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Warsaw May 24, 2024

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SOVEREIGNTY AND THE STRUGGLE TO PROTECT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF VIETNAM AT THE HOÀNG SA ARCHIPELAGO IN HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

The Hoàng Sa Archipelago (Paracel Islands) is one of the two major archipelagos in the South China Sea (Biển Đông in Vietnamese). From the early 17th century, the Nguyễn lords governing Đàng Trong (currently the region from Quảng Trị to the Southeastern provinces of Vietnam) established the Hoàng Sa Flotilla, sending people and boats to exploit and manage the *Bãi Cát Vàng* (Golden Sandbank) and part of the *Bãi Cát Dài* (Long Sandbank) in the South China Sea, which are now known as the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa Archipelagos. By the late 17th - early 18th century, the Nguyễn lords officially established state management over the Southeastern region, with Sài Gòn, Gia Định as the center to attract resources and serve as a stepping stone for advancing to conquer the islands in the southern South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. Besides the Hoàng Sa Flotilla guarding the islands in the middle of the South China Sea, the Nguyễn lords also established the Bắc Hải Flotilla responsible for exploiting marine resources, inspecting, and controlling the enforcement of Vietnam's sovereignty in the southern South China Sea down to the Southwestern waters.

In 1802, Nguyễn Ánh (Gia Long) defeated the Tây Sơn Dynasty, establishing the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802 - 1945), ruling a unified and expansive Vietnam as seen today. In



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1803, the king reinstated the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas, tasked with exploiting and managing the entire South China Sea. In 1816, King Gia Long declared sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. From then until now, the successive states of Vietnam have continuously exercised and defended sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa (and Trường Sa) archipelago, until China forcibly occupied part of these islands in 1956 and invaded all of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago in 1974. Although the Hoàng Sa Archipelago is currently under illegal occupation by China, the Vietnamese state, from the government of the Republic of Vietnam in the South before 1975 to the current Socialist Republic of Vietnam, has always affirmed sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, with clear historical and legal evidence.

This paper presents the process of possession, establishment, enforcement of sovereignty, and the struggle to protect the sovereignty of Vietnam over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago from the 17th century to the present, with objective and truthful historical records, contributing further evidence to the ongoing effort to defend the maritime sovereignty of Vietnam.

A. THE PROCESS OF EXPLORATION, ESTABLISHMENT, AND ENFORCEMENT OF VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOÀNG SA ARCHIPELAGO

1. Name, location, and natural conditions of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago

1.1. Name

According to many ancient Vietnamese texts¹, before the 17th century, the Vietnamese had landed on islands, reefs, and sandbanks in the middle of the South China Sea, naming them Nôm as 壠葛鑽 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*) or 罈鑽 (*Cồn Vàng*). In the Chinese-script historical records of Vietnam, this area was recorded by various names through historical periods: 黃沙洲 (*Hoàng Sa châu*), 黃沙渚 (*Hoàng Sa chử*), 黃沙 (*Hoàng Sa*), 大黃沙 (*Đại Hoàng Sa*), 大長沙 (*Đại Trường Sa*), 萬里黃沙 (*Vạn Lý Hoàng Sa*), 萬里長沙 (*Vạn Lý Trường Sa*),...²

International maps and nautical charts by Western geographers and sailors recorded the name as: *Pracel, Paracel Islands, Paracels, Paracelso*... The names *Pracel* or *Paracel* appeared on some of the first Western maps depicting the Southeast Asian seas, such as

¹ For example:

- Đỗ Bá, *Toàn tập thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*, compiled in the 17th century, included in the *Hồng Đức bản đồ*, handwritten in Han script, stored at Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) in Tokyo, Japan.

- Lê Quý Đôn, *Phủ biên tạp lục*, translated by the Institute of History, published by Văn hóa - Thông tin Publishing House, Hanoi, 2007.

- Phan Huy Chú, *Lịch triều hiến chương loại chí*, published by Khoa học xã hội Publishing House, Hanoi, 1996.

² Cited: Nguyễn Q. Thắng, *Hoàng Sa, Trường Sa - Lãnh thổ Việt Nam nhìn từ công pháp quốc tế* [Hoàng Sa, Trường Sa - Vietnamese territory from the Perspective of International Law] (Reprint), Tri Thức Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh City, 2008, p. 218.



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the map by Diego Ribeiro (drawn in 1529), the map by Bartholomeu Velho (1560), the map by João de Lisboa (1560)³, the map by Lazaro Luis (1563), the map by Fernão Vaz Dourado (1571), the map by the Van Langren brothers (1595), the map by Plancius (1604), the map by Mercator (1613),... According to Pierre-Yves Manguin, the word *Parcel* (or *Pracel*) is an old Portuguese term meaning “récif” (reef) or “haut-font” (rock).⁴ A. Brébion suggests that because a ship of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Dutch - VOC), named *Paracelsse*, sank in this sea area in the 16th century, Westerners called these islands *Paracel*.⁵

However, until the 18th century, both Vietnamese and Westerners thought that there was only one strip of islands and sandbanks in the middle of the South China Sea, collectively referred to by the Vietnamese as *Hoàng Sa* or *Đại Trường Sa*. From the late 17th century, the Nguyễn government in Đàng Trong established the *Hoàng Sa Flotilla*, annually sending this team to *Hoàng Sa* to explore, survey the sea routes, exploit bird’s nests on the island, and collect marine products from ships that had sunk in the sea area. Gradually, the Vietnamese began to differentiate the *Hoàng Sa Archipelago* from other islands, sandbanks, and reefs in the southern waters of the *Hoàng Sa Archipelago* and began to send people to explore and exploit this sea area. According to the book *Phủ biên tạp lục* by Lê Quý Đôn (compiled in 1776), in the latter half of the 18th century, in addition to the *Hoàng Sa Flotilla*, the Nguyễn government also established the *Bắc Hải Flotilla* under the *Hoàng Sa Flotilla*, tasked with exploring and exploiting marine resources from the southern waters of the *Hoàng Sa Archipelago* down to the *Côn Lôn*, *Hà Tiên* waters.⁶ During the reign of King Minh Mạng (1820 - 1841), the map *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* (drawn in 1838) for the first time officially distinguished between *Hoàng Sa* and *Vạn Lý Trường Sa*.

Similarly, Westerners typically used the name *Pracel* (*Parcel*, *Paracel*, *Paracels*,...) to collectively refer to the chain of islands, reefs, sandbanks, and coral reefs lying off the coast of Đàng Trong. The depiction of *Pracel* on Western maps usually appeared as a long, curved blade, with the northern end marked as I. de Pracel (*Hoàng Sa Island*) and the

³ Vietnamese researchers often refer to this map as *Livro de Marinharia*. *Livro de Marinharia* is a document compiled by João de Lisboa in 1560, consisting of 258 pages, including 20 maps depicting various regions of the world. This document is stored at the *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* (National Archive of Portugal), reference PR-TT-CRT-166. Source: <http://digitarq.dgarq.gov.pt/viewer?id=4162625>.

⁴ Pierre Yves Manguin, “Les Portugais sur la côte du Vietnam et du Champa”, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* (B.E.F.E.O.), Paris, 1972.

⁵ Cited: Thái Văn Kiểm, “Những sử liệu Tây phương minh chứng chủ quyền của Việt Nam và quần đảo Hoàng Sa - Trường Sa từ thời Pháp thuộc đến nay” [“Western Historical Records Confirming the Sovereignty of Vietnam over the Paracel and Spratly Islands from the French Colonial Period to the Present,”] *Sử Địa - Đặc khảo về Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa*, No. 29, Saigon, 1975, p. 36.

⁶ Nguyễn Nhã, “Vài nét về quần đảo Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa” [“Some Details about the Paracel and Spratly Islands,”] www.hoangsa.org.



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southern end marked as *Pulo Sissi* (Cù Lao Thu). In 1787 - 1788, when the Kergariou-Lochmaria survey expedition accurately and definitively determined the location of the *Paracels* (Hoàng Sa Archipelago) as it is known today, they distinguished the Paracels in the north from another archipelago located 500 km to the south, which *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* had named *Vạn Lý Trường Sa*. By the 1940s, the French had named the southern archipelago *Spratley*⁷, now known as the Trường Sa Archipelago.

However, in many other documents of the Nguyễn dynasty, the distinction between *Hoàng Sa* and *Vạn Lý Trường Sa* (Trường Sa Archipelago) was not very clear. Even in 1956, the understanding that “*the two archipelagos are one*” still appeared in a document from the government of Ngô Đình Diệm in South Vietnam, which stated that “*Hoàng Sa includes both Paracel and Spratly.*”⁸

However, one thing remains consistent: in the Western historical literature of the 17th - 19th centuries, the islands, reefs, sandbanks, and coral reefs that the Vietnamese recorded as *Bãi Cát Vàng* or *Côn Vàng* (in Nôm script) or *Hoàng Sa* (in Chinese script) were always recorded by Westerners as *Paracel* (or *Paracels*, *Pracel*, *Parcels*, *Paracelso*... depending on the language of each country). Notably, the map *An Nam đại quốc họa đồ* by Bishop Jean Louis Taberd, drawn in 1838, depicted the *Paracel islands* with the annotation “*Paracel seu Cát Vàng*”⁹ (Paracel or Côn Vàng). Bishop Taberd himself, in an article published in *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1837, wrote: “*The Pracel or Paracels is a labyrinth of a small islands, rocks, and sand-banks... The Cochinchina¹⁰ called them Côn Vàng... In 1816, he (King Gia Long) went with solemnity to plant his flag and take formal possess of these rocks, which it is not likely anybody wil dispute with him.*”¹¹

Regarding China, due to limited engagement with this sea area, they have referred to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago by many names, changing frequently. Only from 1907 onward did China start calling the Hoàng Sa Archipelago 西沙群島 (*Xisha Qundao*).¹²

1.2. Location

The Hoàng Sa Archipelago is located in the South China Sea (Biển Đông)¹³, with geographic coordinates from 15°45' to 17°15' North latitude and 111° to 113° East

⁷ Nguyễn Nhã, “Op-cit,” www.hoangsa.org.

⁸ Nguyễn Nhã, “Op-cit,” www.hoangsa.org.

⁹ The Latin word “*seu*” means “*or*.”

¹⁰ *Cochinchina* or *Cochin-Chine* was the name used by Westerners to refer to Đàng Trong at that time, which is the area from southern Quảng Bình Province southwards.

¹¹ James Prinsep, F.R.S. [Ed.], *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VI, Calcutta, 1837, p. 745.

¹² 西沙群島, pronounced in Sino-Vietnamese as *Tây Sa quần đảo*, transliterated in Mainland China’s pinyin as *Xisha Qundao*, and in Taiwan’s romanization as *Hsisa Qundao*, but commonly abbreviated as *Hsisa*.

¹³ Biển Đông (the South China Sea), called 华南海 (*Huananhai*) or 南海 (*Nanhai*) by China.



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longitude. The South China Sea is a crucial maritime gateway for trade among nations in the Pacific Rim, Southeast Asia, India, West Asia, the Mediterranean, and even Oceania over the centuries.

The total area of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago is approximately 16,000 km², lying parallel to the coastlines of the provinces: Quảng Trị, Thừa Thiên Huế, Đà Nẵng, Quảng Nam, and a part of Quảng Ngãi. The farthest western point of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, i.e., the closest point to Vietnam, is the tip of the island Tri Tôn, which is 123 nautical miles (about 228 km) from Cù Lao Ré (i.e., Lý Sơn Island, Quảng Ngãi Province). Meanwhile, the closest distance from the Hoàng Sa Archipelago to Hainan Island of China is about 140 nautical miles (about 254 km).¹⁴

Currently, the Hoàng Sa Archipelago is an administrative district under the jurisdiction of Đà Nẵng City.¹⁵ This island district is located 170 nautical miles (about 315 km) from the coast of Đà Nẵng, with a natural area of 305 km², accounting for 23.77% of the natural area of Đà Nẵng City, of which the total emerged area of the archipelago is about 10 km².

1.3. Main island groups and reefs

Hoàng Sa is a coral archipelago consisting of over 30 islands, rocks, coral reefs, submerged reefs, and sandbanks. The number of islands varies across documents due to tidal submergence. Recent publications¹⁶ identify two main groups within the Hoàng Sa Archipelago: the *Nguyệt Thiêm Group* (Crescent Group) in the southwest and the *An Vĩnh Group* (Amphitrite Group) in the northeast. These groups comprise about 30 islands, rocks, sandbanks, and reefs, including 15 named islands, three banks, three rocks, one sandbar, and one reef.¹⁷ The islands of Hoàng Sa are not high above sea level. The highest is Hòn Đá Island (15.24 m), and the lowest is Tri Tôn Island (3.048 m). Additionally, numerous reefs and submerged rocks are scattered over a large area around these two main island groups.¹⁸

¹⁴ Vũ Hữu San, *Địa lý Biển Đông với Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa* [Geography of the South China Sea with the Paracel and Spratly Islands,] Vietnamese edition, the 3rd printing, Stanford University, USA, 2007, pp. 134, 205.

¹⁵ Statistics for 2007 from the city of Đà Nẵng, <http://www.danang.gov.vn>.

¹⁶ For instance:

- Vũ Hữu San, *Op-cit.*

- Nguyễn Quang Trung Tiến, “Tên gọi các đảo ở Hoàng Sa” [“The names of the islands in the Paracels,”] *Nghiên cứu và Phát triển Magazine*, No. 2 (79)/2010, pp. 32-44.

- Hân Nguyễn Nguyễn Nhã, “Địa lý quần đảo Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa” [“Geography of the Paracel and Spratly Islands,”] *Lao Động cuối tuần Newspaper*, Issue 27, July 15, 2007.

¹⁷ Nguyễn Nhã, “Op-cit,” www.hoangsa.org.

¹⁸ Information about the names of islands, shoals, sandbanks, and rocks listed in this book is cited from: Nguyễn Quang Trung Tiến, “Op-cit,” pp. 32-44.



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1.3.1. Nguyệt Thiềm Group

Also known as *Trăng Khuyết*, *Lưỡi Liềm*, or *Western Group*, this group is referred to in English as the *Crescent Group* and in French as *Croissant Groupe*. The People's Republic of China (PRC) calls it *Yongle Qundao*. Located in the southwest of the archipelago near mainland Vietnam, this group includes seven main islands: *Hoàng Sa*, *Hữu Nhật*, *Duy Mộng*, *Quang Hòa*, *Quang Ảnh*, *Bạch Quy*, *Tri Tôn*, along with several submerged reefs and rocks.¹⁹

* *Hoàng Sa Island*: Known in English as *Pattle Island*, and in French as *Île Pattle*, currently called *Shanhudao* by China. Coordinates: 16°32' N, 111°36' E. The island is oval-shaped, about 9 m high, 950 m long, 700 m wide, covering an area of approximately 0.5 km², including the surrounding coral ring.

* *Hữu Nhật Island*: Known in English as *Robert Island*, and in French as *Île Robert*, currently called *Guanquandao* by China. Coordinates: 16°31' N, 111°34' E. The island is round, about 8 m high, 800 m in diameter, with a circumference of 2,000 m, and an area of about 0.6 km², featuring an outer coral ring and a calm central sea area. Named after Phạm Hữu Nhật (1804 - 1854), a naval captain dispatched by King Minh Mạng in 1836 to survey the sea routes and draw maps.

* *Duy Mộng Island*: Known in English as *Drummond Island*, and in French as *Île Drummond*, currently called *Jinqingdao* by China. Coordinates: 16°28' N, 111°44' E. The island is oval-shaped, about 4 m high, covering an area of approximately 0.41 km². It features small trees and an empty central area suitable for settlement, with a small creek allowing small boats to penetrate inland.

* *Quang Hòa Island*: Known in English as *Duncan Island*, and in French as *Île Duncan*, currently called *Chenhangdao* by China. Coordinates: 16°27' N, 111°42' E. The area is nearly 0.5 km². Adjacent to the main island is a smaller island connected by a long sandbar. Some geological maps distinguish East and West Quang Hòa Islands. *East Quang Hòa Island* has a circumference of about 2,700 m, covering an area of about 0.48 km². *West Quang Hòa Island* is nearly round, with a circumference of about 1,000 m, covering an area of about 0.09 km².

* *Quang Ảnh Island*: Known in English as *Money Island*, and in French as *Île Money*, currently called *Jinyindao* by China. Coordinates: 16°50' N, 112°20' E. Named after Phạm Quang Ảnh, a captain of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Nguyễn era, who conducted multiple expeditions to the archipelago to survey sea routes and collect marine products.

¹⁹ Coordinates of the islands in this section are cited from: Vũ Hữu San, *Op-cit*, pp. 259-271, 353-354, and from: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Tài liệu tham khảo phục vụ công tác tập huấn tuyên truyền về biển, đảo* [Reference Material for Propaganda Training on Sea and Islands,] Thông tin và Truyền thông Publishing House, 2013, pp. 110-117.



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During one expedition, Phạm Quang Ảnh and 24 militiamen were lost at sea in a storm. To honor his contributions, his name was given to this island. The island is oval and slightly round, with a circumference of about 2,100 m, covering an area of about 0.3 km².

* *Bạch Quy Island* (also known as *White Turtle Rock*): Known in English as *Passu Keah Island*, and in French as *Île Passoo Keah*, currently called *Panshiyu* by China. Coordinates: 16°03' N, 111°47' E. The island is an oval-shaped coral strip, about 15 m high, with a stark terrain, making survival challenging.

* *Tri Tôn Island*: Known in English as *Triton Island*, and in French as *Île Triton*, currently called *Zhongjiandao* by China. Coordinates: 15°47' N, 111°12' E. This is the closest island to the Vietnamese mainland among the Hoàng Sa islands. It is a remote island with few visitors, but the surrounding waters are rich in sea cucumbers, turtles, and colorful corals.

1.3.2. An Vĩnh Group

In the latter half of the 18th century, while the Western documents of the *Nguyêt Thiêm Group* in the southwest of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago were still imprecise, the *An Vĩnh Group* in the northeast was better known to them under the name *Les Triangles* (*Triangle Group*). The name *Triangles* derived from the triangular arrangement of the islands, although by the 18th century, this name was seldom used.

This group is also known as the *Northern Group*, in English as the *Amphitrite Group*, in French as the *Amphytrite Groupe*, and currently referred to by the People's Republic of China as *Xuande Qundao*. It is located in the northeastern part of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, with coordinates at 16°53' North latitude and 112°17' East longitude. The name of this group comes from the commune An Vĩnh in Quảng Ngãi, the homeland of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the time of the Nguyễn Lords and the Nguyễn Dynasty.²⁰

²⁰ An Vĩnh is a mainland commune in the southern part of the Sa Kỳ Sea Gateway, Bình Sơn District, Quảng Ngãi Province. During the reign of the Nguyễn Lords (16th - 18th centuries), six clans from An Vĩnh on the mainland had descendants who went to Lý Sơn Island to cultivate (along with people from An Hải Commune in the northern part of the Sa Kỳ Sea Gateway and others), forming two wards: An Vĩnh and An Hải, under the mainland commune of An Vĩnh. Although born and raised on Lý Sơn Island, the people of these two wards were still bound by obligations to their homeland. Participants in the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Lords Nguyễn period were mainly drawn from An Vĩnh Commune. In 1804, the two wards of An Vĩnh and An Hải were separated into independent administrative units from the original commune. From then on, the duty to go to the Paracels was usually carried out by people from the two wards of An Vĩnh and An Hải on Lý Sơn Island. The Hoàng Sa Flotilla in the early period of the Nguyễn dynasty consisted of 70 people, including some from An Vĩnh Commune, who annually went by boat in March to harvest resources on the islands for the court, returning in August. Members of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla closely associated with the conquest of the Paracels included many famous individuals such as Phạm Quang Ảnh, Phạm Hữu Nhật, Võ Văn Khiết, Võ Văn Hùng, Phạm Văn Sanh, Phạm Văn Nhiên, Phạm Văn Nguyên, along with many other unnamed individuals, all from An Vĩnh Commune. The significant contributions of the people from An Vĩnh (on the mainland) and An Vĩnh Ward (on Lý Sơn Island) under the Lords Nguyễn and the Nguyễn Dynasty led to the naming of this group of islands after An Vĩnh. Cited: Nguyễn Quang Trung Tiên, "Op-cit," p. 39.



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The An Vĩnh Group comprises the largest and highest islands in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago and includes the largest coral islands in the South China Sea, such as: *đảo Phú Lâm, đảo Cây, đảo Linh Côn, đảo Trung, đảo Bắc, đảo Nam, đảo Hòn Đá*.

* *Phú Lâm Island*: Known in English as *Woody Island*, in French as *Île Boisée*, and currently referred to by China as *Yongxingdao*. Coordinates: 16°50' N, 112°20' E. Phú Lâm Island, next to Rocky Island and about 87 km from Hoàng Sa Island, is the most significant island of the An Vĩnh Group, measuring 1.7 km in length, 1.2 km in width, and covering an area of about 1.3 km².

* *Linh Côn Island*: Known in English as *Lincoln Island*, in French as *Île Lincoln*, and currently referred to by China as *Dongdao*. Coordinates: 16°40' N, 112°44' E. Lincoln Island is the largest island in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, with an area of about 1.62 km², a height of about 4.5 m, and a coral ring extending southwards for nearly 15 nautical miles.

* *Đảo Cây Island* (also known as *Đảo Cù Mộc*): Known in English as *Tree Island*, in French as *Île Arbre*, and currently referred to by China as *Zhaoshudao*. Coordinates: 16°59' N, 112°16' E.

* *Đảo Trung Island* (also known as *Đảo Giữa Island*): Known in English as *Middle Island*, in French as *Île du Milieu*, and currently referred to by China as *Zhongdao*. Coordinates: 16°57' N, 112°19' E.

* *Đảo Bắc Island*: Known in English as *North Island*, in French as *Île du Nord*, and currently referred to by China as *Beidao*. Coordinates: 16°58' N, 112°18' E.

* *Đảo Nam Island*: Known in English as *South Island*, in French as *Île du Sud*, and currently referred to by China as *Nandao*. Coordinates: 16°57' N, 112°19' E.

* *Đảo Hòn Đá Island*: Known in English as *Rocky Island*, in French as *Île Rocheuse*, and currently referred to by China as *Shidao*. Coordinates: 16°51' N, 112°21' E.

1.3.3. Reefs, sandbars, and rocks

* *Addington Patch*, located at coordinates 15°36' N, 114°25' E.

* *Balfour Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°27' N, 114°00' E.

* *Bassett Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°27' N, 114°10' E.

* *Carpenter Shoal*, located at coordinates 16°03' N, 114°10' E.

