

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 38
May 2016

PHILIPPINES v. CHINA ARBITRATION

29 May 2016: S China Sea case: Duterte says China must follow court ruling

China must follow a United Nations-backed arbitration tribunal's ruling on the Philippines' petition to nullify its vast claims on the South China Sea, incoming president Rodrigo Duterte said.

<http://atimes.com/2016/05/s-china-sea-case-duterte-says-china-must-follow-court-ruling/>

14 May 2016: Philippines declines Itu Aba invitation

The Philippines formally declined Taiwan's invitation, while The Hague has yet to respond.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/05/14/2003646233>

13 May 2016: Beijing Tries to Whip Up Support for Its Case

In its campaign to win international support for its position, China has focused mostly on small nations that depend on Chinese trade or aid, with limited success.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/world/asia/south-china-sea-philippines-hague-ruling.html?_r=0

13 May 2016: Taiwan reiterates position on arbitration between

Taiwan invited the arbitral tribunal to visit Itu Aba and urged the tribunal not to deal with the legal status of the feature if it declined Taiwan's invitation.

http://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=1EADDCFD4C6EC567&s=C2834B14509069C4

12 May 2016: Chinese FM Legal Advisor: Tribunal turned a blind eye to the "actual objective" and corollary of the Philippines' unilateral initiation of the arbitration

Xu Hong said that the Arbitral Tribunal's Award on Jurisdiction and Admissibility is fundamentally flawed and violates the fundamental principle that the jurisdiction shall be established based on fact and law. He insisted that China would not recognize it.

http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/05/12/3521s927383.htm?utm_content=buffer540fe&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

9 May 2016: Taiwan enters South China Sea legal fray

The arbitral tribunal allowed written evidence from the government-linked Chinese (Taiwan) Society of International Law, even though Taiwan is neither a member of the United Nations, nor a signatory to UNCLOS, legal and diplomatic sources told Reuters.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-taiwan-idUSKCN0Y02LD>

7 May 2016: Chinese FM: Arbitration will not change China's sovereignty over South China Sea

"The crux of China-Philippines disputes on the South China Sea is the Philippines' illegal occupation of islands and reefs of China's Nansha Islands", said China Foreign Minister.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-05/07/c_135340215.htm

5 May 2016: China says door for dialogue with Philippines always open

Hong also reaffirmed that China is acting entirely in accordance with the law by not accepting nor participating in the arbitration.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-05/05/c_135337186.htm

1 May 2016: China intensifies lobbying of other nations ahead of South China Sea court ruling

President Xi Jinping told a group of foreign ministers from Asia and the Middle East that the disputes should be resolved through negotiations between the countries involved.

<http://www.cnbc.com/2016/04/29/china-intensifies-lobbying-of-other-nations-ahead-of-south-china-sea-court-ruling.html>

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

30 May 2016: China says fishing boat detained by Indonesia was fishing legally

Hua Chunying insisted the detained vessel had been operating legally "in the relevant waters". "We have made stern representations with Indonesia concerning this matter."

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/china-says-fishing-boat-detained-by-indonesia-was-fishing-legally>

30 May 2016: Beijing tears into Pentagon over South China Sea

Ahead of a high-level Sino-US dialogue, China accused the Pentagon of clinging to "cold war" mentality and attempting to stage a Hollywood blockbuster by deploying its modern weapons to "terrify" Beijing.

<http://www.rediff.com/news/report/beijing-tears-into-pentagon-over-south-china-sea-issue/20160530.htm>

29 May 2016: China to Develop Disputed Parcel Islands to Boost Tourism in South China Sea

Xiao Jie said the remote and romantic islands will cater to tourists who wish to hold special, memorable events there like a wedding or spend a fun vacation diving and windsurfing.

<http://www.chinatopix.com/articles/89155/20160529/china-to-develop-disputed-parcel-islands-to-boost-tourism-in-south-china-sea.htm#ixzz4A82oeaon>

27 May 2016: Philippine arrests 10 Chinese fishermen in latest sea spat

Two Philippine coast guard vessels intercepted a Chinese fishing boat with 10 crew off northeastern Luzon after a two-hour chase.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-china-idUSKCN0Y1167>

27 May 2016: China dissatisfied with G7 statement on S China Sea

"China is strongly dissatisfied with what Japan and the G7 have done." Hua said, urging G7 members to avoid irresponsible remarks and do more that is beneficial to regional peace and stability.

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2016-05/27/content_38553925.htm

27 May 2016: Beijing pledges deeper defence ties with Indonesia after South China Sea spat

China wants deeper defence ties with Indonesia, China's defence minister told his Indonesian counterpart, after a recent diplomatic spat in the South China Sea.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1956339/beijing-pledges-deeper-defence-ties-indonesia-after>

26 May 2016: Beijing Calls South China Sea Island Reclamation a 'Green Project'

"It's a green project," claimed Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director-General Wang Xining. All land reclamation and construction activity in the region "is carefully designed, carefully built, [to] try to minimize ecological effect".

