

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATE No. 61
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ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

30 April 2018: MVP to support Duterte's 60-40 offer to China to explore South China Sea

"It's a number that's not cast in stone. It's up to the President, as well. If he's happy with 60 percent, we'll take it as a marching order," Pangilinan said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/mvp-to-support-dutertes-60-40-offer-to-china-to-explore-south-china-sea/>

29 April 2018: Duterte offers 60-40 deal with China Joint South China Sea exploration planned

"I said maybe we give you a better deal 60-40. So, you cannot go against anybody. You cannot fight it but President Xi (Jinping) is a friend. We'll share with you and nobody has done that to the Philippines," he added.

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2018/04/27/duterte-offers-60-40-deal-with-china-joint-south-china-sea-exploration-planned/>

29 April 2018: Vietnam praises PH in handling of sea row

Roque quoted Nguyễn as having said: "We [Vietnam] will learn from his [President Duterte's] handling of China. The President handled China very well." He said that Nguyễn's remarks might open the possibilities of cooperation between the Philippines and Vietnam in portions of the South China Sea.

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2018/04/27/vietnam-praises-ph-in-handling-of-sea-row/>

28 April 2018: Duterte talked about South China Sea arbitral ruling with Vietnam leader – Palace

Roque said it was Phuc who brought up the July 12, 2016 arbitral ruling in favor of the Philippines, but that Duterte's response did not disappoint. "He made it very clear to a head of state that he recognizes the gains of the arbitral award and that he will refer to the arbitral award in due course".

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/04/27/Duterte-South-China-Sea-arbitral-ruling-Vietnam.html>

26 April 2018: Beijing: Canada Senate motion on South China Sea stirs 'troubles'

A nonbinding motion by Canada's Senate calling for an end to Chinese actions in the disputed South China Sea is irresponsible and will "stir up troubles," a Chinese embassy spokesman said.

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/04/26/18/beijing-canada-senate-motion-on-south-china-sea-stirs-troubles>

26 April 2018: Philippines studying move on China monument in South China Sea

The Philippines' presidential palace has opted to say little for now about China's recent activities in the South China Sea, including its erection of a monument on Fiery Cross Reef and landing military planes on another reef within the Philippines' territory in the strategic waterway.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-studying-move-on-china-monument-in-south-china-sea>

24 April 2018: China unveils monument to South China Sea island building

In a brief report, the People's Liberation Army Daily said the monument was unveiled on Fiery Cross Reef on the Spratly Islands, where China has built one of its airstrips and other military facilities.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-southchinesea/china-unveils-monument-to-south-china-sea-island-building-idUSKBN1HVOY8>

22 April 2018: China's claims in South China Sea 'proposed by continuous boundary for the first time'

A precise continuous line will split the Gulf of Tonkin between China and Vietnam, go south into waters claimed by Malaysia, take a U-turn to the north along the west coast of the Philippines and finish at the southeast of Taiwan.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2141323/chinas-claims-south-china-sea-proposed-continuous-boundary-first>

20 April 2018: China's Visa-Free Tourism May Lure Travelers into Disputed Sea

China's opening of its southernmost province to visa-free foreign tourism next month could make features in a nearby, widely disputed sea more accessible to curious travelers.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/china-tourism-disputed-sea/4357349.html>

19 April 2018: China's aircraft carrier formation conducts exercises in South China Sea

A ship-borne J-15 fighter jet prepares to land at the flight deck of the aircraft carrier Liaoning (Hull 16). A Chinese Navy flotilla including aircraft carrier Liaoning has conducted a series of exercises in the South China Sea since the grand naval parade last Thursday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-18/philippines-sees-sea-exploration-pact-with-china-this-year>

18 April 2018: Philippines Hopes For Sea Exploration Pact With China This Year

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano is confident that an agreement with China to jointly explore for oil and gas in South China Sea can be signed this year.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-18/philippines-sees-sea-exploration-pact-with-china-this-year>

18 April 2018: DFA 'taking diplomatic action' over Chinese military planes on South China Sea reef

"We have to take it into context of how the dialogues are being done now and we'll make sure that all the other claimants know the Philippines' position which is to totally roll back," Cayetano said.

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/04/18/dfa-south-china-sea-p.html>

18 April 2018: China military planes land on Mischief Reef

Two Xian Y-7 Chinese military transport planes were spotted on Mischief Reef. The Armed Forces of the Philippines declined to comment on the images.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/165824/china-military-planes-land-ph-reef#ixzz5D6Tccpnm>

18 April 2018: Philippines verifying photos of Chinese military aircraft on reef in South China Sea

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano told reporters the defence and military establishments had been asked to confirm the presence of the aircraft, after which the Philippines could ask China to explain it.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-verifying-photos-of-china-military-aircraft-on-reef-in-south-china-sea>

18 April 2018: China Jammed US Navy Jet's Equipment as It Patrolled South China Sea

When the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier cruised through the South China Sea last week, one US Navy pilot encountered Chinese jamming technology interfering with his plane's equipment, according to a report.

