

Safeguarding the Philippine EEZ

Liz Derr
April, 2021

Iroquois Reef

Jackson Atoll

Hopps Reef

Livock Reef

Hardy Reef

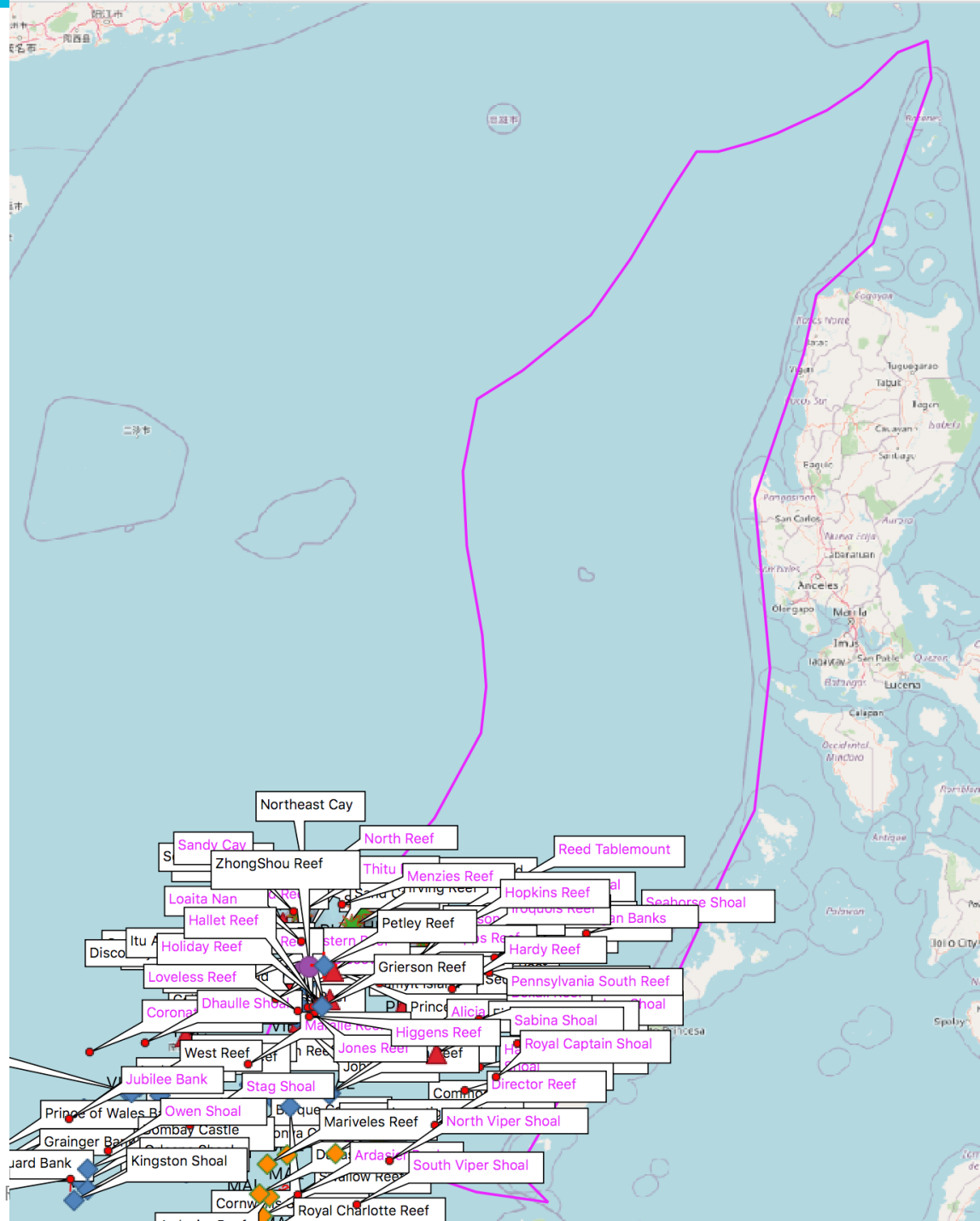
Mischief Reef

The Philippines EEZ

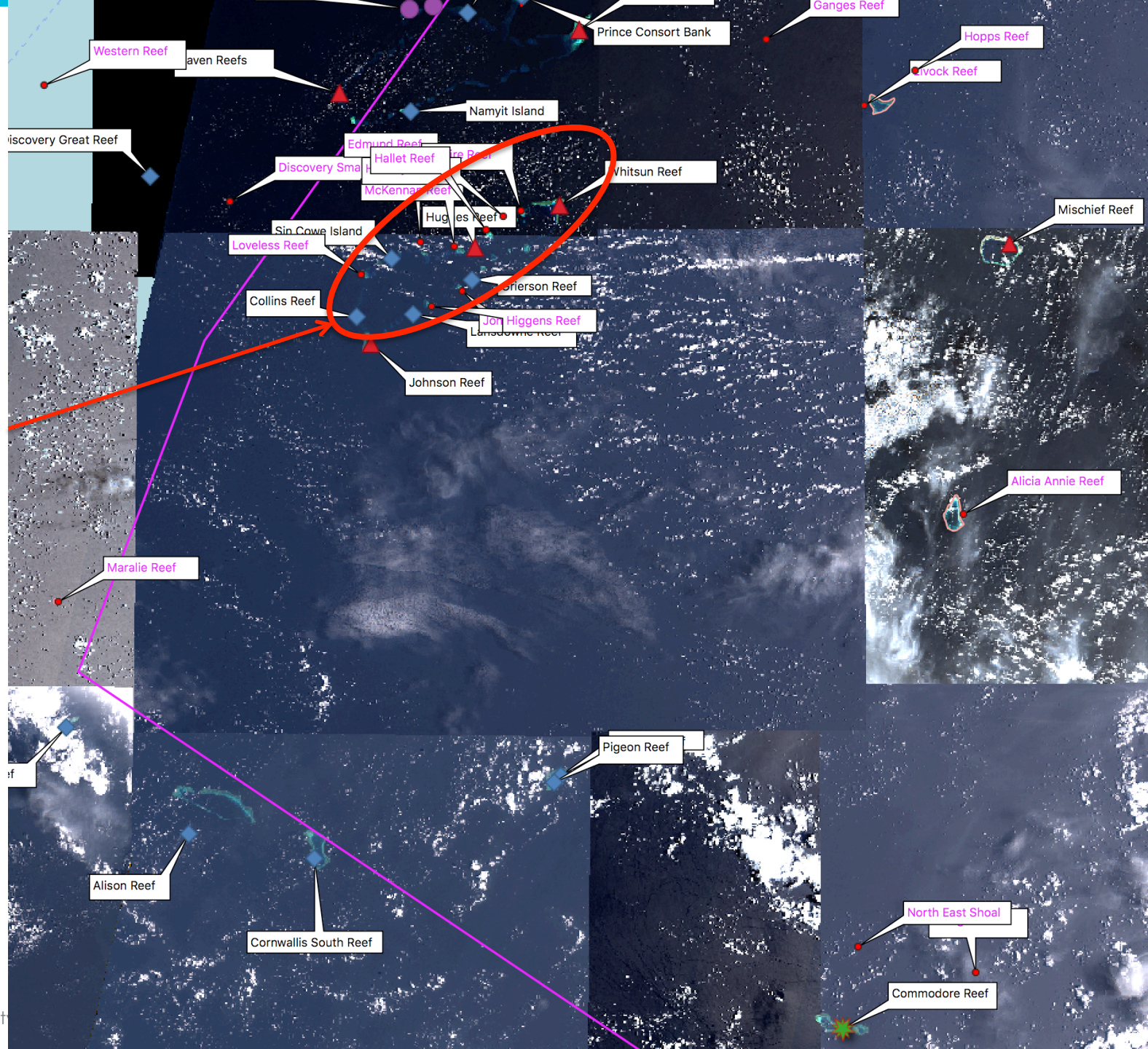
- An Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a concept adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1982), whereby a coastal State **assumes jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources** in its adjacent section of the continental shelf, taken to be a band extending 200 miles from the shore.
- Nations claim and exercise **sovereign rights and exclusive fishery management** authority over all fish in their EEZ.
- Despite the 2016 Ruling by the UNCLOS, and diplomatic objections, foreign countries have occupied features in the Philippine EEZ without the Philippine's permission:
 - They have wreaked ecological damage
 - Destroyed reefs and built artificial islands
 - Turned those islands into military bases
 - Prevented Philippine fisher folk for accessing their rightful fishing grounds
 - Over-fished the Philippine EEZ
 - Threatened Philippine citizens

The purple line is the boundary of the Philippine EEZ on the West Side.

