

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 37
April 2016

PHILIPPINES v. CHINA ARBITRATION

20 April 2016: Beijing seeks Moscow's support over South China Sea court battle with Philippines

"Both China and Russia should stay on guard against abuses of mandatory arbitration," Wang said.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1937227/beijing-seeks-moscows-support-over-south-china-sea>

17 April 2016: Judge Gao: Tribunal deviated from a just and objective stance due to the apparent bias in favor of the Philippines

Gao Zhiguo, the Chinese Judge at ITLOS, said that the arbitration failed to reach the goal of settling disputes and proposing solutions.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-04/17/c_135287405.htm

7 April 2016: Ma again invites Philippine officials to visit Taiping Island

Ma said a Philippine lawyer made a totally untrue argument in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague last November that Taiping was a rock, not an island.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201604070019.aspx>

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

26 April 2016: China to send fleet of nuclear power ships worth £300 MILLION each to South China Sea

The vessels could provide energy to the man-made islands in the area, according to People's Daily Online.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/peoplesdaily/article-3559068/China-send-fleet-nuclear-power-ships-worth-300-MILLION-South-China-Sea-amid-mounting-political-tensions.html>

25 April 2016: China to build on disputed Scarborough Shoal this year: report

China will establish an outpost on Scarborough Shoal, 143 miles off the Philippine coast, the South China Morning Post newspaper cited an unnamed source close to the People's Liberation Army.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/china-build-disputed-scarborough-shoal-report-045219188.html>

24 April 2016: China Reaches Consensus with Brunei, Cambodia, Laos on South China Sea Issue

The four countries also agreed that territorial and maritime disputes should be resolved through consultations and negotiations by parties directly concerned under Article 4 of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/04/24/2201s925391.htm>

22 April 2016: China's Defense Ministry appears to confirm new missile test

China's Defense Ministry maintained that "technological research experiments conducted according to plan within China's boundaries are normal and are not aimed at any specific nations or targets." It noted that the "test location reported by the media is pure conjecture"

<http://in homelandsecurity.com/chinas-defense-ministry-new-missile-test/>

21 April 2016: China says US- Philippine joint patrols in South China Sea triggered tension

"The Chinese military will pay close attention to the situation, and resolutely defend China's territorial sovereignty and maritime interests", the statement added.

<http://stateofthestateks.com/2016/04/21/china-says-us-philippine-joint-patrols-in-south-china-sea/>

20 April 2016: China angered by Britain's comments on South China Sea

"The comments by Mr Swire neglect the facts and are very discriminatory and one-sided and seriously go against Britain's promise not to take sides," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told said. "We are extremely dissatisfied".

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-southchinasea-china-britain-idUKKCNOXH0QS>

19 April 2016: China Flight Tests New Multiple-Warhead Missile

China conducted another flight test of its newest and longest-range intercontinental ballistic missile last week amid growing tensions with the United States over the South China Sea.

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/china-flight-tests-multiple-warhead-missile/>

19 April 2016: Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister: Disputes pose challenge for regional peace

Territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the competing interests of the world's superpowers in South-east Asia have made the effort to maintain regional peace and stability tougher, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said.

<http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/dpm-south-china-sea-disputes-pose-challenge-for-regional-peace#sthash.zOEy91Oy.dpuf>

19 April 2016: China rejects US query on military flight to disputed South China Sea island

China's Defense Ministry rejected queries by the US military as to why China had used a military aircraft to evacuate sick workers from a new airport on an island China has built in the South China Sea.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/563251/news/world/china-rejects-us-query-on-military-flight-to-disputed-south-china-sea-island#sthash.NEFPHNcH.dpuf>

18 April 2016: Chinese military plane lands on disputed South China Sea island

The official People's Liberation Army Daily said a military aircraft on patrol over the South China Sea on Sunday received an emergency call to land at Fiery Cross Reef to evacuate three seriously ill workers.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/18/chinese-military-plane-lands-on-disputed-south-china-sea-island-media>

17 April 2016: China launches upgraded drills for South China Sea fleets

China's South China Sea fleets have conducted training drills with upgraded methods that resemble actual combat conditions to increase the fleets' combat effectiveness.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-scs-training-idUSKCN0XE0GZ>

17 April 2016: Beijing urges 'discretion' over South China Sea as New Zealand leader visits

Beijing said the focus of the trip by Key should be "more on economic ties and less on the South China Sea issue," which it said "is of no concern for Wellington."

