

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 36**  
**March 2016**

**PHILIPPINES v. CHINA ARBITRATION**

**31 March 2016: Indonesia to Respond After South China Sea Ruling**

Indonesia will likely issue a response after an upcoming verdict on the Philippines' arbitration case against China on the South China Sea, Arif Havas Oegroseno, Indonesia's deputy coordinating minister for maritime affairs said.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/indonesia-to-respond-after-south-china-sea-case-minister/>

**22 March 2016: Taiwan Holds Media Tour to Reinforce South China Sea Claims**

Deputy Foreign Minister Bruce Linghu said the trip to aims to counter the Philippines' contention in a case brought before the Permanent Court of Arbitration that the island is merely a rock.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taiwan-holds-media-tour-reinforce-south-china-sea-37835456>

**8 March 2016: UN arbitration on South China Sea 'tainted', says China**

"The Philippines stubbornness is clearly the result of the behind scenes instigation and political manoeuvring," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said.

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/un-arbitration-on-south-china-sea-tainted--says-china/206186.html>

**4 March 2016: Arbitral Tribunal notes Remarks of Taiwan's President on Itu Aba**

The Arbitral Tribunal sent letters to the Philippines and China asking the two nations to explain their views on Taiwan's claim that Itu Aba was an island, not a reef.

<http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=17429>

**1 March 2016: Philippines to China: Respect coming decision on South China Sea claims**

"As we presume to be responsible states, the Philippines, as well as the international community, are asking China to respect the forthcoming ruling," del Rosario said in a statement.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-philippines-to-china-respect-coming-decision-on-south-china-sea-claims-2183883>

**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**30 March 2016: Philippines weighs investing in submarine fleet amid South China Sea row**

The Philippines may invest in its first ever submarine fleet to help protect its territory in the disputed South China Sea, President Benigno Aquino III said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/30/asia-pacific/philippines-weighs-investing-submarine-fleet-amid-south-china-sea-row/#.Vvze6-J96Uk>

**30 March 2016: Malaysian PM: Overlapping claims in SCS can be settled through negotiation**

The overlapping claims cannot be settled through military intervention but via negotiations and solidarity among Asean countries, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

<http://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/03/136108/pm-overlapping-claims-south-china-sea-can-be-settled-through-negotiation>

**30 March 2016: China Defends Deployment of Anti-Ship Missiles to South China Sea Island**

"China's deployment of national defense facilities on its own territory is reasonable and justified," ministry spokesman Hong Lei said. "It has nothing to do with the so-called militarization.

<https://news.usni.org/2016/03/30/china-defends-deployment-of-anti-ship-missiles-to-south-china-sea-island>

**28 March 2016: Taiwan arrests 41 Chinese coral and turtle poachers in South China Sea**

The Taiwanese coast guard said it had arrested 41 Chinese fisherman found with 15 tons of illicit coral and endangered turtles in their possession near a disputed atoll in the South China Sea.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/28/asia-pacific/crime-legal-asia-pacific/taiwan-arrests-41-chinese-coral-turtle-poachers-south-china-sea/#.Vvo9KeJ96U>

**28 March 2016: China Joins Indonesia Naval Exercise After South China Sea Spat**

Chinese ships left the port of Qingdao to take part in multilateral naval exercises hosted by Indonesia just a week after renewed tensions erupted between the two countries over the South China Sea..

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/china-joins-indonesia-naval-exercise-after-south-china-sea-spat/>

**28 March 2016: Malaysia wary of raising tensions over boats**

Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said he is confident that if the sightings were confirmed, the issue "can be resolved bilaterally" with China, as their relationship is strong.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-wary-of-raising-tensions-over-boats>

**28 March 2016: China, Vietnam vow to boost military ties amid strained relations over South China Sea**

Chang and his Vietnamese counterpart Phùng Quang Thanh agreed that both nations' militaries act with restraint to avoid conflict.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1931295/china-vietnam-vow-boost-military-ties-amid-strained>

**27 March 2016: Beijing sets up joint research centre on S. China Sea issues**

The inaugural ceremony for the China-Southeast Asia Research Center on the South China Sea was held on March 25.

