

**CHINA'S  
INDISPUTABLE SOVEREIGNTY  
OVER THE XISHA  
AND NANSHA ISLANDS**

— Document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the People's Republic of China

January 30, 1980

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
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THE Xisha and Nansha Islands are two large island groups in the South China Sea. Like the Dongsha and Zhongsha Islands, they have been China's territory since ancient times. This is not only proved by numerous Chinese and foreign historical records, documents, maps and cultural relics of ancient or modern times, but also recognized by many countries and extensive world opinion. These island groups were for a time in modern history illegally seized by foreign countries, but this in no way changes the historical fact and legal basis of their belonging to China.

The Vietnamese authorities cherish regional hegemonic and expansionist designs. While stepping up aggression and expansion in Indochina and Southeast Asia, they illegally occupied some islands of China's Nansha island group in 1975 and flagrantly laid a territorial claim to China's Xisha and Nansha Islands, reversing their earlier position of recognizing these islands as Chinese territory. On September 28, 1979 the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issued a *White Book* entitled

“Viet Nam’s Sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagoes”, in which it pieced together or contrived some self-contradictory and utterly untenable “proving materials” in a vain attempt to find legal grounds for their illegal occupation and expansionist designs. This is completely futile.

It is impermissible to falsify historical facts or trample upon principles of international law. Here we cite authentic historical records and official documents to refute and explode the lies of the Vietnamese authorities and clearly prove the indisputable sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China over the Xisha and Nansha Islands.

(1) THE XISHA AND NANSHA ISLANDS  
HAVE BEEN CHINA’S TERRITORY  
SINCE ANCIENT TIMES

As early as the 2nd century B.C., at the time of Emperor Wu Di of the Han dynasty, Chinese people began sailing the South China Sea. After long years of navigation, they discovered successively the Xisha and Nansha Islands. The geographical features of these islands are described

in *Nanzhou Yi Wu Zhi* (Strange Things of the Southern Provinces) by Wan Zhen and *Fu Nan Zhuàn* (An Account of Fu Nan) by Kang Tai, both of which were written in the Three Kingdoms period (220-265).<sup>1</sup>

After the discovery of the Xisha and Nansha Islands, groups of Chinese people, surmounting all kinds of difficulties, came to visit and develop them. Their voyages to the Xisha and Nansha Islands and their productive activities there during more than a thousand years and the location and distribution of these islands are recorded in *Meng Liang Lu* (Record of a Day-Dreamer) of the Song dynasty, *Dao Yi Zhi Lüè* (Brief Account of the Islands) of the Yuan dynasty, *Dong Xi Yang Kao* (Studies on the Oceans East and West) and *Shun Feng Xiang Song* (Fair Winds for Escort) of the Ming dynasty, *Zhi Nan Zheng Fa* (Compass Directions) and *Hai Guo Wen Jian Lu* (Records of Things Seen and Heard About the Coastal Regions) of the Qing dynasty and *Geng Lu Bu* (Manuals of Sea Routes) of fishermen of various generations. In these works, the Xisha and Nansha Islands were variously named Jiuruluozhou (nine isles of cowry), Shitang (rocky reefs), Qianlishitang (thousand-li rocky reefs), Wanlishitang (ten thousand-li rocky

reefs), Changsha (long sand cays), Qianlichangsha (thousand-*li* sand cays) and Wanlichangsha (ten thousand-*li* sand cays), and the numerous islands, reefs, sand cays and banks of these two archipelagoes were also given many descriptive names. In recent years, there have been discovered in the Xisha Islands ruins of living quarters, pottery and porcelain utensils, iron knives, iron cooking pots, and other articles of daily use belonging to the Tang and Song dynasties, and wells, shrines, tombs and other relics of the Ming and Qing dynasties. These facts prove that, since at least the Tang and Song dynasties, Chinese people have lived on the Xisha and Nansha Islands and engaged in fishing and other productive activities there.

Along with the exploitation and development of the Xisha and Nansha Islands by Chinese people, the successive Chinese Governments exercised jurisdiction over them.

As early as the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), Chinese naval patrols reached the Xisha Islands. It is recorded in *Wu Jing Zong Yao* (Outline Record of Military Affairs),<sup>2</sup> to which the Northern Song Emperor Ren Zong (1023-1063) personally wrote a preface, that the Northern Song court "ordered patrols by imperial forces and the

building of a barracks for naval patrols" in Guangnan (now Guangdong), "commissioned the building of keeled sea-faring warships" which, "sailing in the southwestern direction from Tunmenshan, with a fair east wind, can reach Jiuruluozhou in seven days". (See annex 1.) Jiuruluozhou was the name for today's Xisha Islands. It shows that the Northern Song court already put the Xisha Islands under its jurisdiction and therefore dispatched naval "warships" to patrol them.

Early in the Yuan dynasty, an astronomical observation was carried out at 27 places throughout the country. In the 16th year of the reign of Zhiyuan (1279) Kublai Khan or Emperor Shi Zu, personally assigned Guo Shoujing, famous astronomer and Deputy Director of the Astronomical Bureau,<sup>3</sup> to do the observation in the South China Sea. According to the official *History of the Yuan Dynasty*, Nanhai, Guo's observation point, was "to the south of Zhuya" and "the result of the survey showed that the latitude of Nanhai is 15°N". The astronomical observation point Nanhai was on today's Xisha Islands.<sup>4</sup> It shows that Xisha Islands were within the bounds of China at the time of the Yuan dynasty.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the officially compiled local chronicles *Guangdong Tong Zhi*, *Qiongzhoufu Zhi* and *Wanzhou Zhi* all record, in the section of "territory" or "geography, mountains and waters", that "Wanzhou covers Qianlichangsha (thousand-*li* sand cays) and Wanlishitang (ten thousand-*li* rocky reefs)". This shows that at the time, the Xisha and Nansha Islands were under the administration of Wanzhou of Qiongzhou Prefecture (now Wanning and Lingshui Counties, Hainan Island), Guangdong Province.

