

The China's “nine-dashed line” and regional dispute on South China Sea

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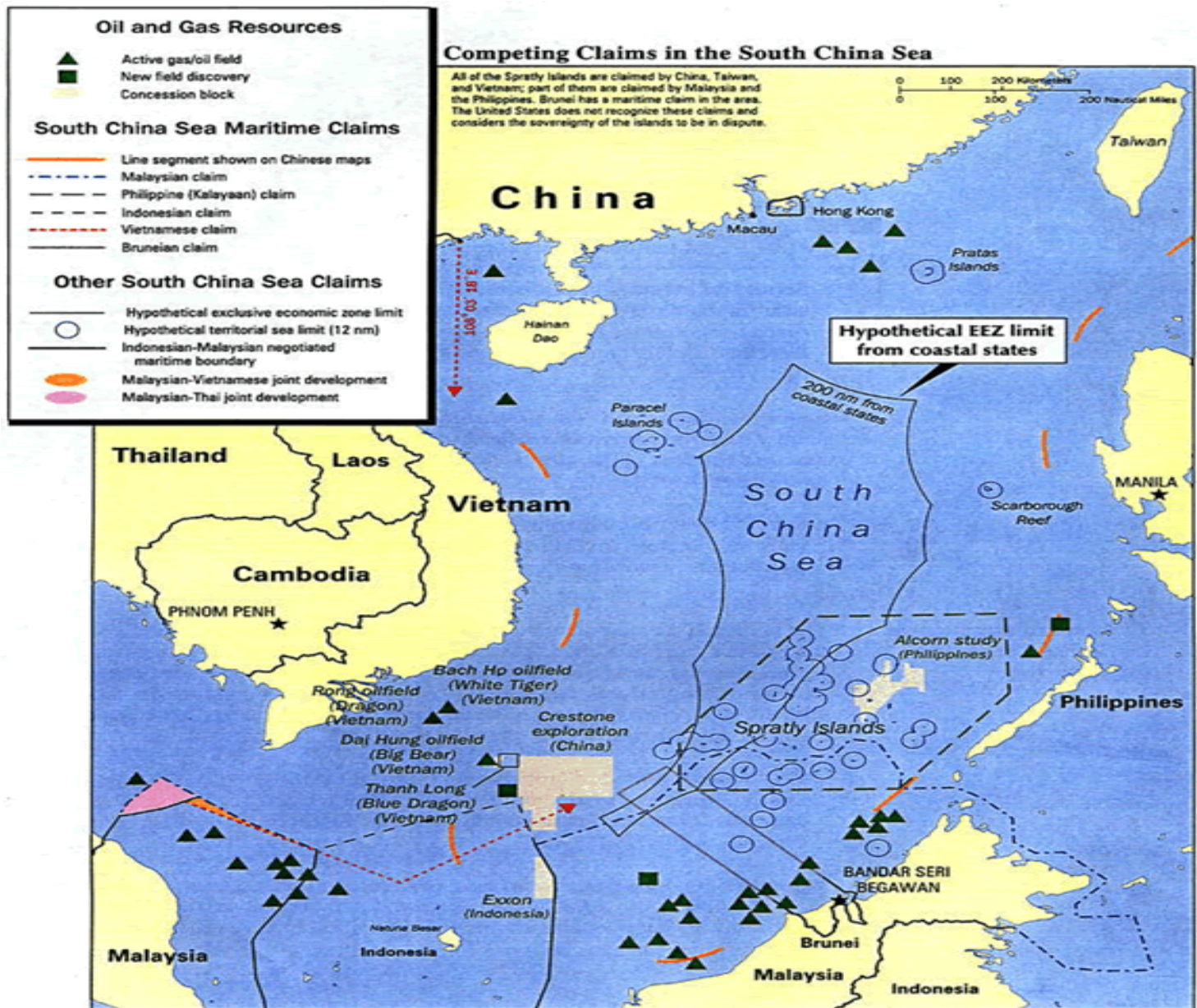
Introduction

- territory dispute in the region of the South China Sea causes escalating tension noticeable.
 - Six claimants: China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei.
 - China claims the biggest portion of territory by the so called “nine-dashed line” (or U-shaped line, nine-dotted line)
- one of the main sources of the conflict between China and other claimants over ocean area.



