

Beat: News

China says media ignores other claimants weaponry in South China Sea.

South China Sea.

Baku, 24.02.2016, 13:57 Time

USPA NEWS - China on Wednesday complained the media were ignoring radars and weapons deployed by other claimants in the South China Sea, and unfairly targeting China, following reports of its deployment of fighter jets and radars in the disputed waterway.

Over the past week or so China has been reported to have deployed advanced missiles, fighters and radar equipment on islands in the South China Sea, especially on Woody Island in the Paracels.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying reiterated that as far as China was concerned, there was no dispute over ownership of the Paracels, and so China could deploy what it wanted on its territory without reproach.

"I suggest to the media that, in your reports, you not selectively pump up or ignore things," Hua told a daily news briefing on Wednesday.

"Because when you pay attention to what China is deploying, do you also pay attention to other countries which have over the years, on Chinese islands they have occupied, deployed many radars and advanced weaponry? I hope friends in the media can objectively, justly, rationally and calmly make their reports."

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion in global trade passes every year. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

The comments, which come as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visits the United States, follow remarks on Tuesday by Admiral Harry Harris, head of the U.S. Pacific Command, that China was "clearly militarizing" the South China Sea.

Harris said he believed China's deployment of surface-to-air missiles on Woody Island, new radars on Cuarteron Reef in the Spratlys and its building of airstrips were "actions that are changing, in my opinion, the operational landscape in the South China Sea".

Soon after he spoke, U.S. government sources confirmed that China recently deployed fighter jets to Woody Island. It was not the first time China sent jets there but the move raised new questions about its intentions.

China's official Xinhua news agency, in an English language commentary, said the "hype" about China's "so-called militarization" failed to mention that China had for many years deployed defensive measures on Woody Island.

"For the South China Sea waters to be calm, Washington should first stop its ugly practice of smearing China and avoid any move that stirs up tension in the region," it said.

(Reporting by Ben Blanchard; Editing by Clarence Fernandez)

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-7226/china-says-media-ignores-other-claimants-weaponry-in-south-china-sea.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): NEWS-AZ

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