

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.108
September 2022

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

28 September 2022: China's Philippine envoy urges Marcos Jnr to get rid of 'interference' in bilateral ties

Beijing has said it is willing to resolve differences with the Philippines over maritime claims in the disputed South China Sea as it called on the Marcos administration to remove outside "interference" from their bilateral relations. Addressing the Chinese embassy's celebration of the country's 73rd National Day, ambassador Huang Xilian said both sides should put their differences in a proper place and seek peaceful solutions through friendly consultations "so that our overall ties will not be affected". "We are neighbours that cannot be moved away and have every reason to live together peacefully," Huang told the virtual gathering on Monday.
<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3194148/chinas-philippine-envoy-urges-marcos-jnr-get-rid-interference>

27 September 2022: China's 'Explorer 2' research ship ends missions in South China Sea

China's scientific research vessel Explorer 2, carrying the 4,500-meter manned submersible Shenhai Yongshi (Deep-sea Warrior), returned to Sanya in south China's Hainan Province on Sunday, after completing its latest missions over the past 10 days. With the 4,500-meter manned submersible Shenhai Yongshi, the team has completed in-situ observation of the areas surrounding the Shenhai-1, China's first self-run deep-sea gas field located 150 kilometers from Hainan Island, including its underwater mooring system and underwater production system, and obtained important data.
<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2022-09-26/China-s-Explorer-2-research-ship-ends-missions-in-South-China-Sea-1dDuQuCTjIA/index.html>

26 September 2022: China Ramps Up Its Maritime Microaggressions with Civilian Trawlers Notorious for Going Rogue: Report

At a time when Beijing is building military pressure for Taiwan reunification, China is reportedly using state-funded large civilian fishing vessels to exert its dominance over the wider South China Sea region. Despite having one of the world's largest navies, Beijing is paying hundreds of civilian ships and fishing vessels to drop anchor for months around the disputed islands in the South China Sea region, the Associated Press reported, adding that about 300 to 400 vessels are deployed there at any given time.
<https://www.ibtimes.com/china-paying-commercial-fishing-vessels-build-its-claim-over-south-china-sea-report-3616797>

25 September 2022: 'Philippines has no territorial conflict with China'

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Friday said the country has no territorial conflict with China, saying that it is Beijing that is "claiming territory that belongs to the Philippines." Marcos made the statement as he acknowledged that the country's relations with the United States are vital to resolving the issue in the West Philippine Sea. "I think it's no surprise to anyone that the Philippines has some of these conflicts with the People's Republic of China. And the position that the Philippines takes is that we have no territorial conflict with China. What we have is China claiming territory that belongs to the Philippines," Marcos said during an interview with former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd.
<https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/09/25/news/national/philippines-has-no-territorial-conflict-with-china/1859634>

23 September 2022: Beijing says will handle disputes in S. China Sea as Philippines' Marcos, Biden stress freedom of navigation

China on Friday said it will "properly handle" maritime disputes with nations surrounding the South China Sea as the US president and his Philippine counterpart reaffirmed their support for freedom of navigation in the disputed waters. "China will continue to properly handle maritime disputes with countries directly concerned, including the Philippines, through dialogue and consultation, and work with ASEAN countries to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea," Wang Wenbin, spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry, told a news briefing.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/beijing-says-will-handle-disputes-in-s-china-sea-as-philippines-marcos-biden-stress-freedom-of-navigation/2693350>

22 September 2022: Satellite images reveal Chinese expansion of submarine base

China is expanding its submarine base on the edge of the South China Sea, with satellite photos showing it's building two new piers. The imagery of the Yulin naval base on the southern tip of China's Hainan Island taken by Maxar Technologies on July 31 and published on Google Earth show the structure for two new piers under construction, adding to the four existing piers at the site.

<https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2022/09/21/satellite-images-reveal-chinese-expansion-of-submarine-base/>

21 September 2022: Marcos calls for resolution of South China Sea issue through dialogue

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has stressed that conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea should be resolved through dialogue. Marcos made the remark during an address to the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, the first day of the General Debate. This is Marcos's first appearance at an international conference since he took office in June. In an apparent reference to China, the president said, "Differences should only be resolved through peaceful means." He added, "By reinforcing the predictability and stability of international law, particularly the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, we provided an example of how states should resolve their differences: through reason and through right."

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20220921_07/

21 September 2022: China's underwater drones spotted in South China Sea: Report

New satellite images of China indicated that Beijing might be preparing for the deployment of massive unmanned subs in the South China Sea, however, the intention is still unclear, a media report said. The new images showed two of China's extra-large uncrewed underwater vehicles (XLUUV) at Sanya Naval Base on Hainan Island, which geographically juts into the contested South China Sea, Asiatimes reported citing Naval News.

