

**SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.98**  
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**ACTS OF CLAIMANTS**

**30 September 2021: Philippines Files New Protests over Chinese Presence in South China Sea**

The Philippine foreign secretary on Thursday ordered that new diplomatic protests be filed against Beijing over the ongoing presence of more than 100 Chinese ships in waters claimed by Manila in the South China Sea. Teodoro Locsin Jr., who is in the United States for an official visit, issued three messages via Twitter ordering the Department of Foreign Affairs to file the protests. The new diplomatic protests are the latest since the Philippines began filing daily protests against Chinese incursions in Manila's exclusive economic zone in the sea earlier this year. "File now our protest on China's incessant & unlawful restriction of Filipino fishermen from conducting legitimate fishing activities in Bajo de Masinloc," Locsin said, using the Philippine name for the Scarborough Shoal.

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/new-protests-09302021142146.html>

**30 September 2021: Philippines defence chief says was urged by China to drop review of U.S. pact**

"While the U.S. welcomes the idea of revisiting the MDT, an outside party does not," he said. "The former Chinese ambassador came to me and said: 'Please do not touch the MDT. Leave it as it is,'" said Lorenzana. He later clarified the conversation took place in 2018. "It did surprise me. I asked him why? He said any attempt to revise the MDT would be construed by the Chinese government as act to contain the rise of China," Lorenzana told Reuters. Asked how he responded, Lorenzana said: "I just looked at him and smiled".

<https://kfgo.com/2021/09/30/philippines-defence-chief-says-was-urged-by-china-to-drop-review-of-u-s-pact/>

**29 September 2021: Philippine 'Angels of the Sea' use their voices to repel Chinese ships**

The foreign fishing boats were deep in Philippine waters near a speck of coral reef known as Sabina Shoal. They bore no official markings, but their blue hulls of reinforced steel — used to ram other vessels — were the telltale signs of Chinese maritime militia. They had not come to fish, but to stake a claim to the sea. A white patrol ship approached. A woman's voice lifted through the crackle of a radio: "This is Philippine coast guard. You are within Philippine exclusive economic zone. You are requested to provide the following: name of vessel, intention, last and next port of call." The stand-off quietly ended as all seven Chinese boats pulled up anchor and sailed to other waters. The radio operator, Ensign Gretch Mary Acuario, was hailed a hero on social media and lauded in local news reports as "the woman who made the Chinese ships go away."

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-09-29/philippines-angels-of-the-sea>

**26 September 2021: Vietnam protests China sending biggest warplane to disputed islands**

Vietnam has protested China sending its biggest warplane to disputed islands in the South China Sea in a move that Hanoi describes as seriously infringing on its maritime sovereignty and violating international laws, Vietnam's Foreign Ministry said.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2021/09/26/vietnam-protests-china-sending-biggest-warplane-to-disputed-islands>

### **22 September 2021: Duterte asserts: South China Sea Arbitral Award must be honored by all nations**

For the second time, President Duterte has stressed the importance of the 2016 Arbitral Award of the South China Sea before the United Nations (UN), saying no country can disregard it nor diminish its importance. Duterte made the statement as he virtually addressed the 76th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Wednesday morning, September 22 (Manila time). In his speech, the President stressed the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes, including the one in the South China Sea. According to Duterte, the Philippines is one with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other stakeholders in ensuring the South China Sea remains a sea of peace, security, and prosperity. “The 1982 UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the 2016 Arbitral Award of the South China Sea provide a clear path towards a just, fair, and win-win solution for all,” Duterte said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/09/22/duterte-asserts-south-china-sea-arbitral-award-must-be-honored-by-all-nations/>

### **21 September 2021: PLA holds Y-20 aircraft transport mission, landing drills in South China Sea**

In two recent, separate moves in the South China Sea, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) dispatched Y-20 large transport aircraft to reefs for troop transport missions, and conducted amphibious landing drills under complex conditions, showing the PLA's capabilities in safeguarding peace and stability in the region, analysts said on Tuesday.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234735.shtml>

### **21 September 2021: Philippines backs Australia-UK-US security alliance**

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. specifically noted the benefits of Australia's decision to join the trilateral pact that will further enhance its military capability, saying its proximity in Southeast Asia would allow it to respond quickly to regional threats and challenges. “Proximity breeds brevity in response time; thereby enhancing an ASEAN near friend and ally's military capacity to respond in timely and commensurate fashion to a threat to the region or a challenge to the status quo,” Locsin said in a statement.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/804026/philippines-backs-australia-uk-us-security-alliance/story/>

