ports were the main routes for the Soviet Union's exports of petroleum; after part of the petroleum exported from the Caspian Sea region to the West arrived at the Black Sea, it went to the Mediterranean and the world markets through the Bosphorus strait. Currently, the Black Sea is still where the biggest export of Russia's petroleum output is.

II. The US and Soviet camps give tit for tat in struggling to control the straits...247

Given that the Black Sea straits are important strategic key points in the world, the multinational struggle over them has involved the interests of the major nations. Centered around control over

the Black Sea straits, the major nations have engaged in a number of games, either to form alliances or to struggle over [the straits], and to a certain extent, this has affected the evolution and development of the world's strategic setup. During the Cold War period, the Black Sea straits again became a battlefield on which the two ideologically opposed camps competed. From the 1920s to the 1940s, the major nations' competition in the Black Sea straits was a miniature of their struggles in the Middle East, and it reflected the course of evolution in the Middle East situation during the thirty years around the Second World War. On 10 August 1920, the Triple Entente held a peace conference in France's Versailles in order to handle the Turkey issue. The conference's peace treaty stipulated a number of items, such as opening the Black Sea straits and placing the straits under the supervision of an international commission with the United Kingdom at its head. The signing of the *Treaty of Sèvres* symbolized that the Ottoman Empire, which had dominated the fate of the Middle East, had retired from the historical stage of great-nation struggles and that an intense British and French struggle with the Soviet Union to dominate the Black Sea straits had been launched. On 16 March 1921, the Soviet Union and Turkey signed the *Friendship Treaty [of Brotherhood]* in Moscow, and the new Government of Turkey tipped toward the Soviet Union; this left the positions of the United Kingdom and France uneasy, and they were forced to rescind the *Treaty of Sèvres* in November 1922 at the Conference of Lausanne. On 23 July 1923, they signed the *Treaty of Lausanne* and the *Straits Convention*. The treaty allowed Turkey to gain the integrity of its own country and its national independence. As regards the straits issue, Turkey was intent on regaining sovereignty over the straits, and it was also forced by intense pressure from the West to make concessions that were not favorable to the Soviet Union. These stipulated that all ships would have the freedom of transiting the straits, that the straits would not be fortified, and that a Straits Commission made up of the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Italy, Greece, and Turkey would manage [the straits]; if necessary, the Powers could dispatch troops to occupy [the straits]. The handling of the straits issue in the *Treaty of Lausanne* dug hidden dangers for future British and French conflicts with the Soviet Union. It severely damaged the Soviet Union's strategic and economic interests in the Black Sea straits, because seventy percent of Soviet exports of cereals had to pass through the Black Sea straits. Moreover, the British and French naval strengths' freedom to enter the Black Sea turned the Black Sea into their inland waters, severely threatening the security of the Soviet Union's belly, and it cut off the Soviet Union's route for expansion into the southern part of the Middle East region. Therefore, this treaty came under intense opposition from the Soviet Union.

It can be seen from this that at the end of the 1920s, the United Kingdom's struggle with the Soviet Union in the Black Sea straits was primarily manifested as a battle between control and countering control and between northwards and southwards. Because the Soviet Union was a traditional great land nation, its power was slightly less than that of the United Kingdom, which is a traditional great maritime nation, and the fight to dominate the straits was mainly manifested between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union; although there was also infighting among the Western powers over the issue of leadership, especially between the United Kingdom and France, their positions opposing the Soviet Union were identical, and therefore the two countries joined hands in managing the Soviet Union. At the Potsdam Conference that was held in July 1945, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union discussed the issue of managing the

Black Sea straits. Using as an excuse the fact that Turkey had permitted German and Italian warships to enter the Black Sea, the Soviet Union strongly advocated weakening Turkey's right to manage the straits, and it demanded the establishment of a military base on the straits; in order to gain control over the strait, the Soviet Union unilaterally announced that it was abrogating the *Turco-Soviet Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression* that had been signed in December 1925. At the same time, it also made four demands, which were that the Kars and Ardahan regions in Turkey's east be handed over to the Soviet Union; that the Soviet Union be permitted to participate in monitoring and managing the straits region and that the Soviet Union have the right to establish a naval base in the straits region; that articles in the *Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits* involving straits navigation and management be revised; and that Turkey should adjust its border with Bulgaria. Turkey believed that every one of these demands seriously harmed Turkey's rights, and it resolutely rejected them; at this point, Turkish-Soviet relations rapidly worsened. At the same time as this, the Soviet Union also used military exercises as an excuse to concentrate heavy troops along the Soviet-Turkish border in an attempt to force Turkey to submit. The Soviet Union's adventurous actions not only left countries like the United States and the United Kingdom very disturbed, believing that that this was a Soviet attempt to control Turkey and to create conditions for its expansion toward the Middle East, and they therefore dispatched fleets to the eastern Mediterranean in order to support Turkey. However, it also caused Turkey to make a major strategic choice in its international relations, that is, it became totally oriented toward the West, and it became an important member for subsequently containing the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. That is, it achieved the goal of "containing the most dangerous and most threatening power through drawing support from the strengths of other powers."³¹⁶ From this, the United States and the Soviet Union, which were ideologically opposed, launched a Cold War of containment and counter-containment (or blockade and counter-blockade) in the Black Sea straits of the Middle East that lasted more than forty years.

III. Issues that have been left over from history involving the Black Sea straits...249

The issue of the navigational system in the Black Sea straits is one of the issues that was disputed the most and that lasted the longest time in early modern international relations. The essence of the "straits issue" {*haixia wenti*}³¹⁷ in early modern times was that the major nations (primarily referring to the United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, France, and Austria) imposed the principle of closing or opening the straits on the owner of the straits – the daily declining Austrian Empire {*aodili diguo*}³¹⁸ – in keeping with their own interests and demands and depending on their own actual strength. The issue of opening or closing the straits was determined by the powers, in accordance with their own interests.

The first was the extension and limitation of the effects of the *Montreux Convention*. In 1936, the signatory states to the *Treaty of Lausanne* signed a new straits convention in Montreux, that is,

³¹⁶ Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece*, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 6-7.

³¹⁷ The international debates that arose from the issue of a navigational system for the Black Sea straits were usually called the "Black Sea straits issue," or were abbreviated as the "straits issue."

³¹⁸ Translator's note: From the context, this should be the Ottoman Empire.

the *Montreux Convention*; this convention is today still the basis in international law for the navigational system of the Black Sea straits. This convention abolished the stipulation that the straits were a non-military region, and it totally restored sovereignty over the straits to Turkey. The convention made stipulations regarding the rules of passage in peacetime and wartime; at the same time, it made provisions for when Black Sea coastal countries and non-Black Sea coastal countries would transit the straits. For example, in peacetime, Black Sea countries had the right to send warships or submarines through the straits (these would have to float on the surface), but non-Black Sea coastal countries were limited to only sending “light surface ships” (with displacement not exceeding 10,000 tons, and with the caliber of their artillery not exceeding eight inches (203 millimeters), through the straits. Moreover, [the non-Black Sea coastal countries] would need to pass through the straits in the daytime and not remain in the Black Sea over twenty-one days; to a certain extent, this kept the major nations from arbitrarily entering and exiting the Black Sea straits. Because Russia is a Black Sea coastal country, the restraints on it are relatively small. In the Cold War period, ships from the Soviet Union’s Black Sea Fleet regularly entered the Mediterranean through the straits, while US ships once in a while also needed to enter the Black Sea straits in order to cruise. Upon entering the 21st century, as the struggle between the world’s sea powers over the Middle East intensified, the Black Sea straits still have an important strategic status. The rules of the *Montreux Convention* still affect today’s world; differing countries have differing interpretations about the Convention in the area of using the Black Sea straits, but the age when maritime hegemony forced their own will on other countries has already gone and will not return.

The second was the issue of the fees for transiting the straits. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the amount of petroleum that has exited the Bosphorus strait has continually grown, and the considerations that the various parties have been giving to the issue where exports of Caspian Sea petroleum exceed the amount of petroleum transportation that the strait can bear, has been constantly growing. What Turkey is concerned over is the severity of the impact that the continual increase in large-scale oil tankers (160,000 – 319,999 tons) will bring about for the security and environment of the Bosphorus strait. Although Turkey has demanded getting relevant rights of collection and management, because of security and environmental factors, still, based on the 1936 Montreux Conference, trade voyages in peacetime have the right to freely sail through the Bosphorus strait. In October 2002, Turkey introduced new restrictive stipulations for delaying oil tankers’ passage through the strait, including the prohibition of nighttime passage of oil tankers whose length exceeds 200 meters; this in reality includes all crude oil tankers and most refined oil tankers. In the winter season that has passed, bad weather conditions also led to delays in the passage of oil tankers; there are reports that the maximum delays in oil tankers transiting the Bosphorus strait could reach twenty days, and that the costs of every day’s delay and anchorage could reach \$50,000.

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CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHINA'S SECURITY...251

Although geography is not a decisive factor, it forms conditions. It provides humanity with possibilities. The only freedom people have is to use these possibilities in a good or bad manner, in order to make them better or make them worse.

- Niu Xianzhong

China is a major continental nation, as well as a major maritime nation, with about three million square kilometers of “ocean territory” {*haiyang guotu*}, 18,000 kilometers of coastline, and more than 6,500 coastal islands; this has determined China's status as a major maritime nation in the world. In the more than thirty years since reform and opening up, as China has rapidly developed and its overall actual strength has greatly increased, the world's sea powers' strategic hostility and containment against the PRC have continually deepened and become ever more severe. At the same time, following the rapid growth of China's economy and the increase of its foreign trade, [China] has become increasingly reliant on the security of maritime strategic accesses. Maritime strategic accesses have become the focus of struggles among the major nations over interests and have also become a chip by which some relevant countries in the Asia-Pacific region balance and restrain the PRC. Therefore, maritime strategic accesses are increasingly becoming an important factor that affects China's security and development.

SECTION 1: THE STATUS AND ROLE OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES IN THE COURSE OF CHINA'S PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT...251

Currently, looking at the overall nature of China's strategy and the long-term nature of the development of its maritime interests, the PRC's maritime strategic accesses are primarily distributed in three maritime regions: the western Pacific, the South Pacific, and the northern Indian Ocean; speaking specifically, they are the maritime accesses for passing from the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea into the western Pacific and into the eastern Indian Ocean. They are maritime strategic accesses in a typical sense, and they have clear strategic value. As the PRC's maritime interests continually develop in the future, maritime accesses in the eastern part of the Pacific, in the western part of the Indian Ocean, and even in part of the sea areas of the Atlantic could all become the PRC's important maritime strategic accesses, and they could all have quite important strategic significance for the PRC's national security, its economic development, and its military security.

I. Maritime strategic accesses are the front gates to China's security interests...252

Upon entering the 21st century, as confrontations over maritime rights and interests further intensify, the environment for the PRC's maritime security strategy will become increasingly grim and complex, and threats coming from the sea direction will become ever more prominent. The uncertainty of the Taiwan issue, the complexity of the South China Sea issue, and the seriousness

of the Diaoyu Islands³¹⁹ issue will add to the possibility that local conflicts will erupt among relevant countries and regions. Therefore, doing a thorough job of protecting the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses will not only affect the maritime "border security" {*bianjie anquan*} of the PRC but it will also affect the continual expansion of the PRC's maritime "borders of security." Looking at things from a geopolitical angle, China's sea region is a sea region that is half open and half closed; China's accesses to the ocean are blocked by a circular island chain. To a certain degree, [China] is controlled by others, and in wartime, it quite possibly could be cut off in the middle by an enemy.³²⁰ As soon as a crisis or war erupts, it is entirely possible that sea powers will block the Ryukyu Islands waterway to China's north and engage in harassment and blockades against the maritime strategic accesses in [China's] center and south, such as the Sembawan Strait, the Straits of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, and the Lombok Strait, thus threatening the PRC's right of navigation in maritime strategic accesses. If China does not have influence on maritime strategic accesses, not only will this place its demands to protect its maritime sovereignty and basic rights and interests in a quite disadvantageous position but even more, it will affect whether China is able in the future to ensure that its accesses to foreign trade and energy are unhindered; at the same time, it will also affect whether [China] will gain or lose international space for the development of its eastern regions, where the economy and population are concentrated, as well as its strategic depths. Therefore, the security of maritime strategic accesses has a major strategic significance for China's protection of its national security.

II. Maritime strategic accesses are an important guarantee for the sustainable development of China's economy...253

With the continual deepening of the PRC's opening to the outside, the PRC's economy has highlighted a development setup of "putting both ends of the production process on the world market," that is, important resources and markets will both be overseas. About ninety percent of the transportation volume of the PRC's foreign trade goes through maritime accesses, and the primary maritime routes have become the main conduits of the PRC's foreign economic contacts. Currently, China has established trade relationships with 228 countries and regions, and it has become the second largest trading nation on the globe, second only to the United States. Growth in foreign trade has grown at a rate three times as fast as [China's] GDP, and its dependence on foreign trade has surpassed sixty percent, high in the forefront of the world's major nations. According to statistics, China's dependence on foreign trade in 1991 was only 33.4 percent, but in 2010, it reached 60 percent, much higher than other countries' dependence on the outside. Looking at total economic output, foreign trade and foreign investment's contributions to economic growth were more than twenty percent, becoming one of the major engines in economic growth. At the same time, the PRC opened more than thirty high-seas transportation routes, with accesses to over 1,200 ports in more than 150 countries and regions in the world. Its high-seas fleet is the fifth-largest in the world, and its container exports are number one in the world. At the same time as this, the PRC's overseas strategic assets, such as overseas investments, overseas markets, overseas

³¹⁹ Translator's note: The Chinese name for the Senkakus.

³²⁰ Liu Yijian, "China's Future Building of Its Navy, and Its Naval Strategy," *Strategy and Management*, Issue 5, 1999.

resource bases, and labor exports, have greatly grown. Currently, the PRC has close to 10,000 [firms] investing overseas, it has almost \$200 billion in funds, and there are around 10 million Chinese overseas.

China's Foreign Trade and its Dependence on Trade (Unit: \$1 Billion)³²¹

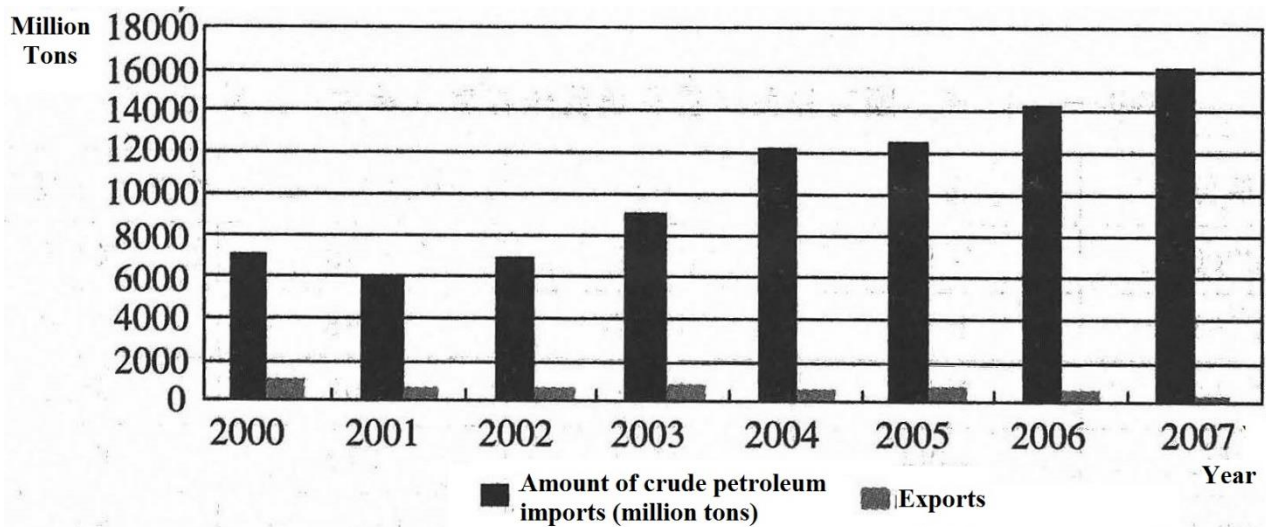
Year	Exports	Imports	Total Amount of Imports and Exports	Dependence on Foreign Trade (%)
2000	2492	2251	4743	43.9
2001	2662	2346	5098	44.0
2002	3256	2952	6208	50.2
2003	4383	4128	8512	60.4
2004	5933	5613	11547	69.9
2005	7620	6601	14221	63.9
2006	9690	7920	17620	65
2007	12180	9558	21738	66.2
2008	14285.5	11330.8	25616.3	60.2

In addition, the contradictions in the PRC's energy supply and demand relationship have become increasingly prominent. Energy is an important strategic resource for a country's military security and economic development, and it is a material driving force promoting social and economic development. An extremely close relationship exists between a country's economic development and its energy needs; the more advanced an economy is, the greater its need for energy. In the energy structure of today's world, petroleum is the most important form of energy; the rapid growth of energy trade conforms to the continually expanding needs that rapid economic development has for energy. From 1980 to 2005, the total amount of China's energy trade imports and exports increased 10.57 times, and the average annual growth rate was 42.28 percent; in particular, the total amount of energy import trade grew 102.26 times.³²² The sharp growth in the amount of energy import trade reflects that under conditions in which ever since the 1980s, domestic energy production and supply capabilities have found it difficult to satisfy rapid economic growth, all that the ever-expanding needs for energy has been able to rely on is imports; in particular, this is even more so for petroleum conditions.

³²¹ *Annual Yearbook of China's Foreign Economic Relations and Trade*, China Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Press, 2000-2008.

³²² Gao Jianliang, "Energy Trade and China's Energy Security," *Science, Technology, and Industry*, 2008, Issue 1, p. 93.

The Amount of China's Crude Oil Imports and Exports, 2000-2007³²³



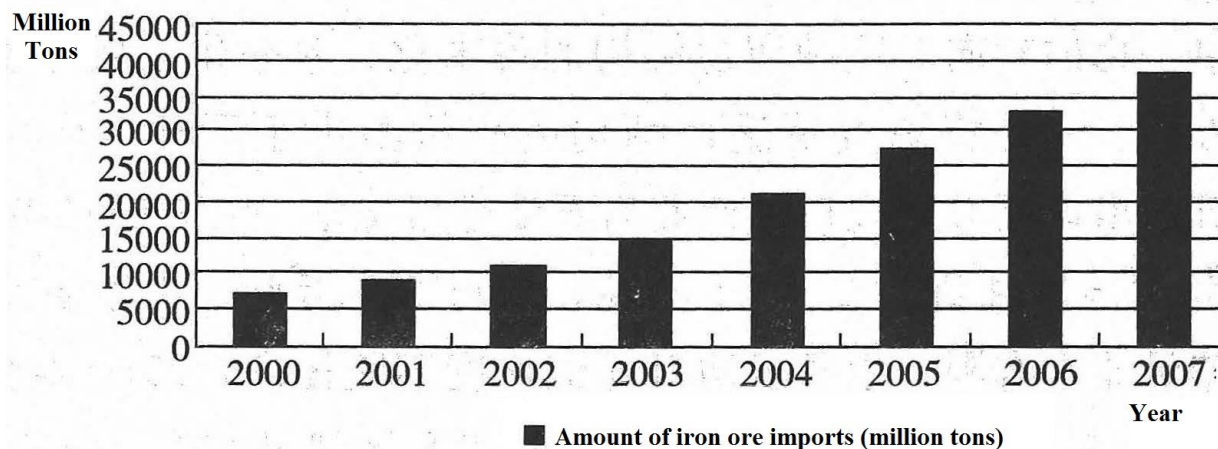
At the same time that large amounts of energy were being imported, the structure of energy trade was also displaying a trend toward becoming ever more highly centralized and simplified. The centralization and simplification of this trade structure were primarily exhibited in two areas. The first was that the structure of energy trade imports was becoming more and more centered on petroleum. Prior to 1992, [China] still exported more petroleum than it imported, but after this, petroleum imports rapidly grow, greatly outstripping exports, so that in 2010, the PRC imported 239.31 million tons of crude oil and exported 3.03 million. Because its own petroleum reserves are extremely limited, China's reliance on foreign petroleum is constantly rising, and it relied on it for 53.7 percent [of China's needs] in 2010. It is estimated that in 2012, it will rely on imports for more than fifty-five percent of its petroleum; in 2020, it will rely on imports for more than seventy percent of its petroleum; and in 2030, this will be eighty-two percent, exceeding the United States' current levels of imports. (The United States' current imports of petroleum make up fifty-eight percent of total petroleum consumption.) The second [area] is that the regional structure of energy trade is becoming increasingly centralized. Currently, China's crude oil imports mainly come from the Middle East, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, which respectively make up 52 percent, 23.5 percent, and 14 percent of its total imports, with 6.5 percent from others. Imports of petroleum from the Middle East region make up almost half of China's total imports of petroleum, and great degree of centralization in China's energy trade structure shows that the risks in China's energy imports are constantly growing. At the beginning of 2011, the Middle East situation was intensely turbulent. [Hosni] Mubarak, who had ruled Egypt for thirty years, fell; large-scale civil unrest erupted in Yemen and Syria; and Libya, which had the largest petroleum reserves in Africa, came under military attacks that NATO launched in the name of humanitarianism. China withdrew 36,000 personnel of various types from Libya, and its petroleum imports were also affected.

Apart from petroleum, imports of iron ore also have increased each year. During the ten years from 1997 to 2006, China's imports of iron ore rose from 55 million tons to 326 million tons, an

³²³ 2007 Report on the Development of Chinese Shipping, China Communications Press, August 2008, p. 16.

increase of almost five times. Starting in 2000, the PRC's imports of iron ore greatly rose, at a speed of over twenty-five percent. According to customs statistics, the PRC imported 383 million tons of iron ore in 2007;³²⁴ its imports made up largely thirty-three percent of the world's [iron ore imports]. In 2008, [even] under conditions of the global financial crisis, the PRC's iron ore imports still reached 440 million tons.³²⁵ 2010 imports reached a record of 618.6 million tons.

China's Iron Ore Imports, 2000-2007³²⁶



It can be seen from this that looking at things from the angle of resources and supplies, as soon as the overseas supply chain is blocked or cut off, there will be no way to maintain the normal development of the PRC's economy. These all show that whether maritime strategic accesses are unimpeded or not directly affects the success or failure of the sustainable development of China's economy.

III. The degree to which maritime strategic accesses are secure is an important indication of the rise in China's great-power status...256

Most of the world's powers, both today and historically, have been sea powers, and they have possessed great sea power and strong navies. It can be said that whether it is possible or not to use and control maritime strategic accesses in an effective manner is one of the important symbols for measuring a country's influence internationally and its right to speak and participate in international affairs.

Ever since reform and opening up, China's national power and its international influence have been greatly enhanced; China's great-power status and great-power role have also attracted more and more attention from the international community. Great nations should have fairly widespread overseas political, economic, and strategic interests, and they should have sufficient overall

³²⁴ The Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China, *2007 Report on the Development of Chinese Shipping*, China Communications Press, August 2008, p. 16.

³²⁵ <http://finance.huanqiu.com/roll/2009-02/370997.html>.

³²⁶ *2007 Report on the Development of Chinese Shipping*, China Communications Press, August 2008, p. 17.

national strength in order to be able to uphold these interests in an effective manner in peacetime and to be able to defend the great nation's joint strengths {*lianhe lilian*} in at least two regions in wartime. Great nations also should have recognized rights to participate in handling all major international issues within their own region; they should have power and should participate in a widespread manner in international matters on a regional or worldwide scope, and should have sufficient coordination and cooperation with other major nations in regard to these matters.³²⁷ By protecting the security of maritime strategic accesses in an effective manner, it is possible to indirectly raise China's great-power status. At the same time, it is also possible to indirectly increase China's actual military and economic power [by protecting these], thereby strengthening China's overall national power and achieving the goal of raising its great-power status. In the past, because of the impact and limitations of many factors, such as relatively weak overall actual national strength and actual maritime military strength, when the PRC's overseas interests were injured, the PRC mostly could only rely on diplomatic means to resolve these. This to a certain extent created a fairly weak image wherein the PRC lacked the ability to handle overseas incidents where its interests had been harmed, such as the 1993 *Yinhe* incident [where the United States detained a Chinese ship that it mistakenly accused of carrying chemical weapons to Iran]. Therefore, only by actively participating in the protection of the security of maritime strategic accesses and by showing that the PRC had the ability and actual power to uphold its overseas interests, is it possible to develop and enhance in a certain sense the PRC's overall national strength, to expand the PRC's international influence, and to help establish the PRC's international image. At the end of 2008, in order to ensure a peaceful environment on the world's oceans and at the same time to protect the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses, the PRC decided, based on the needs of its national interests and on relevant stipulations of international law, to dispatch the navy's high-seas escort formation to the waters of Somalia in order to attack pirate activities; this strategic measure not only formed a major breakthrough in Western powers' blockade and constraints against the PRC's maritime strengths but it also highlighted and displayed the PRC's ability to act in the area of protecting maritime strategic accesses, and it had a profound influence on maintaining the peace and stability of the world's oceans, on carrying out the PRC's responsibilities as a major nation, and on enhancing the nation's status and image.

SECTION 2: THE DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES THAT ARE RELATED TO CHINA'S INTERESTS...257

In regard to China, the distribution of neighboring or relevant maritime strategic accesses is both concentrated and dispersed, [these accesses] are both close by and distant, and they have their unique characteristics.

I. The distribution of major maritime routes that are related to China's interests...257

Maritime strategic accesses are the chokeholds of sea routes; in order to get a clear grasp on the distribution of maritime strategic accesses, we should first understand the situation of sea routes. With China's constant development of an export-oriented economy, China's sea transport routes

³²⁷ Shi Yinhong, "Considerations on China's Great-Power Status and its Image," *International Economic Review*, 1999, Issues 9-10, pp. 43-44.

have extended throughout the world's various oceans and have passed through some important chokeholds and thoroughfares. In accordance with their geographical distribution, the PRC's sea routes can be divided into [the following] four major directions.

