

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS UPDATES No. 69**  
**December 2018**

**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**22 December 2018: Defense chief seeks Philippine-US treaty review**

Lorenzana said over which the Philippines has sovereign rights should be covered by the MDT to obligate the US to come to the aid of the country if ever the Philippines is attacked by other states.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/21/1878729/defense-chief-seeks-philippine-us-treaty-review>

**21 December 2018: Philippines to Continue Patrols, Station Troops in South China Sea**

"We will still continue with our activities there. We will patrol regularly ... [and] continue strengthening our islands," Lorenzana said.

<https://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2018/12/21/philippines-to-continue-patrols-station-troops-in-south-china-sea/>

**21 December 2018: Philippines ready to protest China's actions— Lorenzana**

"If we see Chinese actions that are not consistent with our national interest, we are going to protest China," Lorenzana said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/21/1878881/philippines-ready-protest-chinas-actions-west-philippine-sea-lorenzana#kYH2UBEWPpmU63ub.99>

**11 December 2018: China: Consultation on COC has entered a fast track**

"As China and ASEAN member states work together to maintain stability and conduct maritime cooperation in the South China Sea, our mutual trust has increased notably, leading to more positive mutual perceptions and outlooks on our relations", Wang Yi said.

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1621221.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1621221.shtml)

**11 December 2018: China Girds for Undersea Battle in the South China Sea**

Beijing is setting up a new aircraft unit that will be crucial to its new southern bastion.

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/china-girds-undersea-battle-south-china-sea-38452>

**10 December 2018: Chinese General Says Military Should Use Force against US Ships in South China Sea**

"If the U.S. warships break into Chinese waters again, I suggest that two warships should be sent: one to stop it, and another one to ram it," Dai said.

<https://www.newsweek.com/chinese-general-force-us-ships-south-china-sea-1252690>

**9 December 2018: Palace chides Sison for comments on South China Sea**

Panelo said Duterte has steered clear of a "potential warfare with China" and maintained constructive dialogues through a bilateral consultation mechanism, which led to the signing of 29 agreements.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/09/1875592/palace-chides-sison-comments-west-philippine-sea#B41P0rPpLPPpMsoQ.99>

**7 December 2018: PHL-China oil deal may resolve maritime dispute — Carpio**

The senior justice believes that a service contract-type agreement, similar to the Malampaya gas project off Palawan, may usher in a period where China is satisfied with splitting income instead of claiming the Philippines' rights to the vital sea lane.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/677477/phl-china-oil-deal-may-resolve-maritime-dispute-carpio/story/>

**7 December 2018: China's wish to complete COC in 3 years "good sign" : Philippine defense chief**

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that China's wish to complete talks on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea in three years is "a good sign" and "good news."

[http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off\\_the\\_Wire/2018-12/07/content\\_74251596.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2018-12/07/content_74251596.htm)

**7 December 2018: Lorenzana backs legally binding Code of Conduct with China**

"It should be legally binding. If we have this Code of Conduct, then we have assurance that there will be no misunderstanding and miscalculation," Lorenzana said.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/677470/lorenzana-backs-legally-binding-code-of-conduct-with-china-on-west-phl-sea/story/>

#### **4 December 2018: Palace expresses reservations about confirming China weather stations**

The Palace had said the government will file a diplomatic protest once it verifies the presence of the weather stations, but Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that government forces "cannot go there and inspect them physically."

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/677059/palace-expresses-reservations-about-confirming-china-weather-stations-in-west-phl-sea/story/>

#### **1 December 2018: Chinese navy sent to confront USS Chancellorsville in latest South China Sea stand-off**

"The Southern Theatre Command organised navy and air forces to monitor the US vessel, and gave warning for it to leave," the statement said. "The theatre command will continue close monitoring of the air and sea conditions to prevent the happening of events that poses a threat to national security."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2175916/chinese-navy-sent-confront-uss-chancellorsville-latest-south>

#### **30 November 2018: Vietnam and Russia expand joint South China Sea gas projects**

The two reaffirmed their countries' commitment to joint natural gas development projects in the South China Sea and other forms of economic cooperation.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Vietnam-and-Russia-expand-joint-South-China-Sea-gas-projects>

#### **30 November 2018: Beijing lashes out at US for South China Sea sail-by**

China has also lodged a diplomatic complaint with Washington, foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said during a regular press briefing, calling on the US to "immediately stop such provocative actions that violate China's sovereignty".

