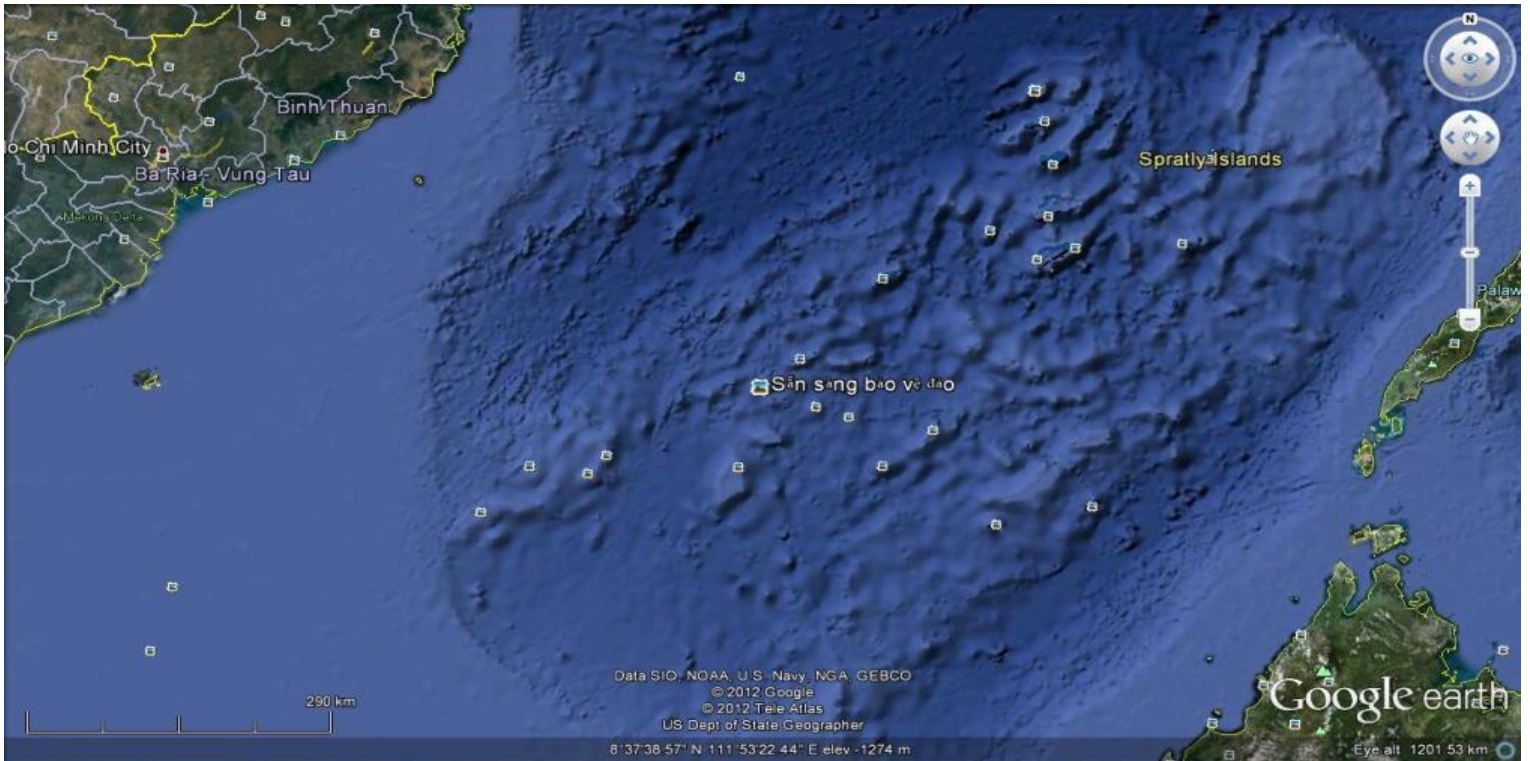
