



The Downey Patriot

Letter to the Editor: Nine Dash Line

Staff Report November 16, 2015

Dear Editor:

What if the United States declared the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea as U.S. territorial waters? Other nations would rightly be furious. The U.S. would be claiming international waters, as well as the home waters of other nations as its own.

This is exactly what China is doing in the South China Sea. In claiming waters out to what it calls the Nine Dash Line, China is attempting to seize what is legally international waters as well as areas within the Exclusive Economic Zones of other nations. This area is roughly the size of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea combined.

China is in the middle of a massive project to build islands on reefs in the middle of the South China Sea and building airstrips on them to cement its claims on the region. All of China's claims in this region are in violation of international law which states that territorial waters are limited to 12 nautical miles measured from the low water line of the coast. Exclusive Economic Zones extend to 200 nautical miles from the coast. China's claims are absurdly beyond these limits that have been common practice for decades and form the basis for the current system of global trade.

The United States was right to send a U.S. Navy destroyer into Chinese-claimed waters to exercise the right to freedom of navigation in international waters. When China objected to the operation it showed that China is blatantly trying to violate international law even while they claim to be defending it. In its press release, China accused the United States of "dangerous and provocative acts," but China is the one out of line.

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