

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.96
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ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

26 July 2021: China announces naval drill in South China Sea

China's Guangdong Maritime Bureau on Monday (July 26) announced that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) will conduct an exercise in the South China Sea. In a statement on its official website, the bureau said the training maneuver will be held in the waters between Guangdong's Shangchuan Island and the South China Sea on July 27 at 6:00 p.m. and will last until July 29 at 10:00 p.m.

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4258662>

26 July 2021: South China Sea: Expert says China faces a bigger domestic threat than the disputed waters

"There isn't really any threat at all to China in the South China Sea which is why I find its actions so difficult to understand," said Hayton. "I think its biggest threats are domestic in terms of making sure its own people are happy," "Nobody has any desire to invade China. All we see is coastal countries like Vietnam and the Philippines trying to protect their fishing, oil, and gas industries and ships from foreign countries sailing through the South China Sea. I don't think there's really a threat to China from the sea at the moment," added Hayton. "It's more China is taking this assertive, maybe even aggressive role towards its neighbors and other countries and that's creating push back."

<https://www.econotimes.com/South-China-Sea-Expert-says-China-faces-a-bigger-domestic-threat-than-the-disputed-waters-1613602>

24 July 2021: China criticises NBC Olympics broadcast for 'incomplete map'

China criticised NBC Universal for showing an "incomplete map" of the country in its broadcast of the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics, after a map displayed during the arrival of Chinese athletes included neither Taiwan nor the South China Sea. The Chinese consulate in New York said the display "hurt the dignity and emotions of the Chinese people", in a post on its official Weibo social media platform on Saturday.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/sport/china-criticises-nbc-olympics-broadcast-for--incomplete-map--15285052>

22 July 2021: China not exploring for oil in South China Sea, says Malacañang

The Presidential Palace on Thursday dismissed reports that China was conducting oil exploration in Philippine-claimed areas in the South China Sea. "We're confident that there's no exploration happening at Scarborough Shoal," presidential spokesman Herminio L. Roque, Jr. told a televised news briefing in mixed English and Filipino. The government would only seek an explanation from China once the country's maritime security forces, who have been patrolling the area, confirm the report, he added. Filipino fishermen from Infanta, Pangasinan in northern Philippines supposedly found an oil exploration device at sea within the country's exclusive economic zone. The equipment bore Chinese characters, they said.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/china-not-exploring-for-oil-in-south-china-sea-says-malacanang/>

20 July 2021: PLA holds drills in all major Chinese sea areas amid consecutive US military provocations

As the US recently launched consecutive military provocations against China, including landing military aircraft on the island of Taiwan and intruding in Chinese territorial waters in the South China Sea, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) held exercises in all major Chinese sea areas over the past week in moves that military experts said on Tuesday could be seen as countermeasures that displayed the PLA's determination and preparedness.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202107/1229169.shtml>

19 July 2021: Philippines Challenges Chinese Warship in South China Sea

The Philippines Coast Guard said it drove away a Chinese warship in the South China Sea, in another sign of tension between the two nations in the disputed waters.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-19/philippines-challenges-chinese-warship-in-south-china-sea>

15 July 2021: Philippines Thankful for US Resolve To Defend Manilas South China Sea Claims

"[W]e welcome the United States' open support for the 2016 Arbitral Award," Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said after he and his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) met virtually together with America's top diplomat. "It is binding international law and the most authoritative application of UNCLOS on the maritime entitlements of features in the South China Sea. As such, it contributes to the rules-based order in ASEAN and benefits all the countries that use the vital artery that is the South China Sea," he said in a statement, referring to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/15072021-philippines-thankful-for-us-resolve-to-defend-manilas-south-china-sea-claims/>

14 July 2021: Remarks of the Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy on Canada's Erroneous Statement Related to Maritime Issues

On July 11, the Global Affairs Canada released a so-called statement on South China Sea ruling. The statement disregards the historical merits and objective facts, makes irresponsible remarks on the situation of the South China Sea and the East China Sea, violates and distorts international law, deliberately stokes disputes, sows discord among regional countries and undermines regional peace and stability. China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to the wrong act by the Canadian side.

