

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.100
November 2021

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

25 November 2021: Philippines rejects China's demand to remove ship from disputed South China Sea shoal

The Philippines has rejected China's demand to remove its naval ship anchored on a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, its defence chief said on Thursday, adding that Chinese coast guard ships should leave the area and stop blocking Manila's supply boats. The Philippines intentionally grounded a warship, BRP Sierra Madre, at the Second Thomas shoal in 1999 to reinforce Manila's sovereignty claims in the Spratly archipelago, according to Reuters.

<https://www.wionews.com/world/philippines-rejects-chinas-demand-to-remove-ship-from-disputed-south-china-sea-shoal-431951>

24 November 2021: South China Sea: China issues warning against US as warship sails through Taiwan Strait

Nations are still at odds against China over the South China Sea, including the Taiwan Strait. Following the passage of a US warship in the narrow region of water, China has issued a warning on the US against making any provocation.

<https://www.econotimes.com/South-China-Sea-China-issues-warning-against-US-as-warship-sails-through-Taiwan-Strait-1622018>

23 November 2021: Philippine supply boats reach marines at China-guarded shoal

The Philippine navy successfully transported food supplies to Filipino forces guarding a disputed shoal in the South China Sea on Tuesday, a week after China's coast guard used water cannons to force the supply boats to turn back, sparking outrage and warnings from Manila, officials said.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/philippine-supply-boats-reach-marines-at-china-guarded-shoal-1.5677297>

22 November 2021: Philippines' Duterte condemns South China Sea flare-up

Duterte made the remarks at an Asian regional summit hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who vowed his country would "never seek hegemony, and certainly not bully the small". China claims almost all of the waterway, through which trillions of dollars in trade passes annually, with competing claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. Beijing has ignored a 2016 ruling by The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration that its historical claim is without basis.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211122-philippines-duterte-condemns-south-china-sea-flare-up>

21 November 2021: Philippines set to resume resupply mission to South China Sea

The Philippines' defence chief said on Sunday a military resupply mission for the country's troops stationed on an atoll in the South China Sea will resume this week, after it was aborted last week when it was blocked by Chinese coast guard.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-set-resume-resupply-mission-south-china-sea-2021-11-21/>

19 November 2021: China uses maritime militia to assert claim on South China Sea

There may be as many as 300 vessels from China's maritime militia patrolling the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea at any one time as Beijing continues to stake its controversial

claim on the disputed waters, according to new research from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in the United States.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/19/china-supports-maritime-militia-to-assert-south-china-sea-claim>

18 November 2021: Philippines says China blocked boats, fired water cannons in South China sea

Two Philippine boats carrying food supplies for soldiers to the disputed Second Thomas shoal were blocked by the Chinese coast guard, who allegedly fired water cannons on them. No injuries were reported in the incident.

<https://www.dw.com/en/philippines-says-china-blocked-boats-fired-water-cannons-in-south-china-sea/a-59852252>

17 November 2021: Philippines, Viet Nam Agree to Resume Joint Marine Scientific Research Expedition

Upholding the rule of the law in the South China Sea and the revival of the joint marine scientific research expedition, which has been halted since 2007, were among the highlights of the 9th Philippines-Viet Nam Joint Permanent Working Group on Maritime and Ocean Concerns (JPWG-MOC) held on 08 November 2021 via video conference. The Philippines and Viet Nam discussed various initiatives for science-based cooperation particularly on marine scientific research, marine environment protection, and hydrometeorology in the 9th JPWG-MOC. Both delegations also substantively covered other issues, including coordination within regional and international fora, fisheries, and maritime security cooperation.

