

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATES No. 67
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ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

29 October 2018: Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi warns US against 'interference' in South China Sea
Wang urged the Philippines and other ASEAN members to be vigilant against "interference and disruption coming from the outside" during a joint press conference with his Filipino counterpart, the newly appointed foreign minister Teodoro Locsin.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2170686/chinese-foreign-minister-warns-us-against-interference-south>

29 October 2018: Philippines hints at compromise on South China Sea dispute pact

"Perhaps, we will not be able to arrive at a legally binding COC, but it will be a standard on how people of ASEAN and governments of ASEAN will behave with each other -- always with honor, never with aggression, and always for mutual progress," Locsin said. Wang said China will abide by the code whether it is legally binding or not. He said China hopes to finish the negotiations before Manila's term as ASEAN-China coordinator ends.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/Philippines-hints-at-compromise-on-South-China-Sea-dispute-pact>

27 October 2018: China's foreign minister heads to Philippines as sides near deal on SCS

Cayetano said that the start of the joint exploration project was "quite near" and contingent on China agreeing to a legal framework for the process.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2170507/chinas-foreign-minister-heads-philippines-sides-near-deal-south>

26 October 2018: China Warns United States Against Meddling In South China Sea

China will not take lightly any shows of strength by outside forces in the South China Sea, said Defense Minister Wei Fenghe.

<http://en.businesstimes.cn/articles/104389/20181026/china-warns-united-states-against-meddling-in-taiwan-south-china-sea.htm>

26 October 2018: 'Prepare for war', Xi Jinping tells military region that monitors South China Sea, Taiwan

"It's necessary to strengthen the mission ... and concentrate preparations for fighting a war," Xi said. "We need to take all complex situations into consideration and make emergency plans accordingly.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2170452/prepare-war-xi-jinping-tells-military-region-monitors-south>

26 October 2018: Vietnam slams Taiwan's live-fire drill in South China Sea

The Foreign Ministry has denounced Taiwan's live-fire drill plan near the Spratly Archipelago as a serious violation of Vietnam's sovereignty.

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-slams-taiwan-s-live-fire-drill-in-south-china-sea-3829539.html>

24 October 2018: China Warns United Kingdom Against "Picking Side"

"I would like to remind the British side that the recent trespassing by their HMS Albion into China's territorial waters off the Xisha Qundao has already inflicted damages on China-UK relations. We strongly urge the UK to treat China's concerns seriously and stop such provocative actions", said Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1606828.shtml

21 October 2018: Malaysia says China and U.S. should not flex military muscle in South China Sea

"Warships, B-52s, anything, we don't want them to show force in this area. They understand our language loud and clear today, both the major powers," Malaysian Defense Minister Mohamad Sabu said.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/10/21/asia-pacific/malaysia-says-china-u-s-not-flex-military-muscle-south-china-sea/#.W80k70IReUk>

18 October 2018: China, Philippines hold 3rd South China Sea talk

Both sides discussed possible cooperation on joint exploration and development of maritime oil and gas.
https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1605180.shtml

16 October 2018: Beijing defends warship confrontation in the South China Sea

"It's not Chinese warships that are going to the coast of California, or to the Gulf of Mexico. It's so close to the Chinese islands and it's so close to the Chinese coast. So who is on the offensive? Who is on the defensive? This is very clear," Cui said.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2018/10/15/beijing-defends-warship-confrontation-in-the-south-china-sea/>

13 October 2018: Philippine and Vietnam to delineate maritime boundaries in South China Sea

"I told him that in due time, but we will take a longer period for we have to establish even our continental shelf limits," Duterte said. Vietnam initiated the on-and-off talks years ago.

<https://www.devdiscourse.com/Article/headlines/216130-philippine-and-vietnam-to-delineate-maritime-boundaries-in-south-china-sea>

11 October 2018: Azmin: Freedom of navigation in South China Sea must remain unencumbered

"South-East Asia is looking at China as the new economic behemoth with genuine admiration but also with some trepidation because of its military might. In this regard, China's commitment to peaceful development is absolutely crucial for the continued prosperity of the region," he said.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/10/11/azmin-on-south-china-sea-freedom-of-navigation/#spyqpb5FuKtZlr81.99>

11 October 2018: President Duterte snubs US to join Chinese military drills

Manila will join a military drill with the Chinese navy this month and will not take part in a US war game in the region, as the government prepares to host President Xi on his first state visit to the Philippines.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/president-duterte-snubs-us-to-join-chinese-military-drills-btvmjn5d>

7 October 2018: US, Philippines, Japan hold joint military exercises in South China Sea

The United States and the Philippines have reportedly been holding joint military exercises in the South China Sea close to the disputed Scarborough Shoal, currently occupied by China. The Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force also sent a humanitarian relief vessel to join the Philippine and the U.S. Navy forces.