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/26/china-calls-south-china-sea-island-reclamation-a-green-project-spratly-islands/>

26 May 2016: Philippines' Aquino says China breaks deal on South China Sea

Philippine President Benigno Aquino accused China of breaking a U.S.-brokered deal between the two nations on the Scarborough Shoal, an uninhabited rocky outcrop in the South China Sea.

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/world/2016/05/26/philippines-aquino-says-china-breaks-deal-on-south-china-sea-outcrop/>

25 May 2016: Beijing lines up diplomatic battle groups over South China Sea

Niger joined the ranks of "over 40 countries that have officially endorsed China's position" that the issues should be settled through direct negotiations".

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/139665/beijing-lines-up-diplomatic-battle-groups-over-south-china-sea#ixzz49p2YopYc>

25 May 2016: New Vietnam PM says won't pursue military buildup in South China Sea

"Vietnam does not pursue military buildup, but Vietnam pursues protecting our sovereignty, firstly with peaceful measures, diplomatic measures and even justice measures," Phuc said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-vietnam-politics-idUSKCN0YG17P>

24 May 2016: Philippines Says Malaysian Navy Detains 3 Fishermen In South China Sea

The Philippine vessel was about 18 miles (29 km) southwest of Commodore Reef, when a Malaysian patrol boat intercepted it for encroaching in territorial waters.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/philippines-says-malaysian-navy-detains-3-fishermen-in-south-china-sea-1409707>

24 May 2016: Outsiders should respect regional order in South China Sea, says spokesman

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying made the remarks in response to U.S. President Barack Obama's remarks about maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-05/24/c_135384856.htm

23 May 2016: China plans base station for rescue operations in South China Sea

A Chinese government bureau is planning a base station for an advanced rescue ship in the disputed Spratly Islands, as China continues its push to develop civilian and military infrastructure.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3604146/China-plans-base-station-rescue-operations-South-China-Sea.html#ixzz49YwV8dDw>

23 May 2016: China's latest weapon in the battle for the South China Sea is newspaper advertising

The ad, which likely cost less than \$10,000 Canadian, argues that "the Philippines, by initiating the arbitration, has violated international law."

<http://qz.com/689957/chinas-latest-weapon-in-the-battle-for-the-south-china-sea-is-newspaper-advertising/>

21 May 2016: Beijing says more than 40 nations back its claim on South China Sea

40 countries including Burundi, Slovenia and Mozambique pledged support for China, the ministry said.

http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/05/21/asia-pacific/beijing-says-40-nations-back-claim-south-china-sea/#.V0K2D_I96Uk

21 May 2016: China Objects Growing Presence of Indian Navy in South China Sea

China objected to the growing presence of Indian Navy in the South China sea, a Chinese official said.

<http://www.thequint.com/world/2016/05/21/china-objects-growing-presence-of-indian-navy-in-south-china-sea>

20 May 2016: China demands end to U.S. surveillance after aircraft intercept

"We demand that the United States immediately cease this type of close reconnaissance activity to avoid having this sort of incident happening again," Hong said.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/southchinasea-china-usa-aircraft-idINKCN0YA2BR>

19 May 2016: China fighter planes intercept US military plane over South China Sea

The incident comes a week after China scrambled fighter jets as a US Navy ship sailed close to a disputed reef in the South China Sea.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/chinese-jets-intercept-us-military-plane-over-south-china-sea-2808045/#sthash.HIE1Nfd4.dpuf>

19 May 2016: Benigno Aquino Says Must Act if China Moves on Reef in South China Sea

Mr. Aquino said the Philippines would be prepared for any action by China. "We don't subscribe to the notion that it's theirs," he said.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/20/world/asia/benigno-aquino-philippines-south-china-sea.html?_r=0

19 May 2016: US, not China, militarising the South China Sea: FM

"The answer is all too clear: the United States," China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/china-militarising-south-china-sea-fm-160516120252938.html>

16 May 2016: China says US report on its military damaged mutual trust

China's Defence Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun expressed "strong dissatisfaction" and "firm opposition" to the Pentagon report and said it has "severely damaged mutual trust".

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/china-says-us-report-on-its-military-damaged-mutual-trust>

15 May 2016: Vietnam urges Japan to take more active role in settling South China Sea row

Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said that Japan should play a more active role in promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes involving the South China Sea.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/05/15/national/politics-diplomacy/vietnam-urges-japan-to-take-more-active-role-in-settling-south-china-sea-row/#.VzmAoPI96Uk>

14 May 2016: Philippines signs defence deal with France amid South China Sea tension

The Philippines signed a defence cooperation agreement with France, which aims to help Manila modernise its defence forces amid tension in its relations with China.

