
South China Sea Timeline 2014

ICASS

ICAS

January

(1) 1 January 2014

The third amendment of the implementation measures for the Fisheries Law of the People's Republic of China in Hainan Province came into force. The measures reassert China's regulatory authority over relevant waters in the South China Sea. In accordance with the measures, foreigners and foreign fishing vessels must abide by relevant laws and regulations of the People's Republic of China referring to fisheries, environmental protection, and exit & entry administration and related regulations of Hainan Province and must secure permission to enter the waters within the jurisdiction of Hainan province.¹ In a subsequent press conference on January 9, the US State Department interpreted this to be an assertion of regulatory authority over the area within the nine-dash line and called the measure "provocative and potentially dangerous."²

(2) 16 January 2014

Vietnam received a second diesel-powered 06361 Kilo-class submarine, HQ-183 Ho Chi Minh City, which was made by a Russian navy shipyard located in St. Petersburg. The existing order will send four more submarines to Vietnam in the future.³

February

(3) 5 February 2014

Daniel R. Russel, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said in testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that any use of the nine-dash line by China to claim maritime rights in the South China Sea would be inconsistent with international law and China should clarify or adjust its nine-dash line claim.⁴

(4) 19 February 2014

The fifth round of consultation of the China-Vietnam expert group for low-sensitivity maritime cooperation was held in Hanoi. The two sides reached agreements on joint research into managing ocean and island environments in Beibu Gulf (Gulf of Tonkin) and the evolution of Holocene sedimentary deposits in the Yangzi River and Red River Deltas.⁵

¹ <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/asia/philippines/2014/01/15/398423/Manila-wont.htm>
<http://thediplomat.com/2014/01/hainans-new-fishing-rules-a-preliminary-analysis/>

² <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2014/01/219509.htm#CHINA>

³ <http://navaltoday.com/2014/01/02/russian-built-sub-hanoi-arrives-in-vietnam/>

⁴ <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2014/02/221293.htm>

⁵ <http://www.hanoitimes.com.vn/news/viet-nam/2014/02/81E0767A/vietnam-china-discuss-tonkin-gulf-sea-issues/>

March

(5) 8 March 2014

Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 (MH370) disappeared from Malaysian and Vietnamese air traffic control radar. Before the search shifted from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean on March 16, twelve nations had joined the effort, including Malaysia, China, Singapore, Vietnam, Australia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, the U.S., New Zealand, India and Japan.

(6) 19 March 2014

Charles Jose, the new spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, stated that the Philippines claimed sovereign rights over the Ren'ai Reef (Second Thomas Shoal), which is located in the Philippines' 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and is approximately 100 miles (about 161 kilometers) away from the coastal line of Palawan Island.⁶

(7) 24 March 2014

While meeting with US President Obama in The Hague, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized that the US should take an "objective and fair attitude" towards issues related to the East and South China Seas, "distinguish right from wrong, and do more to push for an appropriate resolution and improve the situation."⁷

(8) 30 March 2014

The Philippines officially presented its petition in 10 volumes and with nearly 4000 pages to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, seeking arbitration "with respect to the dispute with China over the maritime jurisdiction of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea."⁸

(9) 31 March 2014

The multi-national naval exercise Komodo 2014 commenced in the South China Sea. Warships from Russia, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam, Australia and the Philippines, gathered to participate in the exercise which focused on maritime search and rescue and joint efforts to evacuate tsunami victims.⁹

April

(10) 21-22 April 2014

⁶ <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/100670/new-dfa-spokesman-talks-tough-against-china/>

⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/25/us-china-usa-xi-idUSBREA2N1BE20140325>

⁸ http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag_id=1529

⁹ <http://tuoitrenews.vn/politics/18730/komodo-exercise-with-vietnams-participation-begins-in-east-sea>

