

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 39
June 2016

PHILIPPINES V. CHINA ARBITRATION

30 June 2016: Duterte warns against using tribunal ruling vs. China to 'taunt or flaunt'

Duterte, who had earlier said he is open to bilateral talks with China over the maritime dispute, said he doesn't want "to declare any fighting with anybody." "If we can have peace, I'll be very happy," he said. Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay, Jr. said he is also "averse" to the idea of issuing strong statement in case the ruling is favorable to the Philippines.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/571930/news/nation/duterte-warns-against-using-tribunal-ruling-vs-china-to-taunt-or-flaunt#sthash.HrphdBZi.dpuf>

29 June 2016: China slams South China Sea case as court set to rule

"I again stress that the arbitration court has no jurisdiction in the case and on the relevant matter, and should not hold hearings or make a ruling," Hong Lei said. "The Philippines' unilateral lodging of the South China Sea arbitration case is contrary to international law."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-philippines-court-idUSKCN0ZF1QV>

29 June 2016: Arbitration Panel to Rule July 12 in South China Sea Dispute

The Permanent Court of Arbitration said it will deliver an eagerly awaited ruling on July 12 in a case filed by the Philippines contesting Beijing's sweeping claims to most of the South China Sea.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/arbitration-panel-rule-july-12-south-china-sea-40218659>

23 June 2016: Chinese Official explains Why China says no to arbitration over South China Sea

"Arbitration requires the consent of the two concerned parties but the Philippines went ahead against international practice. Given that the arbitration is out of a series of illegal actions, China says no to illegal actions. How can this be a violation of international law? The logic here is absurd", Zhou explained. "China is a builder and guardian of present international order. China's stance of nonacceptance of and nonparticipation not only secures its own interests but also preserves the right of other countries facing a similar situation", said Zhou.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-06/23/c_135460639.htm

15 June 2016: China commends support from African countries ahead of South China Sea rulings

The Chinese government says more than 40 countries have offered support for its position, the latest being the African nations of Sierra Leone and Kenya.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/china-thanks-countries-for-supporting-it-over-south-china-sea-1419001>

10 June 2016: Chinese Society of International Law releases paper on South China Sea arbitration

The Chinese Society of International Law releases a paper under the title the Tribunal's Award in the "South China Sea Arbitration" Initiated by the Philippines is Null and Void, supporting the Chinese Government's position of neither accepting nor participating in the arbitration.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-06/10/c_135426563.htm

3 June 2016: Chinese Foreign Ministry issued statement on Itu Aba

The statement claim that the feature is an "island" capable of sustaining human habitation or economic life of its own.

http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1369189.shtml

2 June 2016: Vietnam supports peaceful solutions to disputes

Binh underlined Vietnam's view concerning the Tribunal's upcoming judgment. "We hope that the Tribunal will make a fair objective judgment in line with international law including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and asked involved parties to respect international legal obligations as stipulated in this important Convention".

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/marine-sovereignty/157442/vietnam-supports-peaceful-solutions-to-disputes-in-east-sea.html>

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

29 June 2016: New Philippine defense chief says militant threat more pressing than South China Sea
Crushing Islamist militants in the Philippines will take precedence over territorial disputes in the South China Sea, the incoming defense minister said, and spending on military hardware would reflect that.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-security-idUSKCN0ZF0WX>

27 June 2016: Top Chinese envoy visits Vietnam as tension looms before South China Sea court ruling
“We’re glad to realise that the two nations’ relationship over time continues its positive development, despite some existing problems that need to be solved,” Vietnam’s Foreign Minister and deputy premier Pham Binh Minh said after greeting Yang.
<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1982109/top-chinese-envoy-visits-vietnam-tension-looms-south>

23 June 2016: China brushes off doubts over support on South China Sea, says it is growing
“The number of people supporting China rises by the day, so I have no way of giving you a precise figure,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing, adding that the actual number was not the most important thing.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-china-usa-idUSKCN0Z910M>

22 June 2016: China says Zimbabwe's Mugabe Supports its Stance on South China Sea Issue
“President Mugabe has made it clear that he supports the position of the Chinese side on the South China Sea,” Zhang told reporters after the meeting.
<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/06/22/3746s931609.htm>