* *Cathay Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°55' N, 113°58' E.

* *Cawston Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°31' N, 113°46' E.

* *Egeria Bank*, located at coordinates 16°01' N, 114°56' E.

* *Hand Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°59' N, 114°38' E.



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* *Hardy Patch*, located at coordinates 16°05' N, 114°46' E.

* *Herald Bank*, located at coordinates 15°44' N, 112°14' E.

* *Howard Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°51' N, 114°47' E.

* *Learmonth Shoal*, located at coordinates 15°42' N, 114°40' E.

* *Đá Bắc Reef* (also known as *North Sandbar*): Known in English as *North Reef*, currently referred to by China as *Beijiao*, located at coordinates 17°06' N, 111°30' E.

* *Đá Châu Nhai Bank*: Known in English as *Bremen Bank*, currently referred to by China as *Xinmeitan* (Tân Mỹ than), located at coordinates 16°18' N, 112°28' E.

* *Đá Khám Phá Reef* (also known as *Đá Lôi Rock*): Known in English as *Discovery Reef*, currently referred to by China as *Huaguangjiao*, located at coordinates 16°14' N, 111°41' E. This is the largest reef in the archipelago with a coral ring surrounding it, stretching 15 nautical miles in length and about 5 nautical miles in width.

* *Bãi Ốc Tai Voi Bank*: Known in English as *Herald Bank*, currently referred to by China as *Songtaotan*, located at coordinates 15°44' N, 112°14' E.

* *Bãi Quan Sát Bank* (also known as *Côn Quan Sát Sandbar* or *Côn Xà Cừ Sandbar*): Known in English as *Observation Bank*, currently referred to by China as *Yinju*, located at coordinates 16°35' N, 111°42' E.

* *Bãi Quảng Ngãi Bank*: Known in English as *Jehangir Bank* or *Jehangire Reef*, located at coordinates 16°21' N, 112°40' E. Quảng Ngãi is the homeland of the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas established by the Nguyễn Lords to exploit marine resources and establish and enforce sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa Archipelagos since the 17th century. The name *Jehangire* was given after the ship that spotted this sandbar on October 25, 1806.

* *Smith Shoal*, currently referred to by China as *Meixiansha*, located at coordinates 15°27' N, 114°12' E.

* *Bãi Sơn Dương Reef* (also known as *Đá Hải Sâm Rock*): Known in English as *Antelope Reef*, currently referred to by China as *Lingyangjiao*, located at coordinates 16°28' N, 111°34' E, south of *Hữu Nhật Island* and east of *Quang Ảnh Island*, entirely a submerged coral formation not visible above the water.

* *Stewart Bank*, located at coordinates 17°20' N, 118°50' E.

* *Bãi Vọng Các Shoal*: Known in English as *Bangkok Shoal*, located at coordinates 16°00' N, 114°05' E.

* *Bãi Xiêm La Shoal*: Known in English as *Siamese Shoal*, currently referred to by China as *Ximenansha*, located at coordinates 15°58' N, 114°04' E.



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* *Bãi Bông Bay Reef* (also known as *Bông Bay Sandbar*): Known in English as *Bombay Reef*, currently referred to by China as *Languajiao*, located at coordinates 16°02' N, 112°32' E.

* *Đá Chim Yến Bank*: Known in English as *Vuladdore Bank*, currently referred to by China as *Yuzhuojiao*, located at coordinates 16°20' N, 112°01' E, southeast of the *Nguyệt Thêm Group*.

* *Đá Nam Sand* (also known as *Nam Sandbar*): Known in English as *South Sand*, currently referred to by China as *Nanshazhou*, located at coordinates 16°56' N, 112°20' E.

* *Đá Tây Sand* (also known as *West Sandbar*): Known in English as *West Sand*, currently referred to by China as *Xishazhou*, located at coordinates 16°58' N, 112°12' E.

* *Đá Tháp Rock* (also known as *Hòn Tháp Rock*): Known in English as *Pyramid Rock*, currently referred to by China as *Gaojianshi*, located at coordinates 16°34' N, 112°38' E.

Additionally, there are two extensive submerged areas also associated with the Hoàng Sa waters: *Macclesfield Bank* and *Scarborough Shoal*.

* *Macclesfield Bank*, currently referred to by China as *Zhongsha Qundao*, located at coordinates 15°50' N, 114°20' E, comprising submerged reefs without any islands, stretching over 100 nautical miles in length and about 60 nautical miles in width.

* *Scarborough Shoal*, currently referred to by China as *Huangyandao*, located at coordinates 15°08' N, 117°46' E. The shoal includes a few rocks approximately 3 m high, with the majority being submerged reefs just below the water surface at high tide.

1.4. Natural Conditions

1.4.1. Climate

The Hoàng Sa Archipelago is situated in a maritime region characterized by a hot, humid climate with abundant rainfall, frequent fog, and numerous storms passing through. However, compared to similar latitudes on the mainland, Hoàng Sa experiences a milder climate due to its location in the middle of the South China Sea, with winters that are not too cold and summers that are not excessively hot.

Humidity levels on the islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago are consistently high, rarely dropping below 80%. The average humidity in June is about 85%. Rainfall in Hoàng Sa is generally not prolonged. The average annual rainfall is 1,170 mm, with the most rain occurring in October (17 days, 228 mm).

The Hoàng Sa region typically experiences storms during the seasonal transitions, especially from June to August each year. From September onwards, the frequency of storms begins to decrease, although storms can still occur around the archipelago until



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January of the following year. During storms, the sea is often turbulent and the rough conditions can last for several days.

1.4.2. Flora, fauna, and mineral potential

The islands, rocks, and submerged areas of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago host a diverse range of species including swiftlets, seagulls, turtles, mollusks, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, various fish, shrimp, and squid. Most of these species are similar to those found in other maritime regions of Vietnam such as the Trường Sa Archipelago, Cù Lao Ré, and Cù Lao Chàm. According to research conducted by French researcher H. Fontaine in the Hoàng Sa during the 1940s and 1950s, the fauna of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa islands are species also encountered on the Vietnamese mainland, indicating a closer environmental affinity with Vietnam rather than China. The fauna of Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa show little connection with those found in China.²¹

H. Fontaine's surveys of the vegetation on the islands of Hoàng Sa concluded that no indigenous plant species exist there. All plant life had been introduced from the mainland through various means. Further studies by H. Fontaine and Lê Văn Hội²² indicated that the existing vegetation in Hoàng Sa is also found in the central provinces of Vietnam. Plants such as mangroves, noni, and sea almonds found in Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa are also present in Cù Lao Ré and other coastal locations in Vietnam. Nguyễn Dynasty records such as *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd series, volume 104), *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ* (volume 207), and *Việt sử cương giám khảo lược* (volume 4) also attest to the mainland origin of many plant species in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.²³

The mineral resources in the seabed and on the islands, rocks, and submerged areas of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago are highly varied and valuable, including resources such as phosphates and petroleum. Notably, methane hydrates, a rare type of fossil fuel with significant economic value, are believed to exist in large quantities in the region.

2. The process of exploration, establishment, and enforcement of Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago

2.1. Exploration and establishment of sovereignty in the 16th - 17th centuries

Numerous historical sources from Vietnam, Western countries, and even China reflect and acknowledge the process of exploration, establishment, and enforcement of Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. From the 16th century, Vietnamese fishermen

²¹ Nguyễn Nhã, "Op-cit," www.hoangsa.org.

²² H. Fontaine and Lê Văn Hội, "Contribution to the Knowledge of the Flora of the Paracel Islands," *Annals of the Faculty of Sciences*, Saigon, 1957, pp. 133-137.

²³ For example, the event in 1833 when King Minh Mạng sent people to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago to plant numerous trees so that, once they grew large and healthy, they would help ships passing through the area recognize the islands, thus helping to avoid shipwrecks.



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began to explore the islands and seas within the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, exploiting its marine resources. By the 17th century, the authority of the Nguyễn Lords in Đàng Trong established a professional force named the Hoàng Sa Flotilla to exploit the archipelago's resources, marking the beginning of Vietnam's formal sovereignty claims over the islands.

The earliest dated record preserved in Vietnam is the *Toàn tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*, a collection of maps drawn by Đỗ Bá, pen name as Công Đạo, around 1686. This collection includes a map of Bình Sơn District at Quảng Ngãi Province, showing an island off the coast called 擺葛鑽 (Bãi Cát Vàng). Đỗ Bá's notes indicate that annually, the Nguyễn Lords dispatched naval expeditions to exploit the maritime resources around this island. The title *Toàn tập* (Complete Collection) implies that Đỗ Bá based his maps on earlier surveys, including those compiled in the *Hồng Đức bản đồ*²⁴ from the 15th century during the reign of King Lê Thánh Tông (1460 – 1497), suggesting that the Vietnamese were aware of the island now known as 擺葛鑽²⁵ from the 15th century onwards. The use of Nôm script for the island's name indicates that it was named by ordinary fishermen who directly explored and exploited the area, naming the island based on their observations rather than scholarly tradition.

Subsequently, the Nguyễn Lords continued to exploit the resources of the islands and surrounding waters through the operations of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla. This represents the earliest evidence of Vietnamese exploration and establishment of sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

A Chinese monk, Dashan (Monk Shilian), staying at Zhangshou Temple in Guangzhou (China), was invited by Lord Nguyễn Phúc Chu (1675 - 1725) to Đàng Trong in 1695 - 1696. He confirmed the authenticity of the Nguyễn Lords sending people to Hoàng Sa (which he referred to as *Vạn Lý Trường Sa*) to salvage goods from shipwrecks. In his work *Haiwai jishi* (written in 1696)²⁶, Dashan described the perilous sandbanks extending from the northeast to the southwest, acknowledging Vietnamese sovereignty over these islands at the time.

2.2. Continued exploitation and establishment of sovereignty in the 18th century

The exploitation and establishment of sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago continued into the 18th century. In 1774, Duke Bùi Thế Đạt drew the *Giáp Ngọ niên bình*

²⁴ The handwritten copy of *Toàn tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư* by Đỗ Bá merged with the *Hồng Đức bản đồ*, reference 100891, is stored at Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) in Tokyo, Japan.

²⁵ Võ Long Tê, *Les archipels de Hoàng Sa et de Trường Sa selon les anciens ouvrages Vietnamiens d'histoire et de géographie* [The Archipelagos of Paracel and Spratly according to ancient Vietnamese works of history and geography,] Saigon, 1974, pp. 34-35.

²⁶ Cited: Nguyễn Nhã, *Quá trình xác lập chủ quyền của Việt Nam tại quần đảo Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa* [The Process of Establishing Vietnam's Sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Archipelagos,] Ph.D. dissertation, National University of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, 2002, p. 47.



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Nam đồ, a map of Đàng Trong, which depicted the archipelago and named it *Bãi Cát Vàng*, recognizing it as part of Vietnamese territory.

Lê Quý Đôn, in his work *Phủ biên tạp lục* (compiled in 1776), dedicated several pages to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, which he referred to as *Đại Trường Sa*. He recorded the Nguyễn Lords' activities in exploiting and asserting sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa (and Trường Sa) Archipelagos through the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas. These operations, systematic and continuous from the 17th to the late 18th century, involved sailors recruited by the government who received state stipends, with permits and orders issued by the authorities.

Official court chronicles of the Nguyễn Dynasty, such as *Đại Nam thực lục*, *Đại Nam nhất thống chí*, *Lịch triều hiến chương loại chí*, and *Hoàng Việt địa dư chí*, documented the Nguyễn Lords' organization of resource exploitation activities in the Hoàng Sa, Trường Sa, and other islands from the 16th to the 18th centuries, such as establishing the Thanh Châu Flotilla for bird's nest collection off Quy Nhơn, the Hải Môn Flotilla to operate in islands off the coast of Bình Thuận such as Phú Quý Island, the Bắc Hải Flotilla under the Hoàng Sa Flotilla but in charge of the islands far to the south, including the Trường Sa Islands, Côn Lôn Island and islands under our country's sovereignty in the Gulf of Thailand.²⁷

Even during the Tây Sơn Dynasty (1771 - 1801), amidst wars with the Nguyễn clan and foreign invaders like Siam (1785) and the Qing Dynasty (1788 - 1789), there was a continued focus on maintaining the operations of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla. A recently discovered document dated February 14, 1786, from the Tây Sơn period instructs the leader of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla to continue collecting valuable materials and marine resources, demonstrating the ongoing importance of these activities for economic benefits and sovereignty control over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.²⁸

2.3. Official possession and enforcement of sovereignty in the 19th century

As the 19th century unfolded, the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802 - 1945) continued the efforts of previous dynasties, formally taking possession of and enforcing sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

The first king of the Nguyễn Dynasty, King Gia Long (1802 - 1820), solidified Vietnam's sovereignty over Hoàng Sa by officially taking possession of the islands. According to the *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên*, compiled by the Nguyễn Dynasty's National History Institute, in 1803, King Gia Long ordered the establishment of the Hoàng Sa

²⁷ Cited: *Quần đảo Hoàng Sa và quần đảo Trường Sa, bộ phận lãnh thổ của Việt Nam* [The Paracel and Spratly Islands, Part of the Territory of Vietnam,] Sự Thật Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, pp. 13-14.

²⁸ Cited: Nguyễn Quang Ngọc, "Chủ quyền của Việt Nam trên các vùng quần đảo giữa Biển Đông dưới thời Tây Sơn" ["The Sovereignty of Vietnam over the central South China Sea Archipelagos during the Tây Sơn period,"] <http://biengioihaidao.wordpress.com/category/tu-lieu-lich-su/page/2/>, accessed on July 26, 2013.



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Flotilla by drafting locals, and in 1815, he sent Phạm Quang Ảnh to lead the Hoàng Sa Flotilla on a mission to survey and chart the seas of Hoàng Sa.²⁹ Particularly in 1816, Gia Long commanded the Hoàng Sa Flotilla and the royal navy to explore, survey, and plant the flag on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago as a symbol of Vietnamese sovereignty.³⁰ In 1817, he acknowledged and rewarded the submission of maps of Hoàng Sa drawn by ships from Macau.

This possession of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago by King Gia Long's decree is also documented in early 19th century Western scholarly works such as Jean Baptiste Chaigneau's memoirs, *Le mémoire sur la Cochinchine* published in 1820; writings by Bishop Jean Louis Tabert in *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* published in Calcutta (India) in 1837; and Dubois de Jancigny's *L'univers. Histoire et description de tous les peuples. Japon, Indo-Chine, etc.*, published in Paris in 1850.

The enforcement of sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was conducted more systematically and thoroughly under the reign of King Minh Mạng (1820 - 1841). In 1833, Minh Mạng sent officials to Hoàng Sa to build temples, erect steles, and plant trees.³¹ In 1834, he dispatched the chief of the royal guard, Trương Phúc Sĩ, along with over 20 naval soldiers, to chart the islands.³² In 1835, Phạm Văn Nguyên led soldiers and craftsmen from Quảng Ngãi and Bình Định provinces to build temples, set up stone steles, and construct windbreaks in front of the temples.³³ In 1836, the naval commander Phạm Hữu Nhật was sent to survey and map the islands, sandbanks, etc., of the archipelago. During his mission, Nhật brought along 10 wooden tablets inscribed with the message (in Chinese): "In the 17th year of Minh Mạng, Bính Thân, by the command of the naval commander Phạm Hữu Nhật, sent to oversee and survey Hoàng Sa, this inscription was carved here."³⁴

The survey and mapping missions of 1834 to 1836 by Trương Phúc Sĩ, Phạm Văn Nguyên, Phạm Hữu Nhật, and their teams provided data that helped complete *the Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* in 1838, the first official administrative map of Đại Nam that distinctly differentiated Hoàng Sa from Vạn Lý Trường Sa.

From 1834 to 1839, Minh Mạng continuously rewarded those who undertook exploration, surveying, and mapping missions to Hoàng Sa. He also issued decrees

²⁹ National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên*, the 1st era, volume 50, p. 6, reference R.777, stored at the Vietnam National Library (Hanoi, Vietnam).

³⁰ National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, *Op-cit*, the 1st era, volume 52, p. 11.

³¹ National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, *Op-cit*, the 1st era, volume 52, p. 15.

³² National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, *Op-cit*, the 2nd era, volume 122, p. 22.

³³ National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, *Op-cit*, the 2nd era, volume 154, p. 4.

³⁴ National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, *Op-cit*, the 2nd era, volume 165, p. 24-25.



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rewarding those who were unable to complete their missions due to storms and punishing those who failed to fulfill their maritime patrol duties.

Subsequent emperors, Thiệu Trị (1841 - 1847) and Tự Đức (1848 - 1883), maintained administrative management over the islands, aiming to provide the best understanding of the geography and navigation of the area and facilitate the taxation of fishermen in the region.³⁵

Thus, the Nguyễn Dynasty not only exploited the Hoàng Sa Archipelago but also recognized its strategic location as Vietnam's maritime frontier, organizing long-term programs to reinforce borders, enforce sovereignty, and protect territory. They also undertook measures to mitigate the dangers posed by the archipelago's geography to passing ships by planting trees and erecting markers, demonstrating a high level of state responsibility.³⁶

Additionally, the continuous official actions and sovereignty enforcement by the Nguyễn Dynasty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago are reflected in *châu bản* (the imperial records).³⁷ These records, stored at the National Archives Centre I and the National Border Committee (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), contain 17 documents from the reigns of Minh Mạng, Thiệu Trị, and Bảo Đại related to the establishment, enforcement, and protection of sovereignty over Hoàng Sa.³⁸ These documents record the regular dispatch of personnel to Hoàng Sa for tasks such as surveying, marking territories, mapping, and conducting search and rescue operations for both Vietnamese and foreign ships in distress in the area, showcasing a peaceful, state-organized approach to asserting sovereignty over the islands continuously throughout these periods.

These activities continued what previous Vietnamese feudal dynasties had done, spanning 300 years and without any objections from the Chinese state and neighboring countries at the time.

Thus, Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago (and Trường Sa Archipelago) has been acquired through two coordinated methods:

³⁵ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Chủ quyền trên hai quần đảo Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa* [Sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Archipelagos,] Chính trị Quốc gia Publishing House, Hanoi, 1998, p. 43.

³⁶ Cited: Từ Đặng Minh Thu, “Chủ quyền trên hai quần đảo Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa. Thử phân tích lập luận của Việt Nam và Trung Quốc” [“Sovereignty over the two archipelagos of Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa. Try analyzing the arguments of Vietnam and China.”] http://www.tapchithoidai.org/ThoiDai11/200711_Tu-Dang-MinhThu.htm.

³⁷ *Châu bản* is an administrative document of the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802 - 1945), featuring the red ink signatures of the Nguyễn kings.

³⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs - National Border Committee, *Tuyển tập các châu bản triều Nguyễn về thực thi chủ quyền của Việt Nam trên hai quần đảo Hoàng Sa và Trường Sa* [Collection of Official Documents of the Nguyen Dynasty on the Exercise of sovereignty of Vietnam in over Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipenlagoes,] Tri Thức Publishing House, Hanoi, 2013.



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1. Historical sovereignty originates from the long-standing use and possession of a “ownerless territory” (res nullius) under the Nguyen Lords (in the 17th - 18th centuries);
2. Sovereignty originates from the official “actual possession” and continuous exercise of sovereignty under the Nguyễn kings (19th century).

In fact, acquisition by method 1 is enough to create sovereignty for Vietnam, and thus, Vietnam has had “historical sovereignty” since the 17th century. This sovereignty was further consolidated when the Nguyễn Dynasty officially took possession of the Hoàng Sa archipelago in 1816.³⁹

3. Administrative management by Vietnam over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago

3.1. Administrative management during French colonial rule (1884 - 1950)

On June 6, 1884, the Nguyễn Dynasty signed the *Treaty of Giáp Thân* (also known as the *Patenôtre Treaty*) with France, wherein France agreed to represent the interests of Đại Nam (the then official name of Vietnam) in foreign relations and to protect its territorial sovereignty, including ongoing sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁴⁰

In 1899, the Governor-General of French Indochina, Paul Doumer, ordered the construction of a lighthouse on Hoàng Sa Island (*Île Pattle*) to aid navigation in the area. However, due to budget constraints, this project was not realized.⁴¹

In 1920, the Japanese company Mitsui-Bussan Kaisha approached the French authorities in Indochina seeking permission to mine phosphate on some of the islands in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.⁴²

From 1920 onwards, France implemented sea control and customs enforcement over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.⁴³

³⁹ This is the second and third content among the four contents of the “*actual possession*” principle presented in the Berlin Treaty signed on June 26, 1885, and reaffirmed in the Lausanne Statement of the International Law Institute in 1888 on the principle of “*actual possession*” having universal value in international law for resolving territorial sovereignty disputes between nations. The main content of the “*actual possession*” principle in international law includes: [1] *The establishment of territorial sovereignty must be carried out by the state*; [2] *The possession must be conducted peacefully on a terra nullius or on a territory abandoned by a nation that previously had sovereignty over it (derelicto). The use of force for occupation is an illegal act*; [3] *The state in possession must exercise its sovereignty to the necessary extent, minimally appropriate to the natural conditions and population of the territory*; and [4] *The exercise of sovereignty must be continuous and peaceful*.

⁴⁰ As the content of this paper primarily focuses on the issue of Vietnam’s sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago based on the results of the topic *Documentation Fund on the Sovereignty of Vietnam over the Hoàng Sa District - Đà Nẵng City*, in this paper we only briefly outline the administrative management activities of the French in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, not introducing similar activities in the Trường Sa Archipelago.

⁴¹ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 44.

⁴² Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, pp. 44-45.

⁴³ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 45.



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In 1925, the ship *De Lanessan* transported a group of French scientists led by A. Krempf, the Director of the Oceanographic Institute of Nha Trang, to conduct oceanographic, geological, and marine biological surveys in the region.⁴⁴

In 1929, the Perrier-De Rouville mission, after surveying the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, recommended the construction of lighthouses on four islands situated at the corners of the archipelago: Tri Tôn Island, Đá Bắc Rock, Linh Côn Island, and Bombay Reef

Throughout the 1930s, French Indochina continued to dispatch scientific research ships and military vessels to Hoàng Sa, including *La Malicieuse* (1930), *Inconstant* (March 1931), *De Lanessan* (June 1931), and the warship *Alerte* (May 1932).

