

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 54
September 2017

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

29 September 2017: Malaysia to Get New China Security Equipment

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi disclosed that he had agreed in principle to acquire high-tech equipment from China following his engagements with Chinese counterparts this week.
<http://thediplomat.com/2017/09/malaysia-to-get-new-china-security-equipment/>

26 September 2017: China, Vietnam hold talks on maintaining border stability

China and Vietnam, who have clashed repeatedly over rival South China Sea territorial claims, held two days of talks between leading military officials aimed at maintaining border stability.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/09/25/recent-developments-surrounding-south-china-sea.html>

25 September 2017: Philippines Promises Vietnam a Full Investigation Into Fishermen's Deaths

"We would like to offer our sympathies over the unfortunate loss of life and give you our assurance that we will conduct a fair and thorough investigation," Mr. Cayetano told Mr. Minh.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/world/asia/philippines-vietnamese-fishermen.html?mcubz=0>

24 September 2017: Philippine Navy men kill 2 Vietnamese fishermen

Two Vietnamese fishermen were killed by members of the Philippine Navy in an alleged encounter in waters off Bolinao, Pangasinan.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/627006/philippine-navy-men-kill-2-vietnamese-fishermen-in-pangasinan/story/>

21 September 2017: Beijing Adopts New Tactic for S. China Sea Claims

Ma, the Foreign Ministry official, announced that China is asserting sovereignty over the Four Sha through several legal claims. He stated the area is China's historical territorial waters and also part of China's 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone and extended continental shelf.

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/beijing-adopts-new-tactic-s-china-sea-claims/>

21 September 2017: Beijing hits back at freedom of navigation operations

"For some time now, some countries have used the pretext of freedom of navigation to bring their planes and fleets near the South China Sea," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular news briefing. "Actually, I think this behaviour has threatened the sovereignty of South China Sea countries."

<http://www.todayonline.com/chinaindia/china/beijing-hits-back-freedom-navigation-operations>

20 September 2017: Chinese, Vietnamese Communist parties have 'shared destiny', says Beijing

China and Vietnam's Communist parties have a "shared destiny" and there is great potential for economic cooperation, a senior Beijing official said on a visit to Vietnam.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2111944/chinese-vietnamese-communist-parties-have-shared>

18 September 2017: China research vessel collects first-hand deep-sea data

Chinese research vessel Kexue successfully collected a deep-sea probe from the South China Sea Monday, which brought back 186 gigabytes of first-hand data.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-09/18/c_136618518.htm

14 September 2017: China and Brunei pledge closer cooperation

Sultan Bolkuh said his country supports the Belt and Road Initiative.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-and-brunei-pledge-closer-cooperation-in-infrastructure-health-and-defence>

13 September 2017: Chinese sub docks at Malaysian port for second time this year

"This is part of our efforts to enhance defense diplomacy and strengthening bilateral relations," RMN chief Admiral Ahmad Kamarulzaman Ahmad Badaruddin said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/chinese-sub-docks-at-malaysian-port-for-second-time-this-year>

7 September 2017: Vietnam responds to the US patrol plan

Responding to the US plan to conduct more regular patrols in the South China Sea, Vietnamese foreign ministry's spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang said that Vietnam respects navigation and overflight rights and freedoms of states in accordance with international law.

<https://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/the-gioi/viet-nam-phan-hoi-ve-ke-hoach-tuan-tra-bien-dong-cua-my-3638207.html>

7 September 2017: China says it has overlapping claims with Indonesia

Delivered in a letter to the Indonesian embassy in Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry protest asserted that the two countries have overlapping claims in the South China Sea and that renaming the area will not alter that fact.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/china-drags-indonesia-south-china-sea-morass/>

5 September 2017: China's CNOOC to explore new South China Sea block with SK Innovation

Block 17/08 is located in the Pearl River Mouth Basin and covers an area of 466 square kilometers, with water depths ranging between 100 meters and 130 meters. CNOOC, according to its website, is looking for foreign partners to explore and develop 22 blocks this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-cnooc-sk-innovation/chinas-cnooc-to-explore-new-south-china-sea-block-with-sk-innovation-idUSKCN1BG1FN>

5 September 2017: Vietnam protests over Chinese live-fire drills in South China Sea

Vietnam on Tuesday issued a strong condemnation of Chinese military live-fire exercises in the disputed South China Sea, amid rising tension between the two countries.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-vietnam-china/vietnam-protests-over-chinese-live-fire-drills-in-south-china-sea-idUSKCN1BG20H>

5 September 2017: Sandy Cay incident off West PHL Sea 'successfully addressed' — Chinese envoy

Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua said "that issue has been successfully addressed through diplomatic channels."