21 June 2016 China says it has overlapping claims with Indonesia in the South China Sea
“China has no territorial sovereignty dispute with Indonesia. Yet the two countries have overlapping claims for maritime rights and interests over some part of the South China Sea”, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying said.
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1373744.shtml

21 June 2016: Beijing indicates it may exit U.N. sea convention if South China Sea ruling disappoints
China has told other Asian countries that it may leave the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea as a countermeasure if a ruling from an international tribunal expected in the coming weeks over territorial rows in the South China Sea runs counter to the bedrock of its position, diplomatic sources said.
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/21/national/politics-diplomacy/beijing-indicates-may-exit-u-n-sea-convention-south-china-sea-ruling-disappoints/#.V2i8CqKBvnP>

20 June 2016: Chinese Shadow U.S. Aircraft Carrier on Patrol
At least one Chinese ship tailed the USS John C. Stennis daily during its recent cruise through the South China Sea, although no hostile incidents were reported, the commander of the carrier strike group said.
<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2016-06-20/chinese-shadow-us-aircraft-carrier-on-south-china-sea-patrol>

20 June 2016: Del Rosario: No PH-China talks on sea row in 2 yrs
“We talked already and the [incoming] President said he [would] wait for developments over a two-year period and, if nothing happens, he would go bilateral,” Del Rosario said
<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/140288/no-ph-china-talks-on-sea-row-in-2-yrs#ixzz4C6yyhOkr>

19 June 2016: China slams Indonesia after its navy detains boat ‘fishing illegally’ in South China Sea
Hua said the fishermen were “harassed” by and shot at by the Indonesian navy during their “regular fishing operation”, and that China had immediately dispatched coastguard vessels nearby to protect the fishing boat and the crew.
<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1977685/china-slams-indonesia-after-its-navy-detains-boat>

13 June 2016: China urges Philippines to copy Malaysia’s handling of South China Sea issue
The Philippines should emulate Malaysia and resolve its territorial disputes with China over the South China Sea in an “amicable way” instead of resorting to “confrontation” through “unilateral arbitration,” Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Huang Huikang said.
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/13/asia-pacific/china-urges-philippines-to-copy-malaysias-handling-of-south-china-sea-issue/#.V1-8abt96Uk>

12 June 2016: Philippine President Says Sino-Philippine Ties Have Improved

Outgoing Philippine President Benigno Aquino III said Sino-Philippine ties have improved despite the current spat between the two nations over the South China Sea.

<http://www.chinatopix.com/articles/91504/20160612/philippine-president-says-sino-philippine-ties-have-improved-despite-south-china-sea-dispute.htm#ixzz4BQNarMOX>

11 June 2016: Chinese diplomat: Stop playing fire in the South China Sea

Chinese Ambassador to Britain Liu Xiaoming urged the Philippines to return to negotiations. He also said some countries from outside the region should "stop playing with fire."

http://www.china.org.cn/video/2016-06/11/content_38642702.htm

11 June 2016: Clarifying everybody's rights in South China Sea necessary for prosperity: Aquino

"We're hoping that the issue is resolved and once it is, that there is clarity - everybody's duties and obligations are clearly defined, then you have the necessary components to promote stability," says the outgoing Philippine president.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/clarifying-everybody-s/2862466.html>

8 June 2016: China Is Planning a Massive Sea Lab 10,000 Feet Underwater

China is speeding up efforts to design and build a manned deep-sea platform to help it hunt for minerals in the South China Sea, one that may also serve a military purpose in the disputed waters. Such an oceanic "space station" would be located as much as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) below the surface, according to a recent Science Ministry presentation.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-06-07/china-pushes-plan-for-oceanic-space-station-in-south-china-sea>

7 June 2016: China tells U.S. to play constructive South China Sea role

"China hopes the U.S. will scrupulously abide by its promise to not take sides in relevant territorial disputes and play a constructive role in safeguarding peace and stability," Yang said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-china-usa-idUSKCN0YT00I>

6 June 2016: Taiwan says won't recognise Chinese air defence identification zone over South China Sea

"We will not recognise any ADIZ by China," Taiwan defence minister Feng Shih-kuan told lawmakers in a parliamentary session.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/taiwan-says-wont-recognise-chinese-air-defence-identification-zone-over-south-china>

5 June 2016: China says 'has no fear of trouble' in South China Sea

"We do not make trouble, but we have no fear of trouble," Sun told the Shangri-La Dialogue.

