

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATES No. 68**  
**November 2018**

**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**28 November 2018: Duterte blasts Carpio over South China Sea stance**

"What do you want me to do? Ang arbitration, so I'll order my military and the police to go there in Palawan and shoot it out? It will be a massacre."

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/676460/duterte-blasts-carpio-over-south-china-sea-stance/story/>

**27 November 2018: Beijing Eyes Building Underwater AI Base in Disputed South China Sea**

Officials from the Chinese Academy of Sciences consider building an underwater sea base in the South China Sea for unmanned submarine science and possibly defense operations.

<https://sputniknews.com/asia/201811271070180508-beijing-underwater-artificial-base-report/>

**26 November 2018: China Reportedly Starts Building 'New-Generation' Aircraft Carrier**

China is building its third aircraft carrier which will be "bigger and mightier" than the other two warships.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-building-third-aircraft-carrier-reports/articleshow/66807265.cms>

**26 November 2018: Acting Chief Justice Carpio insists South China Sea ruling not useless**

"But the ruling is not useless because, as I've shown, it's being imposed every day." The acting chief justice said that the Department of Foreign Affairs needed to speak up on the recent incident in which China's coast guard prevented a "Reporter's Notebook" news team and Filipino fishermen from documenting a story at the Scarborough Shoal.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/676059/acting-chief-justice-carpio-insists-south-china-sea-ruling-not-useless/story/>

**26 November 2018: Palace releases PH-China MOU on oil and gas development**

Malacañang finally made public on Monday the copy of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) recently signed by the Philippines and China creating the framework for future negotiations on the joint oil and gas exploration.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1057145/palace-releases-ph-china-mou-on-oil-and-gas-development#ixzz5YD4BVoXh>

**25 November 2018: Palace not sure if barring media from S. China Sea is official Beijing policy**

Malacañang will not yet take concrete steps or make any pronouncements after Chinese coastguard personnel barred a Filipino media team from covering a portion of the South China Sea.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/26/18/palace-not-sure-if-barring-media-from-s-china-sea-is-official-beijing-policy>

**25 November 2018: China okay with PH disclosing MOU on joint oil exploration deal**

"As far as I know, this MOU is not a confidential agreement. If the Philippines wants to disclose it, China is open to such an arrangement," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said.

<https://www.doe.gov.ph/energist/china-okay-ph-disclosing-mou-joint-oil-exploration-deal>

**23 November 2018: Vietnam protests new building by Beijing in South China Sea**

"The fact that China continues its activities in Vietnam's Paracels has seriously violated Vietnam's sovereignty on this archipelago," foreign ministry spokeswoman Nguyen Phuong Tra said.

<https://www.malaymail.com/s/1696266/vietnam-protests-new-building-by-beijing-in-south-china-sea>

**23 November 2018: China building 'military base' on disputed Bombay Reef in the Paracel Islands**

Satellite images showed a "new structure" on Bombay Reef in the Paracel Islands.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/china-building-military-base-on-disputed-bombay-reef-in-the-paracel-islands-0gt76mpg9>

**23 November 2018: Vietnam: COC must be effective, practical and binding**

"In the face of recent complications in the sea, ASEAN has repeatedly expressed the need to soon reach the COC, but it's important that the COC must be effective, practical and binding", Trà said.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/480658/philippines-china-joint-oil-activities-in-east-sea-must-follow-intl-law-foreign-ministry.html#mIAKqfWt23esm3OI.99>

**23 November 2018: Vietnam: Philippines-China joint oil activities must follow int'l law**

Joint oil exploration between China and Philippines in the South China Sea can only be conducted in waters over which the two have sovereignty and sovereign rights as per international law

<http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/480658/philippines-china-joint-oil-activities-in-east-sea-must-follow-intl-law-foreign-ministry.html#mIAKqfWt23esm3OI.99>

**23 November 2018: China Philippines aim to agree on joint development in 2019**

The MOU signed by the Philippines and China created the framework for future talks on joint oil and gas development, according to a full copy obtained by CNN Philippines.

