

SPRATLY ISLANDS

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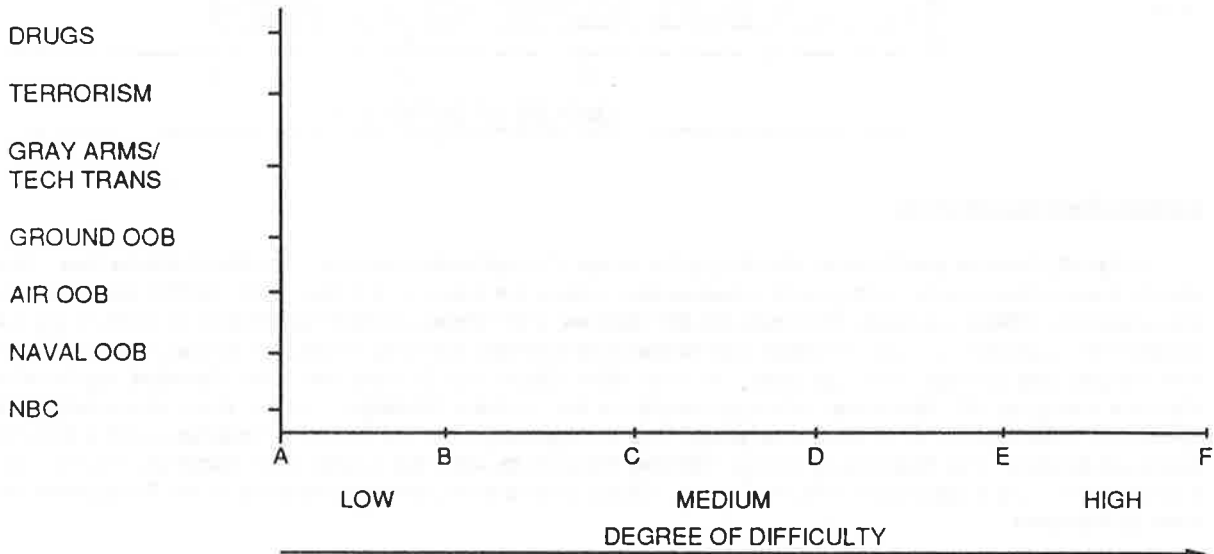


SUMMARY

The **Spratly Islands**, located in the **South China Sea**, are the center of a multinational dispute. These islands are significant because they occupy locations in important sea lanes and are believed to contain valuable oil and gas resources. **China, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Taiwan** all claimed sovereignty to some of the islands in this complex. In 1987, **Chinese and Vietnamese** warships operating in the area opened fire on each other with considerable damage and casualties. These countries continue to maintain warships in the vicinity of the **Spratlys**. **Malaysia** claims possession of the southern **Spratlys**, and has been conducting naval operations in the islands for at least nine years. The **Philippines** claim the northern **Spratlys** which it calls the **Kalayaan Islands**. **Taiwan** occupies **Itu-aba** island, the largest of the **Spratlys**, maintaining a weather station and a contingent of marines there. The islands are of little interest to the **U.S.** other than for their strategic location in the **South China Sea**. They have no indigenous population and no armed forces.

The **Spratlys** consist of numerous small islands. Some of the larger ones contain jungle growth and scrub vegetation. Most, however are small flat and desolate, with coral outcrops. They are unsuitable for cross-country vehicular movement and the average standoff distance for engagement by line of sight weapons (intervisibility) would be less than 1,000 meters. Coverage of the **Spratlys** by 1:50,000 scale maps is not available. There are no airfields, ports or key installations. The **Pacific ARG** with its embarked **MEU** could reach the **Spratlys** in less than two days.