The 7th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (SOM on DOC) and the 20th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Consultation (ACSOC) were held in Pattaya City, Thailand. The 7th ASEAN-China SOM on DOC, held on the 21st, agreed to continue building mutual trust and practical cooperation between the two sides in order to maintain and promote peace, stability and maritime security in the South China Sea. The Meeting also exchanged views on the objectives of the Code of Conduct (COC) and tasked the Joint Working Group (JWG) to flesh out some of the measures that could be undertaken to achieve such objectives, and expand their work on commonalities. The Meeting stressed the need to pursue the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety, which includes not only project-based confidence building activities but also full observance of the principles and norms of conduct as laid down in the DOC. At the 20th ACSOC, held on the 22nd, senior officials reviewed ASEAN-China cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues, including food and energy security, climate change, disaster management, counter-terrorism, transnational crimes, cybercrimes, maritime security, and epidemic with a view to enhance cooperation in these areas.¹⁰

(11) 28 April 2014

The US and the Philippines signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in Manila during an official state visit by US President Barack Obama. The ten-year accord is the first substantial military agreement between the US and the Philippines since American troops withdrew from the Subic Bay naval base in 1992. The EDCA seeks to bolster the US – Philippines security relationship by allowing the United States to station troops and operations on Philippine territory. However, the Agreement clearly states that the US is not allowed to establish a permanent base. According to the EDCA, the US gained operational control of “Agreed Locations” for the purpose of altering, improving or constructing facilities.¹¹

May

(12) 2 May 2014 - 15 July 2014

China's largest deep water oil drilling rig, Haiyang Shiyou 981 (HYSY 981) commenced a drilling operation 17 nautical miles off of Zhongjian (Triton) Island in the Xisha (Paracel) Islands for purposes of oil and gas exploration. The HYSY 981 rig was escorted by several Chinese ships. According to Vietnamese and US allegations, these included military vessels, although this claim was disputed by Chinese officials.¹² Shortly after the Chinese operation began, Vietnam sent several Coast Guard and Maritime Surveillance ships to the site, ordering the convoy to leave their claimed 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone.¹³ In a subsequent report to the UN, China alleged that Vietnam also sent frogmen and other underwater agents to the area, engaged in ramming Chinese vessels, and

¹⁰ <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/28/44914-ASEAN-China-cooperation-moves-forward-at-7th-ASEAN.html>;

¹¹ <http://www.gov.ph/2014/04/29/document-enhanced-defense-cooperation-agreement/>

¹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/13/southchinasea-idUSL4N0OU4EC20140613>

¹³ <http://asaablog.tumblr.com/post/88949660696/china-and-vietnam-square-off-in-war-of-attrition>

dropped large numbers of obstacles, including fishing nets and floating objects, in the waters.¹⁴ The Vietnamese government alleged in a diplomatic note to the UN that Chinese craft engaged in ramming Vietnamese vessels, sinking a Vietnamese fishing boat at the scene and damaging a Vietnamese Coast Guard vessel.¹⁵

(13) 3 May 2014

In response to a temporary blockade by Chinese ships, Philippine aircraft dropped supplies to Philippine troops stationed on a grounded ship at Ren'ai Reef (Second Thomas Shoal) in the Spratly Islands.¹⁶ The Philippines have maintained a garrison consisting of a handful of soldiers on the Philippine Navy vessel the *Sierra Madre* since it ran aground on the reef in 1999.¹⁷

(14) 5-16 May 2014

Over 3,000 troops from the Philippines and 2,500 troops from the United States began the annual Balikatan ("Shoulder to Shoulder") military exercises on the Islands of Luzon and Palawan. It was the first such exercise since the US and the Philippines signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). The 2014 exercises also involved the Australian Defense Force.¹⁸

(15) 6 May 2014

Philippine police intercepted a Chinese vessel and captured eleven Chinese fishermen near Banyue Jiao (Half Moon Shoal) of the disputed Nansha (Spratly) Islands in South China Sea. The fishermen were detained and taken to a Philippine port.¹⁹ Their fishing boat was allegedly carrying 500 sea turtles.