Back ground on South China Sea

- natural-rich resources including oil and gas
- South China Sea has been very busy shipping lanes for long time
- the sea plays a crucial role in military strategy in the whole South East Asia region



Source: CIA Maps and Publications for the Public

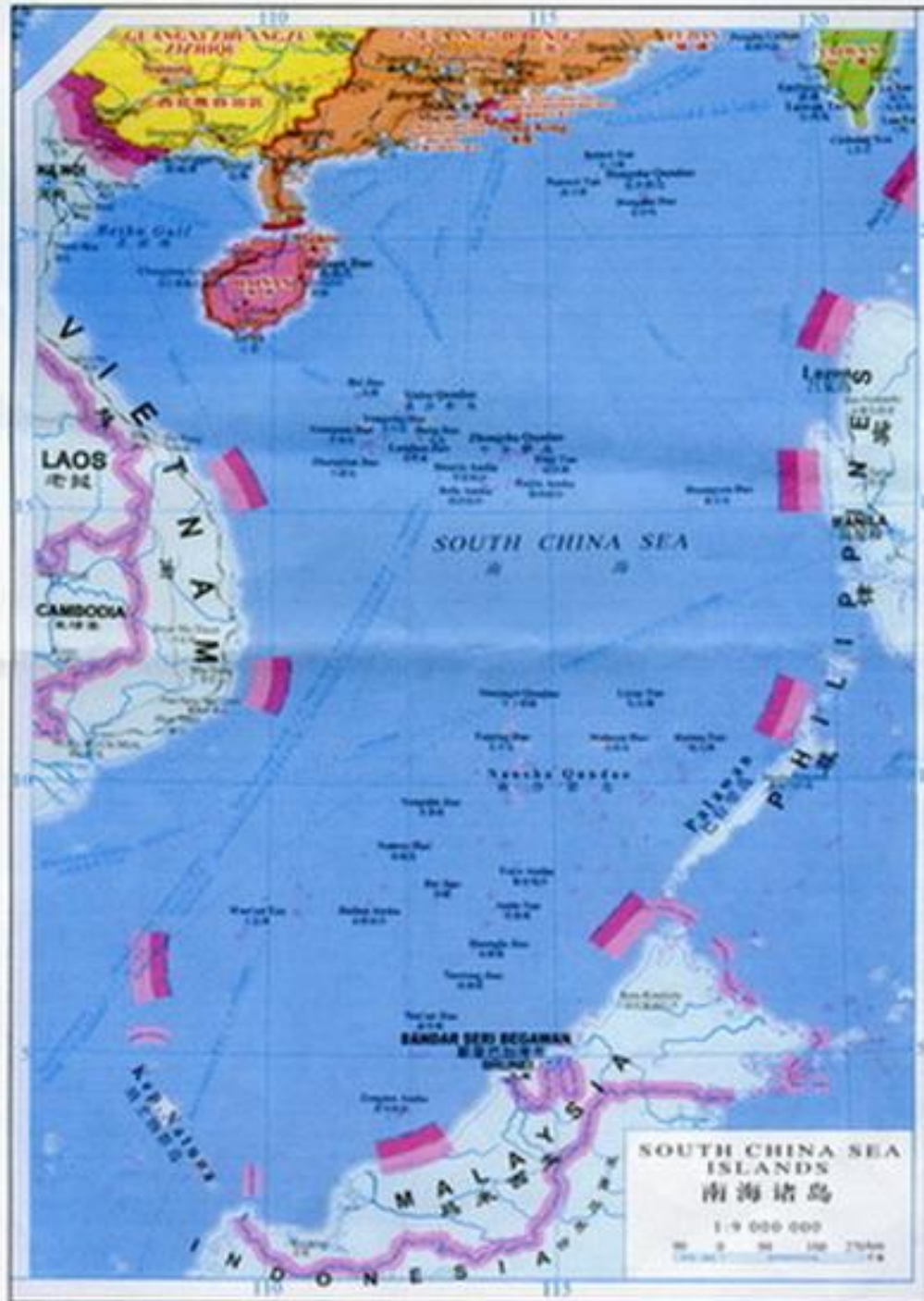
What is the “nine-dashed line”?

