

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 44**  
**November 2016**

**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**30 November 2016: Vietnam condemns Taiwan's military drills in flashpoint waters**

Taiwan's actions are a serious violation of Vietnam's sovereignty, threatening peace, stability, security and maritime safety while causing tensions and complicating the situation in the East Sea, the Vietnamese foreign ministry said in a statement, using the Vietnamese reference for the SCS.

<http://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-condemns-taiwan-s-military-drills-in-flashpoint-waters-3506204.html>

**29 November 2016: Taiwan holds rescue drill off Taiping Island in South China Sea**

Three aircraft and eight vessels took part in the exercise code-named "Nanyuan (Southern Aid) No. 1", according to the Coast Guard Administration (CGA).

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201611290007.aspx>

**25 November 2016: China considering granting Philippines access to disputed Scarborough Shoal in South China Sea, says adviser**

China is considering a "wholesale" deal that will grant Philippine vessels access to the Scarborough Shoal waters in the South China Sea, an influential Chinese academic and government adviser said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-considering-granting-philippines-access-to-disputed-scarborough-shoal-in-south>

**24 November 2016: Duterte says it is common sense to declare disputed Panatag Shoal no-fishing zone, urges China to act**

"China should also give the same order," Duterte said. "I do not care what China says about their ownership of the shoal. Me, as president, I claim my rights, so I say no fishing".

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/duterte-says-it-common-sense-declare-disputed-panatag-shoal-no-fishing-zone-urges-china-act-1593210>

**24 November 2016: Philippines to Upgrade Thitu Island**

The Philippine Department of Transportation has earmarked \$9 million for a seaport on the island, which has been home to about 200 civilians and 50 soldiers. It has a 1.3 kilometer (0.8-mile)-long runway but sea access is difficult because it is surrounded by shallow coral base.

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/a6ea91292fc54c9d91eb272b8661f781/recent-developments-surrounding-south-china-sea>

**23 November 2016: China set to open SCS museum to showcase its claims**

China said it is planning to open a South China Sea museum to showcase its historic claim.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/china-set-to-open-scs-museum-to-showcase-its-claims-4391798/>

**22 November 2016: China, Malaysia begin joint military exercises amid closer ties**

The armed forces began the exercise as the two countries aim to forge closer military ties.

<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/11/22/4081s945551.htm>

**22 November 2016: China keeps mum on whether it supports Duterte proposal**

Geng Shuang said China had made "appropriate arrangements" to allow Philippine fishermen to operate around the shoal. "China's sovereignty and jurisdiction of Huangyan Island has not and will not change".

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-keeps-mum-on-whether-it-supports-duterte-proposal-for-marine-sanctuary-at>

**21 November 2016: Philippines president to declare disputed area in SCS a no-fishing zone**

Duterte has decided to issue a formal order declaring a sprawling lagoon a maritime sanctuary where Filipinos and Chinese will be prohibited from fishing. If Duterte's plan proceeds, Filipino, Chinese and other fishermen would only be allowed to fish in the deeper waters just outside Scarborough.

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/philippines-president-to-declare-disputed-area-in-south-china-sea-a-no-fishing-zone-1.3169474>

**20 November 2016: Xi tells Duterte that Scarborough Shoal will stay open to Philippine fishermen**

"The Chinese leader [vowed] that the fishermen will continue to have free access to their traditional fishing grounds, apart from offering them training such as in fish culture to sustain their livelihood and families," the statement said.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2047747/xi-tells-duterte-scarborough-shoal-will-stay-open>

**20 November 2016: PH to temporarily set aside sea row with China**

"We also had made sure that any actions that would be taken by us will be precisely to just simply promote our interests; with the area of jurisdiction, territorial ownership and sovereignty will be set aside in the meantime until a solution is in sight in the future," he said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/20/16/ph-to-temporarily-set-aside-sea-row-with-china-yasay>

**20 November 2016: Xi calls for transforming South China Sea issue into friendly cooperation opportunity for China, Philippines**

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for jointly transforming the South China Sea issue into an opportunity for friendly cooperation between their countries.

