China’s Activities in the South China Sea (China’s development activities on the features and trends in related countries)

January 2022
Japan Ministry of Defense
In the SCS, claims conflict between ASEAN countries and China over the territorial rights of Spratly and Paracel islands. China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines claim territorial sovereignty of the Paracel Islands. China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines also claim territorial sovereignty of the Spratly Islands. The map highlights the locations of Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef, Subi Reef, Cuarteron Reef, and other features in the Spratly Islands. The “Nine-dash line” is also marked on the map.
China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS

- Since 2014, China has pressed ahead with rapid and large-scale land reclamation works in 7 features in the Spratlys. By the late-2015 when the reclamation had been mostly completed, area of the reclamation work was approx. 12.9 ㎢ (Other countries in the region conducted land reclamation of approx. 0.2 ㎢ in the same period of time).
- After completing reclamation, China militarizes the features further, continuously developing various infrastructure and deploying military assets.
- In November 2018, it was reported that China installed what appears to be an information collection sensor in Bombay Reef in the Paracels without large-scale reclamation.

Building port facilities in the SCS could dramatically improve China’s ISR and other mission capabilities in the SCS.

Runway construction on the Fiery Cross, Subi, and Mischief Reefs (incl. 3,000m-class) would lead to an increase in China’s air force presence in the SCS.
1. China’s Occupation in the Spratly Islands
China has made advances into the SCS by exploiting power vacuums (to the Paracel Islands in 50s-70s and to the Spratly Islands since 80s.)

**Timeline**

1950s: 
- France withdraws from French Indochina
- China occupies half of the Paracel Islands (South Vietnam also advances to Paracel Islands)
- U.S. withdraws from South Vietnam
- China occupies the entire Paracel Islands after dislodging South Vietnam (1975: Collapse of South Vietnam after the Vietnam War)

Mid-1980s: 
- Soviet military in Vietnam decreases

1980s: 
- China advances to the Spratly Islands
- China occupies 6 features of the Spratly Islands

1992: 
- U.S. withdraws from the Philippines

1995: 
- China occupies Mischief Reef

2000s: 
- China advances to the southern SCS

2012: 
- China gains *de facto* control over Scarborough Shoal

2014+: 
- China conducts rapid and large-scale reclamation and infrastructure building in the SCS
China gained de facto control over 7 maritime features in the Spratlys and built structures at all of the 7 features. Based on its sovereignty claim, China has taken legislative and administrative actions such as the enactment of the Law on Territorial Sea (1992), the establishment of Sansha City and the Sansha Security District (2012), and the establishment of Xisha and Nansha Districts under Sansha City (2020). Structures on features etc.

Red: China’s
Star: Taiwan’s
Yellow: Vietnam’s
Blue: the Philippines’
Green: Malaysia’s
※ Thin dash lines show 200 NM from coasts geographically

1988-1995 Media reports etc.
Structures on features etc.

China’s Occupation in the SCS (before reclamation)

Fiery Cross Reef
Gaven Reef
Subi Reef
Fiery Cross Reef
Gaven Reef
Subi Reef

(Ref.) Media reports etc.
Since 2013, China has conducted runway extension works at Woody Island in the Paracels.

Since 2014, China has pressed ahead with rapid and large-scale land reclamation works in 7 features in the Spratlys. By the late-2015 when the reclamation had been mostly completed, area of the reclamation work was approx. 12.9 ㎢.

After the completion of the reclamation, China continues developing infrastructure which can be used for military purposes, with further militarization.
1-4 China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS (for each feature)

January 2014

1. Johnson South Reef

Original outpost

Before reclamation: App. 0.001㎢

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016
After reclamation: App.0.109㎢ (Reclamation completed in 2014)

Descriptions of infrastructure are based on points made by CSIS/AMTI, US DoD annual report to the Congress (2017), and other open sources.