In the 49th to 51st years of the reign of Kangxi (1710-1712) of the Qing dynasty, Wu Sheng, Vice-Admiral of the Guangdong Fleet led a naval patrol and "went personally on an inspection tour, setting out for Qiongya, rounding Tonggu and passing through Qizhouyang and Sigengsha, covering 3,000 *li*".<sup>5</sup> The Qizhouyang (sea of seven islands) mentioned here refers to the sea area around the Xisha Islands, whose patrol was the responsibility of the Guangdong Fleet. In the book *Shi Xi Ji Cheng* (Travel Notes of an Envoy to the West) by Guo Songtao, the Qing dynasty Minister to Britain, the account of his voyage to his post made in 1876 includes this passage: "by noon on the 24th day [of

the tenth moon, 2nd year of the reign of Guangxu], the ship had sailed 831 *li* and reached 17 degrees 30 minutes north of the Equator, 200 to 300 *li* south of Qiongzhou. The sailors called this place China Sea. . . . Nearby to the left were the Paracel Islands [the Xisha Islands] which yielded sea slugs, and also coral, which was not of very good quality. These islands belong to China."

In the 9th year of the reign of Guangxu (1883), Germany carried out surveys on the Xisha and Nansha Islands but had to stop them under the protest of the Qing Government.

The fact that the Xisha and Nansha Islands have been China's territory since ancient times is not only recorded in a large number of history books and local chronicles but also corroborated by many official maps, e.g., *Huang Qing Ge Zhi Sheng Fen Tu* (Map of the Provinces Directly Under the Imperial Qing Authority) made in the 20th year of Qianlong (1755), *Da Qing Wan Nian Yi Tong Di Li Quan Tu* (Map of the Eternally Unified Great Qing Empire) made in the 15th year of Jiaqing (1810) and *Da Qing Yi Tong Tian Xia Quan Tu* (Map of the Unified Territory of the Great Qing Empire) made in the 22nd year of Jiaqing (1817).

In the fourth moon of the first year of

Emperor Xuantong (1909), Zhang Renjun, Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi, sent Li Zhun, Admiral of the Guangdong Fleet, with more than 170 naval officers and men on an inspection tour of the Xisha Islands in three warships, the *Fubo*, the *Guangjin* and the *Shenhang*. They inspected 15 islands and set up stone tablets engraved with the names of the islands. They hoisted the flag and fired a salvo on Yongxing Island by way of reasserting Chinese sovereignty.

In 1911 the Chinese Guangdong Provincial Government announced the putting of the Xisha Islands under the administration of Yaxian County, Hainan Island. In 1921 the Ministry of Interior of the Chinese Government approved a license for He Ruinian, a merchant of Guangdong Province, to engage in fishing, plantation and mining on the Xisha Islands. Later he was found to have transferred the license to Japanese merchants, and the license was withdrawn.

In May 1928 the Guangdong Provincial Government sent a study group consisting of military and civil officers, scientists and technicians to go to the Xisha Islands by warship to make investigations on the spot. The group submitted a detailed report on the results of the investigations.

The above historical facts fully prove that China was the first to discover, develop and administer the Xisha and Nansha Islands. Consecutive jurisdiction was exercised over them by successive Chinese Governments for more than a thousand years. The Chinese are indisputable owners of these island groups.

## (2) CHINA'S STRUGGLE IN DEFENCE OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE XISHA AND NANSHA ISLANDS

For a period of time after the establishment of its colonial rule in Viet Nam towards the end of the 19th century, France still recognized China's sovereignty over the Xisha Islands. In connection with the Xisha Islands, the French Premier and Foreign Minister Aristide Briand admitted on August 22, 1921 "the impossibility in which we currently find ourselves to claim these Islands as the Chinese Government has since 1909 exercised its rights to their ownership [referring to the above-mentioned inspection tour of the Xisha Islands by Li Zhun]". In 1929 French Acting Governor General in Indochina also conceded that "according to

reports from various sources, the Paracels [the Xisha Islands] should be regarded as belonging to China".<sup>6</sup>

But the then French colonialists, covetous of Chinese territory and aware of the great strategic importance of the Xisha Islands, tried to seize these islands by taking the opportunity of Japanese aggression against China's northeastern provinces starting with the September 18th Incident of 1931. In a note addressed to the Chinese Legation in France on December 4 the same year, the French Government asserted that the Empire of Annam had a so-called "prior title" to the Xisha Islands, thus flagrantly laying a territorial claim to these Chinese Islands. The then Chinese Government gave a rebuttal in categorical terms, pointing out that the Xisha Islands had long been under China's jurisdiction. In his note of November 30, 1932 to the French Consul in Guangzhou, Zhu Zhaoxin, Special Inspector of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Government, again affirmed that "there is no doubt whatsoever that the Xisha Islands are part of China's territory".

