

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 46
January 2017

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

24 January 2017: China urges US to act and speak cautiously on South China Sea

China urged the United States to act and speak cautiously on the South China Sea, saying China has irrefutable sovereignty over the Spratly Islands.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-urges-us-to-act-and-speak-cautiously-on-south-china-sea/3462708.html>

23 January 2017: China: United States should not meddle in issues of China's sovereign territory

We hope that the Chinese and American sides will respect each other's core interests and major concerns, Hua said.

http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1433035.shtml

22 January 2017: Philippines, China form way to settle dispute

"Both sides agreed to establish a bilateral consultation mechanism on the South China Sea," Manalo said.

<http://thestandard.com.ph/news/-main-stories/top-stories/227337/ph-ch-form-way-to-settle-dispute.html>

23 January 2017: Look beyond childish notions to resolve disputes, says Malaysian defence minister

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said Malaysia firmly and unequivocally believed that these disputes can only be resolved through diplomacy and via multilateral institutions.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/look-beyond-childish-notions-to-resolve-south-china-sea-disputes-says-malaysian-defence>

22 January 2017: Phl, China eye code of conduct framework this year

"Both sides spoke on the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct (COC) and the mutual interest to reach a COC framework by the middle of 2017," the DFA said in a statement.

<http://beta.philstar.com/headlines/2017/01/22/1664377/phl-china-eye-code-conduct-framework-year#g86LTKttZTbEEIDe.99>

20 January 2017: Malaysia navy to focus on security in South China Sea: Deputy navy chief

The Royal Malaysian Navy is focused on security in the South China Sea and placing the area under key radar surveillance amid the ongoing sovereignty disputes in the waterway, the force's deputy chief said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-navy-to-focus-on-security-in-south-china-sea-deputy-navy-chief>

19 January 2017: Philippine President to visit China again as bilateral ties warm up

"I will come to Beijing to attend the 'One Belt, One Road' international cooperation summit forum, and I look forward to meeting President Xi Jinping again," Mr Duterte said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-says-philippine-president-duterte-to-visit-again-in-may-as-bilateral-ties-warm>

19 January 2017: Vietnam police halt anti-China protest over islands

The protest in Hanoi started after a peaceful commemoration for soldiers of what was then South Vietnam who were killed in 1974, when China seized the Paracel islands, which it still holds.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/vietnam-police-halt-anti-china-protest-over-islands/3450544.html>

18 January 2017: Malaysia to establish three designated submarine exercise areas in South China Sea

The demarcations, which will be known as the Malaysia Submarine Exercise Area (MSEA) 1, 2, and 3 respectively, are being established as part of the country's efforts to enhance submarine operating safety in the region, said the Submarine Force Commander of the RMN.

<http://www.janes.com/article/67039/malaysia-to-establish-three-designated-submarine-exercise-areas-in-south-china-sea>

18 January 2017: Vietnam, China Work to Ease South China Sea Tensions

Two leaders agreed to speed up talks on joint development in the Gulf of Tonkin. The report said the agreement means "effectively stepping up" joint projects in "less sensitive" areas.

<http://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/vietnam-china-ease-south-china-sea-tensions/3681821.html>

17 January 2017: Philippines defence minister says China arms on islands worrying

Gen Lorenzana took a stronger line than Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay, but said the issue had to be handled carefully and the public should know "we are not sleeping on the job". "When something happens that can pose us some kind of threats to our sovereignty rights we issue a note verbale so we can talk about it and make sure it is properly addressed," he said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-defence-minister-says-china-arms-on-islands-worrying>

16 January 2017: Philippines exercising diplomatic options over South China Sea issue: DFA

Yasay said he had released "about three or four" notes verbales expressing concern over China's occupation of Scarborough Shoal since he was appointed to the foreign affairs post last May. "But let's just do it very quietly," Yasay said.

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/01/16/PH-exercising-diplomatic-options-over-South-China-Sea-DFA.html>

15 January 2017: Duterte: I rejected Japan missile offer

President Duterte has declined an offer by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to provide missiles to the Philippines, saying he does not want to see a Third World War.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/duterte-rejected-japan-missile-offer-000000071.html>

14 January 2017: China and Vietnam to 'manage' differences over South China Sea

In the joint communique the two sides agreed to continue to "fully and effectively" implement the DOC and strive for the early conclusion of a COC on the basis of consensus in the framework of the DOC.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-and-vietnam-to-manage-differences-over-south-china-sea/3438740.html>

14 January 2017: China tests aircraft carrier's capabilities in South China Sea

China's first aircraft carrier formation which moved close to Taiwan and conducted drills in the disputed South China Sea has returned to Qingdao port. The fleet sailed through the Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the South China sea, it said.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/china-tests-aircraft-carriers-capabilities-in-south-china-sea/articleshow/56538779.cms>

13 January 2017: China hits back after Tillerson's South China Sea statement

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China has been acting within the limits of its sovereignty. "Like the US, China has the right within its own territory to carry out normal activities".