- The first officially: Dec. 1946, included 11 dashed-line by the ROC Department of the Territories and Boundaries of the Ministry of the Interior
 - In 1953, two dashed were removed, remaining nine-dashed line.
- no clear: no evidence, no longitudes or latitudes

What is the “nine-dashed line”?

- In 2009, Vietnam submitted one individual submission and another joint submission together with Malaysia to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
 - China immediately sent to UN a letter with an attached map in which 9-dashed line printed.
 - The first time ever, China sent the map to an intergovernmental body (in an attached file of a document regarding to the related issue, not submitting the map directly).

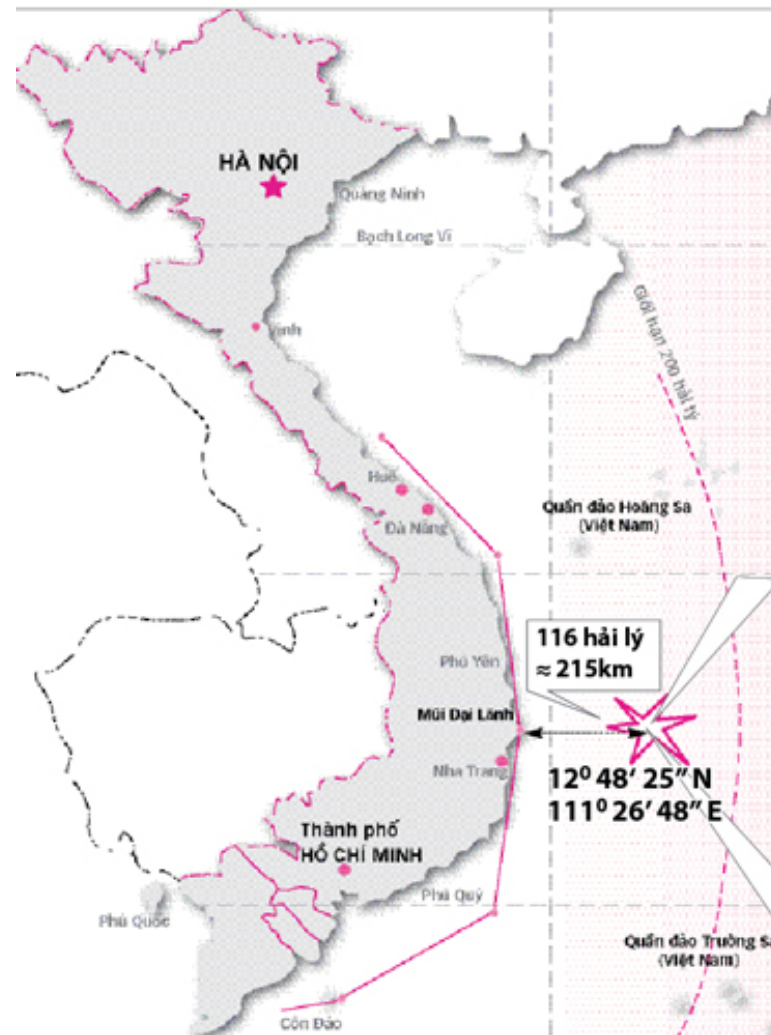
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China – Vietnam tension

- In 1974, China seized the Paracels from Vietnam, with 18 of its troops killed in clashes on one of the islands.
- In 1988, Chinese and Vietnamese navies clashed at Johnson Reef in the Spratlys. Several Vietnamese boats were sunk and over 70 sailors killed.
- Since then, many incidents occurred that Chinese boats harass, capture, and even kill Vietnamese fishermen.

