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OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-seventh year

Letter dated 4 February 1982 from the Permanent Representative of
Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the White Paper entitled "The Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagoes, Vietnamese Territories", recently published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and kindly request Your Excellency to have this note and its enclosure circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) HA VAN LAU
Permanent Representative of the
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
to the United Nations

ANNEX

THE HOANG SA AND TRUONG SA ARCHIPELAGOES,
VIETNAMESE TERRITORIES

FOREWARD.

For decades now, the Chinese authorities have nurtured ambitions over the two Vietnamese archipelagoes of Hoang Sa (i.e. Paracels) and Truong Sa (i.e. Spratley or Spratly), which are called "Xisha" and "Nansha" by the Chinese.

The Chinese authorities have been searching for testimonies in ancient books to prove that their ancestors had discovered and exploited these two archipelagoes long ago. But most embarrassingly they have failed to bring out when the Chinese state began to take possession of "Xisha" and "Nansha" and how this state exercised its sovereignty over them.

In the booklet, Viet Nam's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes published in september 1979, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has made public a number of historical documents and juridical evidence which unmistakably prove that :

- Viet Nam has been in possession of the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa since the time when no other countries claimed sovereignty over them :

- Viet Nam has been continuously exercising its sovereignty over these two archipelagoes ever since.

In the present booklet, the views of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam will be briefly presented to prove once again that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes have for a long and uninterrupted period of time been part and parcel of Vietnamese territory, that the Chinese claim over these two archipelagoes is without juridical grounds and that the Chinese occupation of the Hoang Sa archipelago by force is an act of aggression.

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PART 1

THE VIETNAMESE STATE'S LONGSTANDING AND UNINTERRUPTED
SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOANG SA AND TRUONG SA ARCHIPELAGOES.

It is necessary, first of all, to make clear that Hoang Sa and Truong Sa are two archipelagoes lying off the Vietnamese coast in the East Sea (the Vietnamese have long since adopted this name to designate what the western cartographers call the China sea or the South China sea) - the nearest point of Hoang Sa is about 120 nautical miles from a coastal island called Re, and about 170 nautical miles East of Da Nang harbour - while Truong Sa's nearest point is about 250 nautical miles East of Cam Ranh bay.

In ancient times, the knowledge primarily acquired by navigators about Hoang Sa and Truong Sa was still vague - they only knew that in this vast sea area navigation was dangerous because there were submerged rocks. In those days, the Vietnamese called the area Bai Cat Vang (golden sandbank) or Hoang Sa, or Van Ly Hoang Sa, or Dai Truong Sa or Van Ly Truong sa as shown in ancient Vietnamese books and maps. Almost all Western navigators' maps between the 16th and 18th centuries marked these two groups of islands under an English name : Pracel or Parcel or Paracels (maps drawn by Portuguese, Dutch and French navigators as Lazaro Luis, Ferdanao Vaz Dourdo, Joao Tecyeira, Janysonius, Willem Janyz Bleau, Jacob Aertsz Colom, Thzunis Jacobsz, Hendrick Donckec, Frederich Denwit, P. Duval, Van Langren, etc). The above-mentioned maps generally defined the Pracel area as situated in the middle of the East Sea, East of Viet Nam, off the Vietnamese coastal islands.

Following the progress made in science and navigation, later on it became possible to distinguish the two archipelagoes : the Hoang Sa and the Truong Sa.

The archipelagoes specified as Paracels and Spratley or Spratly in present day international maritime maps are precisely the two Vietnamese archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa. The appellations of "Xisha" and "Nansha" were put forth by the Chinese expansionists some decades ago to promote their scheme of land-grabbing.

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1. Viet Nam's historical sovereignty over the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa :

Long ago, the Vietnamese people discovered the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, the Vietnamese state has occupied them and exercised its sovereignty over them ever since.

Ancient Vietnamese geographical books and maps record clearly that Bai Cat Vang (golden sandbank), otherwise called Hoang Sa or Van Ly Hoang Sa, or Dai Truong Sa, or Van Ly Truong Sa, had long since been a Vietnamese territory.

Toan Tap Thien Nam Tu Chi Lo Do Thu (route map from the capital to the four directions), a Vietnamese atlas compiled and drawn by Do Ba, alias Cong Dao, in the 17th century, in its notes attached to the map of Quang Ngai district, Quang Nam province, described "an eponged sandbank lying in mid-sea known as the golden sandbank". "Every year, in the last month of winter, the Nguyen would send eighteen boats to Bai Cat Vang to retrieve ship-wrecked cargoes, which included jewels, coins, arms and ammunition".

In Giap Ngo Binh Nam Do, a map of Southern Viet Nam, drawn in 1774 by the duke of Doan, Bui The Dat, Bai Cat Vang was also specified as part of Vietnamese territory (in the Hong Duc atlas).

In Phu Bien Tap Luc, a book written by the scholar Le Qui Don (1726 - 1784) on the history, geography, and administration of Dang Trong (present-day Southern Viet Nam) under the Nguyen lords (1558 - 1775), Hoang Sa and Truong Sa islands were defined as belonging to Quang Ngai district :

"In Quang Ngai district, off the coast of An Vinh village (South of the Sa Ky harbour, the An Vinh settlement on the Re island also belongs to this village), Binh Son sub-district, there is an island called Cu Jao Re stretching over 30 dams (dam is an ancient unit of measurement equal to half a kilometre). The Tu Chinh settlement, as it is called, has been established here and the people there grow beans. It takes half a day by boat to get there. Further off, there are Dai Truong Sa islands where sea products and ship-wrecked

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cargoes are available to be collected by the Hoang Sa detachment. It takes three days and nights to reach there by boat. They are near an area called Bac Hai".

Lai Nam Nhat Thong Toan Do, the atlas of Viet Nam, completed in 1838 clearly set Hoang Sa - Van Ly Truong Sa - as part of Vietnamese territory.

In Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi, a geographical book on Viet Nam whose compilation was completed in 1882 (the chapters on Central Viet Nam provinces were amended and printed in 1909) by the National Institute of History under the Nguyen dynasty (1802-1945), Hoang Sa was defined as part of the Vietnamese territory belonging to Quang Ngai province. In its topographical description of Quang Ngai, the book describes :

"To the East (of Quang Ngai), there exist islands - the Hoang Sa ... to the West, a mountainous region stands like a bulwark. The province borders on Binh Dinh in the South at Ben Da pass, and on Quang Nam in the North where Sa Tho gerge marks the provincial boundary".

Many Western navigators and missionaries in past centuries confirmed Hoang Sa as part of Vietnamese territory.

A Western priest during his trip from France to China on board the Amphitrite wrote in one of his letters : "The ^{The} Paracels^{are} an archipelago belonging to the Kingdom of Annam" (J.Y.C.'s quotation in his article "Mystere des Atolls-journal de voyage aux Paracels" printed in the weekly "Indochine" issues of July 3, 10 and 17, 1941. The Kingdom of Annam was the name of Viet Nam in those days).

In a supplementary note to his *Memoire sur la Cochinchine* (Cochinchine (French) or Cochinchina (English) used in some Western documents, depending on the context indicated : A) Viet Nam as a nation at the time - or B) the Southern Viet Nam provinces), J.B. Chaigneau, Emperor Gia Long's adviser, in about 1820 wrote :

"Cochinchina whose king has proclaimed himself emperor"

consists of Cochinchina proper and Tonkin (i.e. Northern Viet Nam) and a number of inhabited off-shore islands and the archipelago of Paracels formed by several uninhabited islets, reefs and rocks... (A. Salles's quotation in his article "Le Memoire sur la Cochinchine de J.B. Chaigneau" printed in "Bulletin des amis du vieux Hue").

Bishop J.L. Taberd, in his note on geography of Cochinchina published in 1837, described Pracel or Paracels as part of Cochinchine's territory and related that the Cochinchinese called Pracel or Paracels by the name of "Cat Vang" (Bishop Jean-Louis Taberd's article "Note on geography of Cochinchina" printed in "The journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal", 1837). In An Nam Dai Quoc Hoa Do (Map of Annam) published in 1838, he delineated part of Paracels with a note that "Paracels or Cat Vang" lie in the middle of the sea beyond the coastal islands of Central Viet Nam, in the area presently known as the Hoang Sa archipelago (printed in "Dictionarium latino-anamiticum", (1838).

In an article entitled "Geography of the Cochinchinese empire" ("Geography of the Cochinchinese empire" printed in "The journal of the Royal geographical society of London" (1849). Published in 1849, Gutzlaff defined Paracels as belonging to Viet Nam and also used the Vietnamese designation "Cat Vang" in accompanying notes.

As the sovereign, the Vietnamese feudal state in past centuries had conducted many geographical and resources surveys of the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa. The results of those surveys have been recorded in Vietnamese literature on geography and history published since the 17th century.

This can be read in Toan Tap Thien Nam Tu Chi Lo Do Thu (17th century) : "In the middle of the sea emerges an elongated sandbank called Bai Cat Vang, about 400 fathoms in length and 20 fathoms in width, facing the coastline between the harbour of Dai Chiem (Dai Chiem is presently known as the harbour of Dai, Quang Nam - Da Nang province). And that of Sa Vinh (Sa Vinh is presently known as the harbour of Sa Huynh, Nghia Binh province). During the South-West monsoon, foreign commercial ships sailing along the coast side of the sandbank would often be blown off course and run aground there. The same thing would

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happen to those sailing on the other side of the sandbank during the North-East monsoon. Men on board the wrecked ships often starved and wrecked cargoes amassed there" (Bai Cat Vang, the golden sandbank, is an area where there are dangerous submerged rocks).

In Phu Bien Tap Luc (1776), Le Qui Don wrote : "The village of An Vinh, Binh Son sub-district, Quang Ngai district, lies close by the sea. To the Northeast of this village there is a cluster of islands composed of over 130 islets and rocks. It may take a day or just a few watches to sail from one islet to another. On some islands there is fresh water. A flat and large strip of yellow sand stretching over 30 dams distinguishes itself among these islands here, the water is crystal clear. The islands abound with swallows' nests and swarm with thousands upon thousands of birds of various species which remain indifferent to the sight of men. Strange things lie on the beach. Of the mollusks there are conches whose size is of a bed-mattress, whose pearls are opaque and whose shells can be cut into small plaques or baked into lime for house building. These are also whelks whose shells can be used as mother-of-pearl for inlaid work. Conches and whelks and other mollusks can also be salted or cooked for food... Foreign vessels hit by storms are often wrecked on these islets."

Dai Nam Thuc Luc Tien Bien, a book on the history of the Nguyen Lords completed by the National Institute of History under the Nguyen dynasty in 1884, similarly wrote :

"Far out in the middle of the sea beyond the coast of An Vinh village, Binh Son sub-district, Quang Ngai district, there are over 130 sandbanks separated by sea distances of a full day's voyage or just a few watches' and scattered on a length of several thousand dams, hence the popular designation of Van Ly Hoang Sa. Fresh water springs are found on many sandbanks. Sea products there include sea-cucumbers, conches, tortoises, turtles, etc..."

For its part, Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi (1882) also wrote :

"The Hoang Sa islands stretch East of Re island, Binh Son sub-district. It takes three to four days to reach there from Sa Ky beach if the wind is

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favourable. The islands consist of over 130 islets. From one islet to another is a day's or a few watches' sailing. Among these islands, which are scattered over a length of several thousand fathoms and popularly called Van ly Truong Sa, there are strips of yellow sand where fresh water can be found and sea birds flock in very great numbers. Marine products include sea cucumbers, conches, tortoises, turtles, etc. cargoes of wrecked vessels amass there".

According to Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien, a book on the history of the Nguyen dynasty compiled in 1848, garrison commander Truong Phuc So, upon completion of his map-drawing assignment to Hoang Sa, reported to Emperor Minh Menh that "Hoang Sa is a boundless area of sandbanks in the middle of the sea".

