

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.77
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ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

30 December 2019: Indonesia Protests to China over Border Intrusion near South China Sea

Indonesia said on Monday it had protested to Beijing over the presence of a Chinese coastguard vessel in its territorial waters near the disputed South China Sea, saying it marked a "violation of sovereignty."

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/indonesia-protests-china-over-border-intrusion-near-south-china-sea>

29 December 2019: ASEAN members up the ante on South China Sea amid code of conduct talks

Southeast Asian nations with claims to the resource-rich South China Sea are upping the ante and may be trying to coordinate their efforts as the deadline approaches for a code of conduct, according to observers.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3043772/asean-members-ante-south-china-sea-amid-code-conduct-talks>

26 December 2019: China sails carrier group through Taiwan Strait as election nears

China has sailed its new aircraft carrier into the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's defense ministry said on Thursday, as a presidential election campaigning was in full swing on the island amid heighten tension with Beijing.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-china-election/china-sails-carrier-group-through-taiwan-strait-as-election-nears-idUSKBN1YU0H0>

25 December 2019: South China Sea live-fire drill for PLA's Hong Kong garrison

China's state broadcaster released a video on Christmas Eve of Hong Kong's PLA garrison conducting live-fire sea drills in the South China Sea.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3043468/south-china-sea-live-fire-drill-plas-hong-kong-garrison>

21 December 2019: Can Beijing bring the South China Sea's ravaged coral reefs back to life?

China has embarked on a decade-long plan to revive the ravaged marine life of the South China Sea, creating a body to protect coral reefs amid criticism that its island building and fishing have devastated marine life in the disputed waters. Experts from various agencies – including the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences – will contribute to a China coral reef protection association set up this month in Hainan under the umbrella of the agriculture ministry.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3043035/can-beijing-bring-south-china-seas-ravaged-coral-reefs-back>

20 December 2019: Saifuddin: China's claim to whole of South China Sea ridiculous

It is ridiculous for China to claim that the entire South China Sea is its possession, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah said today. When asked to explain Malaysia's recent decision to challenge China's "nine-dash line", Saifuddin said that it is the sovereign right of Malaysia to make its territorial claim.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/12/549586/saifuddin-chinas-claim-whole-south-china-sea-ridiculous>

17 December 2019: Vietnam Hopes for Chinese Restraint in South China Sea in 2020

Vietnam, the region's most forceful challenger of China's extensive maritime claims to the busy waterway, will take on the rotating chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2020. "I hope that during our chairmanship China will show restraint and refrain from these activities," Vietnam's deputy foreign minister, Nguyen Quoc Dung, said at a lecture at The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. "What China did is very alarming and also kind of threatening not only Vietnam but also other countries that see the potential of being threatened in the future," he said.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/vietnam-hopes-for-chinese-restraint-in-south-china-sea-in-2020_3176371.html

17 December 2019: Beijing censures Malaysia over fresh South China Sea claim

Beijing said on Tuesday it had protested against Kuala Lumpur filing a submission with the United Nations last week seeking to establish the limits of Malaysia's continental shelf in the northern part of the disputed South China Sea.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-malaysia/china-objects-to-malaysias-un-submission-on-south-china-sea-scmp-idUSKBN1YL0HM>

17 December 2019: China's first domestically built aircraft carrier enters service 'at doorstep of South China Sea'

China announced the delivery and commissioning Tuesday of its second aircraft carrier — the first built domestically — while also revealing its name, the Shandong, state-run media reported. The carrier entered service at its new home, a naval base in Sanya on Hainan Island "at the doorstep of the South China Sea," after a "grand commissioning ceremony" overseen by President Xi Jinping, the Global Times reported.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/12/17/asia-pacific/china-aircraft-carrier-enters-service-south-china-sea/#.Xfmh6GQzaUk>

16 December 2019: South China Sea: message for Beijing in Vietnam, Malaysia defence white papers

The defence white papers published by Southeast Asian neighbours Vietnam and Malaysia in recent weeks attracted a fraction of the media limelight those of larger countries tend to attract.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3042060/south-china-sea-message-beijing-vietnam-malaysia-defence-white>

16 December 2019: Chinese warplanes take South China Sea exercises to new level

China's military has stepped up its exercises in the South China Sea to prepare for "unexpected confrontations", according to a report in Sunday's PLA Daily. The military mouthpiece said a naval aviation unit under the Southern Theatre Command had completed a long-time early warning reconnaissance drill in which participants identified more than 10 kinds of "enemy" radio signals.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3042243/chinese-warplanes-take-south-china-sea-exercises-new-level>

15 December 2019: Philippines' Duterte blames past US inactivity for tensions in South China Sea

Philippines' Duterte blames past US inactivity for tensions in South China Sea
Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has accused the US former administration of taking no action when China began building artificial islands in the South China Sea, which he said resulted in the current strained situation in the region. "Why did [the US] not reprimand [China]? Why did you not send five aircraft carriers? And you had to wait for the problem to ripen to an international issue involving, this time, so many countries," President Duterte said at a news conference upon arrival from a trip to Myanmar and Thailand at an international airport in Manila, according to Reuters.