<http://www.euronews.com/newswires/3201694-south-china-sea-set-to-dominate-singapore-security-summit/>

2 June 2016: Taiwan plans South China Sea research center

Yang said his ministry will push for the establishment of a South China Sea International Research Center. The plan includes establishing an observation station on Taiwan-held Taiping Island, and sharing the ocean and weather research data with ASEAN nations, Yang said.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2016/06/02/468053/Taiwan-plans.htm>

1 June 2016: Beijing ready to impose air defence ID zone in SChina Sea, pending US moves

China is preparing an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the South China Sea, according to sources close to the People's Liberation Army and a defense report.

<http://www.cnbc.com/2016/06/01/beijing-ready-to-impose-air-defence-identification-zone-in-south-china-sea-pending-us-moves.html>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

31 June 2016: Indonesia to Respond After South China Sea Case

"Whether or not ASEAN will have a statement on that I don't know. But Indonesia will certainly have a position on that," Oegresono said.

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

29 June 2016: Indonesia to expand oil exploration, commercial fishing in South China Sea waters

Indonesia's president on Wednesday ordered an expansion of offshore oil exploration and commercial fishing in the waters near the Natuna Islands, the latest in a new campaign to assert sovereignty over the area in the South China Sea.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/indonesia-to-expand-oil-exploration-commercial-fishing-in-south-china-sea-waters-2883580/>

28 June 2016: Indonesia Boosts Defense Spending to Protect South China Sea Territory

Legislature passed a new budget allotting for \$8.25 billion to be spent on defense in 2016, specifically citing China's growing presence in the South China Sea as the issue making the new defense spending necessary.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/06/28/indonesia-boosts-defense-spending/>

28 June 2016: Cambodia would not back upcoming decision on South China Sea: PM Hun Sen

"The CPP does not support, and more so is against, any declaration by ASEAN to support decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in relation to the South China Sea disputes, which some countries outside the region have wire-pulled and pressured ASEAN members even before the court reaches a decision," Hun Sen said in a speech during the CPP's 65th founding anniversary in Phnom Penh.

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/cambodia-would-not-back-upcoming-decision-on-south-china-sea-pm-hun-sen-2859736.html>

23 June 2016: Indonesian leader visits South China Sea islands on warship

President Joko Widodo visited remote Indonesian islands on a warship in an apparent show of force after clashes with Chinese vessels and as fears grow Beijing is seeking to stake a claim in the area.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/indonesian-leader-visits-islands-china-clashes-053553385.html>

22 June 2016: Indonesia says no 'overlapping' South China Sea claims with China

"Our position is clear that claims can only be made on the basis of international law. For Indonesia, we don't have overlapping claims in any form in Indonesian waters with China," Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told reporters.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-22/no-overlapping-claims-with-china-in-indonesian-waters-says-fm/7534498>

21 June 2016: Cambodian PM says not to back arbitral tribunal's decision over South China Sea

Hun Sen said that the country will not support an arbitral tribunal's upcoming decision and called on all parties concerned to resolve their differences through bilateral negotiations. "I would like to declare Cambodia's stance that Cambodia will not issue any joint statement in support of the arbitral tribunal's decision," he said. "Cambodia will have its own statement."

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-06/20/c_135451406.htm

20 June 2016: Indonesia Confirms Seizing Fishing Boat in South China Sea, Defying Beijing

Indonesia is holding the crew of a Chinese fishing boat it says was fishing illegally last week in the South China Sea, an official confirmed. It was the third maritime skirmish — all involving warning shots — between the two countries in the past three months.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/21/world/asia/indonesia-south-china-sea-fishing.html?_r=0

20 June 2016: Indonesian corvette opens fire on Chinese fishing ships in South China Sea

An Indonesian navy Kapitan Pattimura (Parchim I)-class corvette has fired upon a group of 12 Chinese fishing ships after the vessels were detected in waters around the Natuna islands region, the service said.

<http://www.janes.com/article/61602/indonesian-corvette-opens-fire-on-chinese-fishing-ships-in-south-china-sea>

17 June 2016: Indonesia conducts major naval drills in South China Sea

The Indonesian Navy has deployed five surface combatants, an auxiliary support vessel, and a maritime patrol aircraft to the Natuna islands region for a 12-day naval exercise near disputed waters of the South China Sea.