Other books published in the Nguyen dynasty like Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi (1821), Hoang Viet Dia Du Chi (1833), Viet Su Cuong Giam Khao Luoc (1876) provided similar descriptions of Hoang Sa.

Aware of the availability of valuable sea-products and cargoes of wrecked ships in Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, the Vietnamese feudal state set out long ago to exercise sovereignty over and organize the exploitation of these two archipelagoes. In many Vietnamese old books on history and geography, the organisations and operations of various Hoang Sa detachments entrusted with this task were well recorded.

In Toan Tap Thien Nam Tu Chi Lo Do Thu (17th century), it was said :

"The Nguyens every year in the last month of winter would dispatch 18 boats to Bai Cat Vang to retrieve ship-wrecked cargoes which include jewels, coins, arms and ammunition".

In Phu Bien Tap Luc (1776) it was related :

"The Nguyens used to form a 70-strong Hoang Sa detachment made up of An Vinh villagers. It was sent on duty in the third month of every year, taking along enough food for six months. It sailed in five fishing boats and reached the islands after a three-days-and-nights voyage. There, the men were left free in their gleanings. They were able to catch birds and fish for additional food.

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At times they were able to gather from wrecked ships such things as swords, silver or gold ornaments and coins, rings, brassware, tin and lead ingots, guns, ivory, beeswax, chinaware, woolens, etc. They also gathered turtle shells, oysters, sea-cucumbers and conch shells in large quantities. This Hoang Sa detachment would not return home until the eighth month of the year. It used to come ashore by way of Eo harbour from where it went to Phu Xuan citadel to hand over the things it had gathered, have them weighed and classified and get a certificate with which its men could go home. They were then free to

sell their share of conches, turtles and sea-cucumbers... The Nguyens also formed Bac Hai teams recruited from among Tu Chinh villagers in Binh Thuan province or the villagers of Canh Duong. The team-mates were volunteers and were exempted from personal tax and travelling expenses.

They were sent in boats to Bac Hai, Con Lon island and the islets of Ha Tien to gather shipwrecked valuables as well as turtles, oysters, abalones, sea-cucumbers. These teams were placed under the control of the Hoang Sa detachment commander".

Dai Nam Thuc Luc Tien Bien (1844) wrote :

"During the early days of the dynasty, the Hoang Sa detachment was created and it was made up of 70 men recruited from among An Vinh villagers. It set out every year in the third month and used to reach the islands after a three-days-and-nights voyage. There the men collected articles from wrecked ships. Its home trips would normally begin in the eighth month of the year.

In addition, there was a Bac Hai team whose mates were recruited from Tu Chinh commune, in Binh Thuan province or from Canh Duong village. The team was sent to Bac Hai areas and the island of Con Lon to gather articles from wrecked ships. The Bac Hai team was placed under the Hoang Sa detachment commander".

The Tay Son who succeeded the Nguyen Lords also paid close attention to the sustenance and use of the Hoang Sa detachments in spite of the fact

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that they had to cope with continuous aggressions waged by the Qing dynasty of China and by Siam. From among the documents available now. The following order issued in 1786 by Mandarin Thuong Tuong Cong is noteworthy :

" It is ordered that commander Hoi Duc Hau of Hoang Sa detachment lead four boats to Hoang Sa and other islands to gather gold, silver and copper articles, artillery pieces, big and small, turtles, oysters and special fish, and that all these catches be submitted to the court as required by existing rules".

Thus, the Vietnamese state under the Tay Son continued the exploitation of Hoang Sa, being well aware that it was exercising sovereignty over the archipelago.

The Nguyen Emperors did their best to consolidate Viet Nam's sovereignty over the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa from their coming to power in 1802 until the signing of the 1884 Treaty with France.

Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien (1848) describes some of the measures taken by the Nguyen Emperors to consolidate Viet Nam's sovereignty over the two archipelagoes :

- In 1815, Emperor Gia Long ordered Pham Quang Anh to lead the Hoang Sa detachment to Hoang Sa to survey the sea routes.

- In 1816, Emperor Gia Long ordered a naval unit and the Hoang Sa detachment to sail to Hoang Sa to make a survey of sea routes.

- In 1833, Emperor Minh Menh instructed the Ministry of Public works to prepare for a boat trip in the following year to Hoang Sa to build a temple, install stone markers and plant trees.

- In 1834, Emperor Minh Menh ordered Garrison Commander Truong Phuc Si with more than 20 sailors to Hoang Sa to draw maps.

- In 1835, Emperor Minh Menh ordered Navy Commander Pham Van Nguyen to recruit soldiers, workmen and boatmen from the provinces of Quang Ngai and

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Binh Dinh and to transport materials to Hoang Sa to build a temple. A stele was to be installed on its left and a brick screen in front.

- In 1836, approving a report from the ministry of public works, Emperor Minh Menh ordered a Navy Commander named Pham Huu Nhat to head a contingent to Hoang Sa to conduct a survey for map-drawing. The requirements of the survey were recorded in detail in Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien :

"At whatever place they reach, be it an islet or a sandbank, they will have to examine its length, width, height and perimetre and the depths of the surrounding waters, and to ascertain whether under-water rocks and reefs exist and whether the terrain is difficult or not. All these data must be included in their maps. Moreover, they will have to record the date and the point of their departure, the direction taken and the distance covered. On each arrival, they will also have to locate exactly the names and directions of the coastal provinces facing them and those which are on their right and left, and to note down the estimated distance to the mainland in terms of day. Upon completion of their tasks, they will have to submit a detailed report".

According to Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh bien, each of the wooden boards brought along by Pham Huu Nhat to be planted as sovereignty markers, carries the following inscription :

"In the year Binh Than, the 17th year of the reign of Minh Menh, Navy Commander Pham Huu Nhat, on orders from His Majesty the King, has arrived in Hoang Sa to conduct a survey for map-drawing and has planted this marker to perpetuate the memory of the event".