From 1930 to 1933, the French administration stationed military personnel on several key islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago⁴⁵ and established administrative organizations there. Specifically, on June 15, 1932, the Governor-General of Indochina, Pierre Pasquier, issued Decree No. 156-SC, establishing the Hoàng Sa Administrative Agency under Thừa Thiên Province.⁴⁶ Annually, representatives from the French administration in Central Vietnam coordinated with representatives from the Nguyễn Court in Huế Capital City to manage Hoàng Sa. The regime provided specific allowances and subsidies for administrative officials representing and managing Hoàng Sa, funded by the Trung Kỳ (Central Vietnam) government budget.⁴⁷

In February 1937, the French cruiser *Lamotte Piquet* visited the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. In the same year, the Khâm sứ Trung Kỳ (Protectorate's delegate of Central Vietnam) sent engineer J. Gauthier to Hoàng Sa Island to study potential sites for lighthouse and seaplane landing construction.

While the administration of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was directly managed by the Protectorate's delegate of Central Vietnam, the *Nam triều* (Court of Đại Nam)⁴⁸ also coordinated closely with the French in these matters. On March 30, 1938, Emperor Bảo Đại signed Decree No. 10, reassigning the Hoàng Sa Archipelago from Nam-Ngãi Province to Thừa Thiên Province, facilitating better administrative and maritime connections.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁴ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 45.

⁴⁵ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs - National Border Committee, *Op-cit*, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁷ Decree by the Governor-General of French Indochina No. 156-SC dated June 15, 1932, regarding the establishment of an administrative agency in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. An administrative agency is a remote administrative unit, usually managed by a vice consul or a French military officer representing the consul in charge. Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 242.

⁴⁸ Decree signed by the Governor-General of French Indochina on January 28, 1934. Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 46.

⁴⁹ *Nam triều* (Court of Đại Nam) or *Annam Court* are other terms for the Nguyễn Dynasty under Emperor Bảo Đại (1926 - 1945).



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French also built infrastructure on Hoàng Sa, including a lighthouse, meteorological station, and a TSF radio station. In 1938, a sovereignty stele inscribed in French was erected on Hoàng Sa Island.

On May 5, 1939, Governor-General of Indochina Jules Brévié signed Decree No. 3282, amending Decree 156-SC of June 15, 1932, establishing two new administrative agencies in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, replacing the single agency established in 1932. The new agencies, responsible for the Nguyệt Thiềm and An Vĩnh groups of islands, fell under the jurisdiction of Thừa Thiên Province.⁵⁰ The administrative boundaries between these agencies were delineated by the meridian at 112 degrees East, excluding the Vulcan Bank which fell entirely under the Nguyệt Thiềm Administration. The heads of these administrative agencies, representing the Protectorate's delegate of Central Vietnam, were based on the islands of Hoàng Sa and Phú Lâm. Each year, these representatives received an allowance of 400 Indochinese piastres from the Central Vietnam regional budget.

During World War II, some islands in the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos were occupied by Japanese forces, but the French administration maintained military presence on the main island of Hoàng Sa and its adjacent islands, continuing to manage both archipelagos and issuing several declarations against the Japanese occupation. After the Japanese coup d'état in French Indochina on March 9, 1945, French soldiers stationed on Hoàng Sa Island were taken prisoner by the Japanese navy, and Japan began to occupy this island along with Phú Lâm, Linh Côn, and Hữu Nhật islands, which they had already occupied since 1938.

After World War II ended with Japan's defeat, Japanese troops stationed on Hoàng Sa Archipelago did not withdraw until 1946. Subsequently, a French infantry detachment from the ship *Savorgnan de Brazza* landed on Hoàng Sa Island in May 1946, but this unit stayed only a few months due to the Indochina War.

After the French withdrawal, the government of the Republic of China deployed troops to Hoàng Sa Island in November 1946 and occupied Phú Lâm Island by January 1947. The French government formally protested this action by the Republic of China and quickly dispatched a French military unit to station on Hoàng Sa Island in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

On March 8, 1949, French President Vincent Auriol and former Emperor Bảo Đại signed the *Elysée Treaty*, establishing the *Quốc gia Việt Nam* (the State of Vietnam)⁵¹ within the French Union, headed by Head of State Bảo Đại. However, as the State of Vietnam was still nascent, key powers such as military, financial, and foreign affairs in Vietnam were

⁵⁰ Decree No. 10 signed by Emperor Bảo Đại on February 29 of the 13th Bảo Đại year (March 30, 1938).

⁵¹ Decree No. 3282 signed by the Governor-General of French Indochina Jules Brévié on May 5, 1939.



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held by the French High Commissioner in Indochina. The French military in Indochina represented the State of Vietnam in carrying out military activities on Vietnamese territory and maritime areas, including the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. In 1949, France maintained a military presence on Hoàng Sa Island, while Chinese Nationalist soldiers had withdrawn from Phú Lâm Island by April 1950.

On October 14, 1950, the French government officially transferred administrative control of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos to the State of Vietnam. The handover ceremony on Hoàng Sa Island was presided over by Phan Văn Giáo, the Premier of Central Vietnam. The French officially ceased their administration of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁵²

3.2. Administrative management organization during the State of Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam (1950 - 1975)

After taking over the management of the Hoàng Sa archipelago, State of Vietnam kept the administrative organization and facilities that the French had previously built in this place

On September 7, 1951, when attending the Conference to sign a peace treaty with Japan organized by 48 Allied countries in San Francisco (USA), Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Vietnam was Trần Văn Hữu declared the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos as belonging to Vietnamese territory without encountering any opposition from the countries attending this conference.

After the Geneva Agreement on Vietnam was signed and took effect (from July 1954), the two archipelagos of Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa are located south of the 17th parallel, under the management of the State of Vietnam under a provision of this agreement.

In April 1956, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam replaced the State of Vietnam to take over the Nguyệt Thiềm Group in the west of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago and the islands of the Trường Sa Archipelago.⁵³

On June 8, 1956, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Vietnam issued a statement reaffirming sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. Also in this year,

⁵² *Quốc gia Việt Nam* (The State of Vietnam) was established by the *Elysée Treaty* signed on March 8, 1949, between French President Vincent Auriol and Head of State Bảo Đại. Formally, the *Quốc gia Việt Nam* was part of the French Union, independent, and coexistent on the same territory with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam government established by Hồ Chí Minh on September 2, 1945. *Quốc gia Việt Nam* government existed for six years (1949 - 1955). In 1955, Ngô Đình Diệm deposed Head of State Bảo Đại, dissolved the *Quốc gia Việt Nam* government, and established the Republic of Vietnam government in South Vietnam.

⁵³ However, in reality, the French continued their research activities in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. For example, in 1953, France sent the ship *Ingenieur en elef Girod* to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago to conduct surveys on oceanography, geology, geography, and environment.



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the Navy of the Republic of Vietnam supported the Southern Department of Mines, Industry and Small Industry to survey four islands: Hoàng Sa, Quang Ảnh, Hữu Nhật and Duy Mộng in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

Based on the regulations for organizing the national administration from the 17th parallel upwards and the determination of the administrative unit of Quảng Nam Province, on July 13, 1961, the President of the Republic of Vietnam signed Decree 174-NV transferring the archipelago. Hoàng Sa from the management of Thừa Thiên Province to Quảng Nam Province⁵⁴, at the same time, took this entire archipelago to establish an administrative unit, named Định Hải Commune, Hòa Vang District, Quảng Nam Province.⁵⁵ Định Hải Commune is placed under the management of an administrative envoy.

Next, to implement administrative reform in South Vietnam to suit the contemporary situation, on February 6, 1968, the Quảng Nam Provincial Council met to propose the merger of Định Hải Commune (include Hoàng Sa Archipelago) into an administrative unit on the mainland. Next, on August 9, 1969, the Council of Hòa Long Commune, Hòa Vang District met and agreed to merge Định Hải Commune into Hòa Vang District. The Governor of Quảng Nam Province agreed with this merger and proposed to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to approve this. On October 21, 1969, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam agreed to merge Định Hải Commune (into Hòa Vang District, Quảng Nam Province) into Hòa Long Commune of the same district.⁵⁶ From here, the administrative management of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was entrusted to the grassroots administrative unit on the mainland, until China used force to occupy the entire Hoàng Sa Archipelago in January 1974.

3.3. Administrative management from 1975 to present

After the reunification of Vietnam on April 30, 1975, although the Hoàng Sa Archipelago had been fully occupied by China in 1974, Vietnam has continually engaged in activities to affirm its sovereignty over the archipelago.

In 1976, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established, officially inheriting the sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos from previous states, and took on the responsibility to protect the sovereignty over these archipelagos.

⁵⁴ The An Vĩnh Group in the eastern part of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was occupied by the Chinese military before the Army of the Republic of Vietnam could take over.

⁵⁵ Decree 57-a dated October 24, 1956, on the organization of the national administration from the 17th parallel northwards, and Decree No. 335-NC/P6 dated June 24, 1958, specifying the administrative unit of Quảng Nam Province of the Republic of Vietnam.

⁵⁶ Decree No. 174-NV dated July 13, 1961, by the President of the Republic of Vietnam.



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On May 12, 1977, the Vietnamese government issued a declaration on the territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, and continental shelf of Vietnam, affirming that the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos are territories of Vietnam.

On December 9, 1982, the Council of Ministers of Vietnam issued Decision No. 194-HĐBT establishing the island district of Hoàng Sa, which includes the islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, under the jurisdiction of Quảng Nam - Đà Nẵng Province. This legal document reaffirms Vietnam's administrative management over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, which is currently occupied by China.

On November 6, 1996, during the 10th session of the IX legislature of the Vietnamese National Assembly, it was decided to split Quảng Nam - Đà Nẵng Province into Quảng Nam Province and Đà Nẵng City. Consequently, the Hoàng Sa District was incorporated into Đà Nẵng City. From January 1, 1997, Đà Nẵng became a centrally controlled city, officially managing the Hoàng Sa District. Due to China's occupation of the archipelago, the permanent office of the People's Committee of Hoàng Sa District is located within the premises of the Đà Nẵng Department of Home Affairs (132 Yên Bái Street, Phước Ninh Ward, Hải Châu District, Đà Nẵng City).

In 2008, the People's Committee of Hoàng Sa District began recruiting administrative officials. On April 25, 2009, the Chairman of the Đà Nẵng People's Committee officially appointed the position of Chairman of the People's Committee of Hoàng Sa District, held concurrently by Mr. Đặng Công Ngữ, Director of the Đà Nẵng Department of Home Affairs.

From 2010, the Chairman of the People's Committee of the Hoàng Sa District appointed the position of Chief of the Office of the People's Committee of Hoàng Sa, responsible for administrative affairs within the district's competence.

On May 1, 2014, Mr. Đặng Công Ngữ, Chairman of the Hoàng Sa District, retired, and the Đà Nẵng People's Committee appointed Mr. Võ Công Chánh, Director of the Đà Nẵng Department of Home Affairs, to concurrently hold the position of Chairman of the Hoàng Sa District.

In June 2016, after Mr. Võ Công Chánh was transferred to another duty, the Chairman of the Đà Nẵng People's Committee appointed Mr. Võ Ngọc Đồng, the new Director of the Đà Nẵng Department of Home Affairs, as the concurrent Chairman of the Hoàng Sa District. On June 30, 2021, Mr. Võ Ngọc Đồng was reappointed as Chairman of the Hoàng Sa District for the term 2021 - 2026. Additionally, Mr. Lê Phú Nguyễn was appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Hoàng Sa District for the same term.

On March 28, 2018, after three years of construction, the Museum of Hoàng Sa, funded by the Đà Nẵng People's Committee, was inaugurated at Hoàng Sa Street, Thọ Quang



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Ward, Sơn Trà District, Đà Nẵng City. This facility displays over 500 documents, maps, images, legal files, and dozens of research works on the history of exploration, occupation, establishment, enforcement, and protection of Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa, Trường Sa Archipelagos and Vietnamese maritime territories.

Thus, from the 16th century, when the first Vietnamese fishermen landed on the uninhabited islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, to the present day, generations of Vietnamese people and states have continuously explored, exploited, established, and enforced sovereignty, leading to the organization of administrative management of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago over more than five centuries. This long, continuous, and lawful historical process is evidenced in historical records from Vietnam, the West, and even China, which is currently illegally occupying Vietnam's Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

B. SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTES AND THE STRUGGLE TO DEFEND VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOÀNG SA ARCHIPELAGO

Vietnamese people have had a long history, spanning five centuries, of exploring, establishing, and enforcing sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. This history is documented in various sources from Vietnam, the West, and even China. Historical records from Chinese dynasties, from the Qin and Han periods (221 BCE - 220 CE) to the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911), do not describe territories further south than the Yazhou area of Qiongzhou District (Hainan Island). Likewise, Chinese maps from ancient times until the end of the Qing Dynasty limit China's territorial claims to Hainan Island, without mentioning the archipelagos known today as the Xisha Qundao (*quần đảo Hoàng Sa* in Vietnamese) and Nansha Qundao (*quần đảo Trường Sa* in Vietnamese), which are part of Vietnamese territory.

However, starting in 1909, China began disputing Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, and later over the Trường Sa Archipelago. Unlike the Trường Sa, where multiple nations including the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Brunei also claim sovereignty, the dispute over Hoàng Sa Archipelago has been predominantly with China. This dispute began when the Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi, Zhang Renjun, ordered his subordinate, Naval Admiral Li Zhun, to conduct a survey of the Hoàng Sa in 1909. This conflict has escalated over the years, becoming increasingly serious and dangerous.

The roots of China's sovereignty dispute with Vietnam over Hoàng Sa can be traced back even before these events, beginning with the treaties the French colonial administration signed with the Nguyễn Dynasty in 1884 and with the Qing Dynasty in 1885 and 1887.

French rule in Vietnam began with the Treaty of Saigon on March 15, 1874, which established French protection over Southern Vietnam, and was confirmed by the Treaty of



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Huế on June 6, 1884 (also known as the Patenôtre Treaty), which officially established French protection over the entirety of Vietnam and forced Vietnam to abandon its tributary relations with China.

The Patenôtre Treaty granted France significant authority to govern Vietnam, including jurisdiction over its territory and the responsibility to protect its sovereignty. With this treaty, France extended its control to Northern and Central Vietnam. The French military had the right to move freely and station troops throughout Vietnamese territory.

On October 17, 1887, the Indochinese Union was established, comprising Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, under the administration of a French Governor-General. The first Governor-General was Ernest Constans (1887 - 1888). From this point, basic powers, including territorial protection and foreign affairs, previously held by the Nguyễn Dynasty, were transferred to the French. Therefore, from a legal perspective, the French colonial administration in Indochina was acting on behalf of the Nguyễn Dynasty in exercising national sovereignty and protecting national territory. This period also marks the beginning of sovereignty disputes over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, primarily with China, starting with the “inspection of Xisha” in 1909 by the Guangdong provincial government, continued by the Republic of China (1912 - 1949) and the People’s Republic of China (from 1949 to present).

Here are the key events in the ongoing sovereignty disputes over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago involving Chinese states from the late 19th century to the present.⁵⁷

1. Period 1884 - 1954

On June 26, 1887, France and the Qing Dynasty signed a treaty delineating the border between Northern Vietnam and China. The treaty stated: “In Guangdong, both parties agreed that the disputed areas to the east and northeast of Mong Cai, beyond the boundary as demarcated by the Boundary Delimitation Commission, belong to China. The islands lying east of the Paris meridian 105°43’ East, that is, along a north-south line passing through the easternmost point of the island of Tch’a-Kou or Ouanchan (Tra Co), also belong to China. The Cô Tô islands and other islands west of this meridian belong to Annam.”⁵⁸

In 1895, the German ship *Bellona* sank near the Paracel Islands. The following year, 1896, the Japanese ship *Imeji Maru*⁵⁹ also sank near these islands. Both ships were carrying copper and were insured by British companies. Unable to salvage the cargo, most of the

⁵⁷ The main developments of the incident in this section 2.1 are primarily cited from: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, pp. 41-56, and from: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, pp. 124-146.

⁵⁸ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 44.

⁵⁹ The name of this ship varies in contemporary documents, with some documents referring to it as *Huneji-Marui* and others as *Imegu-Marui*.



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goods from these ships were abandoned at the shipwreck sites. Chinese fishermen from Hainan Island came in boats and sailed to the site, looting the cargo and belongings from the wrecks, later selling these stolen goods back to the shipowners on Hainan Island. The insurance companies of the two ships protested the looting by Hainan fishermen and called on the British representative in Beijing and the British consul in Hoihow (Haikou) to object. The Guangdong authorities⁶⁰ disclaimed responsibility, stating that the site of the shipwrecks, the Paracel Islands, were uninhabited islands not belonging to the territory of China nor to Vietnam and “administratively, these islands are not incorporated into any county of Hainan Island and no special law enforcement authority oversees these islands.”⁶¹

In May 1909, the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi, Zhang Renjun, ordered Admiral Li Zhun to lead a fleet of three ships to scout the Paracel Islands. On June 6, 1909, Li Zhun’s group landed on the Paracel Islands and declared “possession” of the islands.⁶² The French government regarded this as merely a unilateral act by the provincial government of Guangdong, thus considering the “nominal possession” claim as invalid.

On March 8, 1921, the French Governor-General of Indochina officially declared the Paracel and Spratly Islands as territories of Annam under French control.

On March 3, 1925, the Minister of War of the Annam Court, Thân Trọng Huề, declared that the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was the territory of Annam.⁶³

On March 30, 1921, the Governor-General of Guangdong declared that the military government of South China in Guangdong had decided to incorporate the Paracel Islands into the Yazhou district of Hainan Island. France did not officially object, but it is a fact that the military government of South China at that time was not recognized by the central government of the Republic of China in Nanjing, nor by other countries, including France.

From 1925, France began to send ships to conduct oceanographic surveys around the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. The first was the ship *De Lanessan*, carrying scientists from the

⁶⁰ *Lưỡng Quảng (Liangguang)* comprises the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in China.

⁶¹ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 44.

⁶² By order of the Viceroy Governor Liangguang Zhang Renjun, Admiral Li Zhun led three gunboats: Fubo, Shenhang, and Guangjin to “inspect” the waters around the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, which China calls *Xisha Qundao*. On June 6, 1909, the fleet arrived at the islands, landed on Phú Lâm Island, which China calls *Yongxingdao*, hoisted the flag, fired guns, visited a few other islands, and returned to Guangzhou within 24 hours. The media and historical documents of the Republic of China at the time referred to this trip as the “Xisha Inspection.” By 1932, the Republic of China regarded the landing by Li Zhun on some of the islands in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago as a historical basis to establish China’s sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago (in fact, it was just a survey of some islands off the east coast of Hainan Island). Li Zhun’s trip was a small survey and exploration, but it was called the “Xisha Inspection” by Chinese media and used as one of the historical bases to assert China’s sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago as well as in the sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea. Source: http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lý_Chuồn.

⁶³ Cited: Nguyễn Nhã, *Op-cit*, Ph.D. dissertation, National University of Ho Chi Minh City, 2002.



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Oceanographic Institute of Nha Trang led by Director A. Krempf. The *De Lanessan* also carried French scientists to survey the Trường Sa Archipelago in 1927 and returned to survey the Hoàng Sa Archipelago again in June 1931. Other ships included *La Malicieuse* (which visited the Hoàng Sa Archipelago in 1930) and the *Inconstant* (which visited in March 1931),... The French regarded the Paracel Islands as territories under French administration and actively sent exploratory and research vessels to these maritime areas.

In 1931, the government of the Republic of China in Nanjing authorized the exploitation of guano on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, granting exploitation rights to the Anglo-Chinese Development Company. The French government sent a message to the Chinese Embassy in Paris on December 4, 1931, to protest this action.

On April 29, 1932, the French government issued a protest, clearly outlining the historical claims and evidence of Annam's possession of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa Archipelagos⁶⁴, which France now represented. Also in 1932, France proposed taking the dispute to an international court, but the Republic of China objected.

On June 15, 1932, the French Governor-General Pierre Pasquier signed Decree 156-SC establishing the *Administrative Agency of the Hoàng Sa* on the Pattle Island, under the jurisdiction of Thừa Thiên Province.

In 1938, the French erected sovereignty steles on the Pattle Island, and constructed a lighthouse, a meteorological station, and a radio station to serve the French forces stationed there.

On May 5, 1939, the French Governor-General Jules Brévié signed Decree 3282, amending Decree 156-SC of June 15, 1932, establishing two new administrative agencies on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago: the *Administrative Agency of Nguyệt Thiềm* and its surroundings and the *Administrative Agency of An Vĩnh* and its surroundings, under the jurisdiction of Thừa Thiên Province. During the period representing the Nguyễn Dynasty in matters of defense and foreign affairs, France consistently affirmed Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, and repeatedly voiced objections to other nations' sovereignty claims over these islands.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Annam* or *An Nam* was the name the French used for our country since their conquest of Vietnam. After the *Treaty of Tientsin* in 1884, the name Annam was commonly used to refer to Central Vietnam (distinguished from Tonkin in the north and Cochinchina in the south). The Nguyễn Court in Huế was also referred to by the French as the *Nam triều* (Court of Đại Nam).

⁶⁵ For example, on December 4, 1931, and April 24, 1932, France protested against the Republic of China's government in Guangdong Province's plans to tender for guano mining on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago; on July 24, 1933, France informed Japan of its deployment of troops to the main islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, Japan protested this move, but France rejected Japan's protest; on April 4, 1939, France protested Japan's claiming of some islands in the Trường Sa Archipelago as under Japanese jurisdiction... Cited: Ministry of Foreign Affairs - National Border Committee, *Op-cit*, p. 39.



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Besides the Republic of China, from 1938 to 1946, the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was also disputed by Japan, then occupying China and other Asian countries. In 1938, Japan forcibly occupied the three main islands in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago: Phú Lâm, Linh Côn, and Hữu Nhật. In 1939, Japan declared sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, renaming the Hoàng Sa Archipelago to *Hirata Gunto* and the Trường Sa Archipelago to *Shinnan Gunto*.⁶⁶ Previously, Japan had occupied Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands of China. Before the end of World War II, the leaders of the three Allied countries - the United States (represented by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt), the United Kingdom (represented by Prime Minister Winston Churchill), and the Republic of China (represented by President Chiang Kai-shek) participated in the Cairo Conference in Egypt on November 27, 1943. The conference issued the Cairo Declaration, which demanded that Japan return all territories it had taken from China, including Manchuria, Taiwan, and the Pescadores Islands. However, the Cairo Declaration did not mention transferring the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos to the Republic of China.⁶⁷

The 1943 Cairo Declaration was endorsed by the representative of the Soviet Union at the Tehran Conference between US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Marshal Joseph Stalin on November 30, 1943. At this conference, Joseph Stalin endorsed the return of Manchuria, Taiwan, and the Pescadores to the Republic of China, but he did not mention transferring the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos to the Republic of China.⁶⁸

On March 9, 1945, after the event of the “Japanese overthrow of the French” in Indochina, the French forces stationed on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was captured by the Japanese navy, and the Japanese military began to occupy the islands.