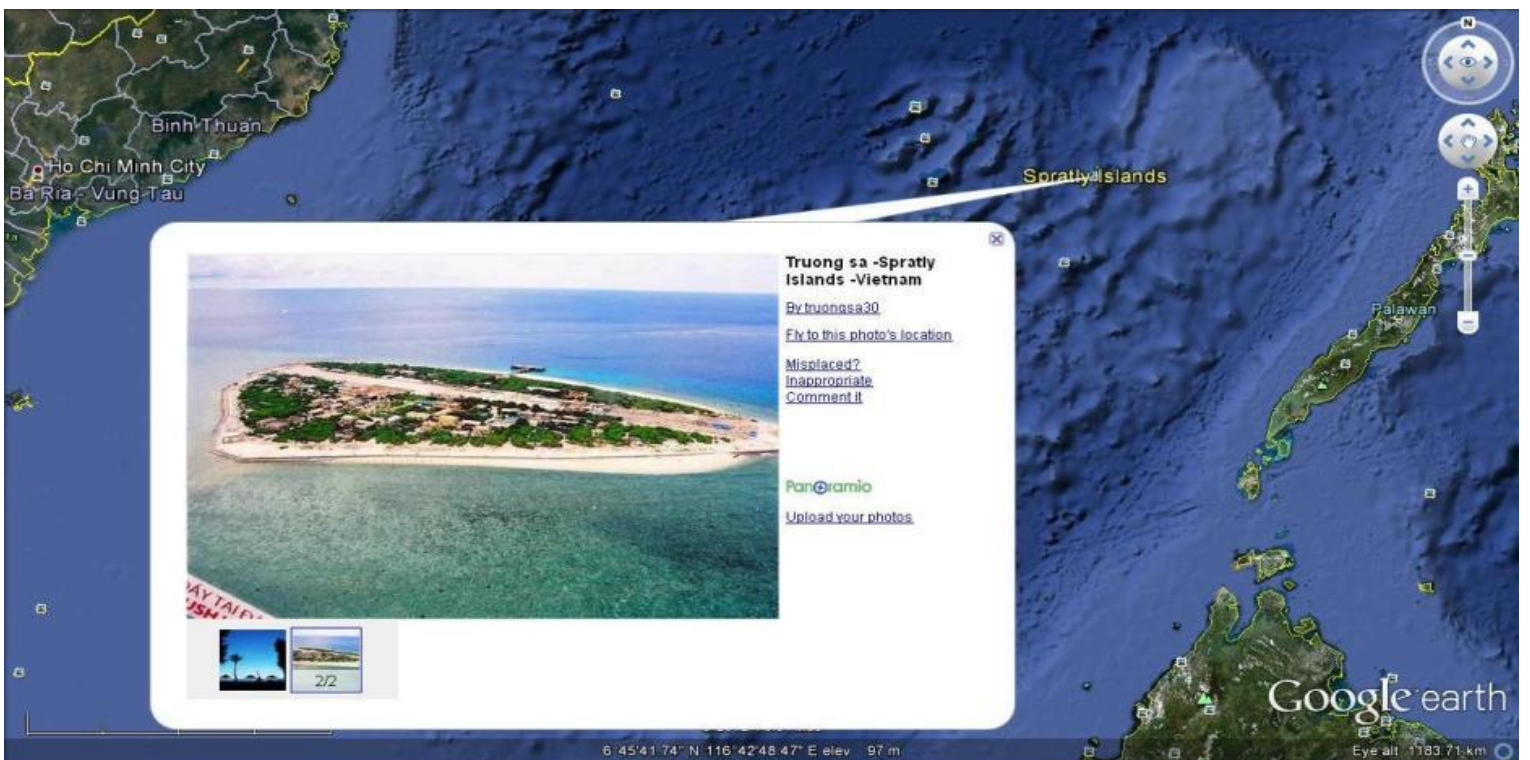


**THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS.  
THE SPRATLYS AND ON-GOING CONFRONTATION BY CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES.  
BUT THE VIETNAMESE ALREADY SEEM TO OWN ALL.**

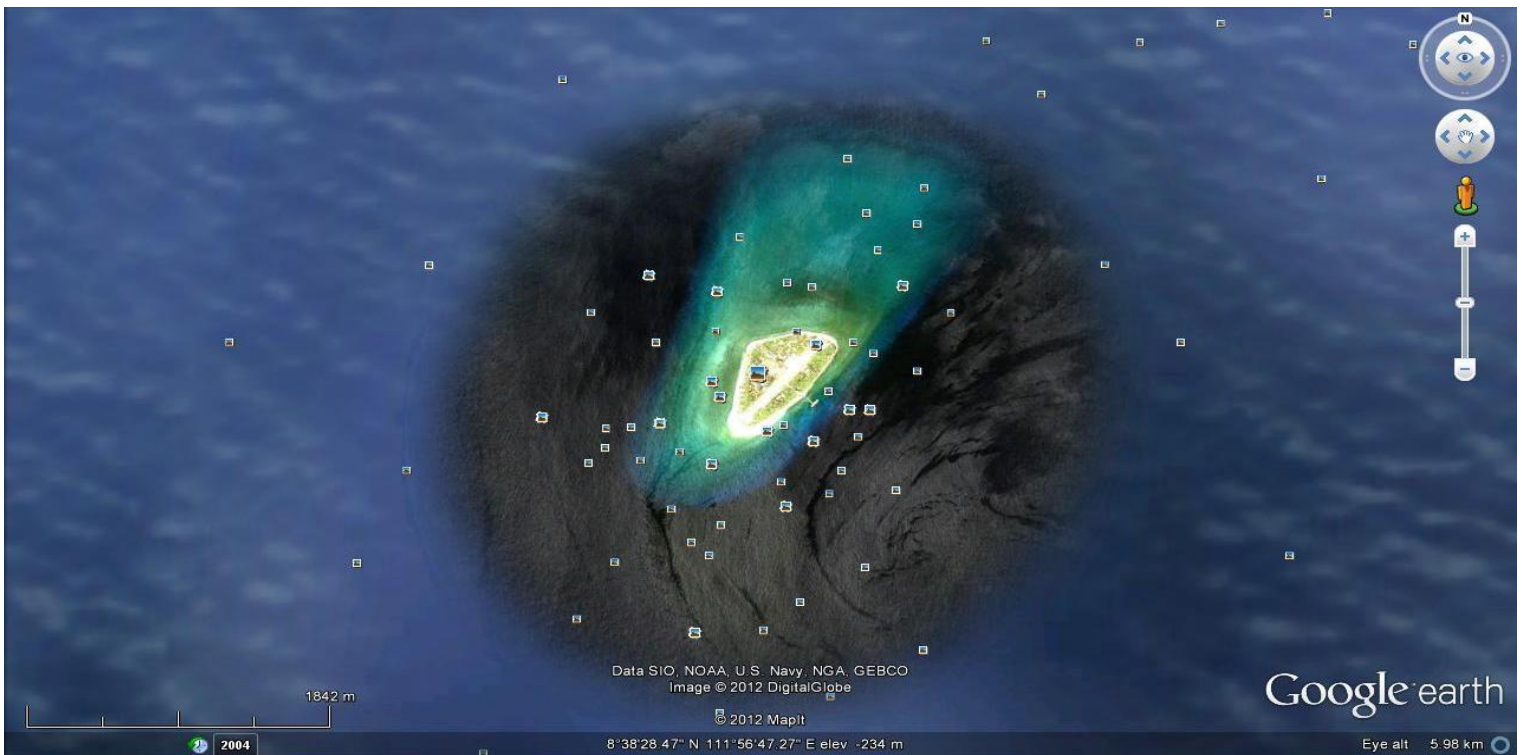


Google Earth photo shows the overview of South China Sea bounded by Vietnam on the left, and the Philippines & Borneo on the right. Small squares are icons placed by viewers that when clicked on, blow up to photos. When the pointer is placed over an icon, the name of the uploaded photo first appears. I highlighted that "Sin Sing" icon to mark its location.