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/beijing-lashes-out-at-us-for-south-china-sea-sail-by-10985270>

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

#### **20 December 2018: Indonesia Opens Military Base Near Disputed South China Sea to 'Deter Threats'**

Indonesian Defense Force chief, Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto, said that the outpost is to act as a deterrent against any potential security threats, particularly at the border areas.

[https://www.theepochtimes.com/indonesia-opens-military-base-near-disputed-south-china-sea-to-deter-threats\\_2743406.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/indonesia-opens-military-base-near-disputed-south-china-sea-to-deter-threats_2743406.html)

#### **19 December 2018: Indonesia: Natuna Base Tasked With Warding Off South China Sea Threats**

The South China Sea unit in the Riau Islands province will be equipped with a surface-to-air missile defense system, the military said. Other facilities include a port, a hangar to support military aircraft and a hospital.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/19122018-indonesia-natuna-base-tasked-with-warding-off-south-china-sea-threats/>

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

#### **28 December 2018: Pentagon urges allies to step up South China Sea patrols**

"I think what could potentially bring more pressure on the Chinese is other partners and allies joining in these activities [in the South China Sea]," he said. "If not freedom-of-navigation operations ... just joint patrols, presence operations."

<https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/us-urges-pacific-allies-to-boost-their-military-presence-in-south-china-sea-1.562346>

#### **21 December 2018: Locsin, Pompeo reaffirm US-Philippines alliance, discuss South China Sea**

Pompeo reaffirmed the alliance between the two countries, including Washington's commitment to the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, US Department of State deputy spokesperson Robert Palladino said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/21/1878807/locsin-pompeo-reaffirm-us-philippines-alliance-discuss-south-china-sea#bKl7HVqV6qzyHw47.99>

**19 December 2018: US envoy: Unfair to blame US for China's actions in South China Sea**

"Our basic approach or position on the South China Sea situation really hasn't changed. I think we have been consistent that we call on all claimant countries to refrain from aggressive unilateral actions," the ambassador said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/19/1878317/us-envoy-unfair-blame-us-chinas-actions-south-china-sea#ckrjeBkVrrrGEHvc.99>

**16 December 2018: NZ 'very, very aware' of South China Sea impact**

Jacinda Ardern said New Zealand "didn't need anyone to point out to us the importance of the issue".

[https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/nz-very-aware-south-china-sea-impact-issue-brought-up-meeting-malaysian-pm?variant=tb\\_v\\_1](https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/nz-very-aware-south-china-sea-impact-issue-brought-up-meeting-malaysian-pm?variant=tb_v_1)

**13 December 2018: China should adhere to South China Sea ruling — US defense exec**

"Certainly, the 2016 ruling was a very clear statement by an international body that China's claims have no basis in international law," he said.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/171989/china-should-adhere-to-south-china-sea-ruling-us-defense-exec#ixzz5ZuUUHwbD>

**13 December 2018: US defense official: It's up to China if they want to escalate and threaten a ship that's sailing in international waters**

"If they want to escalate and threaten a ship that's sailing in international waters in accordance of international law we would be concerned and we hope that would not be a decision they make," said Felter.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/678008/us-defense-official-ldquo-it-s-up-to-china-if-they-want-to-escalate-and-threaten-a-ship-that-s-sailing-in-int/story/>

**8 December 2018: Philippines sounded out by Japan on air-defense radar**

Tokyo is sounding out the Philippines about buying an upgraded model of the Mitsubishi Electric-made FPS-3 air defense radar system, which Japan's Air Self-Defense Force has used since 1991 in missile defense and monitoring airspace incursions. Tokyo has already begun offering technical information on the system to Manila.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Philippines-sounded-out-by-Japan-on-air-defense-radar>

**30 November 2018: US sails warship past contested islands in South China Sea, ahead of G20 summit**

The "USS Chancellorsville sailed near the Paracel islands to challenge excessive maritime claims and preserve access to the waterways as governed by international law," US Navy Cmdr. Nathan Christensen, a spokesman for US Pacific Fleet, told CNN in a statement.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/11/29/politics/us-warship-south-china-sea/index.html>