South China Sea

Claimed Straight Baselines

CHINA

Declaration of the People's Republic of China on the Baseline of the Territorial Sea, May 15, 1996

1	20° 25.8' 00"N	119° 56.3' 00"E	11	21° 27.7' 00"N	112° 21.5' 00"E	21	18° 53.0' 00"N	109° 05.6' 00"E	31	16° 46.9' 00"N	109° 03.6' 00"E
2	20° 32.0' 00"N	118° 04.8' 00"E	12	21° 27.0' 00"N	112° 17.5' 00"E	22	18° 52.0' 00"N	109° 05.0' 00"E	32	16° 46.0' 00"N	108° 57.0' 00"E
3	20° 39.5' 00"N	118° 14.2' 00"E	13	21° 12.0' 00"N	111° 12.8' 00"E	23	18° 52.0' 00"N	109° 11.0' 00"E	33	16° 32.0' 00"N	108° 42.0' 00"E
4	20° 15.9' 00"N	117° 41.5' 00"E	14	20° 39.7' 00"N	110° 29.6' 00"E	24	18° 52.0' 00"N	109° 15.0' 00"E	34	16° 32.0' 00"N	108° 41.0' 00"E
5	20° 12.0' 00"N	117° 36.0' 00"E	15	20° 19.0' 00"N	110° 08.0' 00"E	25	18° 53.0' 00"N	109° 16.0' 00"E	35	16° 31.0' 00"N	108° 37.0' 00"E
6	20° 12.0' 00"N	117° 18.0' 00"E	16	20° 16.0' 00"N	110° 06.0' 00"E	26	18° 53.0' 00"N	109° 18.0' 00"E	36	16° 31.0' 00"N	108° 32.0' 00"E
7	20° 34.0' 00"N	116° 24.7' 00"E	17	20° 23.0' 00"N	110° 03.0' 00"E	27	18° 50.5' 00"N	109° 31.0' 00"E	37	16° 30.5' 00"N	108° 17.0' 00"E
8	20° 50.9' 00"N	115° 57.5' 00"E	18	17° 10.0' 00"N	109° 12.5' 00"E	28	18° 48.0' 00"N	109° 33.0' 00"E	38	16° 15.0' 00"N	108° 16.0' 00"E
9	21° 00.5' 00"N	115° 47.5' 00"E	19	17° 08.0' 00"N	109° 12.0' 00"E	29	18° 21.0' 00"N	109° 39.0' 00"E	39	16° 15.0' 00"N	108° 04.0' 00"E
10	21° 00.2' 00"N	115° 37.9' 00"E	20	17° 07.0' 00"N	109° 11.0' 00"E						

MALAYSIA

Malaysia has not formally claimed and specified a system of baselines in the Southern Maritime Zones Act (ratified in 2007) but baselines were apparently drawn to determine Malaysia's territorial sea limits, which are shown on official maps.

PARACEL ISLANDS *(claimed by CHINA and VIETNAM)*

Declaration on Chinese Control-Straight Baselines, May 15, 1996

1	16° 40' 10"N	112° 44' 12"E	11	15° 46' 10"N	111° 17' 36"E	21	17° 07' 06"N	111° 17' 36"E			
2	16° 40' 10"N	112° 42' 12"E	12	15° 46' 10"N	111° 15' 36"E	22	17° 07' 06"N	111° 15' 36"E			
3	16° 19' 48"N	112° 44' 42"E	13	15° 46' 10"N	111° 13' 36"E	23	16° 59' 54"N	112° 14' 42"E			
4	16° 05' 12"N	112° 25' 48"E	14	15° 47' 12"N	111° 11' 24"E	24	16° 59' 12"N	112° 15' 36"E			
5	16° 07' 54"N	112° 22' 48"E	15	15° 48' 54"N	111° 08' 24"E	25	16° 59' 24"N	112° 16' 12"E			
6	16° 01' 30"N	112° 21' 48"E	16	15° 49' 24"N	111° 06' 30"E	26	16° 58' 24"N	112° 18' 18"E			
7	16° 01' 30"N	112° 19' 48"E	17	15° 49' 24"N	111° 04' 30"E	27	16° 58' 24"N	112° 19' 18"E			
8	15° 46' 10"N	111° 52' 48"E	18	17° 00' 00"N	111° 27' 48"E	28	16° 56' 54"N	112° 20' 18"E			
9	15° 46' 24"N	111° 52' 06"E	19	17° 06' 30"N	111° 28' 12"E						
10	15° 46' 24"N	111° 51' 48"E	20	17° 07' 06"N	111° 31' 00"E						