Anybody can upload photos to any place on the earth. Google first screens the uploads, and allows only photo views, which means no people poses. However, they have no way of knowing how accurate is the upload both in location and content. Hence, the query on the photo margin as to whether it is misplaced or inappropriate. Nonetheless, many uploads by Pinoys at city areas have such titles as "Abad Beer Haus" or "Joe Pizza Hut", etc. To them this is a free advertising media.

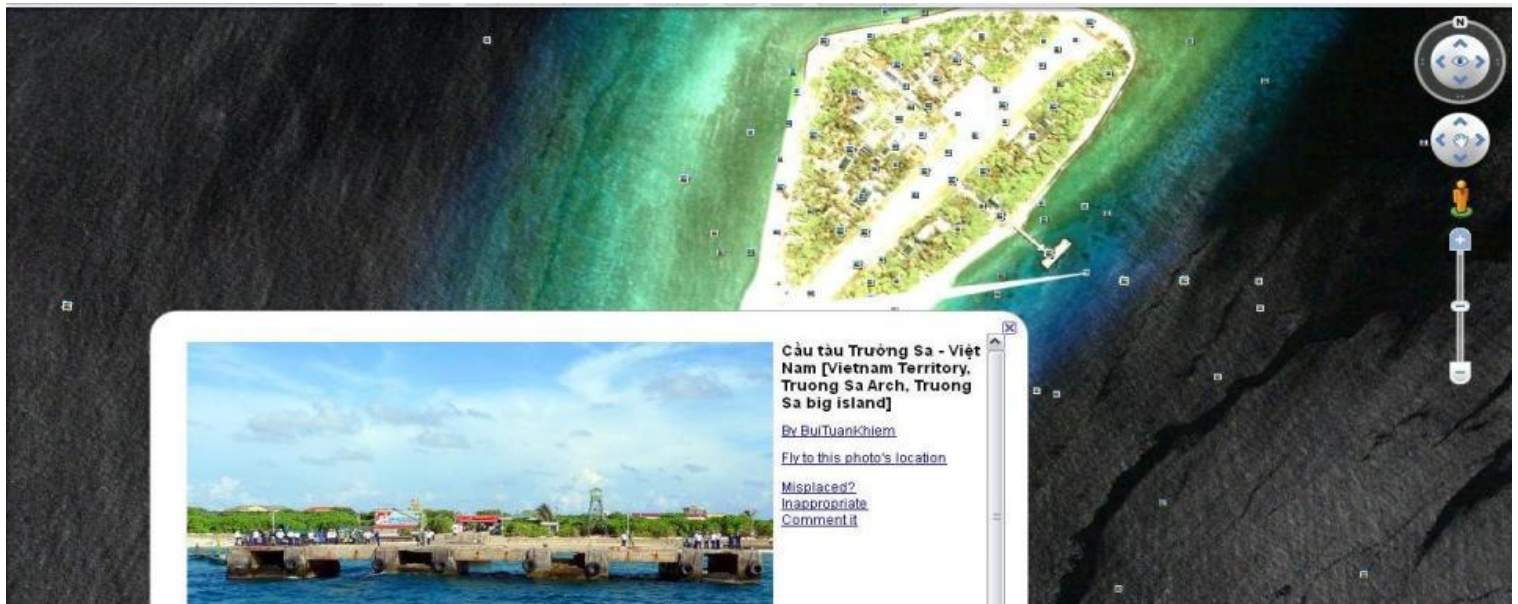


This photo of the Spratly Islands shows a well developed Island, taken by a Vietnamese from a plane, encaptioned "Trung sa - Spratly Islands - Vietnam" Yet, this area is within the 200 mile jurisdiction of the Philippines. In a number of photos, the captions are more explicit with warnings such as "China get out".



This is a close up of the area at the "Sin Sing" icon on the first photo. Obviously, Google processes their areal photos to a higher resolution for strategic locations.

All the surrounding icons blow up to numerous photos uploaded by Vietnamese. Many views are from aircraft. Apparently, there is this concerted effort to show sovereignty in whatever ways possible. I find this novel - "conquest by Google Pics".