(16) 22 May 2014

China sent the first diplomatic note to the UN Secretary-General regarding Vietnamese interference with HYSY 981's drilling operations in the waters around the Xisha (Paracel) Islands. China also submitted a position paper.²⁰

(17) 23 May 2014

The Philippines signed an agreement with Indonesia on a maritime border dispute after 20 years of negotiations. The accord charts an agreed boundary that delimits their otherwise overlapping

¹⁴ http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1163264.shtml

¹⁵ <http://www.vietnam-un.org/en/vnun.php?id=273&cid=33>

¹⁶ <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1447170/philippine-aircraft-drops-supplies-troops-disputed-renai-reef>

¹⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/>

¹⁸ <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122191>;

¹⁹ <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1506539/armed-men-intercept-fishermen-south-china-sea-official-media>

²⁰ <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140611000025&cid=1101>

exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the Celebes and Mindanao Seas.²¹ This pact was the Philippines' first maritime border pact with another country.²²

(18) 26 May 2014

According to Reuters, Taiwan invested \$100 million to build port facilities adjacent its airstrip on Tai Ping (Itu Aba) Island capable of berthing navy and coast guard vessels of up to 3000 tons.²³

(19) 31 May 2014

US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel openly accused China of “destabilizing” the Asia-Pacific region with “unilateral actions” during the Shangri’la Dialogue. Hagel warned that “the United States will not look the other way when fundamental principles of the international order are being challenged”.²⁴ General Wang Guanzhong, China’s deputy chief of the General Staff of the PLA, while delivering his speech at the forum, called Hagel’s accusations “beyond his expectations.” He said Hagel’s speech “taste[d] of hegemony...with expressions of coercion and intimidation, a speech with flaring rhetoric that usher[ed] destabilizing factors into the Asia-Pacific to stir up trouble, and [was] a speech with unconstructive attitude.”²⁵

June

(20) 4 June 2014

IHS Jane's Defence Weekly reported that the Vietnamese National Assembly approved a VND 16 trillion (\$747 million) program to improve maritime surveillance and defense capabilities. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, the Vice Speaker of the Assembly, declared that these financial resources would be used to procure assets for the Vietnamese Coast Guard and Vietnam Directorate of Fisheries.²⁶

(21) 8 June 2014

Vietnamese and Philippine naval forces played soccer, volleyball and tug-of-war on Nanzi Island (Southwest Cay) in the Spratly Islands. The two nations also issued a joint statement claiming sports and cultural performances would help promote friendly relations. The island is under Vietnamese military control but is claimed by China, the Philippines and Malaysia.²⁷

(22) 9 June 2014

²¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27535004>

²² <http://www.manilatimes.net/philippines-indonesia-sign-milestone-border-pact/98921/>

²³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/25/us-taiwan-southchinasea-idUSBREA400E620140525>

²⁴ <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1857>

²⁵ <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/remarks-chinese-lieutenant-general-wang-shangri-la-dialogue/p33054>

²⁶ <http://www.janes.com/article/38805/vietnam-approves-usd747-million-plans-to-boost-maritime-security>

²⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/08/us-philippines-vietnam-idUSKBN0EJ06820140608>

Wang Min, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, presented UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with *The Operation of the HYSY 981 Drilling Rig: Vietnam's Provocation and China's Position* and requested that the Secretary-General circulate it to all UN members. The Paper included a map indicating the location of the drilling sites. It also included documents demonstrating Vietnamese recognition of Chinese sovereignty over the Xisha Islands.²⁸

(23) 13 June 2014

At the meeting of state parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) held in New York, Wang Min, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, criticized Vietnam and the Philippines for infringing upon Chinese territory and reiterated China's claims over the Xisha (Paracel) and Nansha (Spratly) Islands, Huangyan Island (Scarborough Shoal) and other reefs in the South China Sea.²⁹

(24) 18 June 2014

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi met with General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung in Hanoi. Yang Jiechi also held a talk with Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh. These were the highest level of meetings since early May when relations were strained over the HYSY 981 Drilling Rig's operations in Xisha (Paracel) Islands.³⁰

(25) 19 June 2014

Manila Standard Today reported that the Philippines had stepped up efforts to maintain its sovereign claim over the Kalayaan Islands (part of the Nansha/Spratly Islands) that are occupied and effectively controlled by the Philippines by planning to build an approach to the airport runway on Pagasa Island (Chinese Zhongye Island).³¹