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2017 (size) /Google Earth (length)
2. Hughes Reef

February 2010

Original outpost

Before reclamation: App. 0.001㎢

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016
2. Hughes Reef

- Helipad
- Dredged channel
- Quay (with a loading crane)
- Gun Battery
- Radar/communications facility
- Headquarters

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2017 / Google Earth (length)

Descriptions of infrastructure are based on points made by CSIS/AMTI, US DoD annual report to the Congress (2017), and other open sources.
1-4 China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS (for each feature)

3. Cuarteron Reef

March 2013

Before reclamation: App. 0.001㎢

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016
3. Cuarteron Reef

- Dredged channel
- Radar/Communication facility
- Quay (with a loading crane)
- Lighthouse
- Gun Battery
- Headquarters
- Helipad
- Original outpost
- Multiple poles (HF radar possibly)
- After reclamation: App.0.247㎢ (Reclamation completion in 2014)
- Radar/communications facility

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016 (size) /Google Earth (length)
1-4 China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS (for each feature)

4. Gaven Reefs

Before reclamation: App. 0.001 km²

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016
4. Gaven Reefs

Descriptions of infrastructure are based on points made by CSIS/AMTI, US DoD annual report to the Congress (2017), and other open sources.

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2017 /Google Earth (length)
1-4 China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS (for each feature)

5. Fiery Cross Reef

August 2014

Before reclamation: App. 0.010㎢

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016
5. Fiery Cross Reef

Descriptions of infrastructure are based on points made by CSIS/AMTI, US DoD annual report to the Congress (2017), and other open sources.

- Hangers (completed)
- SAM shelters
- Gun battery
- Radar/Sensor Array
- Underground storage facility
- Runway (completed)

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2017 /Google Earth (length)
1-4 China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS (for each feature)

February 2015

6. Subi Reef

Original outpost (incl. EW radar [est.])

Channel

Before reclamation: App. 0.002km²

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016, IHS Jane’s
6. Subi Reef

After reclamation: App. 4.11km²
(Reclamation completed in 2015)

- Radar/Communication facility
- Hangers (completed)
- SAM shelters
- Gun battery
- Underground storage facility
- Runway (completed)

Runway (approx. 3,000m)

Gun battery

November 2016

Radar/Communication facility

Runway (completed)

Gun battery

November 2016

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2017 / Google Earth (length)
1-4 China’s Reclamation Activities in the SCS (for each feature) ⑦

February 2015

7. Mischief Reef

Before reclamation: App. 0.002㎢

Original outpost

(Ref.) CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe (incl. photo)
US DoD Annual Report to Congress 2016
Descriptions of infrastructure are based on points made by CSIS/AMTI, US DoD annual report to the Congress (2017), and other open sources.

Sources: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (photo) / U.S. DoD Annual Report to Congress 2017 / Google Earth (length)
Initially, China denied its intentions to pursue militarization, and repeatedly mentioned the necessity of “defensive facilities”. Recently, government media reports that the reclamation works are “to strengthen the necessary military defences of the South China sea”.

- **September 2015**: On his visit to the U.S., **President Xi stated “China does not intend to pursue militarization” in the SCS.**
- **February 2016**: Foreign Minister Wang Yi said “(As an answer to the question regarding a report about the deployment of SAM systems on Woody Island, the report is a fake created by some western media, and) China’s limited, necessary defense facilities on Nansha (Spratly) Islands are in accordance with international law, which endows every sovereign state with the rights of self-protection and self-defense. These facilities have nothing to do with militarization”
- **December 2017**: CHINA NANHAI reported “**To strengthen the necessary military defense of the South China sea** within China’s sovereignty, China has rationally expanded the area of its islands and reefs.”

※ CHINA NANHAI (nanhai.haiwainet.cn) is a website jointly run by the National Marine Date and Information Service and the People’s Daily Overseas Edition. The website opened in August 2016.
2. Recent activities of PLA in the South China Sea
Satellite imagery from April 28 reveals the first image of a military aircraft Y-8, deployed to China’s base at Subi Reef (a). With these deployments, military aircraft have now verifiably landed on all of “Big three”. (April 2016, a transport aircraft landed at Fiery Cross Reef to evacuate personnel who had fallen ill. A photo in January 2018 shows two Y-7 military transport aircraft on Mischief Reef (b))

On April 9, the WSJ published satellite imagery showing military jamming equipment on Mischief Reef (c). The article cited a U.S. official who said the jamming systems were deployed to Fiery Cross Reef as well.

