

US Provocation in Chinese Waters. The Militarization of the South China Sea

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

Imagine the following scenario. One or more Chinese warships sail provocatively into US Gulf of Mexico waters, or perhaps off its West Coast – after being warned by Pentagon and administration officials not to.

Washington would interdict the vessel, perhaps consider its intrusion a casus belli – with full US media support.

Here's today's reality. In mid-October, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said: "Make no mistake, the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows, as we do around the world, and the South China Sea is not and will not be an exception," code language for laws are what Washington says they are, regardless of their precise meaning.

America considers all global waters its own, intending to sail provocatively through them whenever it wishes, even at the expense of world peace and stability. Hegemons operate this way, by its own rules alone.

China justifiably considers the Nansha (Spratly) Islands and waters surrounding them its sovereign territory. America respects only its own sovereignty, no one else's.

Last May, China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said America should avoid "risky and provocative approaches to maintain regional peace and stability."

She stressed China will defend its territorial sovereignty. Unauthorized intrusions will be challenged. At the time, a state-run Global Times editorial bluntly warned:

If the United States' bottom line is that China has to halt its activities, then a US-China war is inevitable in the South China Sea.

"China will have no choice but to" respond to US provocations. Its message says it won't tolerate US intervention where it doesn't belong.

China is concerned about America's increasing Asia/Pacific presence, provocatively challenging its sovereignty and security.

On October 27, state-run [Xinhua](#) news said "(a) US warship sailed within 12 nautical miles of Chinese islands in South China Sea on Tuesday in a flagrant – and baseless – provocation against China's legitimate rights in the body of water."

The USS Lassen's operation, carried out in the name of freedom of navigation, was nothing but a willful and harmful game of brinkmanship mounted to flex US muscles at China's doormat and reassert Washington's dominant presence in the region – at the cost of injecting more uncertainty into regional stability.

Xinhua blasted Washington's deliberate provocation, calling it "the troublemaker of the West Pacific," accusing it of "making trouble out of nothing." Beijing authorities warned the US vessel after entering Chinese waters, saying it acted "illegally."

A Foreign Ministry statement said: "China strongly urges the US side to conscientiously handle China's serious representations, immediately correct its mistake and not take any dangerous or provocative acts that threaten China's sovereignty and security interests."

Foreign Minister Wang Yi added separately: "We advise the US to think again...before acting" provocatively. The incident was White House authorized – "despite repeated (Beijing) warnings" against violating its sovereign territory.

An unnamed Pentagon official said more US patrols in Chinese waters will follow. "This is something that will be a regular occurrence, not a one-off event."

Reckless US policy risks direct confrontation with Russia over Ukraine and Syria, as well as China for numerous provocations, entering its South China Sea waters illegally, the latest incident, more promised by its own admission.

Washington's so-called "freedom of navigation" right is cover for willfully acting belligerently, confronting an Asian superpower recklessly in its own territory, a new millennium version of gunboat diplomacy, this one with weapons able to destroy life on earth.

China and Russia won't let America run roughshod over their interests. United they're a formidable anti-imperial force, one US policymakers should think twice about confronting.

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His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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