The Nguyen Emperors were not only concerned about the consolidation of national sovereignty and interests vis-a-vis the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes, but also with the safety of foreign vessels navigating in their vicinity. In 1833, Emperor Minh Menh, in a letter to the Ministry of Public works, wrote : "In our territorial waters off Quang Ngai province, there lie the Hoang Sa islands. From afar they become merged into the sky and sea. It is difficult to estimate the depths of the surrounding waters. Recently, foreign

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merchant ships have often been caught in danger there. Preparations should be made for a team to go there next years to plant trees. The trees will grow up into a luxuriant vegetation that would allow navigators to recognize the areas and avoid shipwrecks. This will be for the benefit of many generations to come". Clearly this represents a profound sense of responsibility displayed by a sovereign state with regard to international navigation in its domain.

Thus it has been shown in ancient Vietnamese works of history and geography and through testimonies of Western navigators and missionaries that the Vietnamese state, from one dynasty to another, over hundreds of years had continuously exercised its sovereignty over the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa. The regular presence of the state-directed Hoang Sa detachments from five to six months annually to perform state-entrusted tasks in these two archipelagoes in itself constitutes irrefutable evidence of the jurisdiction exercised by the Vietnamese state over these two archipelagoes. The occupation and exploitation of these two archipelagoes by the Vietnamese state had never encountered protests from any nations including China - this further proves that Hoang Sa and Truong Sa have for long been parts of Vietnamese territory.

2. France carried on the exercise of sovereignty over the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa on behalf of the Vietnamese state.

After the June 6th, 1884 Treaty signed with the Nguyen dynasty, France represented Viet Nam's interests in foreign affairs and was bound to protect Viet Nam's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the framework of such overall commitment, France carried on the exercise of Vietnamese sovereignty over the two archipelagoes.

Hereunder are some examples :

French gunships often went on patrol trips in the East Sea and in particular amid the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa islands.

In 1899, the French Governor general in Indochina, Paul Doumer, proposed Paris that a lighthouse be erected on Hoang Sa proper (Pattle) to direct the

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navigation of foreign ships but the project was called off due to insufficient budget allocation.

After 1920, Indochinese customs ships stepped up their patrols in the vicinity of Hoang Sa to prevent trafficking.

In 1925, the Oceanographic Institute of Nha Trang sent S/S De Lanessan to the Hoang Sa archipelago to undertake Oceanographic research. Along with A. Krempf, Director of the Institute, there were also Delacour, Jabouille and other well known scientists specializing in geological and biological studies.

In the same year, on March 3rd, the Minister for Military Affairs at the Court of Hue, Than Trong Hue, reasserted that Hoang Sa was part of Vietnamese territory.

In 1927, S/S De Lanessan carried out a scientific survey in the archipelago of Truong Sa.

In 1929, the Perrier - De Rouville delegation proposed the building of four lighthouses at four corners of the Hoang Sa archipelago (on the islands of Tri Ton, Da Bac, Linh Con and the beach of Bombay).

In 1930, La Malicieuse, a signal ship, arrived in Hoang Sa.

In March 1931, S/S Inconstant dropped anchor in Hoang Sa.

In June 1931, S/S De Lanessan arrived in Hoang Sa.

In May 1932, Alerte, a gunship, arrived in Hoang Sa.

Between April 13, 1930 and April 12, 1933 on orders from the French Government, various naval units were successively stationed on the Major islands of the Truong Sa archipelago : Truong Sa proper (Spratly), An Bang (Amboyna Cay), Itu Aba, the Song Tu cluster (the Islands of Song Tu Dong and Song Tu Tay), Loai Ta and Thi Tu.

On December 21, 1933, Cochinchina's Governor, M.J. Krautheimer, signed a decree by virtue of which the islands of Truong Sa, An Bang, Itu Aba, the

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Song Tu cluster, Loai Ta and Thi Tu were annexed to Ba Ria province (presently part of Dong Nai province).

In 1937, the French authorities assigned Gauthier , a civil engineer, to Hoang Sa to find places where a lighthouse and a port for amphibian planes could be built.

In February 1937, the cruiser Lamotte Piquet commanded by Vice-Admiral Astava, called at Hoang Sa.

On March 30, 1938, Emperor Bao Dai signed a decree by virtue of which the archipelago of Hoang Sa was severed from Nam Ngai province to be annexed to Thua Thien province (presently part of Binh Tri Thien province).

On June 15, 1938, Indochinese Governor General, Jules Brevie signed an ordinance creating an administrative unit on the Hoang Sa archipelago, Thua Thien province.

In 1938, the French installed sovereignty markers on Hoang Sa islands (Pattle) in the Hoang Sa archipelago and completed the building of a lighthouse, a meteorological station and a radio-transmitting station there. They also built a meteorological station and a radio-transmitting station on Itu Aba island in the Truong Sa archipelago.

On May 5, 1939, Indochinese Governor General, Jules Brevie, signed an ordinance amending the one signed on June 15, 1938 and creating in Hoang Sa island two administrative agencies named "Croissant and Dependencies" and "Amphitrite and Dependencies".

Through the years of representing Viet Nam externally, the French continued to assert Viet Nam's sovereignty over Hoang Sa and Truong Sa and protest against every encroachment upon Viet Nam's sovereignty with regard to these archipelagoes. Following are some examples :

On December 4, 1931, and April 24, 1932, France lodged a protest with the Chinese government over a plan of the authorities of Quang Dong province

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to invite tenders for the exploitation of guano in the Hoang Sa archipelago.

On July 24, 1933, France informed Japan of the stationing of her troops on the Major islands in the Truong Sa archipelago. Hence a Japanese protest but the French authorities rejected it.

On April 4, 1939, France protested to Japan over the latter's decision to place a number of islands in the Truong Sa archipelago under Japanese jurisdiction.

3. The defence and exercise of Viet Nam's sovereignty over the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa since the end of the Second World War.

