

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE – AUGUST 2013

PHILIPPINES V. CHINA ARBITRATION

30 August 2013: China : Arbitration has no legal ground

"The arbitration request initiated by the Philippines concerning the dispute of the South China sea has no legal ground", Huang Huikang, a senior Chinese diplomat, said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua on Thursday.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/807549.shtml#UiErwrwmyNg>

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

23 September 2013: PH, China in battle of photos on Scarborough shoal

Defense Department Spokesman Peter Paul Galvez and Philippine Navy Spokesperson Lieutenant Commodore Gregory Fabic both declined to comment on China's photos and referred the matter to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/focus/09/22/13/ph-china-battle-photos-scarborough-shoal>

22 September 2013: Blueprint drawn for new pier in Spratlys

The Coast Guard Administration (CGA) and the Ministry of National Defense (MND) have completed a location survey for building a new wharf on the Taiwan-controlled Taiping Island in the South China Sea. The pier will be able to accommodate 3,000-ton warships and rescue vessels, according to the report.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/atod/201309190022.aspx>

17 September 2013: DFA focuses on code of conduct, arbitration case in West PH Sea

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Tuesday that it was shifting its focus to the establishment of a code of conduct in the disputed West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) and the arbitration case with China before the international Permanent Court of Arbitration. DFA Spokesman Raul Hernandez said this when asked in a press conference about the planned filing of another diplomatic protest against China for the concrete blocks it placed near Bajo de Masinloc (Panatag shoal or Scarborough shoal).

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/85835/dfa-focuses-on-code-of-conduct-arbitration-case-in-west-ph-sea#ixzz2fDhCX7F3>

16 September 2013: China urges the Philippines to stop provocations

China on Monday said the Philippines should stop acting in a provocative manner on the issue of Huangyan Island and its surrounding waters as they are inherently Chinese territory. Hong's comments came after media reports said the Philippines is considering to remove the concrete blocks on the island, which they claimed were built by China to expand territory ahead of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-09/16/content_16974319.htm

15 September 2013: Top China general orders navy to speed improvement

The official Xinhua News Agency said Fan made the remarks Thursday during an inspection tour of a navy unit in Guangdong province, which lies on the disputed South China Sea.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/sep/14/as-china-south-china-sea/>

12 September 2013: Malaysian FM cites stronger, enduring ties between China, ASEAN

On the South China Sea, Anifah said issues concerning the overlapping territorial and maritime disputes should be managed calmly, reasonably and rationally through dialogue and negotiation.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2013-09/12/c_132714567.htm

12 September 2013: FM dismisses Philippine accusations

The Philippines' claim that China has laid 30 concrete building blocks on Huangyan Island is a "sheer fabrication", the Chinese Foreign Ministry reiterated on Wednesday.

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2013-09/12/content_30004548.htm

10 September 2013: Philippines mulls removing "Chinese" blocks at shoal

Philippine officials are considering removing concrete blocks allegedly installed by China on a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, the Filipino navy chief said on Tuesday.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/philippines-mulls/808916.html>

6 September 2013: China asks Philippines not to create trouble in S China Sea

China on Thursday asked the Philippines to stop making trouble over a contested island in the South China Sea and create conditions for talks to resolve the maritime dispute.

"If the Philippines really care about the COC (code of conduct), it should take real actions to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/05/c_132694978.htm

6 September 2013: PH calls home envoy amid new China sea dispute

The Philippines has called home its ambassador to China for consultations, the foreign department said Thursday amid fresh tensions in a long-running maritime territorial dispute.

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-filipino/09/05/13/ph-calls-home-envoy-amid-new-china-sea-dispute>

5 September 2013: China Denies Philippine Claim of Construction in Disputed Area

China rejected on Wednesday the Philippines' allegation that Beijing laid concrete blocks on Huangyan Island in the South China Sea. Manila's claim is "not in accordance with the facts", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said on Wednesday. "Given the current situation, Chinese government vessels continue regular patrols in the waters off Huangyan Island to safeguard the sovereignty and order of the waters. "It is unquestionable that this is China's lawful right and in China's interest," Hong said.

