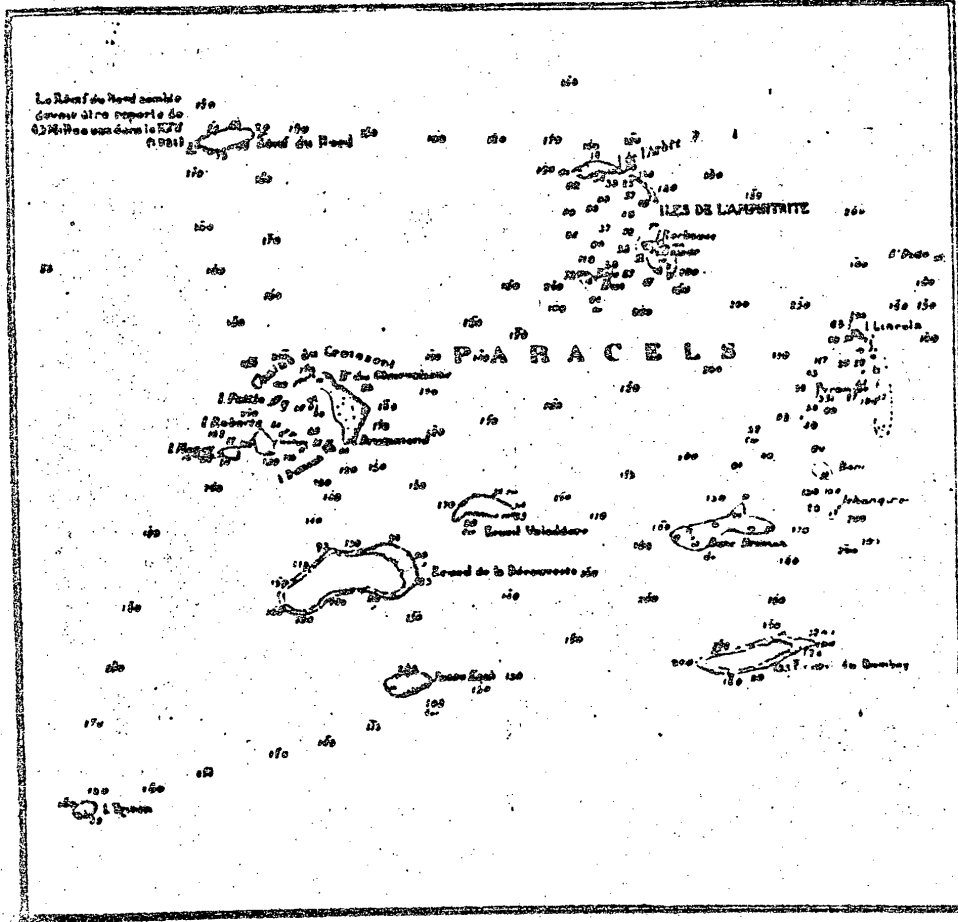


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Extrait de l'ouvrage : A propos des Iles Paracels (les Editions d'Extrême-Asie, Saigon, 1929)
par P.A. Lopicque, Capitaine au long-cours, Armateur en Extrême-Orient.