<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/03/27/4161s922012.htm>

**27 March 2016: 82 foreign fishing boats left in Malaysian waters in South China Sea by Saturday: Official**

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) said only 82 foreign fishing boats were seen in Malaysia's waters in the South China Sea near Miri, Sarawak, by Friday (March 25), a day after a Cabinet minister said 100 Chinese boats were sighted in the area.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/82-foreign-fishing-boats-left-in-malaysian-waters-in-south-china-sea-by-saturday>

**26 March 2016: China Deploys Anti-ship Missiles on Woody Island**

The YJ-62 ASCM would allow China to potentially target any surface vessel within 400 kilometers of Woody Island, providing a powerful power projection capability.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/south-china-sea-china-has-deployed-anti-ship-missiles-on-woody-island/>

**26 March 2016: Philippines Creates New South China Sea Task Force**

The Philippine government said that it had created a new task force to coordinate its policy on the South China Sea.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/philippines-creates-new-south-china-sea-task-force/>

**25 March 2016: Vietnam slams 'illegal' Taiwan Spratlys tour**

"This is a serious violation of Vietnam's sovereignty, escalates tensions and is not conducive to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea," Foreign Ministry spokesman Le Hai Binh said in a statement.

<http://www.mb.com.ph/vietnam-slams-illegal-taiwan-spratlys-tour/>

**25 March 2016: Pushing territorial claim, Taiwan says 'rock' is an island**

Taiwan flew international media to its largest island holding in the South China Sea in a bid to reinforce its territorial claims in the disputed island.

<http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/pushing-territorial-claim-taiwan-says-rock-is-an-island>

**25 March 2016: Malaysia: 100 Chinese Boats in Malaysian Waters in South China Sea**

Malaysia's national security minister Shahidan Kassim said assets from the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency and the navy had been sent to the area near the Luconia Shoals to monitor the situation.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-25/100-chinese-boats-encroach-malaysian-waters-minister/7277232>

#### **24 March 2016: Malaysia: We cannot be neutral over South China Sea**

Anifah stressed that Malaysia's stand on the South China Sea has always been consistent and clear, with all claims and resolution in line with international laws, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982).

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/03/24/anifah-we-cannot-be-neutral-over-south-china-sea/>

#### **22 March 2016: New DFA chief vows diplomatic action over Scarborough harassment**

Interim Foreign Affairs Secretary Jose Almendras vowed that the Philippines will take appropriate action on China's reported harassment of Filipino fishermen at the Panatag or Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/03/22/1565535/new-dfa-chief-vows-diplomatic-action-over-scarborough-harassment>

#### **22 March 2016: China says Philippines fishermen used fire bombs in South China Sea**

Philippines fishermen threw fire bombs at Chinese law enforcement vessels in the South China Sea, China's Foreign Ministry said, after Philippines media reported that fishermen had been struck by bottles hurled from China's coast guard ships.

<http://news.yahoo.com/china-says-philippine-fishermen-used-fire-bombs-south-092128899.html>

#### **22 March 2016: Taiwan demands evidence from Indonesia in shooting incident**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on Tuesday demanded that Indonesia provide evidence to support its claims that two Taiwanese fishing boats were poaching in its territorial waters and attempted to ram an Indonesian patrol vessel before they were fired upon.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201603220009.aspx>

#### **22 March 2016: Taiwan says its fishing boats shot at in Indonesian waters**

Taiwan said that it was investigating allegations that an Indonesian ship pursued and shot at two Taiwanese fishing boats in the Malacca Strait, warning Jakarta that violence on the high seas was unacceptable.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/taiwan-says-its-fishing-boats-shot-at-in-indonesian-waters>