Many of the Spratly Island features fall within the Philippine EEZ.



We recently reported on the status of the Union Banks, which fall entirely within the Philippine EEZ, and contain “illegal constructions” by China (2) and Vietnam (4).



Defending The Philippines EEZ

- Philippine citizens are calling for the government to protect their EEZ, for a variety of reasons that include their inability to feed their families due to decreased fish stock and being barred by foreign governments from fishing inside their own EEZ.
- The Philippine government has said that they don't want to risk a war with China by protecting their own EEZ.
- However, if you are serious about protecting your sovereignty, and your people, you need to actively monitor, patrol, and occupy features in your EEZ.
- This can be done very inexpensively, using Similarity's Premium Monitoring Service, inexpensive occupation such as a lighthouse, and increase Philippine coastguard presence and more frequent patrols.
- This can be done without provoking a war.

Vietnam has protected its sovereign rights over its own EEZ by building **29** outposts in the Spratly islands (not all within the Philippine EEZ).

The Philippines has protected its sovereign rights over its own EEZ by building **11** outposts in the Spratly islands (not all within the Philippine EEZ).

Vietnamese Outposts Are Not All Islands

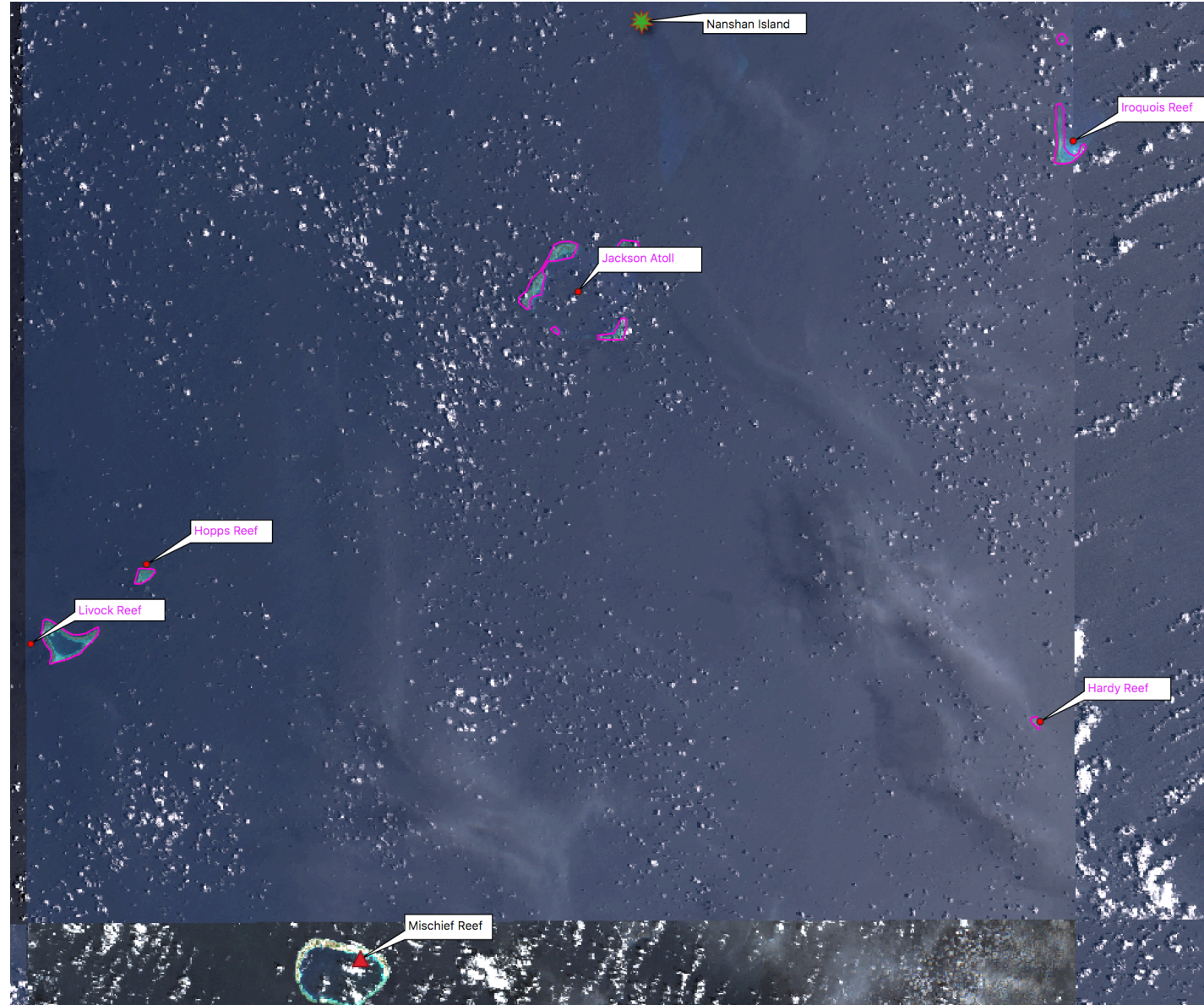
Many are inexpensive “DK1” stations that require no island building, do not disturb the ecology, and have helicopter pads on top for re-supplying, rather than expensive ports for ships.