(26) 24 June 2014

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held talks with Philippine President Benigno Aquino. The two sides agreed on bolstering security cooperation in the South China Sea and Japan decided to provide the Philippines with ten patrol vessels.³²

July

(27) 9-10 July 2014

²⁸ http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1163264.shtml

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/china-internationalizes-south-china-sea-dispute/>

²⁹ <http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1165598.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2661127/Vietnam-China-make-no-progress-oil-rig-talks.html>

³¹ <http://manilastandardtoday.com/mobile/2014/06/19/ph-sets-pagasa-airstrip-upgrade-china-protests>

³² <http://www.wsj.com/articles/philippine-president-backs-abes-military-push-1403594118>

The sixth round of consultation of the China-Vietnam Working Group for Low-sensitivity Maritime Cooperation was held in Beijing. The two sides agreed to implement the consensuses reached by bilateral leaders and the agreement on basic principles guiding the settlement of maritime issues between China and Vietnam.³³

(28) 11 July 2014

Speaking at a conference on the South China Sea and American policy in the region held by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Michael Fuchs called on claimants in the South China Sea to freeze construction, land reclamation, establishment of new outposts and other alterations to the status quo of disputed islands and reefs.³⁴

(29) 15 July 2014

China announced that the oil rig Haiyang Shiyou 981 (HYSY 981) had completed its commercial exploration operations and would be towed back to Hainan Island a month earlier than its originally planned termination date of August 15.

August

(30) 1 August 2014

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida held a dialogue with his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Binh Minh in Hanoi. Japan declared it would provide Vietnam with six vessels worth 500 million Yen (\$5 million) as part of a grant aid package that would boost Hanoi's capacity for maritime security.³⁵

(31) 4 August 2014

The Navigation Guarantee Center of the South China Sea (NGCS) of China's Ministry of Transportation completed work to select locations for five lighthouses in North Reef, Antelope Reef, Drummond Island, South Sand and Pyramid Rocks, all of which are part of the Xisha (Paracel) Islands.³⁶

(32) 8 August 2014

The Asian Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. At the forum, the Philippines developed a "triple action plan" for South China Sea disputes. First, disputed parties would suspend activities that aggravate tensions in the short term, effectively endorsing the new US position on a "freeze" on new facilities in the region. Second, in the mid-term, they would complete the Declaration on the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) as soon as possible,

³³ http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-07/11/c_133477857.htm

³⁴ <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2014/07/229129.htm>

³⁵ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2712849/Japan-provides-Vietnam-6-vessels.html>

³⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/07/us-china-southchinasea-idUSKBN0G70VI20140807>

and implement it comprehensively and effectively. Finally, they would settle disputes via resolution mechanisms in accordance with international law.³⁷

(33) 9 August 2014

In an apparent response to Philippine calls for a “triple action plan” on the South China Sea, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a press conference after the China-ASEAN (10+1) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 9 August that China supports and advocates a “dual-track” approach in resolving the South China Sea issue. Wang Yi expounded on the rationale behind China’s initiative of the “dual-track” approach focusing on bilateral solutions to disputes and a regional, ASEAN-China approach to security.³⁸

(34) 10 August 2014

ASEAN Foreign Ministers made a statement voicing concern over the rising tensions in the South China Sea and calling for more efforts to hold dialogues with China.³⁹

(35) 13 August 2014

Army Gen. Martin Dempsey visited Vietnam, the first US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to visit Vietnam since the Vietnam War.⁴⁰

(36) 18 August 2014

A US Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft was intercepted by a Chinese J-11B fighter aircraft 135 miles east of Hainan Island over China’s EEZ. The incident prompted US officials to label the incident “unsafe and unprofessional.” Chinese officials urged the US to reduce its reconnaissance missions, which they claimed endangered personnel from both countries.⁴¹

(37) 26 August 2014

Le Hong Anh, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam and a permanent member of the Central Committee (CPVCC) Secretariat, visited China as a special envoy of Nguyen Phu Trong, the secretary general of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The two sides arrived at a three-point agreement that sought to implement a basic guideline for the resolution of China-Vietnam