After Germany surrendered to the Allies, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union convened the Potsdam Conference in Germany from July 16, 1945, to August 2, 1945, to discuss sanctions against Germany and the political future of Eastern and Central Europe after World War II. The conference produced two important documents, one of which was signed by US President Harry Truman, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Republic of China President Chiang Kai-shek, requiring Japan to surrender unconditionally and indirectly determining the disarmament of the Japanese military in the Pacific. For Vietnam, the document specified that the disarmament of the Japanese military south of the 16th parallel (including the Trường Sa Archipelago) would be carried out by British forces, and north of the 16th parallel (including the Hoàng Sa Archipelagos) by the military of the Republic of China. Under

⁶⁶ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 127.

⁶⁷ Source: *U.N. Treaty Series*, American Policy 1950 - 1955.

⁶⁸ The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran 1943, The Foreign Relations of the United States, Washington D.C., 1961.



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international law, military disarmament cannot constitute territorial acquisition or possession; thus, neither the United Kingdom nor the Republic of China could claim territorial sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos through the act of military disarmament authorized by the Allied powers.

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied powers. World War II came to an end. The Allied powers prepared to disarm the Japanese forces in Asia-Pacific, including Vietnam.

On August 19, 1945, the Viet Minh seized control in Hanoi. On August 22, 1945, the Provisional Government of Hồ Chí Minh was established. On August 30, 1945, Emperor Bảo Đại abdicated. On September 2, 1945, Hồ Chí Minh declared the independence of Vietnam and established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

From the end of 1945, Japan withdrew from Indochina, but Japanese forces continued to be stationed on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago until 1946. In May 1946, a French infantry detachment landed from the ship *Savorgnan de Brazza* on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago to replace the Japanese forces, but this unit only stayed in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago for a few months before withdrawing due to the Indochina War.

In November 1946, under the pretext of disarming the Japanese military, military units of the Republic of China landed on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago after the French forces had withdrawn, and by December 1946, the military of the Republic of China had landed on Ba Binh Island in the Trường Sa Archipelago.

On February 28, 1946, the *Sino-French Treaty* was signed in Chongqing (China) allowing French troops to replace the military of the Republic of China stationed in northern Vietnam.

On March 6, 1946, the government of Hồ Chí Minh signed a preliminary agreement with the French representative in Hanoi. According to this agreement, the French Republic recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a member of the French Union. However, the implementation of the preliminary agreement encountered many difficulties because from December 1946, warfare between the French forces and the forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam expanded throughout Vietnam. France pursued a policy of expanding the war to regain control of the territories lost to the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. France encouraged the establishment of a pro-French government in Vietnam, in opposition to the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and legitimized this government through an agreement signed on March 8, 1949.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 48.



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In January 1947, taking advantage of the situation where French forces were preoccupied with warfare on the mainland and no longer sending military forces to garrison the islands of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, the Republic of China sent troops to land on Phú Lâm Island in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. The French government formally objected and quickly dispatched a unit consisting of French and Vietnamese troops to garrison the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. The government of the Republic of China objected, leading France and the Republic of China to enter negotiations on this issue in Paris from February 25 to July 4, 1947. The negotiations were inconclusive, and France proposed taking the issue to an international arbitration court, but the Republic of China opposed this proposal.

On December 1, 1947, the President of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, signed a decree naming the Hoàng Sa Archipelago as *Xisha Qundao* (西沙群島) and the Trường Sa Archipelago as *Nansha Qundao* (南沙群島), illegally incorporating these two archipelagos into the territory of the Republic of China.

On March 8, 1949, the President of France, Vincent Auriol, and the former Emperor Bảo Đại signed the *Elysée Treaty*, establishing *Quốc gia Việt Nam* (the State of Vietnam) within the French Union, headed by Head of State Bảo Đại. However, military, financial, and diplomatic powers in Vietnam were held by the French High Commissioner in Indochina. Military operations on the territory, including patrols in the maritime areas of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, was carried out by the French military in Indochina on behalf of the government of the State of Vietnam.

In April 1949, the office director of the Head of State Bảo Đại, Prince Bửu Lộc, publicly reaffirmed Vietnam's rights over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos at an international press conference in Saigon.

In October 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China changed the dynamics of the sovereignty dispute over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁷⁰

In April 1950, the forces of the Republic of China stationed on Phú Lâm Island withdrew, but the French military unit stationed on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago was maintained.

On December 4, 1950, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Zhou Enlai, endorsed the 1943 Cairo Declaration, signed between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of China, considering it a fundamental document for a peace treaty to be signed with Japan (i.e., the *San Francisco Peace Treaty* signed on September 8, 1951)⁷¹, meaning he accepted that the Cairo Declaration only required Japan to return to the Republic of China

⁷⁰ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 48.

⁷¹ Source: *Chou En Lai's Statement on the Peace Treaty with Japan*, People's China, December 16th, 1950.



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the territories that Japan had taken from China, including Manchuria, Taiwan, and the Pescadores Islands, but not the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos of Vietnam.

In the summer of 1951, the parties involved in World War II began drafting a peace treaty with Japan. Article 2 of the draft treaty stated: “*Japan renounces all rights, titles, and claims to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.*” Informed in advance of the draft treaty, on August 15, 1951, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Zhou Enlai, issued a statement affirming the “long-standing” nature of China’s rights to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

In September 1951, the peace conference with Japan opened in San Francisco (USA), and both China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) did not have representatives participating due to the lack of agreement between the USA and the Soviet Union on who would represent China at the conference. In the plenary session on September 5, 1951, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, proposed 13 amendments, including one stipulating that Japan recognize China’s sovereignty “*over the islands of the Hoàng Sa archipelago and other islands further south,*” but this amendment was rejected by the conference. On September 7, 1951, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Vietnam declared at the plenary session of the San Francisco Conference that the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos were the territory of Vietnam. No delegates objected to this statement.

In 1952, during a discussion at the French Union Council, the Vietnamese representative, Nguyễn Khắc Sứ, stated: “*... these islands (Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa) have long been part of the territory of Vietnam,*” and the French Foreign Minister, Maurice Schuman, affirmed: “*It is entirely correct that the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa islands are territories of the French Union,*” but on March 26, 1952, Maurice Faure, the rapporteur on the law ratifying the treaty at the council, regarded the islands in the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos as “abandoned lands” (*terrae derelictae*).

2. Period 1954 - 1975

In April 1956, French troops withdrew from Indochina. The government of the Republic of Vietnam in South Vietnam deployed its military to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago to replace the French forces. At the same time, China also secretly landed troops to occupy the An Vĩnh Group of islands in the eastern part of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. Thus, from 1956, the Chinese military occupied the eastern group of islands, while the military of the Republic of Vietnam held the western group. On June 1, 1956, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Vietnam, Vũ Văn Mẫu, reaffirmed Vietnam’s rights over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.



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On June 2, 1956, the French Government reiterated to the Government of the Philippines the rights that France had over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁷² In February 1958, several Chinese fishermen attempted to settle on the western part of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago but were unsuccessful.⁷³

On September 4, 1958, the Chinese Government declared a 12 nautical mile territorial sea boundary. On September 14, 1958, Phạm Văn Đồng, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, sent a diplomatic note to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai recognizing China's 12-mile boundary, but this note did not recognize Chinese sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. In 1961, the Republic of Vietnam incorporated the Hoàng Sa Archipelago into Quảng Nam Province. On January 11, 1974, China issued a statement reasserting its claims to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

On January 15, 1974, China began landing troops on the western islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, which had until then been occupied by the Republic of Vietnam's military.

On January 19 and 20, 1974, Chinese ships bombarded the western islands of the Paracel Islands and landed troops to occupy the islands. The Republic of Vietnam's military fiercely resisted but was ultimately defeated. China seized control of the entire Hoàng Sa Archipelago. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam issued a statement affirming that the Paracel and Spratly Islands were part of the territory of the Republic of Vietnam. The representative of the Republic of Vietnam at the United Nations requested the Security Council to consider this issue. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam also requested U.S. military intervention in the Chinese seizure of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, but the United States decided to remain neutral in the conflict. The Government of the Republic of South Vietnam⁷⁴ also issued a three-point statement on resolving territorial disputes related to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁷⁵

On June 28, 1974, a representative of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam declared at the first session of the 3rd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea in Caracas (Venezuela) that the Hoàng Sa Archipelago belonged to Vietnam.

⁷² This statement was made after the Foreign Minister of the Philippines declared that, aside from the seven internationally recognized Spratly islands, the other islands in the Spratly Archipelago were terra nullius (ownerless land).

⁷³ Cited: Monique Chemillier-Gendreau, *Op-cit*, p. 51.

⁷⁴ The Government of the Republic of South Vietnam is the government established by communists in South Vietnam, opposing the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, and supported by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in North Vietnam.

⁷⁵ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 134.



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On July 2, 1974, the delegation of the Republic of Vietnam issued a statement at the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea reaffirming Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

3. Period from 1975 to present

In the final days of the war in Vietnam, the People's Army of Vietnam deployed forces to liberate the islands of the Trường Sa Archipelago that were held by the Republic of Vietnam's military. On June 6, 1975, the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam announced the complete liberation of the islands in the Trường Sa Archipelago, continuing to affirm Vietnam's sovereignty over both the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

On September 9, 1975, at the World Meteorological Conference, representatives of the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam continued to register with the World Meteorological Organization the existence and operation of the Vietnamese Meteorological Station on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

On September 10, 1975, the Chinese government sent a diplomatic note to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam affirming China's sovereignty over the *Xisha qundao* (quần đảo Hoàng Sa) and *Nansha qundao* (quần đảo Trường Sa).

On September 24, 1975, in a meeting with a delegation from the Communist Party and Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam led by First Secretary Lê Duẩn, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping stated that the issue of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos would be discussed later.

In 1976, the unified Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established and quickly organized the administration of the islands in the Trường Sa archipelago and declared Vietnam's sovereignty over both the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. China also intensified its sovereignty disputes with Vietnam not only over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago but also the Trường Sa Archipelago, making the dispute increasingly tense and severe.

On May 12, 1977, the government of Vietnam issued a statement on territorial waters, contiguous zones, exclusive economic zones, and continental shelves of Vietnam. Section 5 of the statement explicitly affirmed that both the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos are territories of Vietnam.

In March 1978, the World Administrative Radio Conference passed a resolution allowing China to use certain frequencies in the airspace over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

On December 30, 1978, a spokesperson for the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected the claims made in a statement by the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated February 29, 1978, regarding the Trường Sa Archipelago issue,



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affirming Vietnam's sovereignty over both the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos and reiterated Vietnam's position of settling all disputes through peaceful negotiations.

On March 13, 1979, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam published a dossier on the Vietnam-China border issue, in which it accused China of using force to invade the Hoàng Sa Archipelago of Vietnam in January 1974.⁷⁶

On July 30, 1979, China published documents proving Vietnam had "acknowledged" China's sovereignty over the *Xisha* and *Nansha* islands.

On August 7, 1979, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement about the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, rejecting China's distortion in publishing some documents of Vietnam related to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, reaffirming Vietnam's sovereignty over these islands, and reiterated Vietnam's position on resolving sovereignty disputes through peaceful negotiations.

On September 28, 1979, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a "White Paper" introducing many documents proving Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁷⁷

On January 30, 1980, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a document about the *Xisha* and *Nansha* islands.

On February 5, 1980, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement exposing China's distortion in the aforementioned document.

In June 1980, at the 2nd Asian Regional Meteorological Conference held in Geneva (Switzerland), the representative of Vietnam declared that the meteorological station of China on *Sanhudoao* (island of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago of Vietnam) is illegal, affirming that Vietnam had established a meteorological station on the Hoàng Sa Archipelago since 1937 and had registered the name of this station with the World Meteorological Organization as the Hoàng Sa Meteorological Station. As a result, in the list of world meteorological stations, the name of Vietnam's Hoàng Sa Meteorological Station was retained.

In December 1981, the General Department of Posts and Telecommunications of Vietnam sent a telegram to the Chairman of the Frequency Registration Board in Geneva (Switzerland) protesting China being allocated certain frequencies over the airspace of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos of Vietnam. Also in this month, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to publish a "White Paper" on the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, Vietnamese territory, affirming Vietnam's sovereignty over the

⁷⁶ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 135.

⁷⁷ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 135.



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Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos with many documents and evidence proving this on historical, legal, and international practice aspects.⁷⁸

On February 21, 1982, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement opposing Taiwan's unilateral decision to place the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos under its jurisdiction. In June 1982, the *Xinhua News Agency* reported that China had established a seaport in the Hoàng Sa. Vietnam issued a statement opposing this action.

In October 1982, at the Plenipotentiary Conference of the Frequency Registration Board, the representative of Vietnam declared not to accept the change in broadcasting that had been allocated in 1978 in Geneva.

On November 12, 1982, Vietnam issued a statement about the "baseline" used to calculate the width of the territorial sea. The statement included sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. On December 9, 1982, the Council of Ministers of Vietnam issued Decision No. 194-HDBT establishing Hoàng Sa District, including all islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, under the province of Quang Nam - Đà Nẵng.

In January 1983, the World Administrative Radio Conference agreed to consider Vietnam's proposal for broadcasting over the airspace of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos at the next conference. Also in this month, at the Asia-Pacific Aviation Conference held in Singapore, China proposed expanding the Guangzhou FIR into the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City FIRs managed by Vietnam, but the conference decided to maintain the status quo.

On April 25, 1984, the Chinese Committee on Geographical Names published new names for islands, shoals, rocks in the South China Sea, including islands of the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos of Vietnam.

On May 6, 1984, the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs opposed China naming new islands, shoals, rocks... in the South China Sea. Subsequently, at the 13th Conference of the International Space Information Organization (INTUSAT) held in Bangkok (Thailand), the representative of Vietnam opposed the use of maps marked with the names *Xisha qundao* and *Nansha qundao* by China, and affirmed that these are the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos belonging to the sovereignty of Vietnam.

On June 2, 1984, the government of China decided to establish a special administrative region including Hainan Island (China), the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos of Vietnam. The Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement opposing this decision.

⁷⁸ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 135.



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On April 16, 1987, the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos after the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on January 15, 1987, regarding China's sovereignty over *Nansha qundao* (the Trường Sa Archipelago of Vietnam).

On April 13, 1988, the government of China issued a resolution establishing Hainan Province and annexing the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos of Vietnam into this province.

On April 14, 1988, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement opposing this resolution by China. Also in April 1988, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a "White Paper" on the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos and international law.

On February 25, 1992, the government of China published the Law of the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone of China, regulating a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea and China's territory including the five archipelagos: *Dongsha* (Pratas, currently managed by Taiwan), *Xisha* (Hoàng Sa Archipelago of Vietnam), *Nansha* (Trường Sa Archipelago of Vietnam), *Zhongsha* (Macclesfield Bank, both Taiwan and China claim sovereignty), and *Diaoyu* (Senkaku, currently managed by Japan). Vietnam publicly opposed this event.

On June 23, 1994, the National Assembly of Vietnam passed a resolution ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS 1982). Vietnam was the 63rd country to ratify UNCLOS 1982. Before and after ratification, Vietnam applied most of the provisions of UNCLOS 1982 as the basis for issuing and enforcing legal documents regulating its maritime activities and demanded that countries respect Vietnam's rights according to the provisions of UNCLOS 1982.

At the same time, the National Assembly of Vietnam also reaffirmed Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos and the policy of resolving sovereignty disputes and other disagreements related to the South China Sea and the two archipelagos through peaceful negotiations on the basis of equality, mutual understanding and respect, respect for international law, especially UNCLOS 1982.⁷⁹

On May 15, 1996, the National People's Congress of China ratified UNCLOS 1982.

On January 1, 1997, Đà Nẵng separated from Quang Nam - Đà Nẵng Province to become the city of Đà Nẵng under the central government, and Hoàng Sa District was placed under the administration of the city of Đà Nẵng. Not only disputes over sovereignty with declarations and administrative decisions, China has increasingly been aggressive in the sovereignty dispute, preventing Vietnamese fishermen's boats in the waters of the Da Nang and in other sea areas within the territorial waters of Vietnam.

⁷⁹ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 139.



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Moreover, Chinese ships have even fired at Vietnamese fishing boats, causing fires and injuries and deaths to Vietnamese fishermen fishing in the waters of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago⁸⁰; conducting military exercises in the sea area near the Hoàng Sa Archipelago; cutting the cables of Vietnamese oil exploration ships...⁸¹

In November 2007, the government of China approved the establishment of the city of Sansha (Tam Sa) with the administrative scope of the three archipelagos in the South China Sea as Xisha (Hoàng Sa), Nansha (Trường Sa), and Zhongsha (Macclesfield Bank), with an area equal to 1/4 of the area of China.⁸²

On December 3, 2007, Vietnam made a strong statement opposing this action by the government of China. The Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed: Vietnam has full historical evidence and legal basis to affirm its sovereignty over the two archipelagos of Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa.⁸³

On December 7, 2007, at the 10th session, VII term, the People's Council of Đà Nẵng City passed a resolution affirming that Hoàng Sa is an administrative unit under Đà Nẵng City and opposed China's claim to manage this archipelago.⁸⁴

On March 12, 2009, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement opposing China allowing the Zhoujiang International Tourism Co., Ltd. (of Hainan Province, China) to open tours to Phú Lâm Island of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago of Vietnam. According to the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam has full historical evidence and legal basis to affirm its sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁸⁵

On April 25, 2009, the Chairman of the People's Committee of Đà Nẵng City officially appointed the Chairman of the People's Committee of Hoàng Sa district. On May 7, 2009, the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations sent a Diplomatic Note to the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a map of China drawing the "nine-dash

⁸⁰ On January 8, 2005, a Chinese ship opened fire on Vietnamese fishing boats, resulting in nine fishermen from Thanh Hóa Province being killed and injured. On January 16, 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam requested that the Chinese side take measures to prevent and stop similar wrongful acts, conduct an investigation, and strictly deal with those who shot at the Vietnamese fishermen.

⁸¹ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 140.

⁸² Cited: "Approval for the establishment of Sansha City in Hainan Province to administer an area of 2.6 million square kilometers," *Hunan Daily*, November 20, 2007. Accessed December 21, 2007.

⁸³ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 140.

⁸⁴ Cited from: "Đà Nẵng People's Council affirms Hoàng Sa Archipelago is a district directly under Đà Nẵng City," <http://vietnamnet.vn/chinhtri/2007/12/758588.html>. Accessed December 20, 2010.

⁸⁵ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 140.



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line”⁸⁶ covering about 80% of the South China Sea, claiming it as the territorial waters of China.

The next day, May 8, 2009, the Permanent Mission of Vietnam to the United Nations sent Diplomatic Note No. 86/HC-2009 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations rejecting China’s diplomatic note regarding the map drawing the “nine-dash line”. Also on that day, the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that the “nine-dash line” claim by China “has no value and no legal, historical, or practical basis”, while continuing to affirm Vietnam’s sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

On May 14, 2009, China declared a fishing ban in some sea areas under the sovereignty of Vietnam in the South China Sea from May 16 to August 1, 2009.

In response to this unreasonable ban, on May 16, 2009, the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated: “*Vietnam affirms its sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. Any foreign action towards these two archipelagos and in the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of Vietnam without the consent of Vietnam is a violation of Vietnam’s sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction over this area*”.⁸⁷

On November 22, 2011, Chinese media reported that the government of Hainan Province (China) had granted permission for a Chinese tourism company to take tourists from Hainan Island to visit and tour the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

In response to this incident, on November 24, 2011, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that China’s allowing tourism exploitation in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago violated Vietnam’s sovereignty.⁸⁸

On November 25, 2011, at the 2nd session, XIII term, the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng stated: “... *Our consistent*

⁸⁶ The *Nine-dash line* (九段線) is the name used by China to refer to the “*national maritime boundary*” they have unlawfully established in the South China Sea. The *Nine-dash line* also known as the *Cow’s tongue line* or *U-shaped line*, is based on the *Eleven-dash line* initiated by the government of the Republic of China, first appearing publicly in February 1948 in the appendix map *Location of Islands in the South Sea* of the Administrative Region Map of the Republic of China issued by the Bureau of Regional Administration of the Republic of China’s Ministry of the Interior. After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, China continued to define its territorial claims in the South China Sea based on the *Eleven-dash line* of the Republic of China, reducing it to the *Nine-dash line* in 1953 by removing two segments in the Gulf of Tonkin.

The *Nine-dash line* encompasses four major groups of islands and reefs in the South China Sea: the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, the Trường Sa Archipelago, the Pratas Islands (China calls *Dongsha Qundao*), and the Macclesfield Bank (China calls *Zhongsha Qundao*), covering approximately 75% of the water area of the South China Sea. Source: <http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki>. Accessed January 2, 2014.

⁸⁷ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diển - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 140.

⁸⁸ Cited: “Trung Quốc vi phạm chủ quyền Việt Nam tại Hoàng Sa” [“China violates Vietnam’s sovereignty in the Hoàng Sa Archipelago,”] <http://vtc.vn/quoc-te/trung-quoc-vi-pham-chu-quyen-viet-nam-tai-hoang-sa-302179.html>. Accessed November 24, 2011.



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*position is that the Hoàng Sa Archipelago belong to the sovereignty of Vietnam. We have sufficient historical and legal bases to affirm this. But we advocate negotiating to resolve, and demand sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago by peaceful means. This approach is consistent with the United Nations Charter, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982”.*⁸⁹

On June 21, 2012, at the 3rd session, XIII term, the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam passed the Vietnam Maritime Law.

The law affirms the sovereignty of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam over the internal waters, territorial sea, the two archipelagos of Paracel and Spratly, and the sovereign rights, jurisdiction over the contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, and continental shelf of Vietnam based on the provisions of UNCLOS 1982 and the principles of international law. Also on June 21, 2012, the government of China officially approved the establishment of the district-level city of Sansha (Tam Sa), including both the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.⁹⁰

On July 24, 2012, the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared: *“The establishment of what is called ‘the city of Tam Sa’ and the deployment of the above-mentioned activities have violated international law, seriously infringing the sovereignty of Vietnam over the two archipelagos of Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa, and are of no value”.*⁹¹

On March 20, 2013, while the fishing boat QNg 96382 TS of fishermen from Quảng Ngãi Province was operating at the traditional fishing grounds within the Hoàng Sa Archipelago of Vietnam, it was pursued and its cabin burned by a Chinese fisheries enforcement ship.