<http://www.ecns.cn/2013/09-05/79878.shtml>

5 September 2013: PH to file protest over China's fresh violations in disputed sea

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) plans to file a diplomatic protest over reports of fresh violations by China in the South China Sea.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/84903/ph-to-file-protest-over-chinas-fresh-violations-in-disputed-sea#ixzz2e0oTDLsV>

3 September 2013: Philippines accuses China of building on disputed shoal

The Philippines accused China on Tuesday of laying concrete blocks on a small group of reefs and rocky outcrops within its territory, the latest escalation in a hostile maritime dispute.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/se-asia/story/philippines-accuses-china-building-disputed-shoal-20130903>

3 September 2013: Premier Li sees opportunities despite dispute

China and Vietnam should properly handle sea disputes and convert challenges into cooperation opportunities, Premier Li Keqiang told his Vietnamese counterpart on Monday. Nguyen Tan Dung echoed Li's proposal for properly handling maritime issues, and he said Hanoi has always placed the highest diplomatic priority on the relationship with Beijing.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2013-09/03/content_16938900.htm

3 September 2013: Philippines Rejects Chinese Demands for Aquino's Visit

Philippine President Benigno Aquino III canceled a trip to a Chinese trade fair after Beijing demanded that he first withdraw a legal complaint over disputed territories in the South China Sea, Filipino officials said Monday.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/manila-china-set-impossible-conditions-visit-20133437>

3 September 2013: Taiwan Plans New Infrastructure for Disputed South China Sea Claim

Officials in Taipei announced plans to spend more than \$100 million on a dock that could receive warships. Its plans call for upgrading an airstrip on the same island, which is the largest in the sea's Spratly archipelago. Taiwan is moving to assert itself.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/taiwan-plans-new-infrastructure-for-disputed-south-china-sea-claim/1741463.html>

30 August 2013: Vietnam to Renaming Its Coast Guard Amid South China Sea Tension

Amid rising tension in the South China Sea, Vietnam has decided to enhance its maritime law enforcement agency by changing the name into Vietnam Coast Guard from Oct. 12 to be consistent with international practices and to boost international cooperation.

The agency, which was set up in 1998 as Vietnam Marine Police, will remain under control of the Ministry of Defense. Prior to 1998, the Vietnamese Navy and border guard forces were in charge of regulating the country's sovereign waters.

<http://stream.wsj.com/story/latest-headlines/SS-2-63399/SS-2-311065/>

30 August 2013: China, Vietnam pledge to resolve dispute in South China Sea

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Binh Minh in Beijing on Wednesday when they pledged to resolve the dispute between the two countries in the South China Sea.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-08/28/c_125269531.htm

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

20 September 2013: Natalegawa: Indonesia Wants to 'Facilitate Conversation' on Tense South China Sea

Natalegawa called for "patience," and said Indonesia would like to take a leadership role in the region.

"Indonesia is not a claimant state and therefore it has the capacity to try to facilitate some kind of a conversation, but we'll take it one step at a time," he said.

<http://asiasociety.org/new-york/natalegawa-indonesia-wants-facilitate-conversation-tense-south-china-sea>

16 September 2013: Asean, China to speed up code of conduct

"This meeting has set a clearer process that the COC will be on the agenda at all meetings of the senior officials," Mr Sihasak said. "The SOM will report the progress of discussions to the ASEAN foreign ministers and the ministers will report to the ASEAN leaders. China would be committed to discussing the issue at all times and there would be continuity in discussions, he said. The Joint Working Group and the SOM will meet more frequently to keep the momentum going, he added. The SOM meeting yesterday did not touch on the content of the COC, but China and Asean exchanged views about their goal to establish the code.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/369881/asean-china-set-to-speed-up-code-of-conduct>

16 September 2013: China to promote maritime cooperation with ASEAN countries

China has proposed a maritime emergency help line among China and ASEAN, according to a Foreign Ministry press release. China also proposed a joint maritime search and rescue sandbox. A working plan for implementing the DOC from 2013 to 2014 was approved at the meetings. There were consultations on a more detailed Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) under the framework of the DOC, and agreement to continue to push forward COC development and authorize the Joint Working Group to hold concrete consultations. They also agreed to take steps to gather a celebrity expert group for the COC development.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/15/c_132722676.htm

14 September 2013: China, ASEAN officials begin talks on code of conduct in S. China Sea

Working-level officials of the two sides will discuss details of the proposed code of conduct on the first day, and forward their conclusions to senior officials of the two sides for consideration and approval on the second. According to ASEAN officials, the meetings will also focus on the implementation of the nonbinding Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, adopted by the two sides in 2002.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/130914/china-asean-officials-begin-talks-code-conduct-s-china>

