

NOTE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vietnam presents its compliments to the Parties to the Act of the International Conference on Vietnam, signed in Paris on March 2nd 1973, and has the honour to draw the particular attention of the parties to the grave situation which is taking place on the islands of Paracels, off the shore of the Republic of Vietnam.

On January 16th 1974, in reply to a claim by the People's Republic of China, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam formally published a statement which clearly shows that the two groups of islands known as the Paracels archipelago and the Spratley archipelago form an integral part of the Republic of Vietnam, not only by geographical propinquity, but also on the basis of a continuous and peaceful display of state authority during a long period of time. The statement was to reaffirm the sovereignty of the Republic of Vietnam on these archipelagoes.

The People's Republic of China immediately resorted to military action, by dispatching several warships to the area and landing troops on the Paracels islands. On January 19th 1974, at 8:29 hours, Chinese troops opened fire on the Vietnamese troops on the island of Quang-Hoa (also known as Duncan Island). At the same time, Communist Chinese vessels engaged Vietnamese vessels stationed in the area, causing heavy casualties and material damages. On January 20th 1974, Communist Chinese warplanes which had been overflying the area on previous days, joined the action and bombed Vietnamese positions on the islands of Hoang-Sa (Pattle), Cam-Tuyen (Robert) and Vinh-Lan (Money). By the evening of January 20th 1974, Chinese troops have landed on all the islands of the Hoang-Sa archipelago, and the Chinese naval task-force seemed prepared to head for the Truong-Sa (Spratley) archipelago.

It is clear from these developments that the Government of the People's Republic of China is deliberately resorting to the use of force as a means of acquiring territories, which is a gross violation of the commonly accepted principles of the Law of Nations, the Charter of the United Nations, the Agreement to End the War and Restore Peace in Vietnam signed in Paris on January 27th 1973, and The Act of the International Conference on Vietnam signed at Paris on March 2nd 1973.

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam wishes to call the particular attention of the Parties to Article 1 of the Paris Agreement and Article 4 of the Act of the Paris International Conference, which both solemnly recognize that the territorial integrity of Vietnam must be strictly respected by all states and especially by the signatories of the final act.

In view of the seriousness of the present situation, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam appeals to the Parties, in the interest of peace and stability in the Western Pacific area, to take all measures which the Parties deem appropriate as provided in Article 7 of the Act of the International Conference on Vietnam.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vietnam avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Parties to the Act of the International Conference on Vietnam, the assurances of its highest consideration.

21 January 1974