In response to this action, the spokesperson of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated: *“This is a very serious incident, violating the sovereignty of Vietnam over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, threatening the lives and causing property damage to Vietnamese fishermen. This action has seriously violated the principles of international law, the agreement on the basic principles guiding the resolution of maritime issues between Vietnam and China, contrary to the spirit of the ‘Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea’ (DOC). Vietnam*

⁸⁹ Cited: Nguyễn Bá Diên - Nguyễn Trường Giang (Editors), *Op-cit*, p. 144.

⁹⁰ Cited: [“China sets up Sansha City to administer South China Sea islands,”] <http://english.sina.com/china/2012/0621/479131.html>. Accessed August 3, 2012.

⁹¹ Cited: “Phát biểu của người phát ngôn Bộ Ngoại giao Lương Thanh Nghị ngày 24.7.2012” [“Statement by spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lương Thanh Nghị on July 24, 2012,”] http://mofa.gov.vn/vi/tt_baochi/pbfn/ns120724153811/view. Accessed August 2, 2012.



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*resolutely opposes, demands that the Chinese side investigate, strictly handle the wrongful and inhumane actions mentioned above, and compensate the damages to Vietnamese fishermen”.*⁹²

On November 29, 2013, the government of Hainan Province (China) issued a statement requiring foreign fishing boats to obtain the consent of local authorities of this country to fish or survey in 2/3 of the South China Sea from January 1, 2014, including sea areas belonging to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos of Vietnam.

Vietnam and the Philippines immediately opposed this statement by the government of Hainan Province. More seriously, from May 1, 2014, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) brought the oil rig Haiyang Shiyou 981 into the exclusive economic zone of Vietnam to explore for oil and gas. This was an act of encroachment on Vietnam’s sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction according to the provisions of UNCLOS 1982. To protect this blatant encroachment, China deployed over 80 armed vessels (at the peak there were more than 130 vessels) of various forces such as maritime surveillance, coast guard, steel-hulled fishing boats, and military vessels of the Chinese armed forces and several aircraft to threaten, intimidate, and attack the law enforcement and sovereignty protection forces of Vietnam in the South China Sea and threaten security and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

The government of Vietnam has spoken out, sent maritime police and fisheries surveillance forces to block, and demanded that China remove the oil rig Haiyang Shiyou 981 from Vietnam’s waters. The government of Vietnam brought this issue to international forums, calling on the international community to speak out against China’s violation of Vietnam’s sovereignty in the South China Sea by bringing the oil rig Haiyang Shiyou 981 into Vietnam’s exclusive economic zone, and also demanding that China remove this oil rig from Vietnam’s waters.

On July 15, 2014, China withdrew the oil rig Haiyang Shiyou 981 from Vietnam’s exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that Vietnam has peacefully and continuously conducted exploration, establishment, and actual enforcement of sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago, at

⁹² Cited: “Trung Quốc ngang nhiên mở du lịch Hoàng Sa trái phép” [“China blatantly opens illegal tourism in the Paracel Islands,”] <http://www.tienphong.vn/the-gioi/trung-quoc-ngang-nhien-mo-du-lich-hoang-sa-trai-phep-621496.tpo>. Accessed April 7, 2013.



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least since the 17th century, which has been recorded in various historical sources from Vietnam, China, and other countries. However, it was not until 1909 that China began to claim sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. Subsequently, taking advantage of periods when Vietnam was under foreign invasion and engaged in wars of resistance, China gradually disputed the sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, encroaching bit by bit, and then used military force to fully occupy the Hoàng Sa Archipelago in January 1974, maintaining occupation to this day.

Nevertheless, although the Hoàng Sa Archipelago are currently occupied by China, the Vietnam has continuously striven to defend its sovereignty over these islands politically, diplomatically, and legally from 1974 to the present; meanwhile, it continues to enforce state administrative management over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

Today, the struggle to protect Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago is intense, complex, and prolonged, requiring Vietnam to make efforts on multiple fronts. Among these, collecting, researching, and publishing documents and evidence proving Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago and the broader sovereign maritime areas of Vietnam are extremely necessary.

These activities will further substantiate the just struggle to protect the sacred sovereignty of the Vietnamese homeland over its islands and seas.

T.Đ.A.S.



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POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE

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The South China Sea dispute has become one of the most crucial issues shaping international relations, not only in Southeast Asia. Due to strategic sea lanes of communications going through this body of water, any conflict there would have a global impact. Thus, solving or at least managing this dispute ought to be in the interest of not only regional powers.

This paper aims to provide initial research on possible solutions to the South China Sea dispute and the limitations decision-makers face. In the first part, a general characteristic of the dispute is presented. It encompasses the role of the dispute in relations between claimant states as well as its role in their internal politics, which might prove to be one of the primary restraints. The second part concerns the measures taken to manage the dispute, mainly the negotiations on the Code of Conduct (CoC). The third part studies eventual possibilities to solve the issue through the ASEAN or in either bilateral or minilateral formats, pointing out the advantages and limitations of each of them.

Finally, the advantages of internationalising the dispute and the potential benefits external actors can bring to solve or manage it are examined.



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VIETNAM'S "HEDGING" STRATEGY IN THE DISPUTE OVER ARCHIPELAGOS IN THE EAST VIETNAM SEA

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Wstęp:

Celem artykułu będzie przedstawienie najważniejszych kierunków i założeń polityki zagranicznej Wietnamu związanych ze strategią wykorzystywaną w toczącym się od kilkudziesięciu lat sporze o archipelagi Spratly i Paracel na Morzu Południowochińskim. W drugiej dekadzie XXI wieku jest to jeden z największych, a być może największy problem podejmowany przez wietnamskich dyplomatów zarówno w relacjach dwustronnych jak i na forach międzynarodowych. W przypadku Wietnamu, jego położenie geopolityczne ma szczególne znaczenie przy określaniu aktualnych sojuszników i oponentów, pozyskiwaniu nowych sprzymierzeńców działań oraz retoryki, którą władze się posługują, aby zakomunikować obywatelom własnego państwa oraz społeczeństwu globalnemu własną wizję geopolityczną¹. Cechą charakterystyczną, w przypadku Wietnamu jest widoczne nawiązanie do elementów

¹ G. Dijkink, *Geopolitical codes and popular representations*, "GeoJournal" 1999, vol. 46, no. 4, s. 293-299.



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historycznych, wietnamskiej tradycji, na której opiera się również retoryka i strategia moralizatorka współcześnie rządzącej Komunistycznej Partii Wietnamu. Można zauważyć fakt dziedziczności tradycyjnej ideologii państwowej, nawiązywanie do wspólnych idei konfucjańskich, które wspomagają współpracę między państwami regionu Azji Wschodniej. Jednocześnie ta retoryka nawiązuje do przywództwa Ho Chi Minha i jego taktyki walki o niepodległość a potem zjednoczenie państwa². Retoryka niepodległościowa, podkreślająca podstawowe wartości związane z suwerennością, niemieszaniem się w sprawy wewnętrzne, podkreślanie niechęci do uzależniania się od jednego mocarstwa i jednocześnie oparcie się o sojuszników regionalnych są widoczne w „kodzie geopolitycznym” Wietnamu.

Strategie, jaką przy realizacji celów stosuje Wietnam można opisać wykorzystując pojęcie hedging. Hedging oznacza, że Wietnam nie stawia wszystkiego na ostrzu noża, stara się niwelować nadmierne ryzyko i poszukiwać metod osiągnięcia docelowych korzyści. Dodatkowo chce być pomostem, mediatorem przy rozwiązywaniu konfliktów. Wietnam kreuje się jako średnie mocarstwo o wyważonych koncyliacyjnych ocenach, skłonne do ustępstw, ale w oparciu o własne priorytety, nastawione na negocjacje i poszukujące wsparcia dla swoich priorytetów nawet w perspektywie wieloletniej.

Zatem hipotezą badawczą jest następujące stwierdzenie: Wietnam jest przygotowany na długotrwałe działania dyplomatyczne stosując strategię hedgingową. Jest ona modyfikowana w zależności od zmian środowiska międzynarodowego. Zastosowano, jako metodę badawczą analizę dokumentów i obserwacje

Założenia polityki zagranicznej Wietnamu a spór na Morzu Południowochińskim

W maju 1988 roku Komitet Centralny Komunistycznej Partii Wietnamu przyjął Rezolucję nr 13, w której po raz pierwszy zostało wprowadzone pojęcie interesu narodowego (*wiet. lợi ích dân tộc*). Ten krok miał przygotować kraj do odejścia od wcześniejszej strategii wspólnego frontu z obozem państw socjalistycznych i zasady internacjonalizmu proletariackiego, podkreślającej solidarność międzynarodową klasy robotniczej, a *de facto* oznaczającą podporządkowanie się wytycznym Międzynarodówki

² Nguyen Khac Huynh, *Vietnamese Diplomacy. The Method and Art of Negotiation*, The Gioi Publishers, Hanoi 2013; Nguyen Dy Nien, *Ho Chi Minh thought on Diplomacy*, The Gioi Publishers, Hanoi 2008.



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Komunistycznej³. Po upadku żelaznej kurtyny stało się jasne, iż w relacjach z Chinami, należącymi wcześniej do bloku wschodniego, pojawią się kwestie sporne, wynikające z rozbieżnych interesów narodowych w kontekście sporu na Morzu Południowochińskim. Jednocześnie koniec zimnej wojny otwierał nowe możliwości dla normalizacji stosunków ze Stanami Zjednoczonymi i współpracy z Waszyngtonem tam, gdzie oba kraje odnalazły zbieżne cele. Jednocześnie Wietnam odszedł od wcześniejszej retoryki, gdzie definiował państwa jako potencjalnych przyjaciół i wrogów (*wiet. bạn và thù*), na rzecz mniej radykalnych pojęć.

W lipcu 2003 roku KC KPW wydał Rezolucję nr 8 zatytułowaną „Strategia Obrony Ojczyzny w Nowych Sytuacjach” (*wiet. chiến lược bảo vệ Tổ quốc trong tình hình mới*). Wprowadziła ona bardziej elastyczne podejście w polityce zagranicznej poprzez zastosowanie nowych terminów, tj. partnera/celu (współpracy) i obiektu rywalizacji (*wiet. đối tác và đối tượng*)⁴. Zauważono bowiem, że często dochodziło do tarć i nieporozumień z krajami określanymi jako „zaprzyjaźnione” oraz inicjowania współpracy i zbieżności interesów z państwami uchodzącymi za oponentów. Przed przyjęciem dokumentu do pierwszej grupy zaliczono bratnie ideologicznie Chiny, a do drugiej Stany Zjednoczone. W efekcie przyjęcia Rezolucji KPW usankcjonowała możliwość współpracy z państwami definiowanymi zarówno jako przyjaciele, jak i przeciwnicy, a także rywalizację z jakimkolwiek krajem, zagrażającym interesom Wietnamu. Koncepcja „współpracy i rywalizacji” (*ang. struggle and cooperation, viet. vừa hợp tác vừa đấu tranh*) pozostaje jedną z naczelných zasad, którą w polityce zagranicznej kieruje się Hanoi. Wietnam tym samym podkreśla, że dany kraj, w zależności od okoliczności, może być partnerem na jednej płaszczyźnie, pozostając rywalem na innym polu. To umożliwia elastyczne podejście w polityce zagranicznej nie zamykając żadnej z dróg i tworząc szerokie spektrum potencjalnych partnerów współpracy bilateralnej⁵.

W kontekście sporu na Morzu Południowochińskim istotne jest również założenie o utrzymywaniu „niezależności i samodzielności” w architekturze stosunków międzynarodowych. Zasada ta jest wynikiem analizy dotychczasowych doświadczeń

³ C.A. Thayer, Vietnam’s Foreign Policy in an Era of Rising Sino-US Competition and Increasing Domestic Political Influence. *Asian Security*, s. 3-4.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ C.A. Thayer, Vietnam’s Strategy of ‘Cooperating and Struggling’ with China over Maritime Disputes in the South China Sea, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 3(2), s. 210-214.



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historycznych Wietnamu, który niejednokrotnie popadał w zależność od silniejszych od siebie mocarstw. Do XV wieku były to Chiny, które próbowały zdominować i podporządkować południowego sąsiada, ustanawiając protektorat lub czyniąc z państwa wietnamskiego swoją prowincję. Kolejno wymienić można Francję, która pozbawiła Wietnamczyków niepodległości, włączając wietnamskie ziemie do Związku Indochińskiego, będącego kolonialnym imperium Paryża w Azji Południowo-Wschodniej. Po II wojnie światowej wpływ na sytuację wewnętrzną w podzielonym Wietnamie miały Stany Zjednoczone, a po zakończeniu konfliktu w Indochinach, rząd w Hanoi związał się sojuszem ze Związkiem Radzieckim. Moskwa zapewniała Wietnamowi pożyczki, pomoc rozwojową i blokowała możliwość nałożenia sankcji przez ONZ, jako jeden ze stałych członków Rady Bezpieczeństwa. Przyczyną ówczesnej izolacji Wietnamu na arenie międzynarodowej była interwencja w Kambodży oraz oskarżenia o agresję i imperializm, płynące nie tylko ze strony państwa zachodnich. Obecność wojskowa w Kambodży miała również swoje reperkusje dla polityki wewnętrznej i zagranicznej, co widoczne jest we współczesnej doktrynie polityki zagranicznej Wietnamu.

Realizując założenie pozostawania „niezależnym i samodzielnym” (*wiet. độc lập và tự cường*) na arenie międzynarodowej Wietnam podąża zasadą czterech „nie” w kontekście polityki obronnej. Rząd w Hanoi deklaruje bowiem: 1) niezawieranie formalnych sojuszy wojskowych, 2) niewyrażanie zgody na utworzenie obcych baz wojskowych na terytorium kraju, 3) unikanie działań przeciw innemu państwu we współpracy z trzecim podmiotem oraz 4) niewywoływanie konfliktów i niestosowanie groźby jego rozpoczęcia. Pierwsze trzy postanowienia pojawiły się w Białej Księdze z 1998 roku, a następnie zostały powtórzone w kolejnych tego typu dokumentach w 2004 i 2009 roku. Te trzy elementy pojawiły się również w Ustawie o Obronie Narodowej, która weszła w życie wraz z początkiem roku 2019⁶.

W tym samym roku została również opublikowana kolejna Biała Księga, w której dodano czwarty zapis z wymienionych powyżej oraz dokonano reinterpretacji pierwszego, uwzględniając możliwość nawiązania współpracy wojskowej z innym

⁶ <https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/01/vietnams-defense-policy-of-no-quietly-saves-room-for.html#:~:text=The%20common%20refrain%20on%20the,military%20bases%20on%20Vietnamese%20soil>



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krajem, jeśli zaistnieje taka konieczność⁷. Biała Księga uznała region Azji Południowo-Wschodniej za centrum dynamicznego rozwoju gospodarczego i obszar rywalizacji mocarstw. Chińska Inicjatywa Pasa i Szlaku, amerykańska strategia Wolnego i Otwartego Indo-Pacyfiku oraz polityka Indii działania na Wschodzie (Act East Policy) są wymieniane między innymi jako mechanizmy oddziaływania tych państw na ten region. Wspomniane zostały wyzwania, którym Wietnam musi stawić czoła, takie jak oparty na sile przymus, militaryzacja regionu, naruszenia prawa międzynarodowego i choć Chiny nie zostały wymienione wprost, jasnym jest, że mowa o działaniach Pekinu. Biała Księga podkreśla również chęć „obrony ojczyzny z daleko”, co *de facto* oznacza użycie w pierwszej kolejności narzędzi pozamilitarnych, aby nie dopuścić do konfliktu zbrojnego⁸.

W kreowaniu nowej strategii w polityce zagranicznej i obronnej, czy też tej adaptacji do współczesnych realiów, Wietnam wykorzystuje myśl polityczną Ho Chi Minha, który chociażby podkreślał konieczność analizy swoich atutów i słabości, by przede wszystkim chronić wspomniany już interes narodowy kraju. Mawiał również, że skuteczna dyplomacja zależy od wewnętrznej siły danego państwa, porównując ją do gonga, a działania dyplomatyczne do dźwięku, który rozchodzi się po jego uderzeniu. Ten sposób myślenia Ho Chi Minha można uznać za korzenie idei „niezależnej i samodzielnej” polityki zagranicznej, prowadzonej już po zimnej wojnie.⁹

Interes narodowy jako główny punkt odniesienia w polityce zagranicznej pojawił się w dokumentach z 2011 roku, będących efektem ustaleń podczas XI Zjazdu KPW. Na kolejnym Zjeździe Komunistycznej Partii Wietnamu pięć lat później, również podkreślono tę naczelną zasadę w relacjach zewnętrznych. Z kolei w 2021 roku liderzy partyjni wskazali na konieczność zabezpieczenia interesów narodowych, dobitniej podkreślając znaczenie zasad zawartych w Karcie Narodów Zjednoczonych i prawa międzynarodowego w rozwiązywaniu konfliktów¹⁰.

Ho Chi Minh podkreślał również konieczność współpracy międzynarodowej w celu realizacji wietnamskich interesów, co również ma przełożenie na deklaracje partii i politykę Hanoi. Na XIII Zjeździe partii w 2021 roku podkreślono bowiem konieczność

⁷ <https://amti.csis.org/vietnams-2019-defense-white-paper-preparing-for-a-fragile-future/>

⁸ <https://amti.csis.org/vietnams-2019-defense-white-paper-preparing-for-a-fragile-future/>

⁹ Thuy T. Do, Vietnam's Emergence as a Middle Power in Asia: Unfolding the Power-Knowledge Nexus, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 2022, Vol. 41(2)ss. 279–302, 294-296.

¹⁰ <https://tulieuvankien.dangcongsan.vn/van-kien-tu-lieu-ve-dang/book/sach-chinh-tri/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-toan-quoc-lan-thu-xiii-tap-1-403>



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dostosowania się do wymogów współczesności, opierając dążenie do „niezależności i samodzielności” również na proaktywnej integracji i efektywnej współpracy międzynarodowej, wykorzystując sprzyjające okoliczności i zewnętrzne siły.

Największe piętno na polityce zagranicznej Wietnamu wydaje się odciskać hasło Ho Chi Minha, które można rozumieć jako trzymanie się niezmiennych zasadach i celów, stosując wiele sposobów ich realizacji (*wiet. dĩ bất biến ứng vạn biến*). Odwołanie się do takiej koncepcji podkreśla możliwość elastycznego reagowania na powstające problemy przy zastosowaniu szerokiego wachlarza taktyk i strategii. Myśl ta doprowadziła do stworzenia własnej wersji tzw. „bambusowej dyplomacji”, która opisuje specyfikę działań dyplomatycznych Hanoi i sposób balansowania między mocarstwami. Termin ten pojawił się już wcześniej w literaturze, definiując doktrynę politycznej zagranicznej Tajlandii. „Dyplomację bambusową” w tajskim kontekście pojmowano jako działania dążące do realizacji stałych celów (czego symbolem są korzenie bambusowa) poprzez zachowanie elastyczności, rozumianej w kategoriach współpracy z krajem dominującym w danym momencie na arenie międzynarodowej. Działania rządu miały być niczym łodyga bambusa uginająca się w zależności od kierunku wiatru¹¹.

Wietnamczycy rozumieją „bambusową dyplomację” jednak nieco inaczej. Główne założenie teorii, czyli elastyczność w realizacji interesów narodowych, zostało zachowane. Działania dyplomatyczne miały jednak prowadzić do zachowania równego dystansu między mocarstwami, uniknięcia strategicznej pułapki i maksymalizacji zysków, nie zaś intensyfikacji współpracy z jednym hegemonem dominującym w danym momencie na arenie międzynarodowej. Znajdując analogię w polityce zagranicznej do powszechnego w Wietnamie bambusa wskazuje się, że nigdy nie rośnie on sam, tylko w dużych kępach. Mają one symbolizować sieć powiązań międzynarodowych, czyli liczne strategiczne i wszechstronne partnerstwa zawarte z kluczowymi aktorami sceny międzynarodowej¹². Specyfika „dyplomacji bambusowej” Wietnamu może być próbą stworzenia własnej ścieżki w relacjach między państwami, która nie będzie pokrywać się z drogą obraną zarówno przez Stany Zjednoczone, jak i Chińską Republikę Ludową, przy zachowaniu równego dystansu między Waszyngtonem a Pekinem, co ma i zapewne będzie miało odzwierciedlenie w polityce Hanoi względem sporu na Morzu

¹¹ <https://fulcrum.sg/whats-behind-vietnams-bamboo-diplomacy-discourse/>

¹² <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/12/23/the-careful-balancing-act-of-vietnams-bamboo-diplomacy/>



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Południowochińskim. To podejście, według wietnamskich decydentów, najlepiej służy interesom kraju, w obliczu zmieniającego się krajobrazu geopolitycznego w regionie Azji i Pacyfiku, co podkreślił sekretarz generalny KPW Nguyễn Phú Trọng w 2021 roku podczas jednej z konferencji poświęconej polityce międzynarodowej¹³.

Ewolucja sporu i sekwencja zdarzeń

Spór rozpoczął się już w latach 50. XX w., ale deklaracje polityczne w tym czasie nie pociągały za sobą działań zbrojnych. Na początku lat 70. XX w. ta sytuacja zaczęła się zmieniać. W roku 1974 Chiny zaanektowały Paracele, korzystając z trudnej sytuacji politycznej Wietnamu i trwającej jeszcze do 1975 r. wojny domowej, a w 1988 r. poczyniły podobne kroki wobec wysp archipelagu Spratly. Dużą aktywnością wykazały się w tym czasie Filipiny. Zwiększyły kontyngent wojskowy na Pag-asa, wybudowały lotnisko i przystąpiły do budowy aktywnej administracji cywilnej¹⁴.

W latach 70. XX w. roszczenia terytorialne wysunęła Malezja. Początkowo był to atol James Shoal, a potem także Amboyna Cay, Mariveles Reef i Commodore Reef. W 1984 do sporu włączył się sułtanat Brunei wskazując na Loiise Reef we wschodniej części archipelagu jako ich własność zgodnie z prawem morza. Warto też wspomnieć, że Indonezja co prawda nie pretenduje do żadnej z wysp, ale roszczenia ChRL dotyczące wyłącznych stref ekonomicznych rozszerzają się na część indonezyjskiej wyłącznej strefy ekonomicznej, obejmując m.in. złoża gazu ziemnego Natuna.

Biorąc pod uwagę prawno-międzynarodowe możliwości rozwiązania konfliktu należy pamiętać, że wszystkie jego strony podpisały rozwiązania przyjęte w Montego Bay w 1982 r. dotyczące wyłącznej strefy ekonomicznej sięgającej do 200 mil morskich. Według tych zasad państwa, w ramach tej strefy, posiadają suwerenne prawa do badania i eksploatacji, ochrony i gospodarowania zasobami naturalnymi, zarówno żywymi, jak i nieożywionymi dna morza, jego podziemia oraz pokrywających je wód, budowania i użytkowania sztucznych wysp; badań naukowych morza oraz ochrony i zachowania środowiska morskiego.

