

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.94**  
**May 2021**

**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**28 May 2021: Philippines protests China's 'illegal' South China Sea presence**

The Philippines has protested China's continuing "illegal presence and activities" near an island in the South China Sea held by the Southeast Asian nation, the foreign ministry said on Saturday. Manila lodged the diplomatic protest on Friday over the "incessant deployment, prolonged presence, and illegal activities of Chinese maritime assets and fishing vessels" in the vicinity of Thitu island. It demanded its giant neighbour withdraw the vessels.

<https://whbl.com/2021/05/28/philippines-protests-chinas-illegal-south-china-sea-presence/>

**24 May 2021: PLA warplanes rain down thousands of munitions in S. China Sea shooting exercise**

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy announced on Monday that it recently conducted a live-fire exercise in the South China Sea, in which warplanes rained down thousands of munitions at maritime targets as the pilots enhanced their sea assault and precision strike capabilities.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202105/1224302.shtml>

**22 May 2021: PH seeks resolution of Gem-Ver sinking in talks with China on S. China Sea**

The Philippines and China on Friday tackled the possible conclusion of the incident where a Chinese ship rammed a Filipino vessel in Reed Bank in the West Philippine Sea, as the two countries held its 6th bilateral meeting on the disputed South China Sea, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said. In a statement, the DFA said the country highlighted the "progress" involving F/B Gem-Ver, a vessel that sank in waters within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea in 2019 by a Chinese militia vessel.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/22/21/gemver-compensation-boat-sinking-china-philippines-south-china-sea>

**22 May 2021: Philippines and China hold 'friendly and candid' talks on South China Sea**

The Philippines and China held "friendly and candid" talks on the South China Sea, the Philippines' foreign ministry said on Saturday, days after the minister ordered Chinese vessels out of the disputed waterway in an expletive-laced tweet. "The two sides had friendly and candid exchanges on the general situation and specific issues of concern in the South China Sea," under a bilateral consultation mechanism convened in 2016 to ease tensions in the strategic waterway, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said in a statement. "There was mutual recognition of the importance of dialogue in easing tensions and understanding each country's position and intentions in the area," the DFA said.

<https://wtvbam.com/2021/05/22/philippines-and-china-hold-friendly-and-candid-talks-on-south-china-sea/>

### **20 May 2021: Chinese Maritime Militia Unit Releases Video Celebrating Military Role**

The locally-organized units of China's paramilitary maritime militia usually try to keep a low profile, maintaining the appearance of everyday Chinese fishing companies. When tensions with neighboring states arise and the militia deploys, Beijing often denies its existence and describes militia members as innocent fishermen. However, a unit in Sansha City recently took a different tack, publishing a patriotic music video describing its non-commercial duties.

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/chinese-maritime-militia-unit-releases-music-video-of-its-real-duties>

### **19 May 2021: CNOOC erects 15,000-ton offshore oil platform in South China Sea**

China's largest domestically designed offshore oil platform, Lufeng 14-4 central platform completed deployment, and will be put into operation at the end of 2021, according to a statement by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) released on Wednesday.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202105/1223867.shtml>

### **18 May 2021: PH files diplomatic protest over China's fishing ban in South China Sea**

The Philippines filed yet another diplomatic protest against China, this time against the East Asian giant's "unilateral" imposition of a fishing ban in the South China Sea. "China's annual fishing moratorium extends far beyond China's legitimate maritime entitlements under UNCLOS and is without basis under international law. China cannot legally impose nor legally enforce such a moratorium in the West Philippine Sea," The Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday.

