

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 30
September 2015

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

27 September 2015: China might push on with work on South China Sea reefs despite warning from US President Barack Obama

China might press on with land reclamation in the South China Sea, Chinese military sources and observers say.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1861801/china-might-push-work-south-china-sea-reefs-despite>

25 September 2015: China's President Pledges No Militarization in Disputed Islands

China's President made a public commitment for the first time not to "militarize" artificial islands but didn't expand on the term, leaving it unclear how his commitment would affect China's activities in the Spratly islands.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/china-completes-runway-on-artificial-island-in-south-china-sea-1443184818>

25 September 2015: Spending ban may delay Philippine air support in South China Sea dispute: official

Plans to renovate an air base near Manila, enabling Philippine fighter jets to respond quickly to any Chinese moves in the South China Sea, may face delays due to a spending ban before general elections, a senior official said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/25/us-philippines-southchinasea-idUSKCN0RP1V520150925>

24 September 2015: Manila, Hanoi firm up ties on sea row with China

Evan Garcia, the DFA undersecretary for policy, reported that representatives of the two nations reached agreement during their meeting in Vietnam's capital city of Hanoi where they discussed vital issues that would strengthen their relations.

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/11d15672-6483-48f7-9360-27ae1141d172.aspx>

23 September 2015: Philippine President Mocks China's Maritime Claims to South China Sea

The President also rejected China's calls for a bilateral dialogue, saying that any talks should involve other countries that claim parts of the area such as Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan.

<http://www.chiangraitimes.com/philippine-president-mocks-chinas-maritime-claims-to-south-china-sea.html>

16 September 2015: China continued South China Sea reclamation despite halt claim

The dredgers at Subi could be seen pumping sediment on to areas bordered by recently built sea walls and widening the channel for ships to enter waters enclosed by the reef. At Mischief Reef, a dredger was expanding a channel to enable easier access for ships, possibly for use as a naval base.

<http://antiguaobserver.com/china-continued-south-china-sea-reclamation-despite-halt-claim-expert/>

16 September 2015: Satellite images suggest China 'building third airstrip' in South China Sea

China had reclaimed a flat rectangle of land with a retaining wall about 3,000 meters (3,280 yards) in length on Mischief Reef. It's similar to airstrips that China has been building on artificial islands at the Fiery Cross and Subi reefs in the contested Spratly Islands.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/15/asia/china-south-china-sea-airstrip/>

15 September 2015: China is continuing to militarize the South China Sea despite promising to stop

In addition to the airfield, China is also planning on equipping the recently dredged islands with anti-aircraft weapons and various naval vessels.

<http://www.businessinsider.sg/china-is-continuing-to-militarize-the-south-china-sea-despite-promising-to-stop-2015-9/#.VguFFZcaOzw>

14 September 2015: Vietnam Cozies Up to Japan in South China Sea Strategy

Communist Party chief to meet Japanese leaders in Tokyo to discuss security issues, among others

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/vietnam-cozies-up-to-japan-in-south-china-sea-strategy-1442219225>

11 September 2015: Vietnamese coast guard vessels permitted to use on-board weapons to deter and repel foreign boats

Under the new rule, Vietnamese coast guards can start using weapons to chase away foreign boats which encroach on Vietnamese waters and disregard orders by Vietnamese maritime security officers.

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/politics/new-rule-allows-vietnam-coast-guards-to-chase-invading-boats-with-weapons-51148.html>

10 September 2015: Satellite Imagery Makes Clear China's Runway Work at Subi Reef

At a width of approximately 60 meters, the subgrading could support a runway equal in width to that recently constructed by China at Fiery Cross Reef.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/09/south-china-sea-satellite-imagery-makes-clear-chinas-runway-work-at-subi-reef/>

6 September 2015: PH blasts China's 'deceitful rhetoric'

"The department welcomes the Chinese leadership's recent pronouncement that they are committed to peace, but why the display of offensive weaponry?" Defense spokesman Peter Paul Galvez asked.