However, the then French authorities went a step further and invaded and occupied nine of China's Nansha Islands in 1933. The Chinese people

rose in protest, and the then Chinese Government made strong representations to the French authorities through diplomatic channels.

A "Committee for the Examination of Land and Sea Maps" composed of the representatives of the Chinese Foreign, Interior and Naval Ministries and other institutions in 1934-35 specially checked and approved the names of the South China Sea islands and compiled and printed the "Map of the South China Sea Islands", on which the Dongsha, Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands were clearly marked as belonging to China.

During World War II, Japan invaded and occupied the Xisha and Nansha Islands in 1939. Following the Japanese surrender in 1945, the then Chinese Government in November and December 1946 designated senior officials to proceed to the Xisha and Nansha Islands by warships to take over these islands, where take-over ceremonies were held and stone tablets erected (See annex 2) and troops garrisoned. These were followed by the renaming of the Dongsha, Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands and their various islands, sand cays, reefs and banks. Thus, the Xisha and Nansha Islands, once illegally seized by foreign powers,

were restored to the jurisdiction of the Chinese Government.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, in his Statement on the U.S.-U.K. Draft of Peace Treaty with Japan and the San Francisco Conference, solemnly declared on August 15, 1951 that, like the Dongsha and Zhongsha Islands, the Xisha and Nansha Islands "have always been China's territory", that "although they had been occupied by Japan for some time during the war of aggression waged by Japanese imperialism, they were all taken over by the then Chinese Government, following Japan's surrender", and that "whether or not the U.S.-U.K. draft treaty contains provisions on this subject and no matter how these provisions are worded", China's sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha Islands "will not be in any way affected".

Thereafter, the Government and Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China have issued many solemn statements opposing foreign infringement on China's sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha Islands and reaffirming China's inviolable sovereignty over them.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Government and people have continued to administer and develop the Xisha and Nansha Islands. From 1950 to 1956, large numbers of fishermen from Qionghai County, Guangdong Province, continually went to the Nansha Islands for fishing. The departments concerned of the Hainan Administrative Area of Guangdong Province have continually sent people to the Xisha Islands for surveys, collection of marine products and guano and the setting up of a meteorological station, and exercised administration over the fishermen on the Xisha Islands. In March 1959 the Hainan Administrative Area set up on Yongxing Island of the Xisha Islands an "Office of the Xisha, Nansha and Zhongsha Islands", which in March 1969 was renamed the "Revolutionary Committee of the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands of Guangdong Province".

In January 1974 the Chinese People's Liberation Army and militia drove out the troops of the South Vietnamese authorities in Saigon who had invaded the Xisha Islands and thus defended China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

For years the Taiwan authorities of China have

maintained a military garrison on Taiping Island, the biggest among the Nansha Islands.

(3) CHINA'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER  
THE XISHA AND NANSHA ISLANDS  
IS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED  
INTERNATIONALLY

Many countries and world opinion recognize the fact that the Xisha and Nansha Islands are part of China's territory.

In April 1930 the Far East Conference on Meteorology held in Hong Kong, with the participation of the representatives of China, France, the Philippines and the Hong Kong authorities, adopted a resolution requesting the Chinese Government to establish a meteorological observation station on the Xisha Islands.

After the Annamese police of the French colonial authorities intruded into the Xisha Islands in 1938, a spokesman of the Japanese Foreign Ministry stated that the Xisha Islands on which the Annamese police had landed were "recognized by us as part of China's territory".<sup>7</sup>

The 1951 San Francisco Conference on the peace treaty with Japan decided that Japan should renounce the Xisha and Nansha Islands. The leader of the Soviet Delegation Andrei Gromyko pointed out at the Conference that the Xisha and Nansha Islands . . . are China's "inalienable territory". Although the U.S.-U.K. drafted peace treaty with Japan did not mention the ownership of these islands after Japan's renunciation, yet in 1952, the year after the San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan was signed, the fifteenth map, *Southeast Asia*, of the *Standard World Atlas*, which was recommended by the signature of the then Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuo Okazaki, marks as part of China all the Xisha and Nansha Islands, which Japan had to renounce as stipulated by the Peace Treaty, as well as the Dongsha and Zhongsha Islands (See annex 3). Since these islands were originally China's territory, they should of course be returned to China.

In October 1955 the International Civil Aviation Organization held a conference in Manila, which was attended by representatives of the United States, Britain, France, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and the authorities of South Viet Nam and China's

Taiwan. Resolution No. 24 adopted by the conference requested the Taiwan authorities of China to improve meteorological observation on the Nansha Islands, and no opposition or reservation was registered in this regard.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the authoritative encyclopaedias recognize the Xisha and Nansha Islands as China's territory. For instance, the *Worldmark Encyclopaedia of the Nations* published in the United States in 1963 states that the islands [of the People's Republic of China] "include the reefs and islands of the South China Sea, extending as far as 4°N. These reefs and islands include the Tungsha (Pratas), Sisha (Paracels), Chungsha, and Nansha archipelagoes." The *Bolshaya Sovietskaya Enciclopediya* of 1973 and the Japanese *Kyodo World Manual* of 1979 also explicitly points out that the Xisha and Nansha Islands are China's territory.