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/5/18/PH-diplomatic-protest-China-fishing-ban.html>

### **18 May 2021: Philippines' Duterte issues gag order over South China Sea**

President Rodrigo Duterte said on Tuesday the Philippines would not waver in defence of its interests in the South China Sea, even though he had barred his ministers from talking about the situation there in public. China's maritime conduct has been a constant problem for Duterte but he has refrained from criticising Beijing and instead praised its leadership, hoping to secure investment. But after weeks of rebukes of China by his ministers over the presence of hundreds of fishing vessels in the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), he told his ministers on Monday they must refrain from discussing the matter.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-duterte-issues-gag-order-cabinet-over-south-china-sea-spat-2021-05-17/>

**"If we talk, we talk but just among us," he said in a televised address.**

**13 May 2021: China says Japan's military drills with France, US are a waste of fuel**

China has described the military exercises in southern Japan involving troops and hardware from France, Japan, the United States and Australia as a waste of fuel, but observers say they may signal a tightening of the US alliance in the region.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3133396/china-says-japans-military-drills-france-us-are-waste-fuel>

#### **14 May 2021: Taiwan builds wastewater treatment plant on disputed South China Sea island**

A wastewater treatment plant Kaohsiung is building on the disputed South China Sea island of Dongsha will be completed next month, reports said Friday (May 14). The island, also known as Pratas, is claimed by several countries, including China, but is controlled by Taiwan as part of the Kaohsiung City district of Qijin. It is 444 kilometers from Kaohsiung.

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4203343>

#### **12 May 2021: Philippines plans South China Sea ‘logistics hub’, as Beijing accused of increasing boats**

The Philippines’ Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr on Wednesday said he was considering filing another diplomatic protest against China after it added more ships in a disputed area of the South China Sea, saying the vessels in the contested waters had “increased” to almost 300 from just over 200 in March.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3133239/philippines-plans-south-china-sea-logistics-hub-beijing-accused>

#### **12 May 2021: Fisherfolk group says Filipino fishers have lost control of Scarborough Shoal**

A fisherfolk group said on Wednesday, May 12, Filipino fishers who used to frequent Scarborough Shoal are now unable to return to traditional fishing grounds in fear of being harassed or driven away by Chinese vessels.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/12/fisherfolk-group-says-filipino-fishers-lost-control-of-scarborough-shoal/>

#### **12 May 2021: Locsin tells Roque: Drop the subject, leave foreign affairs to me**

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said this in reaction to presidential spokesperson Harry Roque’s claim that the Julian Felipe Reef is not part of the country’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ). “There is only one voice on what’s ours: mine. Period. Not even the military has any say. I speak for the President on this subject,” Locsin said on Twitter Tuesday night.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/196108/locsin-tells-roque-drop-the-subject-leave-foreign-affairs-to-me#ixzz6unqbU6lK>

#### **11 May 2021: Locsin orders filing of protest over presence of 287 Chinese vessels in WPS**

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. on Thursday ordered the filing of a diplomatic protest over the presence of 287 Chinese vessels scattered in the West

Philippine Sea. “@DFAPHL (Department of Foreign Affairs), fire diplomatic protest,” Locsin said on Twitter, tagging the official account of the DFA.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/196162/fwd-locsin-orders-filing-of-protest-over-presence-of-287-chinese-vessels-in-wps#ixzz6unptU4He>

### **11 May 2021: Palace claims Julian Felipe Reef 'not within EEZ' but still claimed by PH**

After both the Philippine defense and foreign departments said Julian Felipe Reef is within the country's exclusive economic zone and filed diplomatic protests on this basis, Malacañang now sings a different tune. Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque, on Tuesday, May 11, insisted in a press conference that Julian Felipe Reef is outside the EEZ but is still being claimed by the Philippines through a Marcos-era presidential decree. "Hindi 'yan kabahagi ng EEZ ha, 'yung Julian Felipe. Labas po 'yan, ganyan po kalayo 'yan," said Roque. (That's not within our EEZ, that Julian Felipe. It's outside, it's that far.)

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/malacanang-claims-julian-felipe-reef-not-within-eez-still-claimed-philippines>

### **9 May 2021: China, Indonesia holds joint naval exercises near Jakarta**

China and Indonesia conducted joint naval exercises in waters off Jakarta, Beijing said on Sunday, as the two countries work to improve trust and cooperation amid tensions in the South China Sea. The drills, which took place on Saturday morning, were part of the PLA Navy's annual training programme, the defence ministry said. China's Liuzhou and Suqian guided-missile frigates joined Indonesia's KRI Usman Harun frigate and KRI Halasan missile craft in the exercises, which included communication drills, search and rescue operations and formation manoeuvres, it said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3132821/china-indonesia-hold-joint-naval-exercises-near-jakarta>

