

February 16, 1979

**Memorandum dated 14 February 1979 of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic
of Viet Nam on the Chinese Authorities' Intensified
Armed Activities on the Viet Nam Border and their
Frantic War Preparations against Viet Nam**

Citation:

"Memorandum dated 14 February 1979 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on the Chinese Authorities' Intensified Armed Activities on the Viet Nam Border and their Frantic War Preparations against Viet Nam", February 16, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, S-0904-0089-10, United Nations Archives and Records Administration. Obtained by Charles Kraus.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/118500>

Summary:

Vietnam claims that China has "intensified armed activities" on the Sino-Vietnamese border.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

China/Viet Nam



UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



SECURITY COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL

A/34/89
S/13093
16 February 1979

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Thirty-fourth session
Item 46 of the preliminary list*
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-fourth year

Letter dated 16 February 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on the Chinese authorities' intensified armed activities on the Viet Nam border and their frantic war preparations against Viet Nam for your information, and request you to have it circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 46 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) HA VAN LAU
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

* A/34/89.

ANNEX

Memorandum dated 14 February 1979 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on the Chinese authorities' intensified armed activities on the Viet Nam border and their frantic war preparations against Viet Nam

The border between Viet Nam and China has been delimited in the treaties signed between the French Government and the Tsing Dynasty (China) in 1887 and 1895 and has been officially marked out.

Proceeding from the traditional friendship between the two peoples, in 1957-1958, the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party agreed with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to maintain the status quo of the frontier left by history, considering the solution of all border and territorial problems to be within the competence of the two Governments and advocating a negotiated settlement of all eventual disputes.

In accordance with the spirit of this agreement, the representatives of the authorities at various levels in the Viet Nam-China border area held talks on border matters within the competence of the localities. Contacts and talks on the border problem also took place between the representatives of the two Governments.

So far, the Vietnamese side has always abided by the agreement between the two Central Committees, made every effort to contribute to turning the Viet Nam-China border into a border of friendship.

But, in furtherance of dark schemes, the Chinese authorities have for a long time now violated the 1957-1958 agreement between the two Central Committees, and step by step provoked more and more complicated and serious border incidents.

From 1957 to 1977, resorting to odious tricks, they encroached on the Vietnamese territory at over 50 places all along the frontier involving six provinces: Quang Ninh, Lang Son, Cao Bang, Hoang Lien Son, Ha Tuyen and Lai Chau. This did not include the areas they had been controlling prior to 1957 beyond the historic frontier.

Their activities in violation of the sovereignty and territory of Viet Nam, harassment actions and provocations on the land frontier which took place in a number of places up to 1973 have increased in number at an accelerated tempo since 1974:

1974: 179 cases
1975: 294 cases
1976: 812 cases
1977: 873 cases

Out of the above 2,158 cases, there are 568 cases of illegal cultivation on Vietnamese soil, 1,355 cases of armed patrol, 61 cases of attacking and kidnapping Vietnamese on Vietnamese territory.

Noteworthy is the fact that as early as 1955, the Chinese side, availing itself of the opportunity given it when it assisted Viet Nam in restoring the railway line from Huu Nghi Quan (Friendship Gate) to Yen Vien, laid down the rail-connexion 300 metres inside Vietnamese territory, and has since considered it to be a point on the national border between Viet Nam and China.

During the same period of 1975-1977, Chinese boats and ships made more than 1,500 entries into Vietnamese territorial waters, in some instances, they came to places two to five kilometres only from Vietnamese islands. A serious development was the attack and occupation by Chinese troops on 20 January 1974 of the Vietnamese islands of Hoang Sa (Paracels). Moreover China laid absurd claims on other Vietnamese islands in the Eastern Sea (Known in the west as South China Sea-Ed.).

Stepping up their hostile policy against Viet Nam, the Chinese authorities have since 1978 intensified their harassment activities and armed actions on the Vietnamese border and made intense war preparations against Viet Nam.

A. The Chinese authorities incited Hoa people to
provoke troubles in border areas

Early in 1978, the Chinese side, carrying out an organized and ever perfidious scheme, enticed and coerced hundreds of thousands of Hoa people to go to China in an attempt to cause political, social and economic disorder in Viet Nam. Taking advantage of the geographical and demographic features of the border area, and resorting to many tricks of psychological warfare, they carried out their actions with the Hoa people first along the northern border of Viet Nam, then in other provinces and cities where Hoa people lived. Out of the 170,000 Hoa people who have gone to China, nearly 100,000 came from Quang Ninh province bordering on the Chinese autonomous region of Kwangsi.

