

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 33
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PHILIPPINES V. CHINA

21 December 2015: China rejects UN arbitration on South China Sea

China's territorial sovereignty should be decided by all the Chinese people, and no other people or organisation has the right to handle it," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei told media here replying to a question on the recent release of a court hearing record by an international tribunal in the Hague lodged by the Philippines.

http://wap.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/china-rejects-un-arbitration-on-disputed-south-china-sea-115122100679_1.html

19 December 2015: PCA releases transcripts of merits hearing

The Registry of the Tribunal published transcripts of the hearing on merits after consultation with the parties.

<http://www.pcacases.com/web/view/7>

3 December 2015: Carpio: PHL team 'upbeat, confident' of victory in South China Sea arbitration case

Carpio said the arbitral tribunal is expected to decide on the case "four to six months" from the last hearing or between the end of March and May next year.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/546651/news/nation/carpio-phl-team-upbeat-confident-of-victory-in-south-china-sea-arbitration-case#sthash.96SXggwu.dpuf>

1 December 2015: U.N. tribunal ends hearing on South China Sea issue, hands Beijing Jan. 1 rebuttal deadline

Although Beijing has refused to take part in the hearing before the Permanent Court of Arbitration, judges have now given China until Jan. 1 to write a rebuttal to the case laid out by Manila.

http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/01/asia-pacific/crime-legal-asia-pacific/u-n-tribunal-ends-hearing-south-china-sea-issue-hands-beijing-jan-1-rebuttal-deadline/#.Vl_venYrKUK

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

21 December 2015: Philippines vows stronger military to back South China Sea claim

Aquino, ineligible to run for re-election under the constitution, promised to spend about 83.90 billion pesos (\$1.77 billion) in a five-year period until 2017 to strengthen the military as China asserts its claims to most of the waters.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3368570/Philippines-vows-stronger-military-South-China-Sea-claim.html#ixzz3v7eZFb2S>

19 December 2015: China, Vietnam launch joint inspection of South China Sea waters

Chinese and Vietnamese experts will inspect the terrain and geological conditions outside the mouth of the Beibu Gulf. The inspection will be carried out by China's Fendou No 5 ocean research vessel.

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/50248549.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

19 December 2015: Chinese foreign minister says situation in South China Sea 'stable'

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the situation in the disputed South China Sea was "relatively stable" and urged outside countries to help it to stay that way rather than fuelling conflict there.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-china-idUSKBN0U20F020151219>

14 December 2015: China navy carries out more drills in disputed South China Sea

"The People's Liberation Army Navy in recent days organized a fleet to go to relevant seas in the South China Sea, by way of the Western Pacific, to carry out exercises," China's Defense Ministry said.

http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/14/asia-pacific/china-navy-carries-out-more-drills-in-disputed-south-china-sea/#.Vm_8fr9GRBQ

14 December 2015: China to build filling station on disputed South China Sea island

The filling station and accompanying storage tank on Woody Island in the Paracels will take a year to complete, the company, whose listed flagship is Sinopec Corp , said.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/14/china-to-build-filling-station-on-disputed-south-china-sea-island>

13 December 2015: PLA Naval fleet to conduct exercise in South China Sea

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has organized a fleet for a drill in related waters in the South China Sea, according to the Ministry of National Defense.

<http://www.ecns.cn/2015/12-13/192305.shtml>

12 December 2015: Taiwan Officials Make Low-Profile Visit to Disputed South China Sea

Taiwan's ministers of the interior and coast guard head flew to the island with a group of scholars. They attended a ceremony to start up a lighthouse that can guide ships up to 20 kilometers away.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/taiwan-officials-visit-disputed-south-china-sea/3100461.html>

3 December 2015: CNOOC signs PSC with Husky Oil for South China Sea

Block 15/33 is located in the Pearl River Mouth basin of the South China Sea. The block covers a total area of 155 sq km with a water depth of 80 m to 100 m. The block is one of the those CNOOC offered for foreign cooperation in 2014.

