

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE – JULY 2013

PHILIPPINES V. CHINA ARBITRATION

16 July 2013: Arbitral tribunal kicks off - The Hague is seat of arbitration

At its first meeting, the Arbitral Tribunal approved a draft set of Rules of Procedure to govern the proceedings. In its request for comments on the draft by August 5, the tribunal asked the two countries to propose a schedule for the submission of their written pleadings. At their meeting, the president and members of the tribunal also designated The Hague as the seat of the arbitration and the Permanent Court of Arbitration as the registry for the proceedings.

<https://www.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2013-06-27-21-50-36/dfa-releases/344-phl-arbitral-proceedings-against-china-now-officially-under-way>

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/80809/arbitral-tribunal-hearing-on-ph-case-vs-china-kicks-off#ixzz2ZCedC7vv>

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

26 July 2013: Vietnam leader opposes China sea claims

"We cannot find any legal foundation or scientific basis for such a claim and therefore it is the consistent policy of Vietnam to oppose the nine-dash line plan by China," Vietnam's President told the Center for Strategic and International Studies. But Sang declined comment when asked if Vietnam would join the Philippines bid to take the row to a UN tribunal. "As a member of the United Nations, the Philippines has the legal right to carry on with any proceedings they would like," Sang said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/vietnam-leader-opposes/756990.html>

26 July 2013: Rescuers make tourist safety a priority in South China Sea

With more Chinese people visiting the tropical islands of the South China Sea, Chinese authority is paying more attention to tourists' safety. The Nanhai Rescue Bureau, affiliated with the Ministry of Transport, is one of China's professional authorities that deal with marine accidents. It is mainly responsible for rescue operations on boats, planes and other facilities, both Chinese and foreign, on the South China Sea.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-07/26/content_16833078.htm

25 July 2013: China ship intruding? PH checking

The Philippine is verifying reports that another armed Coast Guard ship from China was seen in the disputed West Philippine Sea. The coast guard vessel owned by the Chinese government was reported sighted off the Panganiban Reef near Palawan.

<http://manilastandardtoday.com/2013/07/26/china-ship-intruding-ph-checking/>

25 July 2013: PHL denounces China's deployment of armed coast guard vessels to disputed waters

Saying such move "raises the level of tension in the area," the Philippines on Thursday denounced China's decision to deploy armed coast guard vessels to patrol the South China Sea, where the Philippines and other Asian nations have overlapping claims.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/319140/news/nation/phl-denounces-china-s-deployment-of-armed-coast-guard-vessels-to-disputed-waters>

25 July 2013: Harvest Natural Resources Sued Over South China Sea Exploration

Harvest Natural Resources Inc. was sued by dozens of Taiwan residents seeking to stop the company from developing plans to search for petroleum and natural gas in an area of the South China Sea. The company, based in Houston, "has no legal right to trespass on plaintiffs' property" despite its contract with China National Offshore Oil, which also "has no ownership right" over the property, the residents said in the suit. China National Offshore Oil wasn't named as a defendant in the complaint.

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-07-25/harvest-natural-resources-sued-over-south-china-sea-exploration>

25 July 2013: New China Coast Guard Ships Seen in Disputed Area

China's reorganized coast guard, which was formally inaugurated on Monday, merges four agencies responsible for fisheries administration, maritime surveillance, customs enforcement and border control. Chinese officials said the move would help boost efficiency in law enforcement and "better safeguard China's sovereignty and maritime rights and interests." The divisions "that were not allowed to be equipped with weapons can be armed now", Yang Mian, professor of international relations at the Communication University of China, was quoted as saying by the Global Times newspaper. That "will... show the international community that China has indisputable jurisdiction over the waters", he said.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/23/china-unveils-coast-guard-to-handle-sea-conflict/#ixzz2ZwXW28XT>

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/china-coast-guard-ships-disputed-area-19756480>

24 July 2013: Hundreds protest China's "bullying" of Philippines

Hundreds of Philippine activists on Wednesday accused China of "gunboat diplomacy", demonstrating at a noisy Manila protest against the Asian giant's moves to stake its claims in the South China Sea. The protest, which ended peacefully two hours later, came amid festering tensions between the two neighbours over Scarborough Shoal, a Philippine-claimed outcrop seized by China after a two-month naval stand-off last year.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/hundreds-protest-china-s/755060.html>

24 July 2013: Office to close due to protest in Manila

The Chinese embassy's visa office in Manila will be closed on Wednesday "for security reasons", a statement on the embassy's website said.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90883/8338956.html>

20 July 2013: Filipinos across the world to protest against China

Filipinos based in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States will march in front of the Chinese Embassy on July 24 to protest against China's role in the ongoing territorial dispute. The Philippines' government has denied, however, that it has a role in it.