What is more cruel, after enticing and coercing Hoa people from various provinces to go to the border area, the Chinese authorities closed the check points, thus compelling the blocked Hoa people to live in the open air in misery and want. Then they sent agents across the border to mingle with hooligans among Hoa people and cause disorder and attack Vietnamese people in the region, thus disturbing political security and social order in Vietnamese border areas.

A serious incident occured at the Friendship Gate on 25 August 1978: while Vietnamese cadres were trying to persuade the Hoa people stranded there to return to their former dwelling places, the Chinese side used loudspeakers to give orders to hooligans among Hoa people and sent hundreds of Chinese troops and police in civilian clothes into Vietnamese territory, using iron bars, sticks, knives ... to attack Vietnamese cadres and border guards, killing two persons on the spot and wounding 25 others, seven of them seriously.

/...

B. The Chinese authorities have further and further intensified armed activities in violation of the Vietnamese territory

- The Chinese armed encroachments on Vietnamese territory have been increasing in number. In 1978 there were 583 cases. In January and during the first weeks of February 1979 alone, there were no less than 230 cases.

- Encroachments have been increasing in scale all along the Vietnamese border from Quang Ninh to Lai Chau. They have an increasingly serious character: they have gone from harassment to disturb the normal labour of the people in border areas, encirclement and provocation against Vietnamese armed security guards and militiamen on duty on Vietnamese territory to ambushes, shooting, abducting Vietnamese to China, raids on militia watch posts and border posts of Viet Nam.

- The Chinese armed forces have intruded deeper and deeper into Vietnamese territory; at places no less than 5,000 metres from the border. That was the case of the raid on the Vietnamese militia watch post at Ban Lau, Hoang Lien Son Province on 4 January 1979.

- The intruding forces have kept increasing in size. In some places, thousands of men including regular troops, police and militia, were put into action, for instance, in the attack on Chong Mu Hill, in Cao Bang Province, on 1 November 1978. At one place, a regular battalion penetrated 2,000 metres deep into Vietnamese territory, occupied Vietnamese militia watch posts in the areas behind marker post 25 in Thanh Loa Village, Cao Loc District, Lang Son Province, on 10 February 1979.

- An increasing number of types of weapons have been used, from infantry weapons to heavy machine guns and mortars. In their attack on Xa Ho Post of the Vietnamese people's armed security force in Ma Li Chai Village, Phong Tho District, Lai Chau Province, on 6 February 1979, Chinese troops used 82 mm mortars and 12.7 mm guns; in their attack on Ho Pa border post and its vicinity in the Ban May area, Ha Tuyen Province, on 8 February 1979, they used 75 mm and 85 mm recoilless guns.

- The Chinese armed forces have also repeatedly and wantonly fired big guns across the border, on vehicles and people moving along roads on Vietnamese territory, on Vietnamese watch-posts, villages, townships, construction and forestry sites ... For instance, the firing of machine guns on Phai Lau hamlet, Dong Van Village, Binh Lieu District, Quang Ninh Province, on 14 January 1979: the shelling of Lao Cai Town, Hoang Lien Son Province on the same day; the firing of 12.7 mm guns against Ta Lung border post, Phuc Hoa sugar mill and Hung Long Hamlet, Qui Thuan Village, Quang Hoa District, Cao Bang Province, on 2 February 1979. At times, the firing and shelling lasted several consecutive days in one place, for instance the firing of 82 mm mortars and other infantry weapons at Tra Linh border post, Cao Bang Province, and the surrounding villages from the 10th to the end of January 1979.

NY 34785
S/13093
English
Annex
Page 4

- The Chinese authorities have caused increasing losses in lives and property to the Vietnamese people. In January and the early days of February 1979 alone, the Chinese armed forces killed more than 40 Vietnamese civilians, militiamen and armed security men, wounded hundreds of others and abducted to China more than 20 persons. Many houses of civilians have been damaged. In many places in the border area, the normal life of the Vietnamese people has been and is being seriously hindered.

- Along with armed activities on an increasing scale and at an accelerated tempo along the land border, the Chinese authorities have also sent combat aircraft to violate the air space, and ships and boats to encroach on the territorial waters of Viet Nam. In 1978, there were more than 100 sorties of aircraft intruding into the air space and 481 sorties of ships and boats carrying out provocative acts in the territorial waters of Viet Nam.