Atlases and maps published in many countries mark the Xisha and Nansha Islands as belonging to China. For example, this is done in the *Welt-Atlas* published in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1954, the Soviet *Atlas Mira* from 1954 to 1967, the Romanian *Atlas Geografic Scolar* of 1957, the 1968 *Carte Generale du Monde* published in

France by the Institut Geographique National, the 1968 *Haack Grosser Weltatlas* published in the G.D.R., the 1970 *Gran Atlas Aguilar* published in Spain and the 1973 *Atlas of China* published by the Japanese Heibou Sha. In short, the Xisha and Nansha Islands are recognized as part of China's territory in contemporary maps and books published in many countries.

#### (4) THE PERFIDY OF THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES

It must be pointed out that there used to be no dispute between China and Viet Nam over the ownership of the Xisha and Nansha Islands. During a long period of time the Vietnamese side formally acknowledged these islands as being Chinese territory since ancient times, whether in their government statements and notes, or in their newspapers, periodicals, maps and textbooks.

On June 15, 1956 Vice-Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam received Li Zhimin, Charge d'Affaires *ad interim* of the Chinese Embassy in Viet Nam, and stated to him that, "according to Vietnamese data,

the Xisha and Nansha Islands are historically part of Chinese territory". Le Loc, Acting Director of the Asian Department of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, who was present, specifically cited Vietnamese data and pointed out that, "judging from history, these islands were already part of China at the time of the Song dynasty".

In its declaration of September 4, 1958, the Government of the People's Republic of China proclaimed the breadth of the territorial sea of the People's Republic of China to be twelve nautical miles and stated explicitly that "this provision applies to all territories of the People's Republic of China, including . . . the Dongsha Islands, the Xisha Islands, the Zhongsha Islands, the Nansha Islands and all other islands belonging to China". On September 6, 1958 *Nhan Dan*, central organ of the Vietnamese Workers' Party, prominently featured on its front page details of the Chinese Government's declaration. It wrote, "On September 4, 1958 the Government of the People's Republic of China issued a declaration on China's territorial sea. The declaration provides that the breadth of China's territorial sea is twelve nautical miles (over 22 kilometres). This provision applies to all ter-

ritories of the People's Republic of China including the Chinese mainland and its coastal islands, as well as Taiwan and its surrounding islands, the Penghu Islands, the Dongsha Islands, the Xisha Islands, the Zhongsha Islands, the Nansha Islands and all other islands belonging to China which are separated from the mainland and its coastal islands by the high seas." On September 14 the same year, Premier Pham Van Dong of the Vietnamese Government solemnly stated in his note to Premier Zhou Enlai of the Chinese State Council that "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam recognizes and supports the declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China on China's territorial sea made on September 4, 1958", and that "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam respects this decision". Pham Van Dong's note clearly shows that the Vietnamese Government acknowledged Xisha and Nansha Islands as China's territory (See annex 4).

In its statement of May 9, 1965 on the U.S. Government's designation of a "combat zone" for its forces in Viet Nam, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam said that it was "a direct threat to the security of the Democratic

Republic of Viet Nam and its neighbouring country” for “U.S. President Lyndon Johnson to designate the whole of Viet Nam and the adjacent waters which extend roughly 100 miles from the coast of Viet Nam and part of the territorial waters of the People’s Republic of China in its Xisha Islands as a ‘combat zone’ of the United States armed forces”. Here the Vietnamese Government once again clearly recognized the Xisha Islands as part of Chinese territory.

In reporting foreign intrusions into the Xisha Islands, the Vietnamese press also clearly recognized these islands as belonging to China. For example, on May 13, 1969 *Nhan Dan* reported that “on May 10 a U.S. military aircraft invaded China’s air space over Yongxing Island and Dongdao Island of the Xisha Islands of China’s Guangdong Province.” Many similar reports were carried in Vietnamese papers.

Official maps and textbooks of Viet Nam explicitly acknowledged the Xisha and Nansha Islands as China’s territory. For example, the 1960 *World Map* made by the Mapping Section of the General Staff of the Vietnamese People’s Army marks the Xisha and Nansha Islands by their Chi-

nese names and notes in brackets that they belong to China. The May 1972 *World Atlas* published by the Bureau of Survey and Cartography Under the Office of the Premier of Viet Nam also marks the Xisha and Nansha Islands by their Chinese names (See annex 5). Another example, the lesson entitled “The People’s Republic of China” in the geography textbook for school pupils of grade 9 published by Viet Nam’s Educational Press in 1974 reads in part as follows: “The chain of islands from the Nansha and Xisha Islands to Hainan Island, Taiwan Island, the Penghu Islands and the Zhoushan Islands . . . is shaped like a bow and constitutes a Great Wall defending the China mainland.”

The Vietnamese in apparent seriousness stressed that in order to establish territorial sovereignty it is necessary to present “formal state materials” and “documents of legal force”. What we have cited above are precisely Vietnamese “formal state materials” and “documents of legal force”. This clearly shows that up to 1974 the Vietnamese Government had recognized the Xisha and Nansha Islands as Chinese territory. Now, the Vietnamese authorities have gone back on their

own word and perfidiously departed from their original position of recognizing the Xisha and Nansha Islands as Chinese territory, and this is something absolutely impermissible under international law.

(5) THE ARGUMENTS OF THE  
VIETNAMESE *WHITE BOOK*  
ARE TOTALLY UNTENABLE

The 19 "documents" quoted in the *White Book* of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry fall roughly into two categories: the first category (documents Nos. 1 to 5) consists of some Vietnamese "historical sources" and the second category (documents Nos. 6 to 19) lists some materials about the occupation of China's Xisha and Nansha Islands by the French colonial authorities and the South Vietnamese authorities in Saigon since 1933. All are intended to prove that China's Xisha and Nansha Islands are Vietnamese territory. But if one makes a serious study and analysis, it will not be difficult to find that the "documents" in the first category are all based on deliberate false attribution, and that those

in the second category are totally untenable and legally invalid.

