



Situation Room

**** SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE ****

Period under review: from 15 April 2021 to 21 April 2021.

[This report is based on publicly available sources to describe a changing situation. Information subject to change.]

Situation analysis recap:

- Taiwan launched its first domestically produced amphibious assault vessel. The country also announced that it would buy more long-range missiles from the US. Taiwan is going to launch a new domestic defence programme and will develop its own weapons. China issued a warning to Taiwan that it would go to war if the country forged closer ties with the US.
- Malaysia and Vietnam intend to sign a memorandum of understanding that could end their dispute over sovereignty in the South China Sea. Both countries are members of ASEAN.
- Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga met with US President Biden on Friday, 16 April. Suga remarked that the US and Japan will oppose Chinese coercion or use of force in the South and East China Seas. Both leaders also stressed the importance of peace in the Taiwan Strait. China warned both countries to take China's concerns and demands seriously and to avoid taking actions that interfere in China's internal affairs and interests.
- In a sign of protest to the Chinese closure of parts of the South China Sea in order to conduct naval exercises, a US Navy destroyer, monitoring the Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning, sailed near the carrier while it was participating in the Chinese naval exercise.
- Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said on Monday, 19 April, that he is prepared to send military ships in the South China Sea to stake a claim over the oil and mineral resources in the disputed part of the Philippines strategic waterway. He also commented that challenging China in the South China Sea could lead to violence and that he was prepared to use violence if Beijing drills for oil in the disputed waters claimed by the Philippines.

Sources/Further Reading:

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