

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATES No. 66
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ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

27 September 2018: China Slams US B-52s Fly Over South China Sea As "Provocative"

"Regarding the provocative actions of US military aircraft in the South China Sea, we are always resolutely opposed to them, and will continue to take necessary measures in order to strongly handle (this issue)," Chinese defence ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang said.

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/china-slams-us-b-52s-fly-over-south-china-sea-as-provocative-1923163>

25 September 2018: China urges Britain not to take sides on South China Sea issue

China hopes that Britain can stand by its position of not taking sides in the South China Sea and earnestly respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Chinese government's top diplomat said.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/china-south-china-sea-united-kingdom-jeremy-hunt-10754482>

21 September 2018: China rages at US for creating 'trouble' in 'peaceful' South China Sea

"This was a serious infringement upon China's sovereignty. It threatened China's security and put regional peace and stability in jeopardy," said Mr Liu Xiaoming.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1020751/WW3-news-us-china-south-china-sea-chinese-claimed-islands>

20 September 2018: Vietnam reacts to China's suggestion on joint exploration

It is Vietnam's view that maritime cooperation is to conform with the regimes and provisions of UNCLOS, in compliance with rights and interests of Vietnam as well as in respect of interests of other concerned parties, said the spokesperson.

http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/tt_baochi/pbnfn/ns180925093912

20 September 2018: Vietnam reiterates stance after British, Japanese South China Sea drills

Vietnam respects the rights to freedom of navigation and overflight of other countries in the South China Sea in accordance with international laws, UNCLOS, said the spokesperson.

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-reiterates-stance-after-british-japanese-south-china-sea-drills-3812868.html>

18 September 2018: 'Freedom of navigation' not a problem: China

"Actually — freedom of navigation exercises is not a problem, it has never been a problem in the South China Sea," Colonel Wang said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-18/south-china-sea-free-navigation-never-a-problem-chinese-military/10260934>

18 September 2018: China urges outside caution on actions in South China Sea

"We urge countries outside the region to respect efforts of regional countries in peacefully solving the South China Sea issue through dialogue," Geng said.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/18/content_9289617.htm

16 September 2018: Vietnam, China agree to step up negotiation mechanisms on sea-related issues

They said they will step up negotiation mechanisms on sea-related issues for substantial outcomes, and fully and effectively implement the DOC to ensure a favourable environment for the COC negotiation.

<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns180917143346>

15 September 2018: PH visit of China's top diplomat rescheduled over Typhoon Ompong

Wang, who is also Chinese state councilor, was supposed to be in Manila from September 16 to 18 for discussions on the proposed joint exploration of the South China Sea.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/212073-chinese-foreign-minister-wang-yi-reschedules-philippine-visit>

12 September 2018: Vietnam, Indonesia eye early EEZ delimitation

"We have agreed that the negotiation on the EEZ between the two countries could be enhanced, and I hope that this negotiation could be concluded soon," Widodo said. The two countries also signed a joint statement on their voluntary participation in international cooperation for combating IUU fishing and promoting bilateral sustainable fisheries management.

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-indonesia-eye-early-eez-delimitation-3807656.html>

12 September 2018: Duterte says he quarreled with China

President Rodrigo Duterte has admitted quarreling with China after Chinese troops tried to drive away Philippine Navy planes flying over disputed areas in the West Philippine (South China) Sea last month.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/09/12/1850942/duterte-says-he-quarreled-china#SASUu3DpTqPtICml.99>

10 September 2018: Chinese Navy Frigates Trail Japanese Helicopter Destroyer in the South China Sea

JS Kaga, a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) helicopter destroyer, was trailed by two Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) frigates in the South China Sea.

<https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/chinese-navy-frigates-trail-japanese-helicopter-destroyer-in-the-south-china-sea/>

9 September 2018: Beijing Tests Its First Amphibious Plane Amid Heightened Conflict in S China Sea

China has successfully tested its first domestically build amphibious aircraft (AG600 or Kunlong) with a series of water taxiing and low-flight trials.

<https://sputniknews.com/asia/201809091067873733-china-amphibious-plane-tests/>

9 September 2018: China Welcomes ExxonMobil Investment

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said during a meeting with ExxonMobil Chairman Darren Woods that ExxonMobil is "more than welcome" to carry out large petrochemical engineering investments in China.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1118929.shtml>

8 September 2018: Vietnam looks to Russia as it strikes US\$1 billion weapons deal

"We have a portfolio of orders worth more than \$1 billion," TASS cited Dmitry Shugayev, head of Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, as saying.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/diplomacy/article/2163356/vietnam-looks-russia-it-strikes-us1-billion-weapons-deal>

7 September 2018: Vietnam Senior Official Asks Russian State Duma For Support In SCS Issue

I would like to ask the State Duma ... to support the position of Vietnam on [ensuring] a peaceful solution of all disputes in the South China Sea based on international law, including UNCLOS as well as on respect for all political, diplomatic and legal processes, Trong said.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/vietnam-senior-official-asks-russian-state-du-427584.html>

7 September 2018: Beijing blasts Britain for South China Sea warship sail-by

China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the ship had entered Chinese territorial waters around the Paracel Islands on Aug 31 without permission, and the Chinese navy had warned it to leave.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/beijing-upset-over-british-warship-in-s-china-sea>

2 September 2018: Mahathir draws new line in the South China Sea

Mahathir described the current leadership in China as being "inclined towards totalitarianism" and over-prone "to flex[ing] muscles" to "increase [its] influence over many countries in Southeast Asia."