<http://www.janes.com/article/61470/indonesia-conducts-major-naval-drills-in-south-china-sea>

17 June 2016: Jakarta, Manila agree with aborted Asean statement over South China Sea

Both Indonesia and the Philippines backed the content of an aborted joint Asean ministerial statement expressing concerns over recent developments in the South China Sea. The two countries also said that the foreign ministers who attended the special Asean-China meeting had all agreed initially on its content.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/jakarta-manila-agree-with-aborted-asean-statement-over-south-china-sea>

16 June 2016: Indonesia, Vietnam stress ASEAN's common stance on South China Sea

Vietnam's foreign affairs ministry insisted ASEAN member states had come to a "unanimous agreement" in Kunming on what was to be issued to media at the meeting. The Indonesian foreign ministry agreed that the contents of the statement were consistent with ASEAN's stance on the issue.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesia-vietnam-stress/2878234.html>

16 June 2016: Indonesia stresses on intl law on South China Sea issue

"Without respecting international law, peace and stability will be difficult to achieve," Foreign Minister Retno said in a press statement.

<http://www.antaranews.com/en/news/105248/ri-stresses-on-intl-law-on-south-china-sea-issue>

16 June 2016: Philippines Issues Press Statement following ASEAN-China Kunming Meeting

The Philippines' reply underscored that arbitration is among the legal and diplomatic processes promoting the rule of law in the region, and is fully consistent with the DOC and the region's efforts to peacefully resolve the disputes in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS and the UN Charter.

<http://dfa.gov.ph/index.php/newsroom/dfa-releases/9602-media-statement-of-the-department-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-philippines-after-the-special-asean-china-foreign-ministers-meeting-in-kunming-yunnan-province-china-held-on-14-june-2016>

15 June 2016: China sought to divide Asean with its own 10-point consensus at Foreign Minister meet: Source

China had managed to divide Asean at a rare foreign ministers' meeting by asking the grouping to consider adopting its prepared 10-point consensus "at the last minute".

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-sought-to-divide-asean-with-its-own-10-point-consensus-at-foreign-minister-meet>

15 June 2016: ASEAN Foreign Ministers Issue, then Retract Communique Referencing SCS

The statement didn't contain language drastically different from recent declarations, but was issued inside China.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/asean-foreign-ministers-issue-then-retract-communique-referencing-south-china-sea/>

14 June 2016: Singapore Issues Press Statement following ASEAN-China Kunming Meeting

Minister Balakrishnan noted the serious concerns expressed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers over the developments on the ground and called on ASEAN and China to continue working together to maintain the peace and stability of the South China Sea. Minister Balakrishnan also reiterated Singapore's long-standing position on the issue and underscored the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes with full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, as well as the right of freedom of navigation and over-flight under international law, including UNCLOS.

https://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/media_centre/press_room/pr/2016/201606/press_20160614.html

13 June 2016: Indonesia To Coordinate South China Sea Policy Ahead of Court Verdict

"[The] President has urged us to formulate our stance on the South China Sea so that all state officials have the same answers," Pandjaitan said.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/indonesia-to-coordinate-south-china-sea-policy-ahead-of-court-verdict/>

10 June 2016: ASEAN and China senior officials holds discussion about COC

ASEAN and Chinese senior officials reviewed the implementation of the DOC and discussed the nature of the COC as well as approaches to designing it for the first time.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/297999/asean-and-china-senior-officials-in-12th-meeting.html>

5 June 2016: Thai PM urges South China Sea claimants to seek cooperation, not conflict

"Countries in the region should think of sovereignty in less traditional terms in order to support collective security in the long term," he said. "If we look at everything from the standpoint of conflict, we will never be able to see a way out."

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/politics/PM-urges-South-China-Sea-claimants-to-seek-coopera-30287391.html>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**27 June 2016: US Third Fleet Destroyers Sail Into South China Sea for OMSI Exercises**

The guided missile destroyers Spruance, Momsen and Decatur from the US Third Fleet's Pacific Action Surface Group (PAC SAG) took part in the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) in the South China Sea, according to the US navy.

