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**PHOTOGRAPHIC  
INTERPRETATION  
REPORT**

**NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC  
INTERPRETATION CENTER**

**SPRATLY ISLAND GROUP  
MAY 1974**

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**JULY 1974  
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## SPRATLY ISLAND GROUP

MAY 1974

1. Eight islands of the Spratly Group in the South China Sea [redacted]. All of these islands are in the central portion of the archipelago and include Itu Aba Island, Northeast Cay, Southwest Cay, Thitu Island, Loaita Island, Sand Cay, Sin Cowe Island, and Namyt Island (Figure 1). Activity on all the islands was light. Naval craft observed in the area included three BOSTWICK-class destroyer escorts (DE), one high endurance cutter (WHEC), one tank landing ship (LST), and two unidentified patrol craft. One DE and the two patrol craft were under way when photographed and the other craft were at anchor.

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2. The most activity was on Itu Aba Island (Figure 2). The island is 318 nautical miles (nm) east-southeast of Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam, at 10-22-42N 114-21-52E. It is 4,615 feet long [redacted]. Vegetation consists mainly of trees, scrub brush, and grass. The small garrison on the island consists of three administration buildings, six barracks, one probable officers quarters, one messhall, one large storage building, five small storage buildings, and eight storage/support buildings. A long finger pier extends from the south side of the island to a slip dredged from the coral. A smaller finger pier is immediately east of the long pier. Roads extend the length and width of the island and intersect at a monument in the center of the island. A network of trails extends throughout the island. Personnel trenches and foxholes are around the perimeter of the island, and six revetted possible gun positions are along the beach in the vicinity of the finger piers. At least two of these positions were occupied; the caliber of the weapons could not be determined.

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3. Two ex-US BOSTWICK-class DEs (one shown on Figure 2) and one LST-1 were at anchor off the southern coast. Another BOSTWICK-class DE was under way approximately 1.5 nm southeast of the island. Three small speed boats were on racks near the base of the large finger pier. Three non-motorized ship's boats were tied next to the small finger pier. Six cargo trucks observed on Itu Aba were the only vehicles observed on any of the eight islands.

4. Northeast Cay (Figure 3) is approximately 300 nm east of Cam Ranh Bay at 11-26-30N 114-20-29E. The island is [redacted] 910 feet wide. Vegetation consists mainly of trees, scrub brush, and grass. Structures on the island consist of one administration building, one large barracks, two support buildings, and one observation tower. Roads extend the length and width of the island and intersect at the administration building.

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5. Southwest Cay (Figure 4) is approximately 300 nm east of Cam Ranh Bay at 11-26-31N 114-20-30E. The island is 2,915 feet long and 840 feet wide. Vegetation is mainly grass with a few small scrub trees around the perimeter of the island. Facilities on the island consist of one probable barracks, four storage/support buildings, one observation tower, and one large unidentified tower or mast. Footings have been laid for a possible additional barracks and one additional storage/support building. Eight small probable landing craft were on the beach.

6. Thitu Island (Figure 5) is approximately 300 nm east of Cam Ranh Bay at 11-03-15N 114-16-59E. The island is generally triangular [redacted]. Vegetation consists mainly of scrub trees and grass with a few large trees. The majority of the facilities on the island are in a clearing in the southern portion of the island; these consist of one administration building, three barracks, one messhall, and three support buildings. Two roads extend from the cleared area to the north side of the island, and a third road extends from the main building area to a small clearing on the north-northwest side of the island which contains two storage buildings. Although no naval vessels were observed in the immediate vicinity of Thitu, two unidentified patrol craft, 155 feet and 135 feet long, were under way approximately 2 nm east-southeast of the island [redacted].

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7. Loaita Island (Figure 6) is approximately 320 nm east-southeast of Cam Ranh Bay at 10-40-07N 114-25-20E. The island is [redacted] 815 feet wide. Vegetation consists mainly of scrub trees and grass. The only structures on the island are one large and two small sheds. A single road extends the length of the island and numerous tracks extend from the beach to the vicinity of the large shed.