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3547014>

6 October 2018: China slams Pence's charge of meddling in US internal affairs

"We urge the US to correct its wrongdoing, stop groundlessly accusing and slandering China and harming China's interests and China-US ties," Ms Hua said.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-slams-pences-charge-of-meddling-in-us-internal-affairs>

5 October 2018: China, US need 'heart-to-heart' talk on South China Sea — Cayetano

"We will continue to see these irritants and arguments and it will continue until the US and China sit down and regional players sit down," he said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/10/05/1857530/china-us-need-heart-heart-talk-south-china-sea-cayetano#CDyI0GuBlhaVqZV7.99>

4 October 2018: Vietnam calls for peace, stability after close brush between Chinese, US warships

"We expect countries to contribute positively and practically to maintaining peace and stability, carry out international legal obligations, and obey international laws on the seas and oceans," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang said.

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-calls-for-peace-stability-after-close-brush-between-chinese-us-warships-3819374.html>

3 October 2018: China Opposes US 'Provocation' in South China Sea

"The USS Decatur guided missile destroyer arbitrarily entered waters off China's islands and reefs in the South China Sea," said Defence Ministry spokesman Wu Qian, noting that a Chinese Navy vessel carried out identification and verification procedures and warned the US vessel off.

<https://www.sentinelassam.com/news/chinese-military-opposes-us-provocation-in-south-china-sea/>

1 October 2018: Chinese Warship Passed Dangerously Close To American Destroyer

The PLAN destroyer, identified only as Luyang-class ship, came within 45 yards of Decatur's bow, forcing the ship to change course in order to avoid a collision.

<http://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/23961/chinese-warship-passed-dangerously-close-to-american-destroyer-during-south-china-sea-patrol>

30 September 2018: Chinese warplanes did 'live fire shooting drills' in the South China Sea

Aircraft from the Southern Theater command of the People's Liberation naval air force conducted "live fire shooting drills" at a sea range in the South China Sea.

<https://www.businessinsider.sg/chinese-warplanes-live-fire-shooting-drills-south-china-sea-2018-9/?r=UK&IR=T>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**22 October 2018: ASEAN, China kick off first maritime exercise**

Eight ships kicked off the first Asean-China Maritime Field Training Exercise in Zhanjiang in China's southern Guangdong province. "We also need to promote practical norms that support international laws, and enhance practical cooperation," Singapore's Chief of Navy, Rear-Admiral Lew Chuen Hong said at the opening ceremony of the ASEAN-China exercise

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/asean-china-kicks-off-first-maritime-exercise-10852692>

21 October 2018: Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen heads to China for joint Asean-China maritime exercise

Dr Ng's visit reflects Singapore's support for China's regional engagement efforts and the warm and friendly bilateral defence relationship between both countries, the Ministry of Defence said.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/defence-minister-ng-eng-hen-to-head-to-china-to-visit-joint-asean-china-maritime>

21 October 2018: Asean questions China and US over near-collision in South China Sea

"During our dialogue sessions, we didn't hold back. We asked them pointedly: what happened between the two ships? Should we be worried? How is your relationship?" said Dr Ng.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/asean-questions-china-and-us-over-near-collision-in-south-china-sea>

20 October 2018: ASEAN nations express concern over US-China tensions in South China Sea

The two ships were "too close for comfort", Dr Ng said, adding that no country wants a physical incident in the South China Sea. "That's why I think guidelines help," he added, referring to a set of codes to manage unexpected military encounters over the air and at sea.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/asean-nations-express-concern-over-us-china-tensions-in-south-10847704>

19 October 2018: ASEAN to start naval exercise with US in 2019

The joint exercise with the U.S. will start in 2019, ASEAN said in a declaration. The details have yet to be ironed out. Singapore defense minister Ng Eng Hen, who is chairman of the ASEAN ministerial meeting, did not say whether the exercise would be held in the disputed parts of the South China Sea.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/ASEAN-to-start-naval-exercise-with-US-in-2019>

19 October 2018: China and ASEAN to hold joint naval exercises

"As we speak, the navies of ASEAN are en route to Zhanjiang in China for the ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise," Singaporean Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen said.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/china-and-asean-to-hold-joint-naval-exercises/>

14 October 2018: China, Malaysia, Thailand to hold joint military drill

A total of 692 members of the Chinese People's Liberation Army will participate in the drill, as well as three naval vessels, two shipboard helicopters, three Il-76 airlifters and four vehicles from the Chinese side.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-10/14/c_137531885.htm

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

30 October 2018: US promises to continue South China Sea patrols to show opposition to 'illegitimate' claims

"We will continue to progress this programme of freedom of navigation operations," Richardson said.