TAIWAN

Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone of the Republic of China, January 21, 1998

T1	26° 00.60' 00"N	122° 00.00' 00"E	T10	24° 24.00' 00"N	119° 18.39' 00"E	T19	21° 29.10' 00"N	117° 10.51' 00"E			
T2	25° 28.00' 00"N	122° 00.00' 00"E	T11	24° 24.00' 00"N	119° 18.39' 00"E	T20	24° 20.70' 00"N	117° 11.10' 00"E			
T3	25° 09.00' 00"N	122° 05.00' 00"E	T12	24° 19.50' 00"N	119° 18.00' 00"E	T21	24° 18.00' 00"N	117° 12.70' 00"E			
T4	25° 17.50' 00"N	122° 16.50' 00"E	T13	24° 12.00' 00"N	119° 12.00' 00"E	T22	24° 09.00' 00"N	117° 17.50' 00"E			
T5	25° 17.00' 00"N	122° 19.00' 00"E	T14	24° 19.00' 00"N	120° 28.00' 00"E	T23	24° 06.30' 00"N	116° 45.00' 00"E			
T6	25° 14.00' 00"N	122° 19.00' 00"E	T15	24° 19.00' 00"N	120° 28.00' 00"E	T24	24° 06.30' 00"N	116° 42.00' 00"E			
T7	25° 06.20' 00"N	121° 05.40' 00"E	T16	21° 56.70' 00"N	117° 36.10' 00"E	T25	24° 10.50' 00"N	116° 41.10' 00"E			
T8	24° 00.55' 00"N	121° 00.60' 00"E	T17	21° 57.00' 00"N	117° 17.10' 00"E	T26	24° 15.70' 00"N	116° 42.00' 00"E			
T9	23° 27.20' 00"N	119° 11.00' 00"E	T18	21° 41.00' 00"N	117° 13.00' 00"E						

VIETNAM

Declaration of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, November 12, 1982

A1	09° 15.0' 00"N	105° 27.0' 00"E	A6	04° 19.7' 00"N	106° 42.1' 00"E	A9	11° 54.0' 00"N	109° 23.0' 00"E			
A2	08° 22.8' 00"N	104° 32.4' 00"E	A7	04° 50.0' 00"N	108° 05.0' 00"E	A10	12° 00.0' 00"N	109° 00.0' 00"E			
A3	08° 17.8' 00"N	106° 37.0' 00"E	A8	12° 39.0' 00"N	109° 28.0' 00"E	A11	17° 50.0' 00"N	107° 20.0' 00"E			
A4	08° 18.9' 00"N	106° 40.5' 00"E		12° 51.8' 00"N	109° 27.2' 00"E						
A5	08° 38.0' 00"N	106° 42.0' 00"E									