The Vietnamese authorities allege that Bai Cat Vang and Hoang Sa Chu in the historical records is what they now call the Hoang Sa Archipelago or what is known in the West as the Paracels, that is to say, China's Xisha Islands. Their primary "historical sources" are a "Map of the Quang Ngai Region from a Collection of Maps of Viet Nam" compiled in the 17th century by a Vietnamese called Do Ba and *Phu Bien Tap Luc* (Miscellaneous Records on the Pacification of the Frontiers) written by Le Quy Don in the 18th century. Quoted from the map and the record by the Vietnamese *White Book* are the following descriptions of Bai Cat Vang and Hoang Sa Chu:

"... an elongated sandbank, called Bai Cat Vang (meaning yellow sandbank), ... lies in the middle of the sea. . . . It takes one day and a half from Dai Chiem Port to go there; and only half a day if one embarks at Sa Ky."

"In Binh Son sub-district, Quang Ngai district, there is the An Vinh village on the sea. Off the coast of this village, in the northeast lie islands with over 130 scattered hills. The distance between

these hills is covered by a voyage of one day or sometimes of only a few hours. There are fresh water springs on these hills. Among the islands there is a vast and flat yellow sandbank, over 30 *li* long, where the spring water is crystal clear."

The Vietnamese authorities cite the above two passages as the "earliest and most essential" material. But these records precisely show that what the Vietnamese call the Hoang Sa Archipelago is not China's Xisha Islands. They are two entirely different places.

First, the geographical location. According to the Vietnamese material, it takes one day and a half to get to Bai Cat Vang from Dai Chiem Port (now Cua Dai, Quang Nam-Da Nang Province, Viet Nam) and only half a day from Sa Ky Port (near Binh Son County, Quang Ngai Province, Viet Nam). But China's Xisha Islands are 200 nautical miles from the coast of central Viet Nam, a distance which was absolutely impossible to cover by sailboat in half a day or even one day and a half with navigation techniques as they were.

Secondly, the length and area. It is said in the Vietnamese material that Hoang Sa Chu is "over 30 *li* long" and "vast and flat". Yet, even Yong-

xing Island, the biggest among China's Xisha Islands, is less than 2 kilometres (4 *li*) long and has an area of only 1.85 square kilometres.

Thirdly, the topography. According to the Vietnamese material, there are in the Hoang Sa Archipelago "over 130 scattered hills". But there are no hills at all on China's shallow and flat Xisha Islands, whose elevation is generally only 5 to 6 metres, with the highest point measuring 15.9 metres. And in Xisha there are only a total of 35 islands, reefs, sandbanks and sand cays. There are no "over 130 hills" to speak of.

These comparisons clearly show that the Hoang Sa Archipelago mentioned in the Vietnamese material can only be some islands and shoals off the coast of central Viet Nam and not China's Xisha Islands.

The Vietnamese *White Book* asserts that *Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien* (Official Chronicles of Dai Nam) "records the occupation by King Gia Long of the Hoang Sa Islands in 1816". But no record of "occupation" is found anywhere in this history book. The legend that King Gia Long "occupied the Hoang Sa Islands" originated from an article, "Note on the Geography of Cochinchina".

china" by Bishop Louis Taberd, a French colonialist, who wrote: "the Pracel or Parocels, is a labyrinth of small islands, rocks and sandbanks, which appears to extend up to the 11th degree of north latitude, in the 107th parallel of longitude from Paris." He also wrote that in 1816 King Gia Long "went with solemnity to plant his flag and take formal possession of these rocks, which it is not likely anybody will dispute with him". 107°E from Paris meridian is 109°10'E from Greenwich, which is not far from the coast of central Viet Nam. China's Xisha Islands, however, are to the east of 110°10'E. Taberd said that the Pracel extended to 11°N, but the southernmost point of the Xisha Islands is at 15°47'N. Obviously, the Pracel referred to by Bishop Taberd is islands and shoals off the coast of central Viet Nam, but not China's Xisha Islands.

What the Vietnamese call Truong Sa Archipelago cannot be China's Nansha Islands, either. The *White Book* says that Truong Sa Archipelago used to be called Dai Truong Sa. Dai Truong Sa is described in many Chinese and Vietnamese historical records, but it obviously is not situated where

China's Nansha Islands are; the reference is to some islands and shoals along the Vietnamese coast. As the Vietnamese authorities fail to find any historical evidence of value to prove that Truong Sa is China's Nansha Islands, they in the *White Book* have recourse to *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Toan Do* (Complete Map of Unified Dai Nam), a map of unknown origin. However, it can clearly be seen from this map that Hoang Sa and Van Ly Truong Sa are close and parallel to the coast of central Viet Nam and not where China's Xisha and Nansha Islands are.

By false attribution the Vietnamese authorities are attempting to find a basis for their ambition for territorial expansion and hoodwink the people of the world. But this is surely futile.

The Vietnamese authorities cite in their *White Book* the occupation of China's Xisha and Nansha Islands by the French colonial authorities and the South Vietnamese authorities in Saigon since 1933 in order to prove the legitimacy of the Vietnamese authorities' territorial claim to China's Xisha and Nansha Islands. This is not at all tenable. According to international law, aggression does not establish sovereignty, and "inheritance" of terri-

tory seized from another country through occupation is illegal and therefore invalid.