<http://en.rfi.fr/asia-pacific/20160514-philippines-signs-defence-deal-france-china-sea-tension-grows>

12 May 2016: Beijing vows to increase South China Sea presence after USN's latest FONOP

China will also be constructing "various defence capabilities", said the ministry without giving specific details, adding only that the USN's FONOPs have justified the establishment these installations.

<http://www.janes.com/article/60213/beijing-vows-to-increase-south-china-sea-presence-after-usn-s-latest-fofonop>

10 May 2016: Malaysia, China agree to settle South China Sea issues via DOC

"Because of Malaysia's close relationship with China, we (both countries) sincerely believe that we should be able to talk to each other about problems that we may have, provided we continue to keep the communication and engagement open," Anifah said.

<http://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/05/144810/malaysia-china-agree-settle-south-china-sea-issues-doc>

10 May 2016: Beijing scrambles jets as U.S. destroyer sails near island in South China Sea

"The relevant Chinese department took measures of monitoring, tracking and warning in accordance with the law. Action by the U.S. side threatened China's sovereignty and security interests, endangered the staff and facilities on the reef, and damaged regional peace and stability," spokesman Lu Kang said.

<http://q13fox.com/2016/05/10/beijing-scrambles-jets-as-u-s-destroyer-sails-near-island-in-south-china-sea/>

9 May 2016: Philippines' Duterte calls for summit to solve South China Sea spat

"If you want joint ventures, fine, we can get the gas and the oil," he said. "I believe in sharing."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-duterte-idUSKCN0Y0111>

8 May 2016: China carries out military drill in South China Sea

China's SCS fleets recently conducted training drills in waters around the Paracel Islands in the disputed South China Sea.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/565464/news/world/china-carries-out-military-drill-in-south-china-sea#sthash.f6gkVuZ4.dpuf>

6 May 2016: China says South China Sea Criticism will rebound like a coiled spring

International criticism of China will rebound like a coiled spring, a senior diplomat said.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/565245/news/world/china-says-south-china-sea-criticism-will-rebound-like-a-coiled-spring>

5 May 2016: Chinese TV Shows Footage of Construction on Disputed South China Sea Reef

China has aired the first official footage of ongoing construction on a disputed reef.

http://time.com/4319069/south-china-sea-fiery-cross-yongshu-reef-construction/uted_reef_it_claims_in_the_restive_South_China_Sea

5 May 2016: China's Navy Conducts South China Sea Drills Involving Paracel and Spratly Islands

The exact location and the duration of the naval exercise involving elements of the South Sea Fleet, the PLAN fleet responsible for the South China Sea, are unknown.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/chinas-navy-conducts-south-china-sea-drills-involving-paracel-and-spratly-islands/>

4 May 2016: China dispatches military singer to South China Sea

China has dispatched a well-known military singer to man-made islands in SCS.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/china-dispatches-military-singer-to-south-china-sea-announces-new-drill/story-0axStSVSKylkOFPYxSzjMK.html>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

30 May 2016: Indonesia detains Chinese fishing trawler in Natuna

An Indonesian warship was conducting patrols when it detected the Chinese trawler fishing illegally in the country's "exclusive economic zone", the navy's Western Fleet Command spokesman said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-detains-chinese-fishing-trawler-in-natuna>

29 May 2016: Laos urges bilateral talks on South China Sea rows

Echoing China's stance, Laotian Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith on Saturday called for South China Sea disputes to be resolved through bilateral talks between the countries concerned.

<http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Laos-urges-bilateral-talks-on-South-China-Sea-rows>

26 May 2016: South China Sea tackled in Asean defense ministers meet

Regional security, including the South China Sea disputes, was tackled by defense ministers on the sidelines of ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting in Laos this week.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/139687/south-china-sea-tackled-in-asean-defense-ministers-meet#ixzz49qJEJIT>

19 May 2016: Indonesia considering South China Sea patrols with Malaysia, Philippines: Military chief

General Gatot Nurmantyo says he will soon meet with his Malaysian and Philippine counterparts to discuss details of the patrols in the Sulu and Sulawesi Sea. He may also bring up conducting joint patrols in the South China Sea.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesia-considering/2799990.html>

6 May 2016: Singapore, Australia Expand Military Partnership With Eye on China

Singapore will expand two military bases in Australia's tropical north and rotate thousands of extra troops through the country each year as regional strategic tensions increase over China's muscle-flexing in the South China Sea.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/singapore-australia-expand-military-partnership-with-eye-on-china-1462519648>

5 May 2016: Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines to conduct coordinated anti-piracy patrols in South China Sea