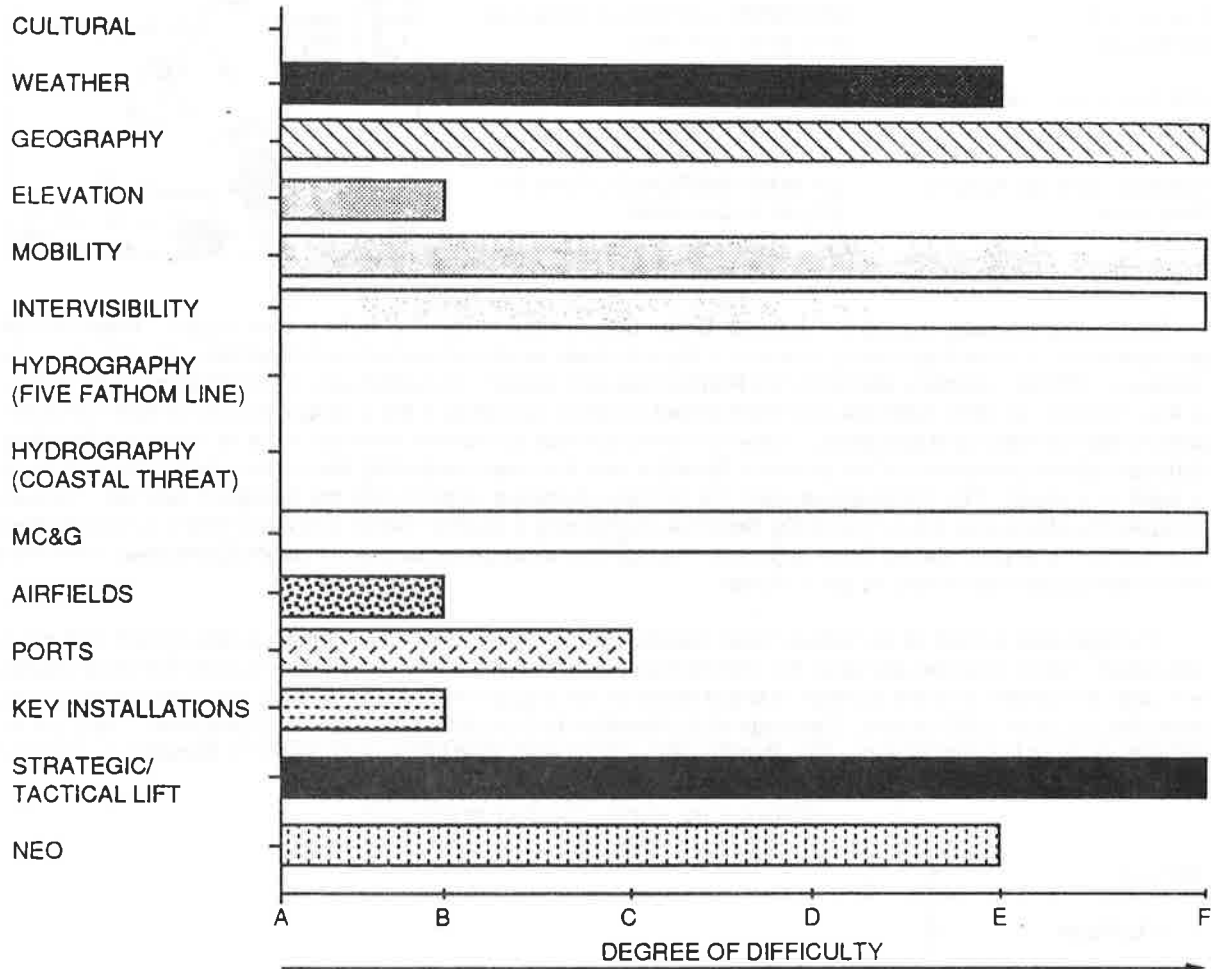
SPRATLY ISLANDS - THREAT SUMMARY



Spratly Islands - 1

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## SPRATLY ISLANDS - TERRAIN AND LOGISTICS SUMMARY



### Existing Ongoing Conflicts

The **Spratly Islands** and **Paracel Islands** are the center of a multination dispute in the **South China Sea**. These islands are significant because they lie in important sea lanes in the area and are believed to contain valuable oil and gas resources. **China, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Taiwan** all claim sovereignty to some of the 200 islands in this complex. In 1987, **Chinese** and **Vietnamese** warships operating in the area opened fire on each other with considerable damage and casualties. In June 1988, **China** had 22 warships in the **Spratlys** region while **Vietnam** had about 39. **Malaysia** claims possession of the southern **Spratlys**, and has been conducting naval operations in the islands for at least nine years. The **Philippines** claim the northern **Spratlys** which it calls the **Kalayaan Islands**. The **Republic of China (Taiwan)** occupies **Itu-aba**, the largest of the **Spratlys**, maintaining a weather station and a contingent of marines there. Of the other islands, nine are occupied by the **Philippines** and three by **Malaysia**.

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Public Release Approved  
2021 Dated Information

U.S. Equities in the Spratly Islands

- Overall U.S. equity is low.

Direct Inv (Mil of \$)	Exports (Mil of \$)	Imports (Mil of \$)	U.S. Aid (Mil of \$)	Total Equity (Mil of \$)	U.S. Citizens	\$ Rating Rating	Total Numerical Rating	Overall U.S. Equity
-	-	-	-	-	-	0 0	0	Low

General Ground OOB

Infantry	Tank OOB	Artillery	Army Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
None	None	None	None	0	0	A

General Air OOB

Air OOB	Close Air	AAW (IAD)	Air Force Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
None	None	None	0	0	0	A

Fighter Aircraft: none; Close Air: none; Air Defense: none.

General Naval OOB

Naval OOB	S/S Missiles	Patrol Craft	Navy Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