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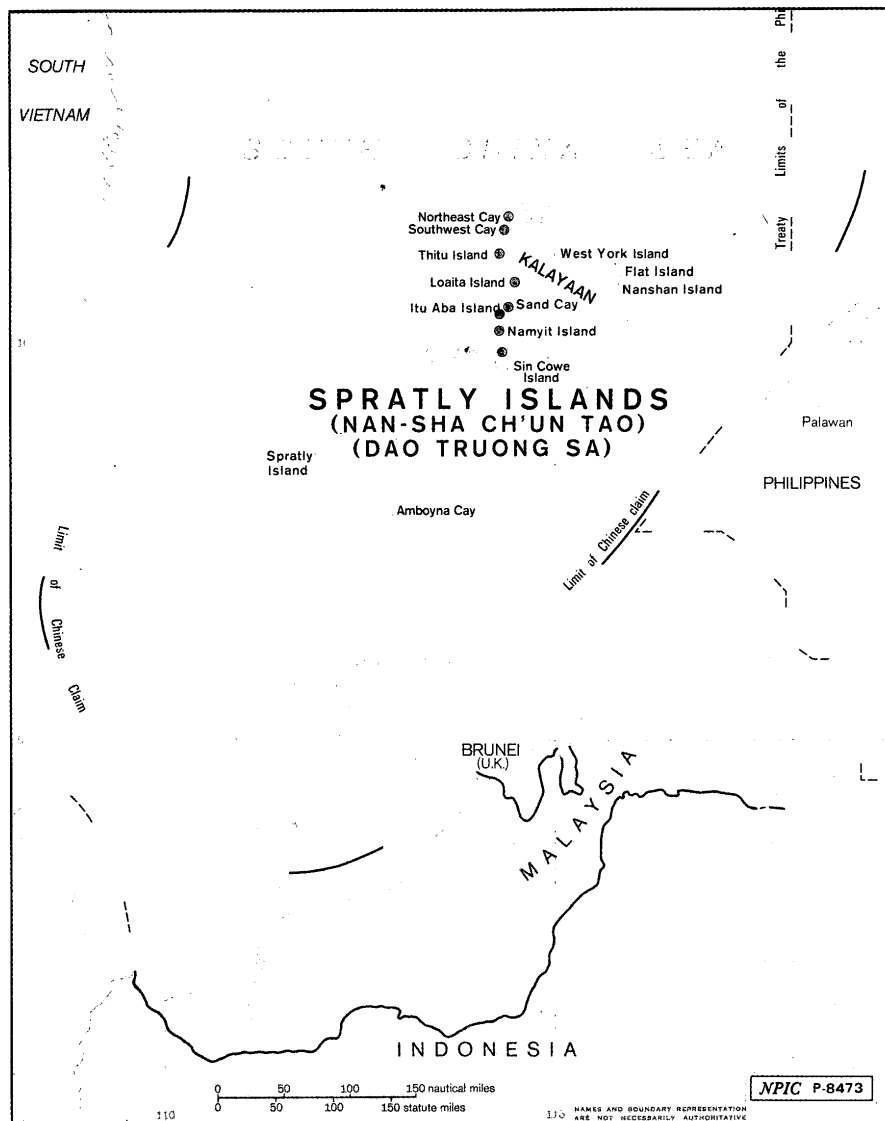


FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF SPRATLY ISLAND GROUP, SOUTH CHINA SEA

8. Sand Cay (Figure 7) is approximately 320 nm east-southeast of Cam Ranh Bay at 10-22-35N 114-28-45E. The island is [ ] 405 feet wide. Vegetation consists mainly of scrub brush and grass. There are no facilities on the island. Six small probable landing craft were on the beach on the northeast side of the island.

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9. Sin Cowe Island (Figure 8) is approximately 330 nm east-southeast of Cam Ranh Bay at 09-51-31N 114-19-42E. The island is [ ] 505 feet wide. Vegetation is mainly grass and low brush. Facilities on the island consist of two large barracks-type buildings, two small probable support buildings, four probable sheds/tents, and one observation tower. Two probable small landing craft were on the beach.

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10. No changes to the facilities on Namyit Island were discernible since the previous observation [ ]. However, one ex-US CASCO-class WHEC was at anchor north of the island. Facilities on Namyit as well as those on Spratly and Nanshan Islands were described in a previous report.<sup>1</sup> These three islands are the only islands in the Spratly Group which were imaged previously on satellite photography.

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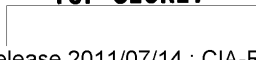
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