

Russia, China to Hold Naval Drills in Disputed South China Sea

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China and Russia will hold “routine” naval drills in the South China Sea in September, the Reuters news agency [reported](#) Thursday.

The drills are designed to strengthen Russian–Chinese cooperation and “are not aimed at any third party,” Reuters reported, citing China's Defense Ministry spokesperson Yang Yujun.

The military exercises are aimed at "strengthening the strategic partnership between Russia and China and strengthening the ability of both states to respond to security threats in the world," the spokesperson said.

China has come under pressure to scale back its military operations in the South China Sea.

This month, Beijing said it would ignore the ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea at The Hague. The court ruled overwhelmingly in favor of the Philippines' claims to strategic atolls and reefs in the South China Sea.

Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova [responded](#) to the ruling by saying that Russia is not a participant in the territorial dispute and doesn't support any side.

"We consider that attempts by non-regional powers to interfere in territorial disputes in the South China Sea are unproductive," she said.

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