1. The northern routes

These primarily pass from China's ports north, through the Korea Strait and into the Sea of Japan, reaching North Korea and South Korea, or they go north from the Korea Strait, pass through the Sea of Japan, and reach Russian and other ports. They are the closest and most important routes for external trade that the PRC has for trade contacts with these countries, and they carry about twenty-five percent of China's trade with the outside. As the global climate changes, the speed at which sea ice is melting in the Arctic Ocean has accelerated. Some experts predict that by around 2040, the Arctic Ocean could become a summer route; at that time, the PRC's routes to Europe through this could be forty percent shorter than [the routes] going through the Indian Ocean, and this also could reduce reliance on the Straits of Malacca and other important chokehold waterways. Therefore, the prospects for the northern routes are quite broad.

2. The eastern routes

These primarily go east from China's coastal ports to Japan, or they pass through the Japanese islands waterways east to cross the Pacific and reach the western shores of North America and South America, or they pass through the Panama Canal to the Caribbean region and the various ports along the eastern seaboard of North America and Latin America. Because the two main trading partners for China's foreign trade, the United States and Japan, are both located along these routes, and because the PRC's friendly activities and economic contacts with the various countries of North America and Latin America are tending to become frequent, this group of routes is the routes along which the PRC has its largest amounts of freight and trade, and they also are one of the most active routes in the world. The main routes consist [of the following].

The northern Pacific route. This refers to the route that passes Japan and the Aleutian islands to reach the west coast of the United States, Canada, and Central America. It is the shortest line for crossing the Pacific, with a range of 4,200 to 4,500 nautical miles. This is the main route for China's trade with North America, making up about sixteen percent of China's foreign trade. Similarly, the northern route is not only an important transportation route for Japanese industry and foodstuffs but it is also an important US military route. Through this route, Japan delivers finished industrial products like steel and machinery to the United States and Canada, and it imports raw materials like cotton and foodstuffs as well as strategic materials from the United States and Canada. By means of this line, the United States also provides strategic supplies to its troops stationed in the Far East region. What the northern line lacks in sailing is islands as well as bases and ports for shelter, making it quite difficult to supply things midway.

The southern Pacific route. This is a maritime access that goes from China's coastal ports past the first island change to cross the Pacific. It goes out through the Tsugaru Strait and the Miyako Strait, it passes Guam and the Hawaiian islands to reach the United States' west coast, and it goes through the Panama Canal to reach the ports of Central and South American countries. This route has the task of carrying Chinese imports of commodities like iron ore and petroleum from Brazil and other South American countries; as China's economic and trade contacts with South American countries become closer, the amount of strategic natural resources that this route carries will further

increase. The greatest advantage of this route is the large number of islands along the route, so it is easy to supply things half-way [along the route]. Its shortcoming is that the summer temperatures are high, reducing the endurance of ships.

3. The southern routes

These primarily go south from China's various coastal ports, past Southeast Asia, Oceania, and the islands of the South Pacific. As the PRC's trade with the various countries of Southeast Asia and Oceania develops, the goods transported along this route will also continually increase in number.

The Australia and New Zealand route. This passes through the Taiwan Strait to enter the South China Sea. It goes through the Sunda Strait and the Singapore Strait, and it is the route for China's contacts with Australia and New Zealand; it is an important route along which China imports iron ore, natural gas, and ores like manganese and uranium from Australia.

The Southeast Asia route. This mainly [is used] to import materials like natural gas, petroleum, rubber, and wood from Southeast Asian countries, and it is an important PRC economic and trade route to the various Southeast Asian countries.

4. The western routes

These primarily [are used] to import petroleum from the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia, which makes up over fifty percent of China's petroleum imports, so these are important Chinese petroleum routes.

The first is a maritime strategic access from the Persian Gulf, which passes through the Strait of Hormuz, the Indian Ocean, and the Straits of Malacca to enter the South China Sea and reach China's coastal ports. This route is 5,500 to 6,500 nautical miles long, and the petroleum imported [along it] makes up seventy percent of the petroleum China imports [along the western routes].

The second goes from West Africa and Southeast Asia, around the Cape of Good Hope, and through the Indian Ocean, the Straits of Malacca, and the South China Sea to reach China's various coastal ports. This route is about 8,000 nautical miles long, and the petroleum imported [along it] makes up thirty percent of the petroleum China imports [along the western routes].

Africa (West Africa): The Cape of Good Hope – the Straits of Malacca – China's coastal ports; the Strait of Gibraltar – the Mediterranean – the Suez Canal – the Straits of Malacca – China's various coastal ports.

Africa (East Africa): The Straits of Malacca – China's coastal ports.

Africa (North Africa): The Mediterranean – the Strait of Gibraltar – the Cape of Good Hope – the Straits of Malacca – China's coastal ports.

5. The main straits and waterways for China's coastal shipping

The first is the Bohai Strait. This is a thoroughfare entering and exiting the Bohai Gulf and the Yellow Sea, and is the gate for entering Beijing and Tianjin. The Bohai Strait is an important screen for protecting the North China region by sea, and it has a quite important significance for the sustainable development of the Bohai Sea region.

The second is the Taiwan Strait. This is an important international access strait; militarily, it is the maritime gate to China's southeast coast, while economically, it is a maritime traffic node that links China's southern and northern sea regions. The normal operations of China's coastal shipping are closely tied to whether the Taiwan Strait is unhindered and secure or not. The Taiwan Strait

belongs to the sea areas under China's jurisdiction; based on the stipulations of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, foreign ships must carry out innocent passage.

The third is the Qiongzhou Strait. This is one of the three major straits of China; it is an access that links the mainland with the island of Hainan, as well as a path that the various ports along China's Guangxi coast must follow in order to get to other coastal regions. It plays the role of a hub for promoting economic and trade contacts between the Hainan special economic zone and the interior and for [promoting] the economic rise of the southwest region.

II. The distribution of maritime strategic accesses that are relevant to China's interests...260

The Bohai, Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea that China faces are all closed seas or semi-closed seas, and to enter or leave the world's oceans, it is necessary to pass through many straits and waterways. These straits and waterways have extremely important significance for China's economic development and its national defense and security. The distribution of China's maritime strategic accesses can largely be divided into two types.

1. The distribution of offshore strategic accesses that are relevant to China's interests

Looking at things geopolitically, China's sea regions have a semi-closed situation; although many places are very close to the sea, they do not have gateways to the sea. "China is a country whose maritime geography is relatively unfavorable;"³²⁸ this unfavorability is prominently manifested in how China is surrounded by the island chains of the western Pacific.³²⁹ For a number of years, the United States has consistently engaged in strategic stifling and blockades against the Soviet Union and China, centered on the island chains of the western Pacific. To use [Douglas] MacArthur's words, "Through a curved chain of islands that we and our free allies control, from the Aleutians to the Marianas, our control of this border reaches the shores of Asia. From this island chain, we can use sea and air strengths to control each Asian port, from Vladivostok to Singapore, and prevent any enemy from entering the Pacific."³³⁰ Looking at the structure of the "two island chains," they are primarily made up of islands of differing sizes as well as the sea areas, straits, and waterways between one island and another. And these straits and waterways are precisely the important accesses by which the PRC goes out to the ocean; in particular, the accesses of the first island chain are even more important for the PRC. The first island chain has more than 140 straits and waterways, but there are only twenty-odd straits and waterways that the PRC

³²⁸ Fu Kuncheng, "Methods and Problems of Delineating the Continental Shelf on China's Periphery," *Journal of the Ocean University of China*, 2004, Issue 3, p. 5.

³²⁹ The term "island chain" was first mentioned after the Second World War by the Western nations, headed by the United States, which used some special islands' strategic geographical positions in the northwest Pacific sea regions in order to stifle and blockade the socialist nations of that time, such as the Soviet Union and China. On 4 January 1951, US State Department advisor [John Foster] Dulles said, "The scope of the United States' defenses in the Pacific region should be Japan, the Kuril islands, the Japanese islands, the Ryukyus, the island of Taiwan, the Philippines islands, and the Indonesian islands in the first island chain. The second island chain goes from the Japanese archipelago through the Ogasawara islands, the Mariana islands, the Yap islands, and the Palau islands to Halmahera. The third island chain is made up of islands whose center is the Hawaiian islands. The existence of the first and second island chains turns China's Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea into typical semi-closed sea areas, and they would be the focus of China's breakthrough. Liu Zhongmin, *Certain Considerations on Strategic Issues Related to the Development of China's Maritime Rights*, Current Affairs Press, 2009, p. 182.

³³⁰ (United States) [John M.] Collins, *Grand Strategy*, Warrior Press, 1978, p. 182.

commonly uses to get beyond China's sea regions. There are primarily four directions for getting through the island chain.

The first goes north through the Tsushima Strait, the Sea of Japan, Tsugaru Strait, and the Soya Strait. The second passes through the Ryukyus, using such waterways as Miyako in order to enter the Pacific to the east. The third enters the Pacific east through the Sembawan Strait. The fourth enters the Indian Ocean from the South China Sea through the Mindoro Strait and the Ba-la-ma-ke³³¹ Strait south of the Philippines, or through the Sulu Sea, the Sulawesi Sea, and the Molucca Sea and then through Malacca to enter the Indian Ocean. It can also go through the Lombok Strait, the Sunda Strait, and the Strait of Makassar to detour and return to the Pacific. At the same time, although the Taiwan Strait is not a necessary component part of these international routes, it still is an indispensable coastal strategic access for China. The important straits and waterways in the island chains are important chokeholds by which China enters and exits the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and they affect China's survival and development. Currently, there primarily are eight offshore strategic accesses that are relevant to China's interests.

³³¹ Translator's note: Based on the context, this is probably a typo for the Balabac Strait.

Distributions of Offshore Strategic Accesses that are Relevant to China's Interests

Name	Geographical Location	The sea areas that are connected	Width (in Nautical Miles)	Depth (in Meters)
Korea Strait	Between the Korean peninsula and Japan	The Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan	180	50-150
Osumi Strait	Between Japan's Honshu Island and the Ryukyus	The East China Sea and the Pacific	15	80-200
Miyako Strait	Between Okinawa in Japan's Ryukyus and Miyako Island	The East China Sea and the Pacific	145	500-1500
Taiwan Strait	Between China's Fujian Province and Taiwan Province	The East China Sea and the South China Sea	130-230	40-1680
The several [parts of the] Bashi Channel	Between Taiwan's Taiwan Island and the Philippines	The South China Sea and the Pacific	210	1000-3000
Sunda Strait	Between Sumatra and Java	The Java Sea and the Indian Ocean	26-110	70-1759
Strait of Makassar	Between Kalimantan [on Borneo] and Sulawesi Island	The Celebes Sea and the Java Sea	120-398	1000
Straits of Malacca	Between the Malay peninsula and Sumatra	The South China Sea and the Indian Ocean	37-370	25-113

Data source: Compiled by author

(1) The Korea Strait. This access is situated between the southeastern part of the Korean peninsula and Japan's Kyushu Island and Honshu Island. It connects the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea. It is a shortcut going from Japan to the Korean peninsula. This strait runs northeast and southwest, it is about 300 kilometers long and about 180 kilometers wide, and its average depth is 50 to 150 meters.³³² North Korea's³³³ Geoje Island, South Korea's Jeju Island, and Japan's Tsushima Island, Iki Island, and Fukuoka Island are key points that control the strait. Tsushima Island divides the strait into a western and eastern waterway; the western waterway is still called the Korea Strait. Fukuoka Island, which is situated in the center part of the eastern waterway, also divides this waterway into two parts, and the waters between Tsushima

³³² *Chinese Military Encyclopedia - Volume on World Military Geography*, Military Science Publishing House, 1994, p. 26.

³³³ Translator's note: This should be South Korea.

Island and Fukuoka Island are called the Tsushima Strait, with a width of about forty-six kilometers. Tsushima Island is located in the center of the Korea Strait and is a key military point for Japan's control of the strait; it is known as "Japan's first line of defense." The Korea Strait is a maritime shortcut that connects the Japanese islands with the Asian mainland and is the only access that connects the Sea of Japan with the East China Sea; it also is a maritime traffic hub for the Northeast Asian region. Historically, the Korea Strait has often become a key point for military struggles. In the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War, the fleets of the two sides fought fiercely on the seas close to this strait; the Russian fleet was almost entirely destroyed, and this became a famous battle in the history of naval warfare. During the Second World War, the US military treated the Korea Strait as one of the key points for a blockade. During the Korean War, the strait was an important waterway by which the US military obtained logistics support. There are a great many naval and air force bases on the two shores of the strait, and the ports and bases on the two shores of the strait have an important role in controlling and blockading the strait. The Korea Strait has an important place in Northeast Asian geopolitics; "Whoever controls the Korea Strait controls the gates to Northeast Asia."

The Korea Strait has a very great impact on China; it is the only access by which China enters the Sea of Japan from the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea. Compared to the South China Sea accesses, this volume of traffic on this route is not considered very big, and it has historically always been an international access; the route is extremely broad, and it is fairly easy and safe for ships to pass through.

(2) The Osumi Strait. This is situated between the southern tip of Japan's Kyushu Island and the Osumi peninsula; it is the northernmost waterway in the Ryukyus. It goes from east to west, and is about seventy-two kilometers long. It is thirty-three kilometers wide and at its narrowest point, between Cape Sata and Takeshima Island, it is about twenty-eight kilometers wide. The strait is 80 to 200 meters deep. The Osumi Strait connects on the west with the East China Sea, and to the east with the Pacific; it is an important access by which the Yellow Sea, the Bohai Sea, the East China Sea, and the various ports along the coast of the Korean Peninsula go east to the Pacific, and it is also a path that must be followed from China east to the Pacific. The freight traffic along the Osumi Strait route is extremely large; Chinese and American trade makes up twenty-five percent of the total amount of traffic along this route, and there are not only PRC freighters but also foreign freighters. The basic direction of the route goes from the East China Sea into the Pacific and then to North America. The routes going from Shanghai, Ningbo, and other East China Sea ports and even from Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Hong Kong, and other South China Sea ports to the United States and Canada are over 1,000 kilometers shorter than other routes. The strait is about 500 nautical miles from Japan's Yokosuka Naval Base to the east and about 170 nautical miles from the Sasebo military port to the north. It is currently a route that the United States' 7th Fleet commonly uses, as well as an important route by which the Chinese navy enters the Pacific. The strait's route is clean and without obstacles, and is easy for various types of ships to sail through; submarines also can pass through underwater. The water depth is appropriate, the current is not big, and it is possible to lay moored mines. The important harbors that the strait is close to are Lu-er Port and Nishinoomote, which can provide various types of ships with anchorage; they are important strongholds for choking and controlling the strait.

(3) Miyako Strait. This is a maritime access that is situated between Okinawa in the south-central part of the Ryukyus and Miyako Island; it connects the East China Sea and the Pacific, its surface is fairly broad – about 145 nautical miles – and it is 500 to 1,500 meters deep. It is the broadest strait among the Ryukyus straits, and sailing conditions are fairly good. After the Second World War, the US military built large military installations on the island; there is Kadena Air Base, a naval base in Nakagusuku Bay in Kin Wan Bay, and missile bases and radar bases in many places. It has become a forward base for the US military's strategic air force and the 7th Fleet. Miyako Strait is close to Okinawa, and the US 7th Fleet frequently passes through there. The PRC's Diaoyu Islands and their nearby islands also are scattered near this access, and the Japanese navy carries out patrols and warnings each year in this sea region, driving away ships that are close to these islands; it has never abandoned its intentions to occupy the islands. For the PRC, the Miyako Strait has a very great impact on the PRC, and PRC [ships] regularly pass through the Miyako Strait to cross the South Pacific to get to countries like Australia or to cross the Pacific to get to places like Central America and South America; it not only is an important commercial and trade access, but it is also a major military strategic access, and so it has major economic and military value.

(4) The Taiwan Strait. This is situated between Taiwan Province and Fujian Province; it is about 380 kilometers long from the south to the north, approximately 130 to 230 kilometers wide, and with a depth of 40 to 1,680 meters.³³⁴ The Taiwan Strait is 75 to 220 nautical miles from Fujian Province's coast to the west, about 335 nautical miles from Okinawa to the east, and only 80 nautical miles from the northernmost tip of the Philippines, Mavulis Island. The Taiwan Strait is a shipping hub between the East China Sea and the South China Sea, as well as an important international maritime route going south from the Northeast Asia region toward regions like South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Oceania, so its strategic status is quite important. The Taiwan Strait has major strategic value for the PRC's sovereign rights and interests, as well as its politics, economics, and military matters. Economically, the Taiwan Strait is an important access for the PRC's north-south transportation; three accesses of the PRC's four main trade accesses pass through the Taiwan Strait, and bulk cargo that the southern region needs, like coal and petroleum, must be shunted by sea and transported south {*nan yun*}. Militarily, the Taiwan Strait also is a key strategic point for protecting the PRC's southeast coastal regions. In China's recent history, foreign invaders entering the Chinese mainland and Taiwan have all first controlled the Taiwan Strait. During the Korean War, the US 7th Fleet intruded into the Taiwan Strait in June 1950 to carry out patrols, and it was not until November 1969 that it stopped these. The PRC began to regularly navigate the Taiwan Strait in May 1979. At the same time, the Taiwan Strait also is an important international route for countries like the United States, Russia, Japan, and South Korea, and there can be more than 100 merchant ships going to and fro each day. For example, eighty percent of the crude oil that Japan imports and forty percent of its raw materials must pass through the Taiwan Strait; this is also an important reason that Japan frequently surreptitiously involves itself in the PRC's Taiwan issue.

³³⁴ General Staff Department Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, preparers, *Collection of World Maps*, Star Map Press, 2006, p. 44.

Currently, because the Taiwan issue has not yet been resolved, China's maritime rights and interests face a severe challenge, and it cannot ensure the security of its territory, coastline, and territorial waters. It cannot protect and control all of its exclusive economic zone in an effective manner. It cannot absolutely control the Taiwan Strait. [Finally,] it cannot indirectly control some important offshore sea regions that have a close connection to China's interests. It can be said that Taiwan Island is an important link for China to smash the first island chain blockade and to move toward the Pacific.³³⁵

(5) The Bashi Channel. Situated between the southern end of Taiwan and the Philippines, with a north-south width of about 210 nautical miles, this is an important access that links the South China Sea with the Philippine Sea. It is divided by Bataan Island and the Babuyan Islands into three waterways: the Bashi Channel, the Balintang Channel, and the Babuyan Channel. Because the Bashi Channel is the broadest, deepest, and most important, these three straits are commonly called the Bashi Channel or the Sembawan Strait. The Bashi Channel and the Balintang Channel are both important international accesses, while the Babuyan Channel is an offshore route of the Philippines. They have many waterways, a broad channel, and great depth that can reach 3,000 to 5,000 meters. They are not suited for laying mines, but they are especially suited for the passage of submarines. The Bashi Channel is situated along the western Pacific international route; it is an access from Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Singapore to Hawaii and the west coasts of the United States and Canada, and in particular, it is an important access by which Japan imports petroleum and many types of raw materials from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. The strait has a major role for US activities in the western Pacific. It is a route that the US Navy's 7th Fleet commonly uses in dispatching troop strengths, as well as an important strategic access for the Russian Pacific Fleet and India's and other countries' navies to exit and enter the Pacific. Ships need to pass through this area going from Manila and Subic Bay to Yokosuka. Subic Bay, 300 nautical miles southwest of the strait, originally was an important military base for the US military, and its military position is not inferior to that of the Straits of Malacca. The Bashi Channel is extremely important to China; it is an important trade route for China, linking the South China Sea with the Pacific.

(6) The Sunda Strait. Situated between Indonesia's Sumatra and Java, this is one of the important strategic accesses from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, as well as an important chokepoint route by which the coastal countries along the northwest Pacific get to East and West Africa and bypass the Cape of Good Hope and get to Europe, so its strategic position is quite important. The strait goes from the southwest to the northeast; it is about 150 kilometers long and 26 to 110 kilometers wide, while its depth is mostly 70 to 180 meters, with the greatest depth, at the southwest mouth, up to 1,759 meters. The eastern shore of the strait is fairly straight, while the western shore is relatively curved; about ninety kilometers east of the northeast mouth is the capital Jakarta and its outer seaport, Tanjung Priok naval base. The main channel of the Sunda Strait is close to the Java side, and its navigational aids are fairly complete. On the one hand, because the strait has deep waters, and because the bottom of the strait is mostly mud, sand, rock, and shell, it is suited to the passage of large-scale ships of 200,000 tons or less and of submarines. But the

³³⁵ Liu Xinhua, "Priorities in Maritime Rights: Contemporary China's Geostrategic Choices," *Social Science*, 2008, Issue 7, p. 54.

channel that has water deeper than fifty meters is narrow and long; at its narrowest, it is only 3.3 kilometers, and so in wartime it would be easy to blockade. On the other hand, the northern part of the strait has mostly sandbars and submerged reefs. The Sunda Strait has always received a great deal of attention from the US military, and it is one of the important maritime accesses for the US Navy's 7th Fleet going between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The Sunda Strait has an important strategic value for China's economic development and especially for its sea trade, as well as for its navy's entering Oceania and the Indian Ocean for activities.

(7) The Strait of Makassar. Situated between Sulawesi and Kalimantan among the Indonesian islands, this connects to the Celebes Sea to the north and to the Java Sea and the Flores Sea to the south. It is linked to the Lombok Strait, becoming a strategic access that connects the western Pacific and the northeastern Indian Ocean, and it is also a shortcut for routes within the Southeast Asia region. The strait runs northeast and southwest and is about 740 kilometers long and 120 to 398 kilometers wide. The eastern side of the strait is a deep water channel, with a water depth of over 1,000 meters, and it is suited for sailing by large-scale ships and submarines; US and Russian nuclear-powered submarines frequently haunt this strait, and it is the most important channel by which US warships come and go to the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The western side of the strait has large shoals, extending east from the seacoast; their water depth is less than sixty meters, and they are filled with coral reefs so that passage is quite dangerous. The shorelines of the strait's two shores are curved, with many capes protruding. The coast has the Ujung Pandang naval and air bases as well as the Balikpapan air base. Most of the trade contacts that China has with Indonesia and the various countries of Oceania pass through this strait.

(8) Straits of Malacca. China has a long history of sailing in the Straits of Malacca. Early on, in the early years of the Common Era, Chinese ships had already sailed to the Straits of Malacca. From the 7th to the 13th centuries A.D., it was already a key traffic route for friendly contacts between China and the peoples of South Asia, the various Arab countries, and Africa. In 1405 to 1433, the Chinese navigator Zheng He made his seven voyages to the "western ocean;" each time, he passed through the Straits of Malacca, and afterwards he reached the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the east coast of the African continent. The Arabians also opened a route in the 4th century, from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea across the Indian Ocean, through the Straits of Malacca, to Chinese ports and Indonesia's Maluku Islands; in ancient times, this was called the "spice route." In 1869, after the opening of the Suez Canal, the "spice route" also was shared by Arabs and Europeans. By this, the route between Europe and Asia was greatly shortened, and Malacca also became even busier.

Currently, China's imports of petroleum from the Middle East and Africa primarily are transported at sea; in this, the Straits of Malacca are a path that must be followed. According to measurements and calculations, about four-fifths of China's imports of crude oil must transit the Straits of Malacca,³³⁶ which is to say that about eighty percent of China's crude oil imports relies on the [Straits of] Malacca. In addition to this, of the ships that pass through the Straits of Malacca each day, close to sixty percent are bound for China. \$100 billion worth of China's exported goods pass through the Straits of Malacca, making up one-fifth to its total year's exports, and so [the

³³⁶ Zhang Jie, "The Malacca Factor in China's Energy Security," *Studies in International Politics*, 2005, Issue 3, p. 19.

Straits of Malacca] play a decisive role in the PRC’s energy security and its development interests. However, the Straits of Malacca also face serious security threats, so that the PRC’s security support in the Straits of Malacca is extraordinarily fragile, and this has been called by experts the “Malacca dilemma.”

2. Distribution of high-seas strategic accesses that are related to China’s interests

In addition to the maritime strategic accesses in the first island chain, high-seas strategic accesses that are relevant to China are scattered over the entire globe but are primarily concentrated in the Pacific and northern Indian Ocean. Although these maritime strategic accesses are far from China, they have a direct or indirect impact on the expansion of its national interests, on its economic development, and on its national security, and so it is necessary to ensure the security and smoothness of these accesses. Currently, there are largely seven high-seas strategic accesses that are relevant to China.