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/11/23/EXCLUSIVE-PH-China-MOU-joint-oil-exploration-maritime-claims.html>

**22 November 2018: Locsin to seek China's nod on release of oil development MOU**

"The two governments will endeavor to agree on cooperation arrangements within 12 months of this memorandum of agreement," Locsin said, reading the agreement.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/22/1870811/locsin-seek-chinas-nod-release-oil-development-mou#SsdRhHp2tAlsouc8.99>

**22 November 2018: MOU on oil development with China an 'agreement to agree'**

"If you are referring to the MOU that was signed, that was memorandum of cooperation to explore ways on how we can harness the resources, indigenous resources at the West Philippine Sea," Cusi said

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/22/1870805/mou-oil-development-china-agreement-agree-cusi#8TOOKHmv0I2SdYcJ.99>

**21 November 2018: Philippines, China sign MOU on joint gas, oil development**

The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) alongside 28 deals related to basic education, agricultural cooperatives and infrastructure projects at a meeting between visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Philippine counterpart Rodrigo Duterte.

<https://gbtimes.com/philippines-sign-offshore-oil-and-gas-deal-with-china>

**20 November 2018: Malaysia: South China Sea must remain accessible to all**

"The Chinese lay claim on the South China Sea by virtue of its name. But at the moment, ships can pass through the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea", Dr Mahathir said.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2018/11/433032/south-china-sea-must-remain-accessible-all>

**20 November 2018: China in possession of South China Sea? 'That's a reality,' says Palace**

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo issued the statement on Tuesday as he defended the remarks of President Rodrigo Duterte that China is "already in possession of the South China Sea."

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/171375/china-in-possession-of-south-china-sea-thats-a-reality-says-palace#ixzz5XhcAvsxD>

**20 November 2018: South China Sea ruling useless 'as of now' — Palace**

Asked if the verdict is useless, Panelo said, "As of now, yes, but as I said, we can get what we are supposed to have by negotiation."

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/20/1870222/south-china-sea-ruling-useless-as-now-palace>

**19 November 2018: China and Brunei to step up oil and gas development in disputed South China Sea**

China and Brunei will together exploit oil and gas resources in the South China Sea, their leaders said.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/china-brunei-step-oil-gas-093300511.html>

**19 November 2018: Palace: Duterte urges a stop to 'adventurism' in South China Sea**

"The President asserted that aggressive moves by nations can worsen the situation with damage that could be exponential," the Palace said.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/171339/palace-duterte-urges-a-stop-to-adventurism-in-south-china-sea#ixzz5XMRKGACK>

**16 November 2018: Carpio rebuffs Duterte: China doesn't possess South China Sea**

He also pointed out that about 25% of the South China Sea is composed of high seas.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/216841-carpio-rebuffs-duterte-south-china-sea-possession>

**16 November 2018: Duterte, Abe vow to uphold freedom of navigation in South China Sea**

"Both leaders also discussed issues pertaining to the disputed South China Sea, during which PRRD stressed the Philippines' commitment to uphold the principles of freedom of navigation and overflight, freedom of commerce and other lawful activities, exercise of self-restraint, and the peaceful resolution of disputes," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/171257/duterte-abe-vow-to-uphold-freedom-of-navigation-in-south-china-sea#ixzz5XMRoRd6S>

#### **16 November 2018: Malaysian PM warns NZ about China's actions in South China Sea**

After less than thirty seconds of general remarks, PM Mahathir Bin Mohamad talked frankly about his geopolitical concerns. "Although New Zealand is quite far from the South China Sea, what happens to the South China Sea will eventually have some impact on other countries around there."

<http://www.maoritelevision.com/news/politics/malaysian-pm-warns-nz-about-chinas-actions-south-china-sea>

#### **15 November 2018: Philippines, Vietnam navies play games on disputed South China Sea island**

A total of 63 Vietnamese forces sailed to Northeast Cay in the Spratlys upon the invitation of the Philippines. It was a "return visit" to match Vietnam's gesture in 2017, when they invited Filipinos to neighboring Southeast Cay. These are dubbed "twin islands."