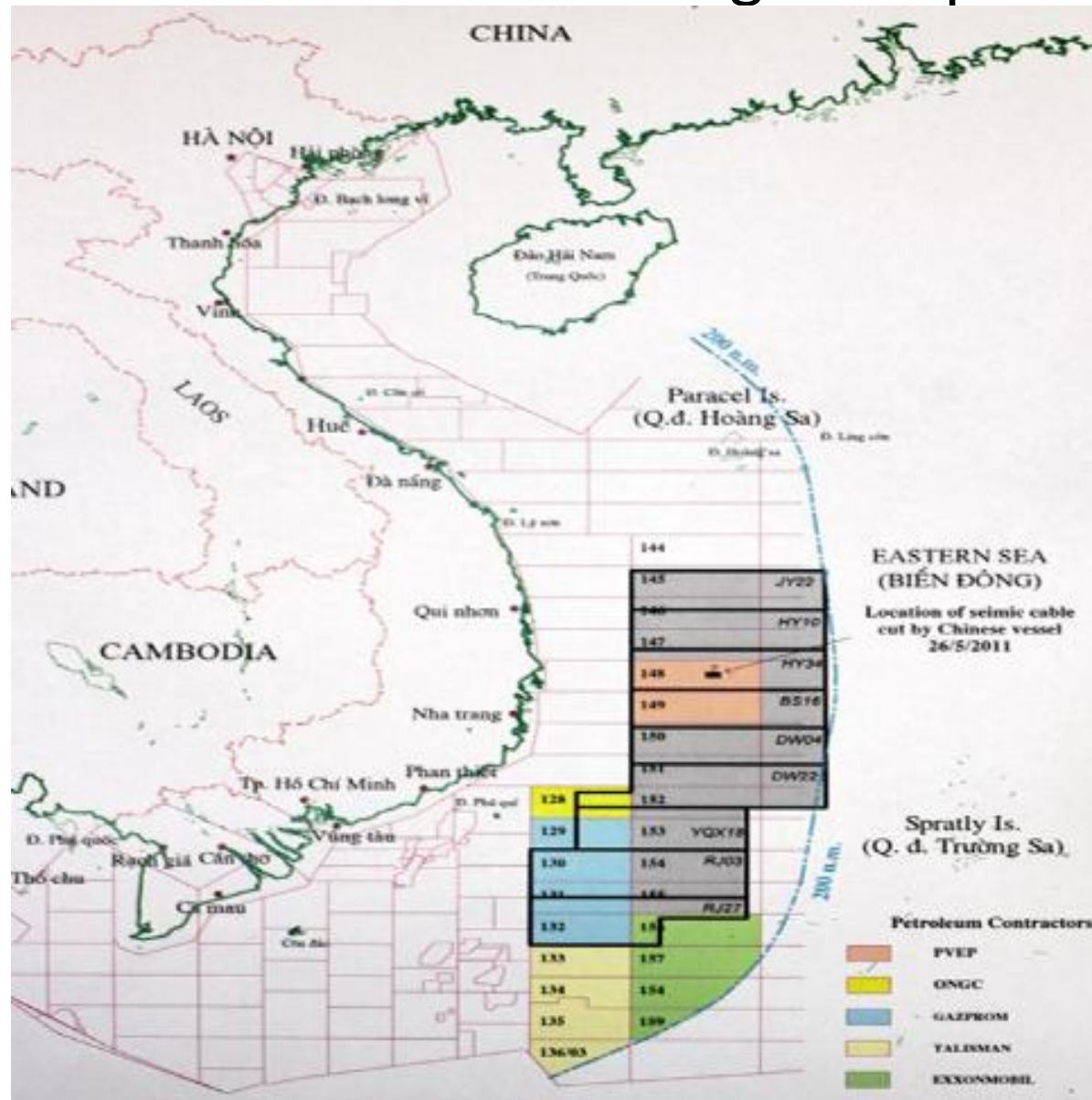
26 May 2011, China cut a submerged cable towed by the ship Binh Minh 02 (Source: Source: tuoitre.vn)



June 9 2011, Chinese fishery administration ships harass and cut Petro Vietnam's Viking II ship's cables in the exclusive economic zone (source: Petrotimes)