Les Iles Paracels
The Paracels Islands

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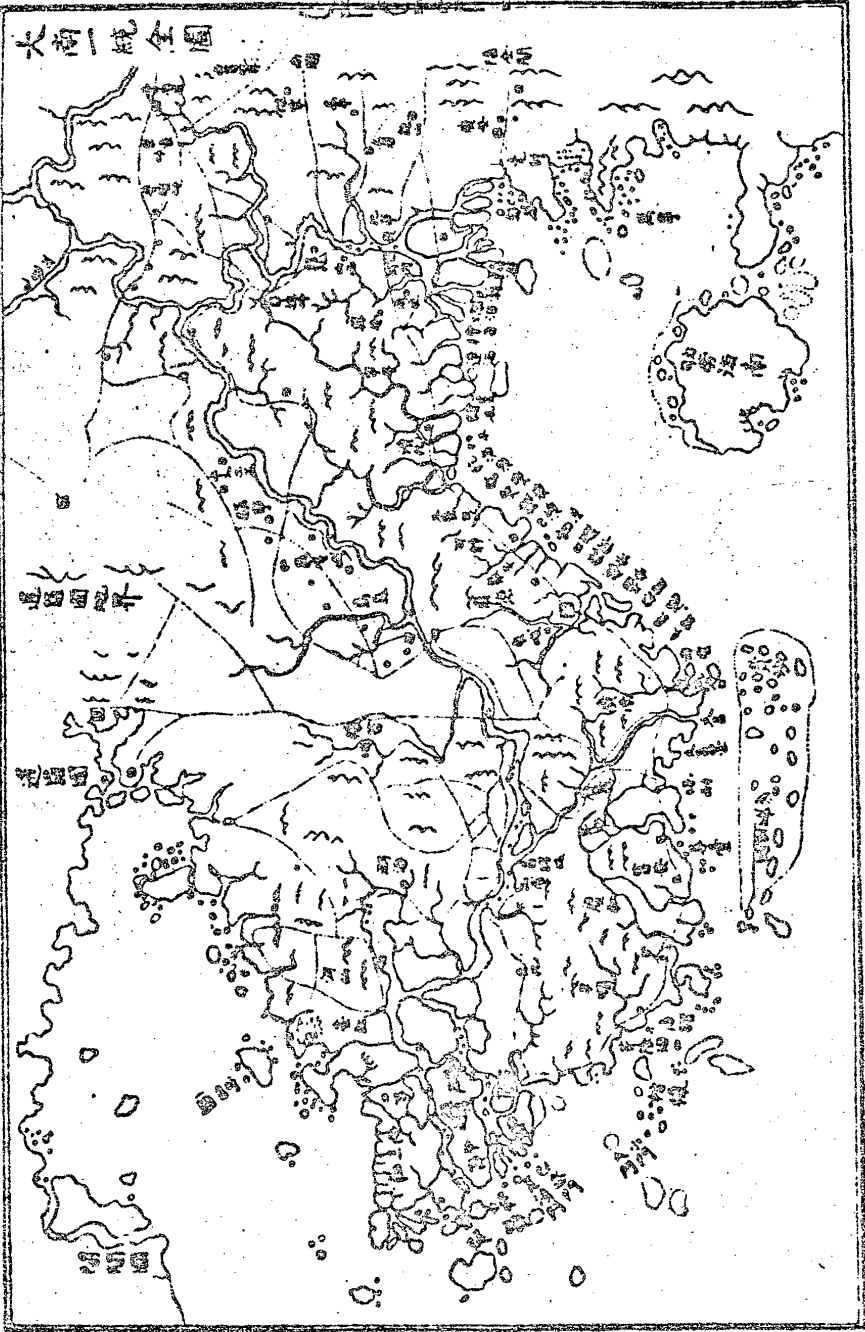
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Les Iles Paracels et Spratley figuraient déjà dans les anciennes cartes du Viet-Nam. Ci-dessus une carte extraite du Hoang-Viet Da-da de la 15^e Année Minh-Mang (1834) où elles sont encadrées par un pointillé.
 The Paracels and Spratley Islands were usually shown in ancient maps of Vietnam. Above is a map from the Hoang-Viet Da-da published in the 15th year of Minh-Mang (1834), they are surrounded with dotted lines.

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2. SUBJECT: (U) PARACEL and SPRATLEY ISLANDS	9. DATE OF REPORT: 27 December 1965	
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6. EVALUATION: SOURCE <u>B</u> INFORMATION <u>2</u>	13. PREPARED BY:	
7. SOURCE: RVN Armed Forces Attache	14. APPROVING AUTHORITY:	

15. SUMMARY: (S) This report forwards verbatim information contained in three documents received from the RVN Armed Forces Attache which supports the RVN claim to the SPRATLEY and PARACEL ISLAND complexes. (Leave Blank)

1. (S) Document number one.

"VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE PARACEL AND SPRATLEY ISLANDS"

"In a statement made on March 17th, last, Mr Tomas Cloma, Director of the Maritime Institute of the Philippines, announced that he had discovered some unclaimed islands off the Philippines which he christened "Freedomland".

Tomas Cloma's statement set off a chain of protests.

To begin with, the Chinese Nationalist Government informed the Philippine Minister of Foreign Affairs, through its Ambassador in Manila, that the Spratley Islands were

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17. DOWNGRADING DATA:

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18. ATTACHMENT DATA:

- 2 Enclosures
- 1. Map of Spratley Islands 1 cy, 1 page (S)
- 2. Map of Paracel Islands 1 cy, 1 page (S)

REQUEST ATTACHMENT FROM DIAAP-IHZ

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Chinese possession.

