

Freedom of Navigation – a UK Perspective



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November 2019

Outline the UK's Position on Freedom of Navigation

Indo-Pacific context



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UK Trade:

95% UK trade comes or leaves by sea, through nearly all of the Global 9 key choke points.

Asia-Pacific Trading Partners

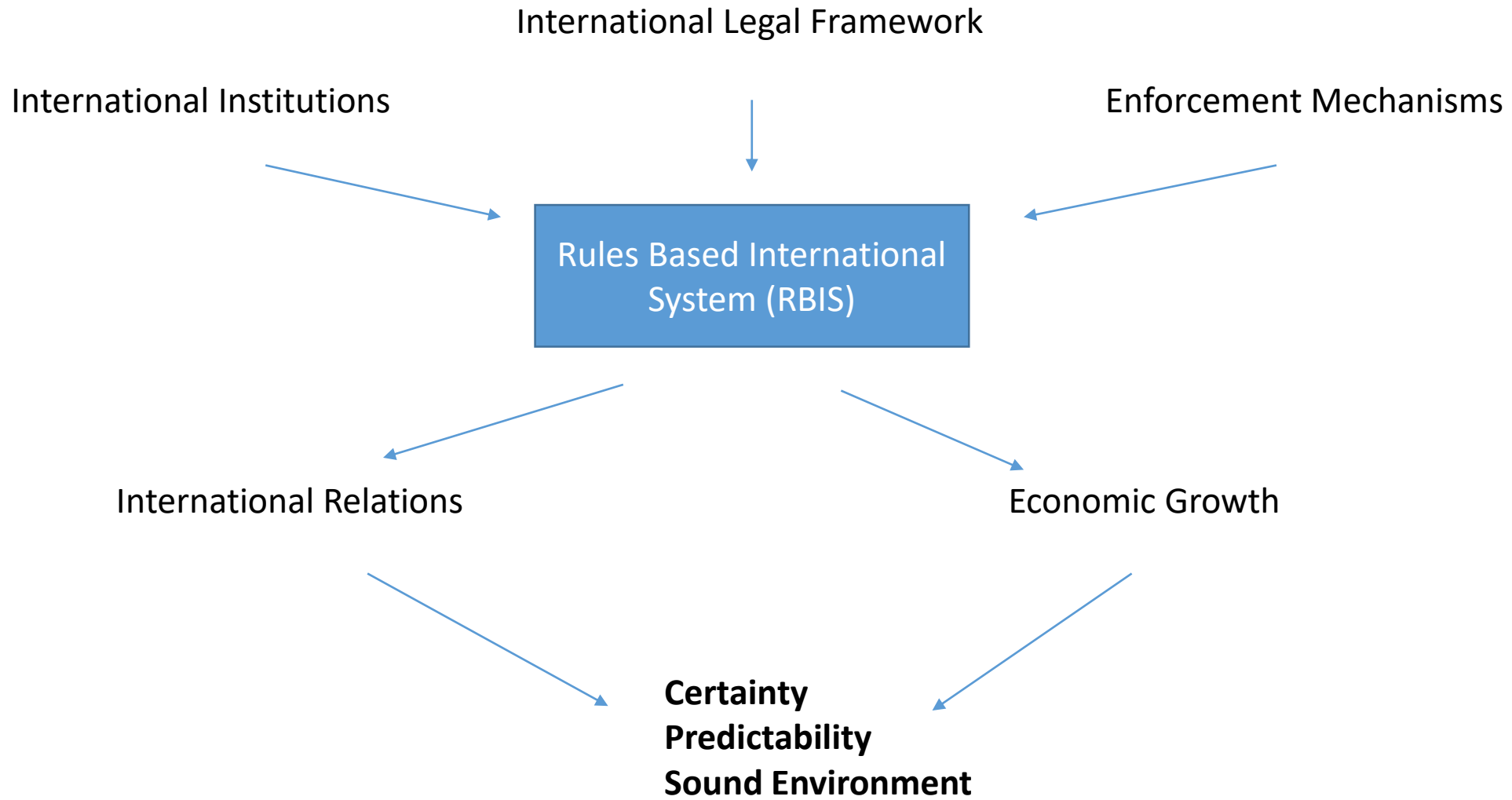
China: 6th biggest export market – 3.5% of total exports (£22.6bn)
4th biggest import market – 6.6% of total imports (44.7bn)