\* \* \*

That the Xisha and Nansha Islands have been China's territory since ancient times is fully proved by legal evidence. And one can draw an impartial conclusion from the ample facts and materials mentioned above. The Vietnamese authorities' illegal occupation of part of China's Nansha Islands and their territorial claim to China's Xisha and Nansha Islands can only serve to reveal their regional hegemonist and aggressor expansionist ambitions. China's sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha Islands is indisputable.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Wan Zhen in his *Nanzhou Yi Wu Zhi* (Strange Things of the Southern Provinces) wrote about the navigation route from the Malay Peninsula to the mainland of China in the Han dynasty: "... going northeastward, one reaches Daqitou and then sails through Zhang Hai, which is shallow and has a lot of lodestones underneath." Zhang Hai was the name for the present South China Sea. The lodestones referred to are the then submerged sand cays and reefs of the Xisha and Nansha Islands. They were called "lodestones" because ships were liable to be stranded on them and unable to extricate themselves. Kang Tai in his *Fu Nan Zhuan* (An Account of Fu Nan) wrote: "In Zhang Hai there are coral islands with flat base rocks, on which coral grows."

<sup>2</sup> *Wu Jing Zong Yao* (Outline Record of Military Affairs) was authoritative literature of the Song dynasty, which records the military system and major affairs in national defence. It was edited by Ding Du, Deputy

Prime Minister and concurrently Minister of Works, and Zeng Gongliang, Royal Attendant in Tian Zhang Ge, a title equivalent to a privy councillor.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese name of the title was "Tong Zhi Tai Shi Yuan Shi".

<sup>4</sup> Guo Shoujing then was responsible for the work of establishing astronomical observation points within the bounds of China in the Yuan dynasty. The Nanhai observation point was "to the south of Zhuya", that is, to the south of Hainan Island. The result of their survey was: "The latitude of Qiongzhou is 19.75°N"; "The latitude of Nanhai is 15°N". This shows that the Nanhai observation point was more than four degrees south of Qiongzhou observation point on Hainan Island, which is exactly the location of the Xisha Islands of today. Owing to technological limitations at that time, the north latitudes obtained of most of the twenty-seven observation points showed an error of about one degree as compared with their present latitudes. Since according to the system of the Yuan dynasty a circumference was divided into 365.25 degrees instead of 360 degrees as at present, the then 15°N for the Nanhai observation point should actually be 14°47'N, and discounting the error of about one degree, its location is precisely on the Xisha Islands of today.

<sup>5</sup> See Volume 56 of *Quan Zhou Fu Zhi* (History of Quanzhou), written during the reign of Qianlong of the Qing dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> See *Review of Foreign Affairs*, April 1934, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> A Reuter dispatch, July 4, 1938.

ANNEXES

# 武經總要

武經總要仁宗皇帝御製序

朕聞天道高武示震耀以宣其威國事在戎設營衛以  
 整其旅輔于文德著之善志自絕契斯草篇讀吹巴  
 先哲玉維御函夏製軍吉志

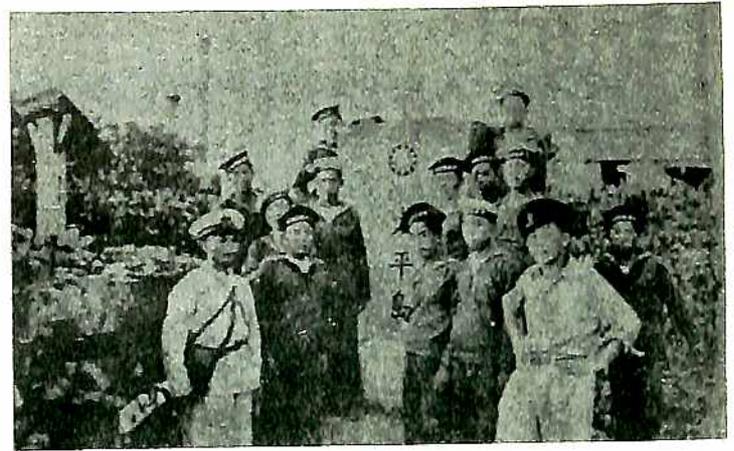
## 廣南東路

廣州南海郡即古百粵也皆蠻夷所居自漢以後人為  
 郡縣唐為清海軍即度本朝平劉鋹復建方鎮為  
 一都會提舉十六州兵甲盜賊控海外諸國有市  
 舶之利蕃漢雜處命王師出戍置巡海水師營壘  
 在海東西二口濶二百八十丈至屯門山二百里  
 治和魚入海戰艦其地東南至大海四十里東至  
 惠州四百二十里西至端州二百四十里南至恩

州七百五十里北至韶州二百五十里東南海路  
 四百里至屯門山二十里皆水淺日可行五十里  
 計二百里從屯門山用東風西南行七日至九孔  
 螺州又三日不勞山在螺州又南三百里至陵  
 山東有嶺其西南至之

