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preliminary list\*  
QUESTION OF PEACE, STABILITY AND  
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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE DECLARATION ON THE  
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY  
PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES  
BETWEEN STATES  
DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF  
GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS BETWEEN  
STATES

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Forty-third year

Letter dated 28 March 1988 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the  
Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the relevant excerpts from the document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China issued in 1980 on the question of the Nansha Islands (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the full text of its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 42, 72, 130 and 137 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) DING Yuanhong  
Acting Permanent Representative of the  
People's Republic of China  
to the United Nations

\* A/43/50.

ANNEX

Excerpts from the document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the People's Republic of China published on 30 January 1980  
regarding the Nansha Islands

(Foreword)

The Xisha and Nansha Islands have been China's territory since ancient times. Before 1974, there were no differences between China and Viet Nam on this question. Since 1975, however, the Vietnamese authorities, reversing their earlier position of recognizing the Xisha and Nansha Islands as Chinese territory, have illegally occupied some islands of China's Nansha island group and laid a territorial claim to China's Xisha and Nansha Islands by revising maps and issuing diplomatic statements. Recently, the Vietnamese authorities have repeated their claims on many occasions. In order to help people better understand the truth, we are republishing hereunder the relevant excerpts of the document of the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued on 30 January 1980.

It must be pointed out that there used to be no dispute between China and Viet Nam over the ownership of the Xisha and Nansha Islands. During a long period of time, the Vietnamese side formally acknowledged these islands as being Chinese territory since ancient times, whether in their government statements and notes, or in their newspapers, periodicals, maps and textbooks.

On 15 June 1956, Vice-Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam received Li Zhimin, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Chinese Embassy in Viet Nam, and stated to him that, "according to Vietnamese data, the Xisha and Nansha Islands are historically part of Chinese territory". Le Loc, Acting Director of the Asian Department of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, who was present, specifically cited Vietnamese data and pointed out that, "judging from history, these islands were already part of China at the time of the Song Dynasty".

In its declaration of 4 September 1958, the Government of the People's Republic of China proclaimed the breadth of the territorial sea of the People's Republic of China to be 12 nautical miles and stated explicitly that "this provision applies to all territories of the People's Republic of China, including ... the Dongsha Islands, the Xisha Islands, the Zhongsha Islands, the Nansha Islands and all other islands belonging to China". On 6 September 1958, Nhan Dan, central organ of the Vietnamese Worker's Party, prominently featured on its front page details of the Chinese Government's declaration. It wrote, "On 4 September 1958 the Government of the People's Republic of China issued a declaration on China's territorial sea. The declaration provides that the breadth of China's territorial sea is 12 nautical miles (over 22 kilometres). This provision applies to all territories of the People's Republic of China including the Chinese mainland and its coastal islands, as well as Taiwan and its surrounding islands, the Penghu Islands, the Dongsha Islands, the Xisha Islands, the Zhongsha Islands, the Nansha Islands and all other islands belonging to China which are separated from the mainland and its coastal islands by the high seas." On 14 September the same year, Premier Pham Van Dong of the Vietnamese Government

solemnly stated in his note to Premier Zhou Enlai of the Chinese State Council that "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam recognizes and supports the declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China on China's territorial sea made on 4 September 1958," and that "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam respects this decision." Pham Van Dong's note clearly shows that the Vietnamese Government acknowledged Xisha and Nansha Islands as China's territory.

In its statement of 9 May 1965 on the United States Government's designation of a "combat zone" for its forces in Viet Nam, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam said that it was "a direct threat to the security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and its neighbouring country" for "U.S. President Lyndon Johnson to designate the whole of Viet Nam and the adjacent waters which extend roughly 100 miles from the coast of Viet Nam and part of the territorial waters of the People's Republic of China in its Xisha Islands as a 'combat zone' of the U.S. armed forces." Here the Vietnamese Government once again clearly recognized the Xisha Islands as part of Chinese territory.

In reporting foreign intrusions into the Xisha Islands, the Vietnamese press also clearly recognized these islands as belonging to China. For example, on 13 May 1969, Nhan Dan reported that "on 10 May a U.S. military aircraft invaded China's air space over Yongxing Island and Dongdao Island of the Xisha Islands of China's Guangdong Province". Many similar reports were carried in Vietnamese papers.

Official maps and textbooks of Viet Nam explicitly acknowledged the Xisha and Nansha Islands as China's territory. For example, the 1960 World Map made by the Mapping Section of the General Staff of the Vietnamese People's Army marks the Xisha and Nansha Islands by their Chinese names and notes in brackets that they belong to China. The May 1972 World Atlas published by the Bureau of Survey and Cartography Under the Office of the Premier of Viet Nam also marks the Xisha and Nansha Islands by their Chinese names. Another example, the lesson entitled "The People's Republic of China" in the geography textbook for school pupils of grade 9 published by Viet Nam's Educational Press in 1974 reads in part as follows: "The chain of islands from the Nansha and Xisha Islands to Hainan Island, Taiwan Island, the Penghu Islands and the Zhoushan Islands ... is shaped like a bow and constitutes a Great Wall defending the China mainland."

The Vietnamese side in apparent seriousness stressed that in order to establish territorial sovereignty it is necessary to present "formal state materials" and "documents of legal force". What we have cited above are precisely Vietnamese "formal state materials" and "documents of legal force". This clearly shows that up to 1974 the Vietnamese Government had recognized the Xisha and Nansha Islands as Chinese territory. Now, the Vietnamese authorities have gone back on their own word and perfidiously departed from their original position of recognizing the Xisha and Nansha Islands as Chinese territory, and this is something absolutely impermissible under international law.