### **8 May 2021: PH asserts arbitral award on South China Sea, calls for greater ASEAN-US maritime cooperation**

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) made the statement after the Philippines joined the 34th Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United States (ASEAN-US) Dialogue held via video conference on May 6. In a statement, the DFA said Acting Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Affairs and Philippine Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Leader Elizabeth Buensuceso represented the Philippines in the dialogue. The DFA said Buensuceso also stressed the importance of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the midst of regional uncertainty in the South China Sea in her lead intervention during the meeting.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/08/ph-asserts-arbitral-award-on-south-china-sea-calls-for-greater-asean-us-maritime-cooperation/>

### **7 May 2021: Protesters Demand China Leave South China Sea Territories**

Dozens of protesters held a rally outside the Chinese Consulate in Manila on Friday, demanding China to get out of territories in the South China Sea claimed by the Philippines.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/protesters-demand-china-leave-south-china-sea-territories.html>

### **7 May 2021: China Denounces G7 Communique on Beijing's 'assertiveness' In South China Sea Feud**

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin strongly condemned these observations of the G7 meeting held in the United Kingdom. In a joint statement released on Wednesday in London, representatives from the G7 which includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the USA, had denounced Chinese presence and actions in the east and the South China Sea. Wang condemned the G7 nations in a news conference, saying their move is an interference in China's sovereignty and runs counter to the current trend of peaceful development and cooperation. He reiterated China's stance on its territorial claims in the Seas, clarifying those are basic legal grounds.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/china/china-denounces-g7-communique-on-beijings-assertiveness-in-south-china-sea-feud.html>

### **7 May 2021: CNOOC begins production at Liuhua 29-2 gas field in South China Sea**

Located 300km south-east of Hong Kong in a water depth of approximately 750m, the Liuhua 29-2 gas field includes a new subsea wellhead. CNOOC said a new subsea wellhead has been built, with one development well planned that will utilise the existing production facilities of Liwan 3-1 gas field and other deepwater gas fields. The company expects the Liuhua 29-2 gas field to reach peak production of approximately 41 million cubic feet of natural gas per day this year.

<https://www.offshore-technology.com/news/cnooc-production-liuhua-29-2-field/>

### **6 May 2021: Historic international ruling on South China Sea 'just paper' fit for rubbish bin: Philippine President Duterte**

President Rodrigo Duterte said on Wednesday (May 6) the historic legal victory for the Philippines against China over the South China Sea amounted to "just paper" fit for the rubbish bin. "That paper, in reality among nations, is just paper. It's nothing... In street talk, I will tell you to give it to me, and I will tell you it's just paper. I'll throw it into the wastebasket," he said in his weekly televised address meant to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

[https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/historic-international-ruling-on-south-china-sea-just-paper-fit-for-rubbish-bin-duterte?fbclid=IwAR3cRk9\\_9NruM2OqhaiMvITF\\_zkXy9d6GXm80AO5ChvQABSsO7tXBRVXQg](https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/historic-international-ruling-on-south-china-sea-just-paper-fit-for-rubbish-bin-duterte?fbclid=IwAR3cRk9_9NruM2OqhaiMvITF_zkXy9d6GXm80AO5ChvQABSsO7tXBRVXQg)

### **4 May 2021: Philippines tells fishermen to ignore Beijing's ban on fishing in South China Sea**

The Philippines has rejected an annual summer fishing ban imposed by China in the disputed South China Sea and encouraged its boats to keep fishing in the country's territorial waters. The fishing moratorium imposed by China since 1999 runs from May 1

to Aug. 16 and covers areas of the South China Sea as well as other waters off China. “This fishing ban does not apply to our fishermen,” the Philippines’ South China Sea taskforce said in a statement late on Tuesday. The taskforce opposed China’s imposition of the ban over the areas within the territory and jurisdiction of the Philippines, adding “our fisherfolk are encouraged to go out and fish in our waters in the WPS (West Philippine Sea)”

<https://kfgo.com/2021/05/04/philippines-tells-fishermen-to-ignore-beijings-ban-on-fishing-in-south-china-sea/>