After the Second World War, the French following their return to Viet Nam, sent warships to the Hoang Sa archipelago, which fell within their occupation zone, to rebuild the meteorological station on Hoang Sa island and to resist Chinese land-grabbing attempts.

On July 7, 1951, Tran Van Huu, head of the Bao Dai government's delegation to the San Francisco Conference on the Peace Treaty with Japan declared that the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa had long been part of Vietnamese territory : "... as we must frankly profit from all the opportunities offered to us to stifle the germs of discord, we affirm our rights to the Spratly and Paracel islands, which have always belonged to Viet Nam".

The Declaration met with no challenge or reservation from any representative of the 51 nations at the conference.

In 1953, S/S Chief engineer Girod was commissioned by the French to conduct oceanographic, geological, geographical and ecological surveys in the Hoang Sa archipelago.

The Saigon administration, and later on the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam also continued the exercise of Viet Nam's sovereignty over the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa. Hereunder is some evidence of this :

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In 1956, Naval Units of the Saigon administration took over the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa from French troops who were moving out.

In 1956, the South Viet Nam service of mining, industrial and cottage-industries conducted a survey of four islands : Hoang Sa (Pattle), Quang Anh (Money), Huu Nhat (Robert) and Duy Mong (Drummond) with the help of Naval Units of the Saigon administration.

On October 22, 1956, the Saigon administration annexed the Truong Sa archipelago to Phuoc Tuy province.

On July 13, 1961, the Saigon administration severed the Hoang Sa archipelago from Thua Thien province and annexed it to Quang Nam province and created an administrative village comprising all the archipelago, called it Dinh Hai, joined it to Hoa Vang district and placed it under the control of an administrative delegate.

Between 1961 and 1963, the Saigon administration installed sovereignty markers on the major islands of the Truong Sa archipelago viz Truong Sa, An Bang, Song Tu Tay, Song Tu Dong, Thi Tu and Loai Ta.

On October 21, 1969, the Saigon Administration annexed Dinh Hai village to Hoa Long village of Hoa Vang district, Quang Nam province.

In July 1973, the Institute of agricultural surveys under the Ministry of Agricultural and Land development of the Saigon administration conducted a survey on Nam Ai island (Nam Yit) in the Truong Sa archipelago.

In August 1973, with the cooperation of a Japanese company, the Maruben corporation, the Ministry of National planning and Development of the Saigon administration conducted a prospecting survey of phosphates in the Hoang Sa archipelago.

On September 6, 1973, the Saigon administration annexed the islands of Truong Sa, An Bang, Itu Aba, Song Tu Dong, Song Tu Tay, Loai Ta and Thi Tu,

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Nam Ai and Sinh Ton and other adjacent islands to Phuoc Hai village, Dat Do district, Phuoc Tuy province.

Feeling keenly about Viet Nam's age-old sovereignty over the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, the successive administrations of South Viet Nam never failed to defend it whenever a foreign country attempted to dispute it or occupied an island in the two archipelagoes.

On June 1, 1956, the Foreign Ministry of the Saigon administration issued a Statement reaffirming Viet Nam's sovereignty over the Truong Sa archipelago as the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and the Republic of the Philippines, each claimed that the archipelago belonged to them.

On February 22, 1959, the Saigon administration arrested 82 citizens of the People's Republic of China and detained them for some time after they had infiltrated the islands of Huu Nhat, Duy Mong and Quang Hoa in the Hoang Sa archipelago.

On April 20, 1971, the Saigon administration again reaffirmed that the Truong Sa archipelago was part of Vietnamese territory in response to Malaysia's claim of sovereignty over some islands in that archipelago.

In connection with the statement of the Philippines President on the Truong Sa archipelago at a press conference on July 10, 1971, the Foreign Minister of the Saigon administration on July 13, 1971 reaffirmed Viet Nam's sovereignty over that archipelago.

In 1974, as the military forces of the People's Republic of China occupied the Southwestern islands of the Hoang Sa archipelago, the Saigon administration in its statement of January 19, 1974, condemned the People's Republic of China for having encroached upon the territorial integrity of Viet Nam. On January 20, 1974, in a statement at the first session of the Third U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea, held in Caracas, the Saigon administration restated that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa islands were part of Vietnamese territory. In a statement issued on February 14, 1974, the Saigon

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administration once again reaffirmed that the two archipelagoes had always been part of Viet Nam.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, for its part, announced a three-point position concerning the settlement of the territorial disputes in a statement on January 20, 1974.

On May 5 and 6, 1975, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam announced the liberation of the islands in the Truong Sa archipelago which had been held by the Saigon troops.

In September 1975, the Delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam to the Colombo meteorological conference said in a statement that the Hoang Sa archipelago belonged to Viet Nam and requested the World Meteorological Organization to continue to register in the W.M.O. list of meteorological stations the Hoang Sa meteorological station of Viet Nam (which had been listed in the W.M.O. Network under registration number 48,860).

After the reunification of Viet Nam in 1976, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam reaffirmed on various occasions Viet Nam's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes, e.g. in its notes to the parties concerned in the Sino-Vietnamese talks started in Peking in October 1977 between the two Deputy Foreign Ministers, in various statements issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Conference of the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva in June 1980, at the World Geological Congress in Paris in July 1980, etc.

On the basis of historical documents and the principles of International law and International practices, it is possible to draw the following conclusions :

1. The state of Viet Nam took effective possession of the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes long ago when they were not under the sovereignty of any nation.

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2. Throughout several centuries since then, the state of Viet Nam has been effectively and continuously exercising sovereignty over these two archipelagoes.

3. The state of Viet Nam has always actively defended its rights and titles against all schemes and acts of encroachment upon the sovereignty, territorial integrity and interests of Viet Nam in connection with the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes.

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Part 2

THE HOANG SA AND TRUONG SA ARCHIPELAGOES HAVE NEVER BEEN CHINESE TERRITORIES.