Conversations were about to open between the Chinese Nationalist Government and the Government of the Philippines on the subject, when, on May 30th a spokesman of the Government of Peking in turn laid claim to the Nansha Islands, that is the Spratley and also the Paracels.

In a communique published on June 1st, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam finally re-established the truth by affirming its historic rights over the two archipelagoes, which have always formed part of Vietnamese territory, as indeed was recalled by the head of the Vietnamese delegation to the Peace Conference in San Francisco at the moment of the signature of the peace treaty (with Japan).

We feel it would be useful to retrace the history of the occupation of these islands, which shows that they have for a long time been Vietnamese possessions.

A. PARACELS ISLANDS

The Paracels archipelago is a string of islets situated off the Vietnamese coast between 110 and 113 degrees of longitude east of Greenwich and from 15°45'17" of latitude about 300km from Tourane. These islands which differ in size, are divided into two groups.

The Amphitrite group (called after the first French ship which entered the South China Sea):

North Island	Rocky Island
Middle Island	Lincoln Island
South Island	Tree Island
Wooded Island	South Bank

and the Crescent Group (so called because of its shape):

Pattle Island	Drummond Island
Roberts Island	Passu Keah Island
Money Island	Triton Island
Duncan Island	

The two largest islands are Wooded Island in the Amphitrite group and Pattle Island in the Crescent Group. The total area of the isles forming the archipelago barely exceeds 10 square kilometers.

Originally coral islands, they have the bare appearance of sandbanks and are for the most part surrounded by a ring of reefs which make the approach by vessels particularly dangerous.

Wooded Island alone is covered by dense forest, from which it takes its name.

The islands have been frequented since long ago by Vietnamese fishermen who went there for tortoises, sea-slugs and other marine creatures which were abundant there. In recent times, the Paracels have attracted exploiters of phosphates, rich beds of which are produced by the interaction of the guano of sea-birds with the tropical rains and the coral limestone.

Vietnamese sovereignty over the Paracels was asserted many centuries ago, even before the official annexation of the isles to the Empire of Annam, in 1816, by the founder of the Nguyen dynasty, the Emperor Gia Long. It will be well here to recall these traditional sovereign rights, which the vicissitudes of history have never yet brought in dispute.

a. THE PARACELS WERE A VIETNAMESE POSSESSION BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH

Many historical works, both Vietnamese and foreign, mention the Paracel Islands as being a dependent possession of the former King of Annam.

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Here is the description given by the Hoang-Viet Dia-Du (Geography of the Annamite Empire) published in the 16th year of the Emperor Minh-Mang (1835).

North East of the Village of An-ninh (huyen de Binh-Son) and well out to sea, there is an archipelago composed of 130 isles separated one from another by anything from a few hours to a whole day's journey by boat. At the lowest point of the islands there is a fresh water well.

In the midst of these reefs lies a yellow sand bank (from which comes the name of Hoang-Sa which is given to this archipelago); the sea is calm there. Sea swallows and other birds live on this archipelago in companies innumerable. They are bold, and do not fly away at the approach of man.

Upon these islands are to be found many kinds of sea treasures, flower shells, shells of the kind called elephants' ears which are as long as mats, and can be used for making tablets for mandarins or for the manufacture of lime, mother-of-pearl shells much sought after for the making of objects d'art, and many kinds of shellfish which make excellent eating.

There are also to be found gigantic tortoises, of which one species, the Ba-Ba, provides shell used in the fabrication of certain objects.

Crayfish, lobsters and sea-urchins are also to be fished for there.

The Dai-Nam Nhut Thong-Ch (Annals of Viet-Nam), published in the reign of Tu-Due, tells the story of the occupation of the Paracels by the Kings of Annam.

According to the Annals, a special company was created at the beginning of the Nguyen dynasty (1802) called the Hoang-Sa Company, for the purpose of supervising the exploitation of the Paracels.

The company was formed by seventy men from the village of Vinh-An, chosen from among the most experienced seamen. The company spent half the year upon the islands.

In the third month of each year they set sail for the isles to collect the sea produce which they brought back in the eighth month to the port of Tu-Hien.