<https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/29737-philippines-viet-nam-agree-to-resume-joint-marine-scientific-research-expedition>

17 November 2021: US, PH tackle S. China Sea, security cooperation in strategic talks

The Philippines and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to peace and security in the Asia Pacific during their 9th Bilateral Strategic Dialogue this week, noting the importance of a rules-based order in the disputed South China Sea. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) earlier said this year's Bilateral Strategic Dialogue aims to discuss "regional and global issues, and... political, security, and economic cooperation," among others.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/17/21/us-ph-tackle-s-china-sea-cooperation-in-talks>

15 November 2021: Chinese bombers in night drills amid Taiwan, South China Sea tensions

The Chinese navy has stepped up assault training and combat readiness with a series of night bombing drills in waters off the southern island of Hainan. The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Southern Theatre Command said on Sunday that dozens of bombers from a naval aviation regiment carried out patrols earlier this month to improve the crews' stamina and situational awareness at night. In the "high intensity" exercise, H-6J bombers practised fending off ship and ground attacks as well as firing tactics.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3156148/chinese-bombers-night-drills-amid-taiwan-south-china-sea>

15 November 2021: Vietnam Construction Continues at 3 South China Sea Locations, Images Show

Vietnam is carrying out construction on three islands in the South China Sea at the same time, satellite images show. Images from Planet Labs analyzed by Radio Free Asia, a sister

entity of BenarNews, show works are being conducted on Pearson Reef, Namyit Island and Sand Cay, all in the disputed Spratly Islands.

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/sea-construction-11152021173116.html>

13 November 2021: Chinese cargo ship sank in South China sea, 13 crew rescued

Cargo ship HANGSHENG88 sank in the afternoon Nov 12 40 nm off the coast of Huilai County, eastern coast of Guangdong province, China, South China sea (east of Hong Kong), cause of accident unknown, understood there was water ingress, probably list. 13 crew went into lifeboat and were rescued in the course of full-scale rescue operation, directed by Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, all are safe. Ship's AIS is off since June this year.

<https://www.maritimebulletin.net/2021/11/13/chinese-cargo-ship-sank-in-south-china-sea-13-crew-rescued/>

12 November 2021: China's 3rd aircraft carrier may be launched in early 2022, think tank says

The construction of China's third aircraft carrier is making steady progress and the carrier, known as Type 003, may be launched as soon as February next year, a U.S. think tank said.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, based in Washington D.C., said in a new report that commercial satellite imagery of Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai shows that the installation of the vessel's main external components "is nearing completion."

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/carrier-launch-11122021161031.html>

11 November 2021: Chinese research wharf being built near largest fishing port on South China Sea

China is building its first scientific research wharf in the southern island of Hainan, in its latest effort to boost exploration in the resource-rich South China Sea amid lingering distrust among Southeast Asian neighbours regarding the aims. The Nanshan Port Public Scientific Research Wharf, the first of its kind in China, is now under construction in Yazhou district in Hainan province's southernmost city of Sanya, according to industry publication China Shipping News.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3155703/chinese-research-wharf-being-built-near-largest-fishing-port>

10 November 2021: Need diplomatic solution to South China Sea issue: Malaysia

Malaysia agrees with Indonesia that the South China Sea issue must be resolved through the diplomatic channel with respect for international law, Malaysian Prime Minister Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has said. He made the remarks during a joint press conference with President Joko Widodo following their meeting at the Bogor Presidential Palace in West Java on Wednesday.

<https://en.antaranews.com/news/198921/need-diplomatic-solution-to-south-china-sea-issue-malaysia>

9 November 2021: Taiwan sent submarine to drills near disputed South China Sea Island

Taiwan sent its aging Hai Lung submarine to participate in defense drills near its disputed South China Sea island of Taiping, according to a report published by the Ministry of National Defense Tuesday (Nov. 9). Amid rising tension with China, experts have warned that Beijing might try and wrest control of Taiping and another Taiwanese-held island, Dongsha, from Taiwan rather than launch a full-scale attack on the country.