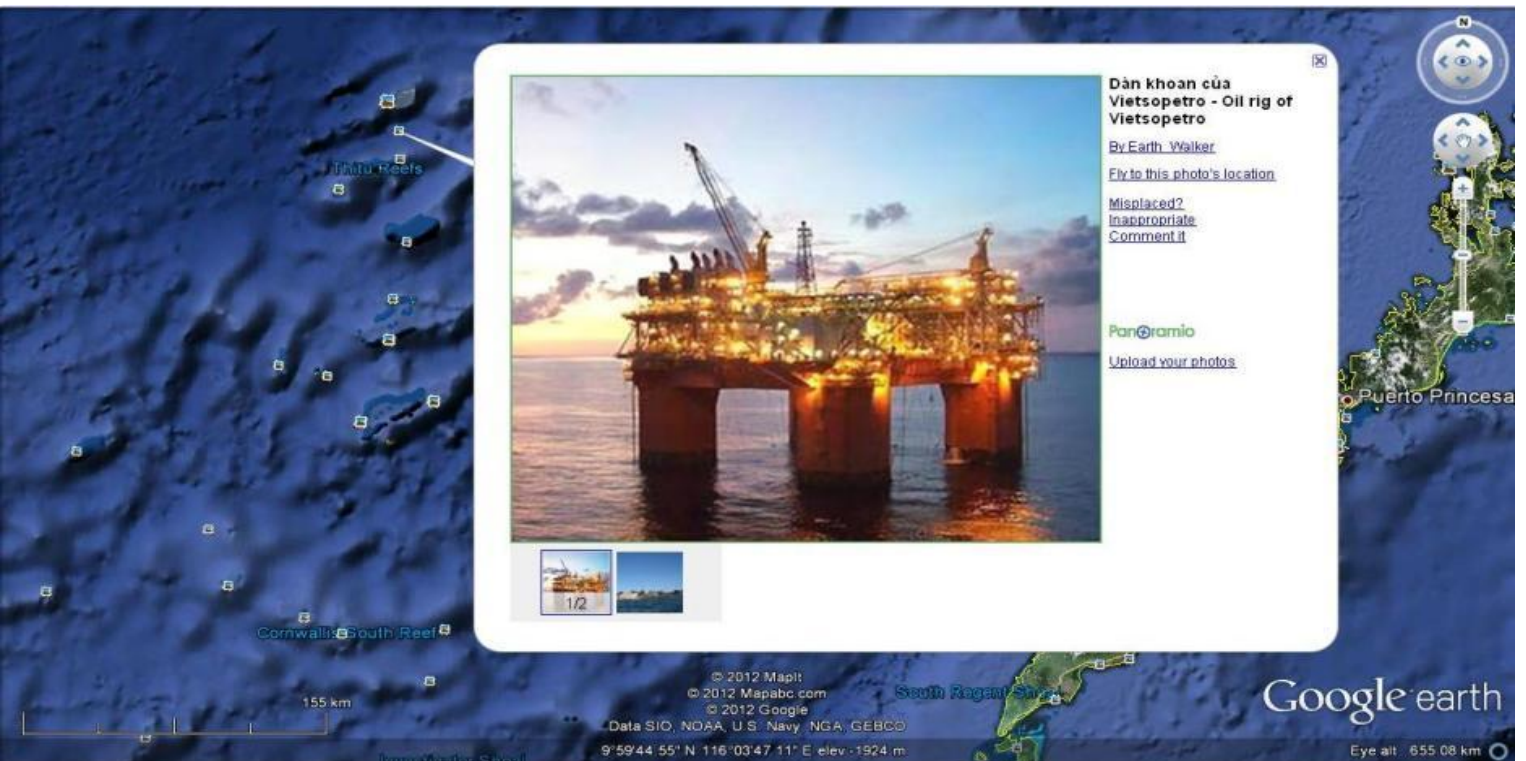
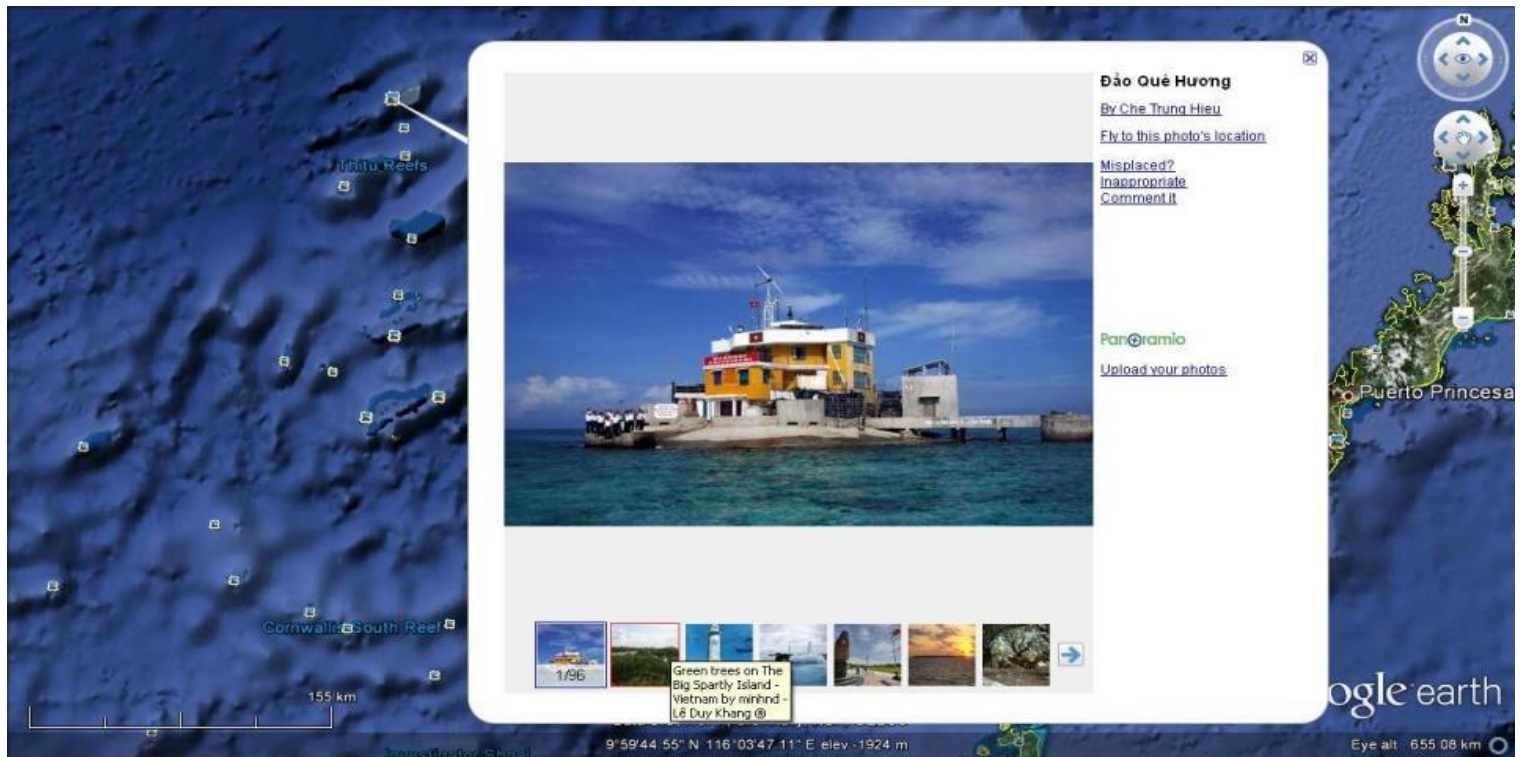
This is a zoomed-in view of the above, with a photo of the pier. Now take close look at the shape of the island. Doesn't it look exactly the same as the island that is shown on the second photo above? How can this island be located at two spots hundreds of miles apart as marked in the first photo?

