

# UNITED NATIONS

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY



## SECURITY COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/34/235  
S/13318

14 May 1979

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: CHINESE/ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Thirty-fourth session  
Item 11 of the preliminary list\*  
REPORT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Thirty-fourth year

Letter dated 14 May 1979 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 transmit to you herewith the text of a speech made by Han Nianlong, Head of the Chinese Government delegation and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the 4th plenary meeting of the Sino-Vietnamese negotiations on 12 May 1979. I request that this speech be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 11 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) LAI Ya-li  
Acting Permanent Representative of  
the People's Republic of China to  
the United Nations

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\* A/34/50.

ANNEX

Speech made by Han Nianlong, Head of the Chinese Government  
delegation and Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the  
fourth plenary meeting of the Sino-Vietnamese negotiations  
on 12 May 1979

Your Excellency Phan Hien, Head of the Government delegation of the Socialist  
Republic of Viet Nam,  
Colleagues on the Vietnamese Government delegation,

I find it most regrettable that in his speech at the third plenary meeting  
(A/34/224-S/13302, annex), Mr. Phan Hien, Head of the Vietnamese Government  
delegation, once again made slanderous charges, and even in abusive language,  
against the Chinese Government and leadership.

The Vietnamese side also vilified and distorted the eight-point proposal put  
forward by the Chinese Government delegation (see A/34/219-S/13294, annex),  
asserting that this proposal was a means to implement a "big-nation expansionist  
and hegemonistic policy towards Viet Nam" and contained "extremely unreasonable  
and arrogant demands". The Vietnamese side, confounding right and wrong, alleged  
that China's proposals for solving the boundary question and dividing the sea area  
in the Beibu Gulf (Gulf of Tonkin in international usage) contravened the Sino-French  
boundary accords and that the Xisha and Mansha Island groups were Vietnamese  
territory. But who has practised expansionism and provoked boundary and territorial  
disputes between China and Viet Nam? Who has violated the Sino-French boundary  
accords and the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the Central  
Committees of the two Parties? Who has created numerous border incidents and even  
provoked armed conflicts? We already made a preliminary exposition on these  
questions in the last two meetings (see A/34/219-S/13294 and A/34/222-S/13299). But  
in view of the fact that the Vietnamese side is still bent on distorting the facts  
to confuse public opinion, we deem it necessary to elaborate further on these  
points.

1. How did the boundary and territorial disputes between China and Viet Nam  
arise?

The boundary between China and Viet Nam is a determined boundary, delimited  
by the accords signed between the Chinese Qing Dynasty Government and the French  
Government in 1887 a/ and 1895 b/ and jointly surveyed and indicated on the ground  
by boundary markers. After the founding of the People's Republic of China and the

a/ Convention entre la France et la Chine, relative à la Délimitation de la  
Frontière entre la Chine et le Tonkin (British and Foreign State Papers, 1892-1893,  
vol. LXXXV, p. 748 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1899)).

b/ Convention entre la France et la Chine, complémentaire de la Convention  
de délimitation de la Frontière entre le Tonkin et la Chine du 26 Juin 1887  
(Ibid., 1894-1895, vol. LXXXVII, p. 523 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office,  
1900)).

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Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the Sino-Vietnamese boundary line being clearly defined on the whole there were no boundary disputes between the two sides. Only on a few sectors were there some differences of view left over from history waiting to be settled by the two sides.

The Government of the People's Republic of China has always taken the position that boundary questions left over from history should be settled in a fair and reasonable manner through friendly consultations in a spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, and that, pending a negotiated settlement, the status quo on the border should be maintained and conflicts avoided. Acting on these principles, the Chinese Government worked out negotiated settlements of its boundary question and signed new boundary treaties with its neighbours - Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the People's Republic of Mongolia.

Regarding the Sino-Vietnamese boundary question, the Central Committees of the Chinese and Vietnamese Parties exchanged letters in 1957-1958, in which the two sides agreed that the boundary line delimited by the Sino-French boundary accords should be respected, that the status quo of the border should be strictly maintained pending a negotiated settlement of the boundary question by the two Governments, and that the local authorities were not empowered to settle any questions of territorial ownership. Acting in line with the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the two Parties, the local authorities of the two countries in the border areas managed to deal satisfactorily with all kinds of issues that arose along the border. So the Sino-Vietnamese boundary was for many years a peaceful and friendly boundary.