A Northern Company was also created under the same direction as the Hoang-Sa Company, which explored the islands to the north of the Paracels, including the Kouen Louen islands close to Hainan.

In 1832 the Emperor Minh-Mang sent labour and materials by State boats to build a pagoda on a rock called the Ban-Na Rock.

Near the pagoda was erected a stone column to commemorate its foundation.

But there are not only the documents of the old court of Annam to assert the sovereignty of Viet-nam over the islets of the Paracels.

Before the establishment of the French protectorate over Annam, numerous writings by missionaries, explorers, and French sailors bore witness to this sovereignty

Thus, in his work entitled "History and description of the religion, customs and morals of all peoples", published in 1838 Monseigneur Taberd wrote as follows about Cochinchina, (which at that time was the name of the territory formed by the south and a part of the centre of Vietnam):

"We shall not embark on enumerating the main islands dependencies of Cochinchina; we shall limit ourselves to remarking that for more than 34 years the archipelago of the Paracels, called by the Annamites Cat-Yang or Hoang-sa (yellow sand), a maze of little rocky islands and sandbanks, feared with good reason by navigators, has been occupied by the people of Cochinchina.

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We do not know if they founded a settlement there, but it is certain that the Emperor Gia-Long had resolved to add this singular ornament to his crown, since he thought fit to take possession of the islands in person, and in 1816 solemnly hoisted there the flag of Cochinchina." (Leave Blank)

The above extract from the work in question was also published in English in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

J. B. Chaigneau (1769-1825) in his "Memoires Sur la Cochinchine" defines Cochinchina as the territory formed by Cochinchina proper... and the archipelago of the Paracels, composed of uninhabited islands, reefs and rocks.

The book also mentions the official annexation of the archipelago by the Emperor Gia-Long in 1816.

a. Vietnam's historic rights over the Paracels are therefore incontestable.

b. THE PARACELS UNDER THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE

During the first year of their protectorate over Annam, no doubt preoccupied by more urgent questions, the French authorities in Indochina seemed to take little interest in this possession far out in the China Sea.

Fortunately there were some far-seeing minds to remind France of the obligations she had contracted, in imposing the protectorate on Annam, to defend the territorial integrity of that country against foreign nations.

The press demanded an effective occupation of the Paracels islands and the establishment of certain vital installations such as a lighthouse, radio unit, meteorological station, etc...in the interest of navigation.

In 1899, after a number of shipwrecks had occurred on the outlying reefs of the Paracels, a plan was drawn up for the erection of a lighthouse. But the plan slumbered in the pigeon-holes of the administration.

The shipwrecks in question gave rise to a number of disputes which are not without interest, since they show that China did not recognize any right of her own over the Paracels.

Two of the shipwrecked vessels, the Bellona (wrecked in 1895 on the north reef) and the Inezi Maru (wrecked in 1896 on the Amphitrite) were carrying cargoes of copper insured by British Companies.

After a vain attempt at salvage, the wrecks were abandoned. Some Chinese, plying in sampans and small junks, pillaged the wreckage and took the copper they got from it to Hainan, where they offered to re-sell it to the shipowners.

The insurance companies then provoked and intervention by the British Minister in Peking and the British Consul in Hoi-Hao, who tried to hold the Chinese local authorities responsible for the shipwrecks.

The Chinese authorities declined all responsibility, maintaining that the Paracels did not belong to China, and that the islands were not attached to any part of Hainan, thereby implicitly throwing back the responsibility onto the Indochinese authorities.

It was in fact with the French authorities in Indochina that the local representative of the Chinese government in Hainan and Southern China settled disputes at issue between Vietnamese and Chinese fisherfold on the Paracels islands.

More than once the French consul in Hao-Hao had to protect against the abduction of women and children of Vietnamese fishermen by Chinese fishermen, who sold them in the ports of Hainan.

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In 1909, profiting from the fact that there were as yet no installations to denote French sovereignty over the Paracels, the Viceroy of Canton sent two gun boats to make a general reconnaissance and draw up a map of the archipelago.

The two gunboats arrived on June 6th and remained less than 24 hours in a cove of the archipelago, departing the next day.

This unexpected volte-face of the Chinese Government could not of course have any legal consequences.

The fact that the French had neglected to reaffirm formal possession of the islands after the establishment of the Protectorate over Annam could not in any way weaken the incontestable rights of the latter.