On May 2, CNBC reported that China had deployed YJ-12B anti-ship cruise missiles and HQ-9B surface-to-air missile systems on each of the reefs in Spratly island as part of military exercises in early April. This is the first confirmed placement of such platforms on the islands.

On May 12, 2020, Jane’s Online reported that China possibly deployed aircraft including Y-8 patrol and Y-9 early warning aircraft and other aircraft to the Fiery Cross Reef in rotation (d)

(a) A Y-8 at the airstrip on Subi Reef, April 28, 2018.

(b) Two Y-7s on the apron at Mischief Reef, January 6, 2018. (Photo provided by The Philippine Daily Inquirer.)

(c) Military jamming equipment deployed on Mischief Reef, May 6, 2018. (under covers)

(d) Z-8, Y-8 and Y-9 at the airstrip on Fiery Cross Reef, May 12, 2020.

Ref. CNBC reported on May 2, 2018

The missile platforms of YJ-12B ASCM and HQ-9B SAM were moved to the outposts in the Spratly Islands within the past 30 days, according to sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Pentagon official told CNBC “The further militarization of outposts will only serve to raise tensions and create greater distrust among claimants.”

YJ-12ASCM (Max range 500km) 
HQ-9SAM (Max range 200km)
※YJ-12 was originally developed as an air-to-ship missile, but recently the development of surface launched and ship launched variant is pointed out.

【Vietnamese MOFA Spokesperson (May 8, 2018)】
“Vietnam is deeply concerned about the information. All militarized activities, including the installation of missiles on Spratly archipelago, seriously violate the country’s sovereignty over the islands. The actions cause tension and instability in the region.”

【Ref.】CNBC reported on May 2, 2018
Most of China’s recent deployments in the Big three followed a pattern set earlier at Woody Island, its largest outpost and administrative seat in the Paracel Islands. From harbor dredging and runway improvements to hangar and radar construction, upgrades at Woody Island have served as a blueprint for things to come on China’s Spratly holdings to the south. China deployed HQ-9s and anti-ship cruise missiles (YJ-62s) to Woody in 2016. Satellite imagery also captured five Y-8 aircraft on the island in November 2017. China has repeatedly deployed J-10 and J-11 fighter jets to Woody Island. Satellite imagery from April 2016 also captured what are believed to be Z-8 helicopters and BZK-005 drone deployed to Woody Island.

(a) Total five Y-8 on Woody Island, November 15, 2017

(b) J-11B fighter jets parked on Woody Island, April 26, 2016

(c) A helicopter believed to be a Z-8 and a drone believed to be a BZK-005 on Woody Island, April 26, 2016.
On May 18, 2018, China Ministry of Defense announced that PLAF H-6K bombers and other aircraft conducted takeoff and landing exercises in “the southern sea area”.

Then, CSIS/AMTI and Defense News etc. stated that they had identified the location of the exercises as Woody Island in the Paracels.

These exercises were the first confirmed case where China landed its bombers on an airstrip on the South China Sea features.

【China Ministry of Defense’s comment (May 18, 2018)】

“PLAF H-6K bombers improving maritime combat capability through take off and landing exercises on islands”:

A division of the PLAF recently conducted takeoff and landing exercises on islands with organized various multiple bombers including H-6K and trained to improve “Full Territory, Full-time Assault and All-round Strike” capabilities. The commander Hao Jianke took the lead in piloting and taking off on an H-6K bomber from an airfield in the southern area. The division conducted assault training onto targets on the sea and then performed takeoff and landing exercises at an airfield on an island, achieving the goals of the training and equipping experience of takeoff and landing on islands with the PLAF bomber units. • • • Focusing on realizing the strategic objectives of “Air and Space Integration, Both Offensive & Defensive Operations,” the PLAF is marching towards the modernization of entire-territory-operations and the transformation into a strategic military service. According to a military expert, Wang Mingliang, the bombers’ deployment to conduct takeoff and landing exercises in the southern sea area contributes to the improvement of the combat capability in response to the threats on the maritime safety as well as the preparation of war and the training of combat capability.

