

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 53
August 2017

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

28 August 2017: China To Build Methane Hydrate Venture In South China Sea

The project, a joint venture between the Chinese Ministry of Land and Resources and the China National Petroleum Corporation, makes use of “flammable ice” found in the South China Sea.

<http://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/China-To-Build-Methane-Hydrate-Venture-In-South-China-Sea.html>

26 August 2017: Taiwan hits back after Vietnam blasts S China Sea military drills

"We have the right to conduct regular drills," Taiwanese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said.

<http://www.qatar-tribune.com/news-details/id/82737>

24 August 2017: Vietnam objects to Taiwan's live-fire drill in Truong Sa

"Vietnam resolutely objects and requests Taiwan not to repeat similar actions," the spokesperson noted.

<http://english.vov.vn/politics/vietnam-objects-to-taiwans-livefire-drill-in-truong-sa-357177.vov>

22 August 2017: Duterte: Why should I defend West PH Sea sandbar?

"Why should I defend a sandbar and kill the Filipinos because of a sandbar?" said Duterte. He also ruled out filing a diplomatic protest, as suggested by Carpio.

21 August 2017: Carpio sounds alarm on latest Chinese intrusion

China is now virtually occupying a new feature in the South China Sea, the Justice said.

<http://www.malaya.com.ph/business-news/opinion/justice-carpio-sounds-alarm-latest-chinese-intrusion>

17 August 2017: Philippine President approves joint South China Sea project

"It's a directive of the President," said Cayetano.

<http://gbtimes.com/world/philippine-president-approves-joint-south-china-sea-project>

16 August 2017: Cayetano: Presence of Chinese vessels near Pag-asa Island means nothing

The presence should not necessarily cause alarm or concern to the Philippine government, said Cayetano.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/622117/cayetano-presence-of-chinese-vessels-near-pag-asa-island-means-nothing/story/>

16 August 2017: Cayetano chides critics of China presence in disputed sea

"How many times have you asked me, why are American ships there?," he said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/17/17/cayetano-chides-critics-of-china-presence-in-disputed-sea>

15 August 2017: Philippines and China aims to begin drilling next year

"We can come up with a commercial deal that is better than Malampaya in the disputed areas," Cayetano said, referring to an existing natural gas project off Palawan island between the government and Chevron.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-southchinasea-philippines-china-idUKKCN1AV0VT?il=0>

15 August 2017: Government vessel prevented by China to access sandbars near Pag-asa

A government ship was prevented by Chinese fishing vessels from going near the sand bars, Alejano said.

<https://www.update.ph/2017/08/government-vessel-prevented-by-china-to-access-sandbars-near-pag-asa-alejano/20163>

15 August 2017: Chinese ships found near Philippine-administered island in South China Sea

Five Chinese ships were found near Thitu Island, a Filipino lawmaker said.

<https://coconuts.co/manila/news/chinese-ships-found-near-philippine-administered-island-south-china-sea/>

15 August 2017: Philippines says China agrees on no new expansion in South China Sea

"The Chinese will not occupy new features in the South China Sea nor they are going to build structures in Scarborough Shoal," Lorenzana told lawmakers.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-southchinasea-philippines-china-idUKKCN1AV0VT?il=0>

14 August 2017: Drilling ship leaves Vietnam oil block after China row

The drilling ship arrived in waters off the Malaysian port of Labuan.

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/drilling-ship-leaves-vietnam-oil-block-after-china-row>

12 August 2017: Palace: No objection to US destroyer's passage near disputed reef

"In the words of [Defense] Secretary [Delfin] Lorenzana, the Philippines has no objection," Abella said.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/159656/global-nation-philippines-american-warship-west-philippine-sea-uss-john-s-mccain-mischief-reef#ixzz4pcsNr8l2>

12 August 2017: Beijing is using underwater drones in the South China Sea to show off its might

The torpedo-shaped vehicles will remain underwater for a month.