#### **4 May 2021: Philippine foreign minister tells China to 'Get the F\*\*k Out' over South China Sea dispute**

The Philippine foreign minister on Monday demanded in an expletive-laced Twitter message that China's vessels get out of disputed waters, the latest exchange in a war of words with Beijing over the South China Sea. The comments by Teodoro Locsin, known for blunt remarks, follow Manila's protests for what it calls the "illegal" presence of hundreds of Chinese boats inside the Philippines' 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/03/asia/philippines-locsin-profanity-south-china-sea-intl-hnk/index.html>

#### **4 May 2021: AFP eyes logistics hub in Pag-asa island for uninterrupted WPS patrols**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is setting its sights on transforming the Philippine-occupied Pag-asa (Thitu) Island in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) into a military logistics hub. Pag-asa, the biggest and most strategically important Philippine outpost in the Kalayaan Island Group, is 400 kilometers from mainland Palawan province. It is the only Philippine-held feature with a civilian community, while eight other islands and reefs are occupied by Filipino troops. “We came up with the proposal to turn our municipality in Pag-asa into a logistics hub so our ships, instead of going back to Puerto Princesa to refuel, will get their supplies there,” said AFP chief Gen. Cirilito Sobejana in an interview with radio station dzBB on Tuesday (May 4).

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/195841/afp-eyes-logistics-hub-in-pag-asa-island-for-uninterrupted-wps-patrols#ixzz6u8nsiCKo>

#### **4 May 2021: Philippines Accuses China of Harassing Coast Guard Ships**

The Philippines on Monday accused Chinese ships of harassing its coast guard in the South China Sea, with Manila calling it a “blatant infringement’ of sovereignty and the foreign secretary using profanity to demand that Beijing withdraw vessels from his country’s exclusive economic zone. Between Jan. 1 and March 18, Philippine maritime patrols had spotted “hundreds of Chinese vessels” in parts of the South China Sea that Manila claims as territory, including Pag-asa, Subi and Loaita islands, Lankiam Cay, Second Thomas Shoal, Jackson Atoll and Scarborough Shoal, the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. The DFA said it “protested the shadowing, blocking, dangerous maneuver, and radio challenges by the Chinese Coast Guard of Philippine Coast Guard vessels conducting legitimate maritime patrols and training in the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc on 24 to 25 April 2021.”

[https://www.eurasiareview.com/04052021-philippines-accuses-china-of-harassing-coast-guard-ships/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasia-review%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](https://www.eurasiareview.com/04052021-philippines-accuses-china-of-harassing-coast-guard-ships/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasia-review%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

### **2 May 2021: China says its carrier group conducts exercise in South China Sea**

China's Shandong aircraft carrier task group recently conducted an exercise in the South China Sea, the country's People's Liberation Army (PLA) said on Sunday. China has repeatedly complained about United States Navy ships getting close to islands it occupies in the South China Sea, where Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan all also have competing claims.

<https://whbl.com/2021/05/02/china-says-its-carrier-group-conducts-exercise-in-south-china-sea/>

### **1 May 2021: Annual fishing ban starts in South China Sea**

The annual summer fishing moratorium in the South China Sea started on May 1. The fishing ban, which spans three and a half months, covers the waters north to 12 degrees north latitude of the South China Sea.

[http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202105/01/content\\_WS608cf0cac6d0df57f98d8f22.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202105/01/content_WS608cf0cac6d0df57f98d8f22.html)

### **30 April 2021: China Condemns 'Vile' U.S. Warship for Disrupting Navy Exercise**

Beijing has lodged a diplomatic complaint over the conduct of U.S. Navy destroyer USS Mustin, which shadowed a Chinese aircraft carrier group for three weeks as it held exercises in the Western Pacific and South China Sea. At a press conference on Thursday, China's defense ministry spokesperson Wu Qian accused the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer of "persistent close-range reconnaissance" as the People's Liberation Army task group led by Liaoning conducted exercises this month.