In the two decades and more prior to 1974, the Chinese and Vietnamese sides respected each other's territorial sea and sovereignty in the Beibu Gulf area. There was a relationship of friendly co-operation on such matters as shipping, fishery, scientific research and resistance to imperialist aggression, and no disputes occurred.

The Xisha and Nansha Islands have been Chinese territory since ancient times, and this fact was solemnly acknowledged and honoured in the many notes, statements and other official documents of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in its newspapers, periodicals, textbooks and official maps, and in the pronouncements of its leaders. On 15 June 1956, when referring to the question of sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha Islands, a Vietnamese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs stated to the Chinese side that "judging from history, these islands belong to China". On 4 September 1958, in a statement on its territorial sea, the Chinese Government declared that this definition of China's territorial sea "applies to all territories of the People's Republic of China, including ... the Dongsha Islands, the Xisha Islands, the Zhongsha Islands, the Nansha Islands ...". On 14 September 1958, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong stated in a note to Premier Zhou Enlai that "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam recognizes and agrees to the statement on defining China's territorial sea made by the Government of the People's Republic of China on 4 September 1958 ... The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam respects this decision." In a statement on 9 May 1965, the Vietnamese Government reiterated its consistent

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stand of clearly recognizing the Xisha Islands as belonging to China when it expressed condemnation of the fact that "United States President Lyndon Johnson designated 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 United States armed forces". All these are indisputable facts which no one can deny.

After 1974, however, the Vietnamese authorities made an about turn in their position. Relying on their sharply increased military strength accumulated during the years of war and with the backing of Soviet social imperialism, they went in for regional hegemonism in a big way and adopted a policy of aggression and expansion. They constantly created incidents and disputes along the border, nibbled at and encroached upon Chinese territory, and used the boundary question to whip up nationalistic anti-China sentiment. Moreover, the Vietnamese authorities sought expansion on the sea and wanted to occupy the greater part of the sea area in the Beibu Gulf. Brazenly going back on their own word, they laid territorial claims to China's Xisha and Nansha Islands and even sent forces to occupy some of China's Nansha Islands.

That was how boundary and territorial disputes arose between the two countries.

It is common knowledge that Viet Nam has three neighbours. Not only China but its two other neighbours suffer, and even more so, from its aggression and expansion. Viet Nam and Laos concluded a boundary agreement in 1977, which made a new demarcation of the Vietnamese-Lao boundary. There is no need to remind you of the tricks you have played and the amount of Laotian territory you have annexed. The Lao people keep an account in their minds, too. You occupied Kampuchea's coastal islands, provoked conflicts along the Kampuchean-Vietnamese border, and then carried out a massive invasion of Kampuchea. Recently, you sent reinforcements and wantonly conducted military operations to put out the flames of the Democratic Kampuchean people's armed resistance. You have brought disaster to the Kampuchean people.

Facts show clearly that it is the policy of regional hegemonism and of seeking territorial expansion pursued by the Vietnamese authorities with Soviet backing that has given rise to boundary and territorial disputes between Viet Nam on the one hand and China, Kampuchea and Laos on the other. It is, moreover, a source of turbulence and unrest in Indo-China and South-East Asia and constitutes a grave threat to peace in Asia and the rest of the world.

2. Who has departed from the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the Chinese and Vietnamese Parties?

In November 1956, representatives of China's Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces met representatives of Viet Nam's Hai Ninh, Lang Son and Cao Bang Provinces to discuss questions relating to border management. Their discussions touched on issues relating to the boundary. The two sides agreed to refer these to their respective central authorities for resolution. In November 1957, the secretariat

