

South China Sea: Major Developments in 2013

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Outline

1. ASEAN Unity on a Code of Conduct
2. New Tensions in China-Philippine Relations
3. China-ASEAN Consultation on a COC
4. Role of the Major Powers
5. South China Sea in Bilateral Relations

1. ASEAN Unity on COC Restored

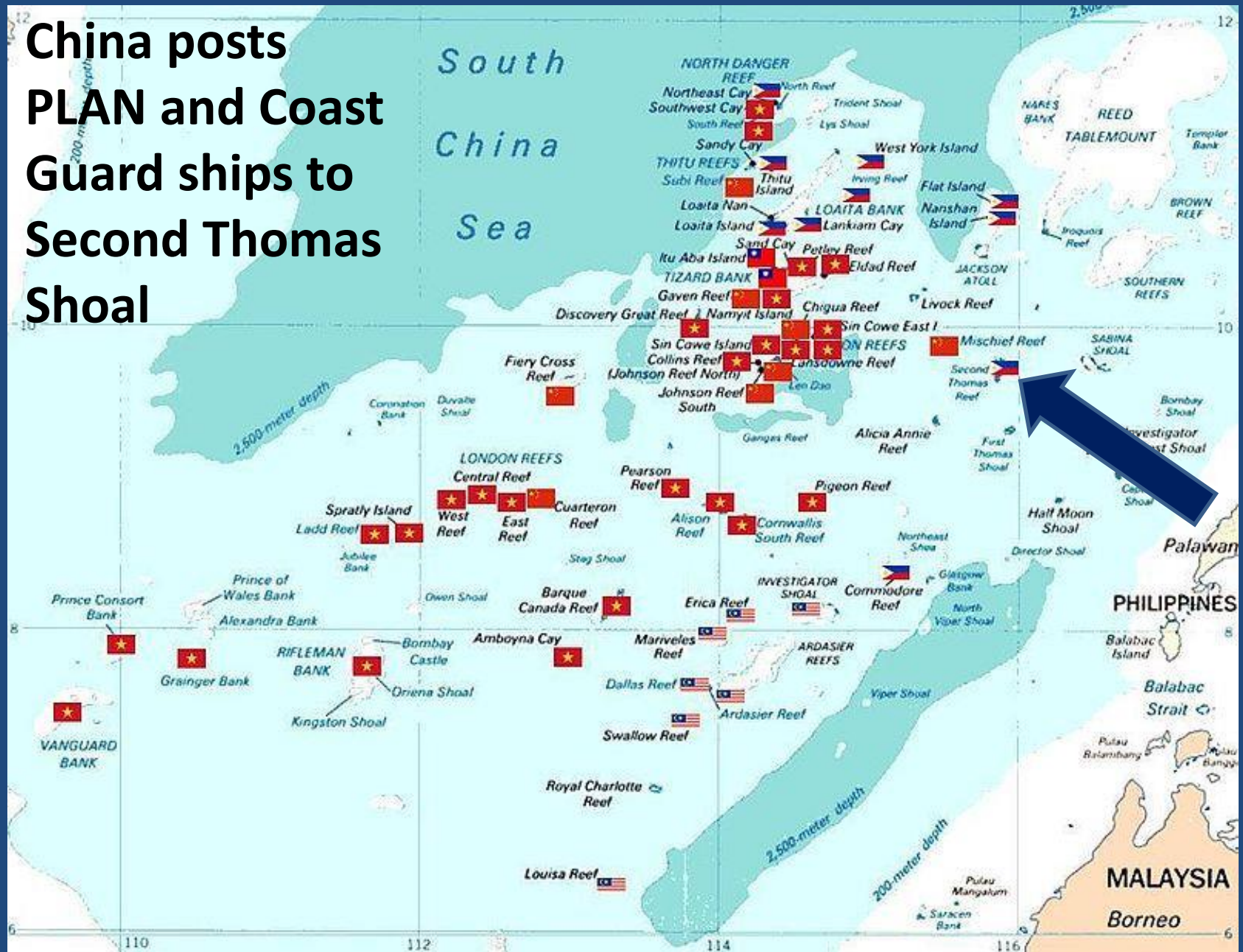


2. New Tensions in China-Philippines Relations

Claim to the Arbitral Tribunal

- January – Philippines lodges Notification and Statement of Claim
- April – Arbitral Tribunal established
- July – first session held
- August – first procedural order
- March 30, 2014 deadline for Philippines to respond

China posts PLAN and Coast Guard ships to Second Thomas Shoal



Second Thomas Shoal



Scarborough Shoal: Rocks or Blocks?

Pictures Taken on 02 Sept 2013



MOL seventy-five (75) suspected square concrete blocks(2 cubic feet in size) located at 10 NM NW off the shoal's entrance

- Concrete blocks prelude to construction
- Violation of the DOC
- Diplomatic protest mooted



3. China-ASEAN Consultations on a Code of Conduct

- March – National People’s Congress elects Xi Jinping President, Wang Yi Foreign Minister
- April - 19th ASEAN-China Senior Officials Consultations
- June - ASEAN China Foreign Ministers meet in Brunei
- August Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s caution
- September – 6th SOM and 9th Working Group Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC

4. Major Powers

U.S. Rebalancing and the Philippines

- Philippines continues force modernization and purchase of frigates and jet aircraft
- Joint Vision Statement to upgrade Mutual Defence Treaty (August)
- Discussions on increased rotational presence of US forces at Philippine military facilities
- Current impasse over issue of control and access to temporary US facilities

Major Powers

U.S. Rebalancing and Vietnam

- July 25 – Joint Statement establishes Comprehensive Partnership
 - US investment in Vietnam's energy sector
 - Defense and Security Cooperation
- October - 6th Political, Security, and Defense Dialogue
- October - 4th Defense Policy Dialogue
 - MOU cooperation between Coast Guards

Major Powers

China' Provocative Military Exercises



James Shoal 80 km
off East Malaysia
March 2013

Major Powers

Japan and the Philippines

An Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend

- 2011 Japan & Philippines Strategic Partnership
- June 2013 Japan's Defence Minister visits Philippines
 - Support Arbitral Tribunal
- July - Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits the Philippines
 - concessional loan for ten Coast Guard patrol boats

Bilateral Relations

Philippines and Taiwan

- May 9, Philippines Coast Guard officers fatally shoot a Taiwanese fisherman
- Three-month crisis in bilateral relations
- Taiwan issues 72-hour ultimatum, Philippines' apology deemed insincere, eleven sanctions imposed, military exercises conducted
- August – Philippines apology accepted, sanctions ended, fishery talks commence

Bilateral Relations

China Hypes Joint Development

- **China and Vietnam**
 - Decline in maritime incidents
 - Premier Li Keqiang promotes joint development
- **China and Malaysia**
 - Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, “Just because you have enemies, doesn't mean your enemies are my enemies.”
- **China and Brunei**
 - “agreed to enhance maritime cooperation to promote joint development”

Conclusion

- ASEAN's new sense of political unity to enter into consultations with China over COC
- Chinese wedge politics to isolate Philippines
- Change in Chinese policy – consultations on COC, maritime cooperation, “magic wand of joint development”
- Intrusion of power politics by major powers
 - US rebalancing, Chinese military exercises, Japanese provision of patrol boats

Conclusion

- Taiwan's role as claimant cannot be ignored
- China-Vietnam relations on a positive upward trajectory
- Malaysia – hedging strategy towards China
- China-Brunei – commercial agreement
- China hyping maritime cooperation and joint development as part of a new charm offensive
 - COC discussions will be protracted

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