<http://gulfnnews.com/news/world/philippines/filipinos-across-the-world-to-protest-against-china-1.1210824>

17 July 2013: CNOOC, BP Sign Production Sharing Contract in South China Sea

The block, known as 54/11, is about 4,500 square kilometers in size and is as much as 1,300 meters deep. The block is located in the western part of the Pearl River Mouth Basin. Financial terms of the contract weren't available.

http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20130716-700985.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

17 July 2013: China: Philippines' claim of having exhausted negotiation was completely not true

China on Tuesday hit back at the Philippines' condemnation towards it over the South China Sea issue and reiterated its objection against international arbitration on the matter.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/17/c_125018933.htm

15 July 2013: Philippines presented 8 facts to belie the statement made by China: Bilateral talks with China becoming impossible

Point by point, the Philippines rebuffed China on Monday, July 15, after the Chinese Foreign Ministry said the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) lied in Belgium about the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) dispute.

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/33790-ph-china-baseless-belgium>

13 July 2013: China: Philippine proclamation not factual

"The Philippine side has closed the door on talks and consultations and at the same time remained keen on attacking China in the international arena," Hua said. "Such acts are not helpful in resolving the issue," she said.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/12/c_132536358.htm

13 July 2013: China asks US not to side with any party in South China Sea disputes

"China hopes the United States will respect the facts and not side with any particular party," Chinese spokesperson said.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-07-12/news/40536471_1_south-china-sea-disputes-china-us-strategic

13 July 2013: Taiwan team discovers South China Sea volcanoes

An oceanic research team comprising leading Taiwan academics has identified eight undersea volcanoes within a radius of 10 kilometers in the South China Sea.

<http://www.taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=207221&ctNode=445>

12 July 2013: Del Rosario: Philippines keen on arbitration with China

The Philippines' top diplomat has underscored that the arbitral proceedings initiated by Manila to challenge China's excessive maritime claims do not undermine the consultations between ASEAN and Beijing for the crafting of a COC on the South China Sea.

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/07/11/13/del-rosario-philippines-keen-arbitration-china>

11 July 2013: Vietnam backs India oil exploration in South China Sea

Amid China's growing assertiveness over the South China Sea, Vietnam Thursday said that India has the right to pursue 'exploration and exploitation work' in the area.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Vietnam-backs-India-oil-exploration-in-South-China-Sea/Article1-1090908.aspx>

10 July 2013: Chinese naval divers set new diving record

The rescue ship "Yongxing Island" of a rescue ship group under the South China Sea Fleet of the Navy of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLAN) sent back a piece of news that with diving equipment, 16 divers succeeded in diving to a depth of 103 meters and completed long-time drill on underwater subjects.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/8319435.html>

10 July 2013: China withdrew its ships from the Scarborough Shoal area

The Chinese withdrawal occurred at about the same time as the holding of U.S.-Philippine naval exercises in that general area but Philippine Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin attributed it to "inclement weather."

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/commentary/the-china-post/frank-ching/2013/07/10/383355/Responsible-China.htm>

9 July 2013: Chinese vessels go in and out of Panata Shoal – DFA

Two Chinese vessels have been spotted again in the disputed Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal off northern Philippines, days after it was reported that the ships have left the area, the Department of Foreign Affairs said on Monday.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/316530/news/nation/chinese-vessels-go-in-and-out-of-panatag-shoal-dfa>

8 July 2013: PetroBroad Copower Signs PSC to Explore Block 28/03 off China

CNOOC Limited announced that its parent company, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) has signed a production sharing contract (PSC) with PetroBroad Copower Limited (PetroBroad Copower) for Block 28/03, which is located in Pearl River Mouth Basin in eastern South China Sea.

http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/127567/PetroBroad_Copower_Signs_PSC_to_Explore_Block_2803_off_China

6 July 2013: Philippines set to buy two frigates from Italy

The frigates, along with 12 FA-50 fighter aircraft, are the most significant items on the government's \$1.7-billion military modernization budget over the next five years, Defense Undersecretary Fernando Manalo said.