<https://theprint.in/world/chinas-underwater-drones-spotted-in-south-china-sea-report/1136648/>

20 September 2022: Vietnamese, Chinese PMs discuss border trade, reopening South China Sea in phone call

Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính has asked China to facilitate customs clearance and expand imports, especially agricultural products, as well as restore operations at border gates. He made the request to Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang on Monday as the two held their second phone discussion in 2022. PM Chính suggested they continue to implement three legal documents on the land border between Việt Nam and China; jointly making efforts to maintain peace, stability, and properly handle maritime issues in the spirit of high-level understanding and the

agreement on basic principles guiding the settlement of maritime issues between Việt Nam and China; accelerating negotiations at sea; settling disputes and disagreements by peaceful means, in accordance with international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982). The two PMs agreed to direct to continue cooperation and promote the negotiation mechanisms on maritime delimitation and cooperation, together with ASEAN countries to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, striving to build a Code of Conduct that is substantive, effective, and in line with international law, including UNCLOS 1982.

<https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/1337103/vietnamese-chinese-pms-discuss-border-trade-reopening-south-china-sea-in-phone-call.html>

14 September 2022: Philippine senator calls for a 'claimants only' Code of Conduct on South China Sea

A Philippine senator's suggestion to negotiate a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea among claimant countries, and not between the whole Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, was met with both approval and reservation from analysts. During a hearing at the Philippine Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Imee Marcos - the committee's chairwoman – asked if there was a possibility for “a code of conduct that includes only us claimants” in the South China Sea, parts of which are known in the Philippines as the West Philippine Sea.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/philippine-senator-schina-sea-09142022042826.html>

13 September 2022: Chinese troops drive away fishing vessels from disputed waters

A newly emerged Chinese military video shows how People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops on China-occupied islands in the South China Sea have been driving away fishing vessels from neighboring countries despite a tribunal ruling against Chinese claims.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/chinese-troops-drive-away-fishing-vessels-09132022052956.html>

12 September 2022: Chinese 'swarming' continues as 48 protests filed since June 30

The incursion of Chinese vessels into Philippine waters has remained unabated, with the government already filing 48 diplomatic protests against Beijing over the aggressive behavior of its ships in the West Philippine Sea since President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. took office in June, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/206747/chinese-swarming-continues-as-48-protests-filed-since-june-30#ixzz7eiZcewsd>

8 September 2022: Marcos, Lee call for completion of South China Sea Code of Conduct; tackle major global issues

The Philippines and Singapore are one in calling all parties involved to work together to complete the much-awaited South China Sea Code of Conduct (COC) to ensure peace and stability in the region.

<https://mb.com.ph/2022/09/08/marcos-lee-call-for-completion-of-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-tackle-major-global-issues/>

6 September 2022: Philippines' South China Sea deal with Beijing hits another snag over profits

The Philippines has said initial talks with Beijing on oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea have failed to progress, as the issue of profit-sharing remains a major sticking point for both sides. The Department of Foreign Affairs on Monday said the deals should adhere to the

country's constitution and international law, adding Manila wished to "build on the gains that have been reached in principle by our predecessors" under a new and mutually agreeable framework. The ministry also said the discussions that took place during the visits of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the International Liaison Department chief Liu Jianchao in July and August had not advanced to "working-level talks".

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/economics/article/3191520/philippines-south-china-sea-deal-beijing-hits-another-snak-over>

6 September 2022: Chinese scientists retrieve ancient ships from depths of South China Sea

Chinese marine researchers say they have discovered three ancient merchant ships in an unprecedented archaeological sweep of the contested South China Sea. The wrecks were found in the vast waterway between China's southern coastline and the Xisha Islands – also known as the Paracels and claimed by Vietnam – according to a report on Sunday by state broadcaster CCTV. The team of scientists and engineers from more than 10 research institutes used mass surveillance technology, which some observers point out could also benefit the Chinese military.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3191489/chinese-scientists-retrieve-ancient-ships-depths-south-china-sea>

5 September 2022: An eye on China? Indonesia, Philippines set to boost ties amid 'very volatile' regional geopolitics

The Philippines and Indonesia would bolster their defence and security ties amid the region's "very volatile" geopolitical dynamics, the two countries' leaders said on Monday, emphasising the need for "inclusive and concrete" cooperation.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3191439/eye-china-indonesia-philippines-set-boost-ties-amid-very>

4 September 2022: Tuna stocks in South China Sea under threat, scientists from around region warn

Policymakers and scientists from five Asian countries have called for fisheries cooperation in the disputed waters of the South China Sea, warning in a report that its fish stocks are at risk. A working group of scientists from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam said in the report that stocks of skipjack tuna were under pressure and threatened by overfishing of young tuna.