<http://ca.china-embassy.org/eng/sgxw/t1891817.htm>

13 July 2021: China begins military flights from disputed South China Sea bases

China's military recently deployed electronic warning and surveillance aircraft and helicopters on two disputed islands in the South China Sea in what analysts say is a sign that the People's Liberation Army has begun routine air operations from the bases.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/jul/13/china-begins-military-flights-disputed-south-china/>

12 July 2021: Statement of Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr. on the 5th Anniversary of the Issuance of the Award on the South China Sea Arbitration

The Award conclusively settled the status of historic rights and maritime entitlements in the South China Sea. It declared as without legal effect claims that exceed geographic and substantive limits of maritime entitlements under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. So, it did not throw historic claims out the window; it discriminated among them.

<https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/statements-and-advisoriesupdate/29134-statement-of-foreign-affairs-secretary-teodoro-l-locsin-jr-on-the-5th-anniversary-of-the-issuance-of-the-award-on-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-2>

12 July 2021: Remarks by the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam Le Thi Thu Hang regarding the the 5th Anniversary of the Final Award issued by the Arbitral Tribunal in the South China Sea Arbitration

The position of Viet Nam with regard to the settlement of relevant disputes in the East Sea (South China Sea) is clear and consistent, according to which Viet Nam always supports the settlement of disputes pertaining to the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the East Sea through diplomatic and legal processes, without threat or use of force, and by peaceful solutions and means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Convention).

https://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/tt_baochi/pbnfn/ns210713080029

12 July 2021: China vessels dumping human waste in parts of West Philippine Sea, photos show

Human waste and sewage from hundreds of Chinese ships anchored in the South China Sea and parts of the West Philippine Sea are causing massive marine damage to the resource-rich waters, a US-based expert said Monday. Liz Derr, founder and CEO of Similarity, which specializes in geospatial analysis and provides satellite data imagery, revealed that Chinese ships have been dumping raw sewage every day for several years on reefs, creating harmful Chlorophyll-a blooms in the waters. "It is so intense you can see it from space," Derr told an online forum hosted by the Stratbase ADR Institute on the 5th anniversary of the Philippines' landmark arbitral tribunal victory against China.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/795041/china-vessels-dumping-human-waste-in-parts-of-west-philippine-sea-photos-show/story/>

12 July 2021: China says 'drove away' US warship in South China Sea

China's military said on Monday it "drove away" a US warship that illegally entered Chinese waters near the Paracel Islands on Monday, the anniversary of an international court ruling that Beijing has no claim over the South China Sea. The USS Benfold entered the waters of the Paracels without the approval of the Chinese government, seriously violating China's sovereignty and undermining the stability of the South China Sea, the People's Liberation Army's Southern Theatre Command said.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/china-says-drove-away-us-warship-in-south-china-sea-673570>

8 July 2021: Beijing harasses Petronas gas project in South China Sea

China has been contesting new Malaysian oil and gas development at the Kasawari field offshore Malaysia since early June with China Coast Guard (CCG) vessels harassing the project. The harassment also coincided with Chinese military planes entering Malaysia's national airspace.

<https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/asia/335626/beijing-harasses-petronas-gas-project-in-south-china-sea/>

6 July 2021: China's biggest research ship to head to South China Sea on maiden voyage

China's newest and biggest research vessel is expected to make its maiden voyage to the South China Sea in October as part of Beijing's efforts to boost exploration in the resource-rich waters. The vessel was manufactured by Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard, builder of China's second and third aircraft carriers and was handed over to researchers at Guangzhou-based Sun Yat-sen University, after which it is named, in a ceremony in Shanghai last month. Professor Yu Weidong, from the university's school of atmospheric sciences, told the Yangcheng Evening News that the vessel would sail to the Paracel Islands in October to study "the steam of the western boundaries of the South China Sea as well as its neighbouring waters ... that could provide scientific support for disaster prevention".

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3140067/chinas-biggest-research-ship-head-south-china-sea-maiden>

2 July 2021: Vietnam orders Netflix to remove Australian spy show over South China Sea map

Netflix Inc (NFLX.O) has removed Australian spy drama "Pine Gap" from its services in Vietnam after a complaint from broadcast authorities in the Southeast Asian country about the appearance of a map which depicts Chinese claims in the South China Sea. The map, which briefly features on the screens of a control room at a spy base in two episodes of the six-part show, depicts China's unilaterally declared "nine-dash line" and is displayed within the context of maritime claims in the region.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-orders-netflix-remove-australian-spy-show-over-south-china-sea-map-2021-07-02/>

ASEAN AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

13 July 2021: Secretary Blinken's Meeting with ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the ASEAN Secretary General

Secretary Blinken stressed the U.S. commitment to working with ASEAN and international partners to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. He also emphasized the importance of taking bold action to address the climate crisis. The Secretary underscored the United States' rejection of the PRC's unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea and reiterated that the United States stands with Southeast Asian claimants in the face of PRC coercion. He pledged continued U.S. support for a free and open Mekong region under the Mekong-U.S. Partnership.