<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130704172189>

5 July 2013: Philippines invites China's Wang to discuss S. China Sea dispute

Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario confirmed that he has invited Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Manila for a "full and constructive discussion on all issues" including the South China Sea dispute that has strained ties.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/130704/philippines-invites-chinas-wang-discuss-s-china-sea-di>

5 July 2013: Chinese general: Philippines stirs trouble for asking US help

A Chinese military general told foreign media Thursday that the Philippines plays the character of a "troublemaker" in the South China Sea.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/07/05/961964/chinese-general-philippines-stirs-trouble-asking-us-help>

5 July 2013: Submersible taps vast mineral deposits in South China Sea

Tang Jialing, an oceanaut on the submersible, told Xinhua News Agency that although the exact area of the deposits was still unknown, he was sure that it was large.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/05/c_132514447.htm

4 July 2013: Philippines upgrades military to end China "bullying" in S. China Sea

The Philippine Defense Department said making Manila's military buildup known to its neighbors could send the message that "the Philippine military or the Philippine government can no longer be bullied."

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/130703/philippines-upgrades-military-end-china-bullying-s-chi>

3 July 2013: Malaysia: South China Sea disputes should be addressed amicably

Malaysia has emphasized that disputes in the South China Sea should be addressed via peaceful dialogue and negotiations based on the principles of international law.

<http://www.thesundaily.my/news/759621>

3 July 2013: South China Sea issue should be resolved through negotiations by parties directly concerned: Chinese FM

At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Meeting, Wang Yi emphasized that China has solid historical and legal evidence supporting its position on the issue. "Should one choose to play up the issue on multilateral occasions, it will not help resolve the issue. Rather, it will harm the bilateral relations and this is not in the interests of that country and its people," he said.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/02/c_124946440.htm

2 July 2013: China refutes the Philippines' accusations of militarization in the South China Sea

The recent tensions in the South China Sea were not caused by China, said Hua, citing facts of harassment of Chinese fishermen by the Philippine military vessels last year as well as the Philippines' illegal occupation of the Ren'ai Reef.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/01/c_124939976.htm

1 July 2013: Philippines accuses China of 'massive military build-up' in disputed waters

The Philippines accused China on Sunday of a "massive" military buildup in the disputed South China Sea, warning at a regional security forum that the Asian giant's tactics were a threat to peace.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1272293/south-china-sea-disputes-focus-asean-forum>

29 June 2013: Philippines Slam China for Retaliation Threat

In a statement, the Department of Foreign Affairs reminded China of its obligation under international law to settle disputes without the use of threat or force. "There is no place in the relations of civilized nations to use such provocative language".

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/79041/ph-slams-china-for-counterstrike-threat>

29 June 2013: China media warns Philippines of 'counterstrike' in South China Sea

China's state media warned on Saturday that a "counterstrike" against the Philippines was inevitable if it continues to provoke Beijing in the South China Sea.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-china-philippines-20130628,0,3568955.story>

28 June 2013: China launches research base in S China Sea

A maritime fishery resource breeding and research base has been established Thursday by China's southernmost province of Hainan in sea waters of Zhongsha Islands in the South China Sea. The base is the first approved scientific program since Sansha City was officially established in July 2012.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/27/content_16674956.htm

27 June 2013: Path of confrontation over South China Sea 'doomed'

Countries with territorial claims in the South China Sea that look for help from third parties will find their efforts "futile", China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned on Thursday, adding that the path of confrontation would be "doomed".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/27/us-china-asean-southchinasea-idUSBRE95Q0CR20130627>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

25 July 2013: Thailand urges China Sea peace

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra stressed Thai policy for a peaceful solution to conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/361354/chinese-top-brass-reminded-of-peaceful-means-on-south-china-sea>

24 July 2013: Singapore conducted a live-firing of a Harpoon missile in the South China Sea
The Ministry of Defence said the missile had "successfully hit the target".