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/17/asia-pacific/beijing-urges-discretion-south-china-sea-new-zealand-leader-key-visits/#.VxRQDfI96Uk>

14 April 2016: Vietnam, Philippines Still Mulling South China Sea Joint Patrols

Vietnam and the Philippines are exploring the possibility of joint exercises and naval patrols in the South China Sea in bilateral discussions.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/vietnam-philippines-still-exploring-south-china-sea-joint-patrols/>

12 April 2016: Chinese fighter jets seen on contested South China Sea island

Satellite imagery from ImageSat International (ISI) show two Chinese Shenyang J-11 fighter jets on Woody Island.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/04/12/chinese-fighter-jets-seen-on-contested-south-china-sea-island-evidence-another-bold-move.html>

12 April 2016: China Blasts G-7 Statement on South China Sea

China accused the G-7 of "hyping up maritime issues and fueling tensions in the region," and said China was "strongly dissatisfied with relevant moves taken by the G-7".

<http://www.voanews.com/content/china-blasts-g-7-statement-on-south-china-sea/3282676.html>

12 April 2016: Philippine diplomat warns China over disputed shoal in South China Sea

A Philippine diplomat warned that any Chinese move to turn a disputed shoal into an island will escalate the disputes in the South China Sea.

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/philippine-diplomat-warns-china-over-disputed-shoal-in-south-china-sea-1.2855159>

10 April 2016: Aquino warns against int'l apathy in sea row

"What is the most important lesson we learned from World War II? It is clear: During times of chaos and

disorder, any free country—even those who aren't part of either side engaged in conflict—cannot stand idly by or remain quiet," Aquino said in his speech.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/778549/aquino-warns-against-intl-apathy-in-sea-row#ixzz45QJav3ki>

8 April 2016: China rejects Vietnam claims over rig in South China Sea

"The relevant work is in undisputed Chinese waters, and it is normal commercial exploration," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a daily news briefing.

<https://www.energyvoice.com/other-news/106271/china-rejects-vietnam-claims-rig-south-china-sea/>

7 April 2016: Vietnam tells China to shift its rig and stop complicating ties

The \$1 billion rig had moved into an area of the Gulf of Tonkin in the South China Sea about which Vietnam said the two countries were still "executing delineation discussions".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-vietnam-china-idUSKCN0X41GD>

6 April 2016: China begins operation of lighthouse on artificial island in South China Sea

China's transport ministry held a "completion ceremony", marking the start of operations at the 55-metre (180-ft) high lighthouse on Subi Reef, where construction began in October.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/china-begins-operation-lighthouse-artificial-island-south-china-012724417.html>

4 April 2016: Philippine port welcomes MSDF submarine to South China Sea

A Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine visited a Philippine port for the first time in 15 years, highlighting closer cooperation amid rising tensions in the South China Sea.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201604040036.html>

4 April 2016: Vietnam seizes Chinese vessel in South China Sea

Vietnamese officials said the boat was disguised as a fishing boat but was transporting 100,000 litres of diesel oil that was to be sold to Chinese fishing boats operating illegally in Vietnamese territorial waters. Hanoi officials said the captain admitted that was the purpose of the vessel. It was stopped near the Vietnamese island of Bach Long Vi and the Chinese island of Hainan.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/vietnam-seizes-disguised-chinese-fishing-boat-tensions-rise-south-china-sea-1552960>

1 April 2016: Xi says China will defend its South China Sea sovereignty

Chinese President Xi Jinping said that China is resolute in defending its sovereignty in the South China Sea, and believes the disputes should be settled peacefully by relevant claimants through direct talks.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nuclear-summit-usa-china-southchinase-idUSKCN0WX2WQ>

1 April 2016: China to US: 'Be careful' in South China Sea

Beijing's defence ministry warned the US navy to "be careful" in the South China Sea and slammed a newly signed agreement between Washington and the Philippines.

