

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE – MARCH 2014

PHILIPPINES VS. CHINA

2 April 2014: Chinese media slams Manila's arbitration attempt as 'against morality'

China on Tuesday accused the Philippines of violating morality and international law by seeking United Nations arbitration in the South China Sea territorial dispute between the two countries.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/asia/regional-news/2014/04/02/404259/Chinese-media.htm>

1 April 2014: China summons Philippines envoy over sea dispute legal case

Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin told the Philippines' ambassador that China was "extremely dissatisfied and resolutely opposed" to the case, repeating that China did not accept it and would not participate.

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/asia/278092/china-summons-philippines-envoy-over-sea-dispute-legal-case>

1 April 2014: Beijing refuses arbitration on South China Sea issue

China will neither accept nor participate in international arbitration unilaterally pushed forward by the Philippines on the South China Sea disputes, said a commentary published by the state-run People's Daily on Tuesday.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140401000069&cid=1101&MainCatID=11>

30 March 2014: PH defends arbitration case against China

President Benigno Aquino III said Monday that Manila's arbitration case against Beijing's sweeping claims in the South China Sea is not meant to provoke China but to peacefully defend his nation's territory and sovereignty.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/101359/ph-defends-arbitration-case-against-china#ixzz2xhbOtnSi>

30 March 2014: Philippines submitted its Memorial to the Arbitral Tribunal

The Memorial presents the Philippines' case on the jurisdiction of the Arbitral Tribunal and the merits of its claims. It consists of ten volumes. Volume I, which is 270 pages in length, contains the Philippines' analysis of the applicable law and the relevant evidence, and demonstrates that the Arbitral Tribunal has jurisdiction over all of the claims made by the Philippines' in its Statement of Claim, and that every claim is meritorious. It sets out the specific relief sought by the Philippines in regard to each of its claims, and shows why it is entitled to such relief. Volumes II through X contain the documentary evidence and maps that support the Philippines' claims, all of which are cited in Volume I. Volumes II through X consist of more than 3,700 pages, including more than 40 maps, for a total submission of nearly 4,000 pages.

<https://www.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2013-06-27-21-50-36/dfa-releases/2460-statement-of-secretary-albert-f-del-rosario-on-the-submission-of-the-philippines-memorial-to-the-arbitral-tribunal>

7 March 2014: PH warned about backlash from China

Observers warned about a possible backlash from China once the Philippines files its memorial, or written pleading, in its historic case over the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea). The memorial is due on March 30. Former Interior Secretary Rafael Alunan III told Rappler: "China is threatening us not to file. They've said behind the scenes: 'Don't do it, or else.'"

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/52270-philippines-china-sanctions-sea-dispute>

4 March 2014: Palace: No invitation for Malaysia to join PHL arbitration case vs. China

The Philippines has not invited Malaysia to join its arbitration case filed before a United Nations (UN) tribunal in connection with China's massive claim over parts of the South China Sea, Malacañang clarified on Monday. He added that the Philippines is "not alone" in its fight.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/350945/news/nation/palace-no-invitation-for-malaysia-to-join-phl-arbitration-case-vs-china>

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

31 March 2014: Indonesia to station Su-27, Su-30s on South China Sea islands

The Indonesian Air Force (Tentara Nasional Indonesia - Angkatan Udara, TNI-AU) is planning to upgrade its airbase at Ranai on Riau Island so it can be used by Sukhoi Su-27 and Su-30 fighter aircraft, the base's commander said on 27 March.

<http://www.janes.com/article/36214/indonesia-to-station-su-27-su-30s-on-south-china-sea-islands>

28 March 2014: China Showcases Rising Maritime Power in Search for Plane

With pictures of gray-hulled naval vessels and planes operating in seas thousands of miles from Chinese shores, state media has hailed the hunt for Malaysia Air Flight MH370 as the country's "strongest-ever search and rescue."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-03-27/china-showcases-rising-maritime-power-in-hunt-for-malaysian-jet.html>

26 March 2014: Southeast Asian Countries Fearful China Will Use Missing Flight MH370 As Excuse To Up Presence In South China Sea

From the Philippines to Vietnam, officials are growing anxious that China may be exploiting the disaster as an opportunity to solidify its presence on the waters, using the search for the wreckage as pretext to stick around in contested waters.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/southeast-asian-countries-fearful-china-will-use-missing-flight-mh370-excuse-presence-south-china>

26 March 2014: Downturn in China-Malaysia ties only temporary, say analysts

Beijing would need to maintain good relations with Malaysia to balance out its dealings with other Southeast Asian nations that were bitterly disputing territory issues with China in the South China Sea, according to political observers.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1458050/downturn-china-malaysia-ties-only-temporary-say-analysts>

15 March 2014: Indonesia announced its dispute with China in the South China Sea

In a move that could have serious repercussions for the security situation in the South China Sea, Indonesian officials on Wednesday acknowledged that China was claiming part of Indonesia's Riau Islands province as its own territory.

