

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 29
August 2015

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

31 August 2015: China ready to launch military power from artificial islands in South China Sea

By 2017, China will have equipped its new sand islands with ports, barracks, battlements, artillery, air strips and long-range radar systems that will enable it to project military and paramilitary power into the furthest and most hotly-contested reaches of the South China Sea.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/china-ready-to-launch-military-power-from-artificial-islands-in-south-china-sea-20150830-gjb1ol.html#ixzz3kLrEk1O>

29 August 2015: Philippine satellite communication slot nabbed by China

Sources from the military of the Philippines said that one of the nation's two geo-orbital slots in space has been occupied by the Chinese. Manila is unable to claim the satellite communication slot back because the Philippines does not have the resources to do so.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20150829000102&cid=1101>

27 August 2015: CNOOC extends rig deployment in South China Sea

Chinese state-controlled oil firm CNOOC will extend deployment of an ultra-deepwater drilling rig in the disputed South China Sea, despite it being the cause of a diplomatic row between China and Vietnam last year over their respective maritime boundaries.

<http://www.argusmedia.com/News/Article?id=1094020>

26 August 2015: Vietnam's Ambassador to India: No China role in Vietnam's area of South China sea

Asked to comment on India's investment in South China Sea which has irked China time and again, Thanh said, "If it (investments) is in the exclusive zone of Vietnam, then it has nothing to do with China. China cannot do any harm to the Indian investment in our region."

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/48686489.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

26 August 2015: Philippines Seeks US Help to Protect Troops in Disputed Sea

During one of the meetings, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin requested that U.S. military patrol planes help escort Philippine supply ships in the contested South China Sea, according to the Associated Press. The request could not be confirmed.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/philippines-seeks-us-help-to-protect-troops-in-disputed-sea/2932770.html>

24 August 2015: China Reaffirms Non-acceptance of Arbitration on S. China Sea: FM

Hua said the Philippines violated the consensus it already reached with China and the commitments it made within the DOC, ignored that the key problem of the South China Sea dispute is related to territorial sovereignty and overlapped maritime rights and interests.

<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2015/08/24/4182s893030.htm>

24 August 2015: Philippines Eyes 'Ecotourism Zone' in Disputed S. China Sea

Eric Lachica, with the U.S.-Pinoy for Good Governance, said the tourism zone would be the best way to handle the competing claims because each of the claimants has developments among those outcroppings.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/philippinesconsiders-ecotourism-zone-in-disputed-south-china-sea/2929823.html>

21 August 2015: China's land reclamation in South China Sea grows

Once the airstrip on Fiery Cross Reef is operational, China could use it as an alternative runway for carrier-based planes, allowing the Chinese military to conduct "sustained operations" with aircraft carriers in the area, the report said.

<http://news.yahoo.com/chinas-land-reclamation-south-china-sea-grows-pentagon-084941809.html>

17 August 2015: China To Build Giant, Floating Islands In The South China Sea

Despite all denials coming from the Chinese officials in recent months, China is reportedly planning to build gigantic floating islands in the South China Sea.

<http://www.valuwalk.com/2015/08/floating-islands-south-china-sea/>

16 August 2015: Taiwan builds a lighthouse in South China Sea

Taiwan is building a lighthouse on Taiping Island (also known as Itu Aba) which will be completed by the end of September, the Maritime and Port Bureau said on Aug. 7.

<http://m.focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201508160004.aspx>

16 August 2015: Manila pushes arbitration, as China military recruitment video fans 'war drums' fear

The Philippine government Sunday called on China to join it in international arbitration over their maritime row, amid fears Beijing was bent on ramping up its military presence in the region following the issuance of a new recruitment video filled with nationalistic bombast.

<http://www.interaksyon.com/article/116103/manila-pushes-arbitration-as-china-military-recruitment-video-fans-war-drums-fear>

16 August 2015: Malaysia: China ships trespassing off Sarawak for two years

Malaysia has been lodging weekly diplomatic protests against the intrusion of Chinese coast guard ships near Beting Patinggi Ali, off the coast of Sarawak, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim said. "We are taking diplomatic action. But, in whatever approach, they have to get out of our national waters."

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/china-ships-trespassing-off-sarawak-for-two-years-kl>

14 August 2015: Philippines warns of 'tipping point' in South China Sea

The Philippines' defense department has expressed skepticism about China's statement that Beijing will build facilities on artificial islands for nonmilitary purposes, saying such activities could be the "tipping point" of an "irreversible crisis."