<https://sputniknews.com/military/201804181063696914-china-jammed-us-navy-jet-equipment/>

17 April 2018: China's aircraft carrier formation conducts exercises in South China Sea

The aircraft carrier formation engaged in reconnaissance, early warning, electronic countermeasures and strikes against air, surface and land targets and submarines, said a statement from the navy.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-04/17/c_137117997.htm

13 April 2018: Duterte and Xi endorse joint exploration in South China Sea

President Rodrigo Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping have agreed in principle on a joint exploration in the South China Sea, greenlighting the controversial project with their highest diplomatic endorsement.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/Duterte-and-Xi-endorse-joint-exploration-in-South-China-Sea>

12 April 2018: China's Xi presides over large-scale naval display in South China Sea

President Xi Jinping presided over the Chinese navy's largest-ever military display on Thursday, state media reported, the country's latest show of force in the disputed South China Sea.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/china-s-xi-presides-over-large-scale-naval-display-in-south-china-sea-10132498>

12 April 2018: China-Philippines Oil and Gas Exploration Deal "Near"

"We separate the two [issues]... China drew some red lines. We drew some red lines. Our red line is building in uninhabited areas including Scarborough," Cayetano said.

<http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2141497/china-philippines-oil-and-gas-exploration-deal-south-china-sea>

12 April 2018: Chinese navy stages double show of strength in South China Sea

PLA puts aircraft carrier and submarines through their paces as USS Theodore Roosevelt passes through contested waterway.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2141322/chinese-navy-stages-double-show-strength-us-strike>

11 April 2018: Philippines wants 'acceptable' joint exploration deal with China ASAP

"If it's acceptable by both sides, we could see the joint exploration done soon," Cayetano told reporters Wednesday.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/04/11/1805166/philippines-wants-acceptable-joint-exploration-deal-china-asap#eX6q0Rt5OkRVHbbT.99>

10 April 2018: China defends South China Sea military buildup

China's military deployments are "the natural right of a sovereign nation that helps safeguard national sovereignty and security," Ren Guoqiang said.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/04/10/asia-pacific/china-defends-military-buildup-disputed-south-china-sea/>

10 April 2018: China Deploys Jamming Equipment

According to U.S. military officials, China has deployed communications and radar jamming equipment to Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratly group in the South China Sea.

<https://thediplomat.com/2018/04/south-china-sea-china-deploys-jamming-equipment/>

9 April 2018: Philippines eyes joint exploration deal with China in South China Sea within months

"We're trying to see if we can achieve an agreement, hopefully within the next couple of months," Jose Santiago Santa Romana said.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-eyes-joint-exploration-deal-with-china-in-south-china-sea-within-months>

6 April 2018: Chinese navy puts on show of force in live-fire South China Sea drills

The Chinese navy launched an unprecedented week-long series of live-fire drills in the South China Sea on Thursday (April 5), which overlap with the Boao Forum for Asia in the southern island of Hainan, not far from the site of the Chinese naval exercises.

<https://www.todayonline.com/world/us-keeps-close-watch-chinese-navy-puts-show-force-live-fire-south-china-sea-drills>

4 April 2018: Duterte to pay 3rd visit to China

For the third time since assuming office, President Rodrigo Duterte will fly to China to participate in a forum which will also be attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping. On April 9 to 10, Duterte will attend the Boao Forum for Asia in China's southern Hainan province, which is a gateway to the disputed South China Sea.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/04/04/1802777/dutertes-3rd-china-trip-set-next-week#8c45aIz1j6ACs2gZ.99>

3 April 2018: In rare comment, PetroVietnam says South China Sea tension to hurt offshore operations

"The East Sea is forecast to continue to have uncertainty this year ... affecting the company's efforts to attract foreign investors to invest in its open offshore fields", PetroVietnam said on its website.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/in-rare-comment--petrovietnam-says-south-china-sea-tension-to-hurt-offshore-operations-10099214>

2 April 2018: China, Philippines seek to share South China Sea

China and the Philippines are now considering a series of resource-sharing agreements in the South China Sea, the latest development in a diplomatic warming trend that has reset the disputed maritime area's strategic calculus.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/china-philippines-seek-share-south-china-sea/>

2 April 2018: China, Vietnam promise to keep peace in South China Sea

Both sides should "properly manage differences, not expand disputes (and) respect legitimate rights and interests of the other in accordance with international law", Pham Binh Minh added.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-vietnam-promise-to-keep-peace-in-south-china-sea-10094024>

31 March 2018: Palace: No cause for alarm over Chinese presence in S. China Sea

"No cause (for) alarm as show of force is not directed at us," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque told CNN Philippines.