<http://www.manilatimes.net/ph-blasts-chinas-deceitful-rhetoric/216696/>

5 September 2015: Philippines most concerned country in territorial dispute vs China

A survey of Asia-Pacific perceptions of various global threats conducted by Pew Research Center showed that 91 percent of Filipinos are concerned with the dispute over the South China Sea.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/09/04/1495940/survey-philippines-most-concerned-country-territorial-dispute-vs-china>

3 September 2015: Philippines, Vietnam close to signing cooperation pact on South China Sea

The Philippines and Vietnam, both claimants of the disputed South China Sea, are close to forging a strategic partnership which is expected to be sealed by the two countries' leaders in November, a solid alliance believed to be causing China to worry.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/128054/philippines-vietnam-close-to-signing-cooperation-pact-on-south-china-sea#ixzz3kkwX1hzt>

3 September 2015: China, Vietnam agree to 'properly handle' disputes

"We are in favour of properly handling disputes between both sides through dialogue, and expanding cooperation and common interests," Chinese President Xi Jinping told Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-vietnam-agree-to/2098498.html>

3 September 2015: Malaysia talks with US to ramp up China spying

There has been no final agreement between the two governments, but the talks themselves represent a shift of Malaysia's long effort to straddle the fence between the US and China.

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/malaysia-us-in-secret-talks-to-ramp-up-china-spying#sthash.5ttXFMsw.dpuf>

2 September 2015: Philippines Launches "Ecotourism Zone" in disputed South China Sea

The campaign for the Kalayaan Islands Eco-Tourism Zone in Palawan was launched by the U.S. Pinoy for Good Governance (USPGG.org) and the Movement & Alliance Against China's Aggression (MARCHA).

<http://www.filipinoexpress.com/news/1852-ph-launches-ecotourism-zone-in-disputed-south-china-sea>

1 September 2015: Philippines Feels Harrassed By China; Asks Help From US Military

Colonel Restituto Padilla, the spokesperson of the AFP said, "It was a specific request on the part of the secretary of national defense to Harris to get their assistance in resupplying and rotating troops."

<http://www.valuewalk.com/2015/09/philippines-feels-harrassed-by-china/>

1 September 2015: Xi Jinping To Overhaul China's Military Structure To Solidify Control

The new system, which calls for joint command structures at both regional and national levels, will replace the current region-based structure.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/xi-jinping-overhaul-chinas-military-structure-solidify-control-report-2076876>

31 August 2015: Taiwan: China likely to declare ADIZ in South China Sea

China will speed up militarization and declare a South China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the area, according to an assessment by the Republic of China's Ministry of National Defense.

<http://m.focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201508310021.aspx>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

24 September 2015: China to host ASEAN defence ministers amid South China Sea tension

China said on Thursday it will host defence ministers from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) next month, amid tension between some of its members and China over the disputed South China Sea.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/09/24/uk-china-southchinasea-idUKKCN0RO14M20150924>

7 September 2015: RI anticipates risk of dispute in South China Sea

Indonesia will strengthen its weaponry systems on Natuna Island in order to anticipate future threats from the South China Sea dispute. "We will equip Natuna with a port and extend its military air base runway. The runway should be enough to accommodate four jet fighters," Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu told journalists.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/07/ri-anticipates-risk-dispute-south-china-sea.html#sthash.HW000KyE.dpuf>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

28 September 2015: US to relocate 30,000 marines to counter China in S. China Sea

In the face of China's growing presence in the South China Sea, the United States Marine Corps is moving ahead with plans to eventually place nearly 15% of the service's personnel in Hawaii and beyond.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news/content?id=20150928000052&cid=1101>

25 September 2015: China, U.S. agree on cybertheft, North Korea, but differ on South China Sea

Xi and Obama took differing approaches to Beijing's activities in land reclamation in the South China Sea. Obama said Washington holds significant concerns over land reclamation, construction and militarization of disputed areas. In his separate statement, Xi took a firm approach, and said China maintains its sovereignty over territories in the South China Sea, where Beijing has been building airstrips over reclaimed reefs.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2015/09/25/China-US-agree-on-cybertheft-North-Korea-but-differ-on-South-China-Sea/9621443207433/

25 September 2015: India ready to move oil platform into South China Sea

With the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is likely to move its oil platform into the area.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20150901000163&cid=1101>

24 September 2015: U.S. to Press China on Island Expansions

"Each of the claimants have made clear that if China would make an undertaking to forgo further reclamation, forgo major construction and forgo the deployment of further offensive military to these outposts, for sure they would do likewise," one official said. "The Chinese know that the diplomatic cost is getting higher and higher."

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-to-press-china-on-island-expansions-1443141465>

24 September 2015: US, China sign deal to deal with naval, air force encounters

The two countries have signed annexes respectively about "notification of military crisis" and "encounters in the air" on major military operations and a code of safe conduct on naval and air force encounters, Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said.

