**The Expanding Military Forces of China in the Indo-Pacific Maritime Region**

The Indo-Pacific maritime region has turned into a grey zone­­­ — an ambiguous area treading between war and peace—because of conflicting maritime claims. Behind the escalating turmoil is China’s provocation towards neighboring countries using military force in defense of its claimed territorial waters. See how China has militarized the region throughout the past decade.

<Territorial Map with Incidents and Colors of the Countries Military Power>

<Spratly, Paracel, Scarborough, Subi Reef, Natuna Islands>

China sent a 165-m long “monster ship” CCG-5901 to the disputed Scarborough Shoal near the Philippines. Here’s a size difference of the biggest ASEAN coast guard ships in comparison to China’s “monster ship.”

<Size difference>

China uses intimidation to undermine the sovereign rights of ASEAN states in the Indo-Pacific Maritime Region. Some of the documented ways include ramming, shadowing, blocking, encircling, firing water cannons, and using-military grade lasers.

<ways illustration>

The number of incidents in the area has increased over time.

<line chart>

China’s geopolitical dominance over the region is backed by its stronger and more capable military compared to the neighboring countries.

<maritime force expenditure and percent change over time>

<maritime sea power distribution>

As China

Country,Military Capability Index

China,69.7

Vietnam,18.3

Malaysia,9.2

Philippines,8.0

Brunei,3.9

Indonesia,15.7

Country,VesselName,DisplacementTons

China,Haijing5901,12000

Vietnam,FormerUSHamiltonClassCutter,3250

Malaysia,KMPekan,1300

Philippines,BRPTeresaMagbanua,2265

Brunei,DarussalamPatrolVessel,1625

Indonesia,TanjungDatuPatrolVessel,2400

strategic locations, territorial disputes, contested areas, geopolitical competition, provocation, escalation