

Letter to the United Nations from the Vietnamese Navy Veterans Association to protest PRC's invasion of the Paracel Islands and Reponse from the UN

To: Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General  
The United Nations  
One United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

On the 28th anniversary of the sea battle of Hoang Sa, Paracels archipelago, We respectfully bring to your attention the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Vietnam with regards to the Paracels and Spratley archipelagos and ask for your immediate intervention and support.

Whereas:

The Paracels and Spratley groups of islands had historically been in the interest of the Vietnamese people. Our Nguyen dynasty at the beginning of the 19th century had officially and unequivocally integrated them into the national community with the establishment of a formal administrative jurisdiction over them

Whereas:  
These two archipelagos are situated on the Vietnamese continental shelf as defined in Article 76 of the United Nation Law of the Sea Convention (1982)

Whereas:

China had repeatedly used forces to usurp the sovereignty of Vietnam, over the eastern group of Paracels in 1956 and over the rest of the archipelago in 1974 and over the occupation of 8 more reefs and islands of the Spratley archipelago in 1988. In two instances sea battles had occurred and Vietnamese blood was shed for the defence of its territorial integrity.

Whereas:

The alarming Chinese military expansion in the South East Asia is all too blatant with the redraw of the map, the declaration of sovereignty over the entire South China Sea, the special effort to build a seapower with aircraft carrier and nuclear submarines and the construction of naval bases in the disputed area.

Whereas:

China's ruthless gunboat policy in the South China Sea is creating a dangerous atmosphere of tension among contending nations such as Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and the Philippines. The situation could degenerate into serious armed conflicts, which would destabilize the entire South East Asia region if the Free World keeps ignoring China's aggressive behaviour.

We hereby urgently ask the Secretary-general with all the power vested in the United Nations to adjure China to restitute the Paracels archipelago to Vietnam. To give top priority to a peaceful solution of the present conflict at the Spratley archipelago, an international committee for a permanent and equitable ruling must be formed with the participation of the United States and other seapowers as voting members to assure fairness for all and compliance by all

Respectfully yours,  
Hai Chan Tran.

Cc: Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of PRC

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Dear Hai Chan Tran,

Thank you for your letter of 12 January 2002, addressed to the Secretary-General, which was referred to my office for reply.

We appreciate your views on the question of the South China Sea. Please be assured that the United Nations believes in a peaceful resolution of territorial claims amongst the parties concerned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonja Bachmann".

Sonja Bachmann  
Political Affairs Officer  
Asia and the Pacific Division  
Department of Political Affairs

Hai Chan Tran  
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United States