Claimed Archipelagic Straight Baselines

INDONESIA

Regulation No. 38, June 20, 2002

1	01° 14.2' 00"N	104° 34.1' 00"E	36	02° 05.10' 00"N	109° 06.42' 00"E	71	01° 07.27' 00"N	130° 07.27' 00"E			
2	01° 02.52' 00"N	104° 49.50' 00"E	37	01° 50.08' 00"N	108° 52.50' 00"E	72	02° 14.0' 00"N	130° 09.28' 00"E			
3	00° 51.00' 00"N	105° 04.00' 00"E	38	01° 35.00' 00"N	108° 38.00' 00"E	73	02° 14.0' 00"N	130° 11.28' 00"E			
4	00° 24.18' 00"N	105° 22.48' 00"E	39	00° 50.00' 00"N	108° 38.00' 00"E	74	00° 17.50.00"N	130° 11.28' 00"E			
5	01° 01.12' 00"N	105° 35.00' 00"E	40	01° 27.77' 00"N	107° 32.41' 00"E	75	00° 17.50.00"N	130° 07.28' 00"E			
6	01° 17.00' 00"N	105° 35.00' 00"E	41	01° 27.77' 00"N	107° 32.41' 00"E	76	00° 04.15.00"N	129° 37.28' 00"E			
7	01° 27.50' 00"N	106° 50.00' 00"E	42	01° 44.50' 00"N	107° 50.50' 00"E	77	00° 02.12.00"N	129° 35.28' 00"E			
8	02° 04.00' 00"N	107° 26.00' 00"E	43	02° 59.00' 00"N	108° 02.50' 00"E	78	00° 01.12.00"N	129° 35.28' 00"E			
9	02° 13.00' 00"N	107° 41.17' 00"E	44	03° 00.00' 00"N	108° 02.50' 00"E	79	00° 09.12.00"N	129° 30.28' 00"E			
10	04° 42.23' 00"N	107° 54.20' 00"E	45	03° 22.40' 00"N	108° 10.00' 00"E	80	00° 17.18' 00"N	129° 17.28' 00"E			
11	04° 47.00' 00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	46	03° 22.40' 00"N	108° 10.00' 00"E	81	00° 17.18' 00"N	129° 16.00"E			
12	04° 47.20' 00"N	108° 03.18' 00"E	47	03° 22.40' 00"N	108° 10.00' 00"E	82	00° 17.18' 00"N	129° 05.28' 00"E			
13	04° 00.68' 00"N	108° 20.66' 00"E	48	03° 22.40' 00"N	108° 10.00' 00"E	83	00° 17.18' 00"N	128° 05.28' 00"E			
14	03° 57.77' 00"N	108° 54.52' 00"E	49	03° 22.40' 00"N	108° 10.00' 00"E	84	00° 17.18' 00"N	128° 05.28' 00"E			
15	02° 58.41' 00"N	109° 30.50' 00"E	50	03° 09.20' 00"N	108° 20.50' 00"E	85	00° 09.57.00"N	128° 02.15' 00"E			
16	02° 58.41' 00"N	109° 30.50' 00"E	51	03° 02.50' 00"N	108° 07.38.18' 00"E	86	00° 10.02.15' 00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
17	02° 58.41' 00"N	109° 30.50' 00"E	52	04° 47.78' 00"N	108° 07.38.18' 00"E	87	00° 10.02.15' 00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
18	02° 58.41' 00"N	109° 30.50' 00"E	53	04° 24.53' 00"N	108° 18.50' 00"E	88	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
19	02° 58.41' 00"N	109° 30.50' 00"E	54	04° 24.53' 00"N	108° 18.50' 00"E	89	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
20	02° 58.41' 00"N	109° 30.50' 00"E	55	04° 30.00' 00"N	108° 02.22.70' 00"E	90	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
21	02° 27.27' 00"N	109° 27.00.12' 00"E	56	04° 42.52.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	91	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
22	02° 27.27' 00"N	109° 27.00.12' 00"E	57	04° 42.52.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	92	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
23	02° 11.00' 00"N	109° 11.00' 00"E	58	04° 27.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	93	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
24	02° 11.00' 00"N	109° 11.00' 00"E	59	04° 27.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	94	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
25	02° 11.00' 00"N	109° 11.00' 00"E	60	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	95	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
26	02° 00.00' 00"N	109° 11.00' 00"E	61	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	96	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
27	02° 00.36.50"N	109° 04.50' 00"E	62	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	97	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
28	02° 00.36.50"N	109° 04.50' 00"E	63	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	98	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
29	02° 11.50.42"N	108° 20.00' 00"E	64	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	99	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
30	02° 12.12.52"N	108° 12.00' 00"E	65	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	100	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
31	02° 12.12.52"N	108° 12.00' 00"E	66	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	101	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
32	02° 12.12.52"N	108° 12.00' 00"E	67	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	102	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
33	02° 12.12.52"N	108° 12.00' 00"E	68	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	103	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
34	02° 12.12.52"N	108° 12.00' 00"E	69	04° 00.00.00"N	108° 00.00' 00"E	104	00° 10.42.00"N	128° 00.15' 00"E			
35	02° 05.10' 00"N	109° 06.42' 00"E	70	01° 07.27' 00"N	130° 07.27' 00"E						