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/rsn-conducts-live-firing/755252.html>

18 July 2013: Chief of Singaporean Navy visits South China Sea Fleet

Rear Admiral Ng Chee Peng and his party visited the South China Sea Fleet of the Navy of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLAN) on July 18, 2013.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/8333888.html>

9 July 2013: ASEAN plays positive role amid sea spats

To put the "ASEAN Way" into action, the ASEAN foreign ministers set forth two concrete steps: to begin publishing an annual ASEAN Security Outlook for enhancing transparency in the sensitive security field, and to set up an ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation for research into conflict management and resolution.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/794593.shtml#UdvW1FMmyNg>

5 July 2013: ASEAN appears more united on South China Sea issues

It may be that Cambodia has realized that its membership in ASEAN loses much of its potency if it is perceived as a Chinese proxy; it may be that Sultan Bolkiah of Brunei has put his entire weight behind the Indonesian initiative; it may be that Chinese assertiveness in advancing its claims to almost the entire South China Sea, and the refusal of both the Philippines and Vietnam to back down, has had the effect of strengthening conviction about its "centrality in the evolving regional architecture" - in the words of the communiqué.

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Asean-appears-more-united-on-South-China-Sea-issue-30209796.html>

3 July 2013: Phl presses China, neighbors to draft code of conduct in South China Sea

"From the Philippine perspective, a rules-based approach in the management and resolution of disputes in the South China Sea has two complementary elements: first, the early conclusion of a legally-binding and substantive COC, envisaged in the ASEAN-China DOC; and second, third party arbitration of maritime disputes under UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)," Del Rosario said at the 20th ASEAN Regional Forum in Bandar Seri Begawan.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/07/02/960764/phl-presses-china-neighbors-draft-code-conduct-south-china-sea>

3 July 2013: Thailand's role in solving the South China Sea impasse

As the current coordinator of ASEAN-China ties, the burden of responsibility falls upon Thailand to help mend frayed relations between China and member ASEAN nations and strengthen unity in the regional group.

<http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asian%2BOpinions/Story/A1Story20130703-434233.html>

1 July 2013: China agrees to talk on COC

Talks on a code of conduct will begin in September, according to a joint statement released after the two sides met in Brunei. The move represents a reversal from a year ago, when ASEAN failed to agree on a mechanism to defuse the disputes amid Chinese pressure to avoid the topic at regional meetings.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/07/01/world/asia/china-asean-code/>

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/world/asia/2013/07/01/china-agrees-to-talks-on-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct>

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/01/c_124933373.htm

1 July 2013: ASEAN Chief Hopeful on Easing Territorial Disputes

Agreement With China Is Positive, But Caution Remains Over Next Step, Minh Says.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323297504578579112463642762.html>

1 July 2013: ASEAN to discuss South China Sea code of conduct

"We have to have the code of conduct," Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa told reporters. "Otherwise, uncertainty will prevail."

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2013/06/30/ASEAN-to-discuss-South-China-Sea-code-of-conduct/UPI-53811372604801/

30 June 2013: Beijing likely to adopt more open approach to COC possibility

This is the first time Beijing has signaled that it would discuss the possibility of a so-called "code of conduct" for the South China Sea. Thailand, as the current coordinator of ASEAN-China cooperation, would do its best to find the way forward for a code of conduct in South China Sea, Sihasak said.

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Beijing-likely-to-adopt-more-open-approach-30209390.html>

29 June 2013: ASEAN should actively maintain stability in South China Sea: Vietnamese President

ASEAN should take initiative and better play its active role in ensuring the peace and security in the South China Sea, visiting Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang said Friday.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/28/c_132495919.htm

29 June 2013: Indonesia and Vietnam agreed to continue to encourage discussions to find agreement for the implementation of "Code of Conduct" in South China Sea

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Indonesia and Vietnam had common view with regard to code of conduct.