Goes to show one can post almost anything, and get away with it.

Write-up from Wikipedia

*The Spratly Islands are a group of more than 750 reefs, islets, atolls, cays and islands in the South China Sea. They contain less than four square kilometers of land area spread over more than 425,000 square kilometers of sea. The Spratlys are one of three archipelagos of the South China Sea which comprise more than 30,000 islands and reefs and which complicate governance and economics in that region of Southeast Asia. Such small and remote islands have little economic value in themselves, but are important in establishing international boundaries. There are no native islanders but there are, at least for now, rich fishing grounds; and initial surveys indicate the islands may contain significant reserves of oil and natural gas.*

About 45 islands are occupied by relatively small numbers of military forces from Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Malaysia and the Philippines. Brunei has also claimed an EEZ in the southeastern part of the Spratlys encompassing just one area of small islands above mean high water (on Louisa Reef.),

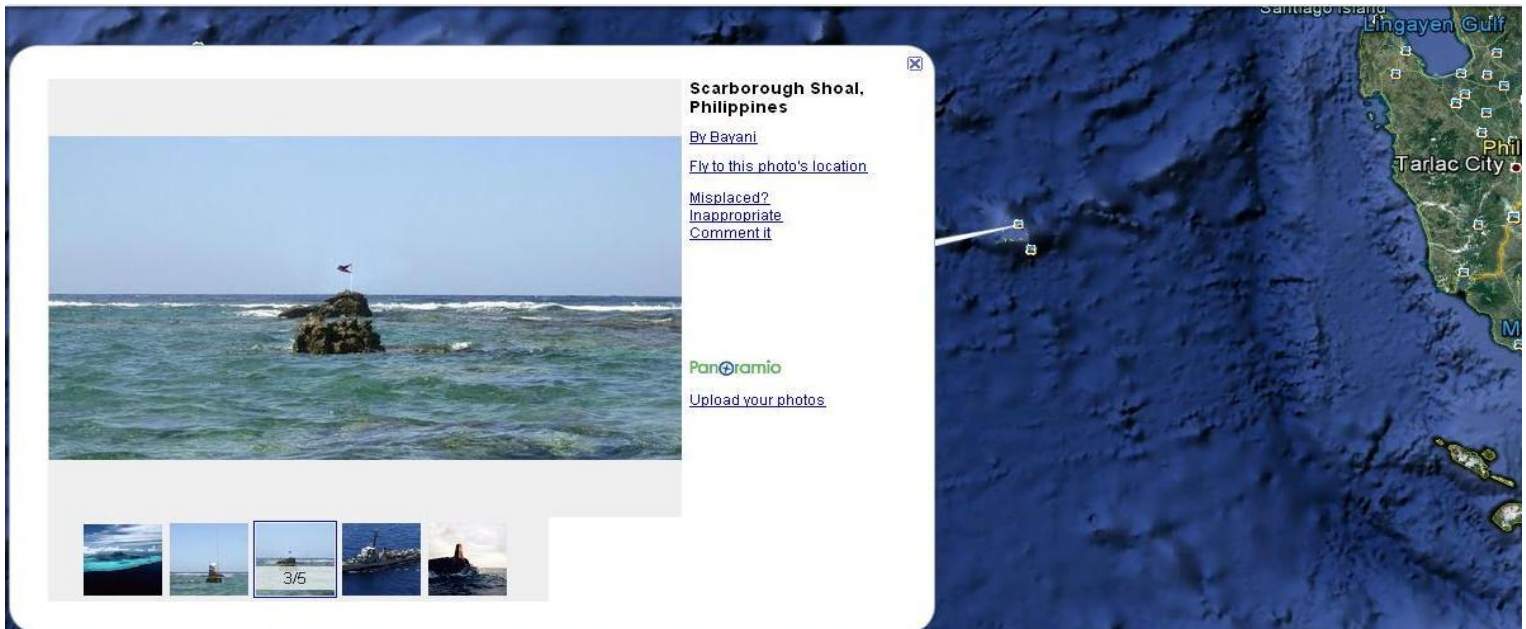


The above two photos have pointers indicating adjacent locations: on an islet halfway between Vietnam and the Philippines and a drilling rig right nearby.

How accurate is this drilling rig picture? It could be a photo of any rig pasted on to that location.