³⁷ <http://www.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/newsroom/dfa-releases/3729-dfa-statement-on-the-philippine-proposal-triple-action-plan>

³⁸ http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-08/10/c_133544827.htm

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-08-09/south-china-sea-tension-seen-dominating-asean-ministers-meeting>

<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/content/china-work-asean-south-china-sea-issue-says-fm-wang-yi>

³⁹ <http://www.asean.org/images/documents/47thAMMandRelatedMeetings/Joint%20Communique%20of%2047th%20AMM%20as%20of%209-8-14%2010%20pm.pdf>

⁴⁰ <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122935>

⁴¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/23/chinese-fighter-jey-buzzed-us-patrol-aircraft-pentagon>

maritime issues signed in October 2011, make best use of the bilateral governmental border negotiation mechanism, seek basic and lasting solutions acceptable to both sides, and study and discuss how to seek joint exploration of the South China Sea.⁴²

September

(38) 1 September 2014 - 31 October 2014

Taiwan held the Exhibition of Historical Archives on the Southern Territories of Taiwan in three locations throughout Taiwan. It was the first time Taiwan had displayed the archives on the South China Sea to the public in an effort to demonstrate sovereignty over islands in the South China Sea through maps, archives, photos and other information.⁴³

(39) 2 September 2014

The cruise ship *Coconut Princess*, which travels to the Xisha (Paracel) Islands, changed its point of departure to the city of Sanya in the southernmost Hainan province with the Xisha (Paracel) Islands on 2 September 2014. About 200 tourists were aboard the maiden voyage.⁴⁴ The base port was originally located in Haikou, the capital city of Hainan. The operator of the cruise line changed the departure point in order to shorten the voyage.

(40) 3 September 2014

Indonesia and Singapore signed a treaty on the maritime delimitation of the eastern section of the Singapore Strait. The two governments had already signed a similar treaty regarding the maritime delimitation in the western section of the Singapore Strait in 2009.⁴⁵

(41) 7 September 2014

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi co-hosted with his Australian counterpart Julie Bishop the 2nd Round of the China-Australia Diplomatic and Strategic Dialogue in Sydney. During the Dialogue, Wang emphasized the importance of "Four Respects" with regard to the issue of the South China Sea: to respect the historical facts; to respect international regulations; to respect the direct dialogue and consultation between the countries involved; and to respect the joint efforts made by China and ASEAN on safeguarding peace and stability of the South China Sea.⁴⁶

(42) 15 September 2014

⁴² <http://news.usni.org/2014/08/27/china-vietnam-call-maritime-truce>

⁴³ <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=15082>

⁴⁴ <http://www.icrosschina.com/news/2014/0902/3154.shtml>;

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/china-revamps-south-china-sea-cruise-line/>

⁴⁵ http://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/media_centre/press_room/pr/2014/201409/press_20140903.printable.html?status=1

⁴⁶ <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/china-australia-seek-to-overcome-tensions/>

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee visited Vietnam and signed seven agreements with his Vietnamese counterpart Truong Tan Sang. One agreement committed to expanding cooperation in oil exploitation in the South China Sea.⁴⁷ Vietnam would outsource another two oil fields in the South China Sea to Indian companies.⁴⁸

(43) 30 September 2014

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Barack Obama held a meeting in the White House and issued a joint statement, one item of which expressed concern about rising tensions over maritime territorial disputes, and affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea.⁴⁹

October

(44) 2 October 2014

In a sign of deepening ties between the former enemies, the United States announced it was partially lifting its ban on sales of weaponry to Vietnam in order to help support its maritime security. The US had not transferred lethal arms to Vietnam since communists took power at the end of the Vietnam War. A 1984 embargo prohibited arms sales because of concern over the authoritarian government's human rights record. The US will allow sales of lethal maritime security capabilities and surveillance equipment on a case-by-case basis.

(45) 3 October 2014

The Philippine government announced that it would halt all construction in the South China Sea to support their case against China at the Arbitral Tribunal in the Hague. This includes the airstrip work at Pagasa island.⁵⁰

(46) 9-10 October 2014

Chinese and Vietnamese officials met in Nanning, the capital of southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, for the third session of the working group for consultation on joint maritime development. The two sides agreed to advance maritime joint development in light of the consensus reached by leaders of the two countries.