"We do dozens of these operations around the world to indicate our position for ... illegitimate claims, maritime claims."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2170781/us-promises-continue-south-china-sea-patrols-show-opposition>

30 October 2018: US Navy chief visits Philippines, receives updates on South China Sea

"The work the U.S. Navy does with the Philippines every year is critical to the peace and stability of the region and the development of both our militaries," Richardson said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/10/30/1864451/us-navy-chief-visits-philippines-receives-updates-south-china-sea#AZsSdRmHiK9BQI2Q.99>

22 October 2018: Royal Navy chief vows to send ships through South China Sea

"If you are going to have a different interpretation of that [convention] to the majority of nations then that has to be resisted," said Sir Philip. "I expect we will do more of that as we transit through with the ships we have there". "Otherwise you could see right around the world nations who will start to make their own interpretations."

<https://www.ft.com/content/efe13b86-d507-11e8-ab8e-6be0dcf18713>

19 October 2018: Britain reminds China of importance of maritime law, says PM May's office

"The Prime Minister reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the rules-based international system, including the importance of freedom of navigation and maritime security, in line with international law," the statement issued following a meeting in Brussels added.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/britain-reminds-china-of-importance-of-maritime-law-says-pm-mays-office>

18 October 2018: US flies B-52s near contested Islands amid China tensions

Pacific Air Forces said Tuesday's "mission is consistent with international law and United States' long-standing commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/10/17/politics/us-b-52-bombers-south-china-sea/index.html>

16 October 2018: US alarmed by China's 'predatory' practices: James Mattis

"We remain highly concerned with continued militarisation of features in the South China Sea," Mattis said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-alarmed-by-chinas-predatory-practices-james-mattis/articleshow/66234238.cms>

16 October 2018: Australia says alliance with America vital with Indo-Pacific tensions

"The challenges in the Indo-Pacific render our alliance as vital as it has ever been," she added.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2018/10/15/australia-says-alliance-with-america-vital-with-indo-pacific-tensions/>

15 October 2018: Japan, New Zealand agree to pursue 'free and open Indo-Pacific'

Peters also said New Zealand will cooperate with Tokyo to address Chinese militarization in the South China Sea for the sake of peace in "our part of the world".

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/10/15/Japan-New-Zealand-agree-to-pursue-free-and-open-Indo-Pacific/9691539610643/

14 October 2018: Jim Mattis pushes closer U.S. ties with Vietnam amid China tensions

By making a rare second trip this year to Vietnam, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is signaling how intensively the Trump administration is trying to counter China's military assertiveness by cozying up to smaller nations in the region that share American wariness about Chinese intentions.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/10/14/asia-pacific/second-visit-year-jim-mattis-pushes-closer-u-s-ties-vietnam-amid-china-tensions/#.W8alw0lReUk>

13 October 2018: US Security Adviser Bolton Vows Tougher Approach to China

Bolton called recent Chinese behavior in the South China Sea “dangerous” and said the United States is determined to keep international sea lanes open.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/us-security-adviser-bolton-vows-tougher-approach-to-china_2688600.html

9 October 2018: Japan and Vietnam agree to cooperate on security in South China Sea

“Going hand-in-hand with Prime Minister Phuc, I am determined to realize the free and open Indo-Pacific region,” which covers the South China Sea, Abe said in a press conference. “I welcome and support Japan’s efforts and initiative to secure economic prosperity, freedom of trade and safety of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region,” Phuc said.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/10/09/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-vietnam-agree-cooperation-secure-peace-south-china-sea/#.W8QPdEIReUk>

4 October 2018: Mike Pence warns against Chinese 'intimidation' in South China Sea

“China wants nothing less than to push the United States of America from the Western Pacific and attempt to prevent us from coming to the aid of our allies,” Vice President Mike Pence said. “They will fail.”

<https://www.businessinsider.sg/white-house-responds-to-chinese-aggression-in-the-south-china-sea-2018-10/?r=US&IR=T>

30 September 2018: U.S. warship sails near disputed South China Sea islands: U.S. official

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the destroyer Decatur traveled within 12 nautical miles of Gaven and Johnson Reefs in the Spratly Islands.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china/u-s-warship-sails-near-disputed-south-china-sea-islands-official-idUSKCN1MAODY>

29 September 2018: US fully committed to Asean partnership, says senior official

"We reaffirmed the US-Asean strategic partnership and discussed US commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region with Asean at its centre, in which independent nations with diverse cultures and aspirations can prosper side by side in freedom and peace," Mr Sullivan told journalists.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/us-fully-committed-to-asean-partnership-says-senior-official>