CSIS/AMTI Analysis on H-6’s Coverage

H-6 bomber*

Radius of operation: 1,800km

*The most advanced H-6 variant is H-6K, it is pointed out that its radius of operation reaches 3,500km.

Peoople’s Daily reported the video of H-6K conducting takeoff and landing exercises

※Defense News identified the location of the exercise as Woody Island based on this video

Philippines and Vietnam criticized the issue

Example of military aircraft that was deployed in South China Sea (based on the classification by CSIS/AMTI, including presumption)
2-2 The commission of the first indigenous CV “Shandong”

- In Nov. 2013, the construction of the first indigenous CV started in Dalian, Liaoning Prov.
- After May 2018, the CV conducted sea trials near Dalian. The CV passed through Taiwan Strait in Nov. 2019.
- On Dec. 17th 2019, the CV was named “PLA Naval Ship Shandong” at the ceremony in Sanya, Hainan Prov.
- Reportedly CV “Shandong” is expected to be deployed in Sanya, and will operate in the South China Sea.
- The second indigenous CV is under construction, and the shipyard is reportedly in Shanghai.

Sanya, Hainan Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification of CV 17 “Shandong”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length × Width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-off</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ref. CV 16 “Liaoning” (Source: IHS Jane’s Online))

| Length × Width | 304.5m × 37m (Max. Width of the Flight Deck: 70m) |
| Displacement | 59,439t (Full), (Standard: 46,637t) |
| Aircraft | Fighter: J-15 × 24, Helicopter × 12 |
| Take-off | Ski-jump |
| Power | Steam powered, 30 knots |
| Armament | SAM: HHQ-10 (18-cell) × 4 Gun: 30mm Type1130 × 4 etc. |

(Reported Performance of CV “Shandong”)
- CV “Shandong” utilizes the space under the front part of the flight deck for aircraft, while CV “Liaoning” utilizes the space for SSMs, resulting in more accommodation of aircraft.
- CV “Shandong” has more operational capability with phased-array radar.

(Deployment Reported by China State-Media)
- The commission of CV “Shandong” in Sanya accounts for China’s first deployment of a CV in the South China Sea. The deployment will play an important role in peace and stability in the South China Sea.

(Source: People’s Daily Net (Dec. 18th 2019), etc.)

Commander of CV “Shandong”
LAI Yijuun, Senior Colonel

Political Commissar of CV “Shandong”
PANG Jianhong, Senior Colonel

※ Attendance of the Commission Ceremony: Representatives from related departments of central and state agencies, Central Military Commission, PLA Southern Theater, PLA Navy, Hainan Province and construction companies.
3. Security Implications by China’s Militarization in the Spratly Islands
Building port facilities of certain size capable of berthing, resupply and maintenance would enable China to maintain more robust naval and maritime law enforcement presence in the entire SCS.

This development would dramatically improve China’s ISR and other mission capabilities in the central and southern portions of the SCS.

Some observers refer to considerable impacts on coastal states in the SCS as well as on the sea lane.

E.g., Fiery Cross Reef

Source: CSIS/AMTI

※ CSIS/AMTI = CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative / DigitalGlobe
Runway construction on the Fiery Cross, Subi, and Mischief Reefs (incl. 3,000m-class) would lead to increase in China’s air force presence in the SCS

- The three features with runways and support facilities would enable China to forward-deploy various aerial platforms (incl. fighters, bombers and UAVs)

- In general terms, its ramifications potentially include:
  1. China’s improved air power-projection capability over the entire SCS (especially, significant improvement in China’s ISR and other mission capabilities in the central and southern portion of the SCS);
  2. enhanced China’s air superiority over the SCS; and
  3. improved “Anti-Access/Area-Denial” capabilities against the U.S. military presence and its intervention to contingencies; and

- It could lead to possible declaration of an “SCS Air Defense Identification Zone” by China in the future

[See.] “Regarding when to declare such a zone [SCS ADIZ], it will depend on whether China is facing security threats from the air, and what the level of the air safety threat.” (China Defense Ministry, June 2016)
4. Situations in Other Related Countries
Although main coastal states in the SCS strive to enhance their navy/air force capabilities, a vast gap with China remains both qualitatively and quantitatively.

