

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 49**  
**April 2017**

**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**26 April 2017: China launches first home-built aircraft carrier amid South China Sea tension**

China launched its first domestically built aircraft carrier amid rising tension in the South China Sea.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-military-carrier-idUSKBN17S06B>

**25 April 2017: China begins deep-sea probe in South China Sea**

Chinese scientists embarked on the second stage of China's 38th oceanic expedition.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/25/c\\_136234952.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/25/c_136234952.htm)

**24 April 2017: China Offers Contested South China Sea Oil And Gas Blocks**

China National Offshore Oil Corp tendered 22 oil and gas blocks in the South China Sea. It has already struck one deal, with Canada's Husky Energy.

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/China-Offers-Contested-South-China-Sea-Oil-And-Gas-Blocks.html>

**24 April 2017: China Deploys Floating Nuclear Power Plant to South China Sea**

Final assembly of the reactor is reported to start in coastal city of Huludao.

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/10253/china-floating-nuclear-reactor>

**24 April 2017: China's Navy harassed PH fishers, says lawmaker**

"According to the initial reports, it was the Chinese Coast Guard that was involved in the Union Banks incident. However, in our meeting with the fishermen themselves, we [learned] that it was actually a Chinese Navy ship [that was involved]," Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano said in a statement.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/891373/chinas-navy-harassed-ph-fishers-says-lawmaker#ixzz4fDHWgLwH>

**23 April 2017: China, Philippines spar over military visit to island**

"Our visits there are part of the government mandate to ensure the safety, wellbeing, livelihood and personal security of our citizens there," Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Robespierre Bolivar said in a statement.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/china-philippines-spar-military-visit-island-170422173715191.html>

**23 April 2017: Chinese President Xi says be combat-ready**

Xi asked military personnel to strengthen their awareness in preparing for war.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/chinese-president-xi-inspects-pla-southern-theater-command-says-be-combat-ready-4624705/>

**22 April 2017: China 'gravely concerned and dissatisfied' with Lorenzana visit to Pag-asa Island**

"This move runs counter to the important consensus reached between the two leadership which is to properly deal with the South China Sea issue. Gravely concerned about and dissatisfied with this, China has lodged representations with the Philippine side," Lu said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/22/17/china-gravely-concerned-and-dissatisfied-with-lorenzana-visit-to-pag-asa-island>

**22 April 2017: Taiwan reiterates sovereignty claim over South China Sea islands**

The ROC government has expressed serious concerns over the recent unilateral moves taken by "related countries" that heightened tensions in the region, the ministry said.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201704220016.aspx>

**21 April 2017: Philippine defence, military chiefs visit disputed South China Sea isle, to build facilities**

The Philippine defence and military chiefs visited ThiTu and announced that the construction of facilities will start soon there.

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/philippine-defence-military-chiefs-visit-disputed-south-china-sea-isle-build-facilities>

**18 April 2017: Taiwan to increase military presence on South China Sea island**

On Itu Aba Island, a remote-controlled multiple rocket launcher with anti-landing capabilities would form the backbone of a coastal defense system, Taipei's ministry of national defense stated.

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2017/04/18/Taiwan-to-increase-military-presence-on-South-China-Sea-island/2531492562283/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/04/18/Taiwan-to-increase-military-presence-on-South-China-Sea-island/2531492562283/)

**17 April 2017: China, Vietnam vow to strengthen bilateral cooperation**

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi met with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh at the 10th meeting of the China-Vietnam Steering Committee on Cooperation in an effort to forge a better cooperation between the two countries.