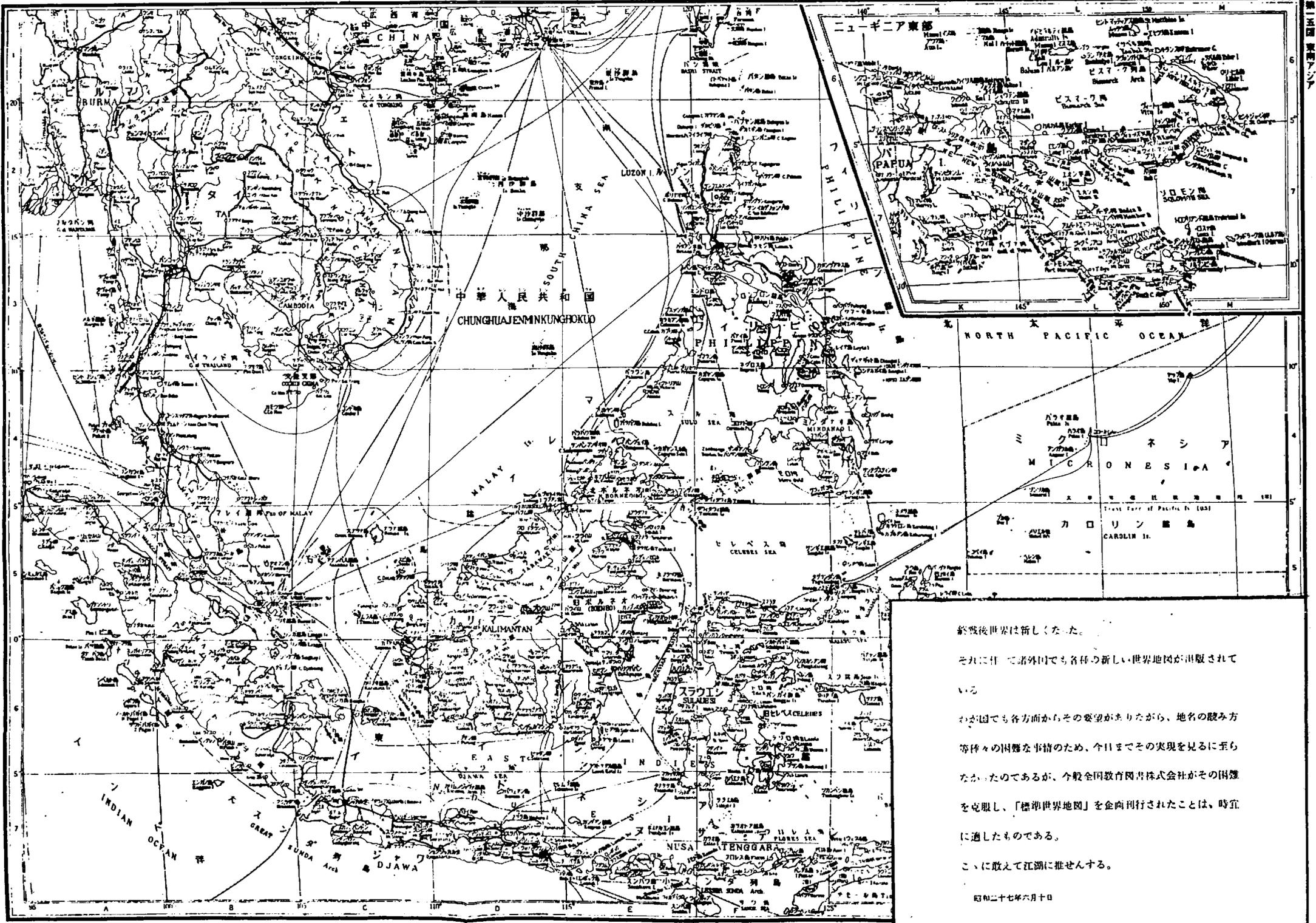
ANNEX 1

Record in Wu Jing Zong Yao (Outline Record of Military Affairs) of the Northern Song dynasty about the patrol of the Guangnan Fleet reaching Jiuruluozhou.



When the Chinese Government officials and naval officers and men took over the Nansha Islands in December 1946, they had a photo taken on Taiping Island as a memento and erected a stone tablet to reassert China's sovereignty over these islands. The photo below left shows the front of the stone tablet and the one below right shows its back.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA



終戦後世界は新しくなつた。  
 それに伴つて諸外国でも各種の新しい世界地図が出版されて  
 いる。  
 わが国でも各方面からその要望がありながら、地名の読み方  
 等種々の困難な事情のため、今日までその実現を見るに至ら  
 なかつたのであるが、今般全国教育図書株式会社はその困難  
 を克服し、「標準世界地図」を金角刊行されたことは、時宜  
 に適したものである。  
 こゝに敢えて江湖に推せんする。  
 昭和二十七年六月十日

外務大臣 吉田 首相

The fifteenth map "Southeast Asia" in the *Standard World Atlas* published in 1952 by the Japanese National Education Books Company. On the right corner below is the then Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuo Okazaki's inscription and signature recommending this Atlas.



**THỦ TƯỚNG PHỦ**  
NƯỚC VIỆT-NAM DÂN-CHỦ CỘNG-HÒA

Thưa Đồng chí Tổng lý,

Chúng tôi xin trân trọng báo tin để Đồng chí Tổng lý rõ :

Chính phủ nước Việt-nam Dân chủ Cộng hoà ghi nhận và tán thành bản tuyên bố, ngày 4 tháng 9 năm 1958, của Chính phủ nước Cộng hoà Nhân dân Trung-hoa, quyết định về hải phận của Trung-quốc.

