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Compiled by CIL Ocean Law and Policy Team

ACTS OF CLAIMANT

29 August: Beijing sends warning on Taiwan, South China Sea across bow of UK-Japan defence ties

China has taken aim at [Britain's growing ties with Japan](#), warning it against any involvement in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea as a British aircraft carrier made a port call in Tokyo.

“We urge Britain and Japan to deeply reflect on their erroneous words and deeds regarding Taiwan- and maritime-related issues, stop interfering in China’s internal affairs, and refrain from stirring up trouble and creating tensions in the Asia-Pacific region,” the Chinese embassy in Britain said on Thursday.

The embassy was responding to a joint statement by British Defence Secretary John Healey and his Japanese counterpart, Gen Nakatani, in Tokyo.

According to the statement, the two ministers agreed that “the security and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific are indivisible”, and “reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait”.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3323692/beijing-sends-warning-taiwan-south-china-sea-across-bow-uk-japan-defence-ties>

26 August: China Questions Legal Basis of American South China Sea FONOPs

In a first report of its kind, the Chinese government has hit out at the US Navy’s FONOPs, saying that these operations have no legal basis in international law and that they reflect Washington’s habitual practice of using military force to pressure other nations.

The report – “Legal Assessment of the United States’ ‘Freedom of Navigation’” – is the first official study of this kind by Beijing and is prepared by the China Institute for Marine Affairs under China’s Ministry of Natural Resources.

The report claims that the US’s “freedom of navigation” incorporates numerous self-created concepts and self-imposed standards of so-called customary international law, which have no basis in true international law and the practices of many countries.

Link to the report: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/X1I81vPiOOK4y5Q-zB0X9A?poc_token=HN1irmijeS0_FN99Oc01W3m4cjekROhToVE0jTpx
<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/china-challenges-us-freedom-of-navigation-ops/>

23 August: Vietnam steps up its island building in Spratlys

Vietnam has significantly expanded island-building work in areas it claims in the Spratly Islands chain of the disputed South China Sea and will match and likely surpass the scale of such activity there by China, a U.S. think tank reported on Friday.

The report from CSIS's Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, said the imagery showed Vietnam has undertaken dredging and landfill work at Alison Reef, Collins Reef, East Reef, Landsdowne Reef and Petley Reefs.

The work meant that all 21 Vietnamese-occupied rocks and low-tide elevations in the Spratly Islands chain have now been expanded to include artificial land, when four years ago a majority hosted only isolated pillbox structures.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/vietnam-island-building-spratlys-may-soon-surpass-chinas-report-says-2025-08-22/>

17 August: Increased China presence in South China Sea bid to cover up 'embarrassing' mishap

The Philippine Navy confirmed that as of August 14, China has deployed seven CCG vessels and 13 Chinese maritime militia vessels in the area, compared with the Philippine Coast Guard's (PCG) lone vessel the BRP Teresa Magbanua.

PCG spokesperson for the South China Sea Commodore Jay Tarriela said China may have also deployed anti-drone technology in the area, as Philippine officials have failed to launch drones in the area.

"We were not able to launch our drones. It's because, we are suspecting, that the Chinese have jammed the signal," he said in the same report.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/956180/increased-china-presence-in-wps-bid-to-cover-up-embarrassing-mishap-nmc/story/>

13 August: Asean-China SOM talks aim to fast-track South China Sea COC negotiations

Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Amran Mohamed Zin said the main focus of the meeting in Kuching is to ensure all parties continue to respect the principles agreed under the DOC, which form the foundation of good relations in the region.

"In addition, the meeting will intensify negotiations to finalise the South China Sea Code of Conduct with a target of completion by or before July 2026.

"We need to step up negotiations more aggressively and proactively so that the COC draft can be finalised according to schedule," he said after paying a courtesy call on Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg at Kompleks Satria Pertiwi here today.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2025/08/1259733/asean-china-som-talks-aim-fast-track-south-china-sea-coc-negotiations>

<https://asean.org/the-24th-asean-china-senior-officials-meeting-on-the-implementation-of-the-declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-som-doc-convenes-in-kuching-malaysia/>

12 August: Malaysia steps up ways to 'confront threats' in South China Sea

The 13th Malaysia Plan outlining the country's latest five-year development includes the [usual goals of economic growth](#), among others, but it is what Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said about defence and security that has caught observers by surprise.

Particularly striking was how he singled out where the focus of military deterrence efforts would be.

"Readiness to confront sovereignty and security threats in the South China Sea will be intensified more comprehensively,"

Putrajaya is in the midst of adding long-range radars, long-endurance drones and a new naval base in Sarawak expected to be capable of launching submarines to boost its security posture in the South China Sea.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/malaysia-south-china-sea-claim-defence-anwar-ibrahim-5288436>

11 August: Chinese vessels collide while pursuing Philippine boat in South China Sea

A Chinese navy vessel collided with one from its coast guard while chasing a Philippine patrol boat in the South China Sea, Manila said on Monday (Aug 11), releasing dramatic video footage of the confrontation.

The incident occurred near the contested Scarborough Shoal as the Philippine coast guard escorted boats distributing aid to fishermen in the area, spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela said in a statement.

Video released by Manila showed a China Coast Guard ship and a much larger vessel bearing the number 164 on its hull colliding with a loud crash.

Earlier in the confrontation, the BRP Suluan was "targeted with a water cannon" by the Chinese but "successfully" evaded it.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/china-vessels-collide-pursuing-philippine-boat-south-china-sea-5288146>

5 August: Beijing ‘on high alert’ for South China Sea disruption after Philippine-India patrol: PLA

Beijing is on high alert for New Delhi’s involvement in South China Sea disputes after the first-ever [joint patrol between India and the Philippines](#) in the strategically important waters, which observers say may further complicate relations between India and China.

The MCA involved three Indian naval vessels, including a guided missile destroyer and an anti-submarine corvette.

China has slammed naval drills involving India and Philippines in the South China Sea. China accused the Philippines of co-opting other nations, for what it considers exercises that disrupt and undermine regional peace and stability.

The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) held “routine patrols” from Friday to Monday in response to joint patrols organized between the Philippines and “non-regional countries,”

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3320806/china-high-alert-south-china-sea-disruption-after-philippine-india-patrol-pla>

<https://news.usni.org/2025/08/07/china-drills-in-south-china-sea-during-philippine-indian-naval-patrols>

OTHER STATES AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

19 August: Philippines, Australia, Canada navies hold joint sail in South China Sea

The navies of the Philippines, Australia and Canada were conducting a joint sail in the South China Sea on Aug 19, an area of flaring tensions following a [collision between two Chinese vessels](#) last week.

The Philippine frigate BRP Jose Rizal, Australian destroyer HMAS Brisbane and Canadian frigate HMCS Ville de Quebec were participating in the operation, which a Philippine military official said was not directed at any country.

“Our activity is based on the premise that the exercise is anchored on the free and open Indo-Pacific with peace and prosperity in the region,” Colonel Dennis Fernandez told a media briefing, adding that the joint sail was taking place within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/philippines-australia-canada-hold-joint-sail-in-south-china-sea>

17 August: Germany Condemns China’s ‘Aggressive Behaviour’ In South China Sea

Germany’s foreign minister on Sunday criticised what he called the “aggressive behaviour” of China in the [Taiwan Strait](#) ahead of a trip to Japan and Indonesia, and stressed the need to strengthen internationally binding rules.

Speaking to reporters, Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful praised Japan's solidarity with Europe over Ukraine as he prepared to board a plane, and highlighted the importance and economic potential of the two populous Asian countries.

"China's increasingly aggressive behaviour in the [Taiwan Strait](#) and the East and [South China Seas](#) also affects us in Europe: fundamental principles of our global co-existence are at stake here," the minister said.

<https://gcaptain.com/germany-condemns-chinas-aggressive-behaviour-in-south-china-sea/>

16 August: Australia, Philippines launch largest military exercises near South China Sea

Exercise *Alon* will involve over 3,600 combined personnel, including participation from the Royal Canadian Navy and the United States Marine Corps' Marine Rotation Force – Darwin, according to Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., who spoke during the opening ceremony in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan

"It signals Australia's ability and willingness to project force, to strengthen our security, and reinforce the sovereignty and importance of key regional partners and partnerships," he said during the same ceremony.

The drills, which will run from August 15 to 29, will include live-fire exercises, a beach assault, and a large-scale airlift operation

Australia is the second nation, after the United States, to secure a Visiting Forces Agreement with the Philippines, allowing for large-scale troop deployments and joint combat exercises in each other's territory. A similar defense pact between the Philippines and Japan is set to take effect next month.

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2025/08/australia-philippines-launch-largest-military-exercises-near-south-china-sea/>

13 August: US warships patrol South China Sea after two Chinese ships collide

The US has briefly deployed two warships in a disputed South China Sea shoal where [two Chinese ships collided earlier in the week](#) while trying to drive away a smaller Philippine ship in a high-seas accident that raised alarms about maritime safety.

The USS Higgins, a guided missile destroyer, and USS Cincinnati, a littoral combat ship, were shadowed by a Chinese navy ship while sailing about 30 nautical miles (55km) from the Scarborough Shoal. There were no reports of any untoward incident, Commodore Jay Tarriela of the Philippine coastguard said, citing information from US officials and a Philippine surveillance flight.

The deployment happened after Washington's ambassador to Manila, MaryKay Carlson, on Tuesday condemned "the latest reckless action by China directed against a Philippine vessel" in Scarborough.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/aug/13/us-warships-south-china-sea>

2 August: Trump takes step back from Philippines in South China Sea

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's recent visit to the White House promised to set a new tone for US strategy. The contrast with the Biden administration was vivid: President Donald Trump mostly discussed trade with Marcos and seemed eager to downplay any militarized rivalry with China.

There was only minimal discussion of tensions in the South China Sea and these came at the behest of Marcos. Trump [reportedly](#) "professed that he didn't mind if the Philippines got along with China."

Such a clear effort to defuse the US-China rivalry could simply reflect Trump's desire to secure a near-term summit with Chinese leader President Xi Jinping.

<https://asiatimes.com/2025/08/trump-takes-step-back-from-philippines-in-south-china-sea/#>