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LETTER DATED 17 FEBRUARY 1979 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF CHINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from the Government of the People's Republic of China and in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the full text of the statement issued by the Xinhua News Agency on 17 February 1979 upon authorization of the Chinese Government and request that this letter and the statement be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) CHEN Chu
Permanent Representative of the
People's Republic of China
to the United Nations

Annex

Statement issued by the Xinhua News Agency on 17 February 1979
upon authorization of the Chinese Government

The Xinhua News Agency is authorized by the Chinese Government to issue the following statement today:

Ignoring China's repeated warnings, the Vietnamese authorities have of late continually sent armed forces to encroach on Chinese territory and attack Chinese frontier guards and inhabitants, causing a rapid deterioration of the situation and seriously threatening the peace and security of China's frontiers. Driven beyond forbearance, Chinese frontier troops have been forced to rise in counterattack.

While recklessly pushing an anti-China and anti-Chinese policy, the Vietnamese authorities have in the past two years carried out incessant armed provocations and hostile activities in China's border areas. Treasuring the friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples and exercising restraint and forbearance, the Chinese side has repeatedly given advice and served warning to the Vietnamese authorities with a view to avoiding a worsening of the situation. But the Vietnamese authorities, emboldened by the support of the Soviet Union and mistaking China's restraint and desire for peace as a sign of weakness, have become more and more unscrupulous and kept escalating their armed incursions into China's border areas. They have concentrated massive armed forces along the Sino-Vietnamese border and repeatedly encroached on China's territory. They have flagrantly laid mines and built defence works on Chinese territory, wilfully opened up with rifles and guns to destroy Chinese villages and kill Chinese soldiers and civilians, plundered Chinese properties and attacked Chinese trains, thus causing grave incidents of bloodshed. In the past six months alone, the Vietnamese have made armed provocations on more than 700 occasions and killed or wounded more than 300 Chinese frontier guards and inhabitants. By such rampant acts of aggression the Vietnamese authorities have meant to provoke military conflicts and heighten tension along China's southern border and disrupt China's socialist modernization programme. Such acts of aggression of Viet Nam, if allowed to go unchecked, will no doubt endanger the peace and stability of South-East Asia and even those of the whole of Asia.

It is the consistent position of the Chinese Government and people that we will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack. The Chinese frontier troops are fully justified to rise in counterattack when they are driven beyond forbearance. We want to build up our country and need a peaceful international environment. We would not like to fight. We do not want a single inch of Vietnamese territory, but neither will we tolerate wanton incursions into Chinese territory. All we want is a peaceful and stable border. After counterattacking the Vietnamese aggressors as they deserve, the Chinese frontier troops will strictly keep to defending the border of their own country. We believe this Chinese position will enjoy the sympathy and support of all the countries and people who love peace and uphold justice.

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The Chinese and Vietnamese peoples, sympathizing with and supporting each other in their long revolutionary struggles, have forged a profound friendship. Today's grave armed conflict between China and Viet Nam is wholly the making of the Vietnamese authorities acting contrary to the will of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples. The Chinese Government and people treasure and uphold the friendship between the two peoples. They have done so and will continue to do so in future.

The Chinese Government solemnly demands that the Vietnamese authorities at once stop armed incursions and all acts of provocation and sabotage in Chinese border areas, withdraw all their armed personnel from the Chinese territory they have illegally occupied and respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese Government has always stood for a fair and reasonable settlement of the disputes between the two countries through peaceful negotiations. Past negotiations have all failed because of lack of good faith on the Vietnamese side. The Chinese Government now proposes again that the two sides speedily hold negotiations at any mutually agreed place between representatives of an appropriate level to discuss the restoration of peace and tranquillity along the border between the two countries and proceed to settle the disputes concerning the boundary and territory. The Chinese Government is prepared to enter into concrete negotiations on any constructive measures that can ensure peace and tranquillity along the border between the two countries.

At this time when Chinese frontier troops are forced to repulse Vietnamese armed incursions, the Chinese Government appeals to the Vietnamese authorities to stop on the precipice, retract from the wrong path and do not go any farther.