<http://www.newsfultoncounty.com/politics/news/147201-philippines-warns-of-tipping-point-in-south-china-sea>

14 August 2015: Philippines to open base near disputed sea even without US

The Philippines will go ahead with a plan to open military camps at Subic Bay facing the disputed South China Sea even if a proposed American military presence doesn't happen, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/philippines-open-near-disputed-sea-even-without-us-083711307.html>

11 August 2015: New Navy chief vows to defend West Philippine Sea

Newly installed Philippine Navy chief Rear Admiral Caesar Taccad vowed to defend the country's maritime domain from China's aggressive moves in the South China Sea.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/hillary-clinton/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-its-all-entertainment-n407371>

7 August 2015: China accuses Manila, Tokyo of joining forces over South China Sea

The Chinese statement said Philippine Foreign Minister Albert del Rosario "attacked" China's South China Sea policy, and received support from his Japanese counterpart.

<http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/china-accuses-manila--tokyo-of-joining-forces-over-south-china-sea/41590448>

5 August 2015: China says has stopped reclamation work in South China Sea

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Beijing had halted land reclamation in the South China Sea, and called on countries in the region to speed up talks on how claimant states should conduct themselves in the disputed waters.

http://news.yahoo.com/kerry-chinas-wang-discuss-south-china-sea-tensions-040713628.html;_ylt=AwrC1zHxwsJVsb8AAEHQtDMD;_ylu=X3oDMTBydDI5cXVubGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwM2BHZOaWQDBHNIYwNzcg--

4 August 2015: China Unveils World's Largest Dock amid SCS Disputes

As a part of a continuing effort to expand Chinese naval presence and project power across the South China Sea, China has completed construction of the world's largest aircraft carrier dock. The dock is 700 feet long and can service two ships at a time.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/08/04/china-unveils-worlds-largest-dock-amid-south-china-sea-dispute/>

2 August 2015: China may be preparing second Spratly airstrip: think-tank

The website said China's airstrip on Fiery Cross Reef, around 1,000 kilometres from the island province of Hainan just off the Chinese mainland, is in the "advanced stages" of construction, which began last year. Satellite photos of another reef, Subi indicate Beijing may be getting ready to build another strip of similar length there, it added.

http://news.yahoo.com/china-may-preparing-second-spratly-airstrip-think-tank-000227260.html;_ylt=A0LEVzwiYMJVhxsAcN9XNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTEzZzQ0YmY1BGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxBHZOaWQDVUIDMV8xBHNIYwNzYw--

1 August 2015: China lifted "South China Sea Fishing Ban"

Around 9-thousand fishing boats and some 40-thousand fishermen are now set to leave Hainan for the fishing grounds in the South China Sea.

<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2015/08/01/4161s889863.htm>

1 August 2015: China is building a new South China Sea fleet

Obtaining a fleet means that maritime militiamen will no longer rely on rental fishing boats, but a state-owned fishing fleet in the South China Sea will be built for them.

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/162694/china-is-building-a-new-south-china-sea-fleet>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

29 August 2015: Thai PM vows to uphold code of conduct in South China Sea

"I expressed appreciation to the Philippines for supporting Thailand in the role of country coordinator for ASEAN-China relations, and affirmed to cooperate with the Philippines and Asean countries in fully implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and promoting consultation in the [Code of] Conduct in the South China Sea," Prayut said following his expanded bilateral meeting with Aquino.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/127871/thai-pm-vows-to-uphold-code-of-conduct-in-south-china-sea#ixzz3kLsKAsCj>

7 August 2015: ASEAN: We remain seriously concerned

"We discussed extensively the matters relating to the South China Sea and remained seriously concerned over recent and ongoing developments in the area. We took note of the serious concerns expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations in the South China Sea, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and may undermine peace, security and stability in the South China Sea," the communique said.

<https://news.yahoo.com/asean-nations-struggle-agree-communiqué-wording-south-china-053602650.html>

7 August 2015: ASEAN nations struggle to agree communiqué wording on South China Sea

Members states had wrangled hard before finally agreeing on the wording of the document. According to a senior Southeast Asian diplomat, most members of the 10-nation bloc pushed hard for a "united, comprehensive" statement on the South China Sea despite pressure from Beijing.