The Vietnamese have managed to do all these things without provoking a war with China.



There Are Many Unoccupied Features Within the Philippine EEZ

Hopps Reef
Sabina Shoal
Southern Banks
Hardy Reef
Boxall Reef
Iriquois Reef
Hopkins Reef
Third Thomas Shoal
Jackson Atoll
Livock Reef
Alicia Annie Reef
Empire Reef
Jones Reef
Higgins Reef
Holiday Reef
Hallet Reef



But Wait, There's More

Pennsylvania South
Reef

Southern Banks

McKenna Reef

Edmund Reef

Loveless Reef

Director Reef

Half Moon Shoal

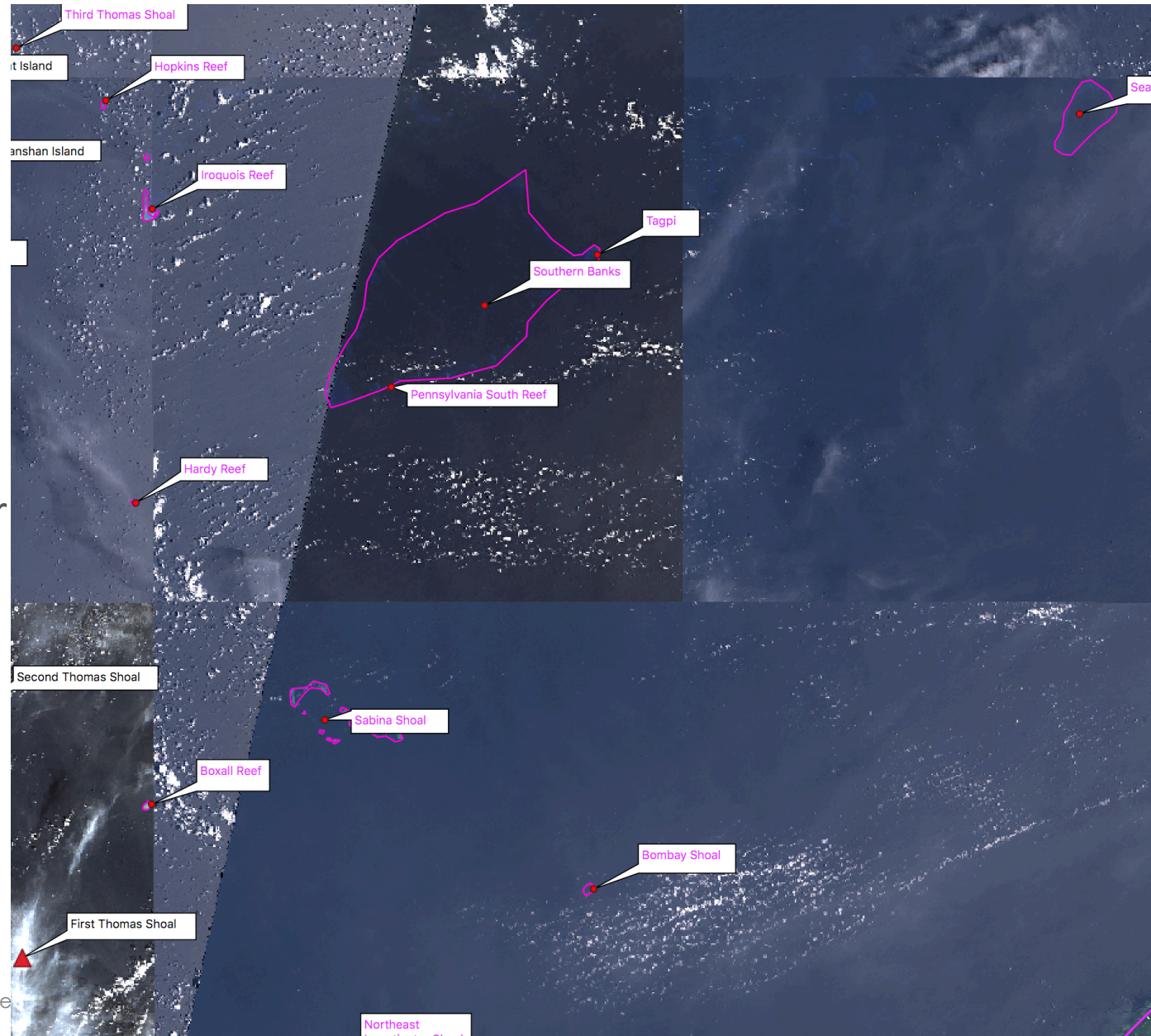
Bombay Shoal

Northeast Investigator
Shoal

Royal Captain Shoal

Sabina Shoal

Seahorse Shoal



Results

If the Philippines occupies the unoccupied Spratly features in its EEZ, with some research into prioritizing which to occupy and what the best level of occupation is, their EEZ will be protected.