<https://stockdailydish.com/philippines-duterte-blames-past-us-inactivity-for-tensions-in-south-china-sea/>

13 December 2019: Malaysia submitted to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, in accordance with Article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, information on the limits of its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured in the South China Sea.

https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_mys_12_12_2019.html

11 December 2019: China steps up compliance with UN sea law after ship expelled by India

China has announced that its scientific researchers must get permission before working in foreign waters, signaling a willingness to follow international sea law weeks after a Chinese research ship was expelled by India. The country's foreign ministry posted a notice on its website on Tuesday instructing Chinese institutions, groups and individuals aiming to conduct marine science research in other countries' territory that they would need "an explicit statement of consent" from that country.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3041693/china-steps-compliance-un-sea-law-after-ships-expulsion-india>

11 December 2019: Chinese envoy defends position on South China Sea

"China's territorial claims and claims to marine rights and interests in the South China Sea are in line with relevant international law and international practices," Wu Haitao, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, told the UN General Assembly.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/11/c_138621524.htm

8 December 2019: Vietnam ‘acknowledged’ PH as lead in sea dispute – Locsin

The Philippines has been standing up to China “in the things that matter,” Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said on Sunday. “We stand up to China in the things that matter without fail and are acknowledged by Vietnam as the lead in the South China Sea disputes,” Locsin said in a tweet.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/182432/vietnam-acknowledged-ph-as-lead-in-sea-dispute-locsin#ixzz67fJgVZOOh>

8 December 2019: Philippines is 'the lead in the South China Sea disputes,' Locsin claims

Within days of the International Criminal Court prosecutor saying it has no jurisdiction over the allegations against Chinese President Xi Jinping for "crimes against humanity" in the West Philippine Sea, Foreign Affairs secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr. tweeted that the Philippines often stood up to China.

www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/12/08/1975297/philippines-the-lead-south-china-sea-disputes-locsin-claims#YvDBshGqCQ0ZpV7I.99

6 December 2019: International Court Drops Philippine South China Sea Complaint

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has dropped a criminal complaint by two former Philippine officials against China’s president, saying it has no jurisdiction over Chinese officials accused of crimes in the disputed South China Sea.

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/icc-statement-12062019120652.html>

5 December 2019: Malaysia points to top concerns in first-ever defense whitepaper

Malaysia has unveiled its first-ever defense whitepaper, identifying its maritime claims in the South China Sea as a top concern, amid a stagnant budget that continues to dog attempts at modernizing its military.

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2019/12/03/malaysia-points-to-top-concerns-in-first-ever-defense-whitepaper/>

4 December 2019: China Is Deploying Airships in the South China Sea

An Israeli satellite imagery company has posted a photo of an aerostat – a tethered balloon – floating over a Chinese island-base in the disputed region.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/china-deploying-airships-south-china-sea-101792>

2 December 2019: China suspends US Navy visits to Hong Kong over support for protests

China has suspended visits by US Navy ships and aircraft to Hong Kong after Washington passed legislation last week backing pro-democracy protesters.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-50626796>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

7 December 2019: The South China Sea conflict will dominate Vietnam’s agenda as ASEAN chair

As Vietnam assumes the ASEAN chair for 2020, its geopolitics are increasingly defined by how it manages Chinese aggression in the South China Sea.

<https://www.aseantoday.com/2019/12/the-south-china-sea-conflict-will-dominate-vietnams-agenda-as-asean-chair/>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

16 December 2019: Philippines, France eye enhanced maritime defense pact

The Philippines is eyeing another agreement with France to strengthen maritime defense cooperation. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and French Defense Minister Florence Parly recently signed the Letter of Intent on Enhancing Defense Cooperation in the Maritime Domain in Paris.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/12/16/1977483/philippines-france-eye-enhanced-maritime-defense-pact>

14 December 2019: US Navy commander: China 'bullying' Southeast Asian neighbours

China's activities in territory it claims in the South China Sea are meant to intimidate other nations in the region, Admiral John Aquilino, the commander of the US Navy's Pacific Fleet said on Friday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/navy-commander-china-bullying-southeast-asian-neighbours-191214012935057.html>

8 December 2019: US Air Force conducts overflights at SCS

“We’ve been flying in and around the South China Sea for really about the last 15 years and I would probably tell you we’ve done some as recently as this week,” US Pacific Air Forces Commander Gen. Charles Brown said. “It doesn’t probably get as much press as what you hear about the freedom of navigation and the maritime environment, but we do hear about it because we do get calls from PRC,” Brown said, referring to China.

www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/12/08/1975209/us-air-force-conducts-overflights-scs#YsUbRDZXrxFhP5Ug.99

8 December 2019: Taiwan the right choice for helping the US Navy

As China rejects port calls in Hong Kong by US warships, Taiwan — which has the geographic advantage of being between the South China Sea north of the Philippines and the East China Sea south of Japan — is the best choice to take over.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2019/12/08/2003727159>

7 December 2019: Australia and Indonesia voice 'serious concerns' about South China Sea

Australia and Indonesia have jointly declared "serious concerns" about the state of the South China Sea, issuing a warning about China's militarisation of the contested waters and urging adherence to international law.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australia-and-indonesia-voice-serious-concerns-about-south-china-sea-20191207-p53hst.html>

7 December 2019: British navy vessel passes through Taiwan Strait

A British navy survey vessel sailed through the Taiwan Strait, it was announced on Saturday, as the United Kingdom steps up its presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3041076/british-navy-vessel-passes-through-taiwan-strait>

4 December 2019: Chinese, US generals vow to manage military differences, like South China Sea

China and the United States will work together to manage their differences and maintain stable military ties, two of their top generals said on Tuesday, a day after Beijing suspended visits by US warships and aircraft to Hong Kong. Relations between the US military and China's People's Liberation Army would not be affected by the ban on port calls, General Mark Milley, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and his Chinese counterpart, General Li Zuocheng, agreed in an "introductory" telephone call, according to a statement from the Pentagon.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3040580/chinese-us-generals-vow-manage-military-differences-south-china>

1 December 2019: India, Japan oppose China's bid on South China Sea code

India has joined Japan to oppose China's latest move to press the ASEAN hard to insert in the proposed Code of Conduct on the South China Sea certain clauses that would help it keep its rivals and other nations outside the region away from the disputed waters.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/india-japan-oppose-china-s-bid-on-south-china-sea-code-781449.html>