¹³ <https://en.nhandan.vn/vietnamese-bamboo-diplomacy-imbued-with-national-identity-post108947.html>

¹⁴ M. Sobczyński, *Uwarunkowania geopolityczne międzynarodowego sporu o Wyspy Spratly* (“Geopolitical Conditions of the International Conflict about Spratly Islands”), [in:] *Problemy rozwoju państw azjatyckich (Development Problems of Asian States)*, ed. J. Marszałek-Kawa, Wyd. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2008, s. 107.



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Prawo Morza leży u podstaw argumentacji przyjętej przez Filipiny, Brunei, Malezję czy Indonezję. Natomiast spośród uczestniczących w sporze państw Chiny i Wietnam, najwięksi rywale i pretendenci do wysp, używają argumentów historycznych. Są one trudne do zweryfikowania, zwłaszcza wówczas, gdy przeplatają się z racjami politycznymi. Właśnie Wietnam i Chiny są najbardziej aktywnymi i zdeterminowanymi uczestnikami sporu.

Na początku lat 90. osiągnięto postęp w sprawie regulacji konfliktu o archipelagi. Państwa ASEAN podpisały w 1992 r. Deklarację dotyczącą Morza Południowochińskiego, a najbardziej skonfliktowane strony Wietnam i Chiny unormowały swoje stosunki w 1991 r¹⁵. W sierpniu 1993 r. po raz pierwszy negocjacje na temat problemów granicznych odbyły się na szczeblu rządowym, a w październiku tego roku podpisano porozumienie dotyczące zasad rozwiązania sporów. Negocjacje zakończyły się 30 grudnia 1999 r. i obie strony podpisały układ graniczny. W czasie wizyty wietnamskiego prezydenta, 25 grudnia 2000 r., obie strony podpisały ważny wspólny komunikat dotyczący dalszego rozwoju wielostronnych stosunków wzajemnych w XXI wieku¹⁶. Efektem wizyty było również podpisanie porozumienia o demarkacji wód terytorialnych z wyłączeniem stref ekonomicznych i szelfu kontynentalnego Zatoki Tonkińskiej oraz o połowach w Zatoce Tonkińskiej. Niestety nie udało się rozwiązać konfliktu dotyczącego suwerenności nad wyspami Spratly i Paracelskimi. Podjęto jednak zobowiązanie, że obie strony nie uczynią nic co mogłoby skomplikować proces normalizacji. Do konfliktu wokół archipelagów Spratly i Paracelskich wrócono 2 listopada 2002 r. w czasie spotkania przedstawicieli dziesięciu państw – członków ASEAN i Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej. Udało się wówczas wypracować 10-cio punktową deklarację „O postępowaniu stron na Morzu Południowochińskim” (Declaration on the Conduct of Parties In the South China Sea), której celem było zmniejszenie napięcia w regionie i polepszenie klimatu politycznego. Jak do tej pory jest to najbardziej całościowa propozycja i punkt wyjścia do dalszych rzeczywistych rozwiązań, choć po osiągnięciu tego porozumienia zaprotestowała

¹⁵ Kent Bolton, Domestic Sources of Vietnam's Foreign Policy: Normalizing relations with the United States [in:] *Vietnamese Foreign Policy In Transition*, Ed by Carlyle A. Thayer, Ramses Amer, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore 1999. s. 150.

¹⁶ Pełny tekst komunikatu patrz pod adresem internetowym: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4471.html> (15.08 2010)



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Republika Chińska na Tajwanie, która nie uczestniczyła w wypracowaniu ustaleń¹⁷. Dokument jest określany jako sukces, problemem jest jednak brak postępów w zakończeniu konfliktu od tego czasu.

Przyjęte w deklaracji nawiązują do wcześniejszych mechanizmów multilateralnych i bilateralnych, ale są tu wpisane trzy nowe rozwiązania. Po pierwsze: powstrzymywanie się od akcji w kierunku niezamieszkałych aktualnie wysp, raf, skał, co oznacza, że żadna nowa okupacja nie powinna mieć miejsca. W tym punkcie jest także mowa o budowie środków zaufania, notyfikowania w sprawie ćwiczeń, manewrów morskich. Po drugie jest wzmianka o kontynuowaniu regularnych konsultacji o „obserwowaniu” i monitorowaniu wypełniania deklaracji. Nie jest to proste, ponieważ zgodnie z międzynarodowym Prawem Morza prawo stron do połowu ryb zajął się z terenem spornym. Po trzecie strony zgodziły się opracować kodeks postępowania.

Po podpisaniu deklaracji próbowano, często z dobrym skutkiem, podjąć wspólne działania gospodarcze i naukowe związane z wyspami. Nawet Wietnam, Chiny i Filipiny po pewnych pracach rozpoznawczych planowały prowadzić wspólną eksploatację złóż ropy i gazu przez firmy państwowe¹⁸.

Zaostrzenie sporu w drugiej dekadzie XXI w.

W drugiej dekadzie XXI w. problem wokół archipelagów między Chinami a niektórymi z uczestniczących w sporze państwami: Filipinami, Wietnamem, częściowo Malezją zaostrzył się. Z powodu wygaszania terminu składania zażaleń w sprawie szelfu kontynentalnego wokół wysp, zgodnie z Prawem Morza z 1982 r. w maju 2009 Wietnam i Filipiny zaktywizowały swoje działania odnośnie do przypieczętowania *de facto* swojej suwerenności nad wyspami. 2 lutego 2009 r. parlament Filipin przyjął ustawę „O określeniu podstawowej linii granicznej filipińskiego archipelagu” (fil: archipelag Kalayaan). W dniu 10 marca ustawa została podpisana przez prezydenta Filipin, a 6 maja Wietnam i Malezja wniosły do ONZ wspólny projekt rozgraniczenia szelfu na Morzu Południowochińskim poza granice 200 milowej wyłącznej strefy ekonomicznej¹⁹. Stały przedstawiciel Chin w ONZ zaproponował w skierowanej do obradujących nocie nie

¹⁷ M.J. Valencia, *South China Sea Agreement: Close but No Cigar*, “Taipei Review” January 2003, ss.34-37.

¹⁸ Michael A. Glosy, *Stabilizing the back yard: Recent development In China's Policy Toward Southeast Asia* [w:] eds. J.Eisenman, E. Hegingotham D. Mitchell. *China and the Developing World: Beijing's Strategy for the 21st Century* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), pp. 150-188, s 165.

¹⁹ http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_mysvnm_33_2009.htm (5.08 2012)



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rozpatrywać projektu Wietnamu i Malezji. Jednocześnie do komisji ONZ została przekazana mapa chińska Morza Południowochińskiego, na której zaznaczono granice ChRL, obejmujące 80% spornych terytoriów. W dniu 8 maja Wietnam ponownie przekazał swój projekt, tym razem indywidualnie, a między Pekinem a Hanoi nastąpiła wymiana not protestacyjnych²⁰.

Do połowy 2011 r. Chiny prezentowały siłę w sprawie wysp Paracelskich, ale osiągnięto kompromis i 11 października 2011 r. podpisano Porozumienie o podstawowych zasadach uregulowania problemów morskich między ChRL a SRW²¹. W porozumieniu obie strony zobowiązały się do niepodejmowania żadnych kroków, które mogłyby zaostrzyć sytuację. W lutym 2012 r. w czasie rozmów ministrów spraw zagranicznych, które miały miejsce w Pekinie ustalono powołanie roboczych grup do rozwiązania spornych kwestii oraz zgodzono się na „gorącą” linię między ministerstwami. Strony określiły 6 zasad, na których mają być oparte negocjacje dotyczące spornych wysp²².

Nie mniej jednak w lipcu 2012 r. miał miejsce kolejny incydent – Chińczycy podjęli decyzję o utworzeniu na wyspie Phu Lam bazy wojskowej Sansha City i przeprowadzeniu tam wyborów²³. W listopadzie 2012 r. spór znalazł swoje odzwierciedlenie na szczycie ASEAN i choć stronom nie udało się sformułować to pozytywnym efektem rozmów była decyzja Indonezji, która wzięła na siebie odpowiedzialność za przygotowanie nowego kodeksu postępowania stron na Morzu Południowochińskim, na co Chiny odpowiedziały pozytywnie.

W kwietniu 2013 r. ponownie miały miejsce wydarzenia, które zaostrzyły spór. Chodziło mianowicie o opublikowanie przez Biuro Kartografii ChRL mapy, na której linia U, tzw. linia 9-ciu kresek, którą Wietnamczycy określają mianem „jęzora” określa suwerenne prawa Chin do akwenu Morza Południowochińskiego. Na wcześniejszych mapach funkcjonująca jako linia sporów granicznych, została zafiksowana jako oficjalna granica państwowa. Państwa ASEAN zwróciły na to uwagę, a Ministerstwo Spraw

²⁰ Portiakow *O niekatorych osobiennosciach wniezniej polityki Kitaja w 2009-2011*, „Problemy Dal niego Wostoka” 2012, nr 2, s. 34.

²¹ <http://www.chinausfocus.com/print/?id=27029>. (12. 08 2013)

²² Tekst porozumienia: <http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns131016150351> (12.08 2013)

²³ <http://www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20120810-us-china-in-east-sea-scrap.aspx> (12.08 2013)



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Zagranicznych Wietnamu i Filipin oprotowały ten akt²⁴. W maju 2014 r. nastąpiła dalsza eskalacja sporu, po tym jak chińskie instalacje naftowe HYSY 981 rozpoczęły odwierty w rejonie wyłącznej strefy ekonomicznej Wietnamu i szelfu kontynentalnego. Dodatkowo, Chiny rozpoczęły budowę sztucznej wyspy w rejonie południowej rafy Johnsona w archipelagu Spratly. Podobne działania zostały zaplanowane przez Chiny wobec innych wysepek archipelagu. Te wydarzenia stały się przyczyną wzrostu nacjonalistycznych antychińskich nastrojów zarówno na Filipinach jak i Wietnamie. Chińska strategia w regionie Morza Południowochińskiego opiera się na następujących zasadach: niedopuszczenie do umiędzynarodowienia sporu i interwencji państw trzecich zwłaszcza USA; osłabienie jedności państw ASEAN w tej kwestii; wykorzystanie innych niezalutwionych sporów w regionie tak, aby osłabić sojusze państw regionu z USA²⁵, o czym świadczą rozmowy prowadzone przez Chińczyków na różnych szczeblach.

Spór na Morzu Południowochińskim jest bezpośrednio związany z interesami amerykańskimi w regionie. Dla Stanów Zjednoczonych korzystne jest utrzymanie *status quo* i zrobienie wszystkiego, by nie zdestabilizować sytuacji. Polityka Stanów Zjednoczonych wobec Morza Południowochińskiego opiera się na dwóch podstawowych zasadach. Pierwszą jest polityka otwartości i dostępności do akwenów, drugą zaś - dążenie do zachowania stabilności, która sprzyja rozwojowi gospodarczemu. Jest tu możliwych kilka zagrożeń dla amerykańskiego przemysłu naftowego, między innymi konflikt wietnamsko-chiński, ryzyko niewielkich działań zbrojnych²⁶.

O ile początkowo w wypowiedziach oficjalnych brak było pełnego poparcia dla proponowanych przez stronę wietnamską i filipińską rozwiązań to w okresie nasilenia konfliktu w drugiej dekadzie XXI w. Stany Zjednoczone zdecydowały się na bardziej otwarte poparcie obu stanowisk w tym konflikcie. Od 2010 r. amerykańska sekretarz stanu Hillary Clinton zadeklarowała wzrost zainteresowania regionem i wzmocnienie dawnych sojuszy z Australią, Japonią, Koreą Południową oraz spośród krajów ASEAN Filipinami i Tajlandią. W 2010 r. w czasie szczytu Stowarzyszenia, który odbywał się w Hanoi amerykańska sekretarz Hilary Clinton powiedziała, że USA popierają dyplomatyczne rozwiązywanie sporów terytorialnych i są przeciw groźbom oraz

²⁴ G.M. Lokszyń, Južno-kitajskie Morie: Do Mira i Spokojstwija jeshcho dalieko, Tichookieanskoje Obrazowanije 2012-2013, Moskwa 2014, s. 254.

²⁵ Ibidem, s. 249.

²⁶ Ibidem.



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przygotowują inicjatywy ułatwiające budowy środków zaufania. Dla Wietnamu każda pomoc i polityczne wsparcie było witane z aprobatą. USA zaproponowały umiędzynarodowienie konfliktu o sporne archipelagi. Chociaż państwa ASEAN od tej propozycji się zdystansowały, to Wietnam widział w tym apelu pewną szansę, chociażby formę nagłośnienia sprawy i nacisku na Chiny. Problem stał się przedmiotem kontrowersji wewnątrz ASEAN²⁷.

Z powyższych rozważań wynika, że najbardziej aktywnymi i zdeterminowanymi uczestnikami sporu są przede wszystkim Wietnam i Chin oraz jeśli chodzi o Spratly również Filipiny. Napięta sytuacja w stosunkach dwustronnych chińsko-wietnamskich, która miała miejsce od końca lat 70 -do początku lat 90. XX w. na długo zamroziła konflikt a także uniemożliwiła rozmowy dotyczące jego rozwiązania.

Druga administracja prezydenta Obamy, podkreślając politykę „rebalance” wyraźnie zintensyfikowała swoją politykę w Azji i przemieściła środek ciężkości z Północno-Wschodniej w kierunku Azji Południowo-Wschodniej.

Orzeczenie Międzynarodowego Trybunału Arbitrażowego

Pewną nadzieję na rozwiązanie sporu daje orzeczenie Międzynarodowego Trybunału Arbitrażowego w Hadze z 12 lipca 2016 r. Trybunał wydał wyrok, w którym przychylił się do argumentacji Filipin i odrzucił roszczenia Chin w stosunku do wysp na Morzu Południowochińskim²⁸. Chiny w rozprawie nie brały udziału i uznały jego wyroki za niewiążące. Nie mniej jednak niezależnie od tego czy ChRL przysłała swoich reprezentantów czy też nie w celu wyjaśnienia sprawy postanowienia wyroku są dla niej wiążące. Sprawa co prawda dotyczyła dwóch stron tj. Filipin i ChRL, ale Wietnam przesłał oświadczenie, w którym uznawał wyroki Trybunału za wiążące również dla siebie. Najważniejszym wnioskiem płynącym z werdyktu jest pierwszeństwo norm Prawa Morza UNCLOS i innych norm Prawa Międzynarodowego. Trybunał orzekł, że Chiny nie mają historycznych praw do spornych wysp. Kolejnym ważnym wnioskiem

²⁷ A. Lukin, Tierytorialnyje spory razshatyvajut ASEAN, <http://www.mgimo.ru/news/experts/document232277.phtml> (1.02.2016)

²⁸ <https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Award.pdf> (5.01 2016)



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jest zachęta, płynąca z werdyktu, do dialogu i współpracy w regionie w celu wypracowania rozwiązań przez zainteresowane strony²⁹.

Obecnie, konflikt na Morzu Południowochińskim jest głównym obszarem działań wietnamskiej dyplomacji. Temat pojawia się zawsze w rozmowach, konferencjach i innych inicjatywach, w których udział ma Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. Mimo, że Chiny nie uznają tego wyroku, dla Wietnamu jest to nadzieja na respektowanie przez społeczność międzynarodowa ich racji. Nie jest to zadanie łatwe, zwłaszcza w regionie Azji Południowo-Wschodniej. Chiny są największym partnerem handlowym i inwestorem w ASEAN, a nowa idea Pasa i Szlaku ma być impulsem dla procesów rozwojowych w regionie. Stąd ostrożność w formułowaniu takich ocen, które mogą być odczytane jako antychińskie. Na szczycie w Wientian w 2016 r. ocena werdyktu Sądu Arbitrażowego w Hadze została pominięta.

Wobec sztywnej postawy Chin w sprawie sporu na Morzu Południowochińskim, odmowy wzięcia w jakikolwiek sposób werdyktu pod uwagę, niejasnego, a nawet raczej prochińskiego, stanowiska partnera strategicznego tj. Rosji, Wietnam szuka wsparcia dla swoich interesów w innych konfiguracjach. Indie wyraziły poparcie dla wolności żeglugi oraz zasad określonych w ONZ-owskiej Konwencji Prawa Morza. Nawołują do pokojowego rozwiązania konfliktu, przy jednoczesnym powstrzymaniu się od eskalowania napięcia np. poprzez organizowanie ćwiczeń wojskowych w obszarze spornego akwenu i wszelkich innych działań, które mogą destabilizować sytuację w regionie³⁰. W czasie spotkania 14 lipca 2016 r. w New Delhi ministrów obrony Indii i Japonii również podkreślono przywiązanie do zasad UNCLOS, w tym kontekście wyrażono aprobatę dla werdyktu Trybunału Arbitrażowego i nawoływano do respektowania postanowień werdyktu przez wszystkie strony³¹.

Jednak na najważniejszego sojusznika w kwestii sporu o wyspy wyrastają Stany Zjednoczone. To USA korzystają z różnych instrumentów, aby zmanifestować niezadowolenie chińską linią „9 kresek” wyznaczającą roszczenia wobec tego akwenu. W styczniu 2016 r. Ameryka wysłała okręt wojenny w okolice Paraceli dla

²⁹ <https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Award.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/27019/Statement+on+Award+of+Arbitral+Tribunal+on+South+China+Sea+Under+Annexure+VII+of+UNCLOS> (13. 11 2016)

³¹ Joint Statement after the meeting Between Raksha Mantri and Japanese Defence Minister in New Delhi <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=147097> (13.11. 2016)



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zamanifestowania wolności żeglugi. Dla Stanów Zjednoczonych, mimo, że nie są stroną konfliktu, wyrok jest korzystny dla ich interesów związanych ze swobodą żeglugi w tym akwenie – to jest podstawowy cel i zasada podkreślana przez amerykańskich przywódców. Departament Stanu USA nawołuje do pokojowego rozwiązania sporu zgodnie z prawem międzynarodowym.

Prace nad Kodeksem Postępowania Stron

Jak już było powiedziane w 2012 r. podjęto rozmowy na temat wypracowania i przyjęcia Kodeksu Postępowania stron na Morzu Południowochińskim. Dużą rolę odegrał minister spraw zagranicznych Indonezji Natalegawa prowadząc „koronkową dyplomację”. Projekt składał się z 6 punktów. Na szczycie w Manili 6 sierpnia 2017 r. ministrowie spraw zagranicznych Chin i ASEAN przyjęli ramowy projekt, a rok później 3 sierpnia ministrowie spraw zagranicznych na szczycie w Singapurze przyjęli pierwszy bazowy tekst Kodeksu³². W preambule odwołuje się do Deklaracji. To co nowe to np. zobowiązanie, że państwa w tym spornym regionie nie będą współpracować z innymi podmiotami spoza regionu.

Wietnam wiązał duże nadzieje z okresem, kiedy to sam pełnił funkcje przewodniczącego ASEAN w 2020 roku i zobowiązał się do zakończenia prac nad Kodeksem postępowania stron na Morzu Południowochińskim. Jednak pandemia Covid-19 pokrzyżowała te plany. Z kolei Chiny wykorzystały kryzys jako okazję do wzmocnienia swoich roszczeń. 30 marca Wietnam wysłał do ONZ notę dyplomatyczną, w której sprzeciwia się chińskim żądaniom, dołączając do Filipin i Malezji, które zrobiły to w poprzednich miesiącach. Zdaniem analityków otwiera to drogę do podjęcia dalszych kroków prawnych przed Stałym Trybunałem Arbitrażowym w Hadze.

W 2022 r. minister spraw zagranicznych ChRL Wang Yi udał się z wizytą do pięciu państw regionu: Malezji Indonezji Mjanmy, Tajlandii i Filipin. Jedną z omawianych kwestii miało być przyspieszenie prac nad ostatecznym kształtem Kodeksu³³.

³² Viet Hoang, The Code of Conduct for the South China Sea: A Long and Bumpy Road, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/the-code-of-conduct-for-the-south-china-sea-a-long-and-bumpy-road/> (20.01.2023)

³³ Sebastian Strangio, Chinese FM Pledges Progress on South China Sea Code of Conduct <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/chinese-fm-pledges-progress-on-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct/>



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W lutym 2023 r. minister spraw Indonezji, która obecnie pełni rolę przewodniczącego ASEAN, Retno Marsudi, potwierdził, że na szczycie ponownie omawiany był Kodeks Postępowania Stron, a dyrektor departamentu ds. współpracy z ASEAN indonezyjskiego MSZ Sidharto R. Suryodipuro stwierdził: "Nowe podejście" będzie analizowane przez wszystkie państwa członkowskie ASEAN i chińskiego odpowiednika, aby osiągnąć postęp w sprawie Kodeksu Postępowania Stron. [...] Ważne jest to, że wszyscy zgadzają się, że powinna to być perspektywa, która jest możliwa do wdrożenia i zgodna z prawem międzynarodowym"³⁴. Te ogólniki świadczą, że negocjacje utknęły w martwym punkcie.

Podsumowanie: Wietnam i strategia hedging. Dywersyfikacja partnerów w polityce zagranicznej i balansowanie chińskich wpływów

Pomimo werdyktu Trybunału Arbitrażowego odsuwającego roszczenia chińskie do akwenu Morza Południowochińskiego rozwiązanie konfliktu oddala się w czasie. Wyraźnie widać, że największe możliwości oddziaływania na stosunki międzynarodowe w tym regionie zdecydowanie ma jedna ze stron konfliktu – Chińska Republika Ludowa. Państwa ASEAN nie są w żadnym razie przeciwwagą dla chińskich roszczeń w tym regionie.

Tak więc, aby urealnić możliwość odzyskania suwerenności nad archipelagami Spratly i Paracele, bodaj najbardziej zdeterminowany gracz w tym obszarze działań międzynarodowych – Wietnam stosuje strategię hedgingową. Istotnym jej elementem jest zapewnienie balansu dla chińskich wpływów w regionie w postaci większego zaangażowania Stanów Zjednoczonych oraz innych mocarstw regionalnych. USA są najważniejszym partnerem bilateralnym Wietnamu wspierającym jego sprawę na Morzu Południowochińskim, choć relacje te są ograniczone obawą Hanoi przed antagonizowaniem Chin. Oba kraje ustanowiły wszechstronne partnerstwo w 2013 roku, a rozważane jest podniesienie go do poziomu strategicznego. Nawet bez tego, dwustronne więzi były już *de facto* "wysoce strategiczne", według byłego urzędnika, z USA wspierającym pozycję Wietnamu na Morzu i zapewniającym mu znaczną pomoc w

³⁴ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/asean-chair-indonesia-to-intensify-talks-on-code-for-south-china-sea/articleshow/97598528.cms>



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budowaniu potencjału morskiego, a Hanoi po cichu popierającym strategię Wolnego i Otwartego Indo-Pacyfiku Waszyngtonu i jego zaangażowanie w sprawy regionalne³⁵.