The Chinese expedition had the fortunate effect of awakening the French authorities in Indochina, who began to realize the importance of the Paracels for the security of the Indochina coast.

From 1920 on, the motor launches of the Customs made frequent visits to the islands, which provided excellent refuge for smugglers of arms, ammunition and opium.

In 1925 the first scientific exploration of the archipelago was set on foot, in which the De Lanessan, a vessel of the oceanographical services in Indochina, took part. This exploration revealed the rich beds of phosphates which the isles possessed.

It also proved the existence of a continental shelf which reaches out in platforms from the Annamite coast into the sea. The Paracels rest on one of these platforms; they are thus joined to the coast of Vietnam by a submarine plinth.

The publication of the report of the expedition revived interest in these possessions, til then little known to the general public. The press of Indochina devoted numerous articles to the possibilities of developing the resources of the archipelago, and to the strategic importance.

Numerous Japanese Companies were not slow in applying to the French authorities in Indochina to obtain permission to work the phosphate beds, therefore recognizing French sovereignty over the archipelago.

The Japanese carried out important works. They built a jetty of phosphate blocks and a metal landing-stage 300 meters long on Roberts Island to ease the loading of phosphate.

These installations were later abandoned, no doubt because the workings were not sufficiently profitable.

By reason of the numerous administrative problems raised by the presence of foreign companies on the archipelago, a decree was issued on June 15th, 1932 making the Paracels an administrative "delegation", named the "delegation of the Crescent and dependencies" and "Delegation of the Amphitrite and dependencies."

c. THE PARACELS DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

In 1939 the Japanese, who had need of strategic bases in the Pacific with a view to an approaching onslaught, quite simply claimed the Paracel Islands and in fact occupied them at the time of their entry into the war at the side of the Axis powers.

The Paracels thus remained under Japanese occupation until the end of the war in 1945.

d. THE PARACELS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO PEACE TREATY

As the natural consequence of her defeat, Japan renounced, under article 2

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of the Peace Treaty, all the territories she had occupied by force during the war, and in particular the Paracels and Spratley Islands.

In order not to miss such an opportunity to reaffirm the rights of Vietnam over these two possessions, the leader of the Vietnamese Delegation to the San Francisco Peace Conference made the following statement which could hardly be more specific:

"And as we must frankly make use of any opportunity to stifle the germs of discord, we declare our rights over the Spratley and Paracels Islands, which from time immemorial have formed part of Vietnam."

This statement, which was made on September the 7th, 1951, raised no objections on the part of the delegations of the 51 powers attending the Peace Conference, which indeed was not surprising.

In fact the Japanese renunciation did not have as result the opening of a succession to the ownership of the islands, to be solved by the United Nations Organization, which would have been provided for in the Peace Treaty; nor did it leave the situation open, an interpretation which is at variance with the objectives of the treaty. Article 2 of the Treaty simply has the effect of re-establishing the territorial integrity of those countries which were temporarily dispossessed of a part of their territory by Japan.

Now there is no dispute that the Paracels and Spratley Islands, at the moment of the Japanese occupation, formed part respectively of Annam and Cochinchina. Furthermore the French Government, as the administering power, was alone in protesting against the de facto occupation by the Japanese which it did not recognize.

As the result of the renunciation by the Japanese Government on the one hand, and by virtue of the transfer to the Vietnamese Government of sovereignty previously exercised by France throughout the whole of Vietnamese territory on the other hand,

Contrary to certain claims which have no juridicial basis, these rights are equally valid in relation to the powers which took part in the San Francisco Peace Conference and to those which were not present at that Conference, since, as we have shown, it is not a matter of a new situation but of the re-establishment of a previously existing juridicial situation.

B. THE SP RATLEY ISLANDS

The Spratley Islands, or Tempest Islands, are situated 480km. or 280 sea miles from Phan-Thiet, 340 miles from the Cap Saint-Jacques, and 210 miles from Poulo Cecir de Mer, between 111 and 118 degrees of longitude east and astride the 11th parallel of latitude.

The archipelago comprises 11 groups of islands:

North Danger: North-east island bank	Namyit Island
North Danger: South-west island bank	Spratley Island
Western York	Amboine Island
Itu Aba Island	Flat Island
Thi Tu Island	Sin Come Island
Loaita Island	

Like the Paracels, these islands are of coral origin, and contain rich beds of phosphates.