### 4-1 Comparison of Navy/Air Force Capabilities (China & the Philippines/Vietnam/Malaysia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>The Philippines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarine</td>
<td>Shang-class (6,100t) x 6</td>
<td>Kilo-class (3,100t) x 6</td>
<td>Scorpene-class (1,800t) x 2</td>
<td>Null</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yuan-class (3,600t) x 17</td>
<td>Yugo-class (100t) x 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kilo-class (3,100t) x 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer/Frigate etc.</td>
<td>Luyang III-class DDG (6,000t) x 13</td>
<td>Gepard-class FFG (1,600t) x 4</td>
<td>Leki-class FF (1,800t) x 2</td>
<td>Hamilton-class FF (2,700t) x 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jiankai II-class FFG (3,600t) x 30</td>
<td>Petya-class FFL (1,000t) x 5</td>
<td>Kasturi-class Corvette (1,800t) x 2</td>
<td>Auk-class Corvette (1,100t) x 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combat Aircraft</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,903 (incl. 4th/5th generation fighter x 1,146)</td>
<td>72 (incl. 4th generation fighter x 46)</td>
<td>69 (incl. 4th generation fighter x 26)</td>
<td>43 (incl. 4th generation fighter x 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighter</td>
<td>J-10 x 488</td>
<td>Su-27/J-11 x 329</td>
<td>Su-30MK2 x 35</td>
<td>FA-50PH x 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Su-27/J-11 x 329</td>
<td>Su-27 x 11</td>
<td>Su-27 x 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Su-30 x 97</td>
<td>Su-22 x 26</td>
<td>Su-30MKM x 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol aircraft (fixed-wing) etc.</td>
<td>KJ-2000AEW&amp;C x 4</td>
<td>Null</td>
<td>Null</td>
<td>F-27-200MPAx 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KJ-500AEW&amp;C x 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N-22SLx 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marines etc.</td>
<td>Approx. 35,000 (PLA Marine Corps)</td>
<td>Approx. 27,000</td>
<td>Null</td>
<td>Approx. 8,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol and coastal combatants etc.</td>
<td>524+ (China Coast Guard)</td>
<td>72+ (Coast Guard)</td>
<td>127 (Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency)</td>
<td>87 (Coast Guard)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excluding aircraft of coast guards

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*Excluding aircraft of coast guards

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*Including 10,000t-class CCG vessels, the largest class in the world

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Sources: Military Balance 2021, Jane’s Fighting Ships 2020-2021, Jane’s online etc.
4-2 Development Trends of Other Countries/Regions in the SCS

Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Taiwan in the 80s/90s built runways (600-1,200m) on the land features over which they have de facto control. All of them have done facility maintenance and development. Reports suggest that Vietnam has recently conducted reclamation work.

Structures on features etc.
- China’s
- Taiwan’s
- Vietnam’s
- the Philippines’
- Malaysia’s
※ Thin dash lines show 200 NM from coasts geographically

Sand Cay (V)
These satellite photos indicate the reclamation area was approx. 37,190 m²

Sin Cowe Island (V)
These satellite photos indicate the reclamation area was approx. 105,501 m²

West London Reef (V)
These satellite photos indicate the reclamation area was approx. 285,303 m²

Spratly Island (V)
Approx. 600m runway

Paracel Islands

Thitu Island (P)
Approx. 1,200m runway

Itu Aba Island (T)

Source: CSIS/AMTI, IHS Jane’s

Approx. 1,400m runway

Runway extended in 2003

** Thin dash lines show 200 NM from coasts geographically

* CSIS/AMTI points out that Vietnam reclaimed 486,000 square meters in 10 features in total in 2 years since 2014.