<http://www.worldoil.com/news/2015/12/03/cnooc-signs-psc-with-husky-oil-for-south-china-sea>

1 December 2015: Vietnam launches investigation into the killing of a fisherman near the Spratly

"The authorities are investigating the incident. They did a postmortem examination and got statements from the captain and others. The result will be announced once it is available," Tho said.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/killing-of-vietnamese-fisherman-in-contested-waters-sparks-outrage/3083175.html>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

16 December 2015: Indonesia looks to boost defenses around Natuna Islands in South China Sea

According to Ryamizard, Indonesia plans to deploy a fleet of jet fighters and three corvettes to the islands, revamp its naval and air force base and deploy more troops.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/16/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/indonesia-looks-boost-defenses-around-natuna-islands-south-china-sea/#.VnEiGEp96Uk>

8 December 2015: Singapore, US Agree Spy Plane Deployment Amid South China Sea Tensions

The deployment of P-8s is significant because it provides Washington with another location in the region from which to stage surveillance flights.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/us-singapore-agree-spy-plane-deployment-amid-south-china-sea-tensions/>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

19 December 2015: South China Sea flyover was not planned, U.S. says

Pentagon spokesman Mark Wright said that the Dec. 10 mission was not a "freedom of navigation" operation and that there was "no intention of flying within 12 nautical miles of any feature," indicating the mission may have strayed off course.

<http://triblive.com/usworld/world/9663501-74/china-sea-south#ixzz3ur00xf6a/>

19 December 2015: China complains about U.S. plane straying into disputed airspace

"The action from the United States is a serious military provocation. It complicates and even militarizes the regional situation in the South China Sea. We demand the United States to take necessary actions to prevent such events from happening, and avoid damages to the military-to-military relations between the two countries," the ministry said.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/18/asia/u-s-south-china-sea-airspace/>

17 December 2015: Australia says no plan to stop surveillance flights over South China Sea

Australia will not bow to Chinese pressure to halt surveillance flights over disputed islands in the South China Sea at the centre of territorial spats between China and its regional neighbours, Defence Minister Marise Payne said.

<http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/australia-says-no-plan-to-stop-surveillance-flights-over-south-china-sea/41844878>

15 December 2015: Australian military plane has overflown disputed South China Sea Island in challenge to Beijing

The Australian Military has bolstered its military surveillance over the South China Sea amid mounting tensions surrounding ownership of the region.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3360863/Australian-RAAF-plane-overflown-disputed-South-China-Sea-Island.html#ixzz3uTHCpE3r>

15 December 2015: Japanese official warns that South China Sea activities may be precursor to ADIZ

“China is building islands in the South China Sea on which to put radar and air defense missiles,”

Masanori Nishi, a policy adviser to Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/15/national/politics-diplomacy/japanese-official-warns-south-china-sea-activities-may-precursor-adiz/#.VnEiFkp96Uk>

15 December 2015: China upset over India-Japan agreement on South China Sea

China expressed dissatisfaction over India-Japan agreement concerning the freedom of navigation in South China Sea. The agreement was signed during Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent visit to New Delhi.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/China-upset-over-India-Japan-agreement-on-South-China-Sea/articleshow/50179729.cms>

12 December 2015: US urges Taiwan to contribute to peace in SCS

The US government said that it hoped that a visit by Taiwan's Interior Minister Chen Wei-zen to Taiping Island would contribute to the peace objective.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201512130007.aspx>

8 December 2015: China criticizes closer US defense ties with Singapore

A stronger U.S. military presence does “not conform to the common and long-term interests among the regional countries,” Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chuying told reporters at a daily briefing.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/south-china-sea-dispute-china-criticizes-closer-us-defense-ties-with-singapore/#sthash.iQDre4kO.dpuf>

3 December 2015: Australia engages in blunt exchange with China over South China Sea dispute

There was a controversy between the dialogue of Australia's defence brass and General Fang Fenghui, chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

<http://www.ibtimes.com.au/australia-engages-blunt-exchange-china-over-south-china-sea-dispute-1489105>