Distribution of High-Seas Strategic Accesses that are Relevant to China’s Interests

Name	Geographical Location	The Sea Areas that are Connected	Width (in nautical miles)	Depth (in meters)
Strait of Hormuz	Between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman	The Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea	64-97	90-219
Bab-el-Mandeb Strait	Between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, and between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean	The Red Sea and the Arabian Sea	25-32	29-323
Suez Canal	The western side of Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula	The Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean	280-345	22.5
Panama Canal	Within the borders of Panama in Central America	The Pacific and the Atlantic	150-304	13-15
Persian Gulf	The northwestern part of the Indian Ocean	To the Arabian Sea	180-320	25
Gulf of Aden	Where the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe meet	The Red Sea and the Arabian Sea	300	2000-3000
South China Sea	Between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean	The northwestern Pacific and the northern Indian Ocean	1700	1212

Data source: Compiled by author

(1) The Strait of Hormuz. Situated between the northeastern end of the Arabian Peninsula and the southern coast of Iran, this connects the Persian Gulf with the Sea of Oman; it is the only outlet by which the Persian Gulf goes to the Indian Ocean and even each place in the entire world. For China, the Strait of Hormuz is no stranger; early on, in A.D. 97, China’s Ban Chao, an ambassador to the western regions, sent a deputy ambassador to the Gulf region. In the 5th century, Chinese

ships were sailing to the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz, and in the Tang Dynasty [618-907], [Chinese] merchant ships entered the Persian Gulf through the strait. At the same time, there were also many Arab merchant ships coming to China. In the mid-9th century, the Arab navigator Sulaiman [al-Tajir] left the strait to pay a visit [to China], and he left behind his famous *Record of Sulaiman's Journeys East*. In the 10th century, Oman's port of Sohar, along the southern side of the strait's eastern mouth, was a major trading town for the East and the West, and it was the commercial center of the Gulf region. Prior to the 13th century, the maritime silk route from China's Guangzhou to Sohar was just as famous as the land Silk Road.³³⁷ The route from Indonesia's Maluku Islands through the Straits of Malacca and the Indian Ocean to the Strait of Hormuz has been called the "spice route." In the Song Dynasty [960-1229], China's navigation industry was already quite advanced, and there were many contacts with the Persian Gulf. By the Ming Dynasty [1368-1644], these contacts were even more frequent. The most famous of them were the seven journeys south to the western ocean by the Chinese Ming Dynasty navigator Zheng He; of these, the destination of the third voyage was the Strait of Hormuz, and the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh voyages also reached this strait. Currently, [the countries] that depend the most on the Hormuz petroleum access are the East Asian countries of China, Japan, and South Korea; their yearly shipments of petroleum reach 400 million tons. This reliance is still continuing to increase, and particularly as regards China, with the rise of China's economy, the significance for China of the Strait of Hormuz will become even more prominent and important, while the risks will also become ever greater.

(2) The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, situated between the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula and the continent of Africa, is a water corridor that connects Asia, Africa, and Europe, and it is one of the important maritime key chokeholds. The total length of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait is eighteen kilometers. Its entrance has several small islands; a fairly large one of these, Perim Island, divides the strait in two. The western channel is 28 kilometers wide and 328 kilometers³³⁸ deep, and it is called the greater strait {*da xia*}; it has many submerged reefs and rapids and is not easy to navigate. The eastern channel is only 3.2 kilometer wide, with a depth of 30 meters, and is called the smaller strait {*xiao xia*}; during the age of small ships, it was the main channel for going from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. As the tonnage of ships increased, as their draft grew deeper, as the ability to resist wind and waves became stronger, and as the number of ships passing through increased, it became difficult for the smaller strait to accommodate the needs of sailing, and now the greater strait has become the main channel. Since ancient times, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait has been a major channel linking contact and transportation between the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. When the Chinese Ming Dynasty navigator Zheng He made his seventh voyage to the western sea in 1431, the fleet that he led passed through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and followed the Red Sea north, sailing to the holy land that he [as a Muslim] longed for – Mecca. Europe is China's primary great trading partner, and the vast majority of the import and export trade [with it] must pass through the Gulf of Aden – the Red Sea – the Suez Canal. There are approximately 1,400 ships that pass through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait each year, and so it has an

³³⁷ Li Bidong, Lou Xichun, and Ling Yong, *Straits*, Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, p. 99.

³³⁸ Translator's note: This is obviously a typo for "meters."

important significance for China's trade and transportation with Europe and the countries along the Mediterranean coast.

(3) The Suez Canal. Situated in the eastern part of Egypt, this is a famous international channel that links the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The canal is 190.25 kilometers long, 280 to 345 meters wide, and about 22.5 meters deep. The opening of the canal greatly shortened the route from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. The Suez Canal not only has an important significance for international trade and the world's shipping business but it also has an important strategic status militarily. Most of China's maritime trade contacts with Europe, North Africa, and the Mediterranean countries pass through this canal. It has been learned that there were a total of 16,500 ships that passed through the Suez Canal in 2005; of these, there were about 1,000 Chinese ships, and the yearly passage fees for Chinese ships were about \$160 million. Once a war breaks out or a dangerous situation appears, this canal will be a place that US, Russian, and other powers must pass through in order to carry out military deployments, to transfer troops, and to transport strategic materials.³³⁹

(4) The Panama Canal. China has a historical origin with the Panama Canal. From the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, tens of thousands of Chinese laborers participated in digging the Panama Canal and many Chinese laborers died from exhaustion and illness; thus, Chinese laborers made an indelible contribution to the opening of the Panama Canal. Starting in the 1960s, the Chinese people were consistently in solidarity with and supported the struggle of the Panamanian people to recover sovereignty over the Canal Zone. Currently, Panama and China have yet to establish relations, but trade and people-to-people contacts between Panama and China have been increasing daily. Panama is an important Chinese trade partner in Latin America; in 2005, total trade between the two sides reached \$3.17 billion, a year-on-year increase of 44.1 percent; this ranked fifth in China's trade with Latin American countries. In 1974, the first Chinese freighter passed through the Panama Canal for the first time. Currently, the United States, Japan, and China are the three countries that use the Panama Canal the most. According to data from the Panama Canal Authority, Chinese cargo containers make up sixty percent of all Panama Canal [containers]. After the Panama Canal is expanded, 300,000-ton oil tankers carrying Venezuelan crude oil being exported to China, as well as iron ore that [China] imports from South American countries, will be able to pass through the Panama Canal, and they will no longer need to cross the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean to reach China. The transportation time will be reduced from forty-five days to twenty-four days. Whether the Panama Canal is secure or not is quite important for China's economic development.

(5) The Persian Gulf. This is situated in the northwest part of the Indian Ocean; its area reaches 241,000 square kilometers, it is 180 to 320 kilometers wide, and its average depth is twenty-five meters. The Persian Gulf enjoys the reputation of being the world's "petroleum treasury," with proven petroleum reserves of 90 billion tons, making up close to two-thirds of the total amount of world petroleum. It is the region where world petroleum reserves are greatest and exports are most numerous. The various countries along the coast of the Persian Gulf, such as Iran, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, are all countries that abound in petroleum. The petroleum transported

³³⁹ Fang Yonggang and Tang Fuquan, *Great Power Competition*, Sichuan People's Publishing House, 2001, p. 257.

out of the Persian Gulf is equivalent to sixty-two percent of the world's petroleum output, making up three-quarters of Japan's consumption of petroleum, two-thirds of Western European countries' consumption of petroleum, and one-third of the United States' consumption of petroleum.³⁴⁰ A rough estimate is that there are more than 300 ships that pass through the strait each day; on average, one oil tanker enters or leaves the Gulf every fourteen minutes, and more than two million tons of petroleum are moved out each day. Because of the Persian Gulf's geographical location and its special economic nature, it has had many events ever since ancient times. Starting with the discovery of large-scale oil fields, the Persian Gulf has become the focus of struggles by Western powers. Currently, fifty percent of China's imports of petroleum come from the Persian Gulf; petroleum imports are overly concentrated in the Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean route, and this has become an important bottleneck for China's sustainable development.

(6) The Gulf of Aden. This is a maritime chokehold that connects the continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa as well as the Pacific, Indian Ocean, and Atlantic; it has been called the lifeline of world shipping, and its strategic status is quite important. The Gulf of Aden is 300 kilometers wide, with a depth of generally 2,000 to 3,000 meters. After the Suez Canal opened to navigation, the Gulf of Aden was the world's second-largest transshipment port. According to statistics, there are around 18,000 ships that pass through the Suez Canal each year; most of these must transit the Gulf of Aden, and fourteen percent of the world's shipping and trade and thirty percent of its petroleum traffic must pass through here.³⁴¹ There are more than 1,000 Chinese ships and boats that pass through the Gulf of Aden and Somali sea regions each year. Because Somali pirate activities have been rampant in recent years, the Gulf of Aden and even the entire sea region close to Somalia have become the most dangerous sea areas in the world, and the PRC has had many ships hijacked or harassed here by pirates.

(7) The South China Sea. The South China Sea is also called the South Sea. It is located between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, with a total area of more than 3.5 million square kilometers and a width of 1,700 kilometers. It is a semi-closed sea that runs from the northeast to the southwest, and its periphery is connected to six straits.³⁴² These straits not only are maritime accesses for international trade, but they also are "maritime containment points" {*haishang ezhi dian*} in military strategy, and the various straits play a greater or lesser role because of their special geographical locations and the regions and countries where they are located. Of them, the most important are the Straits of Malacca and the Taiwan Strait. The entry or exit to the South China Sea that people commonly speak of are these straits that connect to the South China Sea. Of the sixteen key chokepoint routes throughout the world that the United States declared it would control, there are three straits – the Straits of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, and the Strait of Makassar – that

³⁴⁰ Li Bidong, Lou Xichun, and Ling Yong, *Straits*, Surveying and Mapping Press, 2008, p. 95.

³⁴¹ Liu Jun, "An Analysis of the Somali Pirates Issue," *Contemporary International Relations*, 2009, Issue 1, p. 26.

³⁴² These six straits, from north to south, clockwise, are the Taiwan Strait, [which runs] north and south and which connects it to the East China Sea; the Bashi Channel, [which runs] east and west and which connects it to the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea; the Luzon Strait, [which runs] east and west and which connects it to the Philippine Sea; the Balabac Strait, [which runs] north and south and which connects it to the Sulu Sea; the Sunda Strait, [which runs] north and south and which connects it to the Java Sea; and the Straits of Malacca, [which run] east and west and which connect it to the Andaman Sea and the Indian Ocean.

are linked to the South China Sea. The South China Sea is also an important maritime route for the United States, Japan, South Korea, and other countries. At the same time, it is also an extremely important trade access for China; thirty percent of China's total foreign trade and eighty percent of its imported petroleum must be transported through this access. Although the South China Sea is within the first island chain, still, because it is more than 1,000 nautical miles away from the mainland, it has the nature of being a high seas for China.

III. Characteristics of Maritime Strategic Accesses that Are Relevant to China's Interests...272

Maritime accesses are for the world, they are public, and they are shared. Having an understanding and grasp of the characteristics of maritime strategic accesses that are relevant to China's interests has an important strategic significance for the PRC's handling and using maritime strategic accesses.

1. There are a fairly large number of them, and their geographical locations are controlled by other people

China's sea areas are in a state where they are semi-closed, and they are surrounded by two island chains; there is a limited number of straits and waterways that connect to neighboring sea areas, and most of these straits and waterways are not controlled by China. If we look at them only in terms of quantity, China should be a country that is enriched by maritime accesses, but looking at things from the angle of true and actual application, there are very few straits and waterways that can be used. For example, in the various Ryukyus straits, there are not many accesses that China can regularly use, and these are primarily concentrated in the Osumi Strait and the Miyako Strait. There are also a great many maritime accesses in the South China Sea, but again, most of them are not suited to navigation. It is possible to see that although the PRC is a great maritime nation, it still is a country that is poor in maritime accesses. In the area of using maritime accesses, the accesses that China can truly and directly control are extremely few; apart from the Taiwan Strait, other countries basically control the Korea Strait, the Osumi Strait, the Miyako waterway, the Bashi Channel, the Straits of Malacca, and others, and this has an important impact on the PRC's national security and economic development so that the PRC's entry and exit accesses are severely constrained. In particular, the PRC's routes that cross the Indian Ocean not only have checkpoints everywhere and a great many dangers,[but also] the security of [the PRC's] maritime accesses is easily controlled by other people; of these the Straits of Malacca are especially crucial for the PRC's maritime traffic. Currently, "one-third of the petroleum the PRC now needs relies on imports, but its protection of overseas petroleum traffic lines is extremely limited; the initiative mainly lies in the hands of the US Navy. This is extremely insecure for China, which is rising, because contemporary China has entrusted part of its own fate (that is, markets and resources) to the world, and this is a world that has no security guarantees."³⁴³ Currently, although the PRC's exits to the sea remain smooth, and it can also freely use maritime accesses, still, the hidden risks to security are worrisome; as soon as a crisis at sea occurs, the severe possibility exists that the PRC's exits to the sea will be blocked and that its maritime strategic accesses will be closed.

³⁴³ Zhang Wenmu, *On China's Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, p. 87.

2. Their distribution is not even, and there are very great differences in their statuses and roles

Looking at the current distribution of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses, there are very great differences in the distribution, status, and roles of northern and southern maritime strategic accesses, so the PRC's maritime strategic accesses present unique characteristics.

(1) There are few northern ones and many southern ones, and the distribution is not even. The PRC's distribution of accesses in the first island chain is not even; there are fairly few accesses north of the Taiwan Strait. The main ones in the central and northern parts of the first island chain are the Korea Strait and the Soya Strait, as well as the Osumi Strait, the Miyako waterway, and the Tokara Strait in the Ryukyus. But most of the many straits and waterways are concentrated in the southern part, such as the Straits of Malacca, the Bashi Channel, the Sunda Strait, the Makassar Strait, and the Lombok Strait; this has resulted in the distribution of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses being clearly characterized by having few in the north and many in the south. These strategic accesses in the south are a path that the PRC's maritime trade and energy transportation must follow, and they have an important strategic significance for the PRC's economic development. In its 2007 *Annual Report on Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, the United States for the first time referred to the Straits of Malacca as a dilemma: "China currently not only cannot protect its own external supplies of energy but it also cannot protect the routes of its energy supplies, including the Straits of Malacca through which about eighty percent of China's crude oil imports pass – this weak point is called the 'Malacca dilemma.'"

(2) The northern ones are close but the southern ones are far away, and the distribution is broad. Although the PRC has a great many northern and southern maritime strategic accesses, their distances from the PRC's mainland differ very much. Most of the northern and central accesses are fairly close to the PRC; for example, the Ryukyus, situated between Japan's island of Kyushu and the PRC's island of Taiwan, are only 445 to 704 kilometers from the PRC's mainland coast, and the Taiwan Strait is only 120 kilometers from the mainland at its closest. But the large number of straits and waterways in the southern part are fairly distant from the PRC; calculating them by starting from Sanya at the PRC's farthest southern tip, it is 1,900 nautical miles to the Straits of Malacca and about 4,000 kilometers to the Lombok Strait. In addition, the PRC's maritime strategic accesses are spread over a wide scope. They are primarily concentrated in the two major sea regions of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and they pass through six countries and regions from north to south. Vertically, they cross the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea; to the west, they reach passages like the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz in the western part of the Indian Ocean; and to the east, they reach accesses like the third island chain, the sea regions close to Hawaii, and the Panama Canal. Thus, the scope of their distribution is quite broad.

(3) The north is less important than the south, and their roles differ from each other. [The fact that] "the north is less important" primarily refers to the facts that there are relatively few maritime strategic accesses that the PRC's northern routes pass through, that the economic proportion of strategic transportation is fairly low, and that the amount transported along the northern maritime routes makes up only about twenty percent of the PRC's overall transportation. But [the fact that] the "the south is more important" primarily refers to the facts that maritime transportation's use rate of the southwestern maritime strategic accesses is quite high, and transportation is busy and

quite important. Fifty percent of the PRC's import and export trade and eighty percent of its imported petroleum must pass through the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea accesses, and the maritime strategic access in the northern Indian Ocean is the most crucial chokepoint in the PRC's maritime transportation.

3. Lines are long and the area is broad, and it is very difficult to ensure the security of routes

Since reform and opening up, the PRC's foreign trade imports and exports have risen year after year, and in consequence of this, there has been increasingly prosperous sea transportation. Currently, the PRC's routes in all directions not only have very long ranges and the tasks that they have undertaken are heavy, and they need to cross a great many island chains, straits, and waterways, but most of these [island chains, straits, and waterways] are controlled by other countries, and it is easy for other people to control the security of maritime accesses. Maritime accesses are both broad and long, there is a great chance that problems will appear, and this presents even more difficulties for us in upholding the security of maritime accesses. In these maritime accesses, apart from the slightly shorter routes going to the ports of the various Southeast Asian countries, the remaining maritime routes, going to Africa, Europe, and North and South America, are all quite long. For example, the distance of the voyage from the Osumi Strait at the northern tip to the Lombok Strait at the southern tip is about 6,000 kilometers, and the voyage from West Africa through the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Malacca is about 8,000 nautical miles. Over voyages as long as these, large-scale oil tankers need fifty to eighty days for a round trip, sailing continuously at normal speeds. If we take into consideration the loading of petroleum and the influence of factors like weather, the time for each round trip is even longer. The voyage from Guangzhou to London in the United Kingdom is 9,760 nautical miles, the voyage from Guangzhou to Buenos Aires is 10,920 nautical miles, and the voyage from Shanghai to Panama is 8,560 nautical miles. As a rough calculation, the voyages from China to the various places in Asia are, on average, about 3,000 nautical miles, the voyage to Africa is approximately 6,000 nautical miles, the voyage to Europe is about 9,000 nautical miles on average, the voyage to North America is about 8,000 nautical miles on average, and the voyages to South America are the longest, about 10,000 nautical miles on average. Therefore, faced with a situation where these lines are long and the area is broad, the difficulties of ensuring the security of the PRC's maritime routes have clearly increased.

4. Geopolitical factors are interwoven, and the situation of the struggle to protect rights is complicated

The PRC's maritime strategic accesses involve a number of regions, such as East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Oceania, and they involve the interests of numerous parties, such as the US-Japanese alliance, ASEAN, China, and India. In addition, sovereignty over the islands and reefs close to the maritime strategic accesses is mostly not in the PRC's hands, and for many reasons, such as the differentiation of sea areas and struggles over resources, they are intricate and complex; this has caused the issues of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses to involve broad levels, deep degrees, and many interests, and the handling of these is extraordinarily thorny and very difficult. Early on, the United States' 2002 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* pointed out that the "great arc" from the Korean peninsula to western Asia, including "broad waters from the

Sea of Japan south, through Australia to the Bay of Bengal,” is a vast “belt of turbulence.”³⁴⁴ Looking at things from a geopolitical angle, this “belt of turbulence” has many strategic key points distributed in it, and it has always been a place that military commanders have had to struggle for. Therefore, it has unavoidably become one of the most intense and complex regions for maritime struggles in today’s world. Speaking specifically, in the East Asia region, Japan has fairly major disputes with Russia, South Korea, and China in the maritime direction, and the North Korean nuclear issue and the Taiwan issue have always been a focus of concern by the international community. In the Southeast Asia region, although the South China Sea situation is in a state where it is controllable, it still is one of the hotspot regions of the world. Sea powers are getting involved in South China Sea matters more and more frequently, which creates new obstacles for us in resolving South China Sea disputes. In the South Asia region, there has been some amelioration in the India-Pakistan situation, but the danger of conflict still exists, and domestic turbulence in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also greatly affects regional peace and security. In addition, many strategic accesses and sea regions in the South China Sea are also places where there are many instances of piracy and terrorist attacks. In only the single year of 2003, pirate attack incidents that occurred in the Asian sea regions reached one-half (about eighty-five) of pirate attack incidents throughout the world. Piracy and looting incidents that occurred [that year] in Indonesian waters and the Straits of Malacca were listed as first and second place globally.³⁴⁵ To summarize these various complicated factors, they undoubtedly have had an extremely unfavorable impact on the situations of the sea areas that China’s maritime strategic accesses must pass through.

SECTION 3: THE THREATS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO CHINA’S INTERESTS...276

China is located in the Asia-Pacific region; its maritime accesses are close to major powers everywhere, their interests are interwoven, and their contradictions are complex. In regard to the current situation of political, economic, and military setups, and under conditions where disputes, crises, conflicts and even wars occur in order to defend the PRC’s national interests, sea powers will pose a serious threat to the security of the PRC’s maritime strategic accesses.

I. Strategic containment by US power...276

After the Cold War ended, the United States concentrated the heads of its spears and turned them toward China, trying to seal off the PRC’s maritime access to the Pacific and the Indian Ocean through setting up a defensive ring and military bases along the island chain blockade line, thereby “surrounding China by a crescent-shaped strategic arc.” In order to easily carry out maritime control and maritime operations, a strategy of “from the sea to the land” {*you hai dao lu*} that the US Navy proposed divided globally important maritime key chokehold routes into eight regional groups of straits that were connected to each other and supported one another, intending thereby to control the world’s seas for a long time. Looking at their geographical locations, the United States and China cannot be considered neighbors, but looking at things geopolitically,

³⁴⁴ US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 30 September 2001.

³⁴⁵ China Institute of Contemporary International Relations Maritime Security Topics Group, *Maritime Accesses Security and International Cooperation*, Current Affairs Press, 2005, p. 61.

island chains draw the distance between China and the United States closer so that the United States has become China's biggest "neighbor" (*lin guo*); a geostrategy of blockading East Asia has quite important significance for the United States' global strategy.

1. Military deployments for strengthening the two island chains

The PRC's sea areas are vertical and long, from north to south, forming a dumbbell shape; they are easily separated, and the existence of the Taiwan issue further exacerbates this unfavorable situation. For a long period of time, the United States has always been wary of China's peaceful rise; in the newest strategic documents, such as the *National Security Strategy* and the *National Defense Strategy*, it has viewed China as an adversary to be on guard against. After 9-11, the United States gradually shifted the focus of its strategy toward Asia and the Pacific. It deployed heavy troops along the two island chains; it deployed large amounts of advanced Navy and Air Force equipment to its bases in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Guam; it engaged in focused reconnaissance of relevant straits and waterways; and it carried out military exercises, in order to display its existence and deterrence. In particular, it strengthened the status and role of its Guam bases, and it built these into central bases and centers for deploying strengths in the western Pacific region.

The United States has now expanded its military deployments in Asia and the Pacific, and especially in the US bases in Japan and South Korea in Northeast Asia; it has stationed the aircraft carrier *George Washington* at Yokosuka, it has stationed ballistic missile nuclear submarines and the most advanced F-22 [Raptor] fighters in Guam, and it has deployed three of the newest Global Hawk unmanned aerial reconnaissance aircraft in Guam. The flight range of Global Hawk unmanned aerial reconnaissance aircraft can reach 10,000 miles, so they can carry out reconnaissance and surveillance against China and North Korea. [The United States] has deployed the *Virginia* nuclear attack submarine in Hawaii, and in the future it is also preparing to deploy sixty percent of its nuclear submarines and half of its nuclear-powered aircraft carriers to the western Pacific, turning this sea region into a sea region where there is the greatest deployment of US and Japanese troop strengths, where their equipment is the most advanced, and where their blockade and control is tightest. This will greatly enhance the speed of the US military's reaction in Asia and the Pacific. On 16 February 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary [Clinton] visited Japan, and Japan and the United States signed an agreement that by 2014, the United States will remove 8,000 of its troops from the military bases on Japan's Okinawa and transfer them to the Guam bases. The signing of this agreement was a major turning point in the United States' Japan strategy;³⁴⁶ this means that the United States is instigating an escalation in Japan's blocking and containment of China and that it is forming a military alliance with Japan and South Korea in order to suppress the PRC's strategic space along the maritime direction. At the same time as this, the United States reached agreements with Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and other countries, and gained these countries' permission to open up to US ships and aircraft, so that [the US] threat in such strategic accesses as the Straits of Malacca and the Sembawan Strait has grown ever greater. Once a crisis occurs, the United States and its allies can control maritime strategic accesses that affect the PRC, by means of the two island chains; this will block the PRC's exits to the sea and

³⁴⁶ Dai Xu, *A C-Shaped Encirclement*, Wenhui Publishing House, 2010, p. 6.

its maritime strategic accesses, thus severely restraining the PRC's naval and strategic troop strengths' movement forward.

2. Controlling relevant maritime strategic accesses

It should be said that in times of peace, there is no major obstacle to the PRC's normal use of maritime strategic accesses, but once a crisis appears, sea powers will have the ability to set up obstacles in maritime accesses that the PRC's trade and energy traffic and its troop strength movements must go through. For example, the Straits of Malacca are the most important of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses; every day, the PRC has large numbers of ships going to the Straits of Malacca, a very great number of which are crude oil transport ships that involve the PRC's energy security. For another example, the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait both involve the PRC's crude oil transportation from the Middle East and North Africa; these accesses are both among the sixteen maritime key chokepoint routes that the United States wants to control, and the threat to the PRC's military and economic activities is very great.

3. Resolving the containment of the PRC's core interests

The Taiwan issue and the Spratly Islands issue involve the PRC's core interests, but over the short run, it is impossible to resolve these; a prolonged delay in the sovereignty issue will severely neutralize the PRC's efforts to uphold the security of maritime accesses. Taiwan is the shortest route for the PRC to get to the high seas, and if [the PRC] controls the island of Taiwan, it will have a favorable route to get to sea areas beyond the "first island chain." Similarly, the Spratlys are in the South China Sea access, and they have important strategic value for monitoring and controlling the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea access. Speaking in a certain sense, the issue of sovereignty has dispersed {*fensan*} the PRC's energy for protecting the security of maritime accesses, and it has had an impact on the PRC's national security interests and major economic interests. And having other people control maritime strategic accesses over a long period of time also has formed an important factor affecting the unity of the fatherland and the defense of maritime rights and interests; the two affect each other and restrain one another. China and the United States have wide-ranging mutual interests and prospects for cooperation in the area of the security of maritime strategic accesses, but this cooperation is asymmetrical. When PRC-US relations are in relative "harmony" {*rongqia*}, the security of maritime strategic accesses has some "protection" {*baozhang*}; but when something has an impact on PRC-US relations, the United States quite possibly could sacrifice PRC-US cooperation on the security of maritime accesses, and it could even, conversely, threaten the security of China's maritime accesses. The premises whereby the United States would restrain resolution of China's sovereignty, through blockading straits, largely consist of the following situations. The first is that China's rapid development would be considered to pose a challenge to the United States' status in the Asia-Pacific region, and thus the United States would adopt a strategy of containment against China. The second is that an accidental incident would occur, and the Straits of Malacca could become a point for restraining [China]. The US military has already said that if the mainland launches military actions against Taiwan in the future, the United States would not need to carry out a military intervention; as long as [the United States] can block and cut off [the PRC's] maritime strategic accesses, it will be able to achieve its strategic goal of getting the mainland to halt its war. The Straits of Malacca's significance for China does not merely involve its energy security, but it also is closely related to

the Taiwan issue and the South China Sea issue.³⁴⁷ Therefore, once these accesses are controlled by others, this is equivalent to choking the PRC's throat, and it has the effect of moving [China's] whole body by pulling on a single hair. This is sufficient to explain that regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, the United States and Japan are entirely capable of interacting in order to oppose the PRC, to contain the PRC, and to control maritime strategic accesses. As soon as there is an incident involving the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, the US Navy and Air Force [strengths] that are stationed in peripheral areas will be able to quickly reach the area where the incident [occurred], and this will greatly affect the actions of the PRC's troop strengths and control the resolution of the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea issue. Speaking overall, the United States treats containment of maritime strategic accesses as an important card for preventing the PRC from completing its grand enterprise of unifying the fatherland.