Japan: 7th biggest export market (£14bn)/export market (£13bn)

Energy:

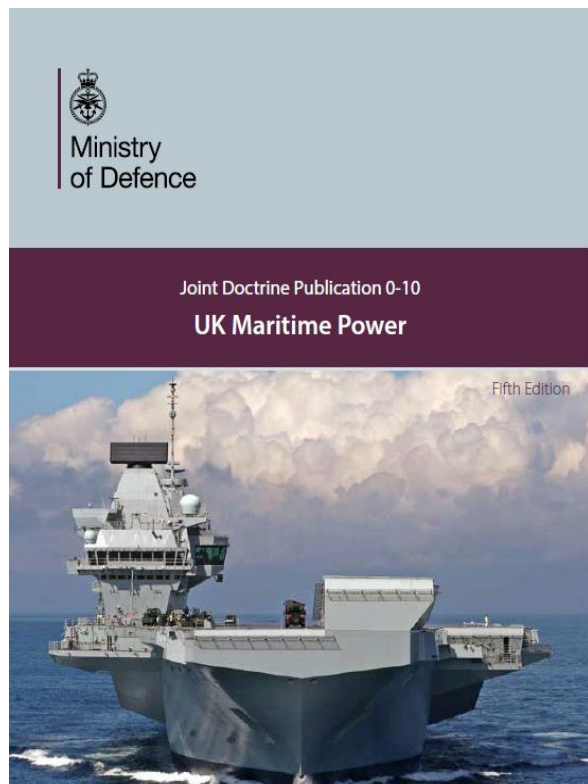
60% of UK energy comes by sea





UK maritime power (JDP 0-10)

JDP 0-10 explains the importance of maritime power to our national interest for joint staffs, officials, allies, and partners in industry. It is available in its full form on www.gov.uk.



Paragraph 2.13 observes:

“Freedom of navigation operations provide an enduring strategic benefit to UK security by protecting the UK’s maritime rights and freedoms, encouraging lawful practice and preventing excessive geographical and/or jurisdictional claims gaining legal traction in international law. UK maritime operations will themselves generate an audit trail of state practice.”

“Freedom of navigation operations in peacetime are one means by which maritime forces maintain the freedom of the seas for maritime trade, ensuring that the UNCLOS provisions are respected.”

Paragraph 2.20 adds:

“In acknowledging the vital value of the sea to the UK and global economy, we must also recognise that this makes the sea an area worth fighting to control.³⁰ Therefore we must be able to push back against any potential challenge to the ‘freedom of navigation’. Only by doing so will we be able to deliver against the principal tasks of the continuous at sea deterrent and providing maritime security for our island nation, while remaining international and meeting these threats to the UK at distance from our shores.”