<https://www.newsweek.com/china-decries-vile-us-warship-disrupting-navy-exercise-1587452>

### **29 April 2021: Vietnam Protests Renewal of China's Fishing Ban in South China Sea**

The Vietnamese government denounced Thursday China's annual, unilateral fishing ban in the South China Sea, which begins May 1. "Vietnam opposes and resolutely rejects China's unilateral decision," Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Spokesman Doan Khac Viet said at a press conference in Hanoi. He said it violated Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracel Islands, the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea agreed by the Southeast Asian bloc in 2003. Viet added it "violates the Vietnam-China agreement on the basic principles guiding the settlement of sea-related issues."

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/china-southchinasea-04292021181503.html>

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

### **19 May 2021: The 27th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Consultation**

At the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Consultation, the Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs emphasised on ASEAN- China cooperation on sustainable development, proposed ways forward in reinvigorating regional growth by encouraging an early entry into force of the RCEP Agreement, and invited ASEAN and China to explore possible cooperation on BCG Economy Model. The Meeting agreed to the convening of Special - China FMM in June 2021 in Chongqing. ASEAN and China also exchanged views on regional and international issues, including the situation in the South China Sea. The Meeting reaffirmed commitment towards an early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, consistent with international law.

<https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/27acsoc-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683e>

### **13 May 2021: China Proposing to Host ASEAN Ministers Next Month**

Citing Chinese government sources, Mainichi Japan reported on Friday that the Chinese government is considering hosting a summit with ASEAN foreign ministers in a city other than the capital Beijing.

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/china-proposing-to-host-asean-ministers-next-month/>

### **6 May 2021: US supports ASEAN in South China Sea issues**

Diplomats of 10 ASEAN member states and the US affirmed at the 34th ASEAN-US Dialogue held via videoconference on May 6 to strengthen cooperation in solving the South China Sea issues. Washington has affirmed that it continues supporting ASEAN principles in the South China Sea issues, welcoming the bloc's role in promoting cooperation, dialogue, and confidence building. The US reaffirmed the importance of the substantive implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and effective negotiations of Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) to be suitable with international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

<http://hanoitimes.vn/us-supports-asean-in-south-china-sea-issues-317253.html>

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

### **25 May 2021: Japan hands over fishery patrol vessel to Indonesia**

Japan has handed over a fishery patrol vessel to facilitate Indonesia in preventing illegal fishing in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea. According to a press release issued by the Japanese Embassy in Jakarta on Tuesday, the handover was made to stop rampant illegal fishing activities far from the coast, as Indonesia currently lacked the proper capabilities to monitor its territorial waters. "This time, a Fishery Patrol Vessel, namely Shirahagi-maru, has been handed over to increase the surveillance capacity of the Indonesian authorities," the embassy said.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/japan-hands-over-fishery-patrol-vessel-to-indonesia/2253642>

### **22 May 2021: China not mentioned in US-S.Korea joint statement**

A joint statement issued by US President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in has stressed the importance of the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and human rights but without directly mentioning China. Biden and Moon issued a joint statement after holding a summit in Washington on Friday.



[https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20210522\\_15/](https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20210522_15/)

**22 May 2021: UK's Johnson tells China: We believe in rule of the sea**

The first operational deployment of Britain's flagship aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth to Asia will show countries such as China that Britain believes in the international law of the sea, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Friday. Johnson said the Carrier Strike Group, which will interact with more than 40 nations on the deployment through the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and South China Sea to Japan, would project Britain's values as well as its military capabilities.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/uks-johnson-tells-china-we-believe-rule-sea-2021-05-21/>

**20 May 2021: Japan Prime Minister raises South China Sea concerns with Duterte**

China's controversial Coast Guard Law and the 2016 Hague ruling won by the Philippines against Beijing were discussed by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Japan Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga in a phone call on Wednesday evening, May 19. The phone call was initiated by Suga and lasted 20 minutes, according to Malacañang. Both Malacañang's and the Japanese embassy's notes about the phone conversation between the two leaders mentioned China as a major topic of the discussion. According to the Japanese embassy, Suga brought up his "grave concerns about recent developments in China, including the Coast Guard Law."