II. The strategic struggles of major regional nations...279

Currently, there are many parties that would be involved in a conflict, that struggle with the PRC over maritime interests, and that pose a challenge to the PRC's maritime accesses, and these mostly adopt attitudes that would contain the PRC rather than cooperate with it. Among these, the most outstanding are Japan and India.

1. Japan's impact on the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses

Japan's military strength, which is growing stronger each day, and the strategy of substantive expansion that it is pursuing have always posed a serious regional and potential threat to the PRC's maritime security. This currently is being transformed from a potential threat to an actual threat.

(1) Adjusting the strategy of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force. Based on the spirit of Japan's peace constitution, Japan's post-war security strategy has consistently been passive defense whose core is "exclusive defense" {*zhuan shou fang wei*}. After the end of the Cold War, the world situation underwent profound changes, and Japan believed that what posed a threat to it was no longer the Soviet Union and Russia but rather "various dangers," including "destruction of maritime traffic lines, violations of territorial airspace, illegal occupation of territory, terrorist activity, and an influx of armed refugees." It stressed that "The Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Strait have extremely non-transparent and uncertain factors," and it listed the Korean peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea area as the regions that could most likely lead to conflict and where certain crises could occur. It believed that as soon as a mishap occurred in these regions, and especially when problems occurred [involving] the security of traffic lines in the western Pacific, this would pose a serious threat to Japan's security and stability. Given the premise where Japan's economic strength has rapidly grown, where its ambitions to become a political and military power have rapidly expanded, and where Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force is intent upon expanding beyond Japan's borders {*zou chu guo men*}, there have been major adjustments to the strategy of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force, and it is gradually switching from passive "exclusive defense" to active "high seas offense" {*yuan yang jin'gong*}. At the same time, Japan has introduced a series of laws related to military matters (including relevant laws, special measures, and amendments to laws), one after the other. Examples are a number of laws and

³⁴⁷ Jiang Hanhui, "The Security of the Malacca Access and China's Policy Choices," master's thesis for the Beijing Foreign Affairs University, 2003, p. 41.

regulations, such as the new *Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation*, the *Peripheral Situation Law*, and the *Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law*. These provide a legal basis for [Japan] to carry out “active preemption” {zhudong xianzhi} and “overseas intervention” {haiwai ganyu}. At the same time, this has also created favorable conditions for Japan to move toward becoming a military power, toward sending troops overseas, and toward influencing and controlling the world’s maritime strategic accesses, in order to gain even more overseas strategic resources. It has vigorously developed its high-seas operational strengths, and it has the power to threaten the security of China’s maritime accesses over broad sea areas.

(2) Strengthening the Japan-US alliance and preventing the PRC from advancing to the Pacific. After the Cold War, the scope of the Japanese navy’s operations underwent an adjustment, and these expanded to the entire Asia and the Pacific. In recent years, as the PRC has rapidly developed, Japan’s control over maritime strategic accesses has clearly grown stronger. In order to control the PRC’s advance to the Pacific, the United States and Japan have set up large numbers of underwater monitoring systems in the Osumi Strait and the Miyako Strait in the Ryukyus, and they have established monitoring stations and monitoring positions. The United States and Japan together constructed a tight anti-submarine system, and they engaged in prolonged monitoring and tracking of the PRC’s naval troop strengths’ activities. Currently, the Japanese navy is also using the Ryukyus, Shimoda Island, and Okinotorishima to establish intelligence and surveillance systems, in order to strengthen its monitoring, control, and prevention of the PRC’s naval troop strengths’ actions.

(3) Energetically developing maritime strengths. For a number of years, the Japanese navy has sped up the building of its high seas mobile operations strengths, in order for Japan to achieve its strategic goal of [becoming] a political and military power; as regards the development of its equipment, it has constantly pushed its ships and equipment toward becoming [forces] that are large-scale, that have missiles, and that are on the high seas. It has developed in a focused manner sea-based missile defense systems and large-scale surface ships that have the ability for operations on the high seas, and it has focused on strengthening the building of equipment for patrols at sea. It has become an elite navy that has complete service arms, that has advanced equipment, and that has fairly strong capabilities for anti-submarine convoy operations and for movement on the high seas. In building military equipment, Japan has always focused on quality, and in the development of equipment, it has focused on seeking technological superiority; with the support of the nation’s great economic strength, the equipment of the Japanese navy has placed it among the world powers in terms of naval equipment. In recent years, Japan has vigorously developed strengths for high-seas operations; its anti-submarine and minesweeping equipment and its conventional submarines are at the world’s advanced levels, and it already has the power to threaten the security of China’s maritime accesses over broad sea areas.

2. India’s impact on the security of the PRC’s maritime strategic accesses

India has always considered itself to be a great maritime nation, and it sees the oceans, and especially the Indian Ocean, as the place where its basic national interests lie. When founding the country, Prime Minister [Jawaharlal] Nehru said that if India wants to become powerful on land, it must first be more powerful at sea. Senior diplomat Kavalam Madhava Panikkar said in a book that he wrote, *India and the Indian Ocean*, that “India’s path forward is closely linked to how much

of a powerful sea power it will gradually develop into.”³⁴⁸ India has always treated control of the Indian Ocean and the guarding of maritime transport accesses as a necessary link and step in pursuing great-power status.

(1) Speeding up the development of a high-seas navy. India has actively promoted a “strategy for controlling the Indian Ocean” – “on the one hand, to deprive enemies of opportunities for using the ocean, while on the other hand maintaining its own authority to use the ocean”³⁴⁹ – and it has listed the navy as a focus in building its national defense and has sped up the pace of modernizing its navy. According to a research report by the London International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the size of the Indian military is fourth in the entire world, and the number of naval ships and their total tonnage is currently listed as seventh in the world; apart from the US Navy, [the Indian Navy] is the most powerful maritime operations strengths in the Indian Ocean. But India is by no means satisfied with this. India believes that its own navy is temporarily inferior to sea powers in the Indian Ocean region and cannot struggle for comprehensive command of the sea and that it can only seize a relative command of the sea in local sea regions; however, it can rely on its main naval strengths to destroy sea powers’ maritime traffic lines, in order to choke their throats. Currently, India is doing all it can to create truly world-class maritime strengths.

First, it is developing aircraft carrier groups. According to a report by the *Times of India*, India’s Chief of Naval Staff [Admiral Nirmal] Verma has said that “By 2014-2015, we will have two complete carrier battle groups, which will include fighters and other aircraft, destroyers, frigates, and tankers. At that time, India’s naval combat power will undergo a huge change.” The first carrier battle group will have the Russian-built *Admiral Gorshkov* as its core, and it is predicted that this will arrive in India at the beginning of 2013. The second carrier battle group will have a 40,000-ton class indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) as its core, with thirty carrier-borne aircraft, including MiG-29K [Fulcrum] and carrier-borne indigenous lightweight Tejas fighters, using a “ski jump-type” {*huayue shi*} deck; [India] plans to launch this in the second half of 2011. At the same time, the Indian Navy will also rebuild an indigenous aircraft carrier and will use catapult takeoffs. It is estimated that by 2017, the Indian Navy will have three aircraft carriers; at that time, India will have developed three carrier battle groups with powerful abilities for operations on the high seas so that its ability for high-sea operations will be greatly enhanced. Second, it is developing nuclear submarines. Based on the Indian Navy’s plans, after the first indigenous “advanced technology vessel” (ATV) *Arihant* is launched, India will rebuild five to six ATV nuclear submarines. At the same time, a leased Russian Akula-class submarine will enter into service for the Indian Navy in October 2011. In addition, India also plans to spend about \$11 billion to newly purchase six conventionally powered submarines equipped with “air-independent propulsion” systems.³⁵⁰ Third, it is developing nuclear attack power. It is using the building of a modernized high-seas attack navy as an important way to achieve its “strategy to control the Indian

³⁴⁸ (Indian) K. M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: an Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, World Knowledge Publishing House, 1966, p. 89.

³⁴⁹ Cao Yongsheng, *The Elephant of South Asia – The Development and Current Status of India’s Military Strategy*, People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 2002, p. 213.

³⁵⁰ “India’s \$47 billion for Building the World’s Second-Largest Navy,” *Chinese Journal of Defense*, 24 May 2011, p. 5.

Ocean.” India’s first autonomously built nuclear submarine was launched in July 2009, and it became a country that possessed a triad of nuclear attack capabilities. In the future, it will also build two strategic missile nuclear submarines, and its power to control the sea will be greatly increased. Currently, the Indian Navy is intensifying its testing of K-15 submarine-launched ballistic missiles, which it will equip indigenous nuclear submarines with, so that these will have combat capabilities by 2015. Fourth, India is actively planning to establish missile launch platforms and to build an air-land-sea triad missile defense system. At the same time, it will link warships and submarines through satellites, seeking to establish a powerful maritime-centric combat network. This equipment has provided important means for India to control the Indian Ocean and to thus control maritime strategic accesses. According to predictions by the United Kingdom’s *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, the total number of troop strengths in the Indian Navy will reach 100,000 men by 2020, deployed on 145 new-type ships, and the Navy’s power will extend from the Indian Ocean to the center of the Pacific, becoming the second most powerful navy in the world.³⁵¹

(2) Strengthening its military presence in the South China Sea region. India believes that as China’s economy rapidly develops and as [China’s] need for energy, like petroleum, has sharply increased, China’s maritime strengths inevitably will enter the Indian Ocean, in order to ensure that the accesses for its energy supplies are smooth, so that China and India will launch a competition in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, a number of Indian leaders and high-level military persons have publicly stressed many times that India needs to strengthen its presence in the South China Sea. In June 2001, when Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh gave a speech entitled “India and ASEAN: A Security Model for the Year 2000” at the Singapore Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, he said, “In regard to India’s area, geographical location, trade relations, and economic size, the security environment and potential security considerations that India is concerned about include the regions along India’s western side, southern side, and eastern side, from the Gulf to the Straits of Malacca, as well as Central Asia along its northwest side, China in Northeast Asia, and Southeast Asia.”³⁵² In order to solidify its maritime hegemony in the Indian Ocean, to control the Malacca sea region, and to enter the Pacific to the east, India has drafted an “eastern maritime strategy” {*dongfang haiyang zhanlue*}. The basic details of this are that to the east, the scope of the Indian Navy’s activities will be expanded to the South China Sea and the Pacific; to the west, it will be expanded to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal; and to the South, it will be extended to the southernmost tip of the Indian Ocean. In addition to establishing the eastern command in the Andaman Islands in order to protect the key chokehold routes of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, it has also inveigled ASEAN and expanded its own sphere of influence. The Indian Navy frequently conducts military exercises in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific; the region of the exercises is becoming ever wider, the contents of the exercises are becoming increasingly aggressive in nature, and the targets of the exercises are getting to be more and more the countries surrounding straits.

³⁵¹ “India’s \$47 Billion for Building the World’s Second-Largest Navy,” *Chinese Journal of Defense*, 24 May 2011, p. 5.

³⁵² Wu Shicun, *The Origins and Development of the Spratlys Dispute*, China Economic Publishing House, 2010, p. 198.

III. Strategic frictions of countries that have relevant interests...284

Given that the South China Sea is an important sea region for the world economy and shipping, disputes and frictions of varying degrees exist among the countries surrounding it, as regards maritime rights and interests. In particular, some countries, driven by powerful maritime strategies, have wantonly exaggerated the “China threat theory” and have ignored international law and international conventions, [instead] relying on international strategic strengths. The unfavorable impact that this has created on the stability and economic development of this region, and especially on the security of strategic accesses along the PRC’s South China Sea direction, has deepened more and more.

1. The differences in the attitude that coastal countries have on management of straits have led to an increase in intervention by the great nations

Based on the stipulations of international maritime law, coastal countries along straits enjoy sovereignty over the straits and waterways, and they enjoy sovereign rights and interests over straits’ exclusive economic zones. Therefore, the Straits of Malacca belong jointly to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. In November 1971, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia issued a joint communiqué, declaring their sovereignty over the straits, and [declaring] that they would assume responsibility for the security of the straits. In 1977, the three countries reiterated this position, and they received the support of ASEAN, but the three countries along the straits had differing positions and attitudes toward the great powers getting involved in straits affairs. Singapore had a positive attitude toward this, but Malaysia and Indonesia, which possess the vast majority of the Straits of Malacca, were quite cautious, and the two countries vigorously held that there was no need for participation by outside forces; in particular, they resolutely opposed great powers from outside the region deploying their militaries to directly interfere in maritime security matters. The differences in the coastal countries’ attitudes could lead to an increase in infiltration by the great powers, but because this would involve sensitive sovereignty issues, the concessions that the coastal countries have made are still limited only to accepting financial, technical, and equipment assistance, and they have avoided letting any great power hold an overwhelming advantage; dominance in the straits will not undergo any great changes.

2. Strengthening the ability to control maritime strategic accesses along the South China Sea direction through the development of naval and air equipment

In recent years, coastal countries along straits have further strengthened their building of national defense, and the building of naval and air force capabilities has become extremely important in the building of the various countries’ national defense. Based on a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, out of weapons imports from 2005 to 2009, the arms purchases by countries in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia, have grown the most, especially purchases of submarines, frigates, amphibious assault ships, and fighter aircraft. The motives of these countries in vigorously purchasing equipment are quite clear, which is to use this equipment to enhance their ability to control disputed regions and maritime accesses. Apart from this, the various countries in ASEAN also are continually expanding their economic and military cooperation with the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, India, and Australia in the South China Sea direction. Thailand and Singapore have provided the US military with military base facilities; Indonesia, Malaysia, and

Brunei have also signed agreements with the US military to “provide service support;” and in 2000, the Philippines renewed large-scale US-Philippines military exercises, which had been interrupted for five years. In summary, as great powers from outside the region have continually promoted cooperative relations with ASEAN, powers from outside the region will have more choices for getting involved in maritime accesses matters, and their intentions to contain China are becoming increasingly clear; the PRC also will face even more issues and predicaments involving maritime strategic access issues.

IV. The real impact of non-traditional security...285

After the end of the Cold War, the world setup no longer existed where there were serious military confrontations between the US and Soviet poles, and without military confrontations in which enemies were evenly matched, it was no longer possible for powerful states to exclusively and nakedly plunder and control maritime accesses or to engage in large-scale blockades and control over maritime security. However, this did not mean that the security of maritime accesses has been safe and sound since then. In recent years, the international community has had an increasingly deeper understanding of non-traditional security, and terrorism at sea, pirate activities, smuggling at sea, and drug trafficking at sea, as well as trafficking in persons, environmental pollution at sea, and organized crimes at sea, have resulted in the security of the post-Cold War world’s maritime accesses encountering diverse challenges, at least locally, and the threats that these have created for the security of the world’s maritime strategic accesses have become increasingly severe, seriously damaging the normal contacts of international economics and trade, and they also have created a great threat to the security of China’s maritime strategic accesses. The PRC has vast seas; its sea area reaches three million square kilometers, and it has rich maritime resources. As the PRC’s economy has developed, its reliance on the maritime transportation industry has also become ever greater, especially its reliance on petroleum imports. The routes for the PRC’s imports of petroleum and its exports to the West of products are distributed over the regions of the world precisely where piracy is most rampant; this has brought about huge hidden dangers for the PRC’s maritime security and its economy’s sustainable development. Given that the Straits of Malacca, which connect the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, are the world’s second-busiest straits, second only to the Strait of Dover, they are an important shipping access among Europe, Asia, Oceania, and Africa. Each day, thousands of ships pass through them, and the PRC’s import and export commodities also mostly pass along this route. This region also has attracted the eyes of large numbers of pirates, due to the importance of commercial interests, and the threat of piracy to the PRC definitely exists.

1. The impact of piracy on China’s maritime strategic accesses

Piracy is a social phenomenon with a very long history; it emerged alongside the emergence of mankind’s nautical activity and nautical trade. Early on, more than 1,000 years B.C., piracy appeared in the eastern waters of the Mediterranean. The 1958 *Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea* affirmed that piratical behavior is any activity that violently plunders private ships on the high seas or that illegally detains personnel or materials onboard ships. The basic reason for the emergence of the phenomenon of piracy is economic issues; the drive of interests leads to a flood of piratical activity, while the social turbulence and governmental weakness that economic decline

and depression lead to also strengthen this tendency. In many places in the world, such as in Southeast Asia, piracy is a means of behavior that can provide local people with additional income in order to survive and that governments confirm is illegal but that is accepted by the local culture. In addition, as carriers of maritime transportation, the number of ships has also greatly increased, and this has provided many choices for piratical attacks and a great many potential targets. Another important reason is that the lax management and insufficient security measures at ports in many regions give pirates opportunities they can take advantage of. Currently, although many ports have had major improvements in their infrastructure, there are still many holes in their management and scheduling. Organized pirates often contact persons who are connected with seaports in order to ensure the ease of their activities, which leads to the prevalence of corruption and to law enforcement personnel deliberately making concessions or collaborating [with pirates], thus greatly increasing the possibility that pirate attacks will be successful.

The *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* defines piratical behavior in detail: “Piracy refers to any illegal acts of violence or detention or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft or against persons or property onboard such a ship or aircraft, in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State. Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of or abetting what is clearly known to be a piratical act, or deliberately facilitating one of the above activities, is also viewed as piratical behavior.”³⁵³

Since ancient times, piracy has mostly occurred along important routes and along important key maritime chokehold routes. For example, attacks are launched near straits and waterways; some places in these straits and waterways are extremely narrow, and it is easy for pirates to engage in plundering and attacks. In addition to this, once an oil supertanker sinks or leaks oil, [this supertanker] can then hinder other ships from sailing, thus blocking the maritime transportation route and seriously affecting the development of the world economy. Modern pirates still haunt the world’s “five major waters of terror:” the West African coast, the sea region off the Somali peninsula, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden that connect to the Suez Canal, the coast of the Bay of Bengal, and the Straits of Malacca and the entire Southeast Asia sea region. Since the 1980s, global pirate activities have become increasingly rampant, and piracy incidents have risen each year. In particular, after the 9-11 incident, global piracy incidents have increased sharply; this poses a serious threat to world shipping and international trade, and pirate activities create losses to the world economy each year of approximately \$25 billion. Currently, ninety percent of the entire world’s trade relies on shipping, and approximately 40,000 ships sail in the world’s various sea regions; it is very easy for pirates to find targets that can be attacked, and it is easy for them to carry out attacks.

According to statistics from the Piracy Reporting Center of the International Maritime Bureau, there were ninety incidents of pirate activity in 1994, which rose to 228 in 1998 and soared to 469 in 2000. One-third of these piracy incidents occurred in the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea region; in just 2000, there were 252 piracy incidents that occurred in the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, about fifty-five percent of the total number.³⁵⁴ Based on data that various

³⁵³ *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Ocean Press, 1983, p. 71.

³⁵⁴ International Maritime Bureau, “Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships,” *2000 Annual Report*, p. 10.

countries report to the International Maritime Bureau, from 2003 to September 2008, there were 669 piracy incidents and attempted piracy incidents that occurred in Southeast Asia, making up 38.2 percent of the total amount of world piracy activities during this same period; Africa was in second place, with 33 percent, and South Asia and South America were respectively in third and fourth place, respectively making up 14.7 percent and 11.5 percent of the total amount [of piracy] in the world (see the table below). In addition, there also have been quite major differences in changes in the number of pirate activities in each region; because attacks against pirate activities in Southeast Asia sea regions have increased in recent years, the number of pirates looting merchant ships there has decreased year by year; from 187 in 2003, this fell to 79 in 2007.

But pirate activities in the African sea regions have continued to increase. For example, Somali pirate activities in the Gulf of Aden sea region have continually escalated; according to statistics by the International Maritime Bureau, there were only one or two piracy incidents in the Somali sea region in 2004; this swelled to 37 in 2005 and reached 120 in 2008, when there were a total of forty-two ships that were hijacked, more than twice as many as in 2007. This made up one-third of the total number throughout the world, and up until now, there are still more than ten tankers that are in the hands of pirates. Oil tankers that are hijacked often are held for ransom by the Somalis for huge sums of cash. On 1 October 2008, Somali pirates hijacked four [ships] in one day, creating a record for the largest [number of ships hijacked]; this became one of the focuses of world attention, and [Somali waters] were listed as a region where there was a risk of war and conflict.

**Distribution of Regions Where There Were Pirate Activities in the World,
2003-2008 (unit: single incidents)³⁵⁵**

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
East Asia	4	11	10	2	5	0	32
Southeast Asia	185	162	112	86	75	49	669
South Asia	87	32	36	53	30	20	258
Africa	97	79	92	69	120	119	577
South America	72	45	25	29	21	9	201
Others	4	6	13	8	12	2	45
Total	449	335	289	239	263	199	1782

Personal Injuries Caused by World Pirate Activities, 2003-2008³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Data source: International Maritime Bureau, "Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships," *Annual Report 2007 and Report for the Period 1 January – 30 September 2008*.

³⁵⁶ Data source: International Maritime Bureau, "Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships," *Annual Report 2007 and Report for the Period 1 January – 30 September 2008*.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of persons dead	21	32	0	15	5	8
Number of persons missing	71	30	12	3	3	7
Number of persons hijacked	.59	234	453	265	355	590

China is one of the world's ten great ocean transportation countries, and the degree to which foreign trade relies on the ocean transportation industry reaches about eighty percent. The PRC currently has more than 7,600 ocean transportation ships, with more than 300,000 standard boxes of containers and over 30 million net deadweight tons; [the PRC] also has close to 300,000 motor fishing boats, and more than 1,700 of these are high-seas fishing boats.³⁵⁷ At the [same] time that such a large number of boats contribute to China's economic development, they also have become targets of attack by pirates, which restricts the development of the high-seas shipping industry. Currently, ninety percent of all world trade relies on shipping, and thirty-three percent of this shipping passes through Southeast Asian waters. The security of maritime accesses has a prominent status in the overall situation of China's strategy. As China's energy needs continually increase, the maritime route from the Middle East across the Indian Ocean and through the Straits of Malacca in actuality has become an important artery for China's economic development. Many of China's maritime strategic accesses must pass through sea regions where pirate activities frequently occur, such as through important key chokehold routes like the Straits of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden. Of these, the Gulf of Aden, the Straits of Malacca, and the Nigerian coast are called the world's three most dangerous sea regions, and incidents where Chinese fishing boats, transport ships, and the like come under attack at sea sometimes occur, so that China's maritime strategic accesses face very great risks. In the early 1990s, the South China Sea was generally acknowledged by the world to be one of the regions where global pirate activities are most rampant. In particular, starting in 1990, piracy incidents clearly increased; out of the sixty-seven pirate cases that occurred around the world in just seven months, from May to December 2004, half of them happened in the South China Sea. In particular, the Straits of Malacca themselves are quite narrow and easily blocked. Once the Straits of Malacca and other places have a large-scale pirate-type terrorist attack incident occur, the entire transport line could be blocked, and the petroleum supplies that maintain the PRC economy's sustained development would become a major issue. In the eight months before 2010, there were 160 piracy and armed hijacking incidents that occurred around the world aimed at ships; seventy of these, or 43.7 percent, occurred in South China Sea waters, while twenty-three, or 14.4 percent, occurred in Indian Ocean waters. Based on information and statistics by the International Maritime Organization, looking at the situation of developments in the eight months prior to 2010, activities by pirate and terrorist forces in Asian sea regions and especially in Southeast Asian sea regions were rampant, and this was an important factor that affected the security of ocean accesses.

It should be said that, over the past ten years, Chinese ships have frequently come under pirate attack and have suffered heavy losses in personnel and assets. In the November 1998 *Chang Sheng*

³⁵⁷ Sun Shalan, "Peaceful Rise and the PRC's South China Sea Policy," *Journal of Sun Yatsen University*, 2005, Issue 3, p. 35.

[piracy incident], twenty-three Chinese crew members were harmed; on 25 September 1999, the Xiamen freighter *Yu Jia* was attacked in the northeast sea region of Sri Lanka by suspected [Liberation Tamil] Tiger organization gunboats; in 2002, China's [fishing boat] *Fuyuanyu 226* was hijacked by Somali pirates; on 20 March 2003, a Chinese fishing boat was shelled by an unknown ship in Sri Lankan waters, resulting in the loss or death of seventeen crew members, and the boat ultimately sank; and on 22 July of that same year, five Chinese fishing vessels were hijacked in the waters of the Gulf of Aden, resulting in one dead, one wounded, and heavy losses of property. Since entering the 21st century and especially since 2008, there have been an ever-increasing number of piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden, along with a succession of Somali piracy and hijacking incidents of Chinese ships. According to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in just January through November 2008, China had a total of 1,265 merchant ships pass through the Somali sea region, of which twenty percent were attacked by pirates, and there were seven hijacking incidents involving China. It can be seen from this that frequent pirate activities not only have a serious impact on world shipping activities but they also pose a very real threat to the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses so that the PRC's national interests and the lives and property of its people face serious potential dangers to their security.