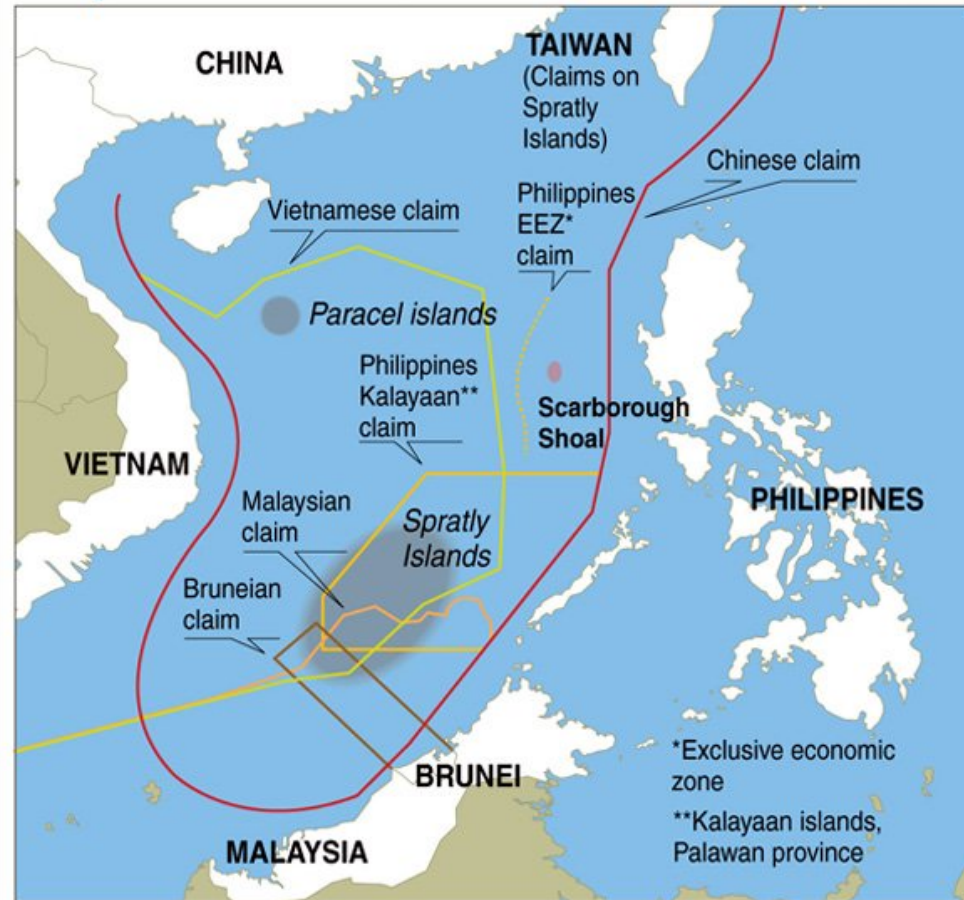


June 2012, China calls for oil exploration auction at nine offshore blocks to foreign companies.



China - Philippines tension

Disputed claims in the South China Sea



Source: D.Rosenberg/MiddleburyCollege/HarvardAsiaQuarterly/Phil gov't

AFP

Navy personnel and Philippine MPs at the tiny rock of Scarborough Shoal bearing Philippine flag in South China Sea in 1997 (Source: AFP)