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20160627/1042034395/us-navy-destroyers-china.html>

22 June 2016: EU calls for free passage through South China Sea

"The EU wants to see freedom of navigation and over flight upheld in the East and South China Seas," the EU executive said in its document, which is aimed at framing the bloc's China policy over the next five years.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-china-eu-idUSKCN0Z81WH>

21 June 2016: Two US Aircraft Carriers Launch Joint Exercises Off Philippines Ahead of South China Sea Verdict

"The ships and aircraft assigned to both strike groups began coordinated operations in international waters demonstrating the United States unique capability to operate multiple carrier strike groups in close proximity," a U.S. Navy statement said.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/two-us-aircraft-carriers-launch-joint-exercises-off-philippines-ahead-of-south-china-sea-verdict/>

19 June 2016: U.S. sails carriers near South China Sea in bid to reassure Asian allies

In a massive show of strength that analysts said was meant to reassure nervous allies in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. Navy deployed two aircraft carrier strike groups for an exercise in the Philippine Sea.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/19/asia-pacific/u-s-sails-carriers-near-south-china-sea-bid-reassure-asian-allies/#.V2enXrt96Uk>

17 June 2016: US Navy Sends Electronic Attack Warplanes to Philippines Amid South China Sea Tensions

The United States Navy dispatched four U.S. Navy EA-18G Growler airborne electronic attack aircraft and about 120 military personnel to Clark Air Base, an air force base located on Luzon Island in the Philippines, according to a U.S. Seventh Fleet press release.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/us-navy-sends-electronic-attack-warplanes-to-philippines-amid-south-china-sea-tensions/>

11 June 2016: China should accept Hague ruling on South China Sea - Gerry Brownlee

China should accept the Hague's ruling on the South China Sea dispute, New Zealand's defence minister believes.

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/china-should-accept-hague-ruling-south-sea-gerry-brownlee>

10 June 2016: India, US, Japan Begin Malabar Joint Naval Exercise Close To South China Sea

Over 100 assets - warships, fighters and surveillance aircrafts - will be participating in this year's Malabar.

<http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-us-japan-begin-malabar-joint-naval-exercise-close-to-south-china-sea-1417661>

7 June 2016: France wants European navies to make their presence felt in South China Sea

Paris said that European navies should begin independent patrols in international waters in the South China Sea to make their presence felt.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/france-wants-european-navies-make-their-presence-felt-south-china-sea-1563989>

6 June 2016: Kerry Urges 'Diplomatic Solution' to Disputes in South China Sea

"We have taken no position on any of the claims of any claimant. The only position we've taken is - let's not resolve this by unilateral action; let's resolve this through rule of law, through diplomacy, through negotiation. And we urge all nations to find a diplomatic solution, rooted in international standards and rule of law," Kerry said.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/us-china-open-annual-high-level-strategic-talks/3363326.html>

4 June 2016: Japan offers PH help in sea row

"I personally talked with your president-elect regarding the South China Sea issue. I personally think that a multilateral dialogue will be very important and very beneficial for all the countries which are engaged to that issue," Kawai told reporters.

<http://thestandard.com.ph/news/-main-stories/top-stories/207344/japan-offers-ph-help-in-sea-row.html>

4 June 2016: Kerry warns Beijing over air defense zone for South China Sea

"We would consider an ADIZ...over portions of the South China Sea as a provocative and destabilizing act which would automatically raise tensions and call into serious question China's commitment to diplomatically manage the territorial disputes of the South China Sea," Kerry said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-usa-china-idUSKCN0YR01D>

4 June 2016: US warns Beijing of 'self-isolation' in South China Sea

China risks further alienating regional neighbors and building a "Great Wall of self-isolation" as it pursues its military expansion across the South China Sea, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter warned.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/139894/us-warns-beijing-of-self-isolation-in-south-china-sea#ixzz4AhvWWRyR>

3 June 2016: Shangri-La Dialogue Opens in Singapore; South China Sea Largely Dominating Summit

The primary interest to delegates attending this year is China's assertive activities in the South China Sea as it continues to gobble up islets and challenge the passage of US Navy ships and aircraft through the area.

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/asia-pacific/2016/06/03/shangri-la-dialogue-opens-singapore-south-china-sea-largely-dominating-summit/85361430/>

3 June 2016: Obama tells Congress to ratify U.N. maritime rules in bid to back South China Sea position

"If we are truly concerned about China's actions in the South China Sea for example, the Senate should help strengthen our case by approving the law of the sea convention," Obama said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/03/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/obama-tells-congress-ratify-u-n-maritime-rules-bid-back-south-china-sea-position/#.V1Elmvl96Uk>