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4339473>

8 November 2021: China ‘Clearly’ Developing Aviation and Maritime Capabilities to Counter U.S. in Indo-Pacific, Says Pentagon

China continues to pursue both aviation and maritime capabilities to counter the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday. Asked about China’s range targets that are shaped like U.S. warships, Defense Department spokesman John Kirby pointed to the Pentagon’s recent assessment of China’s military power. “They can speak to their exercises and what they’re training against. It’s been pretty fairly obvious and we just released the China military report a week ago that I think makes it very clear what our understanding of their intentions are and their capabilities are and how they’re developing those capabilities and to what ends,” Kirby told reporters today.

<https://news.usni.org/2021/11/08/china-clearly-developing-aviation-and-maritime-capabilities-to-counter-u-s-in-indo-pacific-says-pentagon>

7 November 2021: German Navy looks to send vessels to Indo-Pacific every two years

The chief of the German Navy has said he is looking to dispatch vessels to the Indo-Pacific every two years to help maintain peace and order based on international law in the region. Germany has been enhancing its defense cooperation with Japan and other partners amid China’s military buildup and assertive territorial claims in the area. “If possible, I would like to dispatch ships to the area once every two years,” Vice Adm. Kay-Achim Schonbach said in a recent interview with Kyodo News, adding he hopes to enhance cooperation with Japan, Australia and other countries.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/11/07/asia-pacific/german-navy-indo-pacific/>

4 November 2021: South China Sea drama: Philippines pulls Netflix episodes over 9-dash line

Netflix has removed two episodes of spy drama Pine Gap from its service in the Philippines after local regulators ruled that they were “unfit for public exhibition” for depicting China’s self-proclaimed nine-dash line in a map of the South China Sea. Vietnam made a similar complaint in July, resulting in Netflix pulling all six Pine Gap episodes from the Vietnam platform.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/philippines-netflix-11042021155438.html>

3 November 2021: Imagery shows land-filling at another Vietnamese feature in South China Sea

Vietnam is carrying out construction and land-filling on another island under its control in the South China Sea, commercial satellite imagery analysed by RFA shows. The imagery shows an extension is being developed to the western tip of Namyt Island in the northwest of the Spratly Islands.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/southchinasea-landfill-11032021144513.html>

1 November 2021: South China Sea map complaint sees Netflix pull ‘Pine Gap’ episodes in the Philippines

Netflix has removed two episodes of an Australian spy show from its streaming service in the Philippines after Manila objected to scenes showing a map with Beijing’s claims to the disputed South China Sea.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3154498/south-china-sea-map-complaint-sees-netflix-pull-pine-gap>

ASEAN AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

25 November 2021: Russia to enter South China Sea theater with first joint naval exercise with ASEAN next week

Russia will hold the first-ever joint naval exercises with the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the South China Sea, starting next Wednesday. Alexander Ivanov, Russia's Permanent Representative to ASEAN, has revealed that the exercises will be held in the region of North Sumatra from December 1-3 and Moscow will be sending its large anti-submarine ship Admiral Panteleev, which is part of the Pacific Fleet of the Russian Navy, to take part in them.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/international/article/russia-to-enter-south-china-sea-theater-with-first-joint-naval-exercise-with-asean-next-week/835132>

22 November 2021: China, ASEAN strengthen ties despite South China Sea disputes

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced Monday the establishment of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, despite ongoing territorial disputes in the South China Sea. “This is a new milestone in the history of our relations and will inject new impetus into peace, stability, prosperity and development of our region and the world,” Chinese President Xi Jinping said during the virtual summit to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the ties between Beijing and the bloc.

<https://www.laprensalatina.com/china-asean-strengthen-ties-despite-south-china-sea-disputes/>

15 November 2021: South China Sea: Beijing keen to make code of conduct gains for 30th anniversary of China-ASEAN ties

China has pushed for a breakthrough in a South China Sea code of conduct and offered a continued supply of Covid-19 vaccines for Asean countries, in the lead-up to a summit meeting this month. In talks in Beijing on Sunday with top diplomats from the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the summit to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Beijing becoming an Asean “dialogue partner” would be a milestone. “This summit will be a meaningful milestone and will set a direction and plan for the next 30 years of our relationship,” Wang said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3156105/south-china-sea-beijing-keen-make-code-conduct-gains-30th>

