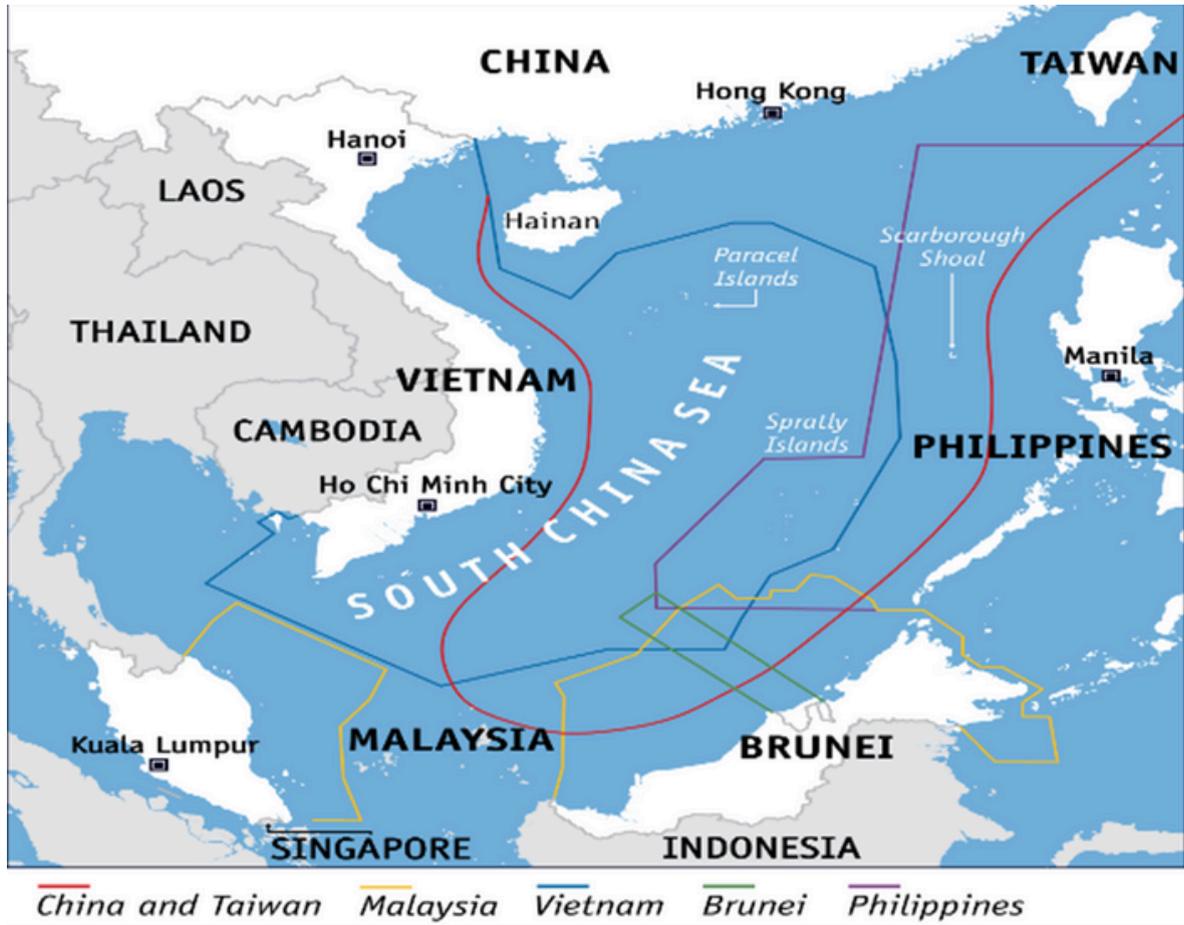


**18 July 2025**

**Context:** The United States Navy is set to establish two military boat repair facilities in Palawan, Philippines, which face the South China Sea. This initiative aims to enhance maritime security in light of escalating tensions with China in this disputed area.



### About the South China Sea:

- The South China Sea is recognized as the largest marginal sea of the western Pacific Ocean, celebrated for its strategic and economic significance due to its abundant marine biodiversity, oil reserves, and essential shipping routes.

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**Location:**

- Situated between Southeast Asia and China, it connects to the Pacific Ocean through the Luzon Strait and to the Indian Ocean via the Strait of Malacca.
- Major geographic features include:
  - China Sea Basin: The deepest point, approximately 5,000 meters.
  - Palawan Trough and Sunda Shelf: Important underwater features.
- Neighbouring Nations:
  - Countries with direct claims or interests include: China, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan.
  - The sea is bordered by the Philippines to the east, Vietnam to the west, Malaysia and Borneo to the south, and China to the north.
- Disputes & Strategic Importance:
  - China asserts claims over nearly 90% of the sea based on its “Nine-Dash Line,” which overlaps with the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of ASEAN nations.

**Key flashpoints include:**

- Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, and Scarborough Shoal.
- There are frequent confrontations between Chinese and Philippine vessels.
- The sea serves as a crucial global trade route and is pivotal to the strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China.

**Rivers Draining into It:**

**Major rivers include:**

- Mekong River (Vietnam)
- Red River

**Additionally, there are several smaller rivers from Malaysia, the Philippines, and China**