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/216807-philippines-vietnam-navies-play-on-disputed-south-china-sea-island>

#### **15 November 2018: Vietnam seeks India's suggestions on South China Sea's Freedom of Navigation**

Vietnam's Ambassador to India Pham Sanh Chau welcomed every possible ideas and initiative for maintenance of peace and stability, and more so freedom of navigation and movement in the South China Sea.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/vietnam-seeks-indias-suggestions-on-s-china-sea-freedom-of-navigation-ahead-of-presidents-visit/articleshow/66638650.cms>

#### **15 November 2018: Duterte says China 'already in possession' of South China Sea, tells US to end military drills**

"China is already in possession (of the South China Sea). It's now in their hands. So why do you have to create frictions... that will prompt a response from China?" Mr Duterte said. "China is there," he added. "That's a reality, and America and everybody should realise that they are there."

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/duterte-says-china-already-in-possession-of-south-china-sea-tells-us-to-end-military>

#### **14 November 2018: Duterte says China should tell South China Sea claimants how to avoid dispute**

President Rodrigo Duterte said China should instruct fellow claimant-countries on how to best avoid dispute in the contested waters.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/11/14/18/duterte-says-china-should-tell-south-china-sea-claimants-how-to-avoid-dispute>

#### **13 November 2018: Chinese Premier Li says hopes for South China Sea code in three years**

China's Premier Li Keqiang said on Tuesday that Beijing hoped a consultation with Southeast Asian nations on a code of conduct in the disputed South China Sea would be completed in three years, and that such an deal would be conducive for free trade.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/Chinese-Premier-Li-says-hopes-for-South-China-Sea-code-in-three-years>

#### **11 November 2018: Beijing seeks to block outsiders from drilling in South China Sea**

As part of the code of conduct, China has also proposed barring outside countries from taking part in joint military exercises with ASEAN countries in the South China Sea. ASEAN members including Singapore have not agreed to this provision, creating another obstacle to concluding the negotiations.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/Beijing-seeks-to-block-outsiders-from-drilling-in-South-China-Sea>

#### **11 November 2018: No country should use any excuse to engage in militarisation in South China Sea: Beijing**

"There is no problem of the freedom of navigation and overflight being obstructed, so to use the freedom of navigation and overflight as an excuse to pursue military actions is unjustifiable," Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/no-country-should-use-any-excuse-to-engage-in-militarisation-in-south-china-sea-beijing/articleshow/66567124.cms>

#### **8 November 2018: Vietnam protests China's weather stations in disputed sea**

Vietnam strongly protested China's launch of weather stations in the disputed Spratly islands, said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang.

<http://www.startribune.com/vietnam-protests-china-s-weather-stations-in-disputed-sea/500012792/>

#### **7 November 2018: Philippines says 2 energy exploration deals with China ready for signing**

One of the deals is Service Contract 57 covering an oil and gas prospect awarded to PNOOC's exploration unit, located off Calamian in southwestern Palawan province, which picked CNOOC as a partner. He did not give details about the other agreement, but said Service Contract 72, an exploration permit held by the Philippines' PXP Energy Corp for Reed Bank, a disputed South China Sea area, is not one of the two.

<https://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFL4N1X1Z70>

#### **5 November 2018: Chinese warship crew says 'good morning' to Japanese helicopter carrier sailors in South China Sea**

"The Chinese navy only sent the friendly message because the Japanese warship wasn't in a sensitive area and was not being in any way provocative."

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/chinese-warship-says-good-morning-230242188.html>

#### **5 November 2018: Palace: Never too late to protest vs China**

"We will have to leave it to the President's judgment... He has 6 years," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said. "It can never be too late when you protest a particular thing, especially when the award is yours."

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/05/18/palace-never-too-late-to-protest-vs-china>

#### **5 November 2018: Palace downplays weather stations in Spratlys despite Beijing's confirmation**

"We have to get confirmation of that since that is merely a news report," presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/05/1866063/palace-downplays-weather-stations-spratlys-despite-beijings-confirmation#Cz4HKU5DVJLElxKp.99>

#### **5 November 2018: Taiwan 'will consider' hosting US warships on Spratly island for humanitarian operations**

Taiwan "will consider" a US Navy request should Washington ask to use the largest of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea for security purposes, the island's defence minister said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2171756/taiwan-will-consider-hosting-us-warships-spratly-island>

#### **5 November 2018: Fishing in West Philippine Sea improbable with Chinese occupation — fishers group**

Pamalakaya pointed out that Filipino fishermen could not fish peacefully in the contested waters anymore.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/05/1866076/fishing-west-philippine-sea-improbable-chinese-occupation-fishers-group#lepMQWLW9X05hxJ3.99>

