



# Vietnamese Media Reports on VP Pence's South China Sea Visit

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 13 November US Vice President, Mike Pence, flew over the South China Sea on the way from Japan to Singapore after attending the East Asian Summit. This did not go unnoticed by the media in Vietnam, whose Vietnamese-language publication, *VnExpress*, published the accompanying excerpted article about Pence's travel. The article reported that Pence's travel route was related to a stronger stance that the US was taking against unilateral Chinese military actions in the South China Sea. The article then quoted Pence, who stated after the flight that the US will exercise its freedom of navigation. Among other Pence quotes, the article also noted that in October he criticized China for bringing warships close to US destroyers in the South China Sea. The article makes clear that Pence supports a US policy that challenges China's claims to sovereignty over 90 percent of the South China Sea and therefore the article writes approvingly of his statements and flight route decision.

In addition, the article reinforces that Vietnam has always claimed sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos in the South China Sea and that in contrast to China, it has always respected international law in those areas. The article also states that Vietnam has urged other countries to follow this example and contribute to the peace, stability, and fulfillment of international law in the South China Sea. The tone of the article, therefore, is supportive of the rhetoric and actions of the US Vice President during his travel in Southeast Asia. This is not surprising, however, because when it comes to geopolitics and security in the South China Sea, the US and Vietnamese positions are mostly aligned. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

**Source:** “Phó tổng thống Mỹ bay qua đảo nhân tạo Trung Quốc bồi đắp ở Trường Sa (Vice President of the United States flying over the artificial islands of China in the Spratly Islands),” *VnExpress*, 15 November 2018. <https://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/the-gioi/pho-tong-thong-my-bay-qua-dao-nhan-tao-trung-quoc-boi-dap-o-truong-sa-3839312.html>

*On the way from Japan to Singapore for the East Asia Summit (EAS), U.S. Vice President Mike Pence flew over the South China Sea and rightfully encroached over Chinese artificial islands in the Spratly Islands. The U.S. vice president said “We will not be intimidated and will continue to exercise our freedom of navigation.” The news came as the U.S. is taking a firmer stance on China’s unilateral military action in the South China Sea. Mr. Pence in October warned the U.S. not to step back from the threat posed by China in the South China Sea and criticized Beijing for bringing warships close to Washington destroyers.*

*China claims sovereignty over 90% of the South China Sea by drawing “illegal lines” and carrying out military development activities in the Spratly Islands. The U.S. criticized these actions, while asserting maritime freedom in the South China Sea under international law. Vietnam has always claimed sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos, respecting the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea in accordance with international law.*