11 November 2021: ASEAN in talks with Beijing on South China Sea code of conduct

ASEAN member states are in negotiations with China to establish a code of conduct for activities in the South China Sea, the foreign affairs ministry said. The ministry said the agreement would be aimed at avoiding conflict and tension in the South China Sea, one of the region’s most important shipping and trade routes. “In carrying out these negotiations, Malaysia always looks to ensure that the code of conduct does not disregard national sovereignty and rights,” it said in a written parliamentary reply to Masir Kujat

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/11/11/asean-in-talks-with-beijing-on-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct/>

31 October 2021: Cambodia Inherits South China Sea Headache as ASEAN's New Chair

As Cambodia takes over the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2022, it faces an uphill task to accelerate negotiations for a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. The code, which is intended to mitigate the risk of conflict in those contested waters, has been in the works for about as long as Cambodia has been in ASEAN. The kingdom joined the 10-nation grouping in 1999, and 2022 will be the third-time that Cambodia has held the rotating leadership of the regional bloc. It’s also the third time that Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has

been in power since 1985, has held the ASEAN gavel that was handed to him from outgoing chair Brunei on Thursday.

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/asean-cambodia-southchinasea-10292021173404.html>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

25 November 2021: South China Sea: Indonesia pledges to develop resource-rich Natuna Islands to secure maritime borders, boost unity

Indonesia is to boost development in the resource-rich Natuna Islands in a bid to underline its sovereignty following visits by Chinese vessels to nearby waters. Jakarta reiterated its commitment to the archipelago of 27 islands, which lie within Indonesia's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, on Tuesday during a two-day visit by Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Mahfud MD and Minister of Home Affairs Tito Karnavian.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3157267/south-china-sea-indonesia-pledges-develop-resource-rich-natuna>

24 November 2021: Japan, Vietnam express serious concern about South China Sea

The leaders of Japan and Vietnam expressed serious concern on Wednesday about the situation in the South China Sea and any unilateral actions aimed at altering the status quo, and agreed to work together to sustain free and open sea lanes as tensions escalate in the region amid China's rise.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/japan-vietnam-express-serious-concern-about-south-china-sea-121112401258_1.html

22 November 2021: EU sides with Philippines over South China Sea water cannon incident

The European Union has become the latest to voice opposition to the firing of Chinese water cannon at supply boats from the Philippines in the disputed South China Sea, as the incident draws mounting criticism against Beijing.

"Last week, coastguard vessels of the People's Republic of China blocked two Philippine supply boats on their way to Second Thomas Shoal, 105 nautical miles west of the province of Palawan (Philippines) in the South China Sea, and used water cannons against them. This episode follows other unilateral actions by vessels of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea over the past months," the EU said in a statement published on Sunday.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3156948/eu-sides-philippines-over-south-china-sea-water-cannon>

19 November 2021: US warns China on action against Philippines in South China Sea

The United States on Friday (Nov 19) accused China of an escalation against the Philippines and warned that an armed attack would invite a US response after an incident in disputed waters. "The United States stands with our ally, the Philippines, in the face of this escalation that directly threatens regional peace and stability," State Department spokesman Ned Price said in Abuja, where Secretary of State Antony Blinken was travelling.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/us-warns-china-on-action-against-philippines-in-south-china-sea>

17 November 2021: Japan, US conduct submarine drill in S.China Sea

Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force says it conducted a joint drill with the US Navy in the South China Sea on Tuesday, sending a submarine to take part in such an exercise for the first

time. The MSDF announced that in addition to the submarine, two destroyers and a patrol plane took part in the drill. The US Navy sent a destroyer and patrol aircraft.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20211116_28/

13 November 2021: US nuclear sub ‘may have hit an oil rig’ in South China Sea

The USS Connecticut nuclear submarine may have been damaged in a collision with an abandoned oil rig in the South China Sea last month, according to a former Chinese naval instructor. Chi Guocang, previously a senior instructor for the PLA’s Naval Submarine Academy, also urged Beijing to strengthen China’s anti-submarine defence capabilities, in response to the “unusual domineering behaviour” shown by the US in the disputed waterway.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3155777/us-nuclear-sub-may-have-hit-oil-rig-south-china-sea>