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have agreed to conduct coordinated patrols in piracy-prone areas over the South China Sea as well as set up crisis centres in their respective countries to better respond to maritime emergencies, said Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi. There will also be a dedicated hotline between them to facilitate faster exchange of information in times of crises at sea, added Ms Retno.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-malaysia-and-philippines-to-conduct-coordinated-anti-piracy-patrols-in-south>

2 May 2016: Vietnam, Laos Tackle South China Sea, Mekong in Bilateral Meeting

Both sides also agreed to maintain peace, stability, security, and safety in the South China Sea and ensure that disputes are settled by peaceful means and in line with international law.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/vietnam-laos-tackle-south-china-sea-mekong-in-bilateral-meeting/>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

27 May 2016: G-7 agrees on strong message on South China Sea

G7 leaders expressed concerns over China's increasingly assertive activity in the East and South China seas, renewing their warnings against one-sided attempts to change the situation.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/leaders-express-concern-south-china-sea-urge-peace-39418886>

26 May 2016: Pentagon: China aircraft intercept over South China Sea violated 2015 agreement

The Pentagon has concluded that an intercept of a US military aircraft by Chinese fighter jets violated an agreement the two governments signed last year, a US defense official said.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/567785/news/world/pentagon-china-aircraft-intercept-over-south-china-sea-violated-2015-agreement#sthash.Ghpl3O6o.dpuf>

25 May 2016: Japan, Canada share 'serious concerns' on South China Sea

Japan and Canada share "serious concerns" over reclamation and militarization in the South China Sea.
<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/567480/news/world/japan-canada-share-serious-concerns-on-south-china-sea#sthash.Ee5aMIJs.dpuf>

24 May 2016: Big nations should not bully smaller ones: Obama on South China Sea row

"Big nations should not bully smaller ones, disputes should be resolved peacefully," Obama told an audience in Hanoi, referring to the disputed maritime region.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/big-nations-should-not-bully-smaller-ones-obama-on-south-china-sea-row/#sthash.yDBCvcLA.dpuf>

23 May 2016: Obama in Vietnam Announces End of Longstanding Arms Embargo

"The United States is fully lifting the ban on sale of military equipment to Vietnam that's been in place for some 50 years," Obama said.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/obama-vietnam-announces-end-longstanding-arms-embargo-n578471>

21 May 2016: Indian Naval Fleet Sails Out To South China Sea

As per the itinerary, the Indian warships will make port calls at Cam Rahn Bay in Vietnam, Subic Bay in the Philippines, Sasebo in Japan, Busan in South Korea, Vladivostok in Russia and Port Klang in Malaysia.

<http://inserbia.info/today/2016/05/indian-naval-fleet-sails-out-to-south-china-sea/>

20 May 2016: US in talks to place military equipment in Vietnam for first time since war's end

The two governments have been discussing the use of Da Nang as a site to store equipment that could be used to respond to natural disasters in the region.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b0fb70d0-1e70-11e6-a7bc-ee846770ec15.html#axzz49SmO7E2i>

13 May 2016: China, US generals to work out mechanism for South China Sea

The conversation followed a sharp verbal exchange following a U.S. destroyer's sail-by past China's largest man-made island in a move to exercise freedom of navigation.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/china-us-generals-mechanism-south-china-sea-054816933.html>

13 May 2016: China has reclaimed 3,200 acres in the South China Sea, says Pentagon

The report argues that the accelerated building effort doesn't give China any new territorial rights. But it says the airfields, ship facilities, surveillance and weapons equipment will allow China to significantly enhance its long-term presence in the South China Sea.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/13/pentagon-report-china-reclaimed-3200-acres-south-china-sea>

12 May 2016: Australia backs US in latest South China Sea dispute

"All states have a right under international law to freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight in the South China Sea," Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told Australian Broadcasting Corp Radio.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/australia-defends-us-in/2777676.html>

10 May 2016: U.S. warship sails near island in South China Sea

The USS William P. Lawrence, a guided-missile destroyer, sailed within 12 nautical miles of a landfill-island recently constructed on Fiery Cross Reef, an area claimed by China and three other countries.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/05/10/united-states-china-south-china-sea/84186836/>

6 May 2016: US Navy commander says canceled HK visit a minor hurdle

Aucoin said he didn't know why the visit was canceled, but "the relationship between our two countries is much too important for a port visit to get in the way of that".

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3576698/US-Navy-commander-says-canceled-HK-visit-minor-hurdle.html#ixzz488YF1Bix>

5 May 2016: India Asked To Clear Stand On South China Sea

In a joint letter to the Narendra Modi government, Russia and China have said that India should state its exact position on the South China Sea, as it is not clear why it has taken slightly different positions on the biggest point of international conflict.

<http://inserbia.info/today/2016/05/india-asked-to-clear-stand-on-south-china-sea/>