#### **22 March 2016: China slammed US and the Philippines for increasing their military presence in the South China Sea**

"The U.S.-Philippines cooperation should not target third parties, harm the sovereignty or security interests of other states, or hamper regional peace and stability," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said at a regular press briefing.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/23/c\\_135213569.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/23/c_135213569.htm)

#### **22 March 2016: China flexes muscle in disputed waters**

At least 10 Filipino fishermen reported being harassed and driven away from Panatag or Scarborough Shoal by a Chinese coast guard vessel.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/03/22/1565425/china-flexes-muscle-disputed-waters>

#### **21 March 2016: China not claiming Natuna but fishing boats operating in "traditional Chinese fishing grounds"**

"The sovereignty of the Natunas belongs to Indonesia. China has no objections to this," Hua told a regular briefing. He said the fishing boat was operating in "traditional Chinese fishing grounds", again demanded the fishermen be released and added the Chinese coastguard vessel did not enter Indonesian waters.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-southchinasea-idUSKCN0WN0B6>

**21 March 2016: China sends coast guard vessel to retrieve a fishing vessel near Natuna**

According to Indonesian Foreign Minister, the incident occurred just 4.34 kilometers off Indonesia's Natuna islands.

<http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/news/indonesia-summon-chinese-ambassador-standoff-natuna-islands/>

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/03/21/ri-confronts-china-fishing.html>

**21 March 2016: Malaysia disclosed efforts to meet and hold talks with Australia, Philippines and Vietnam on SCS**

Hishammuddin remarked that "if the reports that (the Malaysian Ministry of Defence has) received from various sources regarding the build-up and placement of military assets (by Beijing) in the Spratlys are true, this forces us into a pushback against China".

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/why-malaysia-adopting-tougher-south-china-sea-stance-224700272.html>

**21 March 2016: Chinese Coast Guard harassed 17 Filipino fishermen near Panatag Shoal**

Another group of more than a dozen Filipino fishermen from Barangay Cato in Infanta, Pangasinan, was reportedly harassed by the Chinese Coast Guard near the Scarborough Shoal.

<http://www.moderntribune.info/chinese-coast-guard-harassed-17-filipino-fishermen-near-panatag-shoal/>

**20 March 2016: China urges Japan to keep South China Sea row off G-7 agenda**

China has pressed Japan not to broach Beijing's disputes with regional neighbors in the South China Sea at the upcoming Group of Seven summit to be held in Japan in May, arguing that touching on the issue would hamper efforts to improve bilateral relations, diplomatic sources said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/20/national/politics-diplomacy/china-urges-japan-keep-south-china-sea-row-off-g-7-agenda-sources/#.Vu5nURJ97Vp>

**17 March 2016: China rebuffs Japan-East Timor concern over South China Sea**

"I want to tell the Japanese side that doing so will be vain. It will only make the Chinese people see clearly some Japanese people's mentality," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/17/c\\_135198967.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/17/c_135198967.htm)

**16 March 2016: China on EU's South China Sea position: Don't look at us**

"I want to stress that non-militarization of the South China Sea requires the concerted efforts of countries both in and outside the region. It is hoped that relevant parties can respect history and efforts made by regional countries in maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea," Lu said.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/03/16/1563591/china-eus-south-china-sea-position-dont-look-us>

**16 March 2016: Beijing sets up South China Sea tsunami alert center**

China has set up a tsunami alert center in the South China Sea, the head of the country's maritime regulator said Wednesday, in Beijing's latest effort to bolster its jurisdiction in the disputed waters.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/16/asia-pacific/beijing-sets-south-china-sea-tsunami-alert-center/#.VukEqaBvnM>

**15 March 2016: China to Set Up Int'l Maritime Judicial Center**

The decision was announced by the Supreme Court Chief Justice Zhou Qiang. This is on top of the existing maritime courts in the country that adjudicated nearly 230,000 local maritime disputes in the country since it opened in 1984. It's not clear whether what specific types of cases the court will handle.

