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## Billions of Chinese ready for the war in South China Sea

Lyuba Lulko

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The West is trying to show China its place as China is setting its claims for disputed islands in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, Beijing has refused to recognize the jurisdiction of The Hague Tribunal and threatened to pull out from the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Chinese

government feels the powerful support of the population on the issue and is ready for a confrontation with the West. Will the West take the challenge from China?

On July 10, the International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled that China had no "historical right" for the [disputed territories in the South China Sea](#). It was also said that China has thus violated the sovereign rights of the Philippines. The naturally inhabited islands have 12 nautical miles of territorial administration and 200 nautical miles of exclusive economic zone. The dispute also affects the [Spratly archipelago](#), as this is the reef that was artificially transformed into islands, the ruling said.

The West uses the territorial dispute between Beijing and Manila as a bargaining chip in the strategic rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region. China believes that the Western jurisdiction is governed by laws that were passed when China was weak. Now the times are different, so the laws should be changed. For the time being, Xi Jinping urges colleagues to work on a bilateral basis while the US State Department urges the Chinese leader to execute the decision of the Hague court. Obviously, the United States will not be sitting on its hands as the US administration has taken many diplomatic, political and military efforts in the past three years to win positions in the region. Many experts fear that further actions of the parties may lead to a military conflict.

"We are strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to this statement, and have lodged solemn representations with the US side ... We oppose and refuse to accept any proposal or action based on the ruling. China will continue to safeguard territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea...We urge the US to think over its words and deeds, stop advertising the illegal arbitration and meddling with the South China Sea issue, and cease undermining China's sovereignty and security interests and escalating regional tensions," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang said in a statement.

### **The war in the South China Sea may start tonight**

The population of China supports their leaders on the problem. "China today and China two decades ago are two different Chinas," Alexey Maslov, a Sinologist and Orientalist said. "China has realized its power. The average Chinese citizen, even if he or she lives nearly on the level of poverty, understands that they live in a rapidly developing country. The Chinese are proud of their country. They can criticize the local party committee, the local county leader, but they are absolutely convinced in the correct course that China is going, like an icebreaker towards its destination."

A few hours after the announcement of the decision of the Hague court, Chinese social network Weibo (a local equivalent of Twitter) exploded with angry publications. People urged each other to fight for every inch of land and reminded the West of the saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

On WeChat platform, the article titled "[The war in the South China Sea will start tonight](#)" enjoyed great popularity.

"We must return our reefs and islands that Vietnam and other countries have occupied. How can we return them? We can only struggle," one of the comments says.

"The danger of the ongoing escalation is certainly not about an armed local conflict that the USA and China may unleash. The danger is about the possibility for an incidental clash between Chinese and US warships. If this happens, diplomatic statements will not be able to resolve the conflict," Alexey Maslov believes.

Most likely, China will start to put out the fire through bilateral negotiations with the Philippines under the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea from 2002. Yet, nothing will change, and China will continue building islands and bases on the disputed territories.

The West will resort to sanctions, of course. They may revise the decision of the IMF to make the yuan a reserve currency. China may be required to withdraw its judge from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg. The talks about China's participation in the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf are likely to be suspended.

Moscow has not released any statements or comments about the dispute between the USA and China. Russia is developing cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam. However, if China could take a more pro-Russian position on Ukraine, [Russia could support the Celestial Empire](#) in the dispute about the South China Sea. In the long run,

strategic interest in the dispute with the West is more important than a relationship with Washington's allies or those who can sit between two chairs.