<http://news.yahoo.com/china-us-careful-south-china-sea-002058329.html>

1 April 2016: Malaysia summons China ambassador over alleged South China Sea encroachment

Malaysia had summoned the ambassador "to seek clarification as well as to register Malaysia's concerns over the matter", a foreign ministry statement said.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3517262/Malaysias-summons-China-ambassador-alleged-South-China-Sea-encroachment.html#ixzz44Z1EeJ1H>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

26 April 2016: Singapore foreign minister stresses rule of law in South China Sea

"Singapore and Japan have interest in upholding the right of freedom of navigation and overflight," said the minister.

http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/26/national/singapore-foreign-minister-stresses-rule-law-south-china-sea/#.VyB07_I96Uk

23 April 2016: China reaches consensus with Brunei, Cambodia, Laos on South China Sea issue

The four countries agreed that the disputes are not an issue between China and ASEAN as a whole which should not affect the development of China-ASEAN relations, Wang told a press conference. The four

countries also agreed that territorial and maritime disputes should be resolved through consultations and negotiations by parties directly concerned.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-04/23/c_135306137.htm

23 April 2016: Cambodian Foreign Minister Talks South China Sea With Chinese Counterpart

"Cambodia still maintains a neutral stance," Mr. Sokhon said. "The stance of Cambodia has always been to appeal to all sides involved to make efforts to solve the dispute through peaceful means," he said. "If all countries respected these principles like Cambodia, we would not have problems."

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/foreign-minister-talks-s-china-sea-with-chinese-counterpart-111671/>

13 April 2016: Philippines, Singapore push for Asean solidarity, centrality in resolving South China Sea rows

Asean's solidarity, unity and centrality are "fundamental as they are vital" in resolving disputes over the South China Sea, the Philippines and Singapore said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-singapore-push-for-asean-solidarity-centrality-in-resolving-south-china-sea>

6 April 2016: Indonesia Deploys Anti-Air System in S. China Sea

Jane's Defense reported that Indonesia is planning to deploy Swiss-made Skyshield air defense systems to the Natuna Islands in the South China Sea.

<http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/indonesia-deploys-anti-air-system-in-s-china-sea>

2 April 2016: US has to build ties first, says PM Lee

It was therefore important, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said, for the US to push through TPP and ratify the decades-old United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/south-china-sea-dispute-us-has-to-build-ties-first-says-pm-lee>

2 April 2016: Indonesia demands 'bully' China hand over fishing boat

"I do believe China is a great country, with good law enforcement, and they do not back illegal fishing, even if it is done by Chinese vessels," Indonesian Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti said. "I do believe they will honour me, by handing over this (illegal fishing) vessel."

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesia-demands-bully/2657458.html>

1 April 2016: Indonesia Will Defend South China Sea Territory With F-16 Fighter Jets

Indonesia will deploy U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets to the Natuna islands to ward off "thieves", the defense minister said less than two weeks after Chinese coast guard vessels clashed with an Indonesian boat in the area.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-03-31/indonesia-to-deploy-f-16s-to-guard-its-south-china-sea-territory>

1 April 2016: Indonesian Navy plans for submarine base in South China Sea

The Indonesian Navy plans to locate the service's third submarine base on Pulau Natuna Besar, the largest of the Natuna Islands cluster in the South China Sea.

<http://www.janes.com/article/59159/indonesian-navy-plans-for-submarine-base-in-south-china-sea>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

28 April 2016: U.S. urges ASEAN unity on South China Sea ruling; warns China on reputation

Blinken said the United States had worked hard to build up the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as an organization that "might feel some greater strength in numbers" to take on difficult issues like the South China Sea.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-usa-china-asean-idUSKCN0XP2UV>

27 April 2016: China dismisses Pentagon report on freedom of navigation

Hua said these moves by the United States are an attempt to dominate maritime order and reflect its logic of hegemony and exceptionalism in its treatment of international law, which it uses when convenient and abandons on unfavorable conditions.