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/japan-prime-minister-suga-raises-south-china-sea-concerns-duterte-may-2021>

**20 May 2021: Biden: U.S. Must Defend Sea Lanes in Arctic, South China Sea**

President Joe Biden says the U.S. must defend open and safe sea lanes in the Arctic and South China Sea as nations including Russia and China seek to assert greater control over the maritime regions. He speaks at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, in his first commencement address as president.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2021-05-20/biden-u-s-must-defend-sea-lanes-in-arctic-south-china-sea-video>

**20 May 2021: China says US warship illegally entered its territory in South China Sea**

China said on Thursday (May 20) that a United States warship illegally entered its territorial waters in the South China Sea, the latest salvo in the two nations' dispute over Beijing's territorial claims in the busy waterway. In a statement, the Chinese military's Southern Theater Command said that the USS Curtis Wilbur entered the waters near the Paracel Islands without permission, adding that its ships and planes followed the US vessel.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/china-us-south-china-sea-warship-illegally-enters-territory-14847810>

**19 May 2021: China protests latest US Navy passage through Taiwan Strait**

China on Wednesday protested the latest passage by a U.S. Navy ship through the Taiwan Strait, calling it a provocation that undermined peace and stability in the region.

The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said that the guided missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur conducted a routine Taiwan Strait transit on Tuesday in accordance with international law. The passage "demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"The United States military will continue to fly, sail, and operate anywhere international law allows," the Navy said in a statement.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/china-protests-latest-us-navy-passage-taiwan-strait-77771083>

### **18 May 2021: Japan, Vietnam leaders oppose China's maritime actions in phone talks**

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh affirmed their opposition to China's growing maritime assertiveness during phone talks Monday, the first between the two leaders since Chinh was elected last month. In their roughly 30-minute call, the two also voiced grave concerns regarding China's implementation of a new law in February that allows its coast guard to use weapons against ships it views as intruding into its territory.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/05/100be30b514f-japan-vietnam-leaders-oppose-chinas-maritime-actions-in-phone-talks.html>

### **11 May 2021: Civilian ship suspected of spying on China for the US military**

The US military apparently hired a mysterious Norwegian civilian ship for close reconnaissance in China, near the island of Taiwan, and in the South China Sea, analysts warned on Monday. The Grand Canyon II, a multirole construction support vessel seemingly affiliated to Helix Energy, a US oil and gas services company, and has many connections the US military, has been undertaking undisclosed operations during the past months, the South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative (SCSPI), a Beijing-based think tank, said on Sunday.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202105/1223112.shtml>

### **6 May 2021: G7 raises concern over China's actions in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and South China Sea**

Foreign ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) countries rebuked China on issues concerning Hong Kong, human rights violations in Xinjiang, and military build-up in South China Sea. "We remain seriously concerned about the situation in and around the East and South China Seas. We underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues," the G7 ministers said.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/g7-raises-concern-over-chinas-actions-in-hong-kong-xinjiang-and-south-china-sea/articleshow/82423498.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/g7-raises-concern-over-chinas-actions-in-hong-kong-xinjiang-and-south-china-sea/articleshow/82423498.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

### **6 May 2021: Austal sails into South China Sea, backed by might of US**

Perth-based Austal is set to become a joint owner of strategically important shipyards on the edge of the flashpoint South China Sea, alongside a giant US private entity firm with strong ties to the Pentagon. Austal is closing in on the acquisition of the Hanjin shipyards

at Subic Bay in the Philippines in partnership with Cerberus Capital Management, whose co-founder Stephen Feinberg was a major donor to former US president Donald Trump and a member of his Intelligence Advisory Board.

<https://www.afr.com/politics/austal-sailing-into-south-china-sea-backed-by-might-of-us-20210506-p57pec>

**5 May 2021: Japan ‘concerned’ about Beijing’s moves in South China Sea**

Japan has expressed “grave concern” against “unilateral attempts” by China to “change” the status quo in the East China Sea as well as in the South China Sea. The concern was conveyed by Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi at the ongoing Group of Seven (G7) foreign ministers meeting in the UK capital London, the country’s Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday, according to Tokyo-based Kyodo News.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/japan-concerned-about-beijing-s-moves-in-south-china-sea/2230791>