<http://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/china-vietnam-vow-to-strengthen-bilateral-cooperation-3571802.html>

### **13 April 2017: Philippines' Duterte cancels visit to disputed South China Sea island**

"Because of our friendship with China and because we value your friendship I will not go there to raise the Philippine flag," Duterte said. "They said, do not go there in the meantime, just do not go there please. I will correct myself because we value our friendship with China," he said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/philippines-duterte-cancels-visit-to-disputed-south-china-sea-i/3674654.html>

### **11 April 2017: Duterte to China: I can sell disputed isles to you when no more war threat**

"We do not mean harm to China. We are friends, as a matter of fact. Maybe when we get rich, very rich, I can sell the land to you for—inyo na when the spectacle of a war is gone and nothing is dangerous to the Philippines," he said.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/606594/news/nation/duterte-to-china-i-can-sell-disputed-isles-to-you-when-no-more-war-threat#sthash.RW0t9b7K.dpuf>

### **10 April 2017: Chinese Spokesperson: Arrangement made for Philippine fishermen in relevant part of waters near Scarborough Shoal**

"Based on the friendliness between China and the Philippines, China made proper arrangement for fishing activities by Philippine fishermen in relevant part of waters near Huangyan Dao. Chinese Coast Guard vessels are stationed there to administrate relevant fishing activities and preserve peace, tranquility and order of the area," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1452560.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1452560.shtml)

### **10 April 2017: Duterte: PH won't put weapons in S. China Sea islands**

"For the information of China we will not place there any offensive weapons, not even one gun," he said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/10/17/ph-wont-put-weapons-in-s-china-sea-islands>

### **10 April 2017: Duterte softens tone toward US before talks on South China Sea**

"Our relationship with the US is strong and vibrant," Mr Manalo said. "The key is not letting these rough patches affect the core of the relationship."

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/duterte-softens-tone-toward-us-talks-south-china-sea>

### **8 April 2017: Palace: PHL committed to improving relations with other South China Sea claimants**

"The Philippines assures all claimant countries that we remain committed to improving and enhancing our relations with our neighbors and partners in the region," presidential spokesperson Abella said.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/606403/news/nation/palace-phl-committed-to-improving-relations-with-other-south-china-sea-claimants#sthash.3QDm9phZ.dpuf>

### **7 April 2017: China fighter plane spotted on South China Sea island**

A Chinese fighter plane has been spotted on a Chinese-held island in the South China Sea.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-fighter-plane-spotted-on-south-china-sea-island-says-think-tank>

### **7 April 2017: China expresses concern over reported Duterte South China Sea comments**

China's Foreign Ministry on Friday said it hoped the Philippines could continue to properly manage maritime disputes with China.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-china-idUSKBN1790YA>

### **6 April 2017: Philippines' Duterte says 'may' visit disputed South China Sea island**

"In the coming Independence Day, I may go to Pagasa island to raise the flag there," he said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/philippines-duterte-plans-to-visit-disputed-south-china-sea-isl/3657230.html>

### **6 April 2017: Duterte orders Philippine troops to South China Sea reefs**

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he has ordered troops to deploy on unoccupied South China Sea islands and reefs claimed by Manila.

<https://www.afp.com/en/news/15/duterte-orders-philippine-troops-south-china-sea-reefs>

#### **5 April 2017: Chinese patrol ships keep presence around Malaysian reefs**

During the first two months of 2017, three Chinese ships patrolled the Luconia Shoals, an area of islets and reefs about 90 miles (145 km) north of Malaysian Borneo.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/05/chinese-patrol-ships-keep-presence-around-malaysian-reefs>

#### **4 April 2017: China lab plans deep-sea research with manned submersible in S.China Sea**

"It is significant that Jiaolong's first deep-sea scientific research will be conducted in the South China Sea," Pan Kehou, the secretary-general of QNLM, said.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1040740.shtml>

#### **3 April 2017: Vietnam fishing vessels seen in Scarborough**

Vietnamese fishing vessels have reportedly been seen moored at Scarborough Shoal.

<http://m.philstar.com/314191/show/5e386e299e1e4949b4741a8b466d4d82/>

#### **2 April 2017: Philippines seeks to rename sea zone to assert itself**

Manila said it wanted to rename the area "Philippine Rise", said presidential spokesman Abella.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-seeks-to-rename-sea-zone-to-assert-itself>

### **ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

#### **27 April 2017: Philippines' Duterte says pointless discussing South China Sea woes at summit**

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said on Thursday it was pointless discussing Beijing's contentious activities in the South China Sea at this week's Southeast Asian summit, and no one dared to pressure China anyway.