<https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-meeting-with-asean-foreign-ministers-and-the-asean-secretary-general/>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

29 July 2021: US, Vietnamese defence chiefs stress peaceful resolution of South China Sea issues

Vietnamese Minister of Defence, General Phan Văn Giang, and his US counterpart Lloyd Austin, have underlined the need to respect international law in the South China Sea (known in Việt Nam as the East Sea) during talks in Hà Nội on Thursday. The two defence chiefs said they are linked by a mutual understanding of the importance of respecting the legal rights of coastal countries, and a belief in the resolution of disputes and conflicts via peaceful means.

<https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/999618/us-vietnamese-defence-chiefs-stress-peaceful-resolution-of-south-china-sea-issues.html>

28 July 2021: U.S. 7th Fleet Task Forces 71, 75, 76 form SAG in the South China Sea

Comprised of ships and personnel from three U.S. 7th Fleet task forces, Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16), Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd (DDG 100), and a detachment from Commander, Task Group (CTG) 75.1/Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 5 joined together to form a Surface Action Group (SAG) while underway in the South China Sea.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/401878/us-7th-fleet-task-forces-71-75-76-form-sag-south-china-sea>

27 July 2021: Transcript: US Defense Secretary Austin's speech in Singapore

Integrated deterrence also means working with partners to deter coercion and aggression across the spectrum of conflict... including in the so-called "grey zone" where the rights and livelihoods of the people of Southeast Asia are coming under stress. That's why we're working to strengthen local capacity and to bolster maritime-domain awareness, so that nations can better protect their sovereignty... as well as the fishing rights and the energy resources afforded them by international law.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Transcript-US-Defense-Secretary-Austin-s-speech-in-Singapore>

27 July 2021: UK warship ignores Beijing warnings and enters the South China Sea

HMS Queen Elizabeth, a British aircraft carrier, and its Carrier Strike Group have entered the South China Sea, a territory predominantly claimed by China, reports the UK Defence Journal.

<https://www.wionews.com/world/uk-warship-ignores-beijing-warnings-and-enters-the-south-china-sea-400943>

27 July 2021: British official's remarks on South China Sea disregard facts, undermine regional stability: embassy

The Chinese Embassy in Britain on Tuesday voiced deep concern about and firm opposition to the recent remarks by a senior British official on the South China Sea as

they disregard facts and undermine regional peace and stability. Referring to British Secretary of Defense Ben Wallace's "extremely irresponsible" remarks made during a visit to Vietnam, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy said the remarks "disregard the historical merits and objective facts of the South China Sea issue, deliberately sow discord among regional countries and thus, undermine regional peace and stability." China's sovereignty, rights and interests in the South China Sea have been formed in the course of a long history and have abundant historical and legal basis, the spokesperson said, adding that they have been upheld by successive Chinese governments all along and brook no challenge by anyone.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/europe/2021-07/27/c_1310089653.htm

24 July 2021: Defence Secretary Vietnam Diplomatic Academy speech

We are here to discuss maritime security and our interests at sea – from fishing to navigation – and they are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We are here committed to upholding the rights and freedoms under the Convention, including the rights of littoral States in their Exclusive Economic Zones. In recent statements, the UK has objected to Chinese claims based on the so called ‘nine dash line’ and ‘offshore archipelagos’ concept as being unfounded in UNCLOS, and we agree with the findings of the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award in this respect. We’ve seen Vietnam fishing vessels being rammed or even sunk and Chinese vessels congregating around Whitsun Reef in the Spratlys – threatening regional stability and undermining the rule of law. And let us be clear, that is not just a regional issue, nor is it even just a maritime issue. If the terms of a law-making international treaty, bearing the signature of 168 parties, can be junked on a whim, it becomes not just an attack on one or other article or treaty but a wholesale assault on the international system.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/defence-secretary-vietnam-diplomatic-academy-speech>

21 July 2021: Japan, US, South Korea reaffirm cooperation on North Korea

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who held talks in Tokyo with her counterparts, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori and South Korea’s Choi Jong-kun, said their alliance remains a “lynchpin of peace, security and prosperity.” The officials reaffirmed the importance of respecting international law, including maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait.