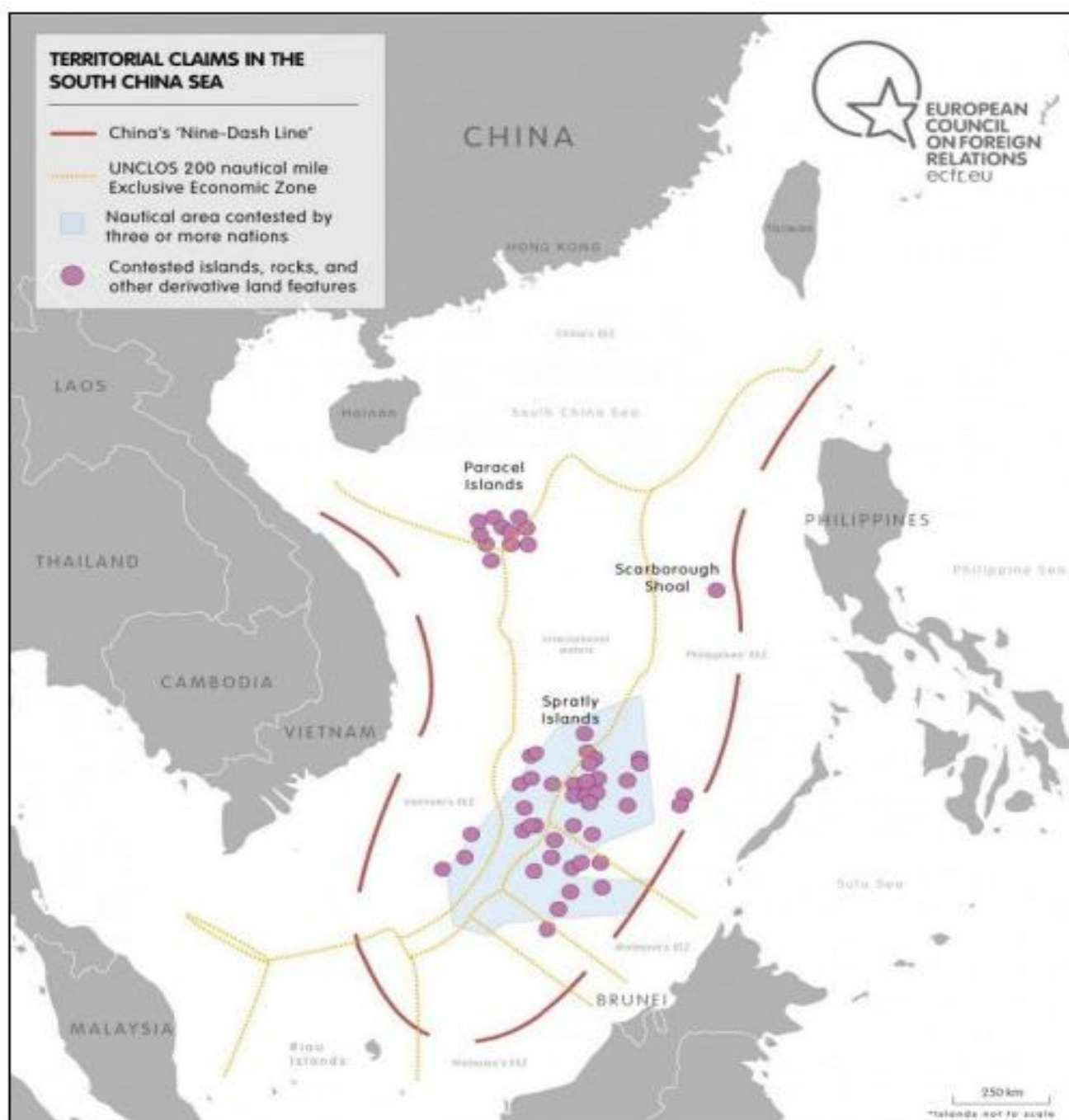


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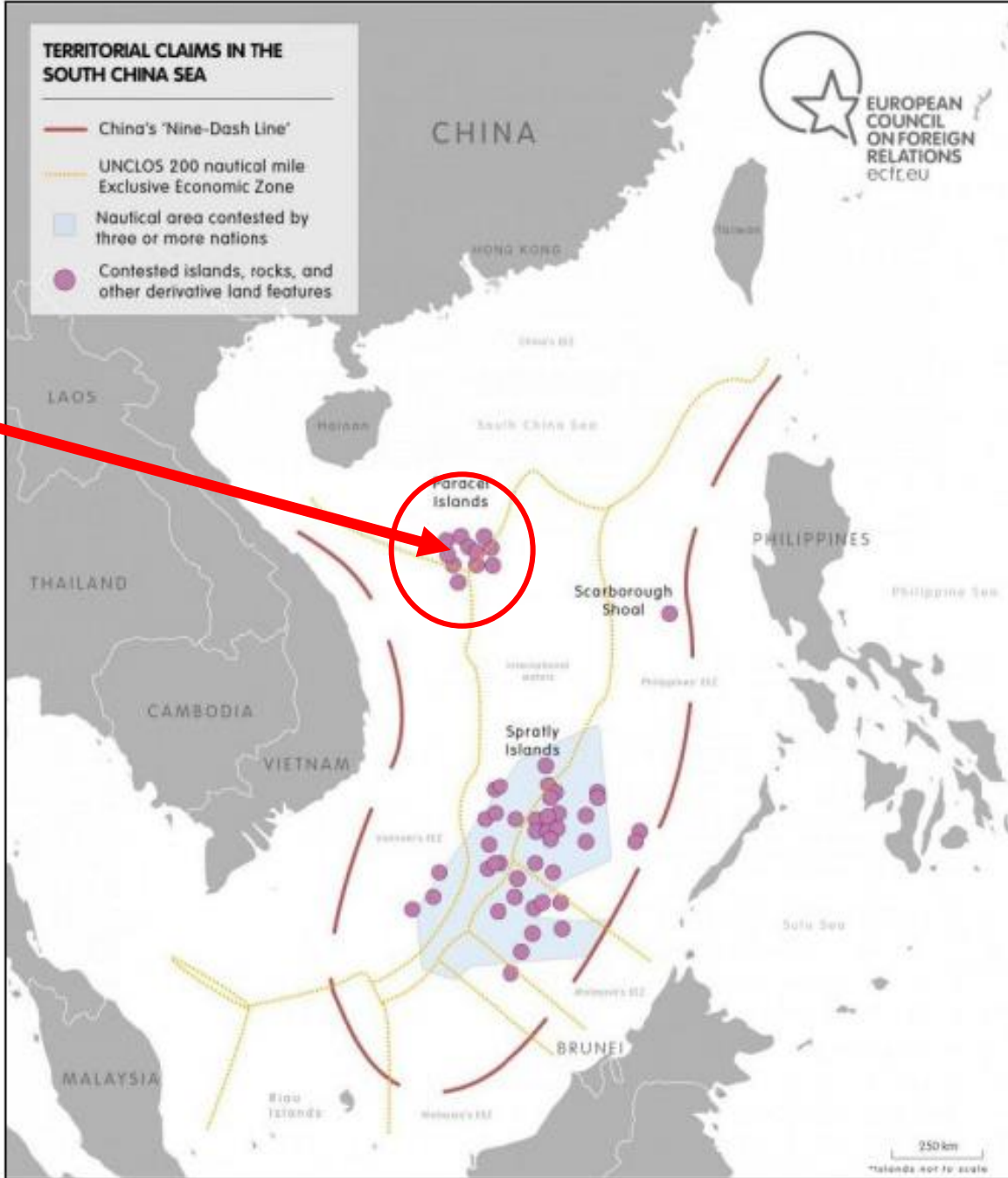
TERRITORIAL CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

- China's 'Nine-Dash Line'
- UNCLOS 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone
- Nautical area contested by three or more nations
- Contested islands, rocks, and other derivative land features



