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STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-fourth year

Letter dated 26 April 1979 from the Permanent Representative
of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for your information, the text of the speech made by Mr. Phan Hien, Vice Foreign Minister and Head of the Government delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, at the second plenary session of the negotiations between the Vietnamese and Chinese delegations in Hanoi on 26 April 1979, and request you to have this letter and its enclosure circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 46 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) HA VAN LAU
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Speech by the Head of the Government delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Mr. Phan Hien, at the second plenary session of the negotiations between the Vietnamese and Chinese delegations in Hanoi on 26 April 1979

At the last meeting, we pointed out the objective fact that the strained situation leading to the recent large-scale war of aggression against Viet Nam and jeopardizing the long-standing friendship between the two peoples had been completely created by the Chinese side.

However, the Chinese Government delegation tortuously denied this fact in an attempt to avoid responsibility and, on the other hand, levelled slanderous accusations against Viet Nam and did its best to argue its desire to preserve the friendship between the two peoples.

It should be asked whether such acts as the use of place-men in waging war against Viet Nam at its south-western border, repeated provocations, armed activities along Viet Nam's northern border, instigation of the Hoa to create disorders and disturbances to undermine Viet Nam from within, the cutting of all aid to Viet Nam, are aimed at preserving the friendship between the two peoples and maintaining the good-neighbourly relations between the two countries.

It should be asked whether it was the Chinese leaders' intention to preserve the friendship with the Vietnamese people when they mobilized over half a million troops along with thousands of tanks and artillery pieces to launch a brazen aggression against Viet Nam, to massacre Vietnamese civilians, mostly old people women and children, to raze to the ground provincial capitals, townships, villages and hamlets, to destroy every economic establishment, cultural institution and public utility work in Viet Nam's border regions.

It should be asked whether the seeking of alliance with imperialism, particularly with United States imperialism and other reactionary forces, to launch an aggression against Viet Nam, the open persuasion of Western countries to stop their aid to and economic relations with Viet Nam when Viet Nam is engaged in national reconstruction, and the attempts to cause ASEAN and other South-East Asian countries to adopt a policy of hostility to Viet Nam, are proofs of the Chinese leaders' desire to preserve the Sino-Vietnamese friendship.

The Chinese leaders cannot evade their responsibility for their criminal war against the Vietnamese people. Although the Chinese side seeks every means to justify itself, public opinion is very clear-sighted and severe. With the exception of a handful of imperialists and reactionaries who are more or less overt accomplices of the Chinese leaders, the whole world indignantly and strongly condemned their unjust war against the Vietnamese people.

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Hardly had this aggression started when the World Peace Council issued a statement pointing out: "by launching an aggression and starting war against Viet Nam, the Chinese leaders have revealed to the international community the criminal character of their policy and have shown that they are following the path of former Chinese emperors, the path of hegemonism and of enslaving other peoples".

The interparliamentary meeting of 16 countries with different social systems from the five continents, held in Canada on 5 March 1979, declared: "We condemn China's aggression against Viet Nam because we clearly realize that it is jeopardizing peace in South-East Asia and in the world."

The United States National Lawyers' Guild affirmed on 2 March 1979: "China's attack on Vietnamese territory is an act that progressive mankind as a whole should condemn. The military attack by one country against another which is independent and sovereign, allegedly to teach the latter a lesson, is indeed a crude violation of international law."

These undeniable facts have belied the Chinese leaders' claims that they are opposed to the use of force in international relations, to hegemony and to expansionism, speaking of non-use of force but, in fact, militarily attacking an independent and sovereign country allegedly to punish and to teach that country a lesson, they have indeed used force in the most arrogant manner in international relations. In spite of their claims that they do not seek hegemony or expansion, all their anti-Viet Nam acts which culminated in the recent military adventure have demonstrated that they are pursuing most frenziedly an expansionist and hegemonist policy. They profess a desire to live for ever in harmony with neighbouring countries, including Viet Nam, but it is they who started an invasion of Viet Nam, a neighbouring country linked to China by an old friendship.

