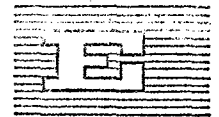


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THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO PEOPLES
UNDER COLONIAL OR ALIEN DOMINATION OR FOREIGN OCCUPATION

Letter dated 22 February 1979 addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-fifth session by the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva

In view of the Soviet representative's cynical attacks against the People's Republic of China during the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, so as to set the record straight, the Statement published by the Xinhua Agency by order of the Chinese Government, concerning the defence of the Chinese frontier and the counter-attack launched in response to Vietnamese aggression.

I should be grateful if you would circulate my letter and the enclosed Statement by the Xinhua Agency as official documents of the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 9.

(Signed) YI SU-CHIH

Beijing, 17 February (Xinhua). By order of the Chinese Government, the Xinhua Agency has today issued the following statement:

Recently, the Vietnamese authorities, disregarding repeated warnings by the Chinese side, have continually been sending armed forces to invade Chinese territory and to attack frontier guards and the Chinese inhabitants of the frontier region, thus bringing about a rapid deterioration of the situation and posing a serious threat to peace and security in the Chinese frontier regions. Their patience having been tried to breaking point, the Chinese frontier defence troops were forced to steel themselves for a counter-attack.

In the past two years, the Vietnamese authorities, while engaging frantically in anti-Chinese activities, including the expulsion of Chinese nationals, have never ceased to launch armed provocative attacks and to perpetrate hostile acts in Chinese frontier regions. The Chinese side, which has the friendship of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples at heart, has consistently adopted an attitude of restraint and moderation, and has given the Vietnamese authorities advice and warnings on many occasions with a view to preventing an escalation of these incidents. However, the Vietnamese authorities, supported by the Soviet Union, have shown unbounded arrogance and interpreted the Chinese side's restraint and desire for peace as a sign of weakness. Thus they have been behaving with even greater effrontery by relentlessly escalating their acts of armed aggression in the Chinese frontier regions. The Vietnamese authorities have massed large numbers of troops along the Sino-Vietnamese border and repeatedly invaded Chinese territory. They have openly laid mines and built fortifications on Chinese land, fired guns and cannon at will, destroyed villages, killed Chinese soldiers and civilians, plundered property, attacked trains and created a number of serious bloody incidents. In the past six months alone, Viet Nam has launched more than 700 armed provocative attacks, resulting in more than 300 dead and wounded among frontier guards and the Chinese inhabitants of frontier regions. By these acts of unbridled aggression, the Vietnamese authorities aim at provoking armed conflicts along China's southern frontier, creating increased tension and sabotaging the country's efforts at socialist modernization. If Viet Nam's acts of aggression are not halted, there is no doubt whatever that peace and stability in South-East Asia and even in the entire Asian region, will be jeopardized.

Accordingly, the position of the Chinese Government and people is as follows: If we are not attacked, we ourselves will not attack. But if we are attacked, we will counter-attack. The fact that the Chinese frontier defence forces, whose patience has been tried to the limit, have steelled themselves for a counter-attack is entirely just. Desirous of building up our country, we need an international climate of peace. We do not want war. We do not claim a single inch of Vietnamese territory, but we have absolutely no intention of allowing anyone deliberately to invade the territory of our country. What we want is a frontier on which peace and tranquillity prevails. After counter-attacking the Vietnamese aggressors as is only proper, the Chinese frontier defence troops will confine themselves strictly to the defence of the frontier of their homeland. We are convinced that China's position will meet with the sympathy and support of all countries and peoples who love peace and justice.

In a long revolutionary struggle, the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples have accorded each other sympathy, aid and support, thereby creating close ties of friendship between them. The fact that such serious armed conflicts have now arisen

between China and Viet Nam is due solely to the Vietnamese authorities who have gone against the wishes of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples. The Chinese Government and people set great store by the friendship of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples and are endeavouring to preserve it, as they did in the past, as they are doing today, and as they will continue to do in the future.

The Chinese Government solemnly calls upon the Vietnamese authorities to cease forthwith their armed invasion and all their acts of provocation and sabotage in the Chinese frontier regions, to withdraw all their armed forces from the Chinese territories they have illegally occupied, and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. The Chinese Government has always maintained that differences between the two countries must be settled in an equitable and reasonable manner through peaceful negotiations. In view of the complete lack of sincerity on the Vietnamese side, none of the negotiations so far entered into have been successful. The Chinese Government now proposes once again that the two sides should arrange early negotiations between their representatives at an appropriate level, in any place acceptable to them, with a view to discussing the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the frontier regions of the two countries, and resolving frontier and territorial disputes. The Chinese Government is prepared to enter into specific negotiations on any constructive measure likely to ensure peace and tranquillity on the Sino-Vietnamese frontier.

At a time when Chinese frontier defence troops are being compelled to resist the Vietnamese armed invasion, the Chinese Government addresses this appeal to the Vietnamese authorities: Realize the error of your ways, stop on the brink of the precipice and do not persist any longer on your mistaken course.