<http://www.morningnewsusa.com/south-china-sea-updates-china-set-intl-maritime-judicial-center-2363989.html>

**15 March 2016: Vietnamese honor soldiers killed by Chinese 28 years ago**

Police watched the ceremony but did not intervene. Unauthorized gatherings are normally stopped by the authorities.

<http://macaudailytimes.com.mo/south-china-sea-vietnamese-honor-soldiers-killed-chinese-28-years-ago.html>

**12 March 2016: Stay the course: Del Rosario's parting words on South China Sea**

Former Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario has one advice for the next administration on foreign policy, particularly in handling the South China Sea dispute: Stay the course.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/137669/stay-the-course-del-rosarios-parting-words-on-south-china-sea#ixzz42glXrs2q>

**11 March 2016: China to begin civilian flights to disputed South China Sea island**

Chinese media said the flights would be to Sansha city, on Woody Island in the Paracel archipelago, China's administrative base for islands and reefs it controls in the South China Sea.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/11/china-to-begin-civilian-flights-to-disputed-south-china-sea-island>

**10 March 2016: Taiwan Bristles as 'Neighboring Countries' Militarize South China Sea**

Without mentioning any nations in particular, the Defense Minister of Taiwan, Kao Kuang-chi, told the nation's legislature that he is concerned with the growing presence of military weapons and facilities in the South China Sea, where Taiwan makes multiple territorial claims.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/03/10/taiwan-bristles-as-neighboring-countries-militarize-south-china-sea/>

**10 March 2016: Philippines To Get Five Aircraft from Japan Amid South China Sea Tensions**

Philippine president Benigno Aquino III confirmed that his country would lease five aircraft from Japan to help the Southeast Asian state's navy safeguard its claims in the disputed South China Sea as the two sides celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic ties.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/philippines-to-get-five-new-aircraft-from-japan-amid-south-china-sea-tensions/>

**9 March 2016: Philippines Denies Role in Trilateral Naval Drills Near South China Sea**

The Philippines denied that it had anything to do with planned joint naval exercises between the United States, Japan and India near the South China Sea amid China's growing assertiveness in the disputed waters.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/philippines-denies-role-in-trilateral-naval-drills-near-south-china-sea/>

**8 March 2016: China takes hard line on South China Sea**

The four-ship U.S. strike group that patrolled the disputed South China Sea was followed by Chinese warships, a show of force that prompted a hard-line response from China doubling down on its claim to nearly all of the resource-rich sea.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/08/china-hard-line-south-china-sea-stennis-patrol/81481860/>

**8 March 2016: China says South China Sea among world's freest shipping lanes**

The scs is the world's freest and safest shipping lane, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said, arguing that Beijing's control over the disputed waters was justified because it was the first to "discover" them.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-says-south-china-se/2582740.html>

**8 March 2016: FM: China cannot be accused of militarization**

"People talk a lot about militarisation. I think China cannot be accused of militarisation. The label is more suited to some other countries," Wang Yi said.

<https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/333210>

**8 March 2016: Wang Yi vows to defend South China Sea rights**

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Beijing won't permit other nations to infringe on what it considers its sovereign rights in the strategically vital areas of the South China Sea.

<http://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1247087-20160308.htm>

**8 March 2016: Chinese Foreign Minister Teases Opening South China Sea Facilities to Journalists**

"After the facilities are completed and conditions there allow, we might consider inviting the press, including from foreign country, to make a field trip," Wang said.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/03/08/chinese-foreign-minister-teases-opening-south-china-sea-facilities-to-journalists/>

**7 March 2016: 'We fish therefore we own' says China official over South China Sea dispute**

"If it can be said that that we want to safeguard China's rights and interest in the South China Sea, fishermen, because they have been living and surviving on fishing for the past thousand years, have been proof of our rights and interests," Luo said, in response to a Reuters question.