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/624540/sandy-cay-incident-off-west-phl-sea-successfully-addressed-chinese-envoy/story/>

2 September 2017: China demands Indonesia rescind decision to rename part of South China Sea

China said Indonesia's move to change an "internationally accepted name" results in the "complication and expansion of the dispute, and affects peace and stability"

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-demands-indonesia-rescind-decision-to-rename-part-of-south-9179992>

1 September 2017: China urges Vietnam to be calm and rational about Beijing's drills in South China Sea

"The relevant sea is under China's jurisdiction, we hope the relevant side can calmly and rationally view it," Hua Chunying said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-urges-vietnam-to-be-calm-and-rational-about-beijings-drills-in-south-china-sea>

1 September 2017: Vietnam protests over Chinese military drill in South China Sea

Vietnam was deeply concerned about drills in the region of the Gulf of Tonkin, at the north end of the South China Sea, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang said in a statement, but did not make clear what drills were being referred to.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-vietnam-china/vietnam-protests-over-chinese-military-drill-in-south-china-sea-idUSKCN1BB2CG>

1 September 2017: Philippines willing to be soft on China: Cayetano

"So fishermen are a good example, from fishing not being allowed and from intimidation by different navies now there's a tentative fishing agreement and we're starting to move to have the coast guard than the navy ships there," Mr Cayetano said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-willing-to-be-soft-on-china-for-peaceful-resolution-of-competing-south>

1 September 2017: China demands Vietnam and Indonesia to halt maritime delimitation

Answering a question on whether China demanded Indonesia to stop maritime delimitation talks with Vietnam, the spokesperson said “we hope that relevant countries could bear in mind the broad picture of bilateral relations and peace and stability in the South China Sea, and act with prudence”.

http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1488873.shtml

31 August 2017: Malaysia sets fire to illegal foreign fishing boat

The boat was set on fire at sea off the coast of the northern state of Kelantan, the first time the Malaysian authorities have resorted to such action, said the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). It did not specify the boat’s country of origin.

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/malaysia-sets-fire-illegal-foreign-fishing-boat>

30 August 2017: China vows to defend its rights on path to peaceful development

“Any foreign country should not expect us to trade our core benefits away, do not expect us to accept any damage to our territorial rights, security or the results of our development,” the foreign minister said.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2109003/china-vows-defend-its-rights-path-peaceful-development>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

28 September 2017: Asean defense ministers to issue ‘unified statement’ on South China Sea

The defense ministers are expected to come up with a “unified statement” on the South China Sea in a meeting next month, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/934046/asean-defense-ministers-to-issue-unified-statement-on-south-china-sea-asean-lorenzana-south-china-sea#ixzz4u1c5hOBp>

18 September 2017: China ties a priority when Singapore is Asean chair: PM Lee

Alluding to the need for rationality and restraint on thorny issues such as the South China Sea dispute, PM Lee said that frictions in the relationship will only affect mutually beneficial cooperation.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-ties-a-priority-when-singapore-is-asean-chair-pm-lee>

6 September 2017: Indonesia, Japan deepen talks on joint development in South China Sea

"There will be better surveillance, tighter detection," Poerwadi said after a meeting between Indonesia's Maritime and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti, and Hiroto Izumi, special adviser to the Japanese prime minister.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Indonesia-Japan-deepen-talks-on-joint-development-in-South-China-Sea>

1 September 2017: Asean, China meet to set stage for negotiations on South China Sea Code of Conduct

DFA said the COC would be tackled during the 22nd meeting of the Asean-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/asean-china-begin-meetings-to-set-stage-for-negotiations-for-south-china-sea-code-of>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

28 September 2017: Australia, Japan and India Look to South China Sea

Tokyo has just announced that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held an exclusive security meeting with India’s leader Narendra Modi to finalize a maritime security cooperation deal in response to the growing naval presence of China in the South China Sea.

<http://maritime-executive.com/article/australia-japan-and-india-look-to-south-china-sea>

21 September 2017: Abe, Macron agree to pursue further security cooperation, rule of law at sea

Regarding the South China Sea, Tokyo and Paris will “continue to work in close coordination to maintain an international order based on the rule of law,” the official said, in an apparent reference to China’s expansionary maritime activities.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/09/21/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-france-pursue-security-cooperation-rule-law-sea/#.WcSby7IjGUK>

19 September 2017: Australian Warships Sent to South China Sea for Military Exercises

A small armada of Australian warships is headed north towards the South China Sea in a gritty show of resolve, but the Turnbull government has not made a final decision on just how close our navy will get to the contested waters.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/turnbull-orders-australian-warships-to-head-to-south-china-sea-for-military-exercises-drawing-criticism-in-chinese-media/news-story/df9779c3572ae0fbd26df3057642739f>

14 September 2017: India, Japan Drop Mention of South China Sea in Joint Statement

When asked about the omission, foreign secretary S. Jaishankar claimed that since Indo-Pacific was mentioned, the South China Sea dispute was part of it. "If you mention full sets, sub-sets are covered," he said. India's top diplomat said that it was a principled position taken by India and not limited to a specific geography.

<https://thewire.in/177653/modi-abe-meet-india-japan-drop-mention-of-south-china-sea-in-joint-statement/>

2 September 2017: 'US planning more regular South China Sea patrols'

The Pentagon is planning to conduct more regular patrols in the South China Sea -- as many as two to three a month -- to assert freedom of navigation in disputed waters claimed by China, the Wall Street Journal reported.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/us-planning-more-regular-south-china-sea-patrols-report-9179968>