11 September 2013: Aquino: ASEAN navy meeting to solidify ties, protect common seas

Amid a maritime dispute in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), the Philippine Navy is hosting the annual Asean Navy Chiefs Meeting, an activity which aims to further enhance the degree of cooperation and interoperability among the navies in the region.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/85371/aquino-asean-navy-meeting-to-solidify-ties-protect-common-seas#ixzz2eYrSB6et>

4 September 2013: Li Keqiang offers Asean cautious backing for South China Sea accord

Premier Li Keqiang tells Asean leaders China supports talks on Code of Conduct for South China Sea through 'friendly consultations'.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1302572/premier-li-keqiang-says-china-wants-south-china-sea-solution>

4 September 2013: South China Sea disputes should not affect China-ASEAN relations: Premier Li

South China Sea disputes should not and will not affect relations between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said Tuesday.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/808376.shtml#.Uibz67y9wpE>

30 August 2013: Malaysia Splits With Asean Claimants on China Sea Threat

Malaysia is not worried about how often Chinese ships patrol the areas it claims in the waters, Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said in an interview in Brunei yesterday. Chinese Navy ships in March visited James Shoal off Malaysia, near where Royal Dutch Shell Plc (RDSA) and Petroliam Nasional Bhd. have oil and gas operations. Malaysia could consider collaborating on the development of oil and gas resources with China in the area, Hishammuddin said. "Provided our friends in Asean know, those who have an interest in the region know, and if they want to object, I would like to know why?" Hishammuddin said. "If they're just objecting for the sake of objecting, that doesn't make sense."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-08-28/malaysia-splits-with-other-asean-claimants-over-china-sea-threat.html>

30 August 2013: China can help guide critical COC talks

Senior officials from China and ASEAN will reportedly focus on agreeing to a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea in Suzhou, China's Jiangsu Province next month. Judging by official statements, China has always been stressing a gradual process to reach a COC. But the upcoming negotiations can be considered as a more active approach taken by the Chinese side in the goal to reach an agreement.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/807117.shtml#.Uh8AlrwyNg>

30 August 2013: No Maritime Breakthrough Likely During ASEAN-China Talks

Tensions over the South China Sea are the backdrop of this week's meeting between foreign ministers from China and the 10 members of ASEAN. The issue is expected to be a major focus of the agenda in Beijing. It is also high on the agenda in Brunei, where regional defense chiefs are meeting with their counterparts from China, the U.S. and other countries. But a breakthrough is seen as unlikely.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/no-maritime-breakthrough-likely-during-asean-china-talks/1738540.html>

MAJOR POWERS AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

26 September 2013: Japan holds Int'l seminar on maritime issues

Japan is holding an International Maritime Seminar, which the Kyodo news agency says aims to contain China's rising influence. Many countries neighbouring the South China Sea, including Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia are taking part.

<http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20130925/103444.shtml>

17 September 2013: Philippines, US to hold war games near South China Sea

The annual exercises, which involve 2,300 marines from both sides, will take place amid the backdrop of ongoing negotiations to further increase an American military presence and the deployment of its hardware in the former US colony.

http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/philippines-us-to-hold-war-games-near-south-china-sea_877093.html

16 September 2013: PLA's drills seen as response to India's infrastructure moves

Several military commands of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), including those handling the western section of the border with India and the South China Sea, have in recent days conducted a series of high-profile live-ammunition drills, according to State media reports.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/world/plas-drills-seen-as-response-to-indias-infrastructure-moves/article5138879.ece>

16 September 2013: Japanese defense minister to visit Vietnam for talks on maritime cooperation

The meeting comes amid China's growing activities in the East Sea, internationally known as the South China Sea, and territorial disputes with Vietnam and its dispute with Japan in the East China Sea.

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20130914-japan-defense-minister-to-visit-vietnam-for-maritime-cooperation.aspx>

5 September 2013: South China Sea Exercises Joined by LCS1 'USS Freedom'

The littoral combat ship 'USS Freedom' (LCS 1) is participating in the Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercise with several regional navies, including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. ¹SEP

<http://www.marinelink.com/news/exercises-freedom-joined358320.aspx>

31 August 2013: US boosts troops in Philippines amid South China Sea tension

The United States has accelerated expansion of its military presence in the Asia-Pacific, as its defense chief on Friday reaffirmed the progress Washington and Manila have made to allow a bigger US military footprint in the Philippines.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2013-08/31/content_16933819.htm