(47) 20 October 2014

⁴⁷ <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/09/15/india-vietnam-pranab-mukherjee-visit-xi-idINKBN0HA1X520140915>

⁴⁸ <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/India-Vietnam-Ink-Seven-Agreements/2014/09/15/article2432356.ece>

⁴⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/30/us-india-joint-statement>

⁵⁰ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/10/03/uk-philippines-southchinasea-idUKKCN0HS0TE20141003>

Joko Widodo was sworn in as Indonesia's new President. He pledged great efforts during his five year tenure towards developing marine industries, strengthening maritime securities, and transforming Indonesia into a maritime power.

(48) 27 October 2014

The seventh meeting of the China-Vietnam Steering Committee for Bilateral Cooperation was held in Hanoi. According the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two countries “agreed to act in accordance with the spirit of the relevant bilateral agreements and consensus to properly handle maritime issues” and to make use of existing boundary negotiation mechanism between the two governments to “seek a basic and long-lasting solution acceptable to both sides.” Both sides also agreed to manage and control maritime differences, and refrain from actions that might complicate or broaden the dispute.

(49) 27 October 2014

Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung visited India. He held talks with his counterpart Narendra Modi. India pledged to offer a \$100 million loan to help Vietnam procure four patrol ships from India.

(50) 28 - 29 October 2014

The 8th ASEAN-China Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) was held in Bangkok. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, “the Senior Officials discussed efforts to strengthen the full and effective implementation of DOC and expedite the early conclusion of the Code of the Conduct in the South China Sea (COC)”. China and ASEAN agreed to adopt some “early harvest” measures proposed by the Joint Working Group (JWP), such as setting up a hotline platform on maritime emergencies among search and rescue (SAR) agencies and foreign affairs ministries at the SOM level, and conducting a tabletop exercise on SAR in 2015. The meeting also adopted the First List of Commonalities provided by the JWP, while tasking the JWP to work on the Second List of Commonalities, “which would be more comprehensive”.

November

(51) 13 November 2014

The 9th East Asia Summit was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Leaders of 18 member countries participated in the forum, discussing cooperation in areas of common concern, particularly non-traditional security issues such as wildlife and human trafficking, pandemics, climate change and disaster management.

(52) 13 November 2014

While attending the 17th China-ASEAN Summit, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang reaffirmed that China and ASEAN states had identified the “dual-track” approach to dealing with the South China Sea issue, and agreed to take positive efforts to engage in consultations and facilitate the consultation process of a code of conduct in the South China Sea. To seek dispute settlement, China proposed that relevant states should “actively explore joint development, as this is a realistic and effective way to manage differences.”⁵¹

(53) 19 November 2014

Japan's Defense Minister Akinori Eto attended an unofficial meeting with his ASEAN counterparts in Myanmar. By doing so Japan became the third country to hold multilateral defense talks with ASEAN members, after the United States and China. According to the Tokyo-based Kyodo News, Eto discussed cooperation in maritime security, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, while ASEAN requested technological cooperation in monitoring piracy and illegal fishing activities.

(54) 20 November 2014

In its annual report, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission noted that “by 2020, China could have as many as 351 submarines and missile-equipped surface ships in the Asia-Pacific”, while the U.S. Navy “plans to have 67 submarines and surface ships stationed in or forward deployed to the region.”⁵²

(55) 21 November 2014

IHS Jane's Defence Weekly released satellite images of Chinese land reclamation work at Yongshu Jiao (Fiery Cross Reef), claiming that the newly completed island was about 3000 meters long and 200 meters wide. According to *Jane's*, the island is now capable of supporting an airstrip.