<http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/11/20/4082s945338.htm>

**19 November 2016: China's Xi presses Philippines, Vietnam to keep South China Sea issues bilateral**

Xi told Duterte "to actively mull maritime cooperation and promote positive interaction on the sea," turning the South China Sea into "an opportunity for bilateral friendly cooperation". That sentiment was echoed by Duterte. The Philippines "is willing to properly address maritime issues with China through dialogue and consultation".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-china-philippines-vietn-idUSKBN13F04P>

**18 November 2016: China urges Vietnam to stop construction on South China Sea island**

"We strongly urge the relevant country to respect China's sovereignty and interest, and withdraw its personnel and facilities," Geng said.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-11/18/c\\_135840851.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-11/18/c_135840851.htm)

**18 November 2016: Vietnam expanding South China Sea runway**

Satellite images taken this month showed Vietnam had lengthened its runway on Spratly Island from less than 760 metres (2,500ft) to more than 1 km. It said the upgraded runway would be able to accommodate maritime surveillance aircraft and transport planes, as well as combat aircraft.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/18/vietnam-expanding-south-china-sea-runway-says-thinktank>

**14 November 2016: China says aircraft carrier now ready for combat**

China's first aircraft carrier is now ready to engage in combat, a change from its past status as a platform for testing and training.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/11/14/china-says-aircraft-carrier-now-ready-for-combat.html>

**7 November 2016: China Post issues stamps featuring South China Sea lighthouses**

China Post issued a set of postage stamps on Oct. 28 featuring five lighthouses located in the South China Sea.

<http://www.ecns.cn/2016/11-07/233078.shtml>

**6 November 2016: Taiwan to hold humanitarian rescue drill in South China Sea**

The joint drill will focus on humanitarian rescue missions and be led by the Coast Guard Administration with support from the Navy in line with the policy of the Navy supporting Coast Guard Administration operations.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201611060017.aspx>

**5 November 2016: Malaysia not being 'sold off' to China, says Najib**

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak dismissed claims that Malaysia was being "sold off" to China after both nations inked 14 agreements worth RM144 billion (S\$47.5 billion) during his visit to Beijing this week, saying his country's sovereignty remained firmly intact.

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/msia-pm-denies-selling-malaysia-chinese>

#### **4 November 2016: KL, Beijing call for restraint in South China Sea**

"Intervention" by external parties will not help solve the South China Sea issue, said China and Malaysia, two of the claimant states in the disputed waters.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/kl-beijing-call-for-restraint-in-s-china-sea>

#### **4 November 2016: Philippines sends six Coast Guard vessels to South China Sea**

The Philippine Coast Guard sent six vessels that guarded Filipino fishermen in the Scarborough Shoal, in the South China Sea, officials said, adding that Chinese and Philippine coastguard vessels did not clash.

<http://gulfnews.com/news/asia/philippines/philippines-sends-six-coast-guard-vessels-to-south-china-sea-1.1924003>

#### **3 November 2016: Philippine foreign minister attributes renewed fishing access in Panatag shoal to trust-building with China**

"There is no agreement that has been arrived at with China insofar as these ships leaving or our fishermen having access to Scarborough but I would imagine as part of our quiet diplomacy trying to build mutual trust and confidence with two countries, these have been made possible," Yasay said.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/philippine-foreign-minister-attributes-renewed-fishing-access-panatag-shoal-trust-building-china-1589622>

#### **3 November 2016: Malaysia optimistic South China Sea issue can be resolved**

Najib stated that it has always been Malaysia's stand on the South China Sea disputes is that problems, differences and rows should be handled and resolved through dialogue and peaceful negotiations.

<http://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/11/185758/malaysia-optimistic-south-china-sea-issue-can-be-resolved>

#### **2 November 2016: China and Malaysia agree on military cooperation in the South China Sea**

Najib Razak signs defence deal during Beijing visit and writes editorial saying former colonial should not lecture countries they once exploited.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-malaysia-idUSKBN12X0CH?il=0>

#### **1 November 2016: Chinese, Malaysian navies to cooperate in South China Sea**

Liu said Najib agreed with the Chinese premier "to further advance the proper settlement of the South China Sea issue on a bilateral channel and through dialogue."

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2016/11/02/chinese-malaysian-navies-to-cooperate-in-south-china-sea-.html>

#### **1 November 2016: Carpio eyes win-win solution in South China Sea, face-saving scenario for China**

"And we have to think of a creative way to give China a face-saving exit here, and I think the way to that is to declare Spratlys as a marine protected area," Carpio said.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/587157/news/nation/carpio-eyes-win-win-solution-in-south-china-sea-face-saving-scenario-for-china>

#### **31 October 2016: Fidel Ramos quits as special envoy to China**

Ramos said he resigned when President Rodrigo Duterte returned to the country from a visit to China.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/148429/fidel-ramos-quits-as-special-envoy-to-china#ixzz4OjBgZpVb>

#### **31 October 2016: Beijing says 'situation' at disputed Scarborough Shoal 'has not changed and will not'**

Beijing says the situation at the disputed Scarborough Shoal "has not changed and will not change", after the Philippines said Chinese vessels had stopped harassing its fishermen.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-31/china-says-situation-at-disputed-scarborough-shoal-unchanged/7982010>

#### **31 October 2016: Philippines says China still guarding key shoal but Filipino fisherman back**

Philippines Defense Secretary said aerial surveillance had showed that Chinese patrol boats were still guarding the but had allowed Filipino boats to enter and fish in the nearby waters.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/31/asia/philippines-china-scarborough-shoal-fishermen/>

#### **31 October 2016: Malaysia's Najib Razak seeks closer military ties with China**

Among Malaysia's aims is the negotiation of a deal to purchase coastal patrol ships from China in what would be the first significant defence equipment contract between the two countries.

