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LETTER DATED 21 JANUARY 1974 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF CHINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China dated 20 January 1974. I would request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) HUANG Hua
Permanent Representative of the
People's Republic of China
to the United Nations

Statement of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
People's Republic of China

Starting from 15 January 1974, the Saigon authorities in South Viet-Nam brazenly sent naval and air forces to encroach on Yungle Islands of China's Hsisha Islands. They ordered their naval vessels to ram and damage a Chinese fishing boat and dispatched armed troops to forcibly occupy China's Kanchuan and Chinyin Islands. What is particularly grave, on 19 January Saigon forces made an armed attack on China's Chenhang Island and sent naval vessels and aircraft to subject it to barbarous shelling and bombing, killing and wounding a number of Chinese fishermen and militiamen. Moreover, Saigon naval vessels opened fire first on China's warships on patrol duty. Driven beyond the limits of forbearance, our naval units, fishermen and militiamen fought back heroically in self-defence, meting out due punishment to the invading enemy.

The Saigon authorities in South Viet-Nam have long attempted to invade and occupy China's Hsisha and Nansha Islands. They not only illegally incorporated into their bounds more than 10 islands of China's Nansha Islands, including Nanwei and Taiping, but have now flagrantly carried out military provocations against China and seized China's territory by armed force. This is audacious to the extreme. The Chinese Government and people hereby express their utmost indignation at and strongly protest against this.

Concurrent with their armed intrusion into Chinese territory, the Saigon authorities, using the tactic of "the guilty party filing the suit first", fabricated the lie about China's "sudden challenge" to their alleged sovereignty over Hsisha Islands in an attempt to confuse public opinion and even asserted that Saigon had full "sovereignty" over Hsisha Islands and that none among the countries participating in the 1951 San Francisco Conference raised any objection to their claim of sovereignty. As is known to all, Hsisha, as well as Nansha, Chungsha and Tungsha Islands, have always been China's territory. This is an indisputable fact and is maintained by all Chinese. Although some islands of Hsisha Islands were occupied for a time by France before World War II and by Japan subsequently, after the war Hsisha Islands, as well as other islands in the South China Sea, were officially taken back by the then Chinese Government. Moreover, as early as 15 August 1951, Foreign Minister Chou En-lai of the People's Republic of China solemnly pointed out in his "Statement on the U.S.-British Draft Peace Treaty with Japan and the San Francisco Conference" that "just like the entire Nansha Islands, Chungsha Islands and Tungsha Islands, Hsisha Islands and Nanwei Island have always been China's territory". The Chinese Government has since reiterated this position on many occasions. All pretexts used by the Saigon authorities in their attempt to seize China's territory are wholly untenable.

China is a socialist country. We never occupy other countries' territory; nor shall we tolerate occupation of our territory by other countries. In order to safeguard China's territorial integrity and sovereignty, the Chinese Government and people have the right to take all necessary actions of self-defence. The personnel of the other side whom we have captured in the fight of self-defence will be

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repatriated at an appropriate time. The Saigon authorities must immediately stop all their military provocations against China and their illegal activities of invasion and occupation of China's territory. Otherwise, they must take all the consequences arising therefrom.

20 January 1974