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of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party proposed, in a letter to the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, that "the national border question, in view of its importance, must be settled in accordance with the existing legal principles or with new ones defined by the two Governments. Local authorities and organizations are strictly forbidden to enter into negotiations on setting up new boundary markers or on ceding territory to each other." In April 1958, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party expressed its agreement to this view in a letter of reply. This meant that both sides would respect the boundary line delimited by the Sino-French boundary accords, that they would strictly maintain the status quo of the boundary pending a negotiated settlement of the boundary question by the two Governments, and that the local authorities were not empowered to settle questions pertaining to territorial ownership. These letters exchanged between the Chinese and Vietnamese Parties constitute the common basis for dealing with boundary issues prior to a negotiated settlement of the boundary question. The Chinese Government has faithfully adhered to the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the two Parties and has respected the boundary line delimited in the Sino-French boundary Accords. In the few sectors where there were issues left over from history, the Chinese Government has strictly kept to the jurisdiction along the border prevailing at the time of the exchange of letters, that is to say, in the early days following the liberation of China. We made no attempt to change the state of jurisdiction even in those areas which clearly belonged to China, according to the provisions of the Sino-French boundary accords, but which had been under Vietnamese jurisdiction for many years. In so doing, we proceeded entirely in the spirit of the agreement between the two Parties, namely, to maintain peace and tranquillity along the border. This does not mean that during future boundary negotiations ownership over such disputed areas will be decided in accordance with the line of actual jurisdiction. The Chinese side holds that if it is ascertained in future negotiations that certain areas under the jurisdiction of one side are situated beyond the boundary line delimited in the Sino-French boundary accords, these should, in principle, be returned to the other side unconditionally. The Vietnamese side is well aware of the above Chinese position, for it was stated explicitly on many occasions in our official documents and in the statements of Chinese leaders.

After 1974, in order to nibble off Chinese territory, the Vietnamese authorities, while expressing willingness to respect the letters exchanged between the two Parties, vigorously denied the principle of maintaining the status quo on the border affirmed by that exchange of letters and tried to negate the boundary line delimited by the Sino-French boundary accords. For this purpose, they produced specious arguments, now claiming that "a historical frontier has existed between Viet Nam and China for a long time", then that "the two sides have agreed to respect the historical boundary line", and calling for "maintaining the status quo on the border line left by history" or "restoring the status quo ante of the historical line", and so on and so forth. When you speak now of this line and then of that, what you are really after is to supplant the boundary delimited in the Sino-French accords by your unilateral "historical border line". Your intention was best expressed by one of your senior officials who said that "there were boundary conventions in the French period. But those conventions are out-dated and too elaborate and cannot be used as the basis for demarcating the boundary line".

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In recent years, under the pretext of "restoring the status quo ante of the historical boundary line", you have created numerous incidents on the Sino-Vietnamese border in a systematic, planned and purposeful way to constantly nibble off and occupy Chinese territory. You made Vietnamese border inhabitants come over to reclaim land, build roads and plant trees on Chinese territory; you sent over armed personnel to patrol, set up posts, build fortifications, lay mines, put up barriers on Chinese territory or even intrude into Chinese villages to take census and issue coupons in an attempt to change the state of jurisdiction. In many areas, Vietnamese military and political personnel, under various pretexts, claimed a boundary line at will, destroyed the original boundary markers there and surreptitiously set up new ones, thus making territorial claims on the Chinese side. In the face of increasing Vietnamese intrusions and provocations, the Chinese side, setting store by the friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples and their over-all interests, always exercised restraint and forbearance. We repeatedly proposed prompt boundary negotiations between the two sides. In the meantime we enjoined our border troops and inhabitants to keep strictly within the border, use reason and persuasion with the intruding and provoking Vietnamese personnel instead of returning blow for blow and curse for curse and absolutely not to open fire and resort to force. Our people did not return fire even when armed Vietnamese personnel opened fire and caused casualties on our side. But the Vietnamese side regarded China's restraint and forbearance as a sign of weakness and intensified its armed provocations on the border. Especially after August 1978, when you suspended the boundary negotiations between the two countries, you immediately went all out to strengthen your anti-China military dispositions in the border areas and incessantly opened fire with guns and artillery, creating incidents of bloodshed resulting in 300 casualties among our military and civilian personnel in a period of six months and thus provoked, at last, the armed border conflict.

Numerous indisputable facts prove that it is none other than the Vietnamese authorities themselves who have violated the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the two Parties and constantly upset the status quo on the border in an attempt to alter the boundary line fixed by the Sino-French boundary accords. The serious deterioration in the situation along the Sino-Vietnamese border is wholly the making of the Vietnamese authorities.