C. The Chinese authorities have ordered a massive concentration of troops near the Sino-Viet Nam border and made frantic war preparations against Viet Nam

After unilaterally suspending the talks on the Hoa problem (September 1978), the Chinese authorities have further and further stepped up war preparations in the border area. They have deployed in the border area a great force including dozens of infantry divisions and many divisions of air forces, anti-aircraft artillery and troops trained for jungle warfare, big quantities of arms and other war material including combat planes, tanks and cannons.

According to an AFP report datelined Peking 21 January 1979, there had been important movements of troops in the border areas involving, in the estimates of Western military sources in Peking, about 15 to 17 Chinese divisions, that is 150,000 men.

On 3 February 1979, the BBC reported that China was increasing its troops on the Sino-Viet Nam border where, according to U.S. intelligence sources, there were about 20 Chinese divisions.

In its 9 February 1979 issue, the Far Eastern Economic Review wrote that along the Sino-Viet Nam border, China had deployed about 160,000 troops, and 700 combat planes including Chinese-made P9 bombers.

At the same time, China has sent to the Sino-Viet Nam border many high-ranking military commanders. According to the Washington Star, General Yang Te-chin - who is one of the most experienced Chinese generals and enjoys great political credit in Peking - has been appointed commander of the Chinese forces along the Sino-Viet Nam border.

Close to the Viet Nam border and at some places encroaching on Vietnamese

/...

territory, the Chinese armed forces have dug trenches, built fortifications, at the same time, they have carried out large-scale military exercises, and compelled Chinese inhabitants in the border area to evacuate to the hinterland; they have created a situation in which hostilities could break out at any time on the border between the two countries.

While carrying out war preparations, the Chinese authorities have mobilized their giant propaganda machine, from the centre down to local level, to spread brazen distortions and crude slanders against Viet Nam.

Of late, a number of Chinese leaders have made extremely arrogant and brazen war threats against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

In his recent visits to the United States and Japan, Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiao-ping bluntly confirmed reports about China's massive concentration of troops near the Vietnamese border and incessantly uttered arrogant and very bellicose words showing their big-nation chauvinism.

On 31 January 1979, in his interview with U.S. journalists, he said: "Viet Nam must be taught a necessary lesson."

On 7 February 1979, in Tokyo, Deng Xiao-ping said: "Viet Nam must be punished".

The Chinese authorities' massive concentration of troops, weapons and other war materials along with their armed encroachments on Vietnamese territory and war threats, are bringing about an extremely dangerous situation along the border between China and Viet Nam.

According to a 23 January 1979 A.N.S.A. report from New York, the United States Administration's experts on the Far-East believed that there might be an invasion of Viet Nam by big Chinese forces.

In its 28 January 1979 issue, the American magazine Newsweek quoted a United States State Department source as saying that China's increased military deployment along the border with Viet Nam would lead people to expect an intervention more important than a simple show of might.

Everyone can clearly see the extremely serious character of the Chinese authorities' armed activities and arrogant threats against Viet Nam. The Peking leaders have openly threatened war against an independent and sovereign country, and claimed to have the right to use force against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. They have laid bare their hostile designs against Viet Nam and their big-nation expansionist ambitions in South-East Asia.

The Vietnamese people and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam energetically denounce and sternly condemn the Chinese authorities' war threats. These adventurous acts could bring about incalculable dangerous consequences for

/...

A/34/89

S/13093

English

Annex

Page 6

peace and stability in South-east Asia and in the world. They run counter to the United Nations Charter, violate the elementary principles of international law, and constitute a serious challenge to the peace- and justice-loving people and countries in the world.

The Vietnamese people and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam are firmly confident that the peoples and Governments of friendly countries and broad sections of world public opinion will strengthen their solidarity with, and support for the Vietnamese people, will check in time the Peking authorities' schemes and acts of war, and keep the latter's hands off Viet Nam.

The Vietnamese people always treasure the traditional friendship between the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples and persist in their stand for a negotiated settlement of all disputes between the two countries. But they are determined to defend the independence, sovereignty and sacred territorial integrity of their homeland and the fruits of their peaceful labour.

The Chinese authorities, who are pursuing a hostile policy towards Viet Nam and bringing about an extremely tense situation along the border between the two countries, must bear full responsibility for their dangerous adventurous actions.