<https://news.yahoo.com/asean-nations-struggle-agree-communiqué-wording-south-china-053602650.html>

5 August 2015: South China Sea tensions flare at Asia security talks

The flashpoint issue has taken centre stage at the annual security forum hosted by ASEAN.

http://news.yahoo.com/asia-security-talks-open-south-china-sea-tensions-033935769.html;_ylt=A0LEV1RWPsfVf2gAzSpXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTByMjB0aG5zBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxBHZOaWQDBHNIYwNzYw--

4 August 2015: Malaysia seeks amicable solution to South China Sea dispute

Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said ASEAN must play a role to ensure an amicable settlement in the dispute over the sea.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/04/asia-pacific/malaysia-seeks-amicable-solution-south-china-sea-dispute/#.VcLH-JOqqko>

4 August 2015: US, Philippines to raise territorial row in Malaysia meet

Despite China's objections, the United States and the Philippines will call for a stop to island-building work, military deployments and other aggressive actions that raise tensions in the disputed South China Sea in an annual diplomatic meeting in Malaysia.

<http://news.yahoo.com/us-philippines-raise-territorial-row-malaysia-meet-015600913.html>

4 August 2015: ASEAN wants China to stop work in disputed sea: official

Southeast Asian nations want China to stop land reclamation in the disputed South China Sea, a regional official said, but China insisted it has a right to continue the activity.

<http://news.yahoo.com/malaysia-seeks-amicable-solution-china-sea-dispute-065959378.html; ylt=AOLEV1RWPsfVf2gAzyXNyoA; ylu=X3oDMTByMjB0aG5zBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDBHNIYwNzYw-->

3 August 2015: Philippines: Hotline Proposal Needs Thorough Discussion

The proposed hotline was discussed during a meeting of senior diplomats from China and Asean in Tianjin, Charles Jose, DFA spokesman, said. Jose added that the matter had been referred back to a joint working group and was still far from fruition.

<http://www.manilatimes.net/one-asean-stand-may-stop-china/205853/>

3 August 2015: China Wants No Talk of South China Sea at Upcoming ASEAN Meeting

"It should not be discussed," said Liu. "This is not the right forum. This is a forum for promoting cooperation. If the U.S. raises the issue we shall of course object. We hope they will not."

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2015/08/03/world/asia/03reuters-asean-malaysia-china.html? r=0>

1 August 2015: China, Southeast Asia to set up hotline for South China Sea issues

China and Southeast Asian nations have agreed to set up a foreign ministers' hotline to tackle emergencies in the disputed South China Sea, a senior official of the ASEAN grouping said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/01/asia-pacific/china-southeast-asia-set-hotline-south-china-sea-issues/#.Vb3943gR-xJ>

1 August 2015: Malaysia Hopeful for South China Sea Code of Conduct Ahead of ASEAN Meeting

Anifah said that this week's meeting of Chinese senior officials with ASEAN gave way to the next stage of negotiations in establishing the CoC.

<http://sputniknews.com/asia/20150801/1025291362.html#ixzz3hfLp9nqt>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

27 August 2015: Australia Says South China Sea Tensions May Threaten Interests

Tensions in the South China Sea have the potential to threaten Australia's interests, Defense Minister Kevin Andrews said as he pledged to bolster the nation's military alliance with the U.S.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-08-27/australia-says-south-china-sea-tensions-may-threaten-interests>

26 August 2015: US to Warn China with More Military, Humanitarian Exercises in South China Sea

The United States has said it will increase the number and frequency of both military and humanitarian exercises in the South China Sea in an effort to send a message to China that its construction of artificial islands and military installations in the region will not be tolerated.

<http://www.newseveryday.com/articles/24262/20150826/warn-china-more-military-humanitarian-exercises-south-sea.htm#kDgF6Hzl4Syi05tZ.99>

26 August 2015: US wants coastguard agreement with China to help keep peace at sea

To reduce tensions at sea, Swift said the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, a regional protocol signed in 2014, "is working quite well", adding that US is interested in expanding the mechanism to the Chinese coastguard as well.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1852724/swift-proposal-us-wants-coastguard-agreement-china-help>

24 August 2015: US to deploy littoral combat ships in the South China Sea

David Shear, assistant defense secretary for Asian and Pacific security affairs, has said the Navy will deploy littoral combat ships in the South China Sea to perform surveillance operations in the region's shallow waters.

<http://www.executivegov.com/2015/08/david-shear-navy-to-rotate-lcs-through-singapore-to-patrol-south-china-sea/#sthash.313UbRNX.dpuf>

24 August 2015: China island-building altering South China Sea status quo, says US

"By undertaking these actions, China is unilaterally altering the physical status quo in the region, thereby complicating diplomatic initiatives that could lower tensions," the report warned.