Claims in the Paracel and Spratly Islands

BRUNEI

While Bandar Seri Begawan has not articulated claims to reefs in the South China Sea (SCS), since 1985 the Sultanate has claimed a continental shelf that extends beyond these features to a hypothetical median with Vietnam. Malaysia contends Brunei's maritime limit stops at the 100-fathom isobath from the coast based on 1958 U.K. Orders in Council. China's and Taiwan's claimed areas in the SCS include the seaward extension of Brunei's maritime claim. China (including Taiwan), Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam do not accept Brunei's claim.

CHINA

Beijing refers to the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Island, and Scarborough Reef as Nansha Qundao, Xisha Qundao, Dongsha Qundao, and Huangyan Dao, respectively, claiming these as well as all adjacent and underwater features within nine dashes drawn on Chinese SCS maps. China treats Scarborough Reef, also claimed by the Philippines, as part of partially drying Macclesfield Bank. Qiongshu Qundao. China adopted the nine dashes from Kuomintang maps drawn in 1947, resulting in Taiwan's claims coinciding largely with China's. China considers the area within the dashes to be its "historical waters" and has asserted various maritime rights therein as Chinese "territorial waters," an undefined term that does not appear to conform to standard maritime regimes permitted under international law. Chinese archeologists assert the islands in the SCS were the ancient site of fishing and merchant activities and Chinese records note naval expeditions into the South China Sea during the Han Dynasty in A.D. 110 and the Ming Dynasty from 1403-1433. China contends the 1887 Sino-French Convention allocated all features to China east of 110°E. China occupies several of the Spratly Islands and completed seizure of all the Paracel Islands from Vietnam in 1974. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam dispute China's claims.

MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur drew its continental shelf claim in the Spratly Islands in 1979 to include five islands which Malaysia occupies (plus others occupied or controlled by the Philippines and Vietnam). It constructed Layang-Layang Reef on Swallow (Layang) Reef. As part of their joint submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in May 2009, Malaysia and Vietnam defined 200-mm EEZ limits extending from mutilated baseline claims, with both states ignoring, but not renouncing, any overlapping jurisdictional effects of the Spratly Islands. Brunei, China (including Taiwan), the Philippines, and Vietnam do not accept Malaysia's claims.

PHILIPPINES

Manila claimed Scarborough Reef as well as a large portion of the Spratly Islands an terra nullius during occupations in the SCS commencing in May 1956. It named the Spratly claim the Kalayaan Freedom Island Group and occupies several of the islands. It defines the Spratlys and Scarborough Reef as a special "regime of islands" district from the rest of the Philippine archipelago. China (including Taiwan), Malaysia, and Vietnam object to the Philippines' claims.

TAIWAN

Taipei, like Beijing, asserts "historic" sovereignty over all features drawn within the dashes originally drawn on a map published by the Kuomintang government in 1947—including the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Island, and Scarborough Reef. Taiwan occupies several of the Spratly Islands and administers Pratas Island. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam object to Taiwan's coincident claims with China.

VIETNAM

Hanoi claims all of the Spratly and Paracel Islands. However, the extent of Vietnam's territorial and maritime claims in the SCS has not been delineated in text or on maps. Vietnam considers the Spratly Islands an offshore district of Khanh Hoa Province and occupies several of them. China seized all of the Paracels in 1974. Like the Chinese, Vietnamese archeologists provide ancient fishing and merchant activities as evidence of sovereignty over features. Hanoi claims that since France controlled both island groups beginning in the 1930s, Vietnam succeeded to those rights after independence. Brunei, China (including Taiwan), Malaysia, and the Philippines dispute Vietnam's claims.