#### **1 November 2018: China opens a number of weather observatories on contested Spratly Islands**

Observation facilities are located on Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief reefs in disputed Spratly archipelago. The new stations could also be used for military purposes, but Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said that they would mainly be used to ensure navigational safety in the South China Sea.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2171271/beijing-opens-weather-stations-artificial-islands-south-china>

### **ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

#### **19 November 2018: Cambodian PM says no China naval base being built**

"I have received a letter from Mike Pence, US Vice-President, regarding concerns that there will be a China naval base in Cambodia," he said. "The Constitution of Cambodia bans the presence of foreign troops or military bases in its territory... whether naval forces, infantry forces or air forces."

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/cambodian-pm-says-no-china-naval-base-being-built>

#### **16 November 2018: ASEAN takes stronger stand on South China Sea issue**

Last year, the ASEAN statement was supposed to address China's actions in the disputed waters but dropped the reference to it in the final statement. This was the first time in several years that the chairman's statement did not express "concern" and excluded references to specific activities by China in the South China Sea, including the building of man-made islands with military fortifications.

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2018/11/15/asean-takes-stronger-stand-on-south-china-sea-issue/>

#### **15 November 2018: ASEAN leaders raise concern over reclamation activities in South China Sea**

"We took note of some concerns on the land reclamations and activities in the area, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and may undermine peace, security and stability in the region", said the statement.

[https://www.asean2018.sg/Newsroom/Press-Releases/Press-Release-Details/ASEAN\\_CS\\_ChairmanStatement](https://www.asean2018.sg/Newsroom/Press-Releases/Press-Release-Details/ASEAN_CS_ChairmanStatement)

#### **15 November 2018: Asean wants to work with both US and China, says PM Lee**

"Asean countries want to be able to engage with both US and China, and maximise the scope and advantages of our cooperation. Therefore, we hope that the US-China relations remain stable and hope that all will work out. We are open to proposals by external partners to strengthen the existing Asean-centric regional architecture."

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/us-vice-president-pence-says-empire-and-aggression-have-no-place-in-indo-pacific>

#### **14 November 2018: ASEAN, China see South China Sea code first draft by 2019**

"ASEAN and China have seen steady progress in the initial phase of the COC negotiations since the announcement of a Single Draft COC Negotiating Text, and looked forward to the completion of the first reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text by 2019," Duterte said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/14/1868553/asean-china-see-south-china-sea-code-first-draft-2019#PUVF0vHiHklzHUr7.99>

#### **7 November 2018: ASEAN statement to express concern about China**

The draft says ASEAN takes note of "some concerns" about the land reclamation and activities in the South China Sea. It says they "have eroded trust and confidence and may undermine peace, security and stability in the region."

[https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20181107\\_03/](https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20181107_03/)

#### **6 November 2018: CoC controls South China Sea situation: Indonesia**

"In the CoC, we do not make rules, but take rules from various existing sources, such as the UNCLOS (the UN Convention on the Law of the International Sea)," he noted.

<https://en.antaranews.com/news/120229/coc-controls-south-china-sea-situation-indonesia>

#### **29 October 2018: Philippines doubts ASEAN, China can come up with legally binding SCS code**

"Perhaps we will not be able to arrive at a legally binding code of conduct," Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin said. "But, it will be the standard on how people of ASEAN, governments of ASEAN will behave toward each other - always with honor, never with aggression and always for the mutual progress".

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-china/philippines-doubts-asean-china-can-come-up-with-legally-binding-south-china-sea-code-idUSKCN1N310A>

### **OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA**

#### **21 November 2018: US bombers fly near South China Sea in 'routine training mission'**

The two B-52H Stratofortress bombers left Andersen Air Force Base in Guam and flew "in the vicinity of the South China Sea", according to a statement issued by the US Pacific Air Forces. The statement said the flight was "consistent with international law and the United States' long-standing commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific".