### **21 September 2021: AUKUS defense pact draws support from some Southeast Asian nations, concern from others**

Some Southeast Asian nations are concerned a new security agreement between the U.S., Australia and the United Kingdom could lead to an arms race and more aggression in the region. Some Southeast Asian nations, including Thailand and Vietnam, didn't immediately comment on AUKUS. Singapore, however, issued an upbeat statement Thursday, detailing a phone call that day between Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Morrison. Philippine National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in a call with Australian Defence Minister Peter Dutton on Friday acknowledged Australia's right to improve its submarine defense and noted that the Philippines is also building capability to protect its territories, according to a statement from the Philippines' Department of National Defense.

[https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia\\_pacific/2021-09-21/aucus-china-indonesia-malaysia-south-china-sea-2964257.html](https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2021-09-21/aucus-china-indonesia-malaysia-south-china-sea-2964257.html)

### **18 September 2021: Malaysia warns new Indo-Pacific pact may trigger nuclear arms race**

Malaysia on Saturday expressed concerns that Australia's plan to build nuclear-powered submarines under a new pact with Britain and the United States could catalyze a nuclear arms race in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia will build eight nuclear-powered submarines under an Indo-Pacific security partnership that has riled China. read more "It will provoke other powers to also act more aggressively in the region, especially in the South China Sea," Malaysia's Prime Minister Office said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/malaysia-warns-new-indo-pacific-pact-may-trigger-nuclear-arms-race-2021-09-18/>

### **17 September 2021: Indonesia adds patrols after detecting ships in South China Sea**

Indonesia's navy has increased patrols around its Natuna islands in the South China Sea after Chinese and US vessels were detected nearby in international waters, despite saying there the vessels had not caused any disturbance, a navy official said. Five navy vessels, assisted by an air patrol, have been deployed in North Natuna Sea to secure the area, Indonesian Navy western fleet commander Arsyad Abdullah told reporters on Thursday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/17/indonesia-increases-sea-patrols>

### **16 September 2021: Chinese FM stresses efforts in safeguarding peace in S.China Sea after rejecting port visit of German warship**

China urges non-regional countries to respect regional countries' efforts in safeguarding peace and stability in the South China Sea, and to play a constructive role on the issue, a spokesperson for Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday in response to China's decision to decline a German warship from docking at a Chinese port.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234510.shtml>

### **15 September 2021: Malaysia insists peace, non-militarisation in South China Sea**

Malaysia is insisting that the South China Sea remains a peaceful trade route where all parties must ensure the area's safety and avoid provocations. In a parliamentary reply yesterday, Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah said Malaysia's position on the South China Sea includes all parties' need to ensure safety, security and stability, as well as freedom of navigation and overflight.

<https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/09/15/malaysia-insists-peace-non-militarisation-in-south-china-sea/>

### **14 September 2021: China Adds Ship to South China Sea Patrol Fleet**

China has added a massive ship to its fleet of maritime patrol vessels in the South China Sea, state media has reported. The 5,560-ton Haixun 03 was launched on Tuesday and will become the largest ocean patrol ship under the Hainan Maritime Safety Administration (MSA), the official China News Service reported, adding that it would help Hainan authorities enforce jurisdiction independently.

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/new-ship-09142021170323.html>

### **14 September 2021: Chinese embassy in Vietnam slams visiting Japanese defense minister's attacks on China**

The Chinese Embassy in Vietnam on Monday refuted Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi's verbal attacks on China during his visit to Vietnam. Kishi falsely accused China of "attempting to use its power to change the status quo" in waters near Diaoyu Island, of "intensifying situation in East China Sea and South China Sea through its coast guard law," and grossly interfered in China's internal affairs related to China's Taiwan region, said the Chinese Embassy in a statement. The enactment of the coast guard law, which is China's routine

legislation, did not target any specific countries, and completely complied with international law and international practice, according to the statement.