2. The impact of maritime terrorist activities on China's maritime strategic accesses

[The term] maritime terrorist activities refers to activities whose targets of attack are ships that sail along normal [routes], offshore drilling platforms, and workers, using violent means and creating an atmosphere of terror, in order to achieve a set political goal.³⁵⁸ After the 9-11 incident, terrorism turned its eyesight toward the sea; according to reports, al Qaeda secretly switched some of its terrorist base area toward the sea, and it organized a "terror fleet" of about twenty vessels, distributed in such sea areas as the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean and prepared to again launch terrorist attacks. The United Kingdom's *Jane's Intelligence Review* in December 2002 issued a statement by senior reporter Ai-de Bu-lan-qi,³⁵⁹ saying that attacks against maritime transportation lines and especially against oil tankers, using these to attack the global economy and to destroy the economic development and social stability of oil- and natural gas-producing countries, could become the next target of international terrorists.³⁶⁰ Looking at how international energy flows, if an oil tanker is blown up in the Strait of Hormuz, in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait at the southern mouth of the Red Sea, or in the Straits of Malacca that connect the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, or if oil refineries and marine terminals are paralyzed, this would greatly damage global energy supplies. According to an evaluation that the United States published in September 2005 [entitled] *Maritime Security Strategy*, terrorists could use sea transport ships as tools, loading dirty bombs, gas bombs, or chemical bombs on them, and launch attacks against harbors or offshore facilities. Terrorists also could use various types of suicide boats and lightweight aircraft filled with explosives in order to launch fast and effective attacks against maritime operating platforms like boats, warships, and oil tankers. Terrorists would only need to set off a few "speedboat bombs" {*kuaiting zhadan*}, with two tons of ordinary explosives, to attack a southbound oil tanker, and

³⁵⁸ Li Bing, "Studies on International Strategic Accesses," doctoral dissertation at the Central Party School, 2005, p. 236.

³⁵⁹ Translator's note: This is the Chinese transliteration of a British name, probably Ed Branch.

³⁶⁰ Zhang Shiping, *Countries' Major Events*, Military Science Publishing House, 2004, p. 269.

they could then paralyze the Straits of Malacca for a long period of time.³⁶¹ The effect that this would create would greatly exceed a pirate attack incident, it would be harder to prevent it, and it would even make it difficult for coastal countries to protect themselves.

In regard to the security of the PRC's maritime transportation routes, the local threats that pirate organizations and terrorists pose to the PRC are primarily exhibited in three areas: the first is destruction of the PRC's maritime accesses, the second is hijacking the PRC's maritime transportation vessels, and the third is destruction of the PRC's offshore oil wells. In the future, the PRC's oil wells in the South China Sea will gradually increase in number; it is quite possible that people with ulterior motives will adopt terrorist actions to destroy the PRC's production facilities like offshore oil wells. In addition, the petroleum cooperation projects that the PRC is engaged in within foreign sea regions will also increase more and more, and the danger of terrorist attacks will also constantly grow. Currently, under conditions where the PRC navy cannot provide complete support, international pirate attacks against PRC oil tankers will become unscrupulous. Therefore, pirates and terrorists pose a very great threat to the PRC's shipping. It can be said that given the situation where traditional threats have not diminished even a bit, and as pirate activities and terrorism become increasingly wanton, the security situation of the PRC's important maritime strategic accesses will become even grimmer.

³⁶¹ Yin Gang, "Two Issues that Studies on Security Environments Need to Pay Attention to," *Modern International Relations*, 2002, Issue 11, p. 17.

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CHAPTER 8

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE HANDLING OF MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES...292

This is the art of skillfully using all resources and all strengths at a specific time and in a specific place.

- Fu Xi

As national interests have continually expanded, handling of maritime strategic accesses has become an important topic that the PRC's national security strategy and military strategy must pay attention to and plan for. As we study this issue, only by having a tight grasp on the needs of the expansion of national interests and on the characteristics of national security in an age of globalization is it possible to holistically sort out the basic threads of thought for administering China's maritime strategic accesses, and only thus is it possible to find correct and effective ways of handling maritime strategic accesses. Given that the practical activities of the PRC's handling of maritime strategic accesses are still in an initial stage, the conditions for carrying out a comprehensive and in-depth study of accesses and strategy are not yet mature; here, it is only possible [to discuss] the basic concepts of handling China's maritime strategic accesses in the new century and the new stage, that is, to engage in a tentative exploration of overall thinking.

SECTION 1: THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF CHINA'S MARITIME STRATEGIC ACCESSES IN THE 21ST CENTURY...292

I. Guiding thoughts...292

Guiding thoughts are what strategic practical activities basically abide by; they are the soul and outline of strategic ideas. The basic ideas on the PRC's maritime strategic accesses must consider issues from the overall situation of national development strategy, they must consider issues from an intricate and complex international background, they must consider issues from the long-term needs of national interests, and they must consider issues from helping to create a PRC maritime strategic environment and fully bringing into play the PRC's active role in international affairs. Therefore, the guiding thoughts for this can include keeping an eye on the nation's long-range interests, scientific plans, overall progress, breaking through dilemmas, positive deeds, and achieving the strategic objectives of peaceful development, harmonious coexistence, and cooperative win-win, with the [Chinese Communist] Party's and the state's strategic thinking as a guide, with the nation's overall development strategy as a basis, with politics and diplomacy as a support, with sustainable development as a guide, and with actual military power as a backing. The connotations of guiding thoughts primarily are reflected in the following four areas.

1. Strengthening national interests

[Karl] Marx pointed out that "Pursuing interests is a motive in all human social activities, and interests have a decisive role in political power." National interests are all the things that satisfy the physical and spiritual needs of all the people of a nation-state; as the times have developed and progressed, national interests have gone beyond narrow geographical boundaries and continually expanded and extended to the oceans and to outer space. In modern China's system of national

interests, the national interests in the maritime sphere have become increasingly important. The development and protection of national interests in the maritime sphere include [the following]. First is to protect the normal operations of the nation's maritime trade and transportation. China's rise depends on the ocean; in the transformation thirty years ago from the planned economy to the market economy, changes in forms of production drove China's development of an "export-oriented economy that relied on maritime accesses." In China's economic and trade relations with the outside, sea and land accesses bore more than ninety-nine percent of the circulation. Currently, China has already become the second largest trading entity in the world, and its large amounts of trade need to be transported at sea; [therefore,] the issue of security for maritime strategic accesses is becoming increasingly prominent. Second is economic activities that support the nation's advance to the oceans and its in-depth exploitation of the seas. As the size of China's economy has expanded more and more, the contradiction between China's limited resources on land and the needs of China's economic development has become increasingly acute, and China needs to use and exploit ocean resources and overseas resources more and more. And the role that maritime strategic accesses play in the transformation from an ocean mercantile civilization toward a maritime industrial civilization is not only not decreasing but instead is becoming more indispensable. Third is ensuring the security of the nation's overseas interests. As the country has further opened to the outside, national interests have rapidly expanded overseas, and their reliance on an overseas economy has continued to grow; the nation's overseas assets have rapidly expanded and grown in value, and there has been a constant increase in the number of Chinese citizens going abroad to do business, to invest, to study, to settle down, or to engage in other activities. The frequency with which they use global maritime strategic accesses has also greatly grown. Fourth is optimizing the nation's maritime geostrategic situation. The PRC's maritime geostrategic environment has a congenital deficiency; in particular, there are a great many places where other people control maritime strategic accesses, and the challenges and risks that [this environment] faces have become ever greater. As an emerging world power, [China] should strive to reverse this passive situation. In summary, the handling of maritime strategic accesses affects the core strategic interests of the nation, and it is necessary to strengthen an awareness of national interests; as regards the nation's behavior, it is not a matter of whether or not we want to do things, but instead, it is necessary to do them, to pay close attention to doing them, and to make an all-out effort to do them.

2. Advocating a harmonious ocean

The concept of security for China's maritime strategic accesses is an organic component part of the grand strategy of China's peaceful rise. It should fully manifest the idea of peaceful development, that is, the development of China's command of the sea should not have seeking to control other countries as its goal, the way traditional maritime hegemonic countries have, it should not have exclusive control over key maritime traffic routes, and it should not use maritime military strengths to force other countries to accept its will; instead, it should [seek] to uphold a fair and just maritime order and its own legitimate maritime rights and interests and to have peaceful use of maritime strategic accesses. In other words, China's use of maritime strategic accesses differs from the form of hegemony that past great nations have pursued but rather is completely new thinking that jointly shares development opportunities, that jointly deals with threats and

challenges, and that jointly promotes peace, development, and cooperation, in accordance with the basic interests of the peoples of each nation. To do this, China is actively advocating the idea of a harmonious ocean, and it treats this program as the overall line of peaceful development's basic manifestation in the direction of maritime development.

At the summit for the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the UN, Chairman Hu Jintao solemnly proposed to the international community the concept of a harmonious world with lasting peace and joint prosperity. At a parade marking the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of China's navy, Chairman Hu Jintao further proposed creating a harmonious ocean. In regard to a developing power like China, whose development is fast and whose security situation is extremely complicated, building a harmonious, secure, and stable international maritime environment is a major and long-term strategic task. Since the 1990s, Chinese leaders have proposed a new security concept whose core is "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation;" they have advocated resolving international confrontations through dialogue and cooperation; and they have avoided resorting to armed force or to threats using armed force. In January 2011, State Chairman Hu Jintao made a state visit to the United States and signed a joint statement with US President [Barack] Obama, affirming that China and the United States "were committed to jointly striving to build a cooperative partnership relationship with mutual respect, mutual benefit, and win-win." This became the position for the world's most important bilateral relationship in the 21st century; from the "constructive strategic partnership" of the [Bill] Clinton period in the 1990s to the "strategic competitor," "constructive cooperative relationship," and "stakeholder" of the [George W.] Bush period in the first ten years of the 21st century, and again to the current "mutual respect, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperative partnership," the PRC-US relationship has been a new development model of interrelationship that for the first time in human history was established between a traditional power and a newly emerging great nation, not through war but through cooperation. Advocating the elimination of Cold War thinking and achieving mutual development have become China's most important diplomatic thinking. Under the guidance of thoughts for establishing a harmonious world, China seeks to protect the security of the expansion of Chinese interests through forms of cooperation and win-win; ensuring the security of maritime strategic accesses primarily involves considerations about the following four points.

First, China's basic position for dealing with the expansion of national interests along the ocean direction and for using maritime strategic accesses does not avoid things and is not negative; it faces up to all major challenges that maritime security faces, and it actively deals with these from the strategic heights of the nation's long-term development and the grand revival of the Chinese people. Second, for China to expand its national interests along the ocean direction; it cannot again follow the path that previous great nations have trod, that is, seeking hegemony and using gunboat diplomacy to instigate large-scale wars at sea and global turbulence. The age of using military [guns] to conquer the world has passed, and what China seeks is a completely new thinking through jointly sharing opportunities for developing the oceans, jointly dealing with maritime threats and challenges, and pushing for mankind to jointly and peacefully use maritime strategic accesses, in accordance with the basic interests of the peoples of the various countries. Third is deepening cooperation in the joint use and joint protection of maritime strategic accesses. Currently, the various countries of the world have many mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral security

cooperation at sea, but not all cooperation mechanisms can achieve actual effects. Maritime strategic accesses have the nature of being international and public; they are not purely a benefit for any given country but rather are intersections of the interests of many countries. Therefore, there is a greater possibility of getting concerns by various countries to become cohesive in regard to cooperation on maritime strategic accesses, and there is a greater [possibility] of these becoming real and relevant. For example, the maritime accesses of the Straits of Malacca, the Taiwan Strait, the Bashi Channel, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Panama Canal are not only strategic chokeholds for Chinese maritime transportation, but the United States, Japan, South Korea, and other countries also view them as the lifelines of their interests. The overlapping and intersection of these security interests have resulted in mutual concern and mutual restraint. If a single country or bloc of countries wants to independently control maritime strategic accesses, this would be both dangerous and impossible; Somali piracy, which was very small, upset the world and made it restless, not to mention how many calamities confrontations among the major nations at sea would bring about for the world. Only through cooperation, dialogue, and jointly building maritime security mechanisms, using cooperation to ensure security, can responsible great nations achieve the peaceful use of maritime accesses and achieve win-win and what can be called “if there is cooperation, then both benefit, while if there is fighting, then both will be harmed.” In the security bottlenecks in maritime strategic accesses that Chinese strategic interests have encountered in the process of outward expansion, it is hard to avoid contradictions and conflicts occurring with relevant countries; in regard to this, [China] should seek common ground while reserving differences, strengthen confidence, and adhere to peaceful forms, in accordance with the principles of “mutual respect, consultations on the basis of equality, and cooperation and win-win,” rather than resolving these in the form of confrontation. This would be better able to achieve the objective of a harmonious ocean and be more able to suit the interests at sea of great nations. Fourth, the international ocean order is not a static concept but rather an idea that is developing. The struggles by the various countries over maritime concepts and interests have been transformed from struggling over land by means of the oceans to struggling over the oceans themselves; the concept of the ocean has undergone major changes, and it has begun to enter a new stage involving the large-scale and comprehensive exploitation and use of the oceans. Undoubtedly, as the awareness of the oceans and as the exploitation and exploration of the oceans further develop, maritime order will also be modified in a more perfect and more rational way, based on the needs of the various relevant parties and their interests.³⁶² Therefore, the Chinese Government has repeatedly and emphatically pointed out that at the same time that China protects and expands its legitimate maritime rights and interests, it in no way excludes other countries from pursuing their individual maritime interests and especially their maritime access interests.

3. Promoting multilateral cooperation

Throughout the history of the world’s development, every time an up-and-coming great power arises, this has been accompanied by a transformation of the international order and rules. The traditional form of redrawing spheres of influence by means of warfare has become outdated, and

³⁶² Song Dexing and Cheng Fen, “World Leaders and Maritime Order – An Analysis Based on a Concept of Long Cycles,” *World Economic and Political Forum*, 2007, Issue 5, p. 104.

the connotations of national interests and the extensiveness of their extensions have determined that the expansion of the strategic interests of emerging nations must unavoidably have conflicts and collisions with the existing powers in many spaces and many spheres; these reflect a dual nature of confrontation and cooperation. For now, many of the PRC's major overseas interests are concentrated in high-risk regions; security issues involving maritime accesses are scattered about in many sea regions, such as the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Indian Ocean. These face increasingly intense competition from other countries, and frictions and collisions involving interests are increasing each year. In the East China Sea, the PRC has serious disputes with Japan over the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Diaoyu Islands,³⁶³ and the struggle is quite acute; in the South China Sea, the PRC has very heavy disputes with peripheral countries regarding such issues as sovereignty over islands, delineation of the sea region, and exploitation of resources, and the situation in the South China Sea is becoming increasingly complicated. These contradictions and conflicts among countries have the possibility of affecting the security of maritime strategic accesses; on the one hand, the exclusiveness of interests leads to the various great nations finding ways to reduce their opponents' influence and constrain their opponents' development, at the same time that they defend the security of their own maritime accesses. For example, the United States has pushed its strategic front lines forward to the first island chain and has used its powerful military superiority to establish bases close to the maritime accesses in East Asia and Southeast Asia; through its front-line deployments and strategic deterrence, it has achieved its strategic goals of controlling maritime strategic accesses and blocking other countries. On the other hand, the coexistence of the security of various countries' maritime accesses has resulted in them having to focus on local cooperation in order to avoid both of them losing because of struggles over their interests, or even harming multiple parties. Cooperation and contact are strategic issues; as its national interests expand and as contacts with the outside continually deepen, China's concerns over the security of its maritime strategic accesses have grown; it has actively expanded its common interests with other countries regarding the security of maritime strategic accesses, it has striven to mold multilateral security mechanisms for maritime accesses, and it has actively resolved confrontations and contradictions with other great nations that maritime accesses could lead to. This is crucially important to whether China can overcome security bottlenecks in the process of expanding its national strategic interests and achieving a peaceful rise. And as regards China's overall political, economic, military, and diplomatic setup, not only does it need to pay attention to the great nations, but at the same time, it also must do a thorough job of handling relations with countries surrounding maritime accesses. In its geostrategic plans, China should pay especial attention to doing a good job of handling relations with countries that have an important impact on maritime accesses, supporting each other politically, strengthening cooperation economically, and ensuring the security of maritime strategic accesses.

4. Building a maritime order

The current international maritime order bears the historical brand of capitalism and colonialist plundering. At the end of the 15th century, Spain, Portugal, and other early developed capitalist countries formulated the earliest maritime order in order to open the path and doors for plundering

³⁶³ Translator's note: This is the Chinese term for the Senkakus.

the world. Over the subsequent several hundred years, the world's spheres of influence and maritime order were primarily determined by major imperialist powers, such as Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, and subsequently the United States, through bloody wars; what changes in the maritime order abided by was "gunboat policies." After the Second World War ended, US President [Harry] Truman issued the first "continental shelf announcement" {*dalujia gonggao*}, marking the basic end of the period when mankind had been carving up the land for several thousand year, and instead entering an age where [mankind] comprehensively carved up the seas. It opened the curtain of modern maritime conflict, and it strongly assaulted the old maritime order. With the development of modern science and technology, the status that exploitation of sea resources held in the development of countries' economies and society became increasingly important, and the international fight to protect maritime rights and interests and oppose ocean hegemony intensified to an unprecedented degree; the vast numbers of developing countries strongly demanded changing the old maritime order and establishing a new maritime order. It was precisely against this kind of background that the UN passed a new convention on the law of the sea in 1982; international law and international precedent became the basic foundation by which the vast majority of countries in the world protected their maritime rights and interests. As a country whose national interests were rapidly expanding toward the sea, China needed to know and understand international law and maritime law at a deep level and to use these. The *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* ought to become a basic tenet for each country's maritime activities, but because the various countries' interests differ and their understanding of things differs, and in addition because of loopholes that exist in the treaty itself, it is difficult to comprehensively enforce [the convention]. Moreover, under conditions where national interests are continually expanding, China is using the sea and maritime strategic accesses more frequently; it should actively push for improvements to international maritime laws, promote the establishment of a new international maritime order, and establish a just and fair international maritime order. In regards to the many issues that exist in maritime accesses, the PRC should actively push to draft a *Maritime Accesses Law* {*haiyang tongdao fa*} in order to standardize the guidelines for maritime access management and to ensure that maritime accesses are unencumbered; regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, it should resolutely oppose interfering with and damaging maritime accesses and maritime navigation under any excuse. At the same time, China also should prepare to shoulder additional international obligations and responsibilities; to bring greater influence into play in the global spheres of politics, economics, culture, security, and environmental protection; to push for the international maritime order to develop in a direction that is fairer and more rational; and to establish a harmonious ocean with lasting peace and common prosperity.

II. Basic concepts...298

In regard to the security conditions of China's maritime strategic accesses and the challenges that they face, and proceeding from meeting the needs of the expansion of national interests, the basic concepts for handling China's maritime strategic accesses should be both macroscopic and forward-looking in nature. It is necessary to incorporate maritime strategic accesses into the overall

plans for national security. When devising the basic thinking for handling China's maritime strategic accesses, the focus should be on the following several points.

First, proceed from the needs of the expansion of national interests. Production forces are the most dynamic factor for promoting the development and progress of human society, and the expansion of interests is an inevitable requirement for the development of production forces as well as an inevitable choice for a country's development to a certain historical stage. The new security issues that are produced during the process of the expansion of national strategic interests are a threshold that must be squarely faced and stepped over in the process of a great nation's rise. In the history of the rise of the world's great nations, no precedent can be found where one [of these countries] became a world great nation whose national interests were limited to only its homeland. And ensuring the security of maritime accesses involving the expansion of national interests is a basic condition for expanding these national interests; without secure maritime accesses, there is no use talking about the expansion of national interests.

Second, fully recognize the complex situations and challenges that are faced. The expansion of national interests requires having the ability to protect the security of maritime strategic accesses. Thirty years ago, the Chinese economy basically was a self-sufficient, closed economic entity, and the borders of China's security were limited to the homeland, territorial waters, and territorial airspace; the limited amount of overseas trade had little impact on national security nor were there many things that the West could use to lock down the PRC. However, in today's economic globalization, the issue of security for maritime strategic accesses has become one of the important factors restraining countries' economic development. For this reason, we should establish systems of maritime strengths that correspond to the expansion of national interests; enhancing control over maritime strategic accesses and having the ability to use the military are major bottlenecks that the PRC urgently needs to break through for its security.

Third, soberly evaluate the ability and conditions for administering maritime strategic accesses. It is necessary to include the security of maritime strategic accesses in considerations for the overall planning of national security, and it is necessary to integrate changes in the overall international environment and peripheral environment, along with the impact that [these changes] have on the PRC, in order to carry out a comprehensive evaluation. Not only [is it necessary] to objectively and calmly evaluate our own abilities and conditions but it is also necessary to consider issues related to current sea powers. We cannot become a major challenger to the existing hegemonic countries for the sake of pursuing local interests in maritime strategic accesses, but we also cannot have the expansion of national interests and economic development be interfered with and blocked by the outside world just in order to avoid contradictions. In regard to this issue, ways of doing things that are too simplistic and conservative or that are too hasty, radical, or exceeding our abilities at the current stage all can create security predicaments for strategic accesses. Therefore, it is certainly necessary to make plans for the overall situation against the nation's overall political, economic, and military background, and to get an accurate grasp on, make thorough preparations for, and have scenarios for any issues that could be encountered when using maritime strategic accesses.

Fourth, make the best use of our advantages and avoid disadvantages, and improve our own maritime geopolitical situation. Although the PRC is a great sea nation, it faces semi-closed sea

regions, and it has become a country whose access to the sea is severely limited. In order to resolve this problem, it is necessary to fully utilize the geographical advantages of the PRC's long stretches of coastline, to expand the number of coastal ports and their throughput capacity, to increase sea routes, and to continually open up new maritime accesses, as well as to fully utilize friendly cooperation with peripheral countries and to establish complementary interoperable relationships in new aspects of maritime accesses.

Based on the above considerations, the basic concepts in handling China's maritime strategic accesses are [first,] to adhere to the ideas of peaceful development of a harmonious ocean and to strive to construct cooperative mechanisms for maritime strategic accesses, whose goals are multilateral cooperation, mutual advantage, and win-win. [Second, they are] to gradually increase the ability to peacefully use major maritime strategic accesses where the PRC's interests are at stake. [Third, they are] to push for the establishment of a system of international laws on maritime strategic access, which are fair and rational, and to thus keep the world's maritime strategic accesses stable and unencumbered. [Fourth, they are] to establish powerful (and relevant) national maritime strengths in order to deal with crises that could arise in maritime strategic accesses. [Finally, they are] to open up new maritime accesses that form a complete set with land strategic accesses in order to improve the layout and structure of the nation's maritime strategic accesses.

In summary, security issues for maritime strategic accesses in the course of China's rapid development and rise are a major strategic topic that is full of variables and challenges. Therefore, the objectives that the PRC should establish for the security of maritime strategic accesses should also be dynamic, and they should continually be modified alongside the security needs that national interests' expansion has for maritime strategic accesses and alongside changes in the international strategic setup, in order to ensure that the security of expansion is always supported in an effective manner.

III. Basic principles...300

Given China's security perspectives, the basic principles of maritime strategic accesses are the fundamental operating guidelines for the PRC's building and use of maritime strategic accesses, and they are a concrete reflection of the guiding thinking for maritime strategic accesses, under the expansion of national interests. Based on the guiding thinking for maritime strategic accesses, the basic concepts for completing maritime strategic accesses in the future should establish the following fundamental principles.

1. Keep an eye on the overall situation and make complete plans

In planning for the security of the nation's maritime strategic accesses, it is necessary to be closely centered on the basic needs raised by the expansion of national interests; to separate these into differing stages, differing sea regions, and differing targets; to analyze and appraise in-depth the effects that maritime strategic accesses in differing sea regions have on our advancing past the island chains and on our maritime routes; and to methodically place our chess pieces {*tou qi bu zi*}, make meticulous plans, and avoid adopting tit-for-tat methods, thus gradually forming a favorable strategic situation. It is necessary to do a good job of handling the relationships for building and using maritime strategic accesses, between what is current and what is long-term, between the off-shore seas and the high seas, between the southern areas and the northern areas,

and between what is local and what is global. Not only is it necessary to keep the PRC's maritime strategic accesses smooth and safe but it is also necessary to guarantee continued deterrence over maritime accesses.

2. Stress cooperation and have mutual benefit and win-win

The expansion of China's national interests could produce conflicts of interest with other major nations, and these points of conflict and points of collision often are manifested at maritime strategic accesses. In peaceful periods, the primary way to resolve these contradictions is still dialogue, using cooperation to find the benefits that each one is pursuing, and to have a relationship where interests coexist and where the two sides are inseparable {*ni zhong you wo, wo zhong you ni*}, thus changing confrontation into benign competition and using cooperation to seek mutual benefit and win-win. With protecting the nation's period of strategic opportunity as the basic objective, [the PRC should] not lightly adopt confrontational measures. First, it is necessary to adhere to recognized guidelines in international relations, to use current international law as a foundation, and to promote the various countries' mutual trust and cooperation at sea. Second, [it is necessary] to be skilled at seeking common ground while reserving differences and at achieving common security goals through cooperation on maritime security; when necessary, it is possible to sacrifice some local interests and momentary interests in exchange for greater interests. Third, [it is necessary] to be skilled at using a number of means and forms of cooperation – political, economic, diplomatic, and military – at continually broadening new spheres of cooperation for maintaining the security of maritime strategic accesses and at exploring new models of cooperation for the security of maritime accesses.