3. Why did the previous two rounds of negotiations fail to yield results?

In August 1974, negotiations were held between China and Viet Nam at the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs level on the division of the Beibu Gulf sea area. In October 1977, negotiations at the same level were again held between the two sides on the boundary question and the division of the Beibu Gulf sea area. No results were achieved at either round of negotiations, mainly because the Vietnamese side disregarded the historical facts, distorted the Sino-French boundary accords and tried to impose on the Chinese side a so-called "sea boundary line in the Beibu Gulf", which was a pure figment of its imagination.

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Back in December 1973, a Vietnamese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs clearly stated that "the Beibu Gulf sea area has not been divided between the two countries because Viet Nam has been at war all the time". But when negotiations started in August 1974, the Vietnamese side suddenly asserted that in the Beibu Gulf "the boundary line was delimited long ago", alleging that the 1887 Sino-French Convention on the delimitation of the frontier between China and Tonkin a/ made longitude 108°3'13"E the "sea boundary line" between the two countries in the Beibu Gulf. It asserted that for the last century all governments of the two countries had "exercised sovereignty and jurisdiction" according to this line and that the Beibu Gulf was a "historical gulf" belonging to China and Viet Nam. By making these assertions, the Vietnamese side aimed at taking possession of two thirds of the Beibu Gulf sea area for itself.

It is stipulated in the paragraph about Guangdong in the Chinese text of the 1887 Sino-French Convention that "as for the islands in the sea, those to the east of the southward red line drawn by the commissioners of the two countries, passing through the hill at the east tip of Tra-Co (Wanzhu in Chinese, which is to the south of Mong Cai and southwest of Zhushan), belong to China, and those to its west Jiutoushan Island (Co To Island in Vietnamese) and the other islands, belong to Annam". The French text of the Convention describes the red line as the meridian of Paris 105°43' of east longitude, which is Greenwich longitude 108°3'13"E. Clearly, this red line only indicates the ownership of the islands but is no "sea boundary line" between the two countries in the Beibu Gulf. Moreover, the term "Gulf of Tonkin" does not occur at all in the Convention, nor is the Gulf of Tonkin included in its entirety in the map attached to the Convention. Moreover, in the historical circumstances at the signing of the Convention in the late nineteenth century, when the "doctrine of the freedom of the seas" was in vogue, it was inconceivable that China and France should regard such an expanse of the high seas as the Gulf of Tonkin as an inland sea and divide it. The Vietnamese side's fantastic interpretation of the Convention in disregard of its terms and the actualities of history is indeed a rare case in the history of international relations.

As for the Vietnamese side's assertion that for nearly a hundred years the Governments of the two countries have always exercised their sovereignty and jurisdiction in accordance with the above-mentioned longitude, it is not at all based on facts. Everyone knows that the previous Governments in China and the French colonial authorities observed the three-nautical-mile principle in regard to the territorial sea. The Government of the People's Republic of China declared a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea in September 1958. China has never exercised sovereignty over or jurisdiction in the Beibu Gulf sea area beyond its territorial sea. In September 1964, the Vietnamese Government also declared its territorial sea to be 12 nautical miles wide and published a map showing its territorial sea boundary in the Beibu Gulf. If, as the Vietnamese side claims, the vast sea area in the Beibu Gulf west of 108°3'13"E was its inland sea long ago, why did it draw another territorial sea boundary within its own inland sea? The Vietnamese assertion is absurd from the viewpoint of international law and is illogical and self-contradictory. Has any ship had to ask for permission from the Vietnamese authorities for entry into the sea west of 108°3'13"E? The "sea boundary line", a brain-child of the Vietnamese authorities, has never existed either in historical agreements or in reality. As for the assertion that the Beibu Gulf is "a

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historical gulf" belonging to China and Viet Nam, it is really news to us. We have no knowledge at all about such a declaration by previous Governments of the two countries at any time. Vietnamese insistence on this unreasonable proposition prevented any results in the negotiations, which went on for three months in vain. The division of the Beibu Gulf sea area between the two countries is still an unresolved issue.

After 1975, the Chinese side proposed on many occasions to hold negotiations on the boundary question. But the Vietnamese side always found excuses to put them off until June 1977 when it reluctantly agreed as Vice-Premier Li Xiannian personally made the proposal in a meeting with Premier Pham Van Dong. It was agreed that the division of the Beibu Gulf sea area be included as a topic in the boundary negotiations.