Przykładem działań dyplomatycznych jest podróż premiera Phúca do USA w maju 2017 r, niedługo po werdykcie Trybunału. Jest ona trzecią najważniejszą wizytą na wysokim szczeblu w relacjach amerykańsko-wietnamskich, od kiedy w lipcu 2015 roku w Ameryce przebywał Sekretarz Generalny KPW Trùng, a do Wietnamu udał się prezydent Obama w maju rok później. W 2018 roku Wietnam po raz pierwszy wziął udział w kierowanych przez USA ćwiczeniach wojskowych Rim of the Pacific, co stanowiło kolejny przykład rozwijania współpracy w dziedzinie bezpieczeństwa. Wizyty sekretarza obrony USA Lloyda Austina i wiceprezydent Kamali Harris odpowiednio w lipcu i sierpniu 2021 roku sygnalizują wolę Ameryki dla silniejszych więzi z Wietnamem obecnej administracji prezydenta Bidena. Głównym wyzwaniem dla bliższych relacji dwustronnych jest jednak ostrożność Hanoi w promowaniu strategicznych powiązań z Waszyngtonem, wynikająca z obaw o zaniepokojenie Pekinu, który stara się zachować równowagę między dwoma mocarstwami. Jak zgodnie oceniają eksperci „Jeśli nie wydarzy się nic nieoczekiwanego, Wietnam raczej nie zezwoli amerykańskim siłom zbrojnym na więcej niż epizodyczny dostęp do swoich obiektów”³⁶.

Wietnam zacieśnia również relacje z Japonią, o czym świadczą częste spotkania między politykami obydwu państw. W maju 2017 r. w Hanoi przebywali m. in. przewodniczący Izby Reprezentantów Tadamori oraz minister handlu Seko. Tokio z kolei odwiedził minister spraw zagranicznych Minh oraz wiceprezydent Thỉnh, a w czerwcu do stolicy Japonii udał się szef wietnamskiego rządu Phúc. Dla Hanoi polityka multilateralizmu i dywersyfikacji partnerów zagranicznych, czego przejawem jest zacieśniająca się współpraca z Waszyngtonem i Tokio, to nie tylko kolejny etap integracji ze światowym rynkiem, ale i poszukiwanie partnerów, którzy zagwarantowałyby równowagę sił w konflikcie o sporne archipelagi.

Wietnam i Japonia osiągnęły porozumienie o rozszerzeniu swojego strategicznego partnerstwa o Wszechstronne Strategiczne Partnerstwo dla Pokoju i Dobrobytu w Azji w 2014 roku³⁷. Współpraca dotyczy również sfery bezpieczeństwa, w tym na Morzu

³⁵ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/north-east-asia/china/318-vietnam-tacks-between-cooperation-and-struggle-south-china-sea>

³⁶ Ibidem

³⁷ <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/2544043>



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Południowochińskim. Premier Suga Yoshihide złożył wizytę w Wietnamie w październiku 2020 roku i obie strony osiągnęły porozumienie o dalszej współpracy w zakresie obrony i bezpieczeństwa. Wietnam i Japonia zgodziły się również na udostępnienie sprzętu obronnego i transfer technologii (Associated Press 19 października 2020). Podczas tej wizyty Suga złożył oświadczenie o możliwym udziale Wietnamu w porozumieniu "Quad plus" (The Times of India, 21 marca 2020).² 21 marca 2020 r.). Nie mniej jednak strategia hedgingowa sprawia, że Wietnam jest nadal ostrożny w obawie o reakcję Chin³⁸.

Dywersyfikacja dyplomatycznych i militarnych partnerów, relacje z którymi mogą wesprzeć hedgingowa strategię Wietnamu obejmuje innego ważnego gracza regionalnego – Indie. Oba kraje ustanowiły strategiczne partnerstwo w 2007 r. oparte na współpracy w dziedzinie obronności. W ramach polityki "Act East" premiera Modiego oba kraje łączą strategiczne interesy w zakresie przeciwdziałania rosnącym wpływom Chin. W grudniu 2020 roku Hanoi i Delhi zgodziły się na stworzenie wspólnego oświadczenia dotyczącego wzmocnionej wymiany wojskowo-militarnej, szkoleń i programów budowania potencjału³⁹ Można się spodziewać, że Indie będą nadal dążyć do poprawy współpracy strategicznej w kwestiach bezpieczeństwa regionalnego, bowiem dla Delhi Hanoi jest wsparciem ich aktywnej polityki w Azji Południowo-Wschodniej. Wietnamu zachęca Indie do ściślejszej integracji z Azją Południowo-Wschodnią. Według słów Pham Sanh Chau, ambasadora Wietnamu w Indiach, oba kraje podzielają pogląd, że ASEAN "odgrywa centralną rolę w każdej ewoluującej strukturze bezpieczeństwa w regionie", a Wietnam pomoże Indiom "rozszerzyć swój zasięg poza Ocean Indyjski"⁴⁰. Bezpieczeństwo morskie jest tym co zbliża oba podmioty. Taka „transakcja wiązana” ma wspomóc większe zaangażowanie potencjalnego sojusznika w kwestii sporu na Morzu Południowochińskim i balansować wpływy chińskie.

³⁸ [Ibidem.](#)

³⁹ India - Vietnam Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1682468> (15.02.2023)

⁴⁰ Huỳnh Tâm Sáng, The Growing Importance of Vietnam to India's South China Sea Policy <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2980923/the-growing-importance-of-vietnam-to-indias-south-china-sea-policy/>



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Niepewnym acz ważnym i w przeszłości wypróbowanym partnerem jest Rosja. Wietnam i Rosja zacieśniły współpracę i planują wspólne projekty wydobywania gazu w rejonie Morza Południowochińskiego. Hanoi poszukuje kolejnych partnerów, dzięki którym ograniczy rosnące aspiracje Pekinu, który w tym miesiącu po raz kolejny dał sygnał, co do swojej polityki względem spornego akwenu, budując nowe instalacje na rafie Bombay. Rosja z kolei próbuje zacieśnić sojusze z takimi krajami jak Wietnam, by nie uzależnić się gospodarczo od Chin w chwili, gdy na Moskwę nałożone zostały sankcje ze strony Waszyngtonu i Unii Europejskiej za wsparcie separatystów na Ukrainie. Zgodnie z tym co raportują media, podczas listopadowej (2018) wizyty Miedwiediewa premier Wietnamu Nguyễn Xuân Phúc odniósł się w swoich wypowiedziach do konieczności pokojowego rozwiązywania sporów na Morzu Południowochińskim w poszanowaniu prawa międzynarodowego, z czym zgodzić się miał szef rządu w Moskwie. O tym, że Moskwa zamierza odnowić dawny sojusz z Hanoi wskazują słowa Putina, który jeszcze w 2017 roku zapowiedział jasno, że Rosja chce być coraz bardziej aktywnym graczem w regionie, a jej obecności w Azji Południowo-Wschodniej ma sprzyjać również skuteczniejsza implementacja Umowy o wolnym handlu Wietnamu z Euroazjatycką Wspólnotą Gospodarczą z 2016 roku.

Rosja jest największym dostawcą uzbrojenia do Wietnamu – 74% importu broni pochodzi od strony rosyjskiej⁴¹ a dodatkowo na podstawie porozumienia w 2014 r. rosyjskie okręty wojenne mają dostęp do bazy wojskowej Cam Ranh. Mimo że zaangażowanie Rosji w spór na Morzu Południowochińskim jest minimalne, Wietnam ostrożnie korzysta z tego neutralnego zaangażowania.

Hedgingowa strategia Wietnamu oznacza dążenie do pozyskiwania nowych sojuszników. Można tu wymienić chociażby wzrost zainteresowania relacji obronnych z Kanadą. Wizyty okrętów kanadyjskich oraz objęcie Wietnamu Kanadyjskim Programem Szkolenia Wojskowego i Współpracy, który formalnie rozpoczął się jeszcze w 2017 roku, wskazują, iż Kanada zamierza odgrywać coraz większą rolę w regionie Azji i Pacyfiku, a rząd w Hanoi upatruje jako interesującego sojusznika, co zaznaczono na spotkaniu Ngô Xuân Lịch z Harjitem Sajjanem⁴².

⁴¹ SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, March 2019.

⁴² <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/2544043>



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Zainteresowana wzmocnieniem sojuszy obronnego z Wietnamem jest również Australia, czego dowodem było włącznie Hanoi w program manewrów Australia's Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2019 (IPE 2019) oraz wizyta dwóch australijskich okrętów krążownika HMAS „Canberra” i fregaty HMAS Newcastle. Zawarte jeszcze w 2010 roku porozumienie pozwoliło na organizację szkoleń dla wietnamskiego personelu w zakresie nauki języka czy kształcenia żołnierzy w australijskich szkołach i uczelniach. Po drodze nastąpiło również sformalizowanie dialogu w 2017 roku, czemu towarzyszyło polityczne wzmocnienie sojuszu w postaci podniesienia rangi relacji dwustronnych do poziomu partnerstwa strategicznego rok później.

Warto zwrócić uwagę, że strategia hedgingowa w kwestiach bezpieczeństwa obejmuje również Chiny. Wietnamska strategia poszerzenia wachlarza partnerów w dziedzinie obronności i ograniczenie powstania kolejnych zapalnych punktów z Chinami wydaje się być celem numer jeden.

Ostatnie wydarzenia w Wietnamie sprawiają, że obserwatorzy bacznie przyglądają się polityce Hanoi wobec Chin i Stanów Zjednoczonych. Na przełomie 2022 i 2023 roku doszło do zawirowań na scenie politycznej Wietnamu. W styczniu tego roku prezydent kraju Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, który przed XIII Zjazdem partii stał na czele wietnamskiego rządu, zrezygnował z pełnienia tej funkcji. Nieco wcześniej urząd złożyli dwaj wicepremierzy Phạm Bình Minh, były szef MSZ w rządzie Phúca, oraz Vũ Đức Đam, wcześniej kierujący zespołem walczącym z koronawirusem. Powodem odejścia wspomnianych polityków wysokiego szczebla były afery korupcyjne, które dotknęły Wietnam w czasie pandemii Covid-19. Pierwszy skandal, tzw. afera Việt Á, była związana ze sprzedażą testów na koronawirusa po zawyżonej cenie, druga natomiast dotyczyła wysokich kosztów lotów repatriacyjnych, które ponieśli Wietnamczycy, wracający do ojczyzny w czasie pandemii.⁴³

Choć oczywiście polityka zagraniczna Wietnamu jest wypracowywana na zasadzie konsensusu między członkami Biura Politycznego, pojawiły się głosy, że rezygnacja Phúca, Minha oraz Đama jest oznaką odejścia od polityki zbliżenia ze Stanami Zjednoczonymi na rzecz zacieśnienia więzi z Chinami. O tym miała też świadczyć wizyta sekretarza Trônga w Pekinie na przełomie października i listopada 2022 roku po wyborze Xi Jinpinga na kolejną kadencję jako szefa Komunistycznej Partii

⁴³ <https://obserwatormiędzynarodowy.pl/2023/01/25/dr-michal-zareba-polityczne-zawirowania-w-wietnamie-analiza/>



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Chin. Stany Zjednoczone z kolei dążą do podniesienia rangi stosunków bilateralnych do poziomu partnerstwa strategicznego, co z pewnością nie byłoby przyjęte pozytywnie w Pekinie. Wydaje się mało prawdopodobne, aby Hanoi kontynuowało w znaczący sposób proces pogłębiania relacji zblizenie ze Stanami Zjednoczonymi w kontekście wojny w Ukrainie, by uniknąć działań odwetowych ze strony Chin. Z punktu widzenia wietnamskich władz najlepszym rozwiązaniem pozostaje nadal balansowanie między oboma mocarstwami i utrzymanie współpracy gospodarczej z Chinami oraz obecności wojskowej Amerykanów w regionie Azji i Pacyfiku, co zmniejsza ryzyko eskalacji sporu na Morzu Południowochińskim.



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ANCIENT DOCUMENTS AND MAPS PROVING VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOÀNG SA AND TRƯỜNG SA ARCHIPELAGOS

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INTRODUCTION

The Hoàng Sa (Paracel) and Trường Sa (Spratly) archipelagos in the South China Sea (Biển Đông in Vietnamese) were discovered and settled by Vietnamese people centuries ago. Subsequently, the Nguyễn Lords (1558 - 1775) in Đàng Trong, the Tây Sơn Dynasty (1786 - 1802), and the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802 - 1945) organized expeditions to exploit the resources of the sea and islands, declared possession (from the 17th century) and established and exercised sovereignty over these archipelagos (from the early 19th century).

Various historical sources and ancient maps from Vietnam, China, and Western countries, published between the 16th and 19th centuries, provide ample evidence proving that Vietnam has long possessed, established, and exercised sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos in the South China Sea, refuting China's claims of historical sovereignty over these archipelagos and the South China Sea.



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This paper introduces historical documents and ancient maps originating from Vietnam, the West, and China to prove Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

1. VIETNAMESE ANCIENT DOCUMENTS PROVING VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOÀNG SA ARCHIPELAGO

Documents about Hoàng Sa in ancient Vietnamese records are diverse and abundant. These include administrative documents issued by the Vietnamese feudal state; reports from officials at various levels; official histories and regulations compiled and published by the state; and writings and research on history, geography, and customs by contemporary scholars. These documents reflect the process of exploration, establishment of sovereignty, and the activities to enforce and protect Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago in the 17th to 19th centuries.

1.1. Hoàng Sa in ancient documents from the Lê - Trịnh, Nguyễn Lords, and Tây Sơn periods (17th - 18th centuries)

Records about Hoàng Sa in ancient documents from the Lê - Trịnh, Nguyễn Lords, and Tây Sơn periods are preserved in state libraries and archives, at communal houses, temples, clan ancestral houses in Vietnam, and in libraries and archives abroad. Notable documents include: *Toàn tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*, *Đại Việt sử ký tục biên*, *Phủ biên tạp lục*, and administrative documents reflecting the management and enforcement of sovereignty over Hoàng Sa in the 17th and 18th centuries.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Toàn tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*

Toàn tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư (纂集天南四至路圖書) is a collection of maps of Vietnam compiled by Đỗ Bá under the order of Lord Trịnh in the 7th year of Chính Hòa reign (1686) during the reign of King Lê Hy Tông (1676 - 1705). This is the earliest document related to Hoàng Sa discovered in Vietnam to date.

The introduction of this map collection, titled *Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư dẫn* (天南四至路圖書引), briefly introduces the author's background and some basic contents of the collection, including a section describing the place name 罷吉鑛 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*: Golden Sandbank) off the coast of Quảng Ngãi Province and the annual dispatch of boats by the Đàng Trong government to collect goods from shipwrecks washed ashore.

In addition, volume 1 of *Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*, combined with the *Giáp Ngọ niên bình Nam đồ* (甲午年平南圖) in the *Hồng Đức bản đồ* (洪德本圖), contains a map depicting the terrain of Bình Sơn District (Quảng Ngãi Province) and the sea area east of this district. The top of this map includes annotations in Chinese characters, describing the place name 罷葛鑛 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*) off the coast of this district, the distance from the mainland to *Bãi Cát Vàng*, and the activities of collecting goods from shipwrecks in this area during the



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Nguyễn Lords period (17th - 18th centuries), similar to the content recorded in *Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư* dẫn.

These annotations serve as evidence that the Vietnamese knew about Hoàng Sa in the 17th century, named the area *Bãi Cát Vàng*, and that the Đàng Trong government regularly sent boats there to exploit resources.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Thiên Nam lộ đồ*

Thiên Nam lộ đồ (天南路圖) is a collection of maps of Đại Việt compiled by Nhữ Ngọc Hoàn in 1771. This collection includes maps of Trung Đô (Thăng Long) and the 13 administrative regions of Vietnam at that time, detailing prefectures, districts, communes, and routes from Thăng Long to the south and north. The latter part of this map collection includes map no. 43 from *Toán tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư* by Đỗ Bá. Map no. 78 in *Thiên Nam lộ đồ* describes *Bãi Cát Vàng* offshore and notes the annual dispatch of boats by the Nguyễn Lords in Đàng Trong to collect goods and ammunition from shipwrecks, similar to the content in *Toán tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Phủ biên tạp lục*

Phủ biên tạp lục (撫邊雜錄) is a book compiled by Lê Quý Đôn (1726 - 1784) in 1776. The book consists of six volumes, with volumes 1 and 2 containing records related to Hoàng Sa. Notably, volume 2 dedicates several pages to describing the geography and terrain of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, referred to by Lê Quý Đôn as *Đại Trường Sa*, along with the process of exploitation and establishment of sovereignty over this area through the activities of the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas during the Nguyễn Lords period.

Phủ biên tạp lục provides the most comprehensive information about Hoàng Sa Archipelago and the activities of the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas, indicating that the Nguyễn Lords not only exploited Hoàng Sa Archipelago but also extended their control to the Bắc Hải water region (now the Trường Sa archipelago) and other southern maritime regions such as Bình Thuận, Côn Lôn, and Hà Tiên from the early 18th century.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Đại Việt sử ký tục biên*

Đại Việt sử ký tục biên (大越史記續編) was compiled under the order of Lord Trịnh Sâm (1739 - 1782), covering the history of Vietnam from 1676 to 1789, from the reign of Lê Hy Tông (1663 - 1716) to the reign of Lê Chiêu Thống (1765 - 1793) of the Later Lê Dynasty. This historical work consists of six volumes and was officially engraved in the 18th year of Chính Hòa (1797). Most of the content of *Đại Việt sử ký tục biên* praises the merits of the Trịnh lords, so during the Nguyễn Dynasty, it was considered a “forbidden book.” In 1838, King Minh Mạng ordered the prohibition and destruction of all printed copies of *Đại Việt sử ký tục biên*. Although it mainly focused on the Lê - Trịnh court in Đàng Ngoài, *Đại Việt sử ký tục biên* also paid some attention to the situation in Đàng Trong and recorded



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activities of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla in the 15th year of Cảnh Hưng (1754). These are the earliest records of the organization and activities of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Nguyễn Lords' period, describing the location, terrain, number of islands, and natural resources of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

* **Records about Hoàng Sa in *Quảng Thuận đạo sử tập***

Quảng Thuận đạo sử tập (廣順道史集) was compiled by Nguyễn Huy Quỳnh (1734 - 1786) between 1774 and 1785. This is an important document about Đàng Trong in the late 18th century. In this work, Nguyễn Huy Quỳnh recorded the land and sea routes from Thuận Hóa to Gia Định, describing the postal stations, ferry landings, patrol stations, warehouses, residences, temples, forest and aquatic products, taxes, and travel time along these routes, accompanied by illustrative maps. Two passages are related to the activities of the Hoàng Sa Nhị Flotilla in An Vĩnh Commune on Lý Sơn Island. These records indicate that the residents of An Vĩnh Commune (actually An Vĩnh ward) on Cù Lao Ré (Lý Sơn Island) established a separate flotilla called 漢沙隊二 (Hoàng Sa Đội Nhị: the 2nd Hoàng Sa Flotilla) managed by this ward, distinct from the 1st Hoàng Sa Flotilla managed by An Vĩnh Commune on the mainland.

* **Records about Hoàng Sa in *Giao Châu dư địa đồ***

Giao Châu dư địa đồ (交州與地圖) is a geographical compilation of Đại Việt, compiled during the Lê Dynasty and copied during the Nguyễn Dynasty, describing the location, boundaries, width, terrain, land and sea routes, and ports of Vietnam, along with maps, including maps of Đại Việt, neighboring countries, Thăng Long Citadel, and regions such as Kinh Bắc, Sơn Nam, Sơn Tây, Hải Dương, Thái Nguyên, Lạng Sơn, Hưng Hóa, An Quảng, Tuyên Quang, Thanh Hóa, Nghệ An, Thuận Hóa, and Quảng Nam, and maps of land and sea routes from Thăng Long to the south (Đàng Trong). This compilation includes a seven-page appendix, consisting of *Thiên tải nhàn đàm* (千載閒談) and *Thiên Nam tú chí lộ đồ thư dẫn*, with sections describing *Bãi Cát Vàng* and the activities of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Nguyễn Lords' period.

* **Document resolving a lawsuit in Mỹ Lợi Village related to the Hoàng Sa Flotilla**

A document dated the 20th year of Cảnh Hưng (1759) has been preserved at the communal house of Mỹ Lợi village for hundreds of years. The content of the document is a local government verdict resolving a dispute over a boat of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla between Mỹ Toàn Ward (now Mỹ Lợi Village, Vinh Mỹ Commune, Phú Lộc District, Thừa Thiên Huế Province) and An Bằng Ward (now An Bằng Village, Vinh An Commune, Phú Lộc District, Thừa Thiên Huế Province), with the local official's approval. This document shows that the Đàng Trong government not only mobilized residents of Quảng Ngãi but also residents of Thuận Hóa (now Thừa Thiên Huế Province) to join the Hoàng Sa Flotilla,



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indicating that the Flotilla's personnel were substantial, and their activities covered the entire central coastal region at that time.

*** Petition to re-establish the Hoàng Sa Flotilla on Lý Sơn Island during the Tây Sơn period**

This is a petition dated January 15, the 36th year of Cảnh Hưng (1775), signed by Mr. Hà Liễu, Head of Cù Lao Ré Ward, An Vĩnh Commune, Bình Sơn District, Quảng Ngãi Prefecture, requesting the Tây Sơn government to re-establish the Hoàng Sa Flotilla. The petition was submitted to the Tây Sơn government led by Nguyễn Nhạc and was approved. This document is of great value, confirming that from the early 17th century, the Nguyễn Lords had established the Hoàng Sa and Quế Hương flotillas to exploit resources from Hoàng Sa Archipelago. When the Tây Sơn regime replaced the Nguyễn Lords in governing the region, these flotillas were re-established and continued their activities under the Tây Sơn government's management, both exploiting resources from Hoàng Sa and contributing to the protection of maritime sovereignty. This document also reveals that besides the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas mentioned in many historical records, there were also the Quế Hương Flotilla and later the Đại Mạo Hải Ba and Quế Hương Hàm flotillas, participating in resource exploitation in Hoàng Sa and other maritime regions in Đàng Trong. They also volunteered to become sea warriors, ready to fight against intruders, protecting the nation's sovereignty.