None	None	None	0	0	0	A

Ships: none; SSM: none; Patrol Craft: none.

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## Culture (Language and Religion)

No native population.

## Weather

Average Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit)	Average Relative Humidity (Percent)	Average Annual Rainfall (Inches)	Rating
80	75	100	Wet/Hot

Tropical hot, humid climate with heavy rainfall and frequent storms.

## General Geographic Conditions

URBAN	DESERT	JUNGLE	MOUNTAINOUS
		X	

## Operational Elevation

<2,000 FT	<4,000 FT	<6,000 FT	>6,000 FT	>9,000 FT	>12,000 FT
X					

The **Spratlys** consist of numerous unpopulated islands in the **South China Sea**. Some islands contain jungle vegetation but most are flat and small, with coral reefs.

## General Cross-Country Mobility

- The **Spratlys** are unsuited for cross-country movement of tracked vehicles.

## Intervisibility (Line of Sight)

Poor, with line of sight distances less than 1,000 meters due to vegetation on the larger islands.

## Hydrography (Five Fathom Line)

- No charts available.

## Hydrography (Coastal Threat)

Maximum Capability Coastal Defense Weapon	Maximum Range of Weapon (Meters)	Rating (Compared with 5"/54-cal)
None	0	U.S. NGF Advantage

**MC&G Shortfalls**

- Map coverage is not available.

1:50 New	1:50 Old	Some 1:50	MSI Avail	1:250 New	None
			X		

**Airfields**

- Not accessible by air.

Number of Airfields	Type Aircraft (C-5, C-141B, C-130) Accommodated	Airfield Utility (Unconstrained/Constrained)	Rating
0	None	0/0	None

**Ports**

- No ports are available in the **Spratlys**.

**Key Installations**

There are no key installations.

**Strategic and Tactical Lift**

The **Pacific** ARG with its embarked MEU could reach the **Spratlys** in less than two days.

**NEO**

- NEO conducted by a MEU under normal conditions in the **Spratly's** would not be difficult.

Embassy Staff	Evacuees	Inland Objective (nm)	Rating
0	0	0	A

Note: In the **Spratly Islands**, the following factors are of little significance:

- Drugs
- Terrorism
- Gray Arms/Technology Transfer
- OOB (Ground, Air, Naval)
- NBC

7/24/13