The Chinese side has always professed willingness to settle problems through negotiations. However, it is common knowledge that before launching their war of aggression against Viet Nam, the Chinese leaders rejected all Vietnamese proposals for negotiations. When they sat down at the conference table, they tried to obstruct the talks, as evidenced by their action of unilaterally suspending the negotiations on the question of the Hoa in Viet Nam. Recently, while launching its military attack, China called for talks. This is nothing but a repetition of the peaceful negotiation trick used by the Johnson Administration during the past United States war of aggression in Viet Nam. Now, at these negotiations, the Chinese Government delegation speaks a great deal about their goodwill and slanderously accuses Viet Nam of obstructing the talks and poisoning the atmosphere. Once again, we must look straight at the facts.

According to a broadcast of the Voice of America on 21 April 1979, a correspondent of a Far Eastern economic review reported that before the start of these negotiations, a responsible Chinese personality had said that it would take a long time to settle the Sino-Vietnamese dispute and that China might launch a second punitive attack against Viet Nam in the near or distant future. A number of Chinese leaders continue threatening to resume the war at any moment they wish.

One day after the arrival of the Chinese Government delegation in Hanoi, an aircraft with markings of the Chinese Army was sent by the Chinese side to violate Viet Nam's air space. The plane which carried out illegal activities crashed over Truc Phu village, Hai Hau District, Ha Nam Ninh Province. The Vietnamese side lodged a protest against this provocation; at the same time, out of humanity, it returned the pilot's body to the Chinese side. Despite such ample evidence, the Chinese side has adamantly denied its responsibility. Furthermore, it has gone so far as to affirm that Viet Nam had slandered China and to reject the Vietnamese protests.

At present, while the negotiations between the two Governments are under way, Chinese troops are still occupying over 10 points on Vietnamese territory. The Chinese side is still concentrating over half a million troops, deploying over 10 divisions, thousands of artillery pieces and a great quantity of war material close to the Vietnamese border. It continues building strategic roads, digging trenches, building fortifications, opening fire on Vietnamese territory with all kinds of weapons from infantry weapons to big guns, launching commando raids and encroachments on Vietnamese territory and indulging in provocative activities along the entire borderline from Quang Ninh to Lai Chau. At the same time, the Chinese side has intensified naval intrusions into the territorial waters of Viet Nam. So Chinese forces have violated Viet Nam's territory, territorial waters and air space.

The above-mentioned actions of the Chinese side cannot but cause broad sections of public opinion to doubt its goodwill. Everybody is waiting to see whether Chinese deeds are matched with Chinese words.

For our part, proceeding from our policy of independence, sovereignty, peace, friendship and broad international co-operation, we have on many occasions made it clear that the Vietnamese people and Government deeply treasure the traditional friendship between the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples and wish to maintain and develop the neighbourly relations with the People's Republic of China. Although over the past several years there have been differences between Viet Nam and China, the Vietnamese people and Government have done their utmost not to let the normal relations between the two States be affected by these differences. We have always stood for a negotiated settlement of all disputes between the two sides and have put forward many initiatives leading to past negotiations between the two Governments. We twice came to Peking and spent a lot of time negotiating with the Chinese side on the border question. During the recent days, while exercising our legitimate right of self-defence to fight back the aggressors, the Vietnamese people and Government have persistently advocated peaceful settlement of the problems concerning the relations between the two countries and have put forward concrete and constructive proposals leading to the current talks between the two sides.

All the above-mentioned facts have proved that the Vietnamese people and Government have unswervingly done their utmost to preserve and develop the long-standing friendship between the peoples of Viet Nam and China. In contrast, the Chinese leaders have more and more frenziedly pursued a hostile policy vis-à-vis

Viet Nam and have even directly resorted to a war of aggression in order to subdue the Vietnamese people, thus seriously jeopardizing the traditional friendship between the two peoples and the neighbourly relations between the two countries.