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/philippine-leader-says-pointless-raising-chinas-island-building-summit>

#### **27 April 2017: Widodo: ASEAN must solve South China Sea row 'immediately'**

"South China Sea is one of the issues that we need to solve immediately. In the previous meetings, there were still differences between ASEAN member states. I think we need to have a common stand," Widodo said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/27/17/widodo-asean-must-solve-south-china-sea-row-immediately>

#### **27 April 2017: Push for South China Sea code stirs ASEAN suspicions about Beijing's endgame**

"Some of us in ASEAN believe this is just another ploy by China to buy time," said one senior diplomat familiar with the talks.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-asean-analysis-idUSKBN17T0A5>

#### **26 April 2017: Indonesia Steps Against 'Any Power Projection' in South China Sea**

The Indonesian maritime minister said Jakarta opposes "any power projection" in the South China Sea, saying Indonesia doesn't recognize China's so-called "Nine-Dash Line".

<https://sputniknews.com/asia/201704261053002683-indonesia-power-projection-south-china-sea/>

#### **26 April 2017: Asean leaders seen going soft on South China Sea feud, according to draft communique**

"We shared the serious concerns expressed by some leaders over recent developments and escalation of activities in the area which may further raise tensions and erode trust and confidence in the region," read the draft of the "chairman's statement" that will be issued at the end of the meeting.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/asean-leaders-seen-going-soft-on-south-china-sea-feud-according-to-draft-communique>

#### **25 April 2017: Indonesia issues tender to upgrade naval pier on South China Sea island**

The contract will include works to extend the pier that is currently used by Indonesian Navy.

<http://www.janes.com/article/69811/indonesia-issues-tender-to-upgrade-naval-pier-on-south-china-sea-island>

#### **19 April 2017: Binding code of conduct in SCS finished this year – DFA**

"There's a commitment from ASEAN and China to complete the framework, in fact, by middle of this year," Bolivar said in a news briefing in Malacanang.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/19/17/binding-code-of-conduct-in-scs-finished-this-year-dfa>

### **3 April 2017: China, ASEAN make progress on framework deal on disputed sea, Philippines says**

"ASEAN and China were more than halfway through identifying the contents. "From a scale of 1-10, we are at the upper level. Remember, we were starting from zero in January."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-idUSKBN1760RL?il=0>

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

### **26 April 2017: U.S. Admiral Sees New South China Sea Freedom of Navigation Operations**

Asked about any upcoming operations, Harris said: "I take direction and guidance from the secretary of defense and the national command authority on the conduct of those operations. I think we'll be doing some -- soon."

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-04-26/us-admiral-sees-new-south-china-sea-freedom-of-navigation-operations>

### **19 April 2017: G7 ministers call for implementation of Hague ruling on South China Sea**

"We consider the July 12, 2016 award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal under the UNCLOS as a useful basis for further efforts to peacefully resolve disputes in the South China Sea," the G7 joint communique read.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/04/19/1691830/g7-ministers-call-implementation-hague-ruling-south-china-sea>

### **14 April 2017: USS Stethem conducting operations in S. China Sea – Navy**

The Arleigh Burke-class, guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) is "conducting routine operations" in the South China Sea, according to a Friday press release from the US Navy.

<https://www.rt.com/news/384793-stethem-south-china-sea/>

### **5 April 2017: US envoy Kamala: Speak to one another on South China Sea disputes**

Overlapping claims in the South China Sea must be resolved through existing international laws, said US ambassador Kamala Shirin Lakhdar.

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/04/05/us-envoy-kamala-all-countries-must-talk-to-each-other-on-south-china-sea/#MQxoLRuIV3aZ63QL.99>

### **2 April 2017: Malaysia, India Urge Nations To Resolve South China Sea Dispute**

They also emphasised that all parties should show utmost respect to UNCLOS.

<http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/malaysia-india-urge-nations-to-resolve-south-china-sea-dispute-1676194>