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/beijing-asserts-right-in-south-china-sea>

13 January 2017: PetroVietnam, Exxon Mobil sign deal on gas generation

State energy group PetroVietnam (PVN) signed an agreement with the Vietnamese unit of U.S. Exxon Mobil Corp to develop the country's biggest gas project for power generation. The project is scheduled to come in 2023 and will draw on a natural gas field situated 88 kilometers from Quang Nam.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-petrovietnam-exxon-mobil-idUSKBN14X1F4>

<http://www.atimes.com/article/exxon-vietnam-gas-deal-test-tillersons-diplomacy/>

12 January 2017: Chinese Spy Ship Joins Fleet After Rex Tillerson Confirmation Hearing

China launched a new ship for intelligence-gathering, to join its already large fleet.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/south-china-sea-conflict-chinese-spy-ship-joins-fleet-after-rex-tillerson-2474402>

12 January 2017: Philippines puts off upgrades to South China Sea isles

The Philippines is deferring plans to repair and upgrade features it occupies, the country's military chiefs said, to avoid provoking China while the two traditional foes seek to bury the hatchet.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/avoiding-chinas-wrath-philippines-puts-off-upgrades-to-south-china-sea-isles/articleshow/56500428.cms>

11 January 2017: Beijing warns of 'necessary response' against provocation

In its White Paper "China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation" released by the State Council Information Office, Beijing said it may also "make the necessary response" to behaviour that undermines peace and stability in the disputed waters.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/beijing-warns-of-necessary-response-against-provocation-in-south-china-sea-in-white>

11 January 2017: Philippines to fast track talks on COC and hope COC ready this year

The Philippine government will fast-track discussions on the DOC implementation and the possible completion of the COC during the its chairmanship.

<http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/01/11/ph-to-fast-track-talks-on-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-in-asean-2017/>

10 January 2017: Beijing flew a strategic bomber around contested SCS islands in a show of force

It was the second such flight by a Chinese bomber in the South China Sea this year.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/beijing-flew-bomber-spratly-islands-south-china-sea-2017-1?IR=T&r=US&IR=T>

9 January 2017: Philippines Defense chief plans to visit Filipino soldiers in SCS

"We (defense and military establishment) will make sure that we are maintaining our presence in the West Philippine Sea and ensure the integrity of our territory," Año added of Lorenzana's planned visit.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/09/17/defense-chief-plans-to-visit-filipino-soldiers-in-west-ph-sea>

8 January 2017: Philippines, Japan navies hold war games

The Philippine and Japanese navies engaged in maritime exercises in waters off Subic to demonstrate freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/151310/ph-japan-navies-hold-war-games>

6 January 2017: Chinese Submarine's Malaysian Port Call Signals Regional Power Shift

A Chinese attack submarine made an unprecedented stopover in Malaysia in a rare public display of China's expanding undersea force and a further sign of power realignment in Southeast Asia.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-submarines-malaysian-port-call-signals-regional-power-shift-1483700183>

6 January 2017: Philippines says South China Sea ruling not on agenda at ASEAN summit

Philippine President wanted to avoid confrontation and saw no need to press Beijing to abide by the ruling.

<http://e.vnexpress.net/news/world/philippines-says-south-china-sea-ruling-not-on-agenda-at-asean-summit-3524311.html>

<http://www.manilatimes.net/ph-will-not-raise-arbitral-award-asean-yasay/305257/>

6 January 2017: Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte courts Russia in snub to US

"We welcome our Russian friends. Anytime you want to dock here for anything, for play, to replenish supplies or maybe to be our ally to protect us," Mr Duterte said.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/south-china-sea-philippines-rodrigo-duterte-courts-russia-in-snub-to-us-20170107-gtnhw9.html>

5 January 2017: South China Sea dispute included in ASEAN summit agenda

"The issue of the South China Sea, of course, is in the agenda of the ASEAN," Manalo said.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2017/01/05/south-china-sea-dispute-included-in-asean-summit-agenda.html>

4 January 2017: China says aircraft carrier testing weapons in South China Sea drills

"The Liaoning aircraft carrier group in the South China Sea is carrying out scientific research and training, in accordance with plans," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular news briefing. "The purpose is to test the performance of weapons and equipment," he said.

<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSKBN1400ZX>

3 January 2017: PH to stick to 'delinking' method in South China Sea issue

"What we're trying to do is to delink it, to discuss it in a separate group like in a bilateral consultative mechanism that is to be set up under the joint statement last October," said the the country's ambassador-designate to Beijing. "We will separate it so that we grow on separate track," said Sta.

