

## From Our Pastor August 11, 2018

Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

A promise by President Xi Jinping was given to then US-President Barack Obama in 2015 that the Chinese government would not militarize the artificial islands in the South China Sea. Psalm 109:2 comes to mind, "...they have spoken with a lying tongue." No surprise as deception, lies, and dissembling have been useful tools for totalitarian regimes since the time of Nimrod (Genesis 10). The sons of Israel have too often been willingly fooled and manipulated by our enemies ever since the time when Joshua fell for the lies of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9).

A US Navy P-8A Poseidon jet was flying this week at 16,500 feet to get a view of four low-lying coral reefs in the South China Sea that have been turned into military bases by the Chinese. The bases are a startling array of military buildings, runways, hangars, and naval bases. Seen from the air are garrisons with five-story buildings, large radar installations, power plants and runways sturdy enough to carry large military aircraft.

However, as reported in the UK Express, the Chinese were not pleased with the airplane flying over them taking pictures. "During the flight that was giving journalists from CNN a rare look at the islands, the crew was warned six times by the Chinese military to get out of their territory. A voice said: "US military aircraft, this is China ... leave immediately and keep out to avoid any misunderstanding." Each time the aircraft was challenged by the Chinese military, the US Navy crew's response was the same.

The response was: "I am a sovereign immune United States naval aircraft conducting lawful military activities beyond the national airspace of any coastal state. "In exercising these rights as guaranteed by international law, I am operating with due regard for the rights and duties of all states."

CNN was granted the chance to see how the Chinese government is rapidly expanding its militarization efforts from a US reconnaissance plane when the harsh threat was issued. The surveillance aircraft noted 86 ships and vessels in one of the artificial harbors.

Parts of the South China Sea are claimed by Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. The sea spans 3.6million square-kilometers and Beijing's claims extend more than one thousand kilometers from its southernmost province, which is almost the entirety of the waters. The United Nations has estimated that a third of global shipping passes through the waters. The South China Sea is also believed to be rich in oil and natural gas reserves that have yet to be explored.

The "order of things" in the Indo-Pacific region is moving towards open strategic rivalry. Opposing China in the region are Australia, India, Japan and the United States. The Chinese arms build-up, financed by selling products to the US over the past two

decades, has resulted in an out of balance in military power and influence. As the arms build-up continues, no one is sure exactly where the Chinese are headed, although statements made by them during the past year indicate a desire for military supremacy and winning any coming war. There is danger ahead.

Psalm 2 begins with the words, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?"

There will be many more strong words and plans made in the coming days. Lies and deception will continue as tools of totalitarian states until Jesus Christ returns to rule this earth and enforce peace, prosperity, and honesty. At that time, they will hear more words from Psalm 2: "Be wise now therefore, you kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling."

*Rex Sexton  
Pastor, UCG Portland*