<http://english.cctv.com/2016/04/27/VIDEENfDibBOXKKUiidgUNAw160427.shtml>

27 April 2016: The US Cancelled a Scheduled FONOP in the South China Sea

In a bid to "lower the temperature" in the South China Sea while still demonstrating resolve to China over possibly intensifying activities near Scarborough Shoal, the United States chose not to hold a freedom of navigation operation this month and instead carried out air patrols near Scarborough Shoal.
<http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/the-us-cancelled-a-scheduled-fonop-in-the-south-china-sea-what-now/>

27 April 2016: Japanese warship visits Philippines amid rising S. China Sea tensions

The Japanese destroyer Ise docked in Subic Bay while on a "navigational training" mission, the ship's captain said. Subic lies around 200km from a Chinese-controlled shoal.
<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/japanese-warship-visits-philippines-amid-rising-s-china-sea-tensions>

23 April 2016: U.S. warplanes conduct operation near key Chinese-held reef in South China Sea

U.S. Pacific Command said that four A-10C Thunderbolt IIs, commonly known by the nickname of "warhogs," and two HH-60G Pave Hawks departed from Clark Air Base on Luzon island, flying through international airspace in the vicinity of the disputed Scarborough Shoal.
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/23/asia-pacific/u-s-warplanes-conduct-operation-near-key-chinese-held-reef-south-china-sea/#.Vxx7qKNcSko>

21 April 2016: Russia, India, China Address South China Sea in Trilateral Statement

Russia, India and China said that all related disputes should be addressed through negotiations and agreements between the parties concerned
<http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/russia-india-china-address-south-china-sea-in-trilateral-statement/>

21 April 2016: US seeks China guarantee: Don't militarize South China Sea

The Pentagon called on China to reaffirm it has no plans to deploy military aircraft in the Spratly Islands after Beijing used a military plane to evacuate sick workers from a new airstrip on an island it has created in the disputed South China Sea.
<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/138781/us-seeks-china-guarantee-dont-militarize-south-china-sea#ixzz46S3OmYgr>

19 April 2016: China, Russia oppose internationalizing South China Sea dispute

Both Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Monday voiced their opposition to internationalizing the South China Sea dispute, calling for settlement through negotiation and consultation.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-04/19/c_135290976.htm

18 April 2016: Britain says South China Sea arbitration ruling must be binding

"Under the international rules-based system on which the world depends, we would expect the ruling from The Hague to be adhered to by all parties concerned, whichever way it goes and we would stand by others, including the United States, whichever way that ruling goes."
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-britain-arbitration-idUSKCN0XF2V6>

17 April 2016: Japan seeks intl efforts to stabilize S. China Sea situation

The government in an annual foreign policy report Friday called for international cooperation in stabilizing the situation in the South China Sea, where China's growing activities are increasing tensions.
<http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0002879368>

17 April 2016: US to sail submarine drones in South China Sea

Ashton Carter made special mention of drone subs in a speech about military strategy in Asia and hinted at their potential use in the South China Sea, which has large areas of shallower water.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e5dd3d5a-0314-11e6-af1d-c47326021344.html#axzz46A9Rf7eH>

16 April 2016: Australia PM raises South China Sea with Chinese President

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has raised concerns over the South China Sea with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a lengthy meeting in Beijing.
<http://www.9news.com.au/national/2016/04/16/03/34/pm-raises-south-china-sea-with-president#MrcOIRX7yq9blr7h.99>

15 April 2016: In South China Sea Visit, U.S. Defense Chief Flexes Military Muscle

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter visited two aircraft carriers, revealed new military agreements with India and the Philippines, and generally signaled that the Obama administration had decided to lean more on military power to counter China's territorial ambitions in the region.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/16/world/asia/south-china-sea-us-ash-carter.html?_r=0

14 April 2016: U.S. and Philippines jointly patrol South China Sea

The United States on Thursday revealed for the first time that American ships have started conducting joint patrols with the Philippines in the South China Sea, a somewhat rare move not done with many other partners in the region.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/04/14/us-and-philippines-jointly-patrol-south-china-sea/83020368/>

12 April 2016: Britain urges refrain in South China Sea's disputes

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond has urged claimants of the South China Sea to refrain from the use of force and uphold international law in resolving their disputes.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/138529/britain-urges-refrain-in-south-china-seas-disputes#ixzz45hBYPPcF>

12 April 2016: Japanese Warships Arrive in Vietnam to Join Drills in South China Sea

Two ships of the the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) arrived in the Vietnamese naval base of Cam Ranh Bay in the South China Sea to join the naval drills aimed at keeping a check on China amid territorial disputes, media reported.