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/china-uses-underwater-drones-in-south-china-sea.html>

11 August 2017: Chinese military tells US ship 10 times to turn around

China's foreign ministry said: "The US destroyer's actions have violated Chinese and international laws, as well as severely harmed China's sovereignty and security.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/11/south-china-sea-chinese-military-tells-us-ship-to-turn-around-10-times>

11 August 2017: China's land reclamation continues in disputed sea, U.S. think tank says

China's reclamation work did not end in mid-2015.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/10/17/chinas-land-reclamation-continues-in-disputed-sea-us-think-tank-says>

8 August 2017: Philippines did not want to include reclamation and militarization in Joint Communiqué

"They (China) are not reclaiming land anymore. So why will you put it again this year?," Cayetano said.

The DFA chief also agreed with China's proposal to have "no major disruption from outside parties" before they could announce the official start of the COC consultation.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1005382>

8 August 2017: Philippines spurns advice over South China Sea row

The Philippines does not want to hear from other countries, including Japan, Australia and the United States, what to do. "The problem is between China and the Philippines", Cayetano said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/08/17/philippines-spurns-advice-over-south-china-sea-row>

7 August 2017: China Cancels Vietnam Meeting Over South China Sea Spat

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi canceled a scheduled one-on-one meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart due to a spat over the South China Sea, according to people familiar with the situation.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-07/china-said-to-cancel-vietnam-meeting-over-south-china-sea-spat>

3 August 2017: Repsol says drilling suspended on Vietnam oil block disputed by China

"Operations have been suspended," Repsol's chief financial officer, Miguel Martinez said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-vietnam-idUSKBN1AI27D>

3 August 2017: Philippine PXP Energy eager to resume South China Sea drilling

"We should start doing that because all of the pronouncements that appear to have been made by both China and the Philippines are moving in a positive direction," Chairman Manuel Pangilinan said.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/r-philippine-pxp-energy-eager-to-resume-south-china-sea-drilling-2017-8/?IR=T>

2 August 2017: Malaysia, China enhance military collaboration to maintain peace in South China Sea

Zhang Zhongmin said that in the future China is willing to be even more open and collaborate with Malaysia to enrich collaboration level by maintaining peace in South China Sea together.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2017/08/02/malaysia-china-enhance-military-collaboration-to-maintain-peace-in-south-china-sea.html>

1 August 2017: Xi says China will never permit loss of 'any piece' of land

President Xi issued a tough line, saying China will never permit the loss of "any piece" of its land.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/919418/xi-says-china-will-never-permit-loss-of-any-piece-of-land#ixzz4oeUfP6oC>

1 August 2017: Vietnam criticises China's cinema on disputed South China Sea island

"That action by China has infringed Vietnam's sovereignty over Hoang Sa Archipelago, violated international law and cannot alter Vietnam's sovereignty over this archipelago," Hang said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/vietnam-criticises-china-s-cinema-on-disputed-south-china-sea-island-9082992>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

24 August 2017: Indonesia, Vietnam mend ties after talks to settle South China Sea disputes

The two leaders agreed to make Asean the engine of peace and stability in the region. The two countries also agreed to speed up negotiations on the limits of the EEZs. Vietnam also supports Indonesia's cause to achieve a sustainable fishery by jointly curbing illegal fishing, Mr Joko said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-vietnam-settle-recurring-maritime-standoffs-in-south-china-sea>

24 August 2017: Vietnam calls for Southeast Asian unity amid South China Sea tension

"Do not let ASEAN become a playing card for the competition among major countries," Trong said.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/vietnam-calls-for-southeast-asian-unity-amid-south-china-sea-tension-9152728>

28 August 2017: PH hosts Asean-China forum on South China Sea cooperation

In a statement, the agency said the event will "build on the gains that have been achieved so far in efforts to build peace and stability in the South China Sea."

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/160050/ph-hosts-asean-china-forum-south-china-sea-cooperation#ixzz4r8lRqi2R>

10 August 2017: Cambodia's FM defends position on South China Sea

Sokhonn said each country would like to add their own "ingredients" but that in the end the soup had to be palatable to all ASEAN member states. "But when the one who likes chili and puts a lot of chili, what about the country who does not like chili, should they agree with it? The Vietnamese had requested a lot of words to be strong," he said.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2017/08/10/cambodias-fm-defends-position-on-south-china-sea.html>

8 August 2017: No outside interference wanted for COC negotiation: Chinese FM

As to the paragraphs on the South China Sea in the ASEAN Joint Communiqué, Wang noted that the section was significantly shortened in this year's document.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-08/08/c_136506933.htm