<http://www.themalaymailonline.com/world/article/we-fish-therefore-we-own-says-china-official-over-south-china-sea-dispute#sthash.m8v5SpWu.dpuf>

**7 March 2016: China watchful of Japan's activities in South China Sea**

"Japan illegally occupied China's islands in the South China Sea during World War II, and we are highly vigilant of Japanese action there," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a daily news briefing.

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-03/07/content\\_23775082.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-03/07/content_23775082.htm)

**7 March 2016: Philippine Military welcomes US fleet deployment**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines sees nothing wrong with the deployment of a U.S. Navy battle group in the West Philippine Sea as such would help strengthen freedom of navigation in the region.

<http://www.mvariety.com/regional-news/84296-philippine-military-welcomes-us-fleet-deployment>

**6 March 2016: PHL: Stop 'aggressive actions' that would rise South China Sea tensions**

The Philippine government has called anew to stop "aggressive actions" that would increase the tensions in the disputed South China Sea.

<http://www.mb.com.ph/phl-stop-aggressive-actions-that-would-rise-south-china-sea-tensions/#BPQpbkv2cgKXf9Aq.99>

**3 March 2016: China admits sending vessels to disputed atoll to tow ship**

Hong also said that during the towing operation, Chinese vessels temporarily stopped fishing boats near the area. He said these Chinese vessels promptly left the site when the towing was finished.

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/03/02/China-admits-sending-vessels-to-disputed-atoll-to-tow-ship.html>

**2 March 2016: DFA: No more Chinese vessels in Quirino atoll**

The Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs said Chinese vessels were no longer sighted near the vicinity of a disputed atoll in the South China Sea.

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/124415-china-ships-quirino-atoll-philippines-south-china-sea>

**2 March 2016: China has launched a self-propelled floating dock that will allow it to repair warships far at sea**

China's navy has launched its first self-propelled floating dock, giving it the ability to repair warships far from the coast, the official People's Liberation Army Daily said on Tuesday, Beijing's latest move to modernize its navy.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/china-has-launched-a-self-propelled-floating-dock-that-will-allow-it-to-repair-warships-far-at-sea-2016-3?IR=T&r=US&IR=T>

**2 March 2016: China takes Quirino/Jackson atoll**

The Chinese have taken over another traditional Filipino fishing ground near Palawan where they have stationed up to five ships to keep local fishermen at bay, sources said.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/03/02/1558682/china-takes-philippine-atoll>

**ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

**28 March 2016: Indonesia MPs call for military base after fishing spat with China**

Mr Mahfudz Siddiq, chairman of a House committee on defence and foreign affairs, said that the new base would help strengthen the existing regional defence system in the eastern and western regions and improve the military's mobility.

<http://news.asiaone.com/news/asia/indonesia-mps-call-military-base-after-fishing-spat-china#sthash.6eyzGFRu.dpuf>

### **23 March 2016: Indonesia rebuffs China's demand that fishermen be released**

Coordinating Minister for Politic, Legal and Security Luhut Pandjaitan said that the eight crewmen will be prosecuted. The government official in charge of maritime security, Arif Havas Oegroseno, said China's action had created "a new ball game" that Southeast Asian countries need to follow closely.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/indonesia-rebuffs-chinas-demand-that-fishermen-be-released/2016/03/23/8404c8c0-f101-11e5-a2a3-d4e9697917d1\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/indonesia-rebuffs-chinas-demand-that-fishermen-be-released/2016/03/23/8404c8c0-f101-11e5-a2a3-d4e9697917d1_story.html)

### **21 March 2016: Indonesia says it feels peace efforts on South China Sea 'sabotaged'**

"We feel interrupted and sabotaged in our efforts," fisheries minister Susi Pudjiastuti told reporters in Jakarta after meeting Chinese embassy officials to discuss the incident in the Natuna Sea, an area between Peninsular Malaysia and the Malaysian province of Sarawak on Borneo island. "We may take it to the international tribunal of the law of the sea," Pudjiastuti said.