Note: The South China Sea is defined by the International Hydrographic Bureau as the body of water stretching in a southwest to northeast direction, whose southwestern is 1° South latitude between southern Sumatra and Kalimantan (Karimata Strait), and whose northern limit is the Taiwan Strait from the northern tip of Taiwan to the Fujian coast of China.

Maritime Lines

- Established maritime boundary
- Claim line
  - Bruneian continental shelf claim
  - Chinese *(notes of 9 dashes; the 10th dash drawn on maps is outside of the South China Sea)*
  - 1979 Malaysian continental shelf limit
  - Philippine (Kalayaan)
- Hypothetical equidistant line
- Malaysian-Vietnamese joint CLCS (Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf) southern submission
- 200-nautical-mile arc drawn from undisputed territory
- 12-nautical-mile line
- Spratly Islands 12-nautical-mile line *Under UNCLOS, states can entitle to claim 12-nm territorial seas from any and all of their seaweigs and/or claimed territory*
- Straight baseline
- Straight baseline turning point

Note: The United States Government does not accept the validity of most of these straight and archipelagic baseline segments. China includes Pratas Island and Paracel Islands in its straight baseline claim, rendering of these baseline points does not denote acceptance or substantiation of these claim.

Populated Places

- *More than 1 million*
- 100,000 to 1,000,000
- 25,000 to 100,000
- Fewer than 25,000
- National capital

Shipping-Related Features

- Approximate shipping lane
- Naval base
- Port facility *A port is named after its attributable city unless otherwise labeled*

Energy-Related Features

- Oil concession block
- Concession block number
- Oil and gas field
- Oilfield
- Gasfield
- Offshore terminal
- Floating (Production) Storage and Offloading unit (FPSO) and FSO

Fiber-Optic Submarine Cables

- APCN
- C2C
- China-US
- EAC
- FLAG
- Guam-Philippines
- SeaMeWe
- TB (Thailand-Indonesia-Singapore)

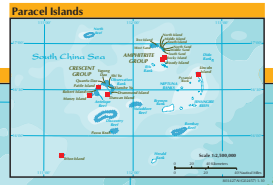
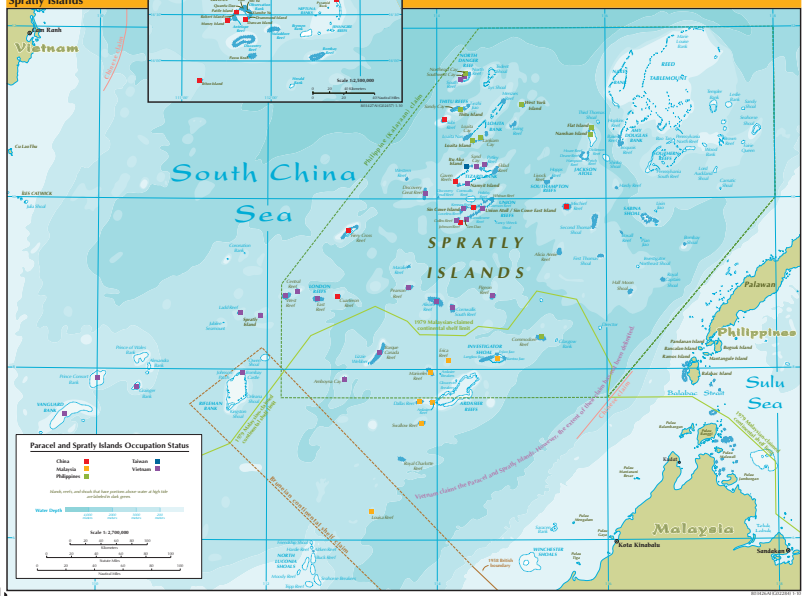
Scale 1: 5,100,000

Kilometers 0 50 100 150 200 250

Statute Miles 0 50 100 150 200

Nautical Miles 0 50 100 150 200

Paracel Islands



Spratly Islands