



Viet Tan (Vietnam Reform Party)

*With members inside Vietnam and around the world,
Viet Tan aims to establish democracy and reform the country through peaceful means.*

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Vietnam's sovereignty can't be dealt in secret with China

According to the South China Morning Post, communist Vietnam has confirmed secret talks with China regarding maritime disputes in the South China Sea (also known as East Sea) and in particular the Paracel and Spratly Islands. The SCMP article published on December 12 contains aggressive statements from Chinese officials asserting “zero chance” of China giving up control of the Paracel Islands and that only bilateral negotiations over the South China Sea are acceptable.

In regards to these developments, Viet Tan affirms that:

- Both the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos belong to the people of Vietnam, as attested by the historical record. Viet Tan condemns China's violation of Vietnam's sovereignty through its invasion of the Paracels in January 1974 and the Spratlys in March 1988. China must cease its occupation of the two archipelagos and return their possession to the Vietnamese people.
- The South China Sea is an international matter affecting the security and economies of the entire region. A negotiated solution must take place in a multilateral setting involving all the related parties. China's condition that negotiations must occur bilaterally is unreasonable and domineering.
- Vietnam's territorial and maritime sovereignty is a common concern for the entire Vietnamese people, not an issue belonging to the VCP. Given the detrimental outcome of previous secret talks leading to the 1999 land border and 2000 Gulf of Tonkin agreements, Viet Tan rejects all forms of secret negotiations between communist Vietnam and China. The VCP has no right to represent the country's interests when it does not permit citizens to participate in free and fair elections.

With the current VCP leadership consisting of individuals beholden and bought off by China, the interests of Vietnam are at risk. To resolve the South China Sea problem and ultimately reassert Vietnamese sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly, Viet Tan challenges the Hanoi regime to:

1. Officially repudiate the 1958 diplomatic note by Pham Van Dong, then prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, ceding Vietnamese territorial claims in the South China Sea to China.
2. To release all Vietnamese patriots—including writer Nguyen Xuan Nghia, cyber activist Pham Thanh Nghien, blogger Dieu Cay, and many others—who are currently imprisoned for publicly asserting Vietnamese sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly.
3. Immediately cancel the bauxite mining project with Chinalco and other Chinese state-run entities.
4. Protect the safety and assets of Vietnamese fishermen operating in the South China Sea.

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