<http://www.mvariety.com/regional-news/79501-china-island-building-altering-south-china-sea-status-quo-says-us>

23 August 2015: U.S. adds muscle, seeks friends in South China Sea standoff

The drill was part of a recent four-day exercise in which American and Indonesian forces stormed beaches, boarded ships, hunted submarines and practiced the wide range of skills they'd need if called upon to fight together in wartime.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/08/22/us-adds-muscle-seeks-friends-south-china-sea-standoff/31921703/>

18 August 2015: Pentagon to Increase Drone Flights Over South China Sea

In the South China Sea, the Pentagon has recently experienced difficulties in gathering reconnaissance data with China electronically jamming U.S. drone flights.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/pentagon-to-increase-drone-flights-over-south-china-sea/>

15 August 2015: Japan Gifts Vietnam Patrol Vessel Amid South China Sea Tensions

The vessel is part of a deal involving six used vessels that Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida pledged to donate to Vietnam during an August 2014 visit to Hanoi to help strengthen maritime safety.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/japan-gifts-vietnam-patrol-vessel-amid-south-china-sea-tensions/>

15 August 2015: Japan seeks multilateral naval exercises with US and Philippines

Philippines' Armed Forces chief General Hernando Iriberry and Defence Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said their meeting with Japan's Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano, head of Japan's Self-Defence Forces, focused on discussions of future joint-war games between Japan and Philippines Marines involving amphibious operations and landing exercises.

<http://m.gulfnews.com/news/asia/philippines/japan-seeks-multilateral-naval-exercises-with-us-and-philippines-1.1567156>

14 August 2015: Japan joins U.S.-Philippine humanitarian drills amid China sea dispute

It was the first time a Japanese navy ship has taken part in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief drills although a flotilla of Japanese training vessels, including a submarine, makes annual port calls in Manila.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/japan-joins-u-philippine-humanitarian-drills-amid-china-104459074.html>

12 August 2015: Rules not power in South China Sea, Britain's FM says in Beijing

There was "tension and the risk of escalation" in the area, Hammond told students at the capital's elite Peking University, adding: "We want to see claims dealt with by rules-based, not power-based, solutions in Asia as elsewhere."

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/29246400/rules-not-power-in-south-china-sea-britains-fm-says-in-beijing/>

10 August 2015: China hits back at U.S. criticism over South China Sea 'restrictions'

Freedom of overflights and navigation doesn't mean allowing foreign warships and military jets to violate other countries' sovereignty and security, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement to Reuters on Monday, after U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry accused China of restricting such movements in the region.

<http://news.yahoo.com/china-hits-back-u-criticism-over-south-china-100937783.html>

8 August 2015: India once again ticks of China over South China Sea issue

Singh told the conference that territorial disputes must be settled through peaceful means "as was done by India and Bangladesh recently using the mechanisms provided under UNCLOS."

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/india-ticks-china-south-china-sea-issue-2384358.html>

6 August 2015: Kerry says U.S. will not accept restrictions in South China Sea

Kerry's blunt criticism of Beijing, in front of his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, is likely to lift the South China Sea up the agenda when Chinese President Xi Jinping visits Washington next month, some experts said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/06/us-asean-malaysia-idUSKCN0QB0DO20150806>

5 August 2015: US, China bicker over territorial claims in South China Sea

The United States and China clashed Wednesday over who is to blame for rising tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea with Washington demanding a halt to "problematic actions" in the area and Beijing telling foreign parties to keep out.

[http://news.yahoo.com/us-china-bicker-over-territorial-](http://news.yahoo.com/us-china-bicker-over-territorial-164929180.html)

[164929180.html; ylt=A0LEVxbiwsJVkV0Aka5XNyoA; ylu=X3oDMTEzZzQ0YmY1BGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDVUIDMV8xBHNIYwNzYw--](http://news.yahoo.com/us-china-bicker-over-territorial-164929180.html)

5 August 2015: Kerry Urges Beijing to Halt Actions in South China Sea

With tensions mounting over the South China Sea disputes, Secretary of State John Kerry urged his Chinese counterpart on Wednesday to halt "problematic actions" in the area to provide an opportunity for diplomacy, a senior State Department official said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/world/asia/john-kerry-urges-beijing-to-halt-problematic-actions-in-south-china-sea-during-asean-meeting.html? r=0>

1 August 2015: U.S. slams China over Spratly buildup

The war of words is escalating again in the South China Sea, with the head of U.S. Pacific Command accusing China of creating "false sovereignty" through "aggressive, coercive" island-building in the disputed Spratly islands.

<http://newspindle.com/u-s-slams-china-over-spratly-buildup/>