3. Stress key points and proceed in an orderly and step-by-step manner

The handling of maritime strategic accesses is a quite complex systems engineering; relying on the nation's overall actual strength and its actual military strength, it is necessary to adapt to the nation's development strategy, to coordinate with the nation's military strategy, and to stay consistent with the nation's naval strategy. There are a great many factors that affect the security of maritime strategic accesses, such as the chaos of war and regional conflicts, piracy and terrorism, developments in the political situation of countries bordering on straits, and interference by great nations in straits; a contradiction that is currently fairly prominent is the resolution of piracy and terrorist issues. The PRC navy's sea convoy actions in the Gulf of Aden have continued for three years; this operation has a groundbreaking significance, and we should use this as a turning point in order to actively promote international cooperation and to seek improvements in the security conditions of a maritime access that is of maximum concern to the PRC. Through international cooperation, [we should] improve Somalia's situation where it has no government, develop its economy, improve the lives of its people, and shrink this hotbed breeding ground for piracy and terrorism.

The handling of the security of maritime strategic accesses must stress key points. Based on the conditions of the PRC's maritime security, it is possible to divide this into three situations. The first is to fully respect international laws and international conventions and to rationally use important strategic accesses that are closely related to the nation's development and security. The second is to closely cooperate with the international community, in order to keep important routes involving the nation's economy and trade smooth. The third is to be able to exert influence on the

use of relatively small and alternative maritime routes. It is necessary to pay attention in a focused manner to the first two types of maritime strategic accesses and to increase the intensity of handling them.

4. Protect interests and take the initiative to act

Because important maritime strategic accesses often are traffic thoroughfares that link international routes, once a conflict or large-scale operational action occurs there, it could quite possibly involve third-parties' ships, and it easily could trigger a foreign incident. In particular, certain countries, because of the needs of their own interests, react radically to the PRC's overseas operational actions and even engage in direct military intervention. If this is not handled appropriately, it will lead to the PRC's political and diplomatic struggle being quite passive, and so this requires that we pay attention to the policy nature and strategic nature of struggles.

At the same time as this, the PRC should make active plans for security issues in some important maritime strategic accesses, be skilled at seizing the "strategic high ground" that affects the overall situation of maritime strategic accesses, take the initiative to act, and resolutely work hard when the time is ripe. In regard to great nations' strategic arrangements close to maritime strategic accesses, the PRC must increase its strategic chips for regulating things, through actively shaping and dispersing things or through dispelling pressure from abroad. It must strengthen the deployment of its core strategic strengths so as to maintain an active position in the great nations' strategic games. [It must] build and prepare equipment, personnel, and battlefield systems in a planned, purposeful, and long-term systematic manner so that it is prepared against calamities. When the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses is going to be threatened, [it must] be able to engage in effective deterrence against the enemy, have its naval troop strengths react rapidly, put powerful pressure on the enemy, and force the enemy to abandon his intentions to threaten the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses. At the same time, [it must] actively adopt a number of means, such as bilateral cooperation and multilateral participation, thereby eliminating the hidden dangers of crises as much as possible. [Finally, it must] actively engage in international coordination and strive to increase the points of intersection with relevant countries' interests, seeking the initiative and balance in an intricate and complex relationship of interests.

The aim of China's basic concept of maritime strategic accesses is to form a benign environment and situation that benefit national security and development, that benefit the expansion of national interests, and that benefit the nation's maritime security.

SECTION 2: ACTIVELY PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND FLEXIBLY LAUNCH A STRUGGLE FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PRINCIPLES...303

The issue of maritime strategic accesses is a comprehensive issue, and it involves factors in many geostrategic areas, such as politics, economics, diplomacy, and military matters. In order to break through the dilemma of maritime accesses, it is far from enough to merely rely upon one-sided measures; it is necessary to use many means and to bring into play overall effects. At the same time, it is also necessary to fully utilize the characteristic that maritime accesses have of international sharing, as well as the protection that international legal principles provide for this sharing, and to push for active international cooperation, in order to resolve the contradictions in conflicts of interest regarding the issue of accesses.

I. Promote the establishment of cooperative mechanisms in order to protect the security of maritime strategic accesses...303

Protecting the security of maritime accesses and transportation lines requires a complete set of systems and mechanisms for promoting international cooperation. Only if the various countries of the world strengthen their mutual trust and cooperation can they respond in an effective manner to some unexpected incidents and respond to the challenges of various types of non-traditional security threats. Currently, launching maritime security cooperation has become an irresistible trend.

1. Establish maritime multilateral mechanisms for security cooperation

There are primarily two types of mechanisms for international security cooperation; the first is global while the second is regional. Respectively, these affect security matters within a global and regional scope. But international cooperation mechanisms that focus on maritime strategic accesses are a new form of security cooperation that has emerged in recent years as the economy becomes globalized and as the convergence in accesses of the various countries' interests becomes denser. Only by strengthening confidence and cooperation with each other can the various countries of the world handle some unexpected incidents in a joint and effective manner, and respond to the threats of various non-traditional security challenges. The ASEAN Regional Forum, which was established in July 1993, is the most important as well as the sole official multilateral security dialogue and cooperation mechanism in the East Asia region. It covers the superpower, major regional nations, and biggest regional organizations that have major interests in the East Asia region. The objectives of the three stages of development in the forum's establishment – strengthening confidence measures, launching preventive diplomacy, and establishing mechanisms for resolving conflicts – have played a positive role in promoting the process of multilateral security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and promoting the peace and stability of Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. Of course, we must see that the international community currently still lacks an effective mechanism for multilateral cooperation on maritime security. Relevant countries should reach an agreement on cooperation in protecting maritime strategic accesses; this agreement should include basic maritime cooperation, including cooperation in such projects as the defining of and actions for joint search and rescue, anti-piracy patrols and actions, joint multilateral disaster relief activities, launching environmental protection, and maritime surveillance and mapping.³⁶⁴ Similarly, no mechanism is all-powerful; because the various countries' positions differ and because the various countries' dissensions and disputes over their interests are complicated, feasibility and operability are limited, and it is hard to resolve some real problems. Therefore, the PRC should fully utilize all opportunities for multilateral cooperation, and it should actively engage in contacts and coordination with the various countries [related to] accesses. In particular, it should [reach] concrete agreements on the planning, building, and management of maritime accesses as well as intelligence and information sharing and exchanges, logistics support and guarantees, and joint attacks against illegal maritime activities, thereby

³⁶⁴ Li Bing, "Establishing Mechanisms for International Cooperation in Upholding the Security of Maritime Strategic Accesses," *Contemporary World*, 2006, Issue 2, p. 55.

achieving common security in maritime strategic accesses and reaching the goal of mutual benefit and win-win.

2. Establish warning mechanisms for maritime crises

Looking at current hijacking incidents that have occurred at sea, non-traditional security [threats], such as piracy and maritime terrorism, not only are transnational and invasive in nature, but they also are sudden and uncertain in nature. Once a maritime military crisis occurs, this inevitably will pose a large assault on the security of maritime strategic accesses. International maritime security and stability involve the interests of each nation; taking maritime security as an example, because of the complexity of terrain, the haunting by pirates, the various countries' differing stages of economic and social development, and the extreme gaps in their actual military power, it is not enough for any country to merely rely on its own strengths in order to deal with the increasingly grimmer situation of maritime security, nor can it achieve the goals of preventing and attacking the crimes of international terrorism. When most maritime non-traditional security issues appear, the greatest threat is a lack of early warning and the lack of ability to prevent and handle these. Therefore, intelligence collection and analysis systems are the basis for crisis-handling mechanisms; we should earnestly enhance the ability to collect and analyze the intelligence that maritime counterterrorism needs and strengthen information and intelligence sharing at each level and in each sphere. And the building of crisis early warning and management mechanisms is the only way by which we can actively respond to and reduce in an effective manner maritime non-traditional security [threats]. [These mechanisms] have very strong relevance, they help to make exchanges and contacts among the various countries closer, they reduce opposition and conflicts caused by misunderstandings and impediments to information, and they promote mutual information exchanges and understanding. For example, the *Agreement on Regional Cooperation on Combating Piracy and Armed Hijacking of Ships in Asia*, which went into effect on 4 September 2006, is the first intergovernmental cooperation mechanism in Asia for maritime security; sixteen countries and regions are participating, including China, Japan, South Korea, India, and ASEAN. In accordance with the arrangements of this mechanism, an Anti-Piracy Information Sharing Center was established in Singapore; its responsibility is to provide maritime information in all weathers, in order to help the governments of the various countries in this region to attack pirates and maritime terrorists. These countries need to undertake the duties of information exchanges on piracy incidents and of helping and assisting each other in actions to attack piracy. Under the mutual efforts of relevant countries in this region, piracy attack incidents in the Southeast Asian sea region have displayed a tendency to greatly decline; there were only sixty-three incidents in 2008, of which ten attacks were abortive.³⁶⁵

3. Establish mechanisms for resolving maritime disputes

Because of the implementation of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Seas* and for various historical and current real reasons, contradictions and disputes unavoidably exist among coastal countries and especially among countries close to maritime accesses, involving controversies about the sovereignty and jurisdiction over islands and about the delineation of sea areas. Relying

³⁶⁵ Li Bing, "Establishing Mechanisms for International Cooperation in Upholding the Security of Maritime Strategic Accesses," *Contemporary World*, 2006, Issue 2, p. 54.

merely upon armed force or upon the threat of armed force to properly handle and resolve these disputes is clearly inappropriate; they must be resolved peacefully and through consultations on the basis of equality, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence and in compliance with charters, conventions, and agreements that the UN and other international organizations have passed. Currently, the PRC has disputes over maritime rights and interests with peripheral countries over the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea sea regions. For many years, the PRC has consistently tried to resolve these disputes using peaceful dialogue, and it has achieved some phased {*jieduanxing*} results in certain sea regions, which has played a positive role in resolving contradictions in an effective manner. But there are still some disputes and differences that have yet to be resolved, and prolonged disputes have created distrust among countries, and this inevitably has had a direct impact on the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses. A British expert on maritime issues, Lai-fu,³⁶⁶ views "disputes among neighboring countries over overlapping regions at sea" as one of the three main factors threatening the security of maritime accesses. Therefore, prior to the effective resolution of disputes over territory, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zones, the PRC should actively explore the establishment of bilateral or multilateral mechanisms for resolving disputes over maritime interests in order to avoid an intensification of disputes and contradictions over maritime interests that unilaterally taking measures could lead to. Timely resolution of disputes between the PRC and various other countries that appear over various maritime interests will let the PRC's maritime strategic accesses have a stable security environment. For example, a series of announcements about cooperation that [the PRC] signed with ASEAN in November 2002 not only helped to greatly reduce the possibility of conflicts arising between the two sides because of disputes over interests but it also facilitated China's joining hands with Southeast Asian countries to attack illegal maritime activities, so they jointly upheld the security of maritime strategic accesses.

4. Establish international anti-piracy mechanisms

As a global threat, pirate activities of course have become a target of concern and attack by the international community. Facts prove that the piracy issue is something far from the ability of a single country to ultimately resolve; no country can escort every single ship of its own, and only by strengthening coordination and cooperation by the military strengths of each country, by having them jointly draft and execute effective patrol mechanisms for attacking pirates, and by having them coordinate and cooperate in operations, is it possible to reduce pirate activities. Current international anti-piracy mechanisms primarily consist of three parts: international anti-piracy laws and regulations, the International Maritime Organization, and regional anti-piracy cooperative mechanisms. International anti-piracy laws and regulations are the basis for all international anti-piracy mechanisms; international conventions are a part that plays a long-term role, but relevant Security Council resolutions directly specify the responsibilities of member states' anti-piracy activities and provide these with legitimacy. Currently, international conventions that are related to anti-piracy primarily consist of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* and the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation*. In addition, the *2005 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation*

³⁶⁶ Translator's note: This is the Chinese transliteration of a British name, possible Laver.

and the *Protocol for the Suppression of the Safety of Fixed Platforms on the Continental Shelf* include details on counterterrorism and preventing proliferation, and they also play a certain role in international anti-piracy affairs. Relevant resolutions passed by the UN Security Council also play an increasingly important role in international anti-piracy activities. After June 2008, as Somali piracy activities became increasingly rampant, the UN Security Council passed four resolutions, one after the other. In particular, Resolution 1851, which was passed unanimously on 16 December 2008, not only recognized the authority of previous resolutions, where foreign navies could enter Somali territorial waters to attack pirate activities once they have received the permission of the Somali transitional government, but it also authorized relevant countries and international organizations to engage in land-based anti-piracy activities, when necessary.³⁶⁷ This provided legitimacy and a motive for the various countries' and international organizations' anti-piracy activities, and China has actively participated in the implementation of these conventions, protocols, and resolutions. In addition, regional or sub-regional multilateral cooperative mechanisms also play an important role in attacking pirate activities. For example, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore signed an agreement in 2004, forming the Malacca Straits patrols (MSP) Joint Coordinating Committee; this formally launched maritime joint unified patrols in order to ensure the security of this international sea transport access. Following Thailand's accession, this anti-piracy mechanism includes four countries.³⁶⁸ Starting in September 2005, the three coastal countries along the Straits of Malacca announced the launching in the Straits of Malacca area of airborne joint patrols codenamed "Eyes in the Sky" in order to protect the security of the Straits of Malacca. The reason that pirate activities in the Southeast Asian sea region have been decreasing each year is closely related to the anti-piracy efforts of these multilateral cooperation mechanisms.

II. Flexible use of legal means to protect the interests of maritime strategic accesses...307

The *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* (hereinafter abbreviated as the "*Convention*"), which was passed in 1982, formally went into effect on 16 November 1994. As of March 2007, 153 countries had formally acceded to the *Convention*.³⁶⁹ On 15 May 1996, the PRC's National People's Congress Standing Committee ratified this convention, and the PRC became a member state of this convention. The *Convention* is an international maritime code; its birth and going into effect marked that the new international maritime order will have a major and profound influences on the world's economic and social development. Among these [influences], modern maritime law will have a direct influence on regulations related to the system of passage through differing sea regions and straits and to the security of maritime strategic accesses. For the PRC, the crucial issue in maritime strategic accesses is whether it is possible to ensure free and secure passage through maritime strategic accesses that are relevant to the PRC and to ensure the security of maritime routes. However, using international maritime law to protect the PRC's maritime accesses interests

³⁶⁷ Security Council SC/9541, <http://www.un.org/New/Press/docs/2008/sc9541.doc.htm>, accessed on 30 December 2008.

³⁶⁸ Zhang Jiadong, *The State of World Piracy Activities and the Building of International Anti-Piracy Mechanisms*, *Modern International Relations*, 2009, Issue 1, p. 33.

³⁶⁹ Shu Zhenya, "A Brief Discussion on Certain Development Trends in International Maritime Law," in Gao Zhiguo, Zhang Haiwen, and Jia Yu, chief editors, *Studies on Development Trends in International Maritime Law*, Ocean Press, 2007, p. 187.

involves many difficulties, such as how to not only keep from being controlled by others but also how to respond [to things] in an effective manner, how to actively take the initiative but also how to have a firm grasp on measuring things {chidu}, and how to not only pay attention to what is current but also how to pay attention to what is long-term, [all of which] are seemingly contradictory requirements; this requires that we engage in dialectical thinking.

1. Do a good job of handling the relationship between “being controlled by others” {shou zhi yu ren} and “maintaining rights and interests” {zhuzhang quan yi} and clearly advocate the PRC’s legitimate right of using maritime accesses

China’s access to the Pacific and the Indian Ocean must pass through a series of important international straits. In addition to such factors as the sovereignty and jurisdiction that countries on the coasts of the straits have over the accesses under their jurisdiction, there are also the control and struggles over these [straits] by the world’s sea powers. Currently, some countries close to straits have proposed positions on maritime rights and interests, through domestic legislation, that go beyond the scope of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, and they have strengthened their management and control over their various adjacent sea regions. An example is the Osumi Strait and Miyako Strait that Japan controls; although Japan has “three nautical miles of territorial waters over these important international sailing straits, and it sets aside high-seas channels for ships, still, when PRC ships are entering and leaving the straits, they are regularly followed, reconnoitered, surveilled, and interfered with by sea powers’ ships and aircraft. The Philippines is an archipelagic nation, and it should open all the maritime accesses within the sea regions of its islands to international [ships], without attaching conditions. However, the Philippines still identifies the Balintang Channel and the Babuyan Channel within the Sembawan Strait as internal Philippines waters, and when warships pass through, they must solicit agreement from the Philippines. However, looking at the provisions of the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, the Philippines’ domestic law clearly does not accord with current international law. It can be seen from this that in today’s world, where peace and development are the main themes, even though the possibility of war is being reduced and is decreasing, still, it looks even more as if sea powers are using international law to restrain some countries. If [these restraints] are small, [the powers just] exhibit their presence; if [these restraints] are large, [the powers] engage in military blockades and economic sanctions. This shows that even if there are no wars, sea powers still can achieve their goals, through blockades, intervention, or threats.

Therefore, it is quite important to do a good job of handling the relationship between “being controlled by others” and “maintaining rights and interests.” At the same time that we study how to use international maritime law to protect ourselves in wartime, we must consciously study how to use international law in an effective manner in peacetime in order to strengthen warships’ and merchant ships’ use of passage through relevant straits as well as countermeasures for this. We should also introduce relevant domestic laws and regulations that favor the PRC, such as drafting a system of straits passage that not only earnestly supports the rights of coastal countries along the straits but that also benefits the security and smoothness of international navigation, in order to maximize the use of maritime strategic accesses.

2. Do a good job of handling the relationship between “taking the initiative” and responding” and actively strengthen the existence of legal principles for disputes

Because the interests of great nations and the interests of military alliance blocs have existed for long periods of time in the proximity of maritime accesses, because the naval and air force troop strengths that exist in sea regions surrounding straits almost saturate [these regions], and because some maritime accesses do not have mature and effective crisis management and control mechanisms, it is hard to find out about sea and air situations that break out in these accesses and in the sea regions surrounding them, and about the direction of their development, and it is hard to draw the line on the degree to which these are handled. Speaking from [the angle of] international law and the theory of international relations, these situations of existing and potential confrontations [involving] disorderly {*wu xu*} troop strengths that saturate [the regions] are extremely dangerous and are extremely unfavorable to the stable development of international relations; they are also extremely unfavorable to the economic development of the various nations, and each side’s naval and air force troop strengths must be extraordinarily cautious in their activities.

In the future, as regards the maritime strategic accesses in the first island chain, the PRC should do a good job of handling the relationship between “taking the initiative” and “responding,” and it can take the initiative to adopt some active action measures {*xingdong cuoshi*}. First, it displays a necessary military presence. The Chinese navy holds routine military exercises each year in the East China Sea and the South China Sea; these military exercises have important and broad-ranging strategic significance, and they highlight that the PRC’s navy has the ability to break out of the first island chains and that it has the confidence and ability to protect PRC maritime rights and interests. At the same time, it also shows that China is not afraid to declare its right to freely cut across [the first island chain]. Second, the Chinese navy also should launch diplomatic talks and consultations with the countries surrounding accesses regarding the piracy issue in the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca, and the Gulf of Aden. For example, through participating in international actions to attack Somali piracy and engaging in consultations and cooperation with various countries, [the PRC] has raised its status as a great nation and brought into play its role as a great nation. In actuality, [the issue] of how to use international law requires being wise; countries with differing actual power have differing interpretations and uses [of international law]. The writer believes that international law will always be a two-edged sword and is equally applicable to each party at sea. However, being equally applicable in no way means that it produces equally normative effects. Looking at large numbers of historical experiences, international law favors the party at sea that is good at planning, and it is also more biased in favor of the party whose actual strength is greater.

3. Actively participate in international legislation and protect in an effective manner the nation’s rights of access

Any country has rights and responsibilities, and it engages in innovations in international law using active practices {*jiji shijian*}. In particular, given the circumstances of today’s international legal system that is centered on Western countries, China must actively participate in the international legislative process and cooperation, [in order] to protect its national interests; in active practices, [it must] participate in creating new international laws and regulations.

First is to launch a rational struggle, to protect relevant rights, and in active practices, to participate in and create new international laws and regulations. For example, Indonesia engages in an island sea region management system in the Sunda Strait. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union used international maritime law to struggle against Indonesia for a twenty-nautical mile “unobstructed right of underwater passage.” In accordance with the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, and drawing support from political and diplomatic channels, the PRC could obtain similar rights. Currently, when many coastal countries stipulate rights of innocent passage for merchant ships, they generally require permission in advance for passage, and they stipulate a system where the navigation is divided up {*fen hang zhi*} and establish certain report points. Just as in the English Channel, when passing ships pass stipulated inspection points, they must report, so that the coastal countries have a grasp on the conditions of the up to a thousand ships that transit each day. The PRC also should refine its system for ships’ innocent passage through its territorial waters, particularly in regard to the issue of warships’ innocent passage through its territorial waters, making this more operable. Second is to increase its cooperation in international counterterrorism. [It should] support the UN and especially the Security Council in bringing their dominant role into play, and [it should] support and participate in the work of drafting *A Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism* and *An International Convention on Preventing Acts of Nuclear Terrorism*. At the same time as this, [it should] actively promote new security concepts whose core is “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation,” and [it should] strive to form customary laws and thus form just and rational new international laws and relations and a new order. Third is that the navy needs to correctly use international law in order to protect the security of maritime strategic accesses. When naval troop strengths enter foreign countries’ territorial waters or their inland ports and exclusive economic zones, they need to abide by international law and coastal countries’ domestic laws and to correctly use the laws and the rules of engagement on warships’ passage through straits, waterways, and air defense identification zones.

SECTION 3: INCREASE THE BUILDING OF CORE STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FIRM SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING NATIONAL INTERESTS...310

In the new historical period, the maritime security situation will present many new features, primarily manifested as [the following]. [First is] disputes over maritime rights and interests and the maritime military crises that these will lead to, with a tendency for many military conflicts surrounding straits and waterways. [Second,] traditional threats and non-traditional threats will coexist, but non-traditional threats will tend to continually increase. [Finally,] the navies of the various countries will not only struggle with each other but will also stress cooperation, in order to protect their maritime interests. Under these kinds of conditions, the PRC navy’s tasks for protecting national interests are not only more arduous but they also require new thoughts about use. Not only is it necessary to win local wars at sea under informationized conditions but it is also necessary to actively engage in naval military actions other than war and to strive to restrain military crises at sea and military conflicts from occurring. This presents even greater demands on building the navy’s core strategic capabilities.

I. Strengthen strategic traction and expand missions and tasks...311

Regardless of whether it is wartime or peacetime, the navy's development always shares the joys and sorrows of national interests. The PRC is a great maritime nation; in defending national sovereignty and security and in protecting the PRC's maritime rights and interests, the navy's status is important, its duties are great, and its missions are glorious. Faced with an increasingly grim security situation for maritime accesses, using the navy's troop strengths to protect the security of the PRC's maritime accesses has become an objective requirement in conscientiously carrying out the PRC military's historic mission in the new period, as well as one of the pressing tasks that the PRC's navy faces in the new stage.

1. Reinforcing the security of maritime strategic accesses is a new requirement for the PRC navy's missions and tasks

Enhancing the navy's military ability to comprehensively carry out its missions and tasks and promoting the overall transformation of the navy's building are a strategic decision that Chairman Hu Jintao has made in his scientific analysis of the expansion of national interests and of the objective conditions for the navy's development. In December 2004, Chairman Hu pointed out when discussing the military's historic mission in the new century and the new stage, that our national interests are currently expanding toward the sea, toward outer space, and toward electromagnetic spaces; it is necessary to expand our perspective on security strategy and military strategy, and not only is it necessary to pay attention to and defend the nation's right of existence but it is also necessary to pay attention to and defend the nation's development rights. [Moreover,] not only is it necessary to pay attention to and defend territorial security, the security of territorial waters, and the security of territorial airspace but it is also necessary to pay attention to and defend maritime security, outer space security, and electromagnetic security, as well as national security in other areas. [Hu] particularly stressed that "The seas are major accesses for international contacts and a treasury of strategic resources for mankind's sustainable development. Regardless of whether it is promoting development or defending national security, the PRC has huge strategic interests in ocean spaces."³⁷⁰ Therefore, in the new century and the new stage, the military "must provide important guarantees for consolidating the Party's power, it must provide powerful security guarantees for safeguarding the important strategic opportunity for national development, it must provide vigorous strategic support for upholding national interests, and it must bring into play its role in safeguarding world peace and promoting development in common."

Today, when the world economy is becoming integrated, the development of the world economy is happening within a world economic system that is unified, and no country can develop on its own outside of this system; China, with its thirty years of reform and opening up, is no exception. Apart from the country's carrying out a strategy of "going global" and from its dual heads of "raw materials and markets," the country's reliance on overseas markets, raw materials, and maritime accesses has increased; maritime transportation bears more than two-thirds of the wealth and ninety-seven percent of foreign trade, thus becoming the "aorta" of the nation's economic development. As the economy, trade, and overseas investment and cooperation have developed, there has been a corresponding extension and expansion of national interests. Against

³⁷⁰ *Liberation Army Daily*, 21 October 2005, p. 6.

the background of economic globalization, the nation's "border security" {*bianjie anquan*} and "security borders" {*anquan bianjie*} are manifested even more prominently;³⁷¹ security interests and economic interests go far beyond the nation's territorial boundaries, extending to almost every corner of the world. And maritime strategic accesses are important media and links for expanding overseas interests; militarily, control of maritime strategic accesses means having command of the sea, in order to achieve the strategic goal that wherever national interests expand, our security needs to go there, and naval strengths must extend there.

2. Strengthening the security of maritime strategic accesses is a new manifestation of the PRC navy's completing its diversified military tasks

In his report at the 17th General Congress of the [Chinese Communist] Party, and based on the characteristic that national security has become even more comprehensive, complex, and variable under the new situation, Chairman Hu Jintao stressed the military's historic mission of "providing three things and bringing one thing into play." He proposed the important thesis that it is necessary to "enhance the military's ability to respond to multiple security threats and to fulfill diverse military tasks." Upholding the security of maritime strategic accesses is a concrete manifestation of the navy's responding to multiple security threats and fulfilling diverse military tasks.