During the current negotiations, at the very first meeting, we made it clear that the Vietnamese people were determined to defend the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country, but, at the same time, they deeply cherished peace, they did not want a resumption of hostilities, they consistently desired solidarity and friendship with the Chinese people and they did not want a hostile relationship between the two countries. In this spirit, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam put forward an important three-point proposal on the "basic principles and contents of a settlement of the problems concerning the relations between the two countries". The three-point stand of Viet Nam is a comprehensive over-all proposal aimed at settling urgent questions arising from the recent war, and creating a basis for the settlement of fundamental issues concerning the relations between the two sides. It meets the ardent desire of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples for an early restoration of peace and of their long-standing friendship. It responds to the desire for peace and stability of the peoples of South-East Asia and the world. It is a logical and reasonable proposal based on mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and mutual benefit and on the principle of settling disputes through peaceful negotiations. It entirely conforms to the principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and the spirit of the Bandung Conference. It is a fair proposal which is satisfactory to both sides.

Broad sections of world public opinion have welcomed and highly appreciated Viet Nam's three-point stand, considering it a constructive proposal, a significant peace initiative, an expression of the serious stand and attitude of goodwill of the Vietnamese side, and proof that Viet Nam has unswervingly carried out a policy of peace and friendship with other nations, primarily with neighbouring countries. Everyone can see that China's aggression has been driven back, but its hostile policy towards Viet Nam has not yet ended. While negotiations are under way here, in the border region of the two countries, gunfire is going on, the situation is still fraught with dangerous elements that may at any time lead to an armed conflict with unforeseeable consequences for the two peoples, and for peace and stability in South-East Asia and the world. The question is now to eliminate this tense situation without delay.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has clearly put forward urgent measures aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the border areas of the two countries and allowing people captured during the war promptly to rejoin their families. These measures are:

(a) To refrain from concentrating troops close to the borderline. To separate the armed forces of the two sides: the armed forces of all kinds of each side along the entire borderline to pull back into their territory to a distance of three to five kilometres from the line of actual control prior to 17 February 1979.

(b) To stop all acts of war provocation and all forms of hostile activities violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other side and threatening its security.

(c) The zone lying on either side of the line of actual control mentioned above, and wherein the armed forces of the two sides will no longer be present, shall become a demilitarized zone. The status of this demilitarized zone shall be agreed upon between the two sides.

(d) The two sides shall exchange at once lists of people captured during the war so that they may be returned as soon as possible.

(e) To set up a joint commission of the two sides to supervise and control the implementation of the above-mentioned measures.

While the situation is very tense in the border areas and pending settlement of the disputes between the two sides, the non-concentration of troops close to the borderline and the separation of the armed forces of the two sides as we have proposed are necessary measures to avoid clashes and remove the danger of armed conflict breaking out along the border. The cessation of all acts of war provocation and all forms of hostile activities violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other side and threatening its security will help ease the tension in the border areas and bring about conditions for the people of these areas to return to their occupations in all tranquillity. The setting up of a demilitarized zone is to provide a buffer zone to ensure an effective separation of the armed forces of the two sides and to prevent armed provocations and other forms of hostile activities. For humanitarian reasons, the two sides shall exchange at once lists of people captured during the war, including the wounded, so that they may soon return to their families who are anxious to see them back. The setting up of a joint commission of the two sides to supervise and control the implementation of the above-mentioned measures is necessary to ensure a serious implementation of the provisions agreed upon.

In short, any objective observer may realize that Viet Nam's three-point proposal is practical, fair, logical and reasonable. It suffices to be prompted by goodwill and a real desire for settlement to be fully in a position to reach a prompt agreement.

The honest sections of world public opinion are expecting that the Chinese side will give a positive response to the three-point proposal of the Vietnamese side, first of all, that it will quickly agree on the urgent measures aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the border areas, allowing an early reunion of the people captured during the war with their families, easing tension between the two countries and facilitating the restoration of normal relations and the settlement of the border and territory issues between the two countries.

The question is whether the Chinese side really wants to settle disputes with Viet Nam through negotiations as it has claimed, or will carry on its hostile policy towards Viet Nam. Does it really want to make the negotiations fruitful or does it

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merely want to use the same for propaganda about its goodwill, for soothing public opinion and camouflaging new ventures against the Vietnamese people?

We sincerely hope that the Chinese side will positively respond to our three-point proposal. We are prepared to discuss with the Chinese Government delegation in a constructive spirit so that we may soon reach an agreement on the urgent measures. Time requires us to do this work urgently.