

PARACEL ISLANDS PROTEST

BY VIETNAMESE CANADIAN FEDERATION / *fédération vietnamienne du*
Canada

Embassy of China, St Patrick Street
Ottawa

Notes for Address by Hon. David Kilgour, JD.

25 May 2014

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation and many other Canadians are deeply concerned about the sending of a Chinese drilling rig to the vicinity of the Paracel Islands, only 120 nautical miles from Vietnam's coast.



We call on the party-state in Beijing to remove its rig, owned by its state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). CNOOC is unfortunately now the owner of Nexen Inc. of Calgary, which was for many years one of Canada's most socially responsible petroleum companies.

We denounce the presence of numerous Chinese escort vessels well within the 321km exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Vietnam in accordance with the international Law of the Sea. This constitutes a violation of Vietnamese sovereignty.

We call on Beijing to cease and desist from attacks on Vietnamese patrol ships, already resulting in injuries to several Vietnamese sailors.

We urge the Chinese government to resolve this bi-national conflict peacefully through the United Nations or other international tribunals or adjudicative bodies.

The lack of sufficient concern in Hanoi is a *causa causans* for the current Paracel Islands situation. We urge the government in Hanoi to take stronger measures to protect Vietnam's legitimate land and sea rights.

Taiwan Implications

Permit me to mention here that those who insist on calling Taiwan the "Republic of China" probably caused injury to Taiwanese residents of Vietnam recently when protesters about the Paracel Islands attacked Taiwanese businesses in Vietnam, mistakenly thinking they were owned by China or Chinese citizens because of this practice.

It is important for members of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation and other Canadians to understand that, although the current government in Taiwan has blurred the distinction between Taiwan and China, the Taiwanese people themselves wish to emphasize their identity as Taiwanese and clearly express that there is a free and democratic Taiwan that is **not** associated with a repressive and expansionist People's Republic of China.

Chen Mei-chin 陳美津 discusses this issue in *the Taipei Times* on May 24: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2014/05/24/2003591088>. To quote her:

The recent anti-China disturbances in Vietnam have inadvertently laid bare a very weak point in the policies of President Ma's government... Its rapprochement with China has — in the eyes of many observers —

blurred the distinction between Taiwan and China, leading some Vietnamese to attack Taiwan-owned companies...

What should Taipei do to clarify its position and prevent a situation in the future...? It must emphasize Taiwanese identity and clearly express that there is a free and democratic Taiwan that is not associated with a repressive and expansionist People's Republic of China.

The previous Chen Shui-bian administration, with strong opposition from kmt opposition, attempted to add the name of "Taiwan", in addition to the sole heading of Republic of China, on the cover page of taiwanese passports. This would have clarified the identity of Taiwanese when they travel abroad, not to be mistaken as mainland Chinese.

For starters, China Airlines should be renamed to show that it is a Taiwanese airline, while state-owned companies like China Steel should proudly carry Taiwan's name.

Conclusion

The Vietnamese have a long tradition of independence... separation from China was obtained in BC 939. The Americans left defeated in 1975, but many contend that Karl Marx and Marxism are so European as to be never acceptable to most Vietnamese. Vietnam has improved its standard of living only since abandoning some features of Marxist economics. Amartya Sen put this succinctly, "Freedom and development are inextricable."

Between 1978 and 1981, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese fled their homeland, with many eventually settling in Canada. Today, they are active and successful in virtually all occupations and regions of our country. Most of their voluntary community organizations across Canada oppose the unelected regime in Hanoi, in part because it "has destroyed genuine Vietnamese culture"; they seek to restore their ancient culture.

In conclusion, the party-state in Beijing should abandon its bad neighbor policies both with Vietnam and other countries.

Thank you.