Tortoise fishing and other sea produce constitute the other resources of the islands.

The Spratley islands have always figured on the most ancient maps of Vietnam as forming part of Vietnamese territory, under the name of Troung-sa (see map, enclosure 1).

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The Chinese called them the Nansha Islands (or Islands of the South), including under this vague appellation all the islands situated to the South of Hainan." (Leave Blank)

2. (S) Document number two: A Communique issued by the Republic of Vietnam Secretary of State in Saigon on 8 April 1959 (translated from French).

"COMMUNIQUE"

"The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Vietnam communique:

The new China agency recently announded a declaration by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Peking pertaining to the subject of the "repeated violations by the Vietnamese authorities concerning the Chinese territory in the region of Paracels" and of the "pretended bad treatment inflicted by the Vietnam Navy to the Chinese fishermen and the deportation of some of them to South Vietnam.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Vietnam strongly denied these allegations and believe they must make the following remarks:

1. The Paracels Islands have belonged to Vietnam for many centuries and many times the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has had the occasion to remind other nations concerning the sovereignty of these islands.

2. On 22 February 1959 a patrol of the Vietnam Navy surprised a group of Chinese on the island of Duncan, one of the islands of the Paracel. These Chinese who just arrived a few days before, were building provisional housing. As the patrol had no interpreter they took the Chinese to Tourane for the usual questioning. On 26 February 1959, the investigation revealed that they were really just fishermen so the Vietnamese authorities decided to free them with all their belongings. Far from being the object of ill treatment, these fishermen were even improvised with food and water by the local authorities, for their return trip to Hainan, where they said they had originated."

3. (S) Document number three: An interview with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the Paracel and Spratley Islands by the Vietnam Press on 6 June 1956 (translated from French):

"Q. In a recent declaration, the government re-affirmed the sovereign rights of Vietnam over the Paracel and Spratley Islands. Can you, Mister Secretary of State, give us precise information on the subject of the historical rights of Vietnam over these islands?

A. Concerning the Paracel Islands, the sovereign right of Vietnam has been established for many centuries. The Dai-Nam Nhat Thong Chi (the Annals) mentioned these islands as a Vietnamese possession. During the reign of Emperor Gia-Long (beginning of the 19th century) a special detachment was created with the name of Doi Hoane Sa (detachment of Hoang Sa Island) for guarding the islands. This detachment closed at the time of the establishment of the French law on the Annam, the responsibility of the defense of the Vietnam territory became incumbent upon France.

In 1931 a detachment of Indo-China guards were sent to the Paracel Islands and stayed there until the war of 1939-1945. (Let us remember that the 15th of June 1932 an administrative delegation was created and attached to a province of Thua-Thien which was named "Delegation of the Paracels"). During the war the Paracel Islands were occupied by the Japanese who left after the signing of the peace treaty, which denounced all of Japan's rights and pretentions to the Paracel and Spratley islands (Article 2 of the San Francisco Treaty).

Precisely as stated in the governmental declaration, the Chief of the Vietnamese Delegation at the Peace Conference of San Francisco reaffirmed at the same time the sovereign right of Vietnam on these islands.

From a judicial point of view, the history of the sovereign right of Vietnam

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over the Paracel Islands seems indisputable.

As to the Spratley Islands, they have been considered for a long time as a part of Vietnam, under the name of Troung-Sa.

In 1929, these islands were attached to the province of Ba-Ria. The 13th of April 1930, after one reconnaissance, the French Navy officially took possession. Notification of this occupation was made to these nations susceptible to be interested: America, China, Philippines and the Netherlands. Only the Japanese government protested, giving for an excuse, one previous expedition. But this protest by the Japanese government can no longer be considered in view of the renunciation of Japan made in the peace treaty.

The transfer of Vietnam sovereignty on all Vietnamese territory automatically involved the transfer of the sovereignty of France on these islands, Sprately attached to the Cochinchina.

Q. By some information received from Taipei the Nationalist Chinese Naval Forces were in the islands of Nansha (Paracels) just a few days ago. Is this information correct?

A. The government doesn't have any official information on this subject. Anyhow the government considers all occupation by these forces (Nationalist Chinese Naval Forces) as a violation of Vietnam sovereignty."