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-09/14/c\\_1310186544.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-09/14/c_1310186544.htm)

### **12 September 2021: Wang Yi: China, Vietnam should avoid unilateral moves over South China Sea**

China and Vietnam should resolve their disputes on the South China Sea issue through friendly consultation and not take any unilateral action, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Saturday. He called for joint efforts from the two countries to maintain overall stability in the South China Sea and deepen maritime cooperation. China stands ready to work with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to advance talks on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and reach a substantive and effective COC, he said.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-09-11/Vietnam-s-leader-meets-visiting-Chinese-FM-13tBazbB7YQ/index.html>

### **12 September 2021: Japan, Vietnam sign defense transfer deal amid China worries**

Japan can now give defense equipment and technology to Vietnam under an agreement signed Saturday, as the two countries step up their military cooperation amid worries about China's growing military influence. Japan's Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said the deal elevates their defense partnership "to a new level" and that Japan and Vietnam plan to deepen defense ties through multinational joint exercises and other means. Details about the transfer of specific equipment, including naval vessels, will be worked out in subsequent talks, the ministry said.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japan-vietnam-sign-defense-transfer-deal-amid-china-worries/2021/09/11/3138b6ca-1314-11ec-baca-86b144fc8a2d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japan-vietnam-sign-defense-transfer-deal-amid-china-worries/2021/09/11/3138b6ca-1314-11ec-baca-86b144fc8a2d_story.html)

### **11 September 2021: China warns Vietnam to watch out for outside interference in South China Sea**

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned of interference from regional outsiders, as he urged Vietnam not to "magnify conflicts" in the disputed South China Sea. Wang's remarks, made during talks with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh in Hanoi on Friday, came around two weeks after visiting US Vice-President Kamala Harris called on Vietnam to join the US in challenging China's "bullying". "We should treasure the hard-won peace and stability in the South China Sea and place maritime-related problems in a suitable position. [We should] not complicate the conditions, [or] magnify conflicts through unilateral moves, and should both be alert in resisting interference and incitement from regional outsiders," Wang said, according to an official statement.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3148419/china-warns-vietnam-watch-out-outside-interference-south-china>

### **10 September 2021: Philippines vows to ignore China maritime law, seeks US help**

Philippine Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has promised that Manila will ignore China's amended maritime law, which now requires foreign vessels sailing in the South China Sea to report their information to Chinese authorities. "Our stand on that is we do not honour those laws by the Chinese within the West Philippine Sea because we consider that we have the sovereign right within this waters. So we will not recognise this law of the Chinese," Lorenzana said during an event marking the Philippines' Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) with the United States.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/10/dutertes-defence-chief-says-manila-got-less-from-us-pact>

### **9 September 2021: Philippines bets on Sampaguita as Forum prepares to drill in disputed waters of South China Sea**

The government of the Philippines is eyeing a potentially large gas discovery as UK company Forum Energy prepares to drill in the disputed waters of the South China Sea. But geologists remain skeptical about the potential and any unilateral drilling will likely draw Beijing's ire.

<https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/asia/348794/philippines-bets-on-sampaguita-as-forum-prepares-to-drill-in-disputed-south-china-sea/>

### **7 September 2021: Arbitral ruling 'crucial' in drafting Code of Conduct on South China Sea — former DFA chief**

Former Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Albert del Rosario underscored the immense importance of respecting the 2016 ruling of the Arbitral Tribunal in approaching discussions about the Code of Conduct (CoC) on the South China Sea. "What is crucial is the enforcement of the 2016 ruling, to uphold the rule of law. The CoC must be a mechanism of enforcing the arbitral tribunal [ruling] and not allow the CoC to undermine the arbitral ruling," Del Rosario said during the inaugural Ambassador Rodolfo C. Severino Jr. organized by the Ateneo de Manila University.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/09/07/arbitral-ruling-crucial-in-drafting-code-of-conduct-on-south-china-sea-former-dfa-chief/>

### **6 September 2021: Chinese research ship on maiden voyage to South China Sea amid distrust by neighbours**

One of China's most advanced new research ships has headed to the South China Sea on its maiden voyage as Beijing boosts exploration in the resource-rich waters despite distrust by its neighbours. The Shiyan 6, or Experiment 6, geophysical and seismic survey ship left a port in Guangzhou on Monday for "key scientific tasks" in the estuary of the Pearl River in Guangdong province and the northern part of the South China Sea, state-owned Science and Technology Daily reported.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/09/07/arbitral-ruling-crucial-in-drafting-code-of-conduct-on-south-china-sea-former-dfa-chief/>