Despite the fact that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes have long since been part of Vietnamese territory, the Peking ruling circles are now trying to justify their expansionist ambitions over these two archipelagoes, quoting ancient books to back up their claims that China was "the first to discover, to exploit and to govern" the "Xisha" and the "Nansha" archipelagoes. "For thousands of years, the governments of various Chinese dynasties had been continuously exercising their jurisdiction over these two archipelagoes... and the Chinese people are undeniable masters of these two archipelagoes", (Document published by the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Jan. 30th, 1980) they say.

On the other hand, they have brazenly made up the story that the Vietnamese Hoang Sa and Truong Sa are coastal islands and sandbanks along Central Viet Nam in an attempt to prove that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes and the "Xisha" and "Nansha" islands claimed by China are not the same.

But no one can deny the truth that Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes have been and shall always be parts of Vietnamese territory.

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1. On the so-called "discovery" and "exploitation" by the Chinese people.

The document made public by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on January 30, 1980, presents excerpts from two books (Nanhou Yiwuzhi and Funanzhuan) published in the Three Kingdoms period (220-265 AD) to prove that long ago the Chinese "discovered" "Xisha" and "Nansha".

It also refers to six other books (Monglianglu, Daoyi Zhilue, Dongxiyangkao, Shunfeng Xiangsong, Zhinan Zhengfa and Haiguo Winjianlu) published during the time between the Sung dynasty and the Qing dynasty (from the 11th to 19th century) and declares that these books write about the Chinese people's voyages to the Xisha and Nansha archipelagoes and their engagement in production activities there over thousands of years, and "in this process, they gave the Xisha and Nansha archipelagoes different names like Liuru Lozhou, Shitang, Qianli Shitang, Wanli Changsha etc..." This was an attempt to prove that "The Chinese people had discovered and carried on exploitation work in Xisha and Nansha."

As a matter of fact, the contents of what is quoted from the two books of the Three Kingdoms period are quite vague. As for the books dated from the Sung to the Qing dynasty, they are essentially writings recording contemporary Chinese cognizance of geographical positions, history and customs of foreign countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia, the sea routes from China to such foreign countries and contain nothing about "The Chinese people's voyages to these two archipelagoes" and their "engagement in production activities" there. Even if the geographical names used in these ancient books correctly refer to the two archipelagoes as Peking claims, they are designations used by the Chinese in the past to denote geographic features of foreign countries or to describe navigation routes in these sea areas. They are in no way of any legal value for the Chinese claim of sovereignty over these islands.

Similarly, even if it is true that the Chinese discovered these archipelagoes, that will not constitute a legal basis for the Chinese claim that they have been under Chinese jurisdiction. Even if it can be shown that some exploitation work was carried by the Chinese in "Xisha" and "Nansha", that

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will in no way help create sovereign rights for the Chinese state over these archipelagoes, since the work was done by private individuals.

2. On the so-called "jurisdiction" exercised by Chinese dynasties.

Public opinion has demanded that the Chinese ruling circles prove when and how the Chinese state took possession of the two archipelagoes of "Xisha" and "Nansha".

The Chinese authorities, however, have failed to provide an answer. They had to resort to a general statement that "the governments of various Chinese dynasties had continuously exercised their jurisdiction over these two archipelagoes", and with a view to proving that, they have cited a number of events taking place during the whole period from the 11th to the 19th century, of which the following three are emphasized :

The first event : In the above-mentioned document of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, what follows is said to be an excerpt from Wujing Zongyao, a book written in the reign of King Renzong (1023 - 1063) of the Northern Sung : the Court "orders that royal troops be dispatched to build and defend the bases or maritime patrol in Guangnan (i.e. present day Guangdong) and "that combat ships be built"... "If from Tunmenshan one avails oneself of the East wind and takes the Southwest route one will reach Jiuru Lozhou in seven days" . The Chinese Foreign Ministry documents considers Kiuru Lozhou to be the "Xisha archipelago" and concludes that "the court of the Northern Sung had placed the Xisha archipelago under its administration" and that "Chinese naval units had patrolled the area of the Xisha archipelago".

In fact, the original Wujing Zongyao had this to say about the above-mentioned event :

"... Orders that royal troops be dispatched to build and defend the bases of maritime patrol in the Eastern and Western sea-harbours which are 280 truongs (truong : an ancient unit of measure equal to 3.51 metres) in width, and which are about 200 li from Tunmenshan (Tunmenshan is a place on

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the mouth of Pearl river (Guangdong province), and that warships be built"...
"If from Tunmenshan one avails oneself of the East wind and takes the South-
west route, one will reach Jiuru Lozhou in seven days and if proceeding
further, one will reach Pulaoshan (in the kingdom of Huanzhou (Pulaoshan is
Cham island : Huanzhou was the kingdom of Champa), within 3 days. And about 300
li further southwards from that point is Lingshandong region. To the Southwest
of Lingshandong are the kingdom of Dashifu, Sizi and Tianzhu (Dashifu, men-
tioned in many Chinese ancient books as Dashi, was a middle age nation in the
Persian gulf area : Sizi was ancient Sri Lanka and Tianzhu denoted India
(according to Chinese books Tengshu, Sungshi and Gugin Doshu Zishen where no
one had any idea of how long a voyage to these kingdoms would take" (Wujing
Zongyao).

Clearly the above excerpt from Wujing Zhongyao mentions on the one hand
the order of the court of the Northern Sung on the establishment of bases for
maritime patrol in Guangzhou harbour, and on the other hand describes the
positions of these bases and the sea-routes from Guangzhou to the Indian Ocean,
and not a single line of the afore-said passage suggests that Chinese naval units
made patrol tours to the vicinity of the "Xisha" archipelago. The document
of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, indeed, re-arranges the words of the quoted
passage (which are here-above quoted) with no other aims than serving the
expansionist design of the Chinese authorities. With regard to the Hoang Sa
archipelago (Peking not only distorts the contents of the books but also
their titles in the French translation. For example "Saoyi Zhilue" means "ge-
neral observation of the barbarous countries on island" - "barbarous countries"
is a spiteful Chinese term for foreign countries-but the Chinese translation
is "general observation of the islands". "Haiguo Winjianlu" means "What one sees
and hears about foreign countries" but the Chinese translation is "What one
sees and hears about coastal areas".