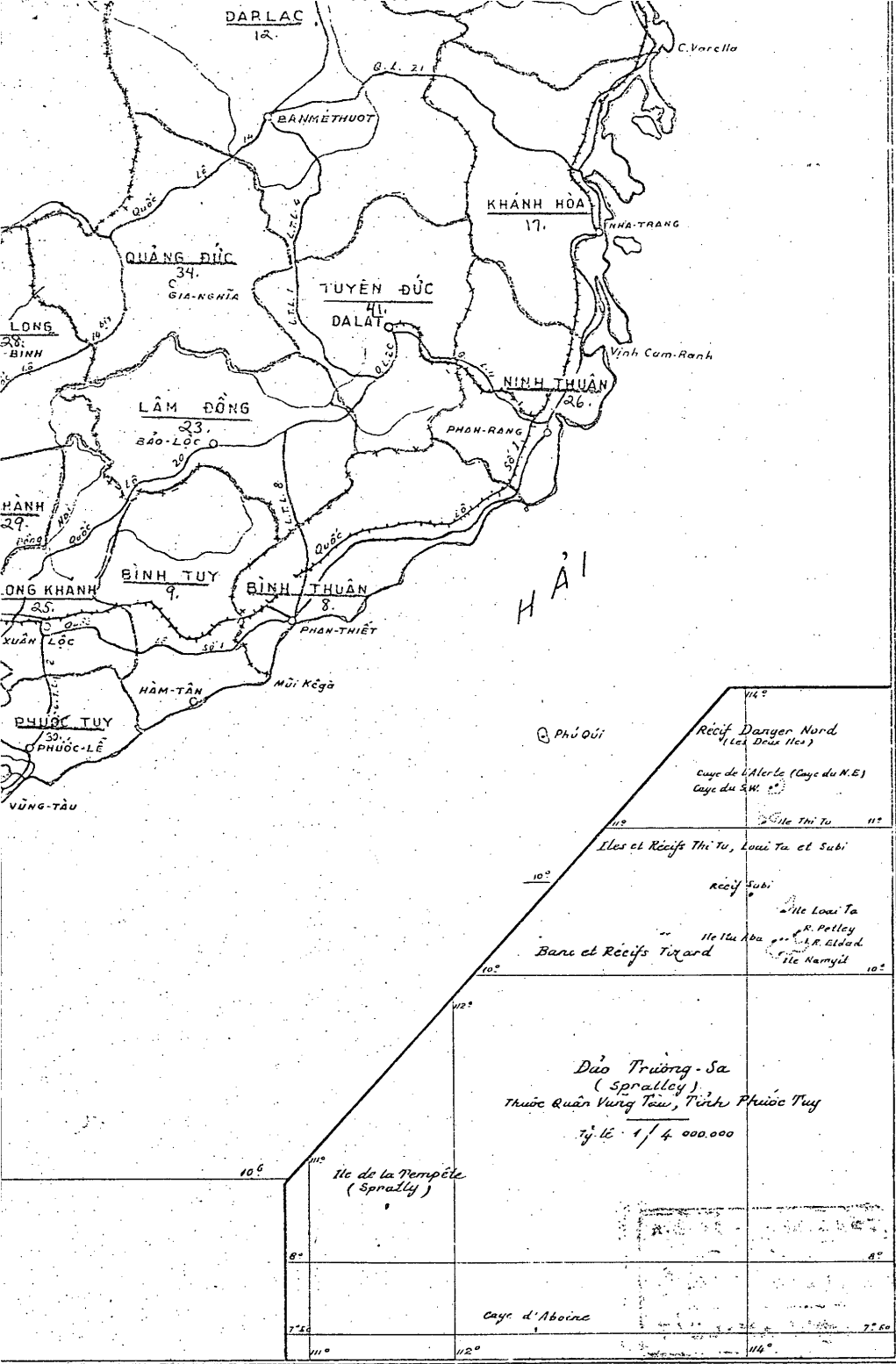
COMMENT:

1. (S) The RVN Armed Forces Attache is apparently unaware that the ChiComs maintain a small garrison on WOODY ISLAND (PARACELS) or that the GRC has a similar unit on ITU ABA (SPRATLEY). He further claims that the RVN has no agreement regarding the use of these or any other islands by other countries.

2. (U) Field Coordination: AM EMB, Taipei.

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