### **1 September 2021: China implements revised law to boost power of maritime authorities**

China on Wednesday implemented a revised law to strengthen the power of its maritime safety authorities, amid concern that the move could escalate tensions with other countries, including Japan, in nearby waters. As Beijing claims that the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea are part of its territory, the amended Maritime Traffic Safety Law could target Japanese vessels navigating around the uninhabited islets, called Diaoyu in China.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/09/01/asia-pacific/china-maritime-law-senkakus/>

### **1 September 2021: Indonesia invites Malaysia, Singapore to join MARPOLEX**

Indonesia has invited Malaysia and Singapore to join the regional marine pollution exercise (Marpolex) to test and stimulate responses and preparedness for dealing with transboundary oil spills at sea. "Indonesia is inviting Malaysia, Singapore, and the Malacca Strait Council member in Japan to join Marpolex. We will feel highly respected if they (Malaysia and Singapore) join the exercise," director of the Marine and Coast Guard Unit of the Sea Transportation Directorate General at the Transportation Ministry, Ahmad, said in a statement here on Tuesday.



<https://en.antaranews.com/news/186902/indonesia-invites-malaysia-singapore-to-join-marpolex>

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

### **29 September 2021: South China Sea: China criticizes UK as Royal Navy ship sails in Taiwan Strait**

Beijing said that the transit by the UK's ship "harbored evil intentions." "This kind of behavior harbors evil intentions and damages peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," said the Chinese military.

<https://www.econotimes.com/South-China-Sea-China-criticizes-UK-as-Royal-Navy-ship-sails-in-Taiwan-Strait-1618222>

### **27 September 2021: UK warship makes rare transit through Taiwan Strait**

The Royal Navy said a British warship was sailing through the Taiwan Strait on Monday, a rare voyage by a non-US military vessel through the sensitive waterway that is likely to strain ties with Beijing. "After a busy period working with partners and allies in the East China Sea, we are now en route through the Taiwan Strait to visit Vietnam and the Vietnam People's Navy," tweeted HMS Richmond, a frigate deployed with Britain's aircraft carrier strike group.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210927-uk-warship-makes-rare-transit-through-taiwan-strait>

### **24 September 2021: Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group returns to South China Sea**

The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group is operating in the South China Sea for the second time during its 2021 deployment, Sept. 24. The carrier strike group includes the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) the embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, and embarked staffs of Task Force 70 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, as well as the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh (CG 67).

<https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/130922>

### **23 September 2021: Chinese, Singaporean navies hold joint drills in the South China Sea 'boosting trust and cooperation'**

A far sea training task force of three advanced warships of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy conducted joint maritime drills with the Republic of Singapore Navy in the South China Sea on Wednesday, a move that, according to experts, boosted the two navies' mutual trust and enhanced the level of military cooperation between both countries.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234992.shtml>

### **16 September 2021: China denies German warship entry on South China Sea mission**

China has denied a German warship on a mission to the contested South China Sea entry into a harbor, a German foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday. The ship involved is the frigate Bayern, the spokesperson told a news briefing, but did not identify the Chinese harbor. The vessel set sail from Germany last month for a six-month mission to the South China Sea.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/South-China-Sea/China-denies-German-warship-entry-on-South-China-Sea-mission>

### **8 September 2021: Destroyer Performs FONOP, U.S. Navy Disputes Chinese Claim That It Ousted Warship**

The U.S. Navy is disputing a claim from China that it chased an American warship out of the South China Sea after the U.S. vessel performed a freedom of navigation exercise. USS

Benfold (DDG-65) on Wednesday sailed near the Spratly Islands – which China has staked a claim to – according to a news release from U.S. 7th Fleet. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) quickly criticized the FONOP and claimed it chased the U.S. guided-missile destroyer out of the waters, according to a report in state-owned media outlet CGTN. Tian Junli, a spokesman for the PLA’s Southern Theater Command, said it “remain[s] on high alert,” CGTN reported.

<https://news.usni.org/2021/09/08/destroyer-performs-fonop-u-s-navy-disputes-chinese-claim-that-it-ousted-warship>

#### **7 September 2021: Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group enters South China Sea**

The Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group (VINCSCG) is operating in the South China Sea for the first time during the group's 2021 deployment. While in the South China Sea, the strike group is conducting maritime security operations, which include flight operations with fixed and rotary wing aircraft, maritime strike exercises, and coordinated tactical training between surface and air units. Carrier operations in the South China Sea are part of the U.S. Navy's routine presence in the Indo-Pacific.