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2174274/us-bombers-fly-near-south-china-sea-routine-training-mission>

**19 November 2018: United States 'won't give in to China' on Taiwan or South China Sea**

"We want to contribute in any way possible to the success. But how can you have a dialogue at the same time, where a country is building, reclaiming and militarising ... that undercuts the faith?", Murphy said.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/united-states-won-t-china-134823212.html>

**19 November 2018: The US's top commander in the Pacific is sounding the alarm over China's 'wall of SAMs' in the South China Sea**

The top US commander in the Pacific warned that China has turned the so-called "great wall of sand" in the South China Sea into a "great wall of [surface-to-air missiles]." In addition to SAMs, China has also deployed anti-ship missiles, giving it the ability to target both enemy ships and aircraft.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/top-us-admiral-calls-out-china-over-wall-of-sams-in-south-china-sea-2018-11>

**16 November 2018: Pence says South China Sea doesn't belong to any one nation**

"The South China Sea doesn't belong to any one nation, and you can be sure: The United States will continue to sail and fly wherever international law allows and our national interests demand," Pence said.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/pence-says-south-china-sea-doesn-t-belong-to-any-one-nation-10937158>

**16 November 2018: Pence Urges Speed on South China Sea Code of Conduct**

He also said countries in the region "must be able to explore and develop their own resources and navigate their own waters."

<https://www.voanews.com/a/pence-urges-speed-on-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct/4661290.html>

**15 November 2018: US carriers conduct warfare drills in Philippine Sea to 'support free and open Indo-Pacific'**

Two US aircraft carrier strike groups with 12,600 personnel are conducting warfare drills in the Philippine Sea in a show of force and commitment to the region at a time when China is increasing its military manoeuvres, the US Navy said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2173371/us-carriers-conduct-warfare-drills-philippine-sea-support-free>

**13 November 2018: 'We are here to stay' — Pence says he personally challenged China with a South China Sea flyby**

"We will not be intimidated," he said. "We will not stand down. We will continue to exercise freedom of navigation."

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/josh-rogin/wp/2018/11/13/pence-its-up-to-china-to-avoid-a-cold-war/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.a2961adda92f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/josh-rogin/wp/2018/11/13/pence-its-up-to-china-to-avoid-a-cold-war/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.a2961adda92f)

**11 November 2018: US calls on China to remove missiles from Spratly Islands**

"The United States called on China to withdraw its missile systems from disputed features in the Spratly Islands, and reaffirmed that all countries should avoid addressing disputes through coercion or intimidation," the US Department of State said in a statement.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/170952/us-calls-on-china-to-remove-missiles-from-spratly-islands#ixzz5WhfipoiT>

**10 November 2018: US presses China to halt militarisation in South China Sea, says not pursuing Cold War**

"Rather, we want to ensure that China acts responsibly and fairly, in support of security and prosperity in each of our two countries," said Mr Pompeo.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/in-high-level-talks-us-presses-china-to-halt-militarisation-of-south-china-sea>

**8 November 2018: Canada joins effort to counter China with Asian warship drills**

"The expectation is to see one, if not two ships, on a year round basis doing a variety of things with a variety of partners in the region," Commander Blair Saltel, the captain of Calgary, said in Yokosuka, Japan.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/canada-joins-effort-to-counter-china-with-asian-warship-drills/articleshow/66541559.cms>

**6 November 2018: US, China set for high-level talks to avert South China Sea clashes**

The announcement of fresh dialogue indicates that the two sides have been willing to reduce the risk of miscalculation with tensions high in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/us-china-set-high-level-024050709.html>

**3 November 2018: Top US Navy officer tells China to behave at sea**

The U.S. Navy's chief of naval operations has called on China to return to a previously agreed-upon code of conduct for at-sea encounters between the ships of their respective navies, stressing the need to avoid miscalculations.

<https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/11/02/top-us-navy-officer-urges-china-to-follow-maritime-code-of-conduct/>

**3 November 2018: US Navy has had 18 unsafe or unprofessional encounters with China since 2016**

"Our continued presence in the region highlights our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and demonstrates that the US Navy will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows," Christensen added.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/11/03/politics/navy-unsafe-encounters-china/index.html>

**1 November 2018: Britain to sell China 'unlimited' amount of military radar equipment, technology**

Unlike previous deals involving British arms sales to China, which were capped by amount and value, under the new agreement the supplier can "export an unlimited quantity of goods", including equipment, components, software and technology for military radar systems, the department said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2171242/britain-sell-china-unlimited-amount-military-radar-equipment>