In 2011, a plan to repair the runway announced; in January 2016, a plan to implement a civilian aircraft tracking system

A lighthouse (height: 12.7m) completed in October 2015; harbor expansion completed in December 2015, in which 3,000t-class vessels can berth

Airfield infrastructure expanded

Harbor expansion completed in Dec. 2015

May 2016

December 2015

Airfield infrastructure expanded

Harbor expansion completed in Dec. 2015

A lighthouse (height: 12.7m) completed in October 2015; harbor expansion completed in December 2015, in which 3,000t-class vessels can berth

Airfield infrastructure expanded

Harbor expansion completed in Dec. 2015

A lighthouse (height: 12.7m) completed in October 2015; harbor expansion completed in December 2015, in which 3,000t-class vessels can berth
Abstract

○ On 12th July 2016, the Tribunal, in the South China Sea Arbitration, issued an Award. The Tribunal concluded that China’s ‘nine-dash line’ is invalid, that none of the features in the Spratly Islands are fully entitled islands, which is capable of generating extended maritime zones, that China had violated the Philippines’ sovereign rights, and that China had caused severe harm to marine environment, resulting in agreement with the majority of Philippines’ claims.

○ “The award shall be final,” and “shall be complied with by the parties to the dispute.”

Historic Rights and the ‘Nine-Dash Line’

○ The Tribunal concluded that historical navigation and fishing by China in the waters of the South China Sea represented the exercise of high seas freedoms, rather than a historic right, and that there was no evidence that China had historically exercised exclusive control over the waters of the South China Sea or prevented other States from exploiting their resources.

○ The Tribunal concluded that there was no legal basis for China to claim historic rights to resources within the sea areas falling within the ‘nine-dash line.’
Status of Features

- Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, “rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.” The Tribunal concluded that this provision depends upon the objective capacity of a feature, in its natural condition, to sustain either a stable community of people or economic activity that is not dependent on outside resources.

- The Tribunal concluded that Scarborough Shoal, Johnson Reef, Cuarteron Reef, Fiery Cross Reef, Gaven Reef (North) and McKennan Reef are high-tide features and that Subi Reef, Hughes Reef, Mischief Reef, and Second Thomas Shoal were submerged at high tide in their natural condition.

- The Tribunal concluded that all of the high-tide features in the Spratly Islands (including, for example, Itu Aba, Thitu, West York Island, Spratly Island, North-East Cay, South-West Cay) are legally “rocks” that do not generate an exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.

Lawfulness of Chinese Actions / Harm to Marine Environment

- The Tribunal found that China had violated the Philippines’ sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone by such means as interfering with Philippine fishing and petroleum exploration and constructing artificial islands. The Tribunal also held that China had interfered with traditional fishing rights of fishermen from the Philippines at Scarborough Shoal in restricting access. The Tribunal further held that Chinese law enforcement vessels had unlawfully created a serious risk of collision when they physically obstructed Philippine vessels.

- The Tribunal found that China’s recent large scale land reclamation and construction of artificial islands at seven features in the Spratly Islands has caused severe harm to the coral reef environment. The Tribunal found, however, that China’s recent large-scale land reclamation and construction of artificial islands was incompatible with the obligations on a State during dispute resolution proceedings.

* The Tribunal found that it lacked jurisdiction to consider the implications of a stand-off between Philippine and China at Second Thomas Shoal.
① In February 2020, a Chinese naval vessel directed radar at a Philippine naval vessel.

② In April 2020, a Vietnamese fishing boat collided with a Chinese Coastguard vessel and sank in the waters of the Paracel Islands.
[Others’ Response] Vietnam lodged diplomatic protest against China. The Philippines also expressed concerns. (The Philippines experienced a similar case in June 2019.)

③ In April 2020, the “Liaoning” aircraft carrier group passed through the Miyako Strait, Bashi Channel and entered the South China Sea.
[Others’ Response] Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense announced the above.