Romana. "The issues which have no dispute we can fast-track."

<http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/01/03/ph-to-stick-to-delinking-method-in-south-china-sea-issue/>

3 January 2017: China navy confirms carrier conducted drills in South China Sea

China's sole aircraft carrier conducted drills in the South China Sea, the navy said, days after neighboring Taiwan said the carrier and accompanying ships had passed 90 nautical miles south of the island amid renewed tension between the two sides.

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/02/china-navy-confirms-carrier-conducted-drills-in-south-china-sea.html>

2 January 2017: China Is Building A Floating Nuke Plant In Disputed Waters

China officially began building an offshore floating nuclear power plant the country plans to place in the disputed South China Sea.

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/01/02/china-is-building-a-floating-nuke-plant-in-disputed-waters/#ixzz4UI2KWaKv>

2 January 2017: China Starts Weather Forecasts from South China Sea

China's State Oceanic Administration says the meteorological and hydrological observations are a response to the rising challenges of environmental protection in the South China Sea, marine disaster prevention, scientific research and maritime navigation safety.

<http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/china-starts-weather-forecasts-from-south-china-sea>

2 January 2017: Envoy says PHL studying joint exploration with China in disputed waters

The Philippine government is "seriously studying" the possibility of conducting joint exploration of natural resources with China in the West Philippine Sea, Ambassador to China Jose Santiago "Chito" Sta. Romana said.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/594371/news/nation/envoy-says-phl-studying-joint-exploration-with-china-in-disputed-waters#sthash.vPrYJ592.dpuf>

2 January 2017: China conducting further navy exercises in contentious South China Sea

The training exercise involved aircraft carrier Liaoning and several J-15 carrier-borne fighters jets - testing comprehensive combat capacity and aviation support ability in China's Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the contentious South China Sea.

<http://www.9news.com.au/world/2017/01/02/13/19/china-conducting-further-navy-exercises-in-contentious-south-china-sea#Opb5pdmXSIg8O34x.99>

NON-CLAIMANTS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

24 January 2017: White House warns China on trade, South China Sea

"If those islands are, in fact, in international waters and not part of China proper, yeah, we'll make sure we defend international interests from being taken over by one country," said the spokesman.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/white-house-warns-china-on-trade-south-china-sea/3461670.html>

20 January 2017: Indonesia to double Riau police deployment to 12,000 in anticipation of South China Sea tension

Police personnel numbers on Riau Islands will be doubled to 12,000 in anticipation of conflict in the South China Sea, Indonesia's police chief said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-to-double-riau-police-deployment-to-12000-in-anticipation-of-south-china-sea>

15 January 2017: Japan, Indonesia to Work More Closely on South China Sea

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Indonesian President Joko Widodo reaffirmed that their countries will strengthen cooperation in dealing with issues in the South China Sea, where China has stepped up military activities.

<http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2017011600002>

15 January 2017: Abe pledges fresh security-related aid to Vietnam

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that Japan will provide six patrol vessels to Vietnam as a part of a fresh yen loan offer totaling ¥120 billion to help its maritime safety efforts amid China's expanding activities.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/01/16/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-jokowi-unite-south-china-sea-disputes-plan-two-plus-two-meeting/#.WH11WFn96Uk>

14 January 2016: Japan and Australia agree to strengthen defence ties

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull where the pair agreed to deepen defence ties through joint military training and exercises.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/japan-and-australia-agree-to-strengthen-defence-ties/3438300.html>

12 January 2017: Abe, Duterte Reaffirm Cooperation on South China Sea

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte agreed that the two countries will continue to work together to ensure stability in the South China Sea, where Manila has a territorial dispute with Beijing.

<https://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2017011200881>

9 January 2017: Turbulence in South China Sea: India Offers Missile to Vietnam

India has offered to supply indigenously developed Akash missile to Vietnam at a time when both countries are talking of China's growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region.

<https://sputniknews.com/asia/201701091049409735-india-vietnam-missile-south-china-sea/>

6 January 2017: Inada speaks in France on South China Sea

Japan's Defense Minister says she hopes European countries will get involved in the issue of the South China Sea. China is increasing its maritime activity in the region. She noted French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told her the issue of the South China Sea directly affects Europe.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20170106_34/

4 January 2017: Russian warships visit Philippines, keen on joint exercises in South China Sea

Russia said it is looking into holding naval exercises in the South China Sea with the Philippines, China and.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/russia-keen-on-joint-exercises-in-south-china-sea>

<http://www.localsyr.com/news/russian-warships-in-philippines-for-joint-exercises/635641651>