<https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/130914>

#### **7 September 2021: Indian, Australian navies carry out military drills in South China Sea**

Indian Navy's anti-submarine warfare Corvette INS Kiltan carried out a military exercise with Australian frigate Anzac in the South China Sea, a region that has been witnessing growing Chinese military expansionism. Indian Navy officials said the exercise took place on Sunday. "Indian Navy ASW Corvette INS Kiltan exercised with Royal Australian Navy frigate Anzac in the South China Sea on September 5 as part of Indo-Pacific Endeavour," a spokesperson of the Indian Navy said.

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/indian-australian-navies-carry-out-military-drills-in-south-china-sea/2155760>

#### **6 September 2021: US: China can't require reporting for South China Sea passage**

China’s new action requiring ships to report innocent passage in the South China Sea “seems to run directly counter to international agreements” and could trigger “potential conflicts,” according to United States Coast Guard Vice Admiral Michael McAllister.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/09/06/2125196/us-china-cant-require-reporting-south-china-sea-passage>

#### **4 September 2021: India, Singapore hold drill in South China Sea**

India and Singapore on Saturday completed their three-day joint exercise at sea conducted at the southern edge of the South China Sea. The two countries did what was the 28th edition of Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX). Since the first week of August, a flotilla of four Indian warships is on an overseas deployment to the South East Asia, the South China Sea and Western Pacific. The deployment of the Indian Navy is aimed at expanding its operational reach, peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly countries. In the exercise with Singapore, three Indian Naval warships — INS Ranvijay, INS Kiltan and INS Kora — participated along with a P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft. The Singapore Navy fielded RSS Steadfast, RSS Vigour, one Archer Class Submarine and one Fokker-50 Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Four F-16 fighter aircraft also participated in the exercise.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-singapore-hold-drill-in-south-china-sea-306767>

## **2 September 2021: Beijing's new law for foreign vessels won't impact US Navy in South China Sea, Pentagon says**

An amendment to China's 1983 Maritime Traffic Safety Law that took effect Wednesday requires certain vessels to provide a checklist of information, including call signs, positions, estimated time of arrival and the next port of call, the Chinese state-run Global Times reported Sunday. The amendment specifies that submarines, nuclear-powered vessels and ships carrying dangerous substances, such as oil or chemicals, must notify Chinese officials before entering areas China claims as territorial waters, according to the Naval War College's Stockton Center for International Law. The amendment was approved in April by China's Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. However, U.S. forces, under international law, will continue to transit those areas or operate in them, according to a Defense Department spokesman. "The United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," Lt. Col. Martin Meiners told Stars and Stripes in an email Wednesday.

[https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia\\_pacific/2021-09-02/china-maritime-law-us-navy-south-china-sea-foreign-ships-2750582.html](https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2021-09-02/china-maritime-law-us-navy-south-china-sea-foreign-ships-2750582.html)

## **2 September 2021: US says new Chinese rule that vessels register for South China Sea access threatens freedom of navigation**

The Pentagon on Wednesday appeared to dismiss Beijing's new demand that all foreign ships entering the South China Sea must register with Chinese maritime authorities, calling it a "serious threat" to freedom of navigation and trade. "The United States remains firm that any coastal state law or regulation must not infringe upon navigation and overflight rights enjoyed by all nations under international law," said John Supple, a Pentagon spokesman, in response to questions about China's decree this week. "Unlawful and sweeping maritime claims, including in the South China Sea, pose a serious threat to the freedom of the seas, including the freedoms of navigation and overflight, free trade and unimpeded lawful commerce, and the rights and interests of South China Sea and other littoral nations," he said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3147229/us-says-new-chinese-rule-vessels-register-south-china-sea-access>

## **2 September 2021: China tells U.S. prolonged tensions would hurt climate cooperation**

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has told U.S. climate envoy John Kerry that prolonged tensions between the world's two major powers would make it difficult for them to work together in the climate field, according to official Chinese media. Wang's remarks on Wednesday came as Beijing has been at odds with Washington over several issues, including its alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang, the crackdown on freedoms in Hong Kong, and security challenges to Taiwan and in the South China Sea.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/09/fb68ea859633-china-tells-us-prolonged-tensions-would-hurt-climate-cooperation.html>