Negotiations started in Beijing in October 1977. The Chinese delegation suggested that the boundary question should be the first item for discussion and put forward a proposal consisting of five principles for the settlement of the boundary question. The following are the main points:

(a) Since the Sino-Vietnamese boundary is a determined boundary, the two sides should base themselves on the Sino-French boundary accords in rechecking the alignment of the entire boundary and settling all boundary and territorial disputes;

(b) Areas under the jurisdiction of one side which lie beyond the boundary line should, in principle, be returned to the other side unconditionally;

(c) The two sides should settle through friendly consultations any differences they may have as to the alignment of the boundary line in certain sectors;

(d) The two sides should then conclude a Sino-Vietnamese boundary treaty to replace the Sino-French boundary accords and delimit the national boundary and erect the boundary markers anew.

The Vietnamese side did not show interest in the fair and reasonable Chinese proposals. It clung to the unreasonable view that the sea boundary in the Beibu Gulf "was delimited long ago", and linked the question of dividing the Beibu Gulf with the boundary question. Insisting that "a border line between Viet Nam and China on land and in the Bac Bo Gulf has been delimited" in the Sino-French boundary accords, it claimed that "this is the most basic principle for the settlement of all kinds of boundary questions between the two countries"; since it was the "basis" for the entire negotiations, it must be discussed first. This was tantamount to raising a precondition which placed a great obstacle in the way of the negotiations. Although the Vietnamese side later agreed that the two sides should first discuss questions relating to the boundary, it played a new trick by submitting a "Draft Agreement on the National Land Border", insisting

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that the two Governments shelve their boundary disputes and first conclude an official boundary agreement. Obviously, the Vietnamese side harboured ulterior motives when it showed no interest in settling boundary disputes and easing the tension along the border while wanting first of all to conclude "a boundary agreement".

Desiring to facilitate the negotiations, the Chinese side gave full consideration to the Vietnamese views and, working on the basis of its original five-point proposal, presented for consultations with the Vietnamese side a comprehensive proposal listing nine principles for the settlement of the boundary question. The nine-point Chinese proposal provided in the main the following:

- (a) The two sides should check the alignment of the entire boundary line between China and Viet Nam, basing themselves on the documents with attached maps relating to the delimitation of the boundary concluded by the then Chinese and French Governments and on the boundary markers erected according to these documents and maps.
- (b) To facilitate the work of checking the alignment of the boundary, the two sides should exchange maps showing the boundary line between the two countries.
- (c) During the process of checking the boundary alignment, if the two sides did not agree on the alignment of the boundary line in certain sectors, they should seek a fair and reasonable settlement through friendly consultations in a spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation.
- (d) After a joint check, the areas either side administers beyond the boundary should, in principle, be returned to the other side unconditionally; with due attention to the interests of the local inhabitants, readjustments on a fair and reasonable basis may be made in a small number of cases where both sides agree.
- (e) Where the boundary follows rivers, it shall follow the central line of the main channel in the case of navigable rivers and the thalweg of the main channel in the case of unnavigable rivers; the ownership of the islands and sandbars in these rivers shall be determined accordingly.
- (f) After checking the alignment of the entire boundary and settling the boundary and territorial disputes, the two sides shall conclude a Sino-Vietnamese boundary treaty, set up a joint commission for delimiting the boundary on the ground and erecting boundary markers, sign a boundary protocol and draw up maps of the boundary.
- (g) Pending the coming into force of the Sino-Vietnamese boundary treaty, the two sides shall respect the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the Central Committees of the Chinese and Vietnamese Parties in 1957-1958, maintain the status quo of the border and make no unilateral attempts in whatever form and on whatever pretext to change the extent of actual jurisdiction so as to maintain tranquillity along the border and the friendly and good-neighbourly relations between the two countries.

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To our surprise, however, the Vietnamese side deliberately distorted this sincere and reasonable Chinese proposal, picked faults with it and levelled the groundless charge that it sought to "alter the historical boundary line". The negotiations lasted more than 10 months, yet in all that time the two sides failed even to reach agreement on the procedure for conducting negotiations on the boundary question.