<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/indonesia-military-flexes-muscle-s-china-sea-dispute-looms/>

11 March 2014: Philippines Protests China Stopping Troop Resupply

The Chinese coast guard prevented delivery of supplies to Filipino soldiers guarding a disputed shoal in the South China Sea and an envoy rejected a Philippine protest over the interference, officials said Tuesday.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/philippines-protests-china-stopping-troop-resupply-22857004>

6 March 2014: PH has backing of Vietnam, Malaysia vs China's sea claims

Vietnam and Malaysia are supporting the Philippines in its maritime dispute against China in the West Philippine Sea, Vice President Jejomar Binay said in a statement Thursday.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/99908/ph-has-backing-of-vietnam-malaysia-vs-chinas-sea-claims-says-binay#ixzz2vFVFGjkB>

6 March 2014: Philippines to upgrade navy base facing disputed South China Sea

The Philippines is to upgrade a navy base facing disputed South China Sea waters to serve the extra ships being acquired to protect its territory, the military said Thursday.

<http://www.interaksyon.com/article/82144/philippines-to-upgrade-navy-base-facing-disputed-south-china-sea>

4 March 2014: China's Xi ramps up military spending in face of worried region

China will increase military spending by 12.2 percent this year to 808.23 billion yuan (\$131.57 billion), the government said on Wednesday, partly to beef up coastal and air defenses and to develop more high-tech weapons.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-china-parliament-defence-20140304,0,6002950.story>

4 March 2014: China's aircraft carrier leaves for tests, training

China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, Sunday left its homeport of Qingdao in east China's Shandong province on tests and training missions.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140304000040&cid=1101>

4 March 2014: Activists slam China water cannon incident

Filipino activists protested in front of the Chinese consular office in Makati on Monday (March 3), condemning Chinese vessels' use of water cannon on Filipino fishermen

<http://www.solarnews.ph/news/2014/03/03/activists-slam-china-water-cannon-incident>

3 March 2014: China on 'offer' to PH: 'Sheer fabrication'

The Chinese Foreign Ministry flatly denied a report that China offered the Philippines incentives to stop it from filing its memorial, or written pleading, in its historic case over the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/52005-china-denies-incentives-philippines-dispute>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

19 March 2014: The 10th ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (JWG on DOC)

As mandated by the 6th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC (SOM on DOC) in September 2013, the JWG Meeting discussed about areas of convergence in order to come up with commonalities in developing the COC as well as programme of its work in the year 2014. It also exchanged preliminary views on preparing Terms of Reference of the Eminent Persons and Experts Group (EPEG) or other mechanisms to support the official consultations.

<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/14/44171-The-10th-ASEAN-China-Joint-Working-Group-on-the-Im.html>

7 March 2014: ASEAN Military Chiefs Endorse Early South China Sea Code

"We reiterate that an early completion of the Code of Conduct (COC) related to the South China Seas is of the utmost importance for regional stability and security in the seas," he said.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/asean-military-chiefs-endorse-early-south-china-sea-code/1864954.html>

6 March 2014: Binay: Asean should take solid stand on sea row

"As long as we are solid in Asean, [we have a strong case on our territorial claims]," Binay told Duong as the Vietnamese envoy urged the Vice President to reject China's claims.

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/manila/local-news/2014/03/06/binay-asean-should-take-solid-stand-sea-row-331681>

4 March 2014: Brunei snubs ASEAN Spratlys claimants' meeting to forge one stand on China'

Brunei was a no-show in the 1st ASEAN Claimants Working Group Meeting held at Pan Pacific Hotel in Manila Feb. 18, and is expected to skip the second round in Malaysia on March 25, diplomatic sources privy to the talks said. The meeting, however, saw a more engaged Malaysia, which has abandoned its former passive attitude toward China's military activities in the region.

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/focus/03/03/14/brunei-snubs-asean-spratlys-claimants-meeting-forge-one-stand-china>