In recent years, threats in non-traditional security spheres have become increasingly prominent; piracy and terrorism have caused exceedingly serious harm to world shipping, international trade, and maritime security. According to a yearly report issued by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), in 2009, pirates attacked 406 passing ships throughout the entire world; they launched a total of 217 attacks in Somalia, making up more than half of the total number of piracy activities in 2009.³⁷² This was almost twice the 123 [attacks] in 2008, and this route is an important trade route that links the PRC with the entire European Union region. Based on international law, the PRC dispatched warships to the Gulf of Aden and the Somali sea region in order to carry out escort tasks. These protected the security of Chinese ships and personnel sailing through this region of the sea as well as the security of ships by which the World Food Program or other international organizations were transporting humanitarian materials, either by escorts that accompanied them or by escorts within a region. This instance of going to the Gulf of Aden for escort tasks was the first time that the PRC had used military strengths to go overseas to protect national strategic interests; it was the first time that the PRC military had organized maritime operations strengths to go overseas to carry out international humanitarian responsibilities; and it was the first time that the PRC navy protected the security of important transportation lines in distant seas. This marked the first time that the Chinese navy carried out combat tasks on the high seas far from its homeland, and it also marked the first time that the Chinese navy joined the ranks in multilateral international security actions. It was a new practice whereby the navy responded in peacetime to multiple

³⁷¹ "Border security" and "the borders of security:" the former is sovereign security or territorial security, while the latter is interests security. The former is limited, while the latter is unlimited; the farther away the security of borders is, the more support there is for border security. Refer to Zhang Wenmu, *On China's Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, p. 91.

³⁷² "International Maritime Bureau Says Somali Pirates Launched 217 Attacks in 09," <http://news.qq.com/20100115/0000105.htm>, 3 April 2010.

security threats and completed diverse military tasks; even more, it was a completely new use of the navy in protecting the security of maritime strategic accesses.

3. Strengthening the security of maritime strategic accesses is a new symbol of the PRC navy's ability for defensive operations in distant seas

As the PRC's export-oriented economy, which relies on the sea, has developed, as the national economy's dependence on the outside has continually grown, and as the size of the country's export trade and maritime economy has continually expanded, the nation's development interests have rapidly expanded in the direction of the sea. In the 21st century, as the PRC's interests in the maritime direction continually expand, the northern part of the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific sea region will become important spaces for the PRC's maritime interests. The PRC's maritime economic activities, such as overseas investments, exports of labor overseas, and oil and gas exploitation, will also be primarily concentrated in West Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. As the PRC continually expands its strategic interests toward the maritime direction, it will inevitably encounter various threats and challenges, and given that the navy is the main protective strength for national sovereignty and interests in the maritime direction, its missions and tasks also will continually add new connotations, because of the needs of the expansion of national interests. The navy has undergone sixty years of building and development; the navy's abilities for offshore integrated operations have basically taken shape, and this has laid a firm foundation for [the navy's] transformation toward defense in distant seas. However, judging by the current situation, the PRC navy's abilities for activities and its abilities for operations in distant seas still have a fairly big gap with the duties it carries out in an effective manner for protecting the security of the nation's strategic accesses for its maritime industries, its maritime transportation, and its energy resources, and [the navy] still is unable to satisfy the mission requirements that the national interests' continual expansion place on the navy.

Currently, if the PRC navy is to carry out and execute its new missions and tasks, it must possess powerful defense strengths for distant seas, it must have the ability to protect the expansion of national interests and the security of maritime routes in all international sea regions that affect the PRC's national security and interests, and [it must] have the ability to evacuate overseas [PRC] nationals. As regards the development of weapons and equipment, it will give traction to building various projects for the navy's abilities [to engage in] defensive operations in distant seas, using enhancement of the ability to defend the security of maritime strategic accesses in an effective manner as a breakthrough point, and thus gradually increasing the navy's abilities for defensive operations in distant seas. On 26 December 2008, China dispatched its first fleet of naval ships to the Gulf of Aden and the Somali sea region to engage in escort tasks; protecting the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses is a creative practical activity for carrying out the navy's defensive operations actions in distant seas, and this inevitably will vigorously promote the building and development of the PRC navy's abilities for defensive operations in distant seas and its effective defense of the nation's security and development interests in the maritime direction.

II. Stressing key points of development and enhancing overall capabilities...314

Chairman Hu Jintao has clearly pointed out, "Build a powerful people's navy that is commensurate with the nation's status and that is adapted to the requirements for carrying out the

PRC military's historic mission in the new century and new stage." "We must expand the perspective of our security strategy and military strategy; not only must we pay attention to and protect the nation's survival interests but we must also pay attention to and protect the nation's development interests."³⁷³ For this, in order to enhance the navy's protection of the security of maritime accesses, the navy should stress the building of its strengths in distant seas and enhance its ability for integrated operations in distant seas.

1. Stress developing the navy's building of its defense abilities in distant seas

[Alfred Thayer] Mahan pointed out that in order to control commercial routes, it is necessary to have two strategic key factors; the first is a mobile navy, and the second is ports that are close to these routes, to serve as bases for naval actions. Currently, in regard to the expansion of the PRC's overseas interests, most of the routes for the PRC's overseas energy strategic accesses, apart from lines close to itself, are along international lines or in sea regions that are handling by other countries; some key chokepoint routes are thoroughfares in straits that are not "internationalized," and it is necessary to obtain maritime passage rights through friendly consultations and mutual advantage. The challenges and threats that the PRC's security interests and development interests face have already expanded to the sea regions of distant seas, and this requires that the navy must expand the scope of its strategic use in order to defend national interests and maritime rights and interests over broader sea regions. As regards military matters, if there are no mobile capabilities for operations in distant seas, then there will be no ability to deter and choke off {*e kong*} wars and war situations; this is an ironclad law.

The PRC's maritime routes are long, and their tasks of carrying things are heavy; in order to ensure the security of strategic routes and accesses, it is necessary to maintain effective strengths in the ocean for mobile maritime operations so as to have a fairly favorable basis for strategic defense and to have a rapid reaction ability that can move along a fairly large number of directions and over a fairly broad sea region, thus completing necessary tasks for escort operations. Using aircraft carrier groups to control maritime strategic accesses has always been an important means by which the world's major sea powers [have done this]; for example, during the Second World War, the United Kingdom used its fleet formations to protect its traffic lines in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, through controlling maritime accesses. Today, the world's sea powers carry out cruises and patrols in some important sea regions and straits in the world's oceans; for example, the US Navy perennially maintains certain mobile troop strengths close to the world's important maritime strategic accesses in order to ensure its control over these maritime strategic accesses. Although Russia's navy is not as good now as it was before, still, in order to exercise the influence it should have in areas of its important interests, it still regularly or occasionally dispatches fleets to the oceans to carry out patrols and military exercises. As the Chinese navy shoulders the heavy burden of protecting the nation's constantly expanding maritime interests and the security of maritime strategic accesses, there is an ever-greater need for the navy to have the necessary ability for defensive operations in distant seas; this requires developing distant seas-type main troop strengths and achieving leaps in the navy's capabilities for strategic deployments and for integrated

³⁷³ "In Accordance with the Principles of Unifying Making Things Revolutionary, Modern, and Regular, Forge a Powerful People's Navy that Is Suited to the PRC Military's Historic Mission," *Liberation Army Daily*, 28 December 2006, p. 1.

offense and defense. On the one hand, it should make fairly major adjustments to its existing naval organizational structures and systems; on the other hand, [it should] emphasize the development of troop strengths and weapons needed for defensive operations in distant seas, the formation of mobile strengths for distant seas, and the ability to carry out offensive and defensive operations tasks in ocean regions.

2. Stress developing the building of naval informationized capabilities

As mankind's understanding of the oceans has gradually deepened, the pace at which the various countries of the world have exploited and used the oceans has also continually quickened; obtaining various ocean information resources, and especially ocean information resources related to maritime strategic accesses, has increasingly become an important way by which the various countries of the world, and especially the various great sea nations, use and control the ocean. Therefore, having information operations and support capabilities, such as intelligence and reconnaissance, early warning and probes, and navigation and positioning, will make the sea battlefield more transparent. In the several recent local wars, more than ninety percent of battlefield intelligence came from satellite reconnaissance. This shows that satellite systems contributed to such operations links as battlefield reconnaissance, long-range precision target indications, and evaluation of the effects of attacks; this provided vigorous support for nations that possess satellites as they struggled for information dominance on the battlefield. Given that the PRC's current level at which the navy has built informationization is low, and its information operations capabilities are weak, there is clearly a gap with the navies of developed countries like the United States and Japan. In informationized naval warfare, air and space information platforms will become the "high ground" of information support for warfare; whoever controls this "high ground" will be able to seize information dominance, thereby creating conditions for command of the air and command of the sea. Loss of this information support means loss of a superior position strategically and loss of the strategic initiative. Strengthening the building of informationized capabilities of the PRC's relevant sea regions and maritime strategic accesses requires increasing investment in troop strengths for informationized operations in distant seas, on a proportionally balanced basis, in order to show its presence and to deter threats and damage that an enemy could pose to the security of the PRC's maritime accesses. With a focus on enhancing reconnaissance and early warning capabilities and command and control capabilities under informationized conditions and with a focus on strengthening military command and information systems, satellite maritime surveillance and early warning capabilities, and command and control capabilities, it is necessary to strengthen the building of military command and information systems, satellite maritime surveillance systems, and digitized sea battlefields, in order to enhance such abilities as the early warning, reconnaissance, communications, command, and semi-global navigation {*zhun quanqiu daohang*} that are needed for winning maritime local wars under informationized conditions.

3. Stress developing maritime mobile support capabilities

Under modern conditions, the operational capabilities of a military are not only determined by the number of combatant troop strengths and the superiority or inferiority of its weapons and equipment, but to a very great degree, they are also determined by how high or low its support capabilities are. Throughout the several local wars that have occurred since the Second World War, in analyzing the reasons that the combatants won or lost, whether support systems were scientific

and sound or not and whether the means of support were advanced and reliable or not had a major impact on the course and outcome of the wars. Currently, the PRC's navigation lines at sea are long and the dangers are great, and the PRC navy's escort formations spend longer periods of time at sea escorting [ships], over a broad scope, and they rapidly consume materials; this requires obtaining timely supplements. Whether it is possible or not to supply formations at sea in a timely manner will directly affect the smoothness of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses. The scope of activities whereby the PRC navy protects overseas interests and uses troop strengths basically is primarily in distant seas; the distance of activities is easily up to 10,000 nautical miles, and carrying out a single regular patrol can require several months of time. This requires that the PRC's navy must have very strong capabilities for comprehensive support at sea. However, looking at the PRC navy's existing equipment, there is still a fairly major gap in its support capabilities. Based on the PRC's needs for protecting maritime strategic accesses and the security of lines at sea in the future, the navy must speed up enhancing its abilities for integrated support at sea and enhance the efficiency of support that accompanies [ships] at sea.

4. Stress developing the ability for strategic deployments in distant seas

In order to achieve the goal of protecting the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses in an effective manner, the PRC's navy must have certain abilities to deploy strengths. In actuality, "the ability to defend the rights and interests of free trade in overseas energy is determined by how distant or near the ability for overseas military deployment is. Without an ability for overseas military deployment, the protection of overseas trade is merely a piece of paper."³⁷⁴ Therefore, protecting the security of maritime strategic accesses requires having a certain ability to deploy strengths in distant seas, before it is possible to undertake the missions and tasks in an effective manner of protecting the security of the PRC's maritime strategic accesses. First, it is necessary to be able to respond to non-traditional security threats. Pirates and terrorists who have been active at sea for long periods of time rely on their geographical superiority to move around close to the PRC's principle routes and to plunder and destroy the PRC's passing ships. In dealing with these forces, it will be hard [for the PRC] to take practical measures if it lacks a certain ability to deploy troop strengths. Second, by using the PRC's maritime strengths, it is possible to carry out escorts that accompany the PRC's merchant ships or regional escorts [for these ships], close to relevant maritime strategic accesses, and to carry out effective monitoring; once there is an incident, the PRC can rapidly react and better protect the PRC's interests in distant seas. Third, it is possible to remedy to a certain extent the PRC's insufficiencies, in that it does not have overseas military bases. Currently, the PRC does not have anchorages and supply points that it can use at any time in crucial sea regions; this inevitably will affect and restrain the PRC navy's effective actions for protecting the security of maritime strategic accesses. And having the ability to deploy strengths of a certain scale or even ones that are fairly powerful will to a very great degree make up for the serious deficiencies in this area. Fourth, when the situation in crucial straits is turbulent, in response to invitations from relevant countries and under conditions where this does not violate international law, [the PRC can] control the situation in these regions and stabilize the security of regions that

³⁷⁴ Zhang Wenmu, *On China's Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, p. 88.

maritime thoroughfares pass through. At the same time, it can also participate more in UN peacekeeping operations and participate in such tasks as evacuating [Chinese] nationals.

5. Emphasize bringing into play the navy's abilities for non-war military activities

Compared to the actions of naval warfare, the navy's non-war military activities are characterized by having a great many forms of action, by having a stronger policy nature, by a broader impact, and by more obvious benefits. The navy's non-war military activities have a special status and role in protecting the nation's maritime interests. Currently, an important means that the various nations have for protecting the security of maritime accesses is to strengthen cooperation in maritime security. Therefore, the navy should improve the abilities of its non-war military activities; on the one hand, it must develop weapons and equipment that are strongly relevant and respond in an effective manner to non-traditional security threats. On the other hand, [it must] actively develop naval diplomatic activities, whose main details are mutual visits by warships, global cruises, training in distant seas, joint military exercises, and establishing mechanisms for regional maritime security cooperation. [It must] maintain broad-ranging contacts with the navies of the various countries of the world in order to promote mutual understanding and friendship. Based on UN resolutions and the needs of the international community, [it must] actively undertake such international responsibilities as peacekeeping, rescue at sea, anti-piracy, and counterterrorism; respond to non-traditional threats; and bring into play the role of protecting world peace and promoting common development. Practices have proven that through various forms of maritime security cooperation, this will not only help to raise the level of military confidence with relevant countries but at the same time, it can also achieve the navy's maritime presence in the sea regions of crucial accesses, under conditions where [the PRC] does not cause too much concern within the international community, thereby achieving the goal of protecting the security of maritime accesses and enhancing the ability to respond to {yingdui} non-war military activities.

III. Strengthen military cooperation and manifest a strategic presence...318

As an international service, uses other than war are an important form of the navy's use in peacetime; it can send a nation's message to its adversaries in political and military areas and have the effect of transmitting friendship and restraining war. The proposals for the PRC navy's new missions have further strengthened the navy's political and diplomatic functions so that the navy's role will be more prominent in such areas as improving the PRC's strategic situation, alleviating international contradictions, struggling for the strategic initiative, and creating a favorable security environment.

1. Strengthen the PRC's influence on relevant maritime accesses

In recent years, the PRC's navy has expanded the scope of its naval diplomacy, laying the foundation for jointly protecting the security of the oceans. One after another, it has held targeted joint military exercises with many countries close to straits and maritime strategic accesses that are relevant to the PRC. In 2007, it participated in the West Pacific Naval Symposium Multilateral Naval Exercise and in the West Pacific Minesweeping and Diving Exercise; these exercises directly involved the security of the Straits of Malacca. Participation in these types of exercises, which were very strongly targeted, strengthened the PRC's perception of and influence on

important sea regions and enhanced the PRC navy's ability to cooperate with foreign militaries; it can be said that they served multiple purposes. In particular, over successive years, the maritime joint military exercises that the PRC navy has engaged in within the Indian Ocean with the navies of multiple countries, such as its participation with many countries in search and rescue exercises at sea, its participation in the Gulf of Aden with the navies of many countries in joint escorts, and its protection of traffic lines at sea, have all shown the presence of the PRC's navy and have brought its role into play; it is gradually being transformed into something that is normal and institutional. At the same time, a *Memorandum of Understanding on Sino-Malaysian Cooperation at Sea* that China and Malaysia signed has provided a basis for military cooperation between the Chinese and Malaysian navies and for them to jointly protect the security of the Straits of Malacca. All of these activities show that the PRC navy's resolve and ability to jointly protect the security of key straits and important straits and accesses, together with relevant countries, through regular cooperation on maritime security, thereby comprehensively improving the PRC's ability to deal with nontraditional security threats to maritime accesses.

2. Increase the PRC's strategic deterrence close to relevant maritime accesses

Maritime military deterrence {*haishang junshi weishe*}, with actual military strengths as its backing, is the form in which the navy is used most regularly in peacetime, as well as the form that is most important. Prior to resorting to armed force to resolve issues, maritime military deterrence is an extremely vigorous and effective means when resolving contradictions and confrontations at sea. When maritime strategic accesses are in a crisis stage or a potential crisis stage (for example, when a given maritime strategic accesses is blocked off by other countries) and when the PRC's maritime strategic accesses are threatened, the PRC should fully show its firm resolve and bring military deterrence into play, in order to create a certain pressure on the enemy, so that he will not dare to act rashly. Deploy dynamic and static strengths together, and at the same time that static deployments predominate, strengthen dynamic deployments, pushing naval and air patrols and military exercises forward. In this way, not only is it possible to have the effect of a military shock on peripheral countries but it is also possible to have the effective role of warning those countries that exclude the PRC from participating in protecting the security of maritime strategic accesses. Speaking in a certain sense, vigorous strategic deterrence sometimes has far stronger, bigger, and longer-lasting military benefits than winning a war. Just as [Hans] Morgenthau said, "Navies have great mobility, they can take a country's flag and power to the four corners of the earth, and the spectacular image of a navy will leave a profound impression on people. Therefore, a demonstration of warships has always been a proud tool of prestigious policies."³⁷⁵

3. Strengthen the PRC's military and security cooperation for relevant maritime accesses

The navy is an international-type outward-facing service, and international cooperation is an important form for the strategic use of the navy. Maritime security cooperation has become an important way by which a country seeks to peacefully maintain security, as well as an important means by which it protects the security of maritime accesses. Currently, the PRC's navy engages in broad-ranging exchanges with the navies of the various countries of the world; in particular, it has strengthened its cooperation with countries that have for a long time regarded the PRC as a

³⁷⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, McGraw-Hill, 1985, p. 1901.

strategic adversary. Examples are the maritime military security consultations that China and the United States have established and the maritime contacts mechanisms that China and Japan have established. In recent years, as regards joint law enforcement for counterterrorism at sea, for opposing piracy, and for dealing with various types of public hazards at sea or carrying out humanitarian relief for natural disasters, the PRC's navy has strengthened its maritime cooperation with relevant countries, and it has engaged in a number of exchanges of ship visits and military exercises at sea with these countries. When the PRC navy was providing escorts in the Gulf of Aden, the commanders of the [PRC] escort formations met with and visited the commanders of the multinational maritime unit and with European Union, NATO, Russian, and South Korean [commanders], one after the other; this increased the mutual trust and friendship between the Chinese navy and foreign militaries' ships, and it established a foundation for the Chinese navy to participate in international naval cooperation. On 18 September 2009, the Chinese navy's third rotation of escort formations and the Russian navy's escort formation conducted the Blue Peace Shield 2009 joint exercise in the Gulf of Aden, whose topic was attacking piracy; this was the first time that the Chinese navy had cooperated in international search and rescue military actions in its escort actions in the Gulf of Aden, and it had groundbreaking significance. Through this cooperation, it has been possible to reduce or dilute to a certain extent the suspicious that peripheral countries have about the PRC, to ease tense situations, to reduce conflicts, to increase trust among the various countries' navies, and to strengthen contacts and understanding between the PRC and foreign militaries.

During two years, from 25 December 2008, when the Chinese navy's participation in escorts in the Gulf of Aden began, to March 2011, China dispatched eight escort formations and sixteen warships; these successfully completed the work of protecting navigation by more than 3,000 Chinese and foreign ships in 281 groups, and the success rate of the escorts reached 100 percent. This made a notable contribution to protecting national interests and world peace, and it received widespread praise from the international community.³⁷⁶ China has expanded from attacking piracy on its own to the sphere of cooperation; in addition to escorting mainland PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan freighters, the Chinese navy was prepared to join with other countries' navies to escort ships along the main channel through the Gulf of Aden. Because of China's contributions in fighting piracy, China on 6 November 2009 successfully hosted a Conference on International Cooperation and Coordination for Escorts in the Gulf of Aden, and China's military and the various countries' navies are currently actively consulting on the technical details for establishing international cooperation for partitioning escorts in the Gulf of Aden. Future participation in international cooperation for partitioning escorts in the Gulf of Aden will be the first time that the Chinese military has participated in models of cooperation for international military operational actions that Western military organization have proposed, and it will be a historic breakthrough for models of the PRC military's overseas military actions.

³⁷⁶ "The Success Rate of the Chinese Navy's Escorts Is 100 Percent, and 3,000 Chinese and Foreign Ships Have Benefited," *Xinhua News Agency*, <http://www.news.cn>, 7 January 2010.

SECTION 4: LOOKING AFTER THE NEEDS OF THE OVERALL STRATEGIC SITUATION AND FOCUSING ON DOING A GOOD JOB OF HANDLING SEVERAL MAJOR STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS...321

I. The relationship between administering maritime strategic accesses and China's peaceful rise...321

Looking at history over a long period of time and over a broad scope, and especially after entering the early modern period, almost all the rising Western great nations relied on expanding their maritime space, on mastering powerful command of the seas through warfare, on plundering the world's resources, and on developing unequal trade in order to become world powers. Just as Mahan pointed out, "The key to the rise of great nations is command of the sea," and the key to command of the sea is control over important maritime accesses. Control over major maritime accesses means control over the main accesses through which the world's resources flow, and it means controlling the historical initiative.³⁷⁷ One of the crucial factors that determine control over maritime strategic accesses lies in the way in which world resources are allocated and basic changes that have occurred compared to the past, which have led to a great increase in the reliance of the various countries on maritime strategic accesses and in their use of them; under these conditions, control of maritime access rights *{haishang tongdao quan}* means that it is possible to ensure the development of the national economy and the security of the nation.

Currently, China's model of economic development has undergone very great changes, its trade with the outside has continued to increase, and shipping enterprises have rapidly developed; the route that PRC petroleum lines must pass over, through the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz, has been called China's lifeline at sea. The layout of China's maritime strategic accesses is closely related to the maritime transportation accesses for petroleum and other strategic resources and energy that national development requires, and they coincide quite a bit. Maritime strategic accesses have become some of the major accesses where the development trends of China's economy and the world economy merge in an age of globalization, and as the degree to which China's economy and the world's economy merge increases more and more, China's development will increasingly rely on keeping maritime strategic accesses smooth and unhindered, and this will directly affect the overall situation of national development. It is very difficult to imagine how there could be coordinated and sustainable development of the domestic economy and society without secure and smooth maritime strategic accesses; in the final analysis, the negative impact that the period of history prior to reform and opening up, of a "closed-door country" *{bi men suoguo}*, had on us was extremely serious. Therefore, the most basic requirement for the maritime strategic accesses that China is concerned over originates from the needs of national security and development. In other words, the question of whether China is able to achieve the most basic needs of security and development forms the basic premise for whether it has the ability and potential to rise. If China does not have sufficient sea power strengths to keep its maritime accesses smooth and to keep its maritime energy routes secure, China's security and development will be severely restricted, and

³⁷⁷ Zhang Wenmu, *An Analysis of China's National Security Interests in World Geopolitics*, Shandong People's Publishing House, 2004, pp. 301 and 306.

its national development will also be forcibly cut off. And a big factor restraining China's peaceful rise is whether or not it has command over maritime accesses and whether or not it can ensure the energy security that national development needs. There are experts who have pointed out, in regard to the importance of the Taiwan issue and its relationship to China's rise, that the Taiwan issue "is a basic premise that concerns China's rise." The reason for this is that ever since modern times, the rise of any great nation cannot be achieved under conditions where the nation is divided. Similarly, if China, as a coastal country, does not have command of the sea, it will be very difficult to achieve its sustained development and rise. Regardless of whether it is the old-school colonial countries or the emerging maritime countries, the security of maritime strategic accesses has strategic significance for the countries' rise or fall, their success or failure, and their life or death.

Of course, the goals and means of China's rise have essential differences from those of the Western sea powers. The West did it to struggle for supremacy at sea, to control strategic energy, and to restrain the development of other countries. But the PRC is doing it to defend world peace, to protect the PRC's overseas interests, to support the nation's economic development, and to break through the West's maritime blockade and constraints against the PRC. Therefore, if the Chinese people are to achieve their grand revival, they must first pay attention to the issue of security for maritime strategic accesses.

II. The coordinated and complementary relationship between maritime strategic accesses and land strategic accesses...323

China is a large country that has both land and sea. In early modern history, China faced hostile situations on both the land and the sea; this circumstance created the famous struggle in the late Qing Dynasty [1644 to 1911] between "sea defense" and "border defense." Up until today, whether the state should focus on developing sea power or land power is still a long-term topic of unending debate in academic circles. Regardless of how this is disputed, it is an undisputed fact that the nation's rights and interests both on land and at sea need to be protected. Looking at history, maritime accesses and land accesses are closely related; without effective cooperation with the land, control that is only over maritime accesses is limited. Only by truly having both land and sea, and having them be the premise for each other and having them rely upon each other, is it possible for both of them to be strong. In particular, today when the economy is becoming increasingly globalized and advanced science and technology is rapidly developing, and looking at the integrated actual strength of the country, this is "determined to a very great extent by the distribution of the traffic network and by transportation capabilities."³⁷⁸ Regardless of whether it is on land or at sea, the lifeline of the nation's economic development certainly cannot be completely tied to a single direction, a single access, or a single node, lest it inevitably encounter serious consequences where it is controlled by others and where it completely crashes.