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/03/30/malacanang-harry-roque-china-presence-south-china-sea.html>

ASEAN AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

29 April 2018: ASEAN revives S. China Sea 'concerns'

The leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations "took note of the concerns expressed by some" leaders on the state of affairs in the South China Sea where China has been unilaterally building military bases, according to the chairman's statement of the just-concluded ASEAN summit. The revival of the word "concerns" over the South China Sea came after the association's summit in November last year, when the expression was dropped in the chairman's statement.

<http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0004406385>

29 April 2018: Indonesia wants to stay away from South China Sea conflicts

Coordinating Minister for Law Security and Political Affairs Wiranto has said Indonesia does not want to be involved in South China Sea conflict.

<http://en.republika.co.id/berita/en/national-politics/18/04/29/p7xkud414-indonesia-wants-to-stay-away-from-south-china-sea-conflicts>

28 April 2018: Not easy to finalise South China Sea code of conduct, but talks can prevent tensions: PM Lee

"The key difficulty is that whether it's binding or legally binding, once you have a document like that, you have to define what exactly you are disagreeing about, which are the areas to which it applies and what is the conduct to which it applies," he said.

<https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/not-easy-finalise-code-conduct-south-china-sea-key-have-talks-keep-tensions-down-says-pm>

8 April 2018: Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan meets Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing

Among the issues they discussed at that time were enhancing Singapore's role in the Belt and Road Initiative through the three platforms of connectivity, financial support and trilateral cooperation, and on-going discussions on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. The talks start formally this year after Asean and China agreed on a framework for the code last year.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/foreign-minister-vivian-balakrishnan-meets-chinese-counterpart-wang-yi-in-beijing>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

27 April 2018: U.S. air force says trains in vicinity of South China Sea

U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers have carried out training in the vicinity of the South China Sea a, the Air Force said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-southchinasea/us-air-force-says-trains-in-vicinity-of-south-china-sea-idUSKBN1HY02Z>

21 April 2018: Australia asserts right to South China Sea passage

The Australian Defence Department confirmed that three ships had recently travelled to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam but declined to comment on "operational details related to ships transiting the South China Sea".

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/australia-asserts-right-to-south-china-sea-passage>

19 April 2018: Australian warships 'challenged' by Chinese navy in South China Sea

One official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told the ABC exchanges with the PLA navy were polite but "robust".

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/apr/20/australian-warships-challenged-by-chinese-navy-in-south-china-sea>

17 April 2018: Vietnam and Indonesia vow to settle fishing violations in South China Sea

“In maritime and fishing cooperation, we agreed on how to conclude the ongoing issues in this regard,” she said via a translator. “We have also agreed to try together to complete the demarcation of the exclusive economic zone, because the demarcation of the EEZ between our two countries can enhance the interests of our two peoples as well as ensure security between our two countries.”

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2142126/vietnam-and-indonesia-vow-settle-fishing-violations-south>

14 April 2018: As China flexes muscle, US reaffirms support to PH with second carrier visit

The USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) brings about 5,000 of its crew members to Manila for a port visit, as China shows off its military might in the disputed waters.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/165699/china-flexes-muscle-us-reaffirms-support-ph-second-carrier-visit#ixzz5CnGk4aWb>

11 April 2018: After China's massive drill, US patrols disputed South China Sea

In a span of 20 minutes, 20 F-18 fighter jets took off and landed on the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier, in a powerful display of military precision and efficiency.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/after-chinas-massive-drill-us-patrols-disputed-south-china-sea>

7 April 2018: Important for US Navy to maintain presence in Asia-Pacific region, says commander of carrier group

It is important for the United States Navy to maintain its presence in the Asia-Pacific region to send a message that the "maritime commons" are open for free trade, the commander of Carrier Strike Group 9, Rear-Admiral Steve Koehler, has said.

<http://www.journal.com.ph/news/top-stories/duterte-explains-china-dispute-tact>

6 April 2018: S'pore and US navies embark on two-day exercise involving aircraft carrier

Conducted in the southern reaches of the South China Sea within international waters — where the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) traditionally conducts its exercises — the two-day exercise also involves the RSN's RSS Supreme and RSS Valiant, as well as the US Navy's USS Sampson and USS Bunker Hill.

<https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/spore-and-us-navies-embark-two-day-exercise-involving-aircraft-carrier>