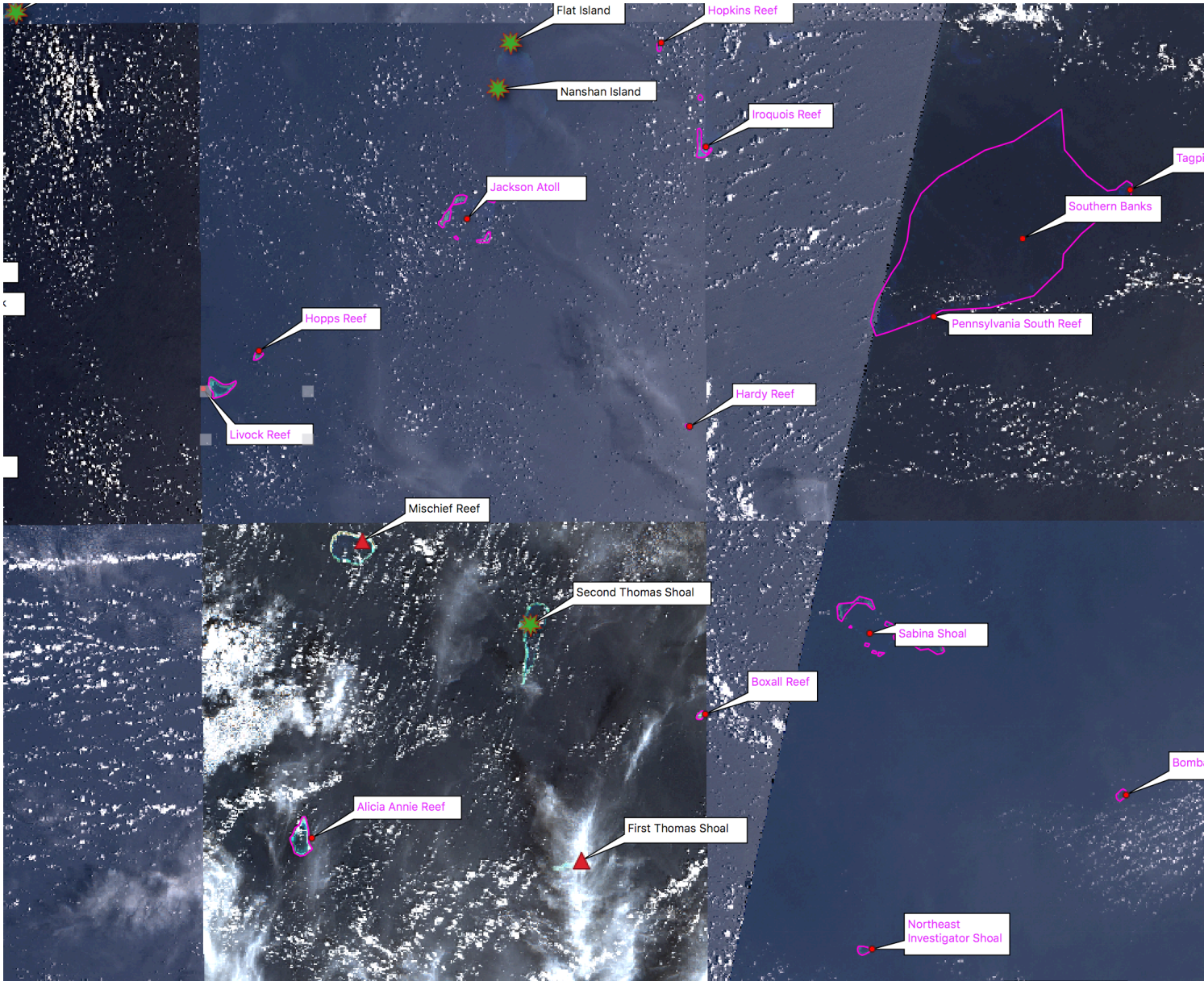
- This will stop foreign countries from occupying more Spratly features and building more destructive artificial islands.
- This will help protect Philippine fisher folk and defend their right to fish in their own EEZ.
- Intrusion into Philippine occupied features will be considered an act of war, and the Philippines has relationships with other countries that will protect it if it is attacked.
- China is trying to “gray zone” their territorial expansion, and have scrupulously avoided outright military conflict in the South China Sea. They do not want a war.

Occupying These Features Will Help the Philippines Defend Against Mischief Reef

Green stars indicate Philippine occupation.

Red Triangles indicate Chinese occupation.

All the rest, outlined in pink, are unoccupied.



The Philippines Is Weak

We've seen and documented what the other claimants have been doing to shore up their claims.

We've seen how much weaker the Philippines is in protecting their territory, compared to the other claimants. If this weakness continues, we will surely see more Spratly features in the Philippine EEZ being occupied by foreign countries.

Use of Force Rules for Select National Coastguards

	Authorized when facing imminent danger to coast guard assets, lives, or the lives of others	Authorized against vessels attempting to flee or resisting arrest	Authorized to defend sovereignty or sovereign rights
China	Yes	Yes	Unclear
Japan	Yes	Yes	Unclear
Philippines	Some cases	Some cases	No
South Korea	Yes	Yes	Unclear
Taiwan	Yes	Yes	No
United States	Yes	Yes	Unclear
Vietnam	Yes	Some cases	Unclear

Source: AMTI: [FORCE MAJEURE: CHINA'S COAST GUARD LAW IN CONTEXT](#)

In Summary

Similarity has been analyzing satellite images of the contested areas of the South China Sea for more than six months.

Our unbiased, well-documented reports have been picked up by news media all over the world.

We aim to shine a light on what is actually happening, in a timely manner, so that countries can take appropriate actions to prevent complicated disputes.

Getting the foreign countries to surrender the artificial islands they built in the Philippine EEZ is unlikely to happen.

The Philippines should focus its efforts on making sure no more are taken.