The above facts clearly show that the responsibility for the failure of the previous two rounds of negotiations to yield results rests squarely with the Vietnamese side. Frankly speaking, the basic reason why there has not been a negotiated settlement of the Sino-Vietnamese boundary question is that the Vietnamese authorities want to use this question as a means internally to fan up nationalistic anti-China sentiments and divert the discontent of their people and externally to cover up their aggression in Kampuchea and their control over Laos in pursuit of regional hegemonism to suit the needs of the Soviet southward-drive strategy. We cannot but point out that you are following a dangerous course.

4. China's eight-point proposal provides a fundamental solution for the disputes between China and Viet Nam.

To achieve their great goal of socialist modernization, the Chinese people have a long-lasting need for an international environment of peace and a peaceful and tranquil border. The Chinese Government has always pursued a foreign policy of peace, and wishes to live in amity with all countries, irrespective of size, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The Chinese Government wishes to seek a fair and reasonable solution to all outstanding issues with other countries through negotiations.

China and Viet Nam are linked by common mountains and rivers, and there is a long, traditional friendship between the two peoples. Though there are serious differences between them on a number of issues and there did occur some unpleasant things, the disputes between them are not impossible to resolve. The eight-point proposal on the handling of the relations between China and Viet Nam, which the Chinese Government delegation put forward at the second plenary meeting, has laid a solid foundation for a fundamental solution of the disputes between the two countries and for a real improvement in their bilateral relations. Moreover, it provides guiding principles for a definitive solution of the boundary and territorial disputes between the two countries. A fair and reasonable solution of the boundary question can be achieved only by honouring the Sino-Vietnamese boundary delimited in the Sino-French boundary accords. Otherwise, there will be no common basis for a solution. Prior to the holding of negotiations on the boundary question by the two Governments, border disputes could have been avoided and armed conflict averted if the Vietnamese side had respected the principles affirmed in the letters exchanged between the Central Committees of the Chinese and Vietnamese Parties in 1957-1958, namely maintaining the status quo of the border and refraining from attempting forcibly to change the extent of actual jurisdiction. The Chinese proposal includes fundamental measures to eliminate tension and ensure peace and tranquillity along the border. The Vietnamese side

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professes to be most concerned about ensuring peace and stability in the border areas, but in practice rejects the basic principle of "maintaining the status quo on the border". This fully shows that the Vietnamese side is aware of its untenable position and has ulterior motives. As to the division of the sea area in the Beibu Gulf, it is natural and indisputable that the two countries should define their respective economic zones and continental shelf in the Beibu Gulf in a fair and reasonable way in accordance with relevant principles of present-day international law of the sea. As regards the Xisha and Nansha Islands, I have already cited many hard facts to show that the Vietnamese side had before 1974 explicitly recognized the Chinese Government's sovereignty over these two island groups. Our demand is that the Vietnamese side revert to its previous position of recognizing this fact and respect China's sovereignty over these two island groups and withdraw all its personnel from those islands in the Nansha group which it has occupied. In what sense can this demand be considered "unreasonable and arrogant"? It is the Vietnamese side that is unreasonable and when it shifts positions in a perfidious manner with a view to seizing and occupying China's islands and laying claim to China's territory. In a word, China's eight-point proposal is directed at the root cause leading to the deterioration in Sino-Vietnamese relations and in the light of the facts of the disputes between the two countries. It is a fundamental solution to these disputes and sets forth basic principles for handling the relations between the two countries. It is reasonable and practicable. We still earnestly hope that the Vietnamese side will give it careful study and make a positive response so that there may be progress in our negotiations.

At the second and third plenary meetings, the Chinese Government delegation repeatedly proposed that the two sides reach a verbal agreement providing that all personnel captured in the armed conflict along the Sino-Vietnamese border shall, in principle, be repatriated as soon as possible and then turn the matter over to the Red Cross Societies of the two countries for concrete discussion and actual execution. The Vietnamese side, however, won't even agree to take up this question. Motivated by revolutionary humanitarianism, the Chinese Government is prepared at any time to release and repatriate all Vietnamese prisoners and demands the release and repatriation of all captured Chinese personnel by the Vietnamese side. Now, the Chinese side has decided unilaterally to release and repatriate the first group of captured Vietnamese armed personnel and hopes that the Vietnamese side will respond positively to this Chinese initiative.

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