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20160412/1037853037/japanese-warships-china-sea.html>

11 April 2016: Japan Sends Warship To South China Sea

Japan is sending a warship to take part in a joint exercise with Indonesia from Tuesday to Saturday as tensions remain high in the South China Sea.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/japan-sends-warship-indonesia-amid-increasing-role-south-china-sea-tensions-2352053>

11 April 2016: G-7 Raises South China Sea Territorial Disputes in Statement

"We express our strong opposition to any intimidating, coercive or provocative unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions, and urge all states to refrain from such actions as land reclamations, including large scale ones, building out outposts, as well as their use for military purposes and to act in accordance with international law including the principles of freedoms of navigation and overflight" the ministers said in a joint statement at the end of a two-day meeting in Hiroshima.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-11/g-7-raises-east-south-china-sea-disputes-in-hiroshima-statement>

9 April 2016: China's actions in South China Sea raising regional tension: Ashton Carter

Carter said the US Department of Defence is operationalising the next phase of the rebalance, and cementing it for the long term. - See more at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/china-south-china-sea-dispute-us-regional-tension-ashton-carter/#sthash.JNhzpnYC.dpuf>

9 April 2016: France opposes any escalation in South China Sea: foreign minister

"We respect international law and the freedom of navigation," he said in the interview.

<http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/France-opposes-any-escalation-in-South-China-Sea-foreign-minister>

6 April 2016: Japan to send destroyer through South China Sea to join joint drills off Indonesia

The 13,950-ton vessel will travel in the South China Sea to join the Komodo Exercise set to be conducted in areas near the western Indonesian city of Padang.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/06/national/japanese-send-destroyer-south-china-sea-join-joint-drills-offindonesia/#.VwTGkvl96UK>

5 April 2016: Japan aims to include South China Sea, North Korea issues in G-7 statement

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who will chair the G-7 Ise-Shima summit on May 26 and 27, is understood to want to display leadership and affirm G-7 solidarity in dealing with issues in Asia, informed sources said Monday.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/05/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-aims-include-south-china-sea-north-korea-issues-g-7-statement/#.VwTGkvI96Uk>

4 April 2016: US, Philippines Launch Massive South China Sea War Games

The annual Balikatan exercises will involve 55 US aircraft operating alongside Manila fighter jets. The Philippines recently acquired a number of ships from the US Navy which may also participate in the games.

<http://sputniknews.com/asia/20160404/1037477031/us-philippines-balikatan.html#ixzz44wZhD4rH>

4 April 2016: Xi-Obama meeting eased tensions over South China Sea, says China's foreign minister

"The Americans have said they will not take sides, so it should not be a problem for the China-US relationship," Wang said.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1933448/xi-obama-meeting-eased-tensions-over-south-china-sea>

3 April 2016: Japanese warships in PHL near disputed area in South China Sea

Two Japanese destroyers and a submarine docked at a Philippine port on Sunday near disputed South China Sea waters, where Beijing's increasingly assertive behavior has sparked global concern.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/561347/news/nation/japanese-warships-in-phl-near-disputed-area-in-south-china-sea#sthash.S7jNYh7d.dpuf>

2 April 2016: US plans third patrol near South China Sea islands

The exact timing of the exercise and which ship would travel inside a 12-nautical mile limit around a disputed island was not immediately clear.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/US-plans-third-patrol-near-South-China-Sea-islands/articleshow/51663965.cms>

1 April 2016: Obama calls on China to 'peacefully' address South China Sea: White House

U.S. President Barack Obama urged China to peacefully resolve its maritime disputes with neighboring countries and to maintain freedom of navigation in the region, a reference to the ongoing dispute in the South China Sea, the White House said in a statement.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nuclear-summit-obama-xi-idUSKCN0WY4V6>