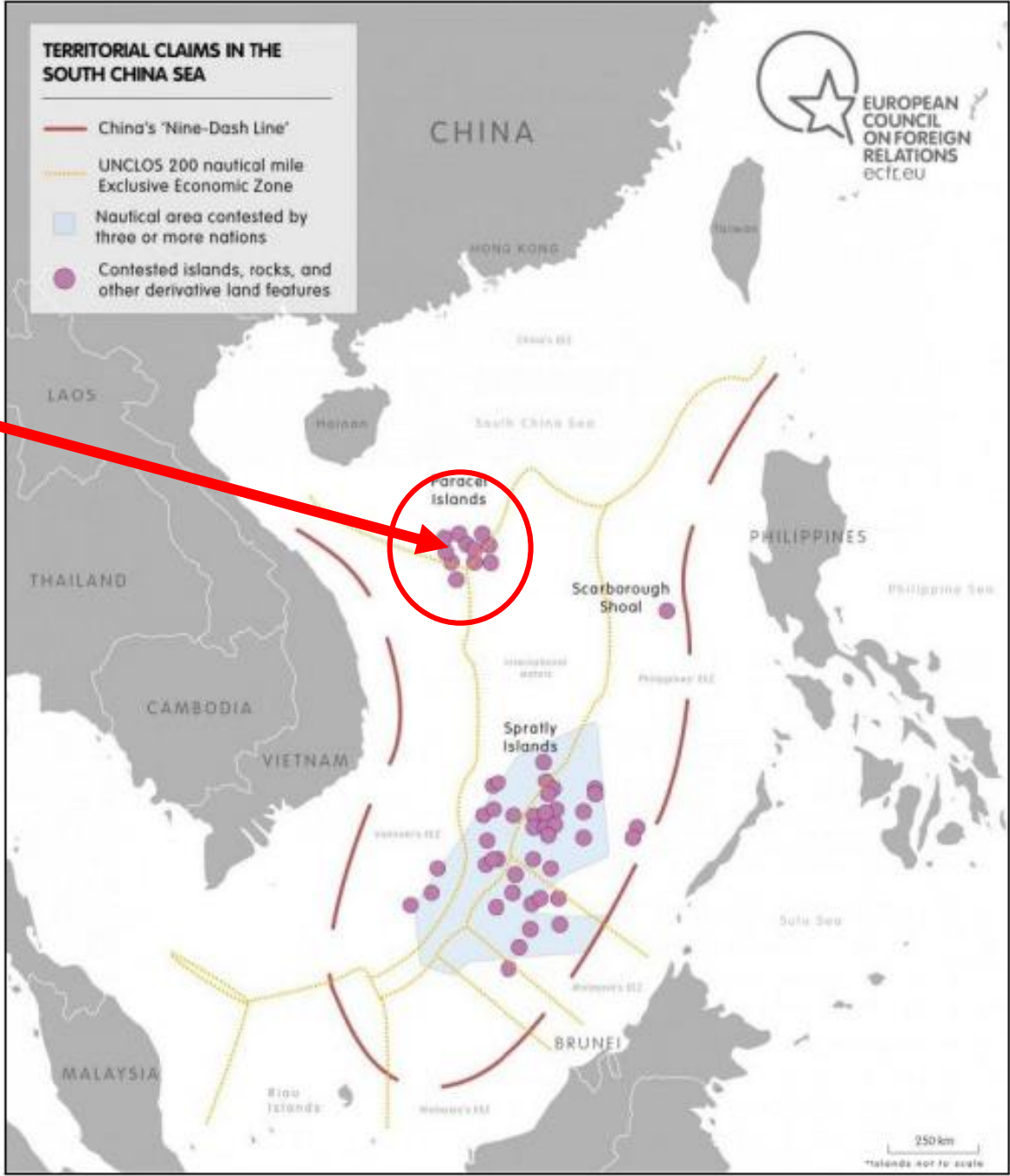
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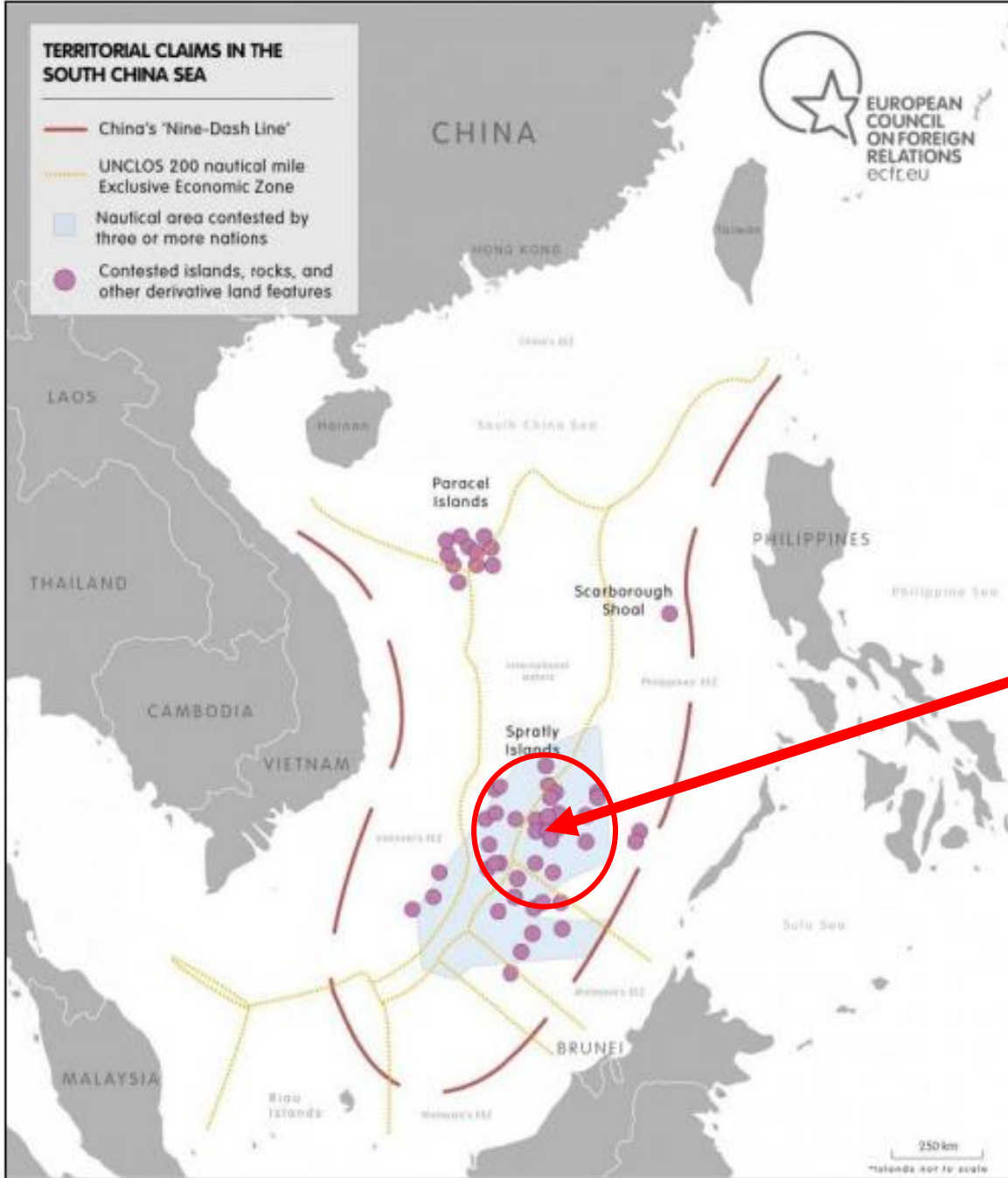


Paracel Islands

Paracel Islands



States which are constituted “wholly by one or more archipelago” – that are governed by those provisions (article 46(a) UNCLOS)



Spratly Islands



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The UK merely seek to:

“..operate in accordance with the rights, freedoms and duties granted to us by the international law of the sea.”

