

# Military and Strategic Issues on the South Sea China Conflict

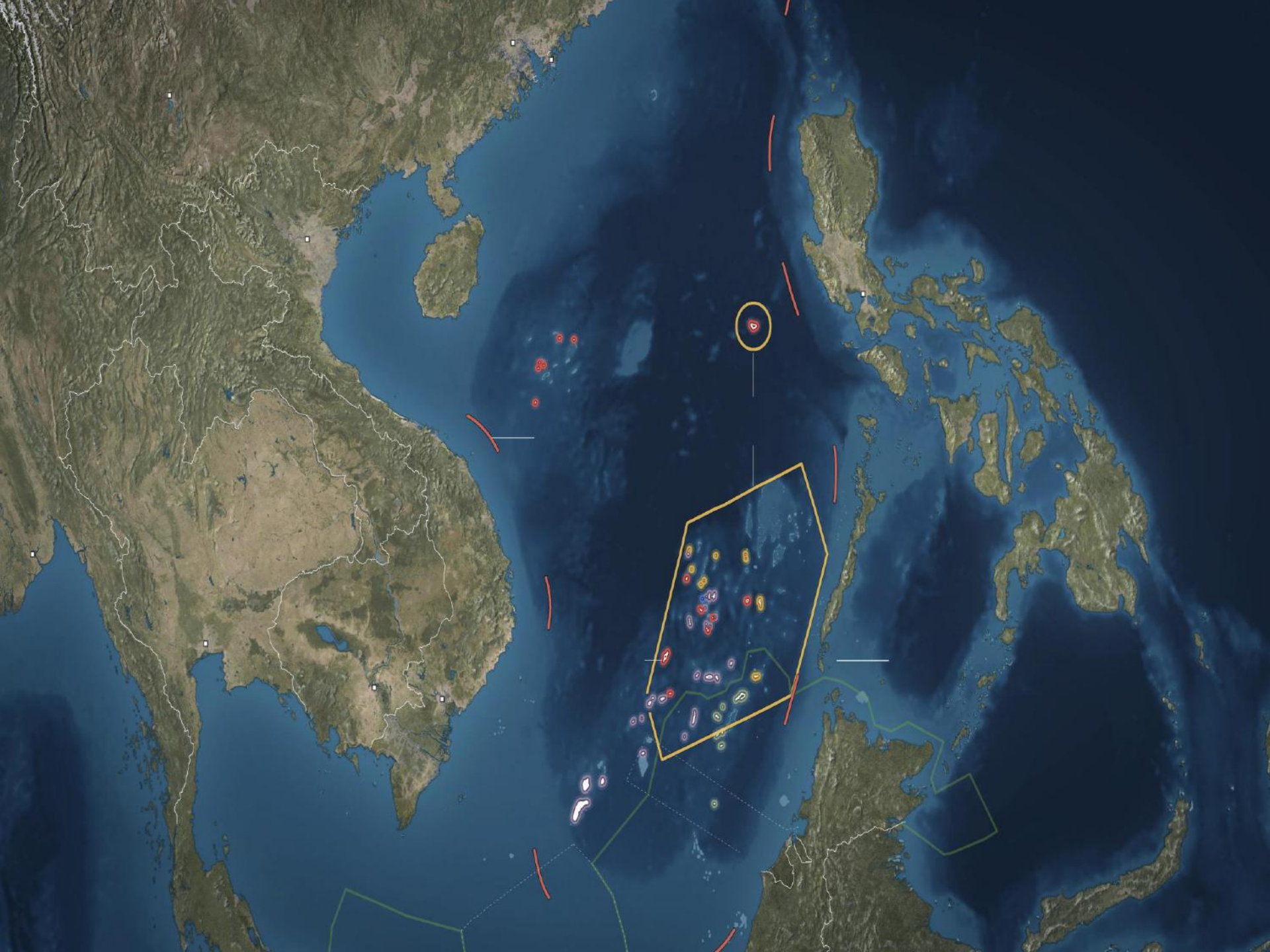
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# 2018 developments

- China almost finished transforming seven reefs claimed by the Philippines in the Spratly Islands into military bases with the main objective to dissuade other five countries in the international dispute (Vietnam, Brunei, Philippines, Taiwan and Malaysia) and to establish a new balance of power in the area

- China has ignored the International Court of Justice' July 2016 ruling that invalidated Beijing's claim to the South China Sea and declared it violated Manila's sovereign right to fish and explore resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)



- “The days of arguing whether or not the Chinese are building civilian or military bases are long behind us. 72 fighter jet hangars are not built for search and rescue or for fishing shelters” – Center for Strategic and International Studies CSIS
- 400 buildings in total – some can have a civilian purposes











# Not Only the Spratlys

- The **Paracel Islands** consisting of some 130 islands. The parties to dispute are China, Taiwan and Vietnam.
- The **Pratals** Islands is a 11 mile long coral reef surrounds a valuable lagoon and is under Taiwanese administration but demanded by China

- The **Scarborough Reef** is also an extensive coral reef, which disappears at high tide, the disputed parties are China, Taiwan and the Philippines. The Macclesfield coast also belongs here.
- The **Spratly Islands** includes 150-180 small islands, rocks, and reefs with several formations constantly being under water. Brunei, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, The Philippines and Vietnam all claim them

- According to data from the US Energy Information Administration (2018) there is an approximate of 11 billion barrels of oil and 5.4 billion cubic meters of natural gas in the area. Difficult to estimate.

# Duterte's Position

- Philippine's Government has declared that they would not protest anymore as long as China kept its "good faith commitment" that it would not reclaim any more islands in the waterway.

# ASEAN 2017 in Manila...

- The fact that ASEAN did not come to unite about the disputes in the South China South Sea Conflict was a big win for China
- President Duterte Role
- Domestic pressure for its lack of compromise to protect national interest in the area.

# TRUMP AND THE US FONOPS

- The US has challenged China's assertive territorial claims and land reclamation efforts by conducting the Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in the Area.
- 7 FONOPs in the Trump's government : US Missile Destroyers (USS Mustin, USS John McCain, USS Dewey, USS Hopper).





# Type 001A China Aircraft Carrier



# Conclusions

- Great powers behave always as great powers
- Military power in an era of global governance?
- Richard Rosecrance “Power and Policy”
- “Power and Fear” John Mearshaimer
- China and the US policies in the South China Sea Conflict: Redefining Neo-realism?