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/49093066.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

23 September 2015: China admonishes Australian PM on South China Sea comments

"We hope that Australia will stay committed to not taking sides on issues concerning disputes over sovereignty", foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters in Beijing.

<http://www.ifreepress.com/china-admonishes-malcolm-turnbull-on-south-china-sea/>

22 September 2015: New Australian PM Urges Beijing to Cool Tensions in South China Sea

"China would be better advised, in its own interest frankly, not to be pushing the envelope there," Turnbull said in an interview a week after he grabbed power in an internal Liberal Party coup.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/new-australian-pm-urges-beijing-to-cool-tensions-in-south-china-sea-1220247>

15 September 2015: Japan promises ships to Vietnam amid South China Sea fears

Japan promised Vietnam ships to strengthen its forces in the South China Sea, with the two nations describing large-scale land reclamation there as a threat to peace - a veiled reference to China.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/japan-promises-ships-to-vietnam-amid-south-china-sea-fears>

15 September 2015: China warns U.S. surveillance plane

The Chinese navy issued warnings eight times as a U.S. surveillance plane on Wednesday swooped over islands that Beijing is using to extend its zone of influence.

http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/20/politics/south-china-sea-navy-flight/index.html?eref=rss_latest

15 September 2015: South Korea hopes for sea code of conduct

Han noted that the South China Sea is important for South Korea since 90 percent of its petroleum trade and 30 percent of its total trade pass through the area.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/09/15/1499952/south-korea-hopes-sea-code-conduct>

14 September 2015: Stop unilateral, destabilising actions in South China Sea: US tells China

"It's not clear to us that they've stopped, and we will continue to watch that situation very closely and engage with the Chinese, as we have in the recent past, on the subject," Department of Defence spokesman Bill Urban said.

http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/stop-unilateral-destabilising-actions-in-south-china-sea-us-tells-china_1796719.html

12 September 2015: India to resist curbs on navigation & flight in South China Sea

Senior officials said China's move to first claim territory, then build artificial islands and now possibly impose Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the region not only goes against India's strategic and commercial interests but also against international norms for freedom of navigation and flight.

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/48930379.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

11 September 2015: South China Sea issue is not of U.S. concern, says Chinese politician

Chinese State Councilor said the United States should not get involved in the territorial dispute over the South China Sea.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2015/09/11/South-China-Sea-issue-is-not-of-US-concern-says-Chinese-politician/6261441988865/

6 September 2015: US warships might make a pass by China's man-made islets

The U.S. government is considering whether to send military ships and planes close to China's man-made islands in the South China Sea. The government is leaning that way in the wake of Chinese navy vessels' recent passage through U.S. territorial waters off Alaska.

<http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/US-warships-might-make-a-pass-by-China-s-man-made-islets>

5 September 2015: Australia approves naval drills with US, India and Japan

Defence Minister Kevin Andrews has flagged the revival of controversial four-way naval drills with the United States, India and Japan in a clear signal Australia is pushing back against growing Chinese assertiveness towards its neighbours. In what could stoke fears in Beijing of a "containment" strategy, Mr Andrews said during a visit to India this week that Australia would be keen to take part in such exercises, which were tried in 2007 but shelved after China reacted badly.

<https://www.ibcworldnews.com/2015/09/05/australia-approves-naval-drills-with-us-india-and-japan/>

5 September 2015: India invites Japan for naval exercises with US

This decision of the Indian government to make the naval exercises trilateral has been clearly encouraged by Washington as part of its aggressive “pivot” to Asia—that is, the military encirclement of China in preparation for war.

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2015/09/05/indi-s05.html>

3 September 2015: China warns Delhi, “India should rethink its oil exploration plants”

The state-run China Daily has said that India's plans to conduct oil exploration off Vietnam coast in the South China Sea is “illegal and is an “unwise move“ that may “sabotage” positive momentum in ties.

<http://en.mercopress.com/2015/09/03/china-warns-delhi-india-should-rethink-its-oil-exploration-plants>

2 September 2015: Australia opposes 'militarisation' in South China Sea, says India's role 'critical'

In a veiled attack on China, Australian Defence Minister Kevin Andrews today strongly opposed the use of "intimidation and aggression" in the disputed South China Sea and said India's role was critical in stability of Indian Ocean region and wider global order.

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/48773110.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst