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ACTS OF CLAIMANT

31 July: China coast guard patrols waters east of Taiwan, angering Taipei

China's coast guard conducted patrols it described as routine law enforcement in waters east of Taiwan on Friday, angering Taipei, which condemned the move as a political operation aimed at expanding Beijing's control.

The Chinese activities off Taiwan's Pacific coast have triggered concern from some Western countries, which have warned against any unilateral change to the status quo or actions that could raise tension in the Taiwan Strait.

In a statement, China's coast guard said the patrols east of Taiwan were led by one of its ships, Xiushan, and it would continue to strengthen such efforts.

"Since July, the Xiushan task group had been strengthening control over the relevant waters to effectively ensure orderly navigation and activities," its spokesperson, Jiang Lue, said.

The effort was safeguarding the legitimate and lawful rights and interests, as well as the lives and property of fishermen on both sides of the Strait, he added.

Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration said a patrol ship, the Taipei, was among the vessels it sent to monitor the Chinese ships, and accused Beijing of engaging in "fake law enforcement, real expansion of power".

Two Chinese coast guard vessels, the Xiushan and Chongming, were detected on Friday, it said.

One drifted about 151 nautical miles east of Lanyu, also known as Orchid Island, and the other about 43 nautical miles to the island's northeast, it said, adding that Taiwan vessels were monitoring them.

It vowed to "take all necessary measures to defend national sovereignty" and ensure the security of Taiwan's waters.

https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-coast-guard-patrols-east-taiwan-angering-taipei-2026-07-31/

30 July: China's military, coast guard, patrol contested shoal in South China Sea

China's military and coast guard conducted patrols in the airspace and waters near the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea on July 30, separate statements showed.

Tensions have recently flared between China and the Philippines amid repeated maritime disputes and confrontations in the South China Sea, which China claims almost entirely as its own despite overlapping claims by South-east Asian nations.

The China Coast Guard said in a statement that it took necessary measures, including a verbal warning, blocking and water cannon shooting in accordance with the law and regulations to expel illegal and harassing vessels.

https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/chinas-military-coast-guard-patrol-contested-shoal-in-south-china-sea

26 July: Rescuers scour South China Sea for 17 missing after Vietnamese vessel sinks

Rescuers were searching on July 26 for 17 people missing after a Vietnamese ship sank in the busy waterway of the South China Sea, while 45 were pulled from the waters, China's state broadcaster CCTV said. The Chinese authorities said cargo vessel Khoi Nguyen 18, with 62 Vietnamese nationals aboard, ran into distress in waters near Fiery Cross Reef, CCTV added.

A distress flare from the vessel was first spotted by a Chinese rescue ship, Nanhai Jiu 115, on the evening of July 25, CCTV said.
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/rescuers-scour-south-china-sea-for-23-missing-after-vietnamese-vessel-sinks?ref=search-results

26 July: China holds air, navy patrol in South China Sea
China said on Sunday it organised a routine patrol by its naval and air forces in the South China Sea, accusing the Philippines of holding patrols with foreign countries in the disputed waterway that undermined regional peace and stability.
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/china-holds-air-navy-patrol-in-south-china-sea?ref=search-results

26 July: US, Japan join Philippines in South China Sea drills
The US and Japan joined the Philippines in maritime exercises in the South China Sea, as the Philippine and Chinese governments traded accusations following an encounter between vessels from their countries in the disputed waters.
The five-day drills from July 21 to 25 brought together warships, coast guard vessels and surveillance and fighter aircraft in operations aimed at improving interoperability among the allies, the Philippine military said on July 26.
It did not disclose the exact location of the exercises. Chinese navy and coast guard vessels have operated in the area during previous joint drills.
The exercises began a day after the Philippines said Chinese Coast Guard personnel had struck a Filipino sailor with a baton at the Second Thomas Shoal. China said Philippine vessels had attacked first and rammed Chinese boats.
During the drills, the Philippine Coast Guard said its Chinese counterpart had fired water cannon at Philippine government vessels near the Scarborough Shoal on both July 23 and July 24. China said it had taken legal measures after Philippine vessels "insisted on intruding".
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/us-japan-join-philippines-in-south-china-sea-drills?ref=search-results

24 July: ASEAN, China target year-end SCS code of conduct; experts see hurdles
ASEAN and China are aiming to conclude negotiations on a long-awaited Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea by the end of the year, marking the strongest push in years to finalize an agreement meant to help manage tensions in the disputed waterway.
The target comes after ASEAN and Chinese negotiators began meeting every month since January, a pace Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro said reflects both sides' willingness to complete the negotiations.
But while officials point to renewed momentum, an expert say fundamental disagreements over the proposed agreement's legal status and coverage remain unresolved, making a year-end conclusion unlikely.
"On the South China Sea, what was given attention is the COC that Asean and China are geared towards … hopefully the conclusion of the COC by the end of this year," Lazaro said in a press briefing after the 59th Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings in Manila.
Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who helped shape the Philippines' legal strategy in the January 2013 arbitration case Manila filed against Beijing, said he does not expect negotiators to conclude the agreement this year or next.
"Nothing will happen with the COC this year or next year," Carpio told the Inquirer on Friday.
Carpio said the Philippines and China remain divided on several key issues.
"The PH wants the COC to be legally binding. China does not want it to be legally binding," he said.

Carpio also said the Philippines wants [Scarborough] Shoal covered by the agreement and the 2016 arbitral ruling reflected in it, while Vietnam wants the Paracel Islands included. China opposes those positions, he said.
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Lazaro said negotiations have accelerated this year.
"I think you know very well that we have monthly meetings. These negotiations have not been done this way," she said.
"Since the start of January, there have been monthly meetings of the negotiators, and this is now part of the political will that we intend to finish this COC by the end of the year," she added.
Negotiations on the COC have continued for years since ASEAN and China signed the 2002 [DOC], a political document that committed parties to exercise self-restraint while working toward a more comprehensive agreement.
Lazaro said negotiators have made progress in building consensus on the principle of self-restraint, one of the proposed agreement's key elements.
Discussions are continuing on the code's geographical scope, legal nature and its relationship with the 2002 declaration, she said.
According to Lazaro, the proposed agreement remains anchored on the 1982 UNCLOS, respects the rights of third parties and seeks to establish rules governing the conduct and behavior of parties in the South China Sea.
Asked whether recent confrontations involving [Second Thomas] Shoal and [Scarborough] Shoal could affect the negotiations, Lazaro said such developments remain part of the ongoing discussions.
https://globalnation.inquirer.net/332365/asean-china-target-year-end-scs-code-of-conduct-experts-see-hurdles

23 July: Philippines accuses China of using water cannon on its vessels for a second day
A Chinese coast guard vessel fired a water cannon at a Philippine government fisheries vessel in Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, scoring an indirect hit, a Philippine Coast Guard official said on July 23.
"These actions violated the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) and endangered Filipino personnel engaged in a purely humanitarian undertaking," Philippine coast guard spokesperson Jay Tarriela said in a post on X on July 23.
The incident happened as Southeast Asian foreign ministers gathered in Manila for ASEAN meetings that were also attended by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
Earlier on July 23, China said it tracked and drove away two Philippine vessels it accused of having "intruded into" waters near the disputed Scarborough Shoal despite warnings.
It was the second incident this week involving both nations in the South China Sea.
"We urge the Philippines to immediately cease its infringing and provocative actions," China's Coast Guard said in a statement, while reaffirming sovereignty over the disputed shoal.
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/china-says-it-drove-away-philippine-vessels-in-fresh-south-china-sea-incident

22 July: Philippine, Chinese foreign ministers trade protests over South China Sea encounter
The foreign ministers of the Philippines and China met in Manila on Wednesday and both made "strong" protests over an encounter between the two countries' vessels this week in contested South China Sea waters.
The Philippine foreign affairs secretary, Maria Theresa Lazaro, said in an X post that she reiterated the protest over what she called "unacceptable actions against Filipino personnel",

while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was quoted by an official readout as lodging a protest over "the Philippine personnel's egregious act of ramming Chinese law-enforcement vessels".
The incident this week took place on Monday in the Second Thomas Shoal. The Philippines said Chinese Coast Guard personnel struck one of the Philippine navy staff on the head with a wooden baton, and China said the Philippine personnel were the first to attack and accused Philippine vessels of ramming a Chinese patrol boat.
In the meeting, Wang told Lazaro that China-Philippines relations stood at a crossroads, and that the Philippines needed to make a "correct and rational" choice regarding its future direction, according to a readout released by China's foreign ministry.
Wang also accused "certain forces" within the Philippine military and police of deliberate provocations, undermining dialogue and "carrying out the orders of external forces".
https://www.reuters.com/world/china/philippine-chinese-foreign-ministers-trade-protests-over-south-china-sea-2026-07-22/

21 July: China summons Philippine ambassador over clash in disputed waters
Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos met with China's ambassador to Manila on July 21 after summoning the envoy over the incident at the flashpoint Second Thomas Shoal, presidential spokeswoman Claire Castro told reporters.
She declined to give details of the meeting but said it had involved a matter of "national security".
Earlier on July 21, China's Foreign Ministry said that it had "urgently summoned" the Philippine ambassador "to lodge solemn representations over the Philippines' deliberate provocation and attack... at Ren'ai Reef", referring to a flashpoint also known as the Second Thomas Shoal.
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-summons-philippine-ambassador-over-clash-in-disputed-waters

20 July: Philippine military says China injured sailor in sea clash
The Philippine military accused the China Coast Guard on July 20 of clubbing a Filipino sailor with a baton as they approached a grounded vessel that has long served as a Philippine garrison in the disputed South China Sea.
News of the incident on July 20 came just hours after the Philippine Foreign Ministry said the two countries' top diplomats would meet at a regional summit in Manila this week.
The Philippines said in a statement that a Chinese rigid-hull inflatable boat carrying eight men had circled the BRP Sierra Madre and taken photos and video of it. The vessel sits on the flashpoint Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly archipelago.
China claims almost the entirety of the crucial waterway despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis, and has frequently clashed with Philippine vessels in the area.
The latest clash in the crucial waterway took place after the Philippines sent two rubber boats to drive away the Chinese group, the statement said.
"The (Chinese coast guard) personnel reacted violently and aggressively by striking a Philippine Navy personnel on the head with a wooden baton, causing injury and damaging the navy rubber boat," the statement said.
https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippine-military-says-china-injured-sailor-in-sea-clash?ref=inline-article

17 July: Philippines demands 'racist' Chinese state media video depicting Filipinos as monkeys be taken down
The Philippines strongly condemned state-run China Daily for releasing an AI-generated video that depicted Filipinos as monkeys, saying the "racist" imagery is "offensive, distressing and

unacceptable" and drawing a firm line against dehumanising propaganda. Manila demanded that the video posted on China Daily's Facebook account on 10 July be taken down. The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The video portrayed a monkey dressed in Filipino attire being directed by arms representing the US and Japan on what to sing. After being called "stupid", the monkey pulled a sheet of lyrics bearing the words "South China Sea arbitration award" before being thrown into the sea and blasted by a vessel's water cannon.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jul/17/philippines-china-racist-monkeys-video

16 July: Philippines sees progress in South China Sea code of conduct talks

The Philippines remains confident that negotiations on the long-awaited Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea are making steady progress, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China maintaining their commitment to conclude talks within the year. Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Spokesperson on ASEAN Matters Dominic Xavier Imperial said ongoing negotiations continue to advance despite the complexity of the issues under discussion ahead of next week's 59th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) in Manila. Speaking during a pre-AMM press briefing on Thursday, July 16, Imperial said recent meetings among negotiators have demonstrated continued momentum toward crafting a substantive and effective code. He added that the latest round of COC negotiations was held in Vietnam, while the Philippines is also expected to host another negotiating session. "We're happy to say that there is—we're confident that there is a continuing progress in terms of the number of meetings that have happened so far," Imperial said. The DFA official said the continued scheduling of negotiations reflects the commitment of all parties to move the process forward. "We see progress, and we still are confident that within the year we will see something coming out of these negotiations," he said. According to Imperial, the target of concluding negotiations this year stems from a 2023 agreement among ASEAN foreign ministers to complete the COC within three years. The ASEAN has since added more negotiating meetings to help achieve that timeline, he added.

Milestone issues remain

Imperial acknowledged that negotiators are still discussing what he described as "milestone issues," but stressed that this does not mean negotiations have stalled. He explained that the remaining issues contain multiple elements that are being addressed individually as negotiators work toward consensus. "When we say that there's progress, it's one by one we are able to address or get consensus of some of these elements," he said, but stopped short from providing further details as he is not part of the Philippine negotiating team.

Bilateral issues separate from negotiations

Asked whether China's continued rejection of the 2016 Arbitral Award and its criticism of the Philippines' position could affect negotiations, Imperial said participating countries remain focused on producing an effective COC. He said national positions and bilateral issues are separate from the multilateral negotiations taking place under the ASEAN framework.

"I think, of course, it's their prerogative to raise this matter, especially bilaterally, if they will have engagements bilaterally," he said. "But as regards to how this will impact the negotiations, we believe that so long as we have the commitment of all the parties, that will be different from how nations will discuss their bilateral issues together," he added. Imperial declined to comment on China's accusation that the Philippines was creating obstacles in the negotiations by invoking the 2016 Arbitral Award, saying the issue would be more appropriately addressed by the country's negotiators.
https://mb.com.ph/2026/07/16/philippines-sees-progress-in-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-talks

13 July: China, Russia wrap up joint naval exercise

The "Joint Sea-2026" exercise between China and Russia concluded at a military port in Qingdao in east China's Shandong Province Monday, with all planned exercise missions finished. Following the conclusion of the drills, some of the two countries' participating forces have set sail for the Pacific to carry out joint patrols. The two naval forces dispatched 10 vessels, including surface, underwater, aerial, and support units, to the exercise centered on "jointly countering maritime security risks." During the harbor planning phase, the two sides held various activities, including tabletop simulations, vessel tours, professional seminars, and receptions, alongside basketball matches.

https://english.news.cn/20260713/9379d756304e40088458553afd2c8264/c.html

12 July: Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, Pham Thu Hang response to a reporter's request for Vietnam's comment on the 10th anniversary of the Award in the Arbitration constituted under Annex VII to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea between the Philippines and China

Viet Nam's clear and consistent position is that maritime disputes must be resolved by peaceful means, in full respect for diplomatic and legal processes, without the use or threat of force, and in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Viet Nam has always been supportive of the settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation or application of Convention in accordance with its provisions.

Viet Nam reaffirms that the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides the sole legal basis for and defines, in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner, the scope of maritime entitlements.

As a coastal state of the East Sea (South China Sea) and an active State Party to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Viet Nam has scrupulously complied with the Convention in good faith and urges relevant parties to fully implement their legal obligations under the Convention, including in the determination of maritime claims and the exercise of maritime rights, as well as to respect the rights enjoyed by other states under the Convention.

Viet Nam also call upon all states to join hands in making active and practical contributions to the maintance of peace, stability, security, safety, freedom of navigation and overflight, and order in the East Sea on the basis of international law.

https://mofa.gov.vn/web/ministry-of-foreign-affairs/detail/chi-tiet/spokesperson-for-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-vietnam-pham-thu-hang-response-to-a-reporter-39-s-request-for-vietnam-39-s-comment-on-the-10th-anniversary-of-the-award-in-the-arbitration-constituted-under-annex-vii-to-the-1982-united-nations-convention-on-the-law-of-the-sea-between-the-philippines-and-china-60848-178.html

12 July: Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on Certain Countries' Playing up of the "South China Sea Arbitration Award" 10 Years After Its Issuance

In response to the joint statement released by the governments of the United States of America, the Republic of the Philippines, Australia, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Romania, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom on the so-called "South China Sea arbitration award" on July 12, 2026, 10 years after its issuance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China solemnly declares the following:

1. China has sovereignty over Nanhai Zhudao (the South China Sea Islands), consisting of Dongsha Qundao (the Dongsha Islands), Xisha Qundao (the Xisha Islands), Zhongsha Qundao (the Zhongsha Islands) and Nansha Qundao (the Nansha Islands); China has internal waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, based on Nanhai Zhudao; China has historic rights in the South China Sea. China's

sovereignty over Nanhai Zhudao and the relevant rights and interests in the South China Sea have been established in the long course of history. As early as 200 B.C., in the Western Han Dynasty, the Chinese people sailed in the South China Sea and, through long-term practice, discovered Nanhai Zhudao. China is the first to have continuously, peacefully and effectively exercised sovereignty and jurisdiction over Nanhai Zhudao and relevant waters. Nanhai Zhudao have long been widely recognized by the international community as part of China's territory.

2. The South China Sea is one of the safest sea lanes in the world. The freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea has never been a problem. China firmly upholds its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, and remains steadfast in maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea. In response to certain countries' infringements and provocations in the South China Sea, China has taken resolute measures to defend its rights and interests—measures that are reasonable, legitimate, professional and restrained. The U.S. and other external countries have been persistently reinforcing military presence in the South China Sea, throwing their weight around and fanning the flames. These acts of militarization and coercion constitute the primary challenge to the current situation in the South China Sea.

3. Land territorial issues are not subject to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). With the optional exceptions declaration China made in 2006 pursuant to Article 298 of the Convention, maritime delimitation disputes have been excluded from the compulsory dispute settlement procedures under UNCLOS. China does not accept any imposed solution with respect to territorial issues and maritime delimitation disputes. China will continue to uphold the fundamental principles of international law and basic norms of international relations as affirmed by the United Nations Charter, including respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. China remains committed to resolving the relevant disputes in the South China Sea through negotiation and consultation with countries directly concerned, on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law, so as to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea.

4. China's position on the "South China Sea arbitration" has been clear, consistent and firm. The "arbitration" violates fundamental principles of international law, including state consent and *pacta sunt servanda*, contravenes UNCLOS itself, and, still more importantly, runs counter to the basic facts of the South China Sea. The so-called "award" is nothing but a worthless piece of paper that is illegal, null and void, and has no binding force. China does not accept or recognize the "award," and opposes and does not accept any claim or action based on it. China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea shall not be affected by the "award" under any circumstances.

5. For the past 10 years, the "award" has not only failed to resolve the maritime issues between China and the Philippines, but instead has become a tool for the Philippines to expand its territorial and maritime claims, exacerbated tensions in the region and provided a pretext for external forces to intervene and destabilize the South China Sea. It has become a stumbling block to China-Philippines relations and to peace and stability in the South China Sea. If the "award" were to be taken as a standard, many countries' islands and reefs would be denied the basis for claiming maritime rights and interests. May we ask, have those countries supporting the "award" voluntarily waived the maritime rights and interests deriving from their relevant islands and reefs? The continued playing up of the illegal "award" by certain countries is inconsistent with the trend of peace and stability in the region, and goes against the aspirations of countries and people in the region for development and prosperity. Such attempts are doomed to fail. China urges the relevant countries to earnestly respect China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, stop

stirring up trouble over the South China Sea issue, and cease undermining peace and stability in the South China Sea.
https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/wjbxw/202607/t20260712_11980357.html

11 July: Why the Philippines' territorial expansion attempts threaten regional peace, stability

The Philippines' attempts to assert sovereignty over Huangyan Dao and certain maritime features of the Nansha Qundao are based on distorting and fabricating historical facts and misapplying international law, and have seriously threatened peace and stability in the South China Sea region, said a report released on Wednesday.

Such territorial expansion acts have challenged the international legal system centered on the UN Charter, according to the report titled "Historical and Legal Critique of the Philippines' Territorial Claims in the South China Sea."

https://news.cgtn.com/news/2026-07-11/Marine-technologies-shape-China-s-blue-future-1OGCsZ4J28g/p.html

11 July: Safeguarding the blue voyage: New frontiers in China's marine technologies

China has also expanded its ocean observation capabilities through an integrated monitoring system that combines satellites, coastal stations, offshore buoys and autonomous underwater vehicles.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources, the country's marine observation network includes 11 remote-sensing satellites, 456 ocean buoys and 557 coastal monitoring stations. Together, they provide real-time information on sea surface temperature, ocean currents, waves, wind conditions and marine disasters, supporting marine weather forecasting, resource surveys and disaster preparedness.

The launch of Haiyang-2E, China's latest ocean dynamics satellite, on July 2 has further strengthened the country's marine observation capabilities. Equipped with a radar altimeter, microwave scatterometer, microwave radiometer and calibration radiometer, the satellite can accurately measure sea surface height, significant wave height, ocean wind fields and sea surface temperature. The data will provide important support for marine weather forecasting as well as global climate research, including studies of El Niño and other large-scale climate phenomena.

https://news.cgtn.com/news/2026-07-11/Marine-technologies-shape-China-s-blue-future-1OGCsZ4J28g/p.html

10 July: Philippines commemorates 2016 South China Sea ruling rejected by Beijing

The Philippines commemorated on Friday the anniversary of a 2016 arbitration ruling, which invalidated China's expansive claims in the disputed South China Sea and which Washington and other allies have used as a rallying call against Beijing's growing assertiveness.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro said Thursday the ruling is legally binding, comparing it to a lighthouse.

"When the waters grow turbulent, when unilateral claims cloud the horizon and when the shadow of coercion looms, nations need something far more permanent than political convenience," Lazaro said. "They need a lighthouse."

https://apnews.com/article/china-philippines-south-china-sea-disputes-arbitration-ruling-d0148a4175f80eedf70dcf2696f03ddd

8 July: Taiwan lawmakers plan visit to Dongsha in South China Sea

Members of the Legislative Yuan Internal Administration Committee plan to go ahead with a visit to Dongsha Island in the South China Sea despite the approach of Typhoon Bavi, reports said Wednesday.
A 19-member delegation, including five KMT and two DPP legislators, will fly from Taipei on Thursday

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Members of the Legislative Yuan Internal Administration Committee plan to go ahead with a visit to Dongsha Island in the South China Sea despite the approach of Typhoon Bavi, reports said Wednesday.
A 19-member delegation, including five KMT and two DPP legislators, will fly from Taipei on Thursday, the Liberty Times reported. The group will also include senior officials from the Coast Guard and the National Park Service.
The legislators will hear a report about the Coast Guard's work on the island, followed by a 30-minute discussion. During the afternoon, the officials and lawmakers will tour the water treatment facilities, a post office, a pier, and a temple.
At the ocean research center, experts will provide an introduction to the results of environmental protection on Dongsha, per Liberty Times.
https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/news/6397350

7 July: China test-launches a ballistic missile in the South Pacific and raises regional concerns
China's navy test-launched a long-range ballistic missile Monday from one of its nuclear-powered submarines in the South Pacific, a rare act that drew protests and concern from countries in the region and the United States.
The missile carried a dummy warhead, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. China last conducted a missile test in the Pacific two years ago, firing an intercontinental ballistic missile with a dummy warhead, the first since 1980.
Monday's launch, at 12:01 p.m. local time, was part of routine annual training, complied with international law and practice and was not directed against any country or target, according to a short statement from Xinhua, which was reposted by the Ministry of Defense.
Beijing's militarization has drawn concerns, and Australia, Japan and New Zealand criticized the launch.
The New Zealand government said it was informed hours beforehand and noted that the missile was fired into the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.
The zone was established by the 1986 Treaty of Rarotonga, which prohibits nuclear weapons throughout the region. China ratified the protocols in 1987, pledging not to test nuclear weapons within the zone or threaten to use them against signatories with territory in the region.
"It appears that despite our long-standing concerns about this type of activity, China carried out the test within hours of informing us," Foreign Minister Winston Peters told The Associated Press in a statement.
The launch took place the same day Australia and Fiji signed a new mutual defense treaty meant to counter Chinese influence in the Pacific.
"Australia has been clear with China that we regard this as destabilizing to the region," Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong told reporters in Fiji in response to the test.
Japan's Defense Ministry in a statement expressed concern about China's increasing military activity and urged Beijing to "rethink" its missile testing so that the projectiles would not fly over Japan or pose other security risks.
https://apnews.com/article/china-missile-test-submarine-36963889390c8a08079165d8a63e4960

OTHER STATES AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

28 July: U.S. to Fund Philippine Coast Guard Base Expansion Near South China Sea
The U.S. pledged to fund the expansion of a Coast Guard base used for operations in the South China Sea and increase foreign military financing for Manila last week.
The Philippines will receive up to $9 million for the expansion of a pier in the western province of Palawan to enhance "maritime law enforcement presence and sustain operations in the South China Sea," according to a Department of State fact sheet covering U.S. initiatives in Southeast Asia released July 22.
While the State Department fact sheet does not specify where the Palawan pier expansion project will take place, a solicitation released in May highlights U.S. interest in developing an intermediate logistics center at Buliluyan Port. Located in the southeast of the island, the Philippine Coast Guard frequently stages from the pier for operations in the South China Sea.
Manila's fleet of 13 cutters has struggled to maintain a presence in the disputed waters against their Chinese counterparts, which has a larger and more capable fleet. Compounding these difficulties is the lack of forward basing and infrastructure. Philippine patrol vessels rely on civilian piers and ports throughout Palawan, competing with civilian bulk carriers and tankers for space.
https://news.usni.org/2026/07/28/u-s-to-fund-philippine-coast-guard-base-expansion-near-south-china-sea

27 July: George Washington CSG in the South China Sea After Philippine-Chinese Clashes
The U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier is steaming in the South China Sea following clashes this month between China and the Philippines across several disputed maritime features.
The George Washington Carrier Strike Group – led by USS *George Washington* (CVN-73) – transited the Luzon Strait last week after almost two months of activities in the Philippine Sea, USNI News previously reported. The move comes as Washington seeks to back up Manila amid a series of renewed clashes between Philippine and Chinese forces.
"The USS George Washington Carrier Strike Group's advanced capabilities, including the F-35, are upholding FREEDOM of Navigation and Overflight in the South China Sea. We challenge excessive maritime claims around the world," U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Lipton said in a social media post on X last Friday.
A brawl on July 20 at Second Thomas Shoal saw Chinese Coast Guard officers strike a Philippine Navy SEAL on the head with a baton, which necessitated a medical evacuation. The melee marked the most severe incident between Beijing and Manila to date. It was the first time the two forces directly engaged each other beyond rammings, water cannon blasts and other coercive activities.
The Second Thomas Shoal incident also involved direct American involvement, according to Secretary of State Marco Rubio.
https://news.usni.org/2026/07/27/george-washington-csg-in-the-south-china-sea-after-philippine-chinese-clashes

26 July: US, Japan join Philippines in South China Sea drills
The US and Japan joined the Philippines in maritime exercises in the South China Sea, as the Filipino and Chinese governments traded accusations following an encounter between vessels from their countries in the disputed waters.

The five-day drills from Jul 21 to 25 brought together warships, coast guard vessels and surveillance and fighter aircraft in operations aimed at improving interoperability among the allies, the Philippine military said on Sunday (Jul 26).
The exercises were the latest in a series of joint drills that have expanded in scope and frequency in recent years as the Philippines, backed by the US and Japan, seeks to push back against China's sweeping claims over the South China Sea.
The drills underscored "the enduring partnership among the partner nations in promoting peace, stability, and security in the Indo-Pacific region," the military said in a statement.
It did not disclose the exact location of the exercises. Chinese navy and coast guard vessels have operated in the area during previous joint drills.
https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/us-japan-join-philippines-in-south-china-sea-drills-6278791

16 July: Coast Guard Ends Middle East Mission, Moves Cutter Squadron to Western Pacific
The U.S. Coast Guard is transitioning its Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA) to the Western Pacific, ending a more than 20-year forward-deployed mission in the Middle East.
The Coast Guard's Expeditionary Cutter Squadron that makes up PATFORSWA, which was previously forward deployed to Bahrain, will instead operate from Guam and the Pacific Islands, the service announced Wednesday. The transition from the Middle East to the Western Pacific is in response to national security requirements, reads the Coast Guard news release.
PATFORSWA cutters are already engaged with regional allies and partners. *Charles Moulthrope* and *Emlen Tunnell* participated in a Maritime Cooperative Activity with the Armed Forces of the Philippines within the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone from June 27-28. The two-day exercise included a series of interoperability activities, including a search and rescue exercise, maritime domain awareness activity and division tactics, according to a U.S. 7th Fleet news release. The AFP deployed Philippine Coast Guard patrol vessels BRP *Melchora Aquino* (MRRV9702) and BRP *Capones* (MRRV4404) and Philippine Navy frigate BRP *Antonio Luna* (FFG15) to participate alongside the U.S. Coast Guard.
Following the MCA, *Charles Moulthrope* and *Emlen Tunnell* sailed to Sattahip, Thailand, to participate in the 32nd iteration of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Thailand. The exercise began on July 6 and concluded Wednesday. Along with the two Coast Guard cutters, U.S. participation included a P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) of Patrol Squadron (VP) 26 assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 72 and U.S. Marines from the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Pacific (FASTPAC).
The Royal Thai Navy deployed a surface force led by frigates HTMS *Taksin* (FFG-422) and HTMS *Saiburi* (FFG-458) while the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) joined the exercise with its Advanced Naval Capabilities Unit.
According to a U.S. Navy release, the at-sea phase in Sattahip and the Gulf of Thailand included complex training scenarios focused on anti-submarine warfare exercises, air defense exercises, surface action group coordination, mine countermeasures, and search and rescue training.
"These exercises advanced U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Canadian and Thai forces' abilities to refine their tactics, techniques, and procedures in a dynamic maritime environment," reads the release.

13 July: Viet Nam, Japan enhance defence cooperation
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence General Phan Văn Giang is paying an official visit to Japan from July 12-15, with Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi hosting a welcome ceremony for him on Monday. Giang reaffirmed that Viet Nam consistently

pursues a foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, friendship, cooperation and development, as well as diversification and multilateralisation of external relations; wishes to be a friend to all countries; and remains steadfast in its "Four No's" defence policy. Regarding the [South China Sea] issue, he reiterated Viet Nam's consistent position that disputes and differences should be resolved through peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 [UNCLOS]. He also underscored the importance of fully implementing the [DOC] and expressed hope for the early conclusion of a substantive, efficient and effective [COC].
https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/1785349/viet-nam-japan-enhance-defence-cooperation.html

11 July: South China Sea: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the tenth anniversary of the Arbitral Award between the Philippines and China
The EU reaffirms its unwavering commitment to UNCLOS, which reflects and codifies customary international law and sets out the universal and unified legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The EU underlines the critical importance of upholding the freedoms, rights and duties set out in UNCLOS, in particular the freedom of navigation and overflight, including the right of transit passage, as essential to regional stability, global security, and the maintenance of safe, free and open sea routes.
The EU reiterates its support to ongoing efforts by ASEAN and China to conclude an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, that would be in line with UNCLOS. All tensions and disputes must be resolved through dialogue and peaceful means, in accordance with international law, with the Charter of the United Nations and UNCLOS at its core.
The EU is deeply concerned by the steady increase of tensions and dangerous incidents in the South China Sea and firmly opposes any unilateral actions that threaten to undermine regional stability and the international order based on international law and the rule of law, and remains steadfast in its commitment to safe, free and open maritime routes in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/07/11/south-china-sea-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-tenth-anniversary-of-the-arbitral-award-between-the-philippines-and-china/

11 July: Joint Statement on the Tenth Anniversary of the Philippines-China South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award
The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States of America, Australia, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, the Republic of the Philippines, Romania, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Philippines-China South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award.
We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, stable, and rules-based, anchored in international law, and commemorate the 10th anniversary of the July 12, 2016, Arbitral Tribunal's landmark and unanimous decision on the South China Sea constituted under Annex VII of UNCLOS.
We reaffirm that maritime disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with UNCLOS. We reaffirm that the Award rendered ten years ago by the Arbitral Tribunal is a significant milestone and is final, legally binding, and definitive between China and the Philippines with respect to the maritime entitlements and claims addressed by the Arbitral Tribunal.
We reaffirm the Arbitral Tribunal's decision that there is no legal basis for China's expansive maritime claims in the South China Sea, including those based on "historic rights". We

underscore the importance of upholding freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as other internationally lawful uses of the sea, as reflected in UNCLOS.

We reiterate our strong opposition to any destabilizing or unilateral actions including by force or coercion that threaten peace and stability in the region. We reaffirm our strong opposition to the use of coast guard, military, and maritime militia forces to harass, obstruct, or intimidate lawful operations by other States at sea or in the air, and in so doing endanger the safety of personnel and fishermen and seriously degrade regional peace and security. We urge the parties to abide by the 2016 Award and resolve disputes peacefully through dialogue and other lawful mechanisms in accordance with international law.

We remain steadfast in our support for a free and open Indo-Pacific and reiterate our commitment to promoting our shared vision with ASEAN of the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity driven by vibrant lawful commerce.

https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/07/joint-statement-on-the-tenth-anniversary-of-the-philippines-china-south-china-sea-arbitral-tribunal-award