This very obviously is a spurious photo. The aircraft and landing craft could be from some movie.



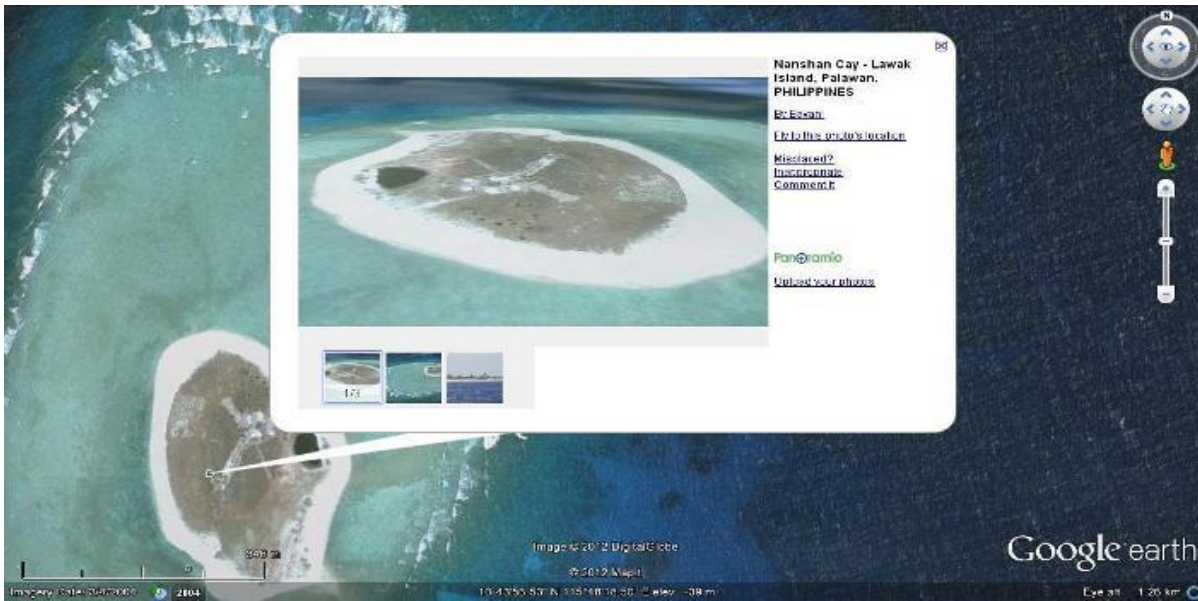
I clicked on almost all the photo icons trying to find some photo posted by a Pinoy. The one above says "Scarborough Shoal - Philippines" and it shows a Philippine flag flying above a rock, as posted by one who ID'd himself as Bayani. There are five other photos in the bunch, and one of them is a Navy warship. I am not sure if this is the same warship that Penoy sent out to confront some Chinese fishermen poachers, but later had to pull back when the Chinese sent reinforcements.

What ever happened to that Pinoy fellow "Coloma" who in the early 50s colonized one of the islands with a large group of Pinoy migrants and fishermen?

Maybe we should go into the offensive in some novel way, such as peppering Google with 100 times more uploads of photos showing scenes of carabaos and tamaraws and the like, scattered all over the Spratlys. Or perhaps various views of our old navy boats (and even Moro pirate's bancas - with their multiple outboard motors strapped on to the outriggers) at high sea in and around those islands doing patrol duty. And to cap it all, place a photo of Malacañang on the largest island.

Trouble is, if you ask me, I wouldn't know how. Some years back, I tried to upload some photos to Google showing a recent adventure to Batanes, but the photos never came out. Censored, perhaps?

PS : I Googled again and found another posting by the same Bayani. The island is located somewhere in the vicinity indicated in the first photo above as "Spratly Islands". It is captioned as "Lawak Island, Palawan".



Bayani's inset above clearly shows that he is at the island shown by Google.



His third shot, taken from a lower level shows how desolate is the island. Not sure if the Phil military has any structure there.



Yet an unknown but imaginative Vietnamese places a photo of some serene resort on the island.