The second event : The document of the Chinese Foreign Ministry mentions
the astronomical surveys conducted by the Yuan dynasty in the "South sea" to
conclude that "the Xisha archipelago lies within Chinese territory under the
Yuan".

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"Nevertheless, in Yuanshi, the official history of the Yuan dynasty, the astronomical surveys conducted during the early years of the Yuan dynasty are described as follows :

"The measurements of shadows cast by the Sun in the four seas were carried out at twenty-seven points including Kaoli in the East, Tianchi in the West, Zhuya in the South and Tiele in the North" (Yuanshi).

In the chapter "the measurements in the four seas", Yuanshi clearly listed the twenty-seven points including Kaoli, Tiele Peihai and Nanhai, where the measurements were carried out (Yuanshi). From what is written in Yuanshi, one can see clearly that the astronomical surveys at the twenty-seven points were not made on a "national level" as Peking said in its document but "in the four seas". That is why these twenty-seven points included such places lying outside the "Chinese domain" as Kaoli i.e. Kores, Tiele i.e. a place in Siberia (USSR), Peihai (Northern sea) i.e. the sea off Siberia and Nanhai i.e. the East sea.

Even if the point where measurements were carried out in Nanhai lies in the "Xisha" archipelago, that does not mean "Xisha" was part of the Chinese domain under the Yuan dynasty. Yuanshi itself says the Chinese empire then extended only to Hainan island in the South and not beyond the Gobi desert in the North (after Yuanshi, the part on geography, and Lidagangwupiao (Qing dynasty)).

The third event : The document of the Chinese Foreign Ministry mentions the patrol tour made by Vice-Admiral Wu Sheng some time between 1710 and 1712 during the Qing dynasty. The Admiral was said "To have set out from Qiongya, proceeding to Tonggu, Qizhouyang, and Sigengsha, making a three-thousand li tour of patrol and observation". Making use of the above description of the tour, the publisher of the document says "Qizhouyang is present-day Xisha archipelago area which was then patrolled by naval units of Guangdong province".

In reality, the places mentioned in the above excerpt are in or around Hainan island :

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- Quongya or "The military district of Qiongya" under the Qing dynasty had its headquarters at Qiongshan near the present-day Township of Haikou, in the Northern part of Hainan island (according to Zhungwen Dacidian, 1968 Published in Taiwan) . .

- Tonggu lies in the Northeastern point of Hainan island.

- Qizhouyang is that part of the Sea East of Hainan island in which there are seven islets called Qizhou.

- Sigengsha is a sandbank in the Western part of Hainan island.

It is now clear that the document of the Chinese Foreign Ministry has distorted facts, turning "Qizhouyang" into "Xisha archipelago region" and conjuring a tour in "Xisha archipelago region" out of Wu Sheng's patrol tour around Hainan island to conclude that "The region was then patrolled by naval units of Guangdong province".

The comparison between Peking's excerpts and the original texts shows clearly that none of the three cited events had any connection with the Xisha archipelago.

Peking also cited some local geographical books in the Ming and Qing dynasties which said "Wanzhou includes Qianli Changsha and Wanli Shitang" (Guangdong Tongzhi, Qiongzhou Fuzhi and Wanzhou Zhi) in an attempt to prove their assertion that "The Xisha and Nansha archipelagoes were then part of Wanzhou in the district of Qiongzhou, Guangdong province". Nevertheless, in "Daqing Yitongzhi", the official geographical book edited by the National Institute of History of the Qing dynasty with a foreword by Emperor Xuanzong in the 22nd year of Daoguang (1842), there was not a single mention about "Qianli Changsha" and "Wanli Shitang" being part of Wanzhou, Qiongzhou district, Guangdong province. That is the reason why, perhaps, Peking failed to mention this official work published by that feudal state itself.

Peking goes even further to say that it is in possession of three ancient maps of China, all drawn in the Qing dynasty (Huangqing Gezhiseng Fentu

(1755, Daqing Wannian Yitong Dili Quantu (1810) and Daqing Yitong Tianxia Quantu (1817), "as evidence" supporting its claim. Readers may ask why the Peking authorities have not yet made public these maps. Such caution is not accidental because of the fact that all the maps of China drawn from that time till the early years of Zhunghua Minguo (the Chinese Republic) did not include "Xisha" and "Nansha" as is asserted by the Peking authorities. Isn't it so that they need time to have these maps altered ?

The landing of 170 Chinese sailors on some islands in "Xisha" in 1909 under the command of the Guangdong Admiral Li Zhun on the order of Liangguang Governor Zhang Renjun was simply an unlawful act since the archipelago by that time had been part of the Vietnamese territory for several hundred years and no longer unoccupied land.

The landing of the Quo Ming Tang troops on Phu Lam island (Ile boisee) in the Hoang Sa archipelago and on Itu Aba island in the Truong Sa archipelago in December 1946 was an act of aggression for these islands had belonged to Viet Nam long before.

The occupations by the P.R.C. troops of the Northeastern islands in the Hoang Sa archipelago in the early 1950's and of the Southwestern islands of the same archipelago which were being held by the troops of the Saigon administration in 1974 were also acts of armed aggression.

Be it a lightning invasion or a prolonged occupation or any other acts undertaken by the Chinese in the Hoang Sa archipelago and Itu Aba island, they are all flagrant acts of encroachment upon the territorial integrity of Viet Nam and brazen violations of international law. Those acts cannot create any rights or titles for the Chinese.

3. A new allegation from Peking : Viet Nam's Hoang Sa and Truong Sa and China's "Xisha" and "Nansha" are not the same.

The above-mentioned document published by the Chinese Foreign Ministry ends with a most sensational assertion : Viet Nam's Hoang Sa and China's "Xisha"

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are not the same , Viet Nam's Truong Sa and China's "Nansha" are not the same . Viet Nam's Truong Sa and Hoang Sa can only be " islands and sandbanks along the coast of Central Viet Nam". The Chinese authorities also say Viet Nam cannot prove that the Truong Sa archipelago is the China-claimed archipelago of "Nansha". These are new allegations from Peking.