④ In April 2020, China announced the new establishment of “Xisha and Nansha Districts” in the South China Sea.

⑤ In April 2020, a Chinese survey ship “Haiyang Dizhi 8” operated near the Malaysian drillship “West Capella.” (Image 1)
[Others’ Response] While avoiding explicit protests, Malaysia’s Foreign Minister remarked that the presence of warships and other naval vessels in the South China Sea could increase tensions and undermine peace, security and stability.

⑥ From July 1 to 5, 2020, PLA Navy conducted military exercise near the Paracel Islands. [Advance notice on June 28] (Image 2)
[Others’ Response] A spokesperson of the Vietnam’s Foreign Ministry remarked that China’s drill violated Vietnam’s sovereignty, and the Philippine’s Foreign Minister uploaded a video statement showing concerns.

[The U.S.] The U.S. DoD expressed concern that China’s military exercise would destabilize the situation in the South China Sea.

⑦ In August 2020, PLA conducted military exercise in the South China Sea. (According to reports, four medium-range ballistic missiles launched)
[The U.S.] The U.S. DoD expressed concern about the Chinese military exercise and the launch of ballistic missiles in the South China Sea.

⑧ In September 2020, PLA noticed military exercise in the South China Sea.
[The U.S. DoS] released a press statement to the effect that despite the Xi’s promise five years ago, China uses militarized outposts as platforms of coercion.

⑨ In May and June 2021, 16 PLA aircraft approached Malaysian coastal area.
4-4 Trends in China and reactions of the U.S. and Australia since the COVID-19 outbreak(2)

- **China continues to intensify activities** in the South China Sea after the COVID-19 outbreak.
- On July 13, 2020, the U.S. announced the statement of Secretary of State “U.S. Position on Maritime Claims in the South China Sea.”
- On July 26, 2020, **Australia** backed the U.S. by sending a letter to the UN denying China’s sovereignty claims in the South China Sea.

**The U.S.**

- Beijing’s claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful.
- The U.S. shares deep and abiding interests of the peace and stability, freedom of the seas in a manner consistent with international law, the unimpeded flow of commerce, and opposition to using coercion or force to settle disputes with our allies and partners. These shared interests have come under unprecedented threat from the People’s Republic of China (PRC).
- Beijing uses intimidation to undermine the sovereign rights of Southeast Asian coastal states in the South China Sea, bully them out of offshore resources, assert unilateral dominion, and replace international law with “might makes right.”
- The PRC has no legal grounds to unilaterally impose its will on the region. In a unanimous decision on July 12, 2016, an Arbitral Tribunal rejected the PRC’s maritime claims as having no basis in international law.
- The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire. America stands with our Southeast Asian allies and partners in protecting their sovereign rights to offshore resources, consistent with their rights and obligations under international law. We stand with the international community in defense of freedom of the seas and respect for sovereignty and reject any push to impose “might makes right” in the South China Sea or the wider region.

**Australia**

- Australia rejects China’s claim to ‘historic rights’ or ‘maritime rights and interests’ as established in the Tong course of historical practice in the South China Sea. The Tribunal in the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award found these claims to be inconsistent with UNCLOS and, to the extent of that inconsistency, invalid.
- The Australian Government does not accept China’s assertion in its note of 17 April 2020 that its sovereignty claims over the Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands are ‘widely recognized by the international community.’
The U.S. concerns:
- inhibition of freedom of navigation in the SLOC
- constraints of the U.S. military activities
- deterioration of security environment in the entire region

⇒ The U.S. demands China to comply with international norms, and criticizes China’s unilateral and assertive actions in the SCS.

The U.S. remarks about the SCS

- I believe our world is embarking on a new era with new challenges. Our partnerships throughout the Indo-Pacific including Southeast Asia are a top priority for the United States.
- We know that Beijing continues to coerce, to intimidate, and to make unlawful claims to the vast majority of the South China Sea. Beijing’s actions continue to undermine the rules-based order and threaten the sovereignty of nations.