[http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesia-says-it-feels/2622356.html#.Vu\\_4Sa-DQb0.twitter](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesia-says-it-feels/2622356.html#.Vu_4Sa-DQb0.twitter)

### **21 March 2016: Indonesia to summon China ambassador over Natuna Sea incident**

Indonesia was attempting to detain the Chinese vessel for fishing illegally in waters near the contested South China Sea when a Chinese coast guard vessel intervened, fisheries minister Susi Pudjiastuti said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesia-to-summon-china/2620402.html>

### **18 March 2016: Singapore and Australia say they reserve the right to continue to sail and fly through the South China Sea.**

Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said that security of passage through the South China Sea was "essential". "So we totally subscribe to the concept of freedom of navigation and overflight and we would highlight the South China Sea as important for both Australia and Singapore, because so much of our trade flows through that," he said.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2016/03/18/aust-singapore-discuss-south-china-sea>

## **MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

### **30 March 2016: U.S. says it will not recognize South China Sea air exclusion zone**

U.S. officials have expressed concern that an international court ruling expected in the coming weeks on a case brought by the Philippines against China over its South China Sea claims could prompt Beijing to declare an air defense identification zone, or ADIZ, in the region, as it did in the East China Sea in 2013.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-work-idUSKCN0WW1QB>

### **28 March 2016: European Union calls halt on militarization, threat of force in South China Sea**

The EU made a declaration urging all claimant countries in South China Sea "to resolve disputes through peaceful means, to clarify the basis of their claims, and to pursue them in accordance with international law including UNCLOS and its arbitration procedures."

<http://www.update.ph/2016/03/european-union-calls-halt-on-militarization-threat-of-force-in-south-china-sea/3614>

### **27 March 2016: New Zealand's Permanent Representative to UN: SCS could come before UNSC**

Gerard van Bohemen said that if there was an incident, and a significant one, there could well be a call to put it on the council's agenda.

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/politics/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=280&objectid=11612568](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/politics/news/article.cfm?c_id=280&objectid=11612568)

### **26 March 2016: Australia weighs regional ties in drawn-out submarine acquisition**

Canberra outlined an ambitious upgrade of its military that analysts saw as a response to China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

<http://atimes.com/2016/03/australia-weighs-regional-ties-in-drawn-out-submarine-acquisition/>

### **24 March 2016: US Submarine Visits Former Philippines Base Amid South China Sea Tensions**

A U.S. submarine arrived at a former base in the Philippines this week amid ongoing South China Sea tensions between Manila and Beijing.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/us-submarine-visits-former-philippines-base-amid-south-china-sea-tensions>

**23 March 2016: Australia beefing up military as it looks at China**

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull committed to raising defense spending in five years to the equivalent of 2 percent of the economy in perpetuity, a big increase that could influence the balance of power in the Pacific Ocean, experts say.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/australia-beefing-up-military-as-it-looks-at-china-1.400252>

**21 March 2016: Australia to continue sending ships, planes to disputed South China Sea**

"We have been extremely consistent in saying that our activities will continue by sending our ships and planes to that part of world in accordance with rule of law. That's not a position we have changed," said Payne, after holding talks with her Malaysian counterpart Hishammuddin Hussein in Kuala Lumpur.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/australia-to-continue/2623494.html>

**18 March 2016: Washington 'Anxious' Over China's Presence in South China Sea Shoal**

Admiral John Richardson, the US Navy's chief of naval operations, reportedly expressed concern saying that there is increased Chinese "surface ship activity" near Scarborough Shoal.

