

The United States accuses China of carrying out “coercive interference” in oil and gas activities in waters claimed by Vietnam, It also accuses Beijing of using “bullying tactics.”

On Saturday, a Chinese survey vessel extended its activities to an area closer to Vietnam’s coastline, ship tracking data showed, after Australia and the United States expressed concern about Beijing’s actions in the disputed waterways.

[Pentagon in a statement](#) said, “Recently, China resumed its coercive interference in Vietnam’s longstanding oil and gas activities in the disputed South China Sea”.

The United States said China’s activities were contradictory to Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe’s promise in a speech in Singapore earlier this year that Beijing would “stick to the path of peaceful development.”

“China will not win the trust of its neighbours nor the respect of the international community by maintaining its bullying tactics,” Pentagon statement added.

It also said, “Chinese actions to coerce ASEAN claimants, station offensive military systems, and enforce an unlawful maritime claim raise serious doubts over China’s credibility. The United States will continue to support efforts by our allies and partners to ensure freedom of navigation and economic opportunity throughout the entire Indo-Pacific.”

The Chinese Survey vessel, The Haiyang Dizhi 8 vessel first entered Vietnam’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) early last month where it began a weeks-long seismic survey, triggering a stiff standoff between military and coastguard vessels from China and Vietnam.

Vietnam, which has developed increasingly close ties with Washington has given shared concerns about Beijing. It has demanded that China remove the vessel amid a month-long standoff in waters seen as a potential global flashpoint.

Both the Asian countries have for years been embroiled in a dispute over the potentially energy-rich stretch of waters and a busy shipping lane in the disputed South China Sea.

Wang Yi, Beijing’s top diplomat, said last month that maritime problems involving Vietnam should not spoil their ties.

Last week, the U.S. State Department said the actions were “an escalation by Beijing in its efforts to intimidate other claimants out of developing resources in the South China Sea.”

The statement came as President Trump on Monday predicted a trade deal with China after assertive gestures by Beijing, calming global markets that have been disturbed by escalating tensions between the world’s two largest economies.

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