(2021.8.24)

- Beijing’s claim to the vast majority of the South China Sea has no basis in international law.
- Yet even in times of competition, we are not asking countries in the region to choose between the United States and China.
- We are going to have new high-end bilateral training opportunities with Singapore including Singapore’s future F-35B.
- Let me thank President Duterte for his decision to fully restore the Visiting Forces Agreement. VFA will help achieve the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.

(2021.7.27~30)
“FONOP” is one of the means for carrying out “Freedom of Navigation (FON) Program”

FON Program is characterized as below:

Ends: In order to preserve the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace guaranteed to all states under international law by demonstrating a non-acquiescence to excessive maritime claims asserted by coastal states

Ways: (1) Operational activities by U.S. military forces / DoD (i.e., “FONOP”)

(2) Consultations and representations by U.S. DoS

History: The FON Program has been continuously carried out since 1979.
2. Manner of “FONOP” [news report etc.](1)

○ In May 2015, the U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said: “The U.S. will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows.”

○ According to the U.S. DoD “Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy” (August 2015), “U.S. PACOM maintains a robust shaping presence in and around the SCS, with activities ranging from training and exercises with allies and partners to port calls to FONOPs and other routine operations” and “[a]s part of the Department’s routine presence activities, the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Coast Guard conduct FONOPs.”

○ In October 2015, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Subi Reef, the Spratly Islands (USS Lassen).

○ In November 2015, PACOM commander Harry Harris said that the U.S. has been, and will be, conducting “FONOPs” in the SCS.

○ In January 2016, the U.S. conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Triton Island, the Paracel Islands (USS Curtis Wilbur). The U.S. Office of Secretary of Defense stated: “This operation was about challenging excessive maritime claims that restrict the rights and freedoms of the U.S. and other, not about territorial claims to land features. The U.S. takes no position on competing sovereignty claims between the parties to naturally-formed land features in the SCS.”

○ In May 2016, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Fiery Cross Reef (USS William P. Lawrence).

○ In October 2016, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Decatur).

○ In May 2017, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Mischief Reef (USS Dewey).

○ In July 2017, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Triton Island, the Paracel Islands (USS Stetham).

○ In August 2017, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Mischief Reef (USS John S. McCain).

○ In October 2017, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Chafee).

○ In January 2018, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Scarborough Shoal (USS Hopper).

○ In March 2018, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Mischief Reef (USS Mustin).

○ In May 2018, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Paracel Islands (USS Higgins and Antietam).

○ In September 2018, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Gaven Reef and Johnson South Reef, the Spratly Islands (USS Decatur).

○ In November 2018, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Chancellorsville).

○ In January 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Tree, Lincoln and Woody Island, the Spratly Islands (USS McCampbell).

○ In February 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Mischief Reef (USS Spruance and Preble).

○ In May 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Gaven and Johnson South Reefs (USS Preble and Chung-Hoon).

○ In May 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Scarborough Shoal (USS Preble).

○ In August 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Fiery Cross Reef and the Mischief Reef (USS Wayne E Meyer).

○ In September 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Wayne E Meyer).

○ In November 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Mischief Reef (USS Gabrielle Giffords).

○ In November 2019, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Wayne E Meyer).

○ In January 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near Fiery Cross Reef (USS Montgomery).

○ In March 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS McCampbell).

○ In April 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Barry).

○ In April 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Gaven Reef (USS Bunker Hill).

○ In May 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Mustin).

○ In July 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” within 12NM of the Paracel Islands (USS Ralph Johnson).

○ In August 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Mustin).

○ In October 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS John S. McCain).

○ In December 2020, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Spratly Islands (USS John S. McCain).
2. Manner of “FONOP” [news report etc.](2)

- In February 2021, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS John S. McCain).
- In February 2021, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Spratly Islands (USS Russell).
- In May 2021, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Paracel Islands (USS Curtis Wilbur).
- In July 2021, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Spratly Islands (USS Benfold).
- In September 2021, the U.S. Navy conducted the “FONOP” near the Spratly Islands (USS Benfold).