<http://sputniknews.com/asia/20160318/1036537823/us-south-china-sea-tension.html#ixzz43QrgbasC>

**18 March 2016: US, Philippines Agree on Locations Covered by Defense Pact**

The locations are at Antonio Bautista Air Base on western Palawan island, which faces the hotly disputed Spratly islands in the South China Sea; Lumbia Air Base on southern Mindanao island; Basa Air Base and Fort Magsaysay, north of the capital, Manila; and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base on Cebu.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/us-philippines-agree-locations-covered-defense-pact-37750350>

**15 March 2016: Japan, East Timor serve up veiled criticism of China over maritime rows**

Japan and East Timor on Tuesday expressed "serious concern over the recent situation in the South China Sea," a veiled criticism of Beijing's aggressive moves in the waters, including its construction of islands in the disputed Spratly archipelago.

<http://osen.mt.co.kr/article/G1110374986>

**11 March 2016: India Rejects Joint Naval Patrols with US in South China Sea**

Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar said, "As of now, India has never taken part in any joint patrol; we only do joint exercises. The question of joint patrol does not arise."

<http://www.voanews.com/content/india-rejects-joint-naval-patrols-with-us-in-south-china-sea/3231567.html>

**8 March 2016: US General: Air Force to Keep Flying Over South China Sea**

"We will continue to do as we've always done, and that is fly and sail in international airspace in accordance to international rules and norms," Robinson told reporters.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-general-air-force-flying-south-china-sea-37482377>

**7 March 2016: Japanese Submarine to Visit the Philippines Amid South China Sea Tensions**

Sub set to arrive in Subic Bay in April along with two destroyers which will then move on to Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/japanese-submarine-to-visit-the-philippines-amid-south-china-sea-tensions/>

**6 March 2016: US: China wants control of disputed sea**

"Clearly, there's a pattern there that they want to control this area.. China, in some ways, is trying to make it appear that we are provocative and trying to raise tensions but it isn't new. We've been doing that for decades. Our interests are the freedom of navigation and the principle that this issue should be decided by the rule of law," Goldberg said.

<http://www.manilatimes.net/china-wants-control-of-disputed-sea-envoy/248858/>

**4 March 2016: U.S. aircraft carrier patrols South China Sea as Beijing keeps watch**

The Navy's Seventh Fleet said that the USS John S. Stennis, a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, as well as the guided-missile destroyers USS Chung-Hoon and USS Stockdale, the guided-missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay and the supply ship USNS Rainier had been operating in the eastern part of the South China Sea



since March 1 after passing through the Luzon Strait between the Philippines and Taiwan. Chinese naval ships were "in the vicinity," the U.S. Navy release said.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/04/politics/aircraft-carrier-patrols-south-china-sea/index.html>

**2 March 2016: U.S. plans naval exercises with India and Japan**

India, the United States and Japan will hold naval exercises in waters off the northern Philippines near the South China Sea this year, the U.S. military said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-usa-idUSKCN0W41UW>

**2 March 2016: U.S. Proposes Reviving Naval Coalition to Balance China's Expansion**

The chief of the United States Pacific Command, Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., on Wednesday proposed reviving an informal strategic coalition made up of the navies of Japan, Australia, India and the United States, an experiment that collapsed a decade ago because of diplomatic protests from China.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/03/world/asia/us-proposes-india-naval-coalition-balance-china-expansion.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/03/world/asia/us-proposes-india-naval-coalition-balance-china-expansion.html?_r=1)

**1 March 2016: U.S. warns China on militarization of South China Sea**

"China must not pursue militarization in the South China Sea," Carter said in a wide-ranging speech at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. "Specific actions will have specific consequences."

<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSKCN0W35N4>

**1 March 2016: Japan And Philippines Sign Defense Agreement Amid Regional Uncertainty**

"Let me stress that what underpins this agreement is not only our desire to enhance our respective defense capabilities but also to contribute to regional peace and stability," Filipino Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said, adding the agreement will also include technology supplies and joint development projects. The agreement is the first of its kind for Japan in the region.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/south-china-sea-controversy-2016-update-japan-philippines-sign-defense-agreement-amid-2327098>