10 November 2021: ‘South China Sea belongs to everyone’, says German navy chief

The chief of Germany’s navy, Kay-Achim Schönbach, said that the dispatch of a German frigate to the Indo-Pacific was meant to show support for Japan, the US and other allies. Speaking at a news conference in Tokyo on November 9, 2021, the vice admiral said Germany is joining its partners in advocating for peace, free navigation and rule-based international order in the area. The frigate Bayern arrived in the Japanese capital on November 5, becoming the first German warship to visit Japan in nearly 20 years. Schönbach said that to demonstrate the right to freedom of passage, the vessel will sail through the South China Sea, where China has been increasingly pressing its territorial claims.

<https://www.scmp.com/video/world/3155492/south-china-sea-belongs-everyone-says-german-navy-chief>

5 November 2021: US Navy fires 2 officers for South China Sea submarine mishap that angered Beijing

The US Navy announced on Thursday that it has fired two senior officials deemed responsible for a recent mishap involving the USS Connecticut submarine in the South China Sea, shortly after a top military official said it was looking to hold individuals accountable for the incident that sparked a diplomatic row with Beijing.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3154921/navy-hold-those-accountable-south-china-sea-submarine-mishap-if-need-be>

2 November 2021: USS Connecticut crashed into 'underwater mountain' in South China Sea last month, Navy says

The USS Connecticut struck an "uncharted seamount" in early October, damaging the Washington state-based submarine and injuring 11 sailors, according to a U.S. Navy investigation.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/11/02/navy-investigation-uss-connecticut-submarine-accident-china/6253033001/>

1 November 2021: US spy planes over South China Sea likely surveyed nuclear fallout of sub collision, observers say

US special-purpose aircraft the Constant Phoenix may have been in the South China Sea region to examine radioactive material, military experts said, after a Beijing-based think tank cited satellite images to report five American reconnaissance planes operating in the area at the weekend.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3154476/us-spy-planes-over-south-china-sea-likely-surveyed-nuclear>

1 November 2021: Investigation Concludes USS Connecticut Grounded on Uncharted Seamount in South China Sea

Investigators have determined USS Connecticut (SSN-22) hit an uncharted seamount that grounded the nuclear attack submarine on the underwater feature in the South China Sea Navy, USNI News has learned. The results of the command investigation into the Oct. 2 incident, completed last week, have now been passed up to U.S. 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Karl Thomas for review and to determine if there will be any additional accountability actions over the incident, a legislative source and two defense officials that are familiar with the findings told USNI News on Monday.

<https://news.usni.org/2021/11/01/investigation-concludes-uss-connecticut-grounded-on-uncharted-sea-mount-in-south-china-sea>

31 October 2021: US urges China to refrain from unilateral action on Taiwan

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken advised China on Sunday to refrain from taking unilateral actions towards Taiwan, senior State Department officials told the Reuters and AP news agencies. Blinken made the comments to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during an hour-long meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome.

<https://www.dw.com/en/us-urges-china-to-refrain-from-unilateral-action-on-taiwan/a-59677781>

30 October 2021: Japanese and US combat ships have conducted tactical drill in South China Sea

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) Murasame-class destroyer JS Yudachi (DD 103) and Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Jackson (LCS 6) operated bilaterally in the South China Sea, Oct. 28-29. Joining to form a surface action group (SAG) while transiting, the ships practiced a range of surface warfare tactics to include flight operations, communications drills and coordinated tactical maneuvering, all designed to enhance interoperability and enabling the ships to practice bilateral tactics in close proximity to one another.

<https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/naval-news/naval-news-archive/2021/october/10929-japanese-and-us-combat-ships-have-conducted-tactical-drill-in-south-china-sea.html>