8 August 2017: Philippines did not want to include land reclamation and militarization activities in ASEAN Joint Communiqué

"They (China) are not reclaiming land anymore. So why will you put it again this year?," Cayetano said. The DFA chief also agreed with China's proposal to have "no major disruption from outside parties" before they could announce the official start of the COC consultation.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1005382>

8 August 2017: Philippines says China wanted non-legally binding South China Sea code

Alan Peter Cayetano said some countries wanted the South China Sea code to be legally binding, and China preferred the less forceful "binding". He said all parties realized it was better to drop all mention of it from the framework and move forward.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asean-philippines-southchinasea-idUSKBN1AO1LW>

7 August 2017: ASEAN overcomes communique impasse, urges non-militarisation in South China Sea

The communique takes a stronger position than an earlier, unpublished draft, which was a watered-down version of one issued last year in Laos. The agreed text "emphasized the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint". It said that after extensive discussions, concerns were voiced by some members about land reclamation "and activities in the area which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tension and may undermine peace, security and stability".

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asean-philippines-southchinasea-state-idUSKBN1AM0IR>

6 August 2017: Chinese official says talks for a South China Sea pact can start this year if "outside parties" won't cause disruption

Chinese official says talks for COC can start this year if "outside parties" won't cause disruption.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/chinese-official-says-talks-for-a-south-china-sea-pact-can-start-this-year-if-outside-parties-wont-cause-disruption/2017/08/06/a76405c4-7a85-11e7-b2b1-aeba62854dfa_story.html?utm_term=.ce8d7125d58a

6 August 2017: Southeast Asia, China adopt framework for crafting code on South China Sea

All parties say the framework is only an outline for how the code will be established.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-asean-philippines-southchinasea-idUSKBN1AM0AY?il=0>

6 August 2017: ASEAN block wavers in support of Vietnam over South China Sea

The ministers delayed releasing one after their annual meeting failed to reach a consensus.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/asean-block-wavers-in-support-of-vietnam-over-south-china-sea-20170806-gxq7rv.html>

5 August 2017: Asean foreign ministers endorse framework of South China Sea code at Asean talks

The framework meant to prevent conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea from erupting into violence.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/vietnam-challenges-china-over-south-china-sea-at-asean-talks>

1 August 2017: DFA: Framework on South China Sea code might skip Hague ruling

"I would think it's something more generic so there's no specific mention (of the ruling)," Bolivar said.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/08/01/1723821/dfa-framework-south-china-sea-code-might-skip-hague-ruling>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

27 August 2017: US to continue South China Sea operation despite naval mishap in Singapore waters

US Pacific Air Forces commander General Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy said the recent naval accident in Southeast Asia will not prevent US from exercising freedom of navigations.

<http://www.ibtimes.sg/us-continue-south-china-sea-operation-despite-naval-mishap-singapore-waters-14591>

20 August 2017: PH Navy gets radar system from U.S.

"It is expected to enhance the Philippine Navy's capability in maritime intelligence surveillance reconnaissance by effectively detecting maritime and air traffic within the country's coastal waters using sensors," said Lincuna.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/179332-philippine-navy-tars-radar-maritime-surveillance>

10 August 2017: US destroyer challenges China's claims in South China Sea

USS John S. McCain traveled close to Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, among a string of islets, reefs and shoals.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/us-destroyer-challenges-chinas-claims-in-south-china-sea>

8 August 2017: Japan, China in testy exchange over Tokyo's South China Sea remarks

Japan and China had a "frank and candid" exchange of views during their bilateral meeting, according to Ando.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/08/08/1726712/japan-china-testy-exchange-over-tokyos-south-china-sea-remarks>

7 August 2017: Australia, US, Japan call for South China Sea code to be legally binding

Australia, the United States and Japan have urged South-East Asia and China to ensure that a code of conduct on the South China Sea they have committed to draw up will be legally binding.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-07/australia,-us,-japan-want-legally-binding-south-china-sea-rules/8782934>

2 August 2017: China accuses U.S. of 'serious provocation' as Navy destroyer sails near disputed island

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Stethem had "trespassed" there, entering the waters "without China's approval."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-navy-destroyer-south-china-sea-20170702-story.html>