

Presentation by Mr. Tran Duy Hai
Vice Chair of the National Boundary Commission
at the Press Briefing on 7 May 2014

1. At 5h22 on May 1, 2014, competent authorities of Viet Nam detected the deep-water drilling rig Hai Yang Shi You 981 (referred to as HD 981 by Viet Nam) and three oil and gas service ships of China moving Southward from the Northwest of Tri Ton Island (of the Hoang Sa Archipelago of Viet Nam). By 16h00, May 2, 2014, the HD 981 was floated at 15°29'58" north latitude, 111°12'06" east longitude, South of Tri Ton Island, which is 80 miles deep into the Vietnamese Continental Shelf, 119 nautical miles from Ly Son island and 130 miles from Vietnam's coastal line. China installed this oil rig to conduct exploration drills in the Vietnamese Continental Shelf and mobilized a large number of vessels to protect it. At present, the number of escorting ships of China has reached 60, including military ships. These vessels have intentionally hit and collided with Vietnamese law enforcement ships, including those of the Maritime Police and Fisheries Control, causing damage in human and property. The representatives of the maritime law enforcement agencies of Viet Nam will make detailed presentations about this later.
2. In the past few days, Viet Nam has made public statements and contacted the Chinese side a number of times on the incident, including contacts between the Ministry of Defense of Viet Nam and Military Attaché of the Chinese Embassy in Ha Noi, the communication between the CEO of Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (Petro Viet Nam) and the CEO cum Chairman of the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam made eight communications with the Chinese side in Ha Noi and Beijing. Noticeably, in the afternoon of May 6, 2014, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs had a phone conversation with Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi. Before that, on May 4, 2014, Vice Minister, Chief of the Vietnamese Government Negotiation Delegation on border and territory of Viet Nam Ho Xuan Son talked over the phone with Chief of the Chinese Government Negotiation Delegation on border and territory Liu Zhenmin to protest against the illegal actions of China within Vietnam's continental shelf. Also on 4 May, 2014, the Ministry representative summoned Chargé d'Affairs of the Embassy of China in Ha Noi to hand over a Note verbale of protest.
3. In these contacts and communications, the Vietnamese side has underlined the followings:

The location that the drilling rig HD-981 and its escorting vessels operate is undeniably within Viet Nam's Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf. The activity undertaken by the Chinese drilling rig and its escorting vessels seriously violates the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Viet Nam under the provisions of the 1982 UNCLOS, the Declaration of the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and other relevant agreements between the two countries' high-level leaders as well as the Agreement on the basic principles guiding the settlement of maritime issues between Viet Nam and China. Viet Nam requests that China immediately pull this drilling rig out of the Vietnamese waters.

Viet Nam has full historical evidence and legal bases to attest its sovereignty over Truong Sa and Hoang Sa Archipelagoes; we are entitled to the sovereign rights and jurisdiction over our Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Viet Nam demands that China respect the sovereignty of Viet Nam over the Truong Sa and Hoang Sa Archipelagoes and respect the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Viet Nam over its Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf.

4. Viet Nam also requests China to settle disputes over sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the East Sea via negotiation and peaceful measures in conformity with the international law, including the UN Charter and the 1982 UNCLOS.

5. In the meantime, China stated that the activity of the HD-981 drilling rig was its normal oil and gas activity in the South of Zhongjian Island (Tri Ton Island) which belongs to the Xi Sha Island (*Hoang Sa Archipelago of Viet Nam*); it did not relate to Viet Nam's continental shelf and EEZ; this was the area belonging to the territorial waters and Xi Sha Island (*Hoang Sa Archipelago of Viet Nam*); these activities were normal exploration in the undisputed waters under the management of China. The Vietnamese side completely rejects and resolutely does not accept this wrongful position of China.

6. Regardless of the communications and contacts made by Viet Nam, China still fails to withdraw the drilling rig, the oil and gas service vessels and the escorting ships out of the Vietnamese waters. This is clearly an intentional act, seriously violating the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Viet Nam over its Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf. It also infringes upon the relevant provisions of the international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS and runs counter to the spirit and language of the DOC. This action and behavior of China also run counter to the agreements and common understanding between the two countries leaders, particularly the Agreement on the basic principles guiding the settlement

of maritime issues between Viet Nam and China. These documents all underline the principle of exercising restraint, not further complicating the disputes and conducting negotiations to settle disagreements.

7. China's action significantly affects the political trust between the two countries, the on-going negotiations on maritime issues between the two sides, including the consultations of the working group for joint development at sea. This action also hurts the feelings of the two countries' people. Viet Nam again demands that China pull out without delay the drilling platform and the related vessels, equipment and personnel from the Continental Shelf of Viet Nam, compensate for the damage in human and vessels and not take similar actions in the future. Viet Nam will spare no efforts to protect its legitimate rights in conformity with the international law./.