Chính phủ nước Việt-nam Dân chủ Cộng hoà tôn trọng quyết định ấy và sẽ chỉ thị cho các cơ quan Nhà nước có trách nhiệm triệt để tôn trọng hải phận 12 hải lý của Trung-quốc, trong mọi quan hệ với nước Cộng hoà Nhân dân Trung hoa trên mặt bể.

Chúng tôi xin kính gửi Đồng chí Tổng lý lời chào rất trân trọng./.

Hà-nội, ngày 14 tháng 9 năm 1958



*Phạm Văn Đồng*

Kính gửi :

Đồng chí CHU AN LAI

Tổng lý Quốc vụ viện

Nước Cộng hoà Nhân dân Trung-hoa

tại

BAC-KINH.

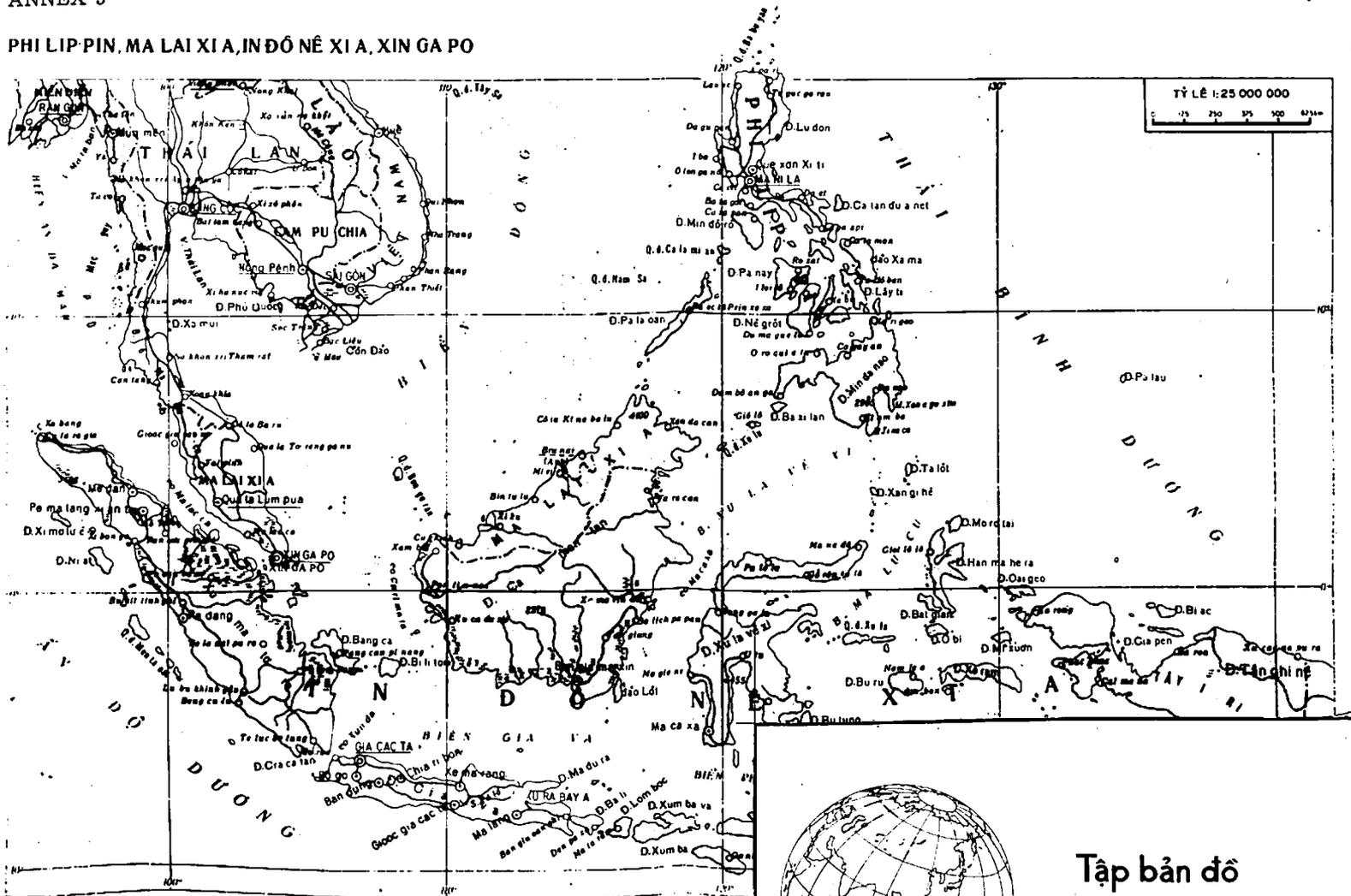
PHẠM VĂN ĐỒNG

Thủ tướng Chính phủ

Nước Việt - nam Dân chủ Cộng hoà

Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong's note to  
Premier Zhou Enlai, dated September 14, 1958.

## PHI LIP PIN, MA LAI XI A, IN ĐỒ NẾ XI A, XIN GA PO



World Atlas printed by Viet Nam in May 1972, page 19. On the right corner below is the cover of the Atlas. The Vietnamese words on the right corner below give the name of the compiler: "The Bureau of Survey and Cartography Under the Office of the Premier of Viet Nam".



Tập bản đồ  
**THẾ GIỚI**

中国对西沙群岛和南沙群岛  
的主权无可争辩

——中华人民共和国外交部文件  
(一九八〇年一月三十日)

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