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3191224/tuna-stocks-south-china-sea-under-threat-scientists-around?module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article&campaign=3191224

2 September 2022: Marcos to raise South China Sea issue with leaders of Indonesia and Singapore

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr of the Philippines, one of the claimant states in the South China Sea, will raise the maritime dispute with the leaders of Indonesia and Singapore during his inaugural state visits next week. Mr Marcos will be visiting Indonesia from Sunday to next Tuesday, before heading to Singapore from next Tuesday to Wednesday.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/defence-investment-top-marcos-agenda-in-state-visits-to-indonesia-singapore>

1 September 2022: Malaysian navy holds intra-maritime exercise in South China, Sulu seas

The Malaysian navy demonstrated its presence and capabilities in an annual naval exercise in the South China Sea and Sulu Sea from Aug 23 to Sept 1. The exercise, codenamed Ostex East 2/2022 and coordinated by the Eastern Fleet Command, was the main platform for the naval forces to test the efficiency of the navy and the readiness of its assets in the eastern fleet. This initiative was also implemented with the mission to prepare the navy for any eventuality of a maritime threat, besides enhancing the naval community's skills in navigation, maritime knowledge and warfare.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2022/09/01/malaysian-navy-holds-intra-maritime-exercise-in-south-china-sulu-seas>

31 August 2022: South China Sea: US firm accuses Chinese hackers of targeting Malaysia's Petronas, Australia's government

Chinese hackers likely targeted energy companies operating in the South China Sea and Australia's government, according to a US tech security firm, the latest accusation of coordinated cybersnooping by the Asian giant to advance its geopolitical goals.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/australasia/article/3190775/south-china-sea-us-firm-accuses-chinese-hackers-targeting>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

29 September 2022: In ship visit in Japan, VP Harris highlights 'disturbing' actions in South China Sea

US Vice President Kamala Harris emphasized Washington's role in ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region as she noted China's moves that she said were "undermining key elements" of the international rules-based order. "China has flexed its military and economic might to coerce and intimidate its neighbors and we have witnessed disturbing behavior in the East China Sea and in the South China Sea, and, most recently, provocations across the Taiwan Strait," Harris told sailors on board.

<https://www.philstar.com/world/2022/09/29/2213104/ship-visit-japan-vp-harris-highlights-disturbing-actions-south-china-sea>

23 September 2022: Marcos, Japan PM eyeing further talks over South China Sea issue —Palace

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida are eyeing further discussions on the maritime issues in the South China Sea, Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles said Friday. At a press conference in New York after the bilateral meeting between Marcos and US President Joe Biden, Cruz-Angeles said there were no specific talks regarding Japan's assistance to the Philippines in terms of patrolling and defending the West Philippine Sea. "The talks weren't very specific yet kasi nga these are sideline talks. But certainly maritime issues were forefront in the agenda: maritime law, maritime security, and peace in our region. So that was one of the primary considerations on the side of the Japanese Prime Minister," Cruz-Angeles said.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20220923_14/

23 September 2022: Biden, Philippines' Marcos discuss tensions in South China Sea

US President Joe Biden and his Philippine counterpart, Ferdinand Marcos, underscored their support for freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea on Thursday (Sep 22), in response to China's efforts to exert its influence there. Biden and Marcos held their first face-to-face talks on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. Marcos, son of the late Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, took power in June. "The leaders discussed the situation in the South China Sea and underscored their support for freedom of navigation and

overflight and the peaceful resolution of disputes," the White House said in a statement after the talks.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/biden-philippines-marcos-discuss-tensions-south-china-sea-2958626>

21 September 2022: USS Higgins (DDG 76) Conducts Operations with Royal Canadian Navy in South China Sea

Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Vancouver (FFH 331) concluded exercises in the South China Sea with Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins (DDG 76) Sept. 18. Vancouver and Higgins conducted bilateral surface action group operations demonstrating interoperability in the execution of joint exercises in the South China Sea and highlighted the U.S. Navy's support to Canada's Indo-Pacific deployment and their presence and role in the Western Pacific.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/429751/uss-higgins-ddg-76-conducts-operations-with-royal-canadian-navy-south-china-sea>

18 September 2022: PH, France boost ties on trade, food security

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Saturday had a brief telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron to mark 75 years of the Philippines-France diplomatic relations. Marcos echoed the French embassy's earlier statement of both countries agreeing to strengthen cooperation on various sectors, most especially on climate change, food security and trade. The French embassy, in a separate statement, noted that Macron gave assurances that France will ensure "respect for international maritime law and the issues of preserving biodiversity and the oceans."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/09/18/news/national/ph-france-boost-ties-on-trade-food-security/1858907>

16 September 2022: US Coast Guard cutter conducts at-sea ops with Singapore Navy in South China Sea

Midgett and the Republic of Singapore Navy Maritime and security response vessel (MSRV) Bastion conducted a passing exercise, maneuvering drills and communication exercises between the two ships within international waters in the southern reaches of the South China Sea.

<https://www.navaltoday.com/2022/09/16/us-coast-guard-cutter-conducts-at-sea-ops-with-singapore-navy-in-south-china-sea/>

10 September 2022: Australia's navy not threatened by China

The Chinese navy's "unusual behavior" in shadowing Australian warships in the South China Sea had not deterred operations in the contested waters, Australia's navy chief said. Vice Admiral Mark Hammond said the "odd" Chinese tactics had not escalated in recent years, which left him "reasonably comfortable" that Australian crews were safe.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/09/10/news/world/australias-navy-not-threatened-by-china/1857872>