

April 30, 2016

## Letter to Leaders of Vietnam's Government

Mr. Trần Đại Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister

Ms. Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, Chairperson of the National Assembly

Cc:

Mr. Nguyễn Phú Trọng, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam

Dear Sirs and Madam:

The year 2016 marks a special occasion. It is the 60th anniversary of China's illegal invasion and occupation of Woody Island, part of Vietnam's Paracel Islands. Following this act, the Chinese took by force the entire Paracel Archipelago in 1974, and maritime features belonging to Vietnam in the Spratly Islands in 1988.

In the past 40 years, instead of responding to Vietnam's policy of peaceful negotiation regarding the disputes over the Paracels and the Spratlys, China has increased tensions over the South China Sea in many ways, such as causing property damage and losses of life to Vietnamese fishermen, imposing fishing bans in Vietnam's traditional fishing waters, modifying and enlarging islands or creating artificial islands from reefs that they illegally occupy, building or renovating administrative structures, military airports, and seaports, lighthouses and other structures in the Paracels and Spratlys. All these directly threaten the national security of Vietnam.

Studies of international law regarding national interests and sovereignty have shown:

1. Diplomatic protests can bring about good results only if followed by active resolution of disputes, either through peaceful negotiations or through international courts such as International Court of Justice, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, an arbitral tribunal constituted in accordance with Annex VII, or a special arbitral tribunal constituted in accordance with Annex VIII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
2. China's lengthy occupation of the Paracel Archipelago and certain features of the Spratly Archipelago, while attempting to rewrite the history of effective control of the islands and in this way, legitimize its illegal occupation of the Paracels and Spratlys, put Vietnam at an increasing disadvantage as long as the South China Sea disputes are not resolved in accordance with international law.

In view of the above, we, the undersigned, strongly and firmly urge you, the leaders of the Government of Vietnam, to publicly call on China to either start peaceful negotiations with the countries involved in the disputes in South China Sea, or to agree to bring the disputes with Vietnam on the structures in the Paracels and the Spratlys to international courts for resolution. If China does not respond to this call then Vietnam should actively make use of peaceful means, in accordance with international law, which include initiating formal legal actions against China in international courts as soon as possible.

Given China's steadfast position of not engaging in peaceful negotiations with Vietnam on the Paracels and the Spratlys, international law is Vietnam's only remaining viable approach. By appealing to competent international courts, Vietnam will not only defend its national interests and sovereignty, but also help to bring peace, security and stability to the region and thereby creates trust from countries that rely on freedom of navigation in an area with international trade value of more than 5,300 billion dollars annually.

This conduct will prove that Vietnam is a nation that respects laws and a responsible member of the world community.

## **List of Signees**

1. Nguyễn Trọng Vĩnh, Major General, former Ambassador to China. Vietnam
2. Nguyễn Quang A, former Director of the Institute for Development Research (IDS). Vietnam
3. Hồ An, Literary critic and journalist. Vietnam
4. Vũ Thị Phương Anh, PhD. Vietnam
5. Huỳnh Kim Báu, former Secretary General of the Saigon Union of Intellectuals. Vietnam
6. Nguyễn Nguyên Bình, Writer. Vietnam
7. Thái Văn Cầu, Space Systems Specialist. USA
8. Nguyễn Huệ Chi, Professor of Literature. Vietnam
9. Tống Văn Công, former Editor-in-Chief, Lao Động journal. Vietnam
10. Lê Đăng Doanh, Member of the United Nations Committee for Developmental Policies. Vietnam
11. Hoàng Dũng, PhD, Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the Pedagogy University in HCM City. Vietnam
12. Nguyễn Đình Đầu, Researcher. Vietnam

13. Trần Tiến Đức, Journalist and former Director of the Family Planning Committee. Vietnam
14. Nguyễn Ngọc Giao, Journalist and former Lecturer of Mathematics at the University of Paris VII. France
15. Lê Công Giàu, former Deputy Secretary of the Communist Youth League of HCM City. Vietnam
16. Trần Hải Hạc, former Assistant Professor at University of Paris 13. France.
17. Chu Hảo, former Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology. Vietnam
18. Đặng Thị Hào, PhD in Literature. Vietnam.
19. Nguyễn Đức Hiệp, Atmospheric Scientist, Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW, Australia
20. Nguyễn Thái Hợp, Bishop. Vietnam
21. Hoàng Hưng, Poet and former Head of the Culture and Arts section of Lao Động journal, Vietnam
22. Nguyễn Lương Hải Khôi, PhD. Vietnam
23. Trương Lai, former Member of the Group of Advisors to the late Prime Minister Võ Văn Kiệt and former Director of the Institute of Social Studies in Vietnam. Vietnam
24. Hồ Uy Liêm, former Vice-chairman of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA). Vietnam
25. Ngô Vĩnh Long, Professor of History, the University of Maine. USA.
26. Nguyễn Khắc Mai, Director of “Trung tâm Minh Triết”. Vietnam
27. Huỳnh Tấn Mẫm, former Chairman of the Union of Students in Saigon. Vietnam
28. Huỳnh Công Minh, Catholic priest. Vietnam
29. Bửu Nam, PhD in Literature, Assistant Professor. Vietnam
30. Kha Lương Ngãi, former Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Sài Gòn Giải phóng daily. Vietnam
31. Nguyễn Ngọc, Writer. Vietnam
32. Phạm Đức Nguyên, PhD, Assistant Professor of Architecture. Vietnam.
33. Trần Đức Nguyên, former Director of the Prime Minister Research Committee. Vietnam.
34. Lê Minh Phiếu, PhD in Law. Vietnam
35. Đinh Kim Phúc, Reseacher, Vietnam
36. Phạm Hoàng Quân, Researcher, Vietnam

37. Trần Đức Quế, Elder revolutionary personality. Vietnam
38. Tô Lê Sơn, Engineer and member of the Lê Hiếu Đằng Club. Vietnam
39. Nguyễn Quốc Thái, Journalist, Vietnam
40. Đinh Hoàng Thắng, former Ambassador to the Netherlands. Vietnam
41. Trần Văn Thọ, Professor of Economics, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.
42. Đào Công Tiến, PhD, Assistant Professor, former President of the University of Economics in HCM City. Vietnam
43. Lê Trung Tĩnh, Engineer, France
4. Nguyễn Khánh Trâm, Member of the Lê Hiếu Đằng Club. Vietnam
45. Nguyễn Trung, former Ambassador to Thailand. Vietnam
46. Lê Vĩnh Trương, Businessman, Vietnam
47. Hà Dương Tường, former Professor of Mathematics at Compiègne University of Technology. France
48. Hoàng Tụy, Professor of Mathematics. Vietnam
49. Lưu Trọng Văn, Writer and journalist. Vietnam
50. Vũ Quang Việt, former Senior Statistician at the United Nations. Recently, Consultant on Economic Statistics to Myanmar, the African Development Bank, and the Gulf Cooperation Council in Oman. USA
51. Hà Quang Vinh, Retired government official. Vietnam
52. Tô Nhuận Vỹ, Writer. Vietnam
53. Nguyễn Đắc Xuân, Cultural researcher. Vietnam
54. Phạm Xuân Yêm, Physicist, former Research Director at the National Center for Scientific Research and the University Paris VI, France

**Contact address:**

Nguyễn Trọng Vĩnh

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