What arises from this Chinese allegation is the recognition that there exist in Vietnamese territory the archipelago of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa and also the assertion of the existence of the claimed archipelagoes of "Xisha" and "Nansha" belonging to Chinese territory. Then whatever are these "Xisha" and "Nansha" and where do they come from ? It is written in many Vietnamese ancient books that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes have long since been Vietnamese territories and this was confirmed in many Westerner maps (under the designations of Paracels and Spratley or Spratly) as well as in Vietnamese maps. However, the Chinese expansionists have chosen to baptize them "Xisha" and "Nansha" with a view to deliberately asserting claims on these two archipelagoes.

Having done all this, the Peking authorities are now saying that Viet Nam can in no way prove that Hoang Sa and Truong Sa are the same as the China-claimed archipelagoes of "Xisha" and "Nansha". This new allegation of the Chinese expansionists ^{show} on the one hand their arrogant attitude and on the other hand their legally indefensible position in attempting to grab Viet Nam's territory.

Vietnamese archives make distinction between the islands along the coast of Central Viet Nam and the Hoang Sa archipelago. In Phu Bien Tap luc, for example, Le Qui Don noted clearly that the Dai Truong Sa islands stand farther out in the sea, separated from the Re island by a voyage of three-day sailing.

They do not know of the fact, or they may have known it but pretend not know it, that a year later, in 1838, Bishop Taberd published a map called An Nam Dai Quoc Hoa Do in his Dictionarium latino-annamiticum in which Paracel or Cat vang was defined as situated far away from major islands along the coast of Central Viet Nam such as Cham, Re, Xang, Tre, Thu, etc. Thus, Bishop Taberd made a distinction between the Paracels archipelago in the middle of the sea and the islands along the coast of Central Viet Nam. Almost all the maps drawn by the 16th, 17th, and 18th century navigators generally marked the Paracels or

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Parcel in the same areas of the present-day Paracels and Spratly far beyond the coastal islands of Central Viet Nam.

In 1959, 82 fisherman of the People's Republic of China sailed in three boats and landed on three islands-Huu Nhat, Duy Mong and Quang Hoa - in the Hoang Sa archipelago and were arrested by the Saigon troops. In connection with this case, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, on February 29, 1959, issued a statement protesting against the Saigon administration, the arrest of the fishermen of the People's Republic of China mentioned in the above statement did not take place on the coastal islands of South Viet Nam but on the islands of Huu Nhat, Duy Mong and Quang Hoa in the Hoang Sa archipelago.

On January 19, 1974, the Saigon authorities denounced the occupation of the Hoang Sa archipelago by Peking armed forces and on January 20, 1974, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China issued a statement to defend the aggression. It is evident that the fighting between Saigon and Peking took place in the Hoang Sa archipelago (Paracels) which Peking calls "Xisha" and not on the islands along the South Vietnamese coast, and that Chinese armed forces have been occupying the Hoang Sa archipelago ever since, not the islands along the coast of South Viet Nam.

The two events recalled above show all the more clearly that before January 30, 1980- the date on which the document of the Chinese Foreign Ministry was circulated - Peking always held that what they called "Xisha" and "Nansha" were also the Vietnamese archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, i.e. the Paracels and Spratley in international maritime maps.

The Vietnamese archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa can in no way alter their geographical positions by their Chinese names, nor can they become Chinese territories due to Peking's allegations.

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Despite all the noisy propaganda, all the concoction and distortion of the documents, and all the arguments constructed over the past decades, Peking has failed to bring out when the Chinese state began to take possession of the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes, and how this state has exercised its sovereignty over them. This is the thing Peking cannot prove, because of a simple fact that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes which they call "Xisha" and "Nansha" have never been Chinese territories.

C O N C L U S I O N

There exists a Hoang Sa and Truong Sa problem. But this question must be correctly understood.

On the basis of historical facts and international law, it cannot be denied that the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes have long since and always been Vietnamese territories. The Vietnamese state took possession of these archipelagoes when they were not under the sovereignty of any nation, and it has been continuously and effectively exercising its sovereignty over them.

The Chinese state in the past had never taken possession of these two archipelagoes which it calls "Xisha" and "Nansha" and had never exercised its sovereignty over them. China had not even raised any claim over these two archipelagoes until the early years of the 20th century, but Peking is now fabricating facts and distorting history to back up its claims that "Xisha" and "Nansha" have since ancient times been Chinese territories.

The real problem here is not the question of a dispute between Viet Nam and China, but it is the Chinese aggression and occupation of the Hoang Sa archipelago, part of Vietnamese territory, and the Chinese claim of the Truong Sa archipelago as part of China. The Chinese authorities must return to Viet Nam the Hoang Sa archipelago and renounce all claims to the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes - This is a matter of course, in conformity with international law.

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The ambition of the Peking authorities over the two Vietnamese archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa manifests all the more clearly their policy of big-nation expansionism and hegemony which is aimed at conquering Viet Nam as well as Laos and Kampuchea gradually controlling and eventually turning the East Sea into a Chinese lake and using the Indochinese peninsula as a springboard for their expansion into Southeast Asia.

The act of aggression of the reactionary clique in the Peking ruling circles against the Hoang Sa archipelago and their scheme to annex the Truong Sa archipelago constitutes not only an encroachment upon Viet Nam's sovereignty and territorial integrity but also an immediate threat to the interests of the countries in the East Sea area, as well as to peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

The Vietnamese people are determined to defend the territorial integrity of their country and their sovereignty over the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa against all expansionist designs of the reactionary clique in the Peking ruling circles. This just struggle enjoying the sympathy and support of the world's peace-loving and progressive forces fighting against imperialism and Peking's expansionism and hegemonism, will certainly end in total victory.