<http://www.antaranews.com/en/national>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

24 July 2013: Barack Obama to meet Vietnam's president Truong Tan Sang

President Barack Obama will receive a rare White House visit on Thursday by the president of Vietnam, Truong Tan Sang, in the latest sign of growing ties between the two former wartime foes.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a8d62bd0-f479-11e2-a62e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2a8EqG88D>

22 July 2013: Japan PM to visit Philippines amid regional disputes

Amid the heightening tension in the region over territorial disputes, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will be undertaking an official visit to Manila from July 26 to 27.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/07/22/999161/japan-pm-visit-phl-amid-regional-disputes>

17 July 2013: US to get wider access to South China Sea for military warships and aircraft

Ambassador Jose G. Cuisia this week told reporters that the Philippines plans to provide the US with greater access to its bases on a temporary and rotational basis, which would bolster its defense.

<http://rt.com/usa/philippines-usa-china-sea-176/>

15 July 2013: Singapore & US hold maritime drill exercise in South China Sea

Singapore and the US are holding the annual maritime drill Exercise CARAT - short for Singapore-US Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training - from 15 to 26 July in the South China Sea.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/s-pore-us-hold-maritime/745126.html>

13 July 2013: Euro parliament backs PH move for peaceful resolution of sea row

The European parliament continues to back the Philippine stand for a peaceful and rules-based method of solving maritime disputes, including the decision to seek international arbitration in accordance with UNCLOS.

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/07/14/13/euro-parliament-backs-ph-move-peaceful-resolution-sea-row>

9 July 2013: Japan: China wants status of South China Sea region changed

China is trying to "use force to change the status quo" in the South China Sea region by displaying its military might, says Japan's annual defense paper that was adopted Tuesday.

<http://www.bignewsnetwork.com/index.php/sid/215725550/scat/b8de8e630faf3631/ht/China-wants-status-of-South-China-Sea-region-changed-alleges-Japan>

4 July 2013: US play down China's overture in South China Sea, no breakthrough

A senior U.S. administration official who attended the Brunei meeting said the new talks were welcome, but by no means a breakthrough. "It's not enough to simply promise some form of talks in the run-up to a multilateral meeting as a way of abating criticism and creating the appearance of progress," the official said.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/03/uk-asean-idUKBRE96205P20130703>

2 July 2013: Any use of force in South China Sea not acceptable to India: Salman Khurshid

Ahead of India-ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference, foreign on Monday said India will reject any use of force in the South China Sea.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-07-01/india/40306919_1_salman-khurshid-south-china-sea-navigation

2 July 2013: Kerry shows support for South China Sea code of conduct

United States Secretary of State John Kerry threw his support behind a "substantive code of conduct" in dealing with the overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/se-asia/story/kerry-shows-support-south-china-sea-code-conduct-20130701>

<http://www.thesundaily.my/news/757249>

2 July 2013: Kishida lauds efforts on code of conduct for South China Sea

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida has praised the efforts of relevant countries to establish a legally binding code of conduct to address maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/07/02/national/kishida-lauds-efforts-on-code-of-conduct-for-south-china-sea/#.UdMkZOsmYNg>

29 June 2013: US trains Philippines on how to use drones amid China fears

US troops trained their Philippine counterparts how to use surveillance drones on Friday, as Manila seeks to boost military ties with Washington and counter what it perceives as a rising security threat from China.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\06\29\story_29-6-2013_pg4_11

29 June 2013: Sea tensions to remain as Japan, China curry ASEAN favor

In the most recent explicit gesture to step up its engagement with economically resilient Southeast Asia and shore up a languishing economy, Japan will relax visa requirements for travelers from five major economies in the region. The move comes on the heels of Japan's earlier call for stronger security ties with ASEAN members, with Tokyo looking to boost alliances at a time of long-simmering territorial tensions with China.

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20130628-sea-tensions-to-remain-as-japan-china-curry-asean-favor.aspx>

28 June 2013: Philippines, US start Naval exercise in South China Sea

The Philippines and US Naval forces began joint military exercises at the South China Sea today, with an opening ceremony at the former US Naval base in Subic.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/06/27/959146/phl-us-start-naval-exercise-south-china-sea>

28 June 2013: Japan to be on the Philippines' side in South China Sea dispute

"We agreed that we will further cooperate in terms of defense of remote islands as well as the defense of territory, or territorial sea as well as protection of maritime interest ... We will cooperate with the Philippine side in this matter," Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera said.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/06/27/958907/japan-take-phls-side-south-china-sea-dispute>