<http://www.atimes.com/article/mahathir-draws-new-line-in-the-south-china-sea/>

3 September 2018: Philippines Pulls Warship Off South China Sea Shoal

At least four Philippine Navy and Coast Guard ships were deployed to secure the BRP Gregorio del Pilar. Tugboats were hired to extricate the ship, military spokesman Col. Noel Detoyato said.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/philippines-pulls-warship-off-south-china-sea-shoal/4556703.html>

1 September 2018: PH won't accept China aid to retrieve grounded warship

"No, we can do it," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told Inquirer.net when asked if the Philippines would accept China's assistance to extricate the warship.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/169442/ph-will-not-accept-china-aid-retrieve-grounded-warship#ixzz5QDW3Gfuu>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

28 September 2018: Asean shows consensus on South China Sea, says US Deputy Secretary of State

"On the South China Sea, there was unanimity; what everyone including the United States is looking for is resolution of disputed claims, not unilaterally but we want international law to be followed and for there to be a peaceful process," US Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan said after co-chairing a US-Asean ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/asean-consensus-on-south-china-sea-sanctions-on-north-korea-holding-says-us>

12 September 2018: Indonesia, Vietnam welcome progress of COC negotiation.

The leaders were encouraged by the progress of the substantive negotiation towards an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), said the joint statement. They also exchanged views on an Indo-Pacific concept which enables ASEAN to continue its role as a primary driving force in the wider regional architecture.

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-indonesia-issue-joint-statement/138185.vnp>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

27 September 2018: US flies bombers over South China Sea amid heightened tensions with Beijing

Lieutenant-Colonel Dave Eastburn, a Pentagon spokesman, said that B-52 bombers transited over the South China Sea as part of "regularly scheduled operations designed to enhance our interoperability with our partners and allies in the region."

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/us-flies-bombers-over-south-china-sea-amid-heightened-tensions-with-beijing>

27 September 2018: Japanese carrier drills with British warship heading to contested South China Sea

Japan's biggest warship, the Kaga helicopter carrier, joined naval drills with Britain's HMS Argyll in the Indian Ocean as the frigate headed toward the contested South China Sea and East Asia.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/japan-warship-britain-south-china-sea-navy-10762428>

24 September 2018: Australia, France eye joint operations in South China Sea

"In terms of the South China Sea, both Australia and France share a common view, which is that the South China Sea is international waters and that we are entitled to navigate as we see fit, and through the norm practice of any country, navigating through the South China Sea," Pyne said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/09/24/1854311/australia-france-eye-joint-operations-south-china-sea#4M3vFFzbEI2V3UDJ.99>

20 September 2018: US, PHL affirm defense treaty

Mr. Pompeo also reiterated to Mr. Lorenzana the US' continuing assistance to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Modernization program.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/us-phl-affirm-defense-treaty/>

20 September 2018: China's Sea Control Is a Done Deal, 'Short of War With the U.S.'

"In short, China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the United States," Admiral Davidson said, an assessment that caused some consternation in the Pentagon.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/20/world/asia/south-china-sea-navy.html>

18 September 2018: Abe shrugs off Japan's submarine drills in South China Sea, says relations with China are on right track

He added that Japan had been carrying out submarine exercises in the South China Sea for the past 15 years, including last year and the year before.

<https://nationalpost.com/news/world/abe-shrugs-off-japans-submarine-drills-in-south-china-sea-says-relations-with-china-are-on-right-track>

17 September 2018: Japan conducts first submarine drill in disputed South China Sea: Media

Submarine Kuroshio on Thursday joined three Japanese warships in waters just southwest of the China-controlled Scarborough Shoal, the Asahi Shimbun said.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/japan-conducts-first-submarine-drill-in-disputed-south-china-sea-10728148>

6 September 2018: British Navy warship sails near South China Sea islands, angering Beijing

The HMS Albion, a 22,000 ton amphibious warship carrying a contingent of Royal Marines, exercised its "freedom of navigation" rights as it passed near the Paracel Islands, two sources, who were familiar with the matter but who asked not to be identified, told Reuters.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/british-navy-warship-sails-near-south-china-sea-islands-angering-10688996>

1 September 2018: Japan's largest warship trains with US naval strike group in contested South China Sea

The two navies practiced sailing in formation and joint maneuvering. The ships also trained in replenishment-at-sea procedures. The drill demonstrated how "seamlessly" the allied fleets can operate, explained US Rear Admiral Karl Thomas.

<https://www.rt.com/news/437422-us-japanese-naval-drill/>