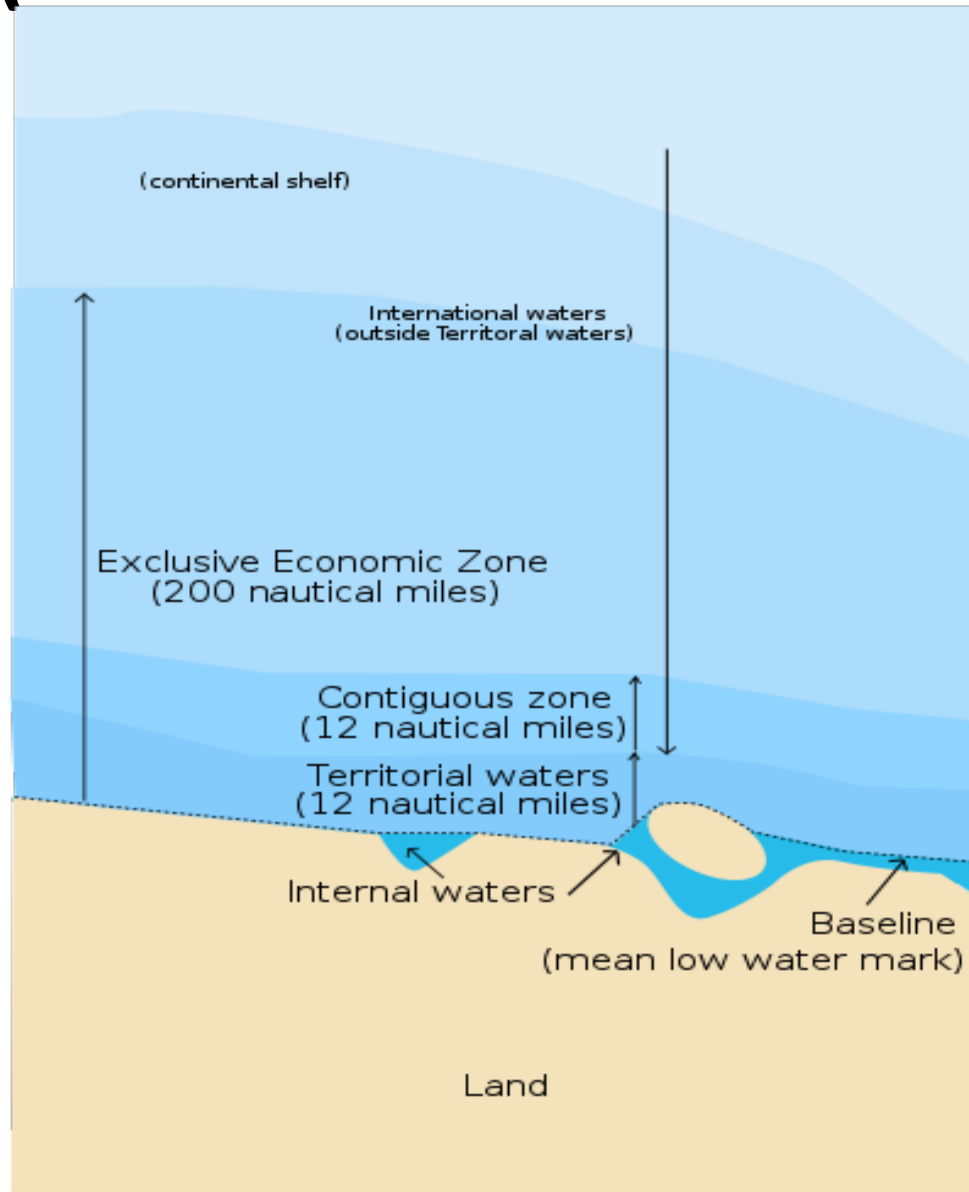
China - Philippines tension

- Scarborough Shoal has no major economic or strategic value.
 - But it has acquired great significance for both countries as a test case for issues of sovereignty
- who gets to exploit potentially large reserves of natural gas and oil in other contested areas of the South China Sea.

China - Philippines tension

- April 8 when the Philippines sent its Navy to confront Chinese vessels fishing in the area
- Philippines – American annual maritime exercises
- economic consequences: China imposed import restrictions on bananas (more than 30% of Philippine banana exports); tourism canceled

Where does 9-dashed line fit in? (maritime zone UNCLOS)



Where does 9-dashed line fit in?

UNCLOS maritime zone:

- “historical water”? → only applied for bays
 - Exclusive economic zone? → yes, but others countries’
 - International water → then joint exploration
- None of the norms fits in.

Conclusion

- the dashes can not suggest any maritime boundary claims → have no impact on the resolution of maritime boundary disputes
- It is merely a unilateral announcement by China and they never show their willing to make it clear to the public.
- These activities result in a military race and escalating tension alarmingly in the region