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-japan-1ab747d5698354fc46af03dda6c90682>

21 July 2021: ‘We are in the same boat’: Japan urges Australia to join forces to address challenge of China

Japan’s ambassador has called on the Morrison government to consider joint military exercises with Japan in the East China Sea, saying the shipping lane is just as important as the South China Sea to Australia’s security and prosperity.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jul/21/we-are-in-the-same-boat-japan-urges-australia-to-join-forces-to-address-challenge-of-china>

20 July 2021: Japan, UK to expand defense ties at sea, military technology

The British aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth and its strike group will visit Japanese ports in September for joint exercises, defense ministers from Japan and Britain said Tuesday as the two countries step up military ties amid increased Chinese assertiveness in regional seas. British defense secretary Ben Wallace said the visit by the Royal Navy's largest warship is part of his country's "Indo-Pacific tilt" that shares goals with Japan. "Both our countries seek to protect and uphold the rules-based international order," Wallace said at a joint news conference after meeting with his Japanese counterpart, Nobuo Kishi.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japan-uk-to-expand-defense-ties-at-sea-military-technology/2021/07/20/679b5702-e94f-11eb-a2ba-3be31d349258_story.html

19 July 2021: France, South Pacific nations to combat 'predatory' fishing as China extends reach

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday France and South Pacific nations would launch a South Pacific coastguard network to counter "predatory" behaviour, which an adviser said was aimed at illegal fishing, as China expands its maritime reach.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/france-south-pacific-nations-combat-predatory-fishing-china-extends-reach-2021-07-19/>

16 July 2021: France commits to uphold UNCLOS, maritime order in Indo Pacific region, South China Sea

France has assured the Philippines that as a permanent member and president of the United Nations Security Council, it will perform its role to ensure that international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and sovereignty of its regional partners are upheld.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/07/16/france-commits-to-uphold-unclos-maritime-order-in-indo-pacific-region-south-china-sea/>

13 July 2021: China hits back after Canada wades into Hague South China Sea row
China has warned against "further damage" to its relationship with Canada and to regional peace and stability after Ottawa urged Beijing to abide by a five-year-old ruling rejecting most of its South China Sea claims.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3140941/china-hits-back-after-canada-wades-hague-south-china-sea-row>

12 July 2021: Marking the 5th Anniversary of the South China Sea Arbitral Award

Five years ago today, an Arbitral Tribunal established in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) reached a clear and unanimous decision on the South China Sea arbitration between the Philippines and China. It found that China's claim to 'historic rights' or 'maritime rights and interests' established in the 'long course of historical practice' in the South China Sea were inconsistent with UNCLOS and, to the extent of that inconsistency, invalid. The Australian Government has consistently called on the parties to the arbitration to abide by the Tribunal's decision, which is final and binding on both China and the Philippines.

<https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/marking-5th-anniversary-south-china-sea-arbitral-award>

11 July 2021: Statement by Global Affairs Canada on South China Sea ruling

On the fifth anniversary of the decision by the tribunal constituted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the matter of the South China Sea Arbitration, Canada reiterates the need for all involved parties to comply with it. This decision is a significant milestone and a useful basis for peacefully resolving disputes in the South China Sea

<https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2021/07/statement-by-global-affairs-canada-on-south-china-sea-ruling.html>

11 July 2021: Fifth Anniversary of the Arbitral Tribunal Ruling on the South China Sea

The United States reaffirms its July 13, 2020 policy regarding maritime claims in the South China Sea. We also reaffirm that an armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments under Article IV of the 1951 U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty.

<https://www.state.gov/fifth-anniversary-of-the-arbitral-tribunal-ruling-on-the-south-china-sea/>

6 July 2021: German, Chinese defence ministers discuss South China Sea in call - statement

German Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer discussed the situation in the South China Sea with her Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe, including the upcoming deployment of a German frigate there, the Berlin ministry said.

The ministry said Kramp-Karrenbauer had used the video conference to remind Wei of the importance of upholding a 2016 arbitration decision that limited China's claims to some sea areas in the body of water.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/german-chinese-defence-ministers-discuss-south-china-sea-call-statement-2021-07-06/>