In regard to China, the security of its imported supplies of petroleum is quite important. The basic connotation of this has two sides: the first is that it is necessary to find suitable and sufficient sources of petroleum, while the second is that it is necessary to establish secure transportation accesses for the petroleum. Gulf petroleum resources are plentiful and are also the main sources of imports of China's petroleum, now and in the future; the key to this is how to establish secure

³⁷⁸ Dong Liangqing, *Studies in Strategic Geography*, National Defense University Press, 2000, p. 209.

petroleum transportation accesses from the Gulf to China. Currently, China's sources of petroleum imports are overly concentrated in the Middle East region, which puts huge pressure on the secure transportation of energy; as soon as a disturbance occurs in a maritime strategic access, China's economic security will come under huge pressure. All of this means that the degree to which China depends on the outside for its energy and the security risks of this have increased over the years. Therefore, in addition to continuing to solidify and expand [China's] traditional petroleum sources and establishing petroleum stockpiles, it is also necessary to adopt diverse import strategies and to select imports using many aspects, such as the current state of the distribution of global resources as well as bilateral relationships, in order to disperse the risks involved in the import of petroleum resources, and thereby, from the angle of transportation security, giving priority consideration to peripheral countries and potential resource countries {*ziyuan guo*}, reducing [the PRC's] heavy reliance on the Straits of Malacca, and creating a geopolitical advantage for opening new petroleum transportation lines on land. Currently, the PRC's land accesses primarily have three directions.

1. The southwest direction

First is to open a Chinese-Burmese petroleum transportation access. Early on, in February 2006, China and Burma reached a consensus on the issue of building an oil pipeline. On 26 March 2009, the governments of China and Burma officially signed a *Government Agreement on Constructing Sino-Burmese Crude Oil and Natural Gas Pipelines*; based on the project designs, China and Burma will invest 80 billion [renminbi] to build the petroleum and natural gas pipelines; the starting point for the two pipelines for transporting petroleum [and natural gas] will be the island of Maday on the west coast of Burma; they will go northeast through Mandalay to China's border city Ruili and then to Kunming in Yunnan, and finally deliver [the petroleum and natural gas] to Chongqing and Nanning. One line is a route that will deliver Middle East and African petroleum to China; this will be transported through the Indian Ocean and offloaded at the port of Sittwe in Burma, and then go through a 900 kilometer-long oil pipeline through Mandalay in Burma and Ruili in Yunnan, straight to Kunming in Yunnan; every year, twelve million tons of crude oil will be delivered to China. Compared to delivering crude petroleum through the Straits of Malacca to Zhanjiang, this can reduce the route by at least 1,200 kilometers. That is to say, China's imports of petroleum and gas from the Middle East can reach the border in only seven days. The other line will transport to China natural gas that is produced in Burma; the amount transported each year can reach 12 billion cubic meters, and it is estimated that [this pipeline] will be put into use in two years. Because the two pipelines will be located in a region with a moderate climate, and because Sino-Burmese relations are close, the security of the oil pipeline can be assured. "If all goes according to plan, Burma will soon replace the crowded Singapore Strait, becoming an access for transporting petroleum from the Indian Ocean to China's south."³⁷⁹ This will strengthen the security coefficient {*anquan xishu*} of the PRC's petroleum transportation and win even more of the strategic initiative.

Second is to pay attention to building the Kra Isthmus plan. The Southeast Asian oil-importing countries compete with each other, but they also have expanded their space for cooperation. In

³⁷⁹ The United States' *The Economist*, weekly publication, 15 March 2008.

particular, in the area of ensuring the secure transportation of the extremely long maritime petroleum accesses from the Gulf to East Asia, the interests of the East Asian countries should be largely identical. Chief Researcher Tanabe Toshinori of Japan's Fujitsu Economic Research Institute has proposed that China and Japan jointly construct a canal across the Kra Isthmus in Thailand, in order to avoid the narrow Straits of Malacca and open up a shortcut for transporting petroleum. The Thai Government also has proposed a concrete program for building a Kra Isthmus oil pipeline. In the design, the Kra Isthmus [pipeline] will cross the southern part of Thailand, with a total length of 120 kilometers, a width of 400 meters, and a depth of 25 meters. Based on relevant studies, once this project is completed, large ocean oil tankers will be able to directly sail from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific; for this reason, the route can be shortened by 700 miles, which can save two to five days of sailing time, and large oil tankers can save \$300,000 each voyage.

2. The northeast direction

This primarily refers to the Sino-Russian petroleum pipeline. China is a major oil-consuming country, and it primarily faces the problem of diversifying its energy supplies. The complementary relationship between China and Russia in regard to supply and demand for petroleum and gas has become a basic starting point for the two countries' strategic cooperation on petroleum and gas. On 17 February 2009, China and Russia signed a *Minutes of the Talks on Mechanisms for Energy Negotiation*; its details included a package of agreements on cooperative projects, such as constructing a Sino-Russian crude oil pipeline, long-term trade in crude oil, and loans. Among these, it was stipulated that Russia would provide 300 million tons of long-term crude oil supplies over a period of twenty years in exchange for \$25 billion in Chinese loans; this shows that Sino-Russian energy cooperation has taken substantive steps. At the same time, the Russian Railway Company has received approval from the Russian Government and has decided to construct a railway in order to raise China-bound yearly railway petroleum capacity to 30 million tons. The construction of a Sino-Russian oil pipeline will have major strategic significance for resolving China's petroleum security issues; before the Taine line program actually is carried out, against a background where variables still exist, the PRC should continue to adopt a number of measures, including political, economic, and diplomatic ones, so that [this program] ultimately develops in a direction that is favorable to China's petroleum security.

3. The northwest direction

This primarily refers to the Sino-Kazakh oil pipeline. Based on a 1993 US Department of Energy survey report, the quantity of Caspian Sea petroleum is between 50 billion and 200 billion barrels, of which forty percent to fifty percent is concentrated in the Caspian Sea continental shelf region close to Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's onshore recoverable petroleum is 2.88 billion tons, while the quantity of recoverable petroleum in the Caspian Sea region that belongs to Kazakhstan is 3.6 billion tons, for total reserves of 101 to 109 billion barrels, making up about one-half of total reserves in the Caspian Sea region. Because Kazakhstan is an inland country, the main route for its petroleum exports must go through Russia; as things stand now, this proportion makes up more than seventy percent of [Kazakhstan's] total petroleum exports. Just like China's "Malacca dilemma," Kazakhstan's path for petroleum exports similarly faces a "Russia dilemma." In order to reduce the degree to which it relies on Russia and to avoid being controlled later by others, Kazakhstan needs to carry out a strategy for diversifying petroleum exports. Because China is a

major energy consuming country in the world, and because the regional situations that a pipeline [to China] would have to pass through are stable and relatively secure, the Kazakhstan Government has chosen to cooperate with China and to have reciprocal and mutually beneficial “win-win.” After the Sino-Kazakhstani oil pipeline has been built, Kazakhstan will be able to deliver approximately 20 million tons of petroleum to China each year, so China will become Kazakhstan’s biggest petroleum export destination, thus greatly reducing [Kazakhstan’s] reliance on Russia. This pipeline began to be laid out in 2004, and the first-stage construction of this project was completed in 2005. The designed oil transportation capacity will be 10 million tons each year. On 25 May 2006, Kazakhstan formally shipped petroleum to China through the Sino-Kazakhstani oil pipeline. This marked another important step in China’s push to diversify its energy supplies. The second stage of the engineering plan will be completed in 2011, and the oil transportation capacity will rise to 20 million tons each year. In accordance with an agreement that was reached in 2004 for a Sino-Kazakhstani petroleum and natural gas cooperative project, its long-range objective is a yearly petroleum transportation capacity of 50 million tons. On 12-14 December 2009, Chairman Hu Jintao visited Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and attended a China-Central Asia natural gas pipeline ceremony. This pipeline, which is 1,833 kilometers long, starts out in Turkmenistan, passes through the territory of a number of countries, and ultimately reaches China; over the next thirty years, it will provide 40 billion cubic meters of natural gas to China, thus promoting the diversification of China’s import channels.

4. Constructing international accesses that avoid the Strait of Hormuz

In regard to China’s petroleum import accesses, there is domestically fairly great concern over the security of shipping in the Straits of Malacca, but there has not been enough focus on the Strait of Hormuz access. Given the profound restraint of geopolitical factors, it will be very difficult for China to carry out its own security guarantees for international accesses west of the Straits of Malacca for a fairly long period of time in the future. In a systematic discussion of China’s strategy for international energy sources, overall and as regards sources, what is even more crucial is to consider how to avoid the various risks in the Strait of Hormuz and to have secure oil and gas links to the Gulf; this is a major issue that China, as a major petroleum-importing country, must face over a long period of time. If the normal transportation of the petroleum access of the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaranteed in an effective manner, it will be imperative to find a more-secure replacement path. The realities of international politics show that even if we totally rely on “unilateral strengths” {*danbian lilian*}, it will still be impossible to achieve “absolute security.” The optimal way to seek international security should be to strengthen international cooperation. The security of energy sources is a combination of the security of supplies and the security of demand; there is an even-greater relationship of mutual dependence between petroleum-consuming countries and resource-exporting countries. By launching international cooperation that is based on this relationship of mutual dependence and by building oil and gas pipelines that avoid this “petroleum chokepoint of the world” that is the Strait of Hormuz, it is possible to reduce the risks of transporting Gulf oil and gas. This would greatly improve the security coefficient of global resources supply and demand; not only would it benefit China and the various [other]

petroleum-consuming countries but it would also benefit the Gulf energy-transporting countries, and it would be able to gain common support and security guarantees from each side.³⁸⁰

If we speak only of spatial distance, a land route from the Gulf through Pakistan to China's western borders would only be 2,000-odd kilometers, so constructing a direct pipeline for transporting petroleum by land could also be a choice. But the core of China's petroleum consumption is the coastal belt in the east; if we were to construct a land pipeline from the Gulf directly to China's east, over an extreme distance, the investment would be huge, the engineering would be arduous, and the costs would be high. A more feasible line should be a maritime transportation route by the Indian Ocean. Although a maritime access from the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean to China is economically feasible, it would still be filled with various natural and man-made risks. Therefore, the construction of a Saudi Arabian "east-west oil pipeline" provides people with a useful revelation: energy transportation from the Gulf to China and the [other] East Asian countries does not necessarily have to completely rely upon the highly risky Strait of Hormuz; there can also be another way, just like the "east-west oil pipeline," by building an oil and gas access directly [from] the Gulf oil-producing countries to the broad waters of the Indian Ocean.

The Persian Gulf is a narrow gulf that goes from the northwest to the southeast; after petroleum that is transported by water from the Gulf heartland goes southeast to the Great Tonb and Little Tonb islands at the junction of Iran and the United Arab Emirates, it must switch to the northeast, in order to bypass the "jutting"-shaped Strait of Hormuz. It then turns back to the southeast out of the Gulf of Oman, and after passing through the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, it transports [petroleum] to the various oil-importing countries of the world. The route that it detours along reaches up to a thousand kilometers. If oil and gas pipelines were laid from the Gulf's heartland directly to the broad waters of the Indian Ocean, such as the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, it would then be possible to open an energy-transportation shortcut without the need to detour through the Strait of Hormuz.³⁸¹

It is undeniable that oil and gas pipelines themselves have their own "insecurities." But compared to the Strait of Hormuz, the risks of transportation [using] a land pipeline are easier to control, and the harms it suffers are easier to repair or eliminate. A Gulf pipeline engineering project is a series of multiple combinations of transportation programs with multiple sources, multiple accesses, and multiple exits, that go from short to long and from easy to hard, step by step. These can disperse and control the various local risks in an effective manner, and can ensure overall the secure operations of the pipeline in an effective manner. Similarly, it is undeniable that a Gulf pipeline certainly cannot completely replace the Hormuz waterway. In actuality, a Gulf pipeline also has no need to completely replace this waterway. However, as long as a Gulf oil and gas pipeline has been constructed, China's one-sided reliance on the risks of the Strait of Hormuz will be greatly reduced. No matter what, multiple accesses clearly will have a greater ability to resist risks than a single access can. In regard to this issue, it is also necessary to think in the

³⁸⁰ Wang Hai, "Constructing an International Access that Avoids the Strait of Hormuz," *World Economics and Politics*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 49.

³⁸¹ Wang Hai, "Constructing an International Access that Avoids the Strait of Hormuz," *World Economics and Politics*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 49.

opposite direction: as the amount of Gulf petroleum that is imported continues to grow, will China, which has the possibility of becoming the biggest user of the Strait of Hormuz, suffer greater political and economic risks because it passively relies solely on the “bottleneck” of the Strait? Historical experiences have shown that once the normal petroleum exports in the volatile Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz are threatened, the international price of petroleum and the costs of transporting it will rapidly soar. For a fairly long period of time in the future, it will be hard for China to directly influence and control conflicts and risks in the region surrounding the Strait of Hormuz; the optimal choice should be to take precautions and avoid risks and to open a new access for transporting Gulf oil and gas that would replace the Strait of Hormuz.³⁸² First, [it should] jointly construct an oil and gas pipeline so as to link China with Gulf energy security. In order to improve as early as possible the passive situation where it relies solely on the Strait of Hormuz, China must draft an overall strategy for international energy security as quickly as possible, with the Gulf region as its heart, and it should strengthen cooperation with the Gulf countries and jointly construct oil and gas pipelines from the Gulf oilfields to the ports on the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Second, [it should] get China’s and the Gulf’s economies to link up, through oil and gas connections. The economic and trade contacts between China and the Gulf on the one hand [must] strengthen energy cooperation so as to ensure the security of oil and gas imports; on the other hand, it is also necessary to actively open up the Middle East commodities and labor markets, in order to have a reverse flow of “petrodollars” and to achieve a bilateral balance of trade. And the construction of Gulf oil and gas pipelines would provide China with an important opportunity.

III. The relationship between “internal solidifying” and “external expansion” of maritime strategic accesses...328

Chapter 13 of the *Classic on the Game of Go* says, “One who is skilled at positions {*shan zhen*} will not fight, one who is skilled at fighting {*shan zhan*} will not lose, and one who is skilled in defeat {*shan bai*} will not have confusion.” In this, what “skilled at positions” talks about is seeking potentials {*mou shi*} and creating potentials {*zao shi*}. For China, not only is there the issue of maritime accesses within the island chains but there is also the issue of maritime accesses outside the island chains, and [China] should organically combine the maritime accesses both inside and outside the island chains in a planned manner and create potentials and seek potentials in a purposeful manner. Doing a good job of unifying “internal solidifying” and “external expansion” and of having these complement each other means being skilled at positions; this requires grand strategy and great wisdom. During the Cold War, the United States established a series of bridgeheads along a zone on the borders of the Eurasian continent, through organizing its allies and carrying out forward military deployments. It controlled the important islands, straits, and accesses along the outer periphery of the Eurasian continent. [Finally,] it had powerful maritime strengths made up of the United States’ and its allies’ navies. The Soviet Union controlled Eastern Europe and solidified its central position, and it established powerful naval fleets, to compete with the United States for controlling the oceans. However, because its actual naval power had no way to compare with that of the United States, its efforts to go south to the Indian Ocean

³⁸² Wang Hai, “Constructing an International Access that Avoids the Strait of Hormuz,” *World Economics and Politics*, 2006, Issue 1, p. 53.

were repeatedly defeated. Therefore, looking at the entire course of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was always in an inner situation, while the Western bloc, headed by the United States, held the outer situation; this was very strongly related to the United States' seeking potential and creating potential in a purposeful manner and to its combining what was on the inside with what was on the outside.

For a long period of time, the PRC has continually been in a situation where it is controlled by others, and where it is either contained by the powers or attacked. At least psychologically, it has frequently been in a state of siege. This has led to the PRC continually handling maritime strategic accesses both inside and outside the island chains by using the thinking of first handling what is nearby and then handling what is far away and of first handling what is easy and then handling what is hard; this thinking has, to a certain extent, restrained the PRC's actions. The PRC should depart from its traditional mindset and should comprehensively use the PRC's political, diplomatic, and military means in order to make overall arrangements and to cast its strategic vision toward the countries and regions outside the island chains, doing a good job of handling the relationship between "internal solidifying" and "external expansion." "External expansion" has to a very great degree determined the connotations of the maritime security layout; in particular, it is necessary to strengthen relations with the countries on the coast of the Indian Ocean; at the same time, it is also necessary to strengthen broad-ranging contacts and cooperation with Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and other Asia-Pacific island countries. Basically speaking, the goals of China's handling of the sea regions and accesses outside the island chains are to stabilize the peripheral environment and to lay a foundation and create conditions for the nation's strategic interests to expand toward the entire world at an even deeper level and over an even broader scope, to combine "inner solidifying" and "external expansion," to rely on the combined strength of both the internal and external aspects, and to ultimately achieve the strategic goals of breaking through the blocking of the island chains and of comprehensively opening up and improving the PRC's maritime strategic accesses.

Apart from this, the PRC should also focus on the Arctic access. The Arctic region's abundant resources and potential navigability have great strategic value for the various great nations. The "polar route" through the Arctic Ocean is a shortcut that connects the Atlantic and the Pacific as well as an important international maritime route that links Europe with East Asia. Because it is perennially frozen, there has never been any way up until now to regularly navigate this route. As global warming has led to a retreat of the ice layer, there are experts who predict calculations that the Arctic Ocean's ice cover is melting at a speed of three percent a year, and that this route will have summer navigation by around 2040 at the earliest. In the future, the opening of routes in the Arctic Ocean will result in many of the countries in the world, such as the United States, Russia, Western Europe, and Japan, launching a new round of disputes over the Arctic route; each great nation will focus on the opening and use of this route. Currently, the eight countries on the Arctic Council are evaluating the feasibility of Arctic sea transportation and are preparing to issue a report on that evaluation. The chairman of the US Arctic Research Council, [Louis Mead] Treadwell, predicted that the opening of the Arctic route will "challenge" the current maritime routes through the Panama Canal and the Suez Canal, reducing the voyage between the North American West Coast and Asia by 6,500 kilometers.

Through controlling the strategic resources and maritime accesses of the arctic region, relevant countries not only will be able to strengthen their advantages in strategic competition, but even more, they will be able to contain in an effective manner the intentions that opponents have of expanding their strategic interests in the northern hemisphere. Starting in the Cold War period, relevant great powers pre-deployed strengths in the Arctic direction. After the Cold War ended, the Arctic Ocean was still an important region in which the West engaged in strategic containment against Russia. The US Navy continued to treat the “Northwest Passage” as a corridor in which US Navy nuclear submarines maneuvered, and US and British nuclear submarines regularly cruised for extended periods of time in the Arctic Sea, tracking, reconnoitering, and hunting Russia’s ballistic missile nuclear submarines. Russia has continually treated the Arctic Ocean as an important strategic defensive direction and has stressed the need to ensure its strategic superiority at sea in the north. For this reason, Russia has deployed naval and air strategic strengths and large numbers of conventional operations strengths along this direction. At the same time as this, circumpolar countries have stressed, one after the other, recognition of their rights and interests in the Arctic and have entered the Arctic, so the struggle over the Arctic has become more intense. On 12 May 2011, the seventh Arctic Council [ministerial] conference, composed of the eight circumpolar countries – such as the United States, Canada, and Russia – was held in Greenland’s capital, Nuuk; the United States, Russia, and the rest of the eight countries signed the first *International Convention* on exploiting the Arctic region. Apart from this, the United States, Russia, and the rest of the eight nations also stressed at the meeting that circumpolar countries possess “special rights” in Arctic matters, and they also defined the duties and limits of authority of observer nations, as well as a program for obtaining observer status. Countries that want to become observers must first recognize the sovereignty that Council member states have over the Arctic region, and the rights of observers are limited to only being able to participate in scientific research or in the financial subsidizing of some projects.

As for China, it was a signatory to the 1920 *Svalbard Treaty*, and based on this treaty, [which recognized the sovereignty of Norway over the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard,] [China] has the right to enter the Svalbard Islands region to launch scientific expedition activities. Early on, in July 2004, China established the PRC’s first Arctic scientific research station, the Yellow River Station, which launched a number of [instances of] cooperation in Arctic scientific research. In the future, “polar route” navigation will also have a major significance for expanding China’s maritime transportation routes; Europe is the most important trading partner in China’s external economic relations, and based on European statistics, China has replaced the United States as the European Union’s main source of imports. Chinese and European maritime transportation voyages through the “polar route” will be forty percent shorter than routes through the Indian Ocean. China’s entering the Arctic Ocean as early as possible is a forward-looking strategic act and choice. It not only could promote the development of Chinese and European trade, so that the PRC would participate more broadly in international competition and would increase [the PRC’s] international influence, but it also could reduce [China’s] dependence on the maritime route in the Indian Ocean direction, thus achieving the goal of gradually improving the strategic situation of the maritime

direction.³⁸³ As an emerging developing great nation and the advocate of the “harmonious world” idea, China can make a suitable contribution to the appropriate resolution of Arctic issues by promoting multilateral cooperation and improvements in the Arctic legal system, based on a combination of its own national interests and the common interests of the various countries.

IV. The relationship between competition and cooperation in maritime strategic accesses...331

[The existence of] maritime strategic accesses has determined that regardless of whether it was in the past or it is now, and regardless of whether it is in wartime or peacetime, [these accesses] are destined to be the focus of struggles among the various countries, and [it has determined] that these struggles have never ceased, from the past until now. When the interests of a number of countries collide at a given point, a strategic conflict will frequently ensue. In history, the center of political and economic gravity is the principle objective in the struggles and attacks of two hostile sides. In strategic games, each one determines its own strategic choices through measuring the two sides’ interests, and the struggle over chokeholds will become a struggle for existence between one country and another; neither side will yield in this clash of interests, nor will it retreat. Because maritime strategic accesses have an international nature and a public nature, they are not purely the interests of any single country; therefore, in the economic globalization of today, the strategic conflicts that are displayed at sea involving the expansion of national interests are becoming increasingly intense and increasingly prominent. The cargos that ships passing over the world’s oceans carry are more connected and more relevant, so the trade of the various countries is more tightly linked; each side is intermixed with the other, and the sides are inseparable from each other. This presents three features: they penetrate each other, they rely upon each other, and they check and balance each other. Once an incident happens, it can be said that they are bound together, for good or ill. A famous economist, Richard Cooper, first proposed the concept of interdependence {*xianghu yicun*} in his *The Economics of Interdependence*; he believed that interdependence is manifested as the growing sensitivity of foreign economic relations among countries and that the mechanism generating this is mutual needs, while the premise for it is the price that they pay each other. That is, once one party suffers damages, another party will also pay a price. Therefore, competition among the various countries today over maritime strategic accesses has abandoned, under most circumstances, the armed struggles that in the past would have predominated; what has replaced this is greater cooperation and dialogue. Currently, there are a great many bilateral and multilateral security mechanisms at sea for the various countries of the world. However, not all cooperation mechanisms can achieve actual effects; security cooperation for maritime strategic accesses is better able to have the attention of the various countries coalesce, and it has a greater actual relevance. The *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* that the United States published in October 2007 clearly pointed out that “No one nation has the resources required to provide safety and security throughout the entire maritime domain,” and it advocated “joining navies and coast guards around the world to police the global commons and

³⁸³ Fang Kun, *The Impact that Changes in the Arctic Region Situation Will Have on Developments in Naval Strategy*, collection of excellent articles from the 2007 “First Academic Seminar on Innovative Developments in Military Strategy and National Strategy in the New Century and New Stage.”

suppress common threats.”³⁸⁴ It can be said that cooperation on maritime strategic accesses will be an expansion of the world’s various countries’ strategic interests in the future, and under circumstances where there is a continual increase in the level to which they rely upon each other economically, where common threats are becoming increasingly grimmer, and where economic interests are constantly expanding, international cooperation at sea will inevitably become an important means and inevitable choice.

The PRC has consistently been praised by the world for its peace and friendship; in the area of using straits and accesses, aside from its positions that oppose hegemony and restrain states that do not have jurisdiction but that control straits, it has primarily done this through political and diplomatic means. Even more, it has supported countries that have jurisdiction over straits in exercising their own rights and obligations. In regard to the security of maritime accesses, the PRC’s responsibilities are to participate in this and not to strive for international strategic domination control. Currently, jointly constructing international energy security mechanisms through cooperation and dialogue has become a consensus and practice among many countries of the world. Maritime security network systems have been established, one after the other, such as the Black Sea coordinating organization, the Caspian Sea guard, the Straits of Malacca anti-piracy organization, and ASEAN’s “regional joint defense” {*qiyu lian fang*}. The United States and Japan rely on their overall national strength and naval power to hold a dominant status in international maritime security cooperation. In addition, China also needs to study, use, and assist in cooperation with the UN and international organizations and with sea powers, because even though China has a strong navy, now and in the future, it cannot entirely protect the security of its own commercial ships on its own, at all times and in all places. Therefore, China must study and use existing international mechanisms in order to protect its own legitimate rights and interests; it cannot entirely rely upon the so-called self-help form to resolve issues.

³⁸⁴ (United States) *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, October 2007.

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This book is the crystallization of three years of painstaking research for my book. On the occasion of the book going to press, I do not feel even a slight bit of relaxation, instead there is a surge of a generally complex mood that is difficult to express. The first time I came into contact with this topic of maritime strategic access began at the end of 2007. At that time, due to the school's mathematics reforms and curriculum setup, I took on the responsibility for the preparatory task of the new Defense Studies startup topic of "Study on the Security Issues of Safeguarding Strategic Access." During the course of preparing the new course, the many years of human utilization and control of maritime strategic access, the chess game and the rise and fall of the successively alternating maritime great nations, and in particular is the continuously in-depth expansion of globalization of today, the distinct role and charm of maritime strategic access becoming more prominent, and the close connection between it and national security and development, all have aroused a strong desire for my thorough study of this major topic. Ever since then, I have been accumulating, preparing, and plotting out this academic problem.

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Liang Fang
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