(56) 24 November 2014

Nine Chinese fishermen were convicted by a court in western Philippine province of Palawan for poaching and taking protected wildlife. The court imposed a penalty of 100,000 U.S. dollars each for poaching, and 120,000 pesos each for violating the Wildlife Resources Conservation Act. The fishermen were intercepted and arrested by Philippine police near Banyue Jiao (Half Moon Shoal), a feature of the disputed Nansha (Spratly) Islands in May. China's Foreign Ministry urged the Philippine authorities to immediately release the fishermen, and said that China's sovereignty over the Nansha (Spratly) Islands and adjacent waters is beyond all dispute, and that the Philippines seizure and trial of Chinese fishermen were illegal.

(57) 25 November 2014

⁵¹ http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-11/13/c_133787622.htm

⁵² <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-02/china-space-plans-threaten-u-s-military-ability-report>;
http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/annual_reports/Complete%20Report.PDF;

Two Vietnamese Gepard-class frigates, HQ-011 Dinh Tien Hoang and HQ-012 Ly Thai To, docked at South Harbor in Manila to begin a three-day visit to the Philippines. Vietnamese and Philippine navy personnel collaborated in a search and rescue training exercise.

(58) 30 November 2014

Two Vietnamese frigates, the HQ-011 Dinh Tien Hoang and the HQ-012 Ly Thai To, led by Rear Admiral Nguyen Van Kiem, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Navy, visited Nanzi Island (Southwest Cay) while returning to Vietnam after its visit to Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. Nanzi Island (Southwest Cay) is claimed by China, Vietnam and the Philippines and currently occupied by Vietnam.

December

(59) 5 December 2014

The US Department of State released a report in its “Limits in the Seas” series entitled “China: Maritime Claims in the South China Sea,” noting that China has no open, continuous and effective exercise of authority over the South China Sea waters within the “nine-dash line”. Hong Lei, spokesperson of Chinese Foreign Ministry, remarked that “China’s sovereignty over the South China Sea and claims to the relevant rights were formed over the long course of history, and have been consistently upheld by successive Chinese governments.”

(60) 5 December 2014

The Indonesian Navy destroyed three Vietnamese boats for illegally fishing in Indonesian waters. The boats had been detained in early November and the 33 fishermen had been detained at the Tarempa Naval Base.

(61) 7 December 2014

China's Foreign Ministry released the *Position Paper on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Philippines*. The Position Paper reiterates the Chinese Government will neither accept nor participate in the arbitration. It explains the legal basis for its position that the Arbitration Tribunal does not have jurisdiction over this case. One of the central claims of the paper is that the subject-matter of the case “would constitute an integral part of maritime delimitation between the two countries, thus falling within the scope of the declaration filed by China in 2006 in accordance with the Convention, which excludes, inter alia, disputes concerning maritime delimitation from compulsory arbitration and other compulsory dispute settlement procedures”.⁵³

(62) 10-12 December 2014

⁵³ http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1217147.shtml

The sixth round of consultation of the working group between China and Vietnam on the delimitation of the sea area off the Beibu Bay (Gulf of Tonkin) was held in Beijing. Both sides reiterated that they would earnestly implement relevant consensus reached by leaders of the two countries and actively promote joint development in the area.

(63) 11 December 2014


In response to the position paper on the South China Sea arbitration that China released on 7 December, the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam announced on 11 December that Vietnam has sovereignty over the Spratly and Paracel islands, and opposes China's claims in the South China Sea based on "nine-dash line". He stated that the Vietnamese side had already made clear its position on the arbitration case to the Arbitral Tribunal. The spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry responded that "China has indisputable sovereignty over the Spratly Islands and their adjacent waters. And it is an indisputable fact that the Paracel Islands are an integral part of China's territory", and that "China will stick to its principled position of neither accepting nor participating in the South China Sea arbitration unilaterally initiated by the Philippines" and "the Chinese side urges the Vietnamese side to earnestly respect China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests".

(64) 11 December 2014

The Vietnamese frigate, HQ-011 Dinh Tien Hoang, was locked in a confrontation with China's Type 053 Frigate in the waters around the Chigua Reef (Johnson South Reef) of Nansha (Spratly) Islands.

(65) 15 December 2014

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement cited by Philippines-based *GMA News Online* that "the Vietnamese position is helpful in terms of promoting the rule of law and in finding peaceful and nonviolent solutions to the South China Sea claims."



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