<https://www.ft.com/content/11853454-9f40-11e6-891e-abe238dee8e2>

## **ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

### **16 November 2016: ASEAN defense ministers discuss security cooperation, S. China Sea**

Defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations discussed advancing defense cooperation amid regional and international security challenges, including territorial disputes in the South China Sea, during a one-day retreat in the Laotian capital Vientiane.

<https://english.kyodonews.jp/news/2016/11/444453.html>

### **6 November 2016: Indonesia to boost military in South China Sea amid dispute**

Indonesia will strengthen its weaponry systems on Natuna Island in anticipation of future threats in the South China Sea dispute.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/841476/indonesia-to-boost-military-in-south-china-sea-amid-dispute#ixzz4PJ90YnZr>

### **5 November 2016: Indonesian president says 'no compromise' on South China Sea**

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said there will be "no compromise" to his country's sovereignty in the contested South China Sea, ahead of a visit to staunch U.S. ally Australia.

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/indonesian-president-says-no-compromise-south-china-sea>

### **30 October 2016: RI proposes joint patrols with Australia**

Following a meeting with Australia's foreign and defense ministers, Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said he had proposed that Indonesia and Australia conduct joint patrols in the eastern South China Sea in the near future to ensure safer waters.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/10/29/ri-proposes-joint-patrols-with-australia.html>

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

### **21 November 2016: Japan, Vietnam reaffirm pledge to coordinate in South China Sea row with China**

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang have affirmed their commitment to peacefully resolving disputes in the South China Sea in line with international law, as Japan prepares to provide Hanoi with patrol ships to strengthen its maritime law enforcement capabilities.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/11/21/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-vietnam-reaffirm-pledge-coordinate-south-china-sea-row-china/#.WDT52bJ96Uk>

### **19 November 2016: China and US Conducts Drills Despite Lingering Tensions on the South China Sea**

The joint three-day humanitarian relief military drill between the United States and China has been concluded despite the lingering tensions between the two countries over the South China Sea and the uncertainty brought by Donald Trump winning the elections.

[http://chinachristiandaily.com/2016-11-19/society/china-and-us-conducts-drills-despite-lingering-tensions-on-the-south-china-sea\\_3313.html](http://chinachristiandaily.com/2016-11-19/society/china-and-us-conducts-drills-despite-lingering-tensions-on-the-south-china-sea_3313.html)

### **16 November 2016: PACOM chief eyes coastal defence artillery for South China Sea**

The US military needs coastal defence weapons that can threaten adversaries' ships in the Pacific, according to Admiral Harry Harris, head of US Pacific Command (PACOM).

<http://www.janes.com/article/65519/pacom-chief-eyes-coastal-defence-artillery-for-south-china-sea>

### **15 November 2016: Japan to Give Malaysia 2 Large Vessels During Najib Visit**

The vessels would be provided at no cost and transferred to Malaysia during the first half of 2017 along with the necessary training and support.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/11/japan-to-give-malaysia-2-large-vessels-during-najib-visit/>

### **12 November 2016: India, Japan stand together on South China Sea**

"Regarding the South China Sea, the two Prime Ministers stressed the importance of resolving the disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law including the UNCLOS," said the joint statement.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India-Japan-stand-together-on-South-China-Sea-discuss-partnership-on-Chabahar/articleshow/55380015.cms>

**7 November 2016: India to oppose China over South China Sea**

India proposed to Singapore last month that the two countries make a specific mention in a joint statement of the international tribunal order in July dismissing China's "historical" rights as claimed by Beijing over almost all of South China Sea waters. However, this proposal was eventually shot down by Singapore, said the report.

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/071116/india-to-oppose-china-over-south-china-sea-as-payback-for-nsg-report.html>

**1 November 2016: Australia, Indonesia consider joint South China Sea naval patrols**

Bishop said that Australia and Indonesia would notify other countries in the region of any planned exercise. "This is a regular part of what our navy does. This is part of our engagement in the region and this is in accordance with Australia's right of freedom of navigation including in the South China Sea," she said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/australia-indonesia-consider-joint-south-china-sea-naval-patrols/3251280.html>