*** Directive of the Tây Sơn Dynasty's Vice Marshal on exploiting resources in Hoàng Sa Archipelago**

This is a directive dated February 14, the 9th year of Thái Đức (1786), issued by the Vice Marshal in charge of civilian affairs (name unknown) of the Tây Sơn regime, ordering the dispatch of boats to Hoàng Sa Archipelago to collect goods from shipwrecks and exploit precious marine products for the court. These documents related to Hoàng Sa during the Tây Sơn period show that although the Tây Sơn regime existed for a short time (1771 – 1801), it continued to maintain activities to exploit and enforce sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago and other maritime regions in Đàng Trong at that time.

1.2. Hoàng Sa in Nguyễn Dynasty historical records (19th century - early 20th century)

The historical records from the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802 - 1945) related to Hoàng Sa are numerous. These include administrative documents from the government, from central to local levels, concerning the establishment, exercise of sovereignty, territorial management, resource exploitation, and marine benefits in Hoàng Sa such as decrees, edicts, and memorials from officials to the king, with royal annotations; official histories, legal codes, and geographical records compiled by the court; memoirs, studies, and literature by



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contemporary authors; petitions from the people to various levels of government and the corresponding governmental responses, all related to Hoàng Sa.

Among these, the most important are the *châu bản* (朱本: the imperial records) and historical documents compiled by the Quốc sử quán (National History Office), Nội các (the Nguyễn Dynasty Cabinet), and contemporary scholars.

1.2.1. Hoàng Sa in *châu bản* of Nguyễn Dynasty

Châu bản are a special type of administrative document of the Nguyễn Dynasty, drafted by court officials and submitted to the king. The king personally reviewed and annotated these documents in red (朱: *châu*) ink to convey his opinions and directly address the issues presented by the officials. *Châu bản* of the Nguyễn Dynasty include various types: edicts, imperial orders, commands, personal decrees, lists, memorials, petitions, translations of diplomatic documents, and other types of correspondence.

The collection of *châu bản* of Nguyễn Dynasty currently stored at the National Archives Center 1 (State Archives and Records Department, Ministry of Home Affairs) consists of 734 volumes with thousands of pages of documents, dating from the reign of Gia Long (1802 - 1820) to the reign of Bảo Đại (1926 - 1945). Among these, there are 15 royal records in Chinese characters documenting the establishment and exercise of sovereignty by the Nguyễn Dynasty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago. Additionally, in 2009, researcher Phan Thuận An discovered and published two more *châu bản* from the Bảo Đại period, written in Vietnamese, along with a French document, related to the exercise of sovereignty in Hoàng Sa during the French colonial period.

The content of these *châu bản* shows that the Nguyễn Dynasty continuously sent people to Hoàng Sa (and other islands in the South China Sea - Biển Đông in Vietnamese) to survey, plant markers, and map the area; to carry out rescue operations for Vietnamese and foreign ships in distress in Vietnamese waters; to implement preferential policies for those assigned by the court to perform duties in Hoàng Sa; to reward those who endured hardships or achieved significant accomplishments, and to punish those who were negligent or failed to complete their duties in Hoàng Sa.

1.2.2. Hoàng Sa in Nguyễn Dynasty official histories, legal codes, and geographical records

The activities of exercising and protecting sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago were not only reflected in state administrative documents but also recorded in official histories, legal codes, geographical records compiled by the Nguyễn Dynasty, and the works of contemporary scholars.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Đại Nam thực lục*



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Đại Nam thực lục (大南寔錄) is the official history compiled by Quốc sử quán triều Nguyễn (阮朝國史館: the National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty), documenting historical events from the time Lord Nguyễn Hoàng took control of Thuận Hóa (1558) until the reign of King Khai Dinh (1925). The first part of *Đại Nam thực lục*, called *Đại Nam thực lục tiên biên* or *Liệt thánh thực lục tiên biên*, consists of 12 volumes, documenting events in Đàng Trong from the time of Lord Nguyễn Hoàng to Lord Nguyễn Phúc Thuần (1558 to 1777). The second part, *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* or *Quốc triều chính biên*, consists of 587 volumes, documenting historical events from when Nguyễn Anh came to power in the south until the end of King Đồng Khánh's reign (1778 to 1889). The compilation of *Đại Nam thực lục* began in the second year of Minh Mạng (1821) and was completed in the second year of Duy Tân (1909) with the completion of the *Tiên biên* and the first six periods of the *Chính biên*.

This history contains numerous passages about the exploration, establishment, and exercise of sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago and other maritime regions of Vietnam from the Nguyễn Lords to the Nguyễn Dynasty. Specifically:

- *Đại Nam thực lục tiên biên* (volume 10, page 24) records the activities of the Hoàng Sa and Bắc Hải flotillas during the Nguyễn Lords' period.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 1st era, volume 22, page 2a), in the second year of Gia Long (1803), notes that King Gia Long re-established the Hoàng Sa Flotilla after his first year on the throne, continuing exploration and exercise of sovereignty in Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 1st era, volume 50, page 6a), in the 14th year of Gia Long (1815), notes that King Gia Long sent people to survey and map the waters around Hoàng Sa.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 1st era, volume 52, page 15a), in the 15th year of Gia Long (1816), notes that King Gia Long continued to send people to survey Hoàng Sa.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 1st era, volume 55, page 19b), in the 16th year of Gia Long (1817), notes that King Gia Long rewarded the crew of a Macau ship for their efforts in mapping Hoàng Sa and presenting it to the king.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 104, pages 18b-19a), in the 14th year of Minh Mạng (1833), notes that King Minh Mạng ordered the Ministry of Public Works to send people to Hoàng Sa to build a temple and plant trees on the island for ships to recognize and avoid grounding.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 122, pages 23a-b), in the 15th year of Minh Mạng (1834), notes that the Hoàng Sa Flotilla, during their trips to the islands to map



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and survey sea routes, also collected products from Hoàng Sa and presented them to the court, receiving praise.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 154, pages 4a-b), in the 16th year of Minh Mạng (1835), notes that King Minh Mạng ordered the transport of materials to Hoàng Sa to build a temple to the deity of Hoàng Sa and erect a stele.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 165, pages 24b, 25a-b), in the 17th year of Minh Mạng (1836), notes that the Ministry of Public Works submitted a memorial to King Minh Mạng, who ordered naval officer Phạm Hữu Nhật to lead troops to survey and plant markers of sovereignty in Hoàng Sa.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 176, pages 1a-b), in the 17th year of Minh Mạng (1836), notes that an English merchant ship was wrecked in Hoàng Sa, and the survivors drifted to Bình Định, where they were rescued by Nguyễn court officials. King Minh Mạng ordered the provision of money, rice, and clothing to the survivors and arranged for their transport to Singapore to return home.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 194, pages 7b-8a), in the 19th year of Minh Mạng (1838), notes that King Minh Mạng rewarded Đỗ Mậu Thường, an official of the Ministry of Public Works, for his contributions in surveying and mapping Hoàng Sa.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 2nd era, volume 204, pages 3b-4a), in the 20th year of Minh Mạng (1839), notes that naval officer Phạm Văn Biên and his subordinates, who went on a reconnaissance mission to Hoàng Sa and survived a storm, were rewarded by King Minh Mạng, who also ordered a thanksgiving ceremony.

- *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (the 3rd era, volume 49, page 5a), in the 5th year of Thiệu Trị (1845), notes that an official who had acted irresponsibly in Quảng Ngãi during a mission to Hoàng Sa was exiled as punishment.

The records in *Đại Nam thực lục* related to Hoàng Sa comprehensively reflect the Nguyễn Dynasty's exercise of sovereignty over Hoàng Sa. This includes the re-establishment of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla, incorporating it into the Nguyễn navy for sea route exploration and island discovery; building temples and planting sovereignty markers on the islands; rewarding those who contributed and punishing those who neglected their duties in Hoàng Sa; organizing rescue operations for foreign ships in distress in Hoàng Sa waters and providing financial and material aid to survivors. These are valuable documents confirming the continuous and peaceful exercise of sovereignty over Hoàng Sa and fulfilling the responsibilities of a sovereign state in rescuing and assisting foreign ships in distress in its waters.

*** Records about Hoàng Sa in *Minh Mạng chính yếu***



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Minh Mạng chính yếu (明命政要) is a book compiled by Nội các triều Nguyễn (the Nguyễn Dynasty Cabinet), started in the 18th year of Minh Mạng (1837) and completed and printed in the 9th year of Thành Thái (1897). It consists of 25 volumes, summarizing important documents, policies, and essential activities during King Minh Mạng's reign, reflected in 22 sections. Volume 25, page 36b, records the event of an English merchant ship being wrecked in Hoàng Sa in the 17th year of Minh Mạng (1836), and the survivors being rescued and provided with food and clothing by King Minh Mạng. This event, recorded in *Đại Nam thực lục*, is also mentioned in *Minh Mạng chính yếu*.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ*

Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ (欽定大南會典事例) records the legal codes, regulations, and data related to the organization and activities of the Nguyễn Dynasty in various aspects. This book, compiled by the Nguyễn Dynasty Cabinet from 1843 to 1895, consists of two parts: *Chính biên* (264 volumes, over 17,000 pages in Chinese characters) and *Tục biên* (61 volumes, over 6,000 pages in Chinese characters).

- *Chính biên* (volume 257, page 45a) records the event in the 14th year of Minh Mạng (1833) when the king approved the provincial authorities of Quảng Ngãi to hire merchant ships for official duties in Hoàng Sa and exempted them from taxes for the year.

- *Chính biên* (volume 207, pages 26a-b) records the event in the 16th year of Minh Mạng (1835) when the king approved the provincial authorities of Quảng Ngãi to build a temple, erect a stele, build a screen, and plant trees on the islands in Hoàng Sa.

- *Chính biên* (volume 221, pages 26a-b) records the event in the 17th year of Minh Mạng (1836) when the emperor sent people to Hoàng Sa to map the area.

Thus, *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ* continues to reflect the activities of surveying and exercising sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa archipelago by the Nguyễn Dynasty, as recorded in their official histories. This book also reveals that, besides using court ships and manpower, the Nguyễn Dynasty mobilized private ships and coastal laborers to participate in official duties in Hoàng Sa and implemented tax exemptions for those ships and laborers involved in surveying and official tasks in Hoàng Sa. This is evidence of the Nguyễn Dynasty's successful policy of "mobilizing the people" to exercise maritime sovereignty in the 19th century.

* Records about Hoàng Sa in *Quốc triều chính biên toát yếu*

Quốc triều chính biên toát yếu (國朝正編撮要) was compiled in the 2nd year of Duy Tân (1908), summarizing the important parts of *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* compiled by National History Office of Nguyễn Dynasty. Volume 3 of this summary history has three passages related to Hoàng Sa, specifically:



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- Volume 3, page 113a, records the event of King Minh Mạng ordering the construction of a temple and the erection of a stele on Hoàng Sa in 1835.

- Volume 3, pages 118a-b, records the event of King Minh Mạng ordering naval officer Phạm Hữu Nhật to lead people to survey the islands in Hoàng Sa.

- Volume 3, page 121b, records the event of an English merchant ship being wrecked in Hoàng Sa in 1836, and King Minh Mạng ordering the rescue and provision of food and clothing for the survivors, and arranging for their transport to Singapore to return home.

* **Records about Hoàng Sa in *Đại Nam nhất thống chí***

Đại Nam nhất thống chí (大南一統志) was compiled by the National History Office of the Nguyễn Dynasty, completed, and printed in the 3rd year of Duy Tân (1909), recording the natural geography, historical sites, customs, notable figures, products, and crafts of the provinces in central Vietnam, from Thanh Hóa to Bình Thuận. Volume 8, which writes about Quảng Ngãi Province, describes the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, the resource exploitation activities by the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Nguyễn Lords' period, and the event of King Minh Mạng sending officials to transport materials to build a temple in Hoàng Sa.

* **Records about Hoàng Sa in *Nam Hà tiếp lục***

Nam Hà tiếp lục (南河捷錄) is a work compiled by Le Dan (1742 - ?) in 1811, documenting the history of the Nguyễn Lords in Đàng Trong, from their origins to the 3rd year of Gia Long (1804). It consists of five volumes, divided into 16 sections: *royal genealogy, literary collection, legal codes, tribute, wealth, military organization, geography, territory, literary examinations, loyalty, customs, neighboring countries' customs, diplomatic relations, miscellaneous, and omens*. It also includes two maps of Lũy Ấn and Lũy Thầy in Quang Bình Province.

The sections related to Hoàng Sa are in the Wealth and Geography sections, specifically:

- Volume 2, page 38a, in the *Wealth* section, describes the geography of *Bãi Cát Vàng* and the activity of collecting goods from shipwrecks in this area during the Nguyễn Lords' period.

- Volume 3, page 54a, in the *Geography* section, describes the distance from Đại Chiêm Seagate to *Bãi Cát Vàng* (Hoàng Sa Archipelago).

* **Records about Hoàng Sa in *Lịch triều hiến chương loại chí***

Lịch triều hiến chương loại chí (歷朝憲章類誌) is a work by Phan Huy Chú (1782 - 1840), documenting various aspects of Vietnam's history, geography, culture, etc., from the Hồng



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Bàng period to the Later Lê Dynasty. It consists of 49 volumes, divided into 10 sections: *geography, notable figures, official ranks, rituals, examinations, national revenue, laws, military organization, literature, and diplomacy.*

Volume 5, in the *Geography* section, writes about An Vĩnh Commune in Tư Nghĩa District, Quảng Ngãi Province, and how the Nguyễn Lords recruited people from this commune into the Hoàng Sa Flotilla, annually sending them to Hoàng Sa to exploit marine resources and present them to the Nguyễn Lords.

*** Records about Hoàng Sa in *Hoàng Việt địa dư chí***

Hoàng Việt địa dư chí (皇越地輿誌) is also a work by Phan Huy Chú, consisting of two volumes, first printed in 1833. This work presents the historical changes in administrative geography of the provinces, prefectures, and notable products, crafts, and figures of various localities. Volume 1 includes sections on the natural geography, distinctive marine species in the Hoàng Sa waters, and the exploitation activities of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Nguyễn Lords' period.

*** Records about Hoàng Sa in *Hoàn vũ ký văn***

Hoàn vũ ký văn (還宇紀聞) was compiled by Nguyễn Thu (1799 - 1855). It is a geographical work covering the provinces from Nghe An to Hà Tiên (including 16 provinces according to the administrative boundaries of the Minh Mạng period). Each province has sections on location, boundaries, history, mountains and rivers, notable temples, population, tax system, customs, notable figures, number of prefectures and districts, etc., including sections on Hoàng Sa off the coast of Quảng Ngãi Province and the annual marine resource exploitation activities by the Hoàng Sa Flotilla during the Nguyễn Lords' period.

*** Records about Hoàng Sa in *Việt môn địa sử***

Việt môn địa sử (越門地史) is a geographical and historical work on Vietnam from the Hùng kings to the Nguyễn Dynasty. The content includes a *General Introduction*, describing the names of the country, capital cities of various dynasties, territories, population, borders, mountain and river formations, and internal and external routes; and an *Annotated Section*, describing the boundaries of the capital, provinces, prefectures, districts, occupations, products, and notable sites. The Mountain and River section of Quảng Ngãi Province writes about *Vạn Lý Trường Sa* (Hoàng Sa archipelago).

*** Records about Hoàng Sa in *Việt sử cương giám khảo lược***

Việt sử cương giám khảo lược (越史綱鑑考略) is a work by Nguyễn Thông (1827 - 1884), consisting of seven volumes, completed in 1877. It is a historical and geographical survey of Vietnam from the Hùng kings to the reign of King Thiệu Trị of the Nguyễn Dynasty. It



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also surveys the four neighboring countries of ancient Đại Việt: Lâm Ấp, Chân Lạp, Siam, and Nanzhao.

Volume 4, pages 47a-b, 48a-b, and 49, describes *Vạn Lý Trường Sa* (Hoàng Sa Archipelago) and *Vạn Lý Thạch Đường* (Trường Sa Archipelago), the marine resource exploitation activities in Hoàng Sa during the Nguyễn Lords' period, and the maritime routes of Japanese, Chinese, and Western merchant ships passing through Vạn Lý Trường Sa to trade with Lữ Tống (Philippines), Văn Lai (Brunei), Nam Dương (Indonesia), and others.

In general, the ancient Vietnamese historical records about Hoàng Sa in the 17th - 19th centuries are abundant. These records confirm that, at the latest, from the early 17th century, the Vietnamese had discovered the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, named it *Bãi Cát Vàng*, and recorded it in their historical documents and maps. Annually, both the people and the government sent ships to Hoàng Sa to exploit marine resources and collect goods from shipwrecks in these waters. From the 18th century onwards, the exploitation activities in Hoàng Sa were systematically organized by the Nguyễn Lords through the annual activities of the Hoàng Sa, Bắc Hải, and Quế Hương flotillas, serving both economic purposes and the assertion and exercise of sovereignty over Hoàng Sa and other distant maritime areas in the South China Sea. From the 19th century, the Nguyễn Dynasty officially declared sovereignty (in 1816), sent people to survey maritime routes and boundaries, planted markers, and mapped the area, officially establishing and exercising sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. These are the substantial and vivid evidences documenting the history of possession, establishment, and exercise of sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago by the former Vietnamese feudal dynasties.

2. VIETNAMESE ANCIENT MAPS PROVING VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOÀNG SA ARCHIPELAGO

In addition to the ancient literature compiled by the feudal governments of Vietnam and contemporary scholars, confirming Vietnam's process of establishing and exercising sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago and the Trường Sa Archipelago, there are many maps, charts, and geographical documents compiled from the 16th to the 19th centuries that also affirm Hoàng Sa lies within Vietnam's territorial boundaries. These include national administrative maps, provincial maps organized by the government, and geographical maps in historical, geographical, and local chronicles compiled by contemporary scholars.

In these maps and geographical documents, Hoàng Sa is depicted or labeled with Nom characters such as 罢葛鑽, 涿葛鑽, 擺葛鑽, 罢葛鑽, 罢吉鑽, 罢吉黃, 罢割鑽 (all pronounced as *Bãi Cát Vàng*), 罢沙鑽 (*Bãi Sa Vàng*), 葛鑽處 (*Cát Vàng xứ*), 璜鑽 (*Côn Vàng*),



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or with Chinese characters such as 黃沙 (*Hoàng Sa*), 黃沙洲 (*Hoàng Sa châu*), 黃沙渚 (*Hoàng Sa chử*), 黃沙處 (*Hoàng Sa xứ*), 大長沙 (*Đại Trường Sa*), 萬里黃沙 (*Vạn Lý Hoàng Sa*), 萬里長沙 (*Vạn Lý Trường Sa*), located off the coast of what is now Central Vietnam.

Vietnamese ancient maps from the 17th to 18th centuries are mostly horizontal maps following the traditional Chinese map-drawing style, with west at the top, east at the bottom, north on the right, and south on the left. In these horizontal maps, Hoàng Sa is often depicted or labeled at the bottom. The top of the map usually contains annotations in Han characters describing the topography, explaining the positions and distances of the locations and geographical names mentioned. An example of these horizontal maps is the map of Quảng Nam in *Toản tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư* compiled by Đỗ Bá (pen name as Công Đạo) in 1686.

In the 19th century, the traditional horizontal map style continued. However, from the late 18th century, many French engineers, soldiers, and military experts joined Nguyễn Ánh's forces in the Nguyễn - Tây Sơn war. They likely introduced the vertical map-drawing technique with more modern Western surveying and positioning methods into Vietnam. After the Nguyễn Dynasty was established (1802), these French experts continued to serve under King Gia Long (1802 - 1820) and King Minh Mạng (1820 - 1841). Consequently, the map-drawing technique underwent fundamental changes during the Nguyễn Dynasty, culminating in the creation of the *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* in 1838 during the Minh Mạng reign. This was the first national administrative map of Vietnam drawn vertically, with north at the top, south at the bottom, east on the right, and west on the left. In this map, *Hoàng Sa* and *Vạn Lý Trường Sa* are depicted on the right side, similar to later Vietnamese maps.

The earliest recorded Vietnamese map mentioning Hoàng Sa is the map of Quảng Nam in *Toản tập An Nam lộ* compiled by Đỗ Bá during the Chính Hòa reign (1680 - 1705). This traditional horizontal map includes the Nôm characters 𡗗葛鑽 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*) at the bottom, situated in the offshore waters of Quảng Ngãi, then part of Quảng Nam.

In 1686, Đỗ Bá compiled *Toản tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư* by order of the Trịnh lords, based on revising and annotating the geographical maps of Vietnam drawn since the 15th century and his maps in *Toản tập An Nam lộ*. This collection includes a map depicting the topography of Bình Sơn District (Quảng Ngãi Prefecture, Quảng Nam Province) and the eastern offshore area. This is also a horizontal map, with annotations in Chinese characters describing 𡗗葛鑽 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*), an island located east of this district. The annotations describe the distance from the mainland to *Bãi Cát Vàng* and the activities of the Hoàng Sa Flotilla under the Nguyễn lords in Đàng Trong.

Apart from *Toản tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*, several map collections from the 18th century also depict Quảng Nam or Quảng Ngãi, mentioning, labeling, or annotating *Bãi*



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Cát Vàng (Hoàng Sa) as an island belonging to Vietnam. These include maps in *Thiên Nam lộ đồ* by Nhữ Ngọc Hoàn (1771), *Giáp Ngọ niên bình Nam đồ* by Duke Bùi Thế Đạt (1774 - 1775), *Thiên hạ bản đồ* (anonymous) compiled during the Lê Dynasty and copied during the Nguyễn Dynasty, and *An Nam hình thắng đồ phụ Nam Bắc xứ đồ* (anonymous) from the late 18th century. These are all horizontal maps, with annotations describing *Bãi Cát Vàng* similar to those in Đỗ Bá's map of Bình Sơn District in *Toàn tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*.

In the 19th century, horizontal maps describing or naming *Bãi Cát Vàng*, *Cat Vang xu*, *Hoàng Sa* continued to be compiled or copied from Lê Dynasty documents. Notable maps include:

- *Thiên tài nhàn đàm* by Đàm Thận Hữu (1810) has three maps all titled *Quảng Nam tam phủ cứu huyện*. The first map depicts an island off Quảng Ngãi Prefecture annotated as 沙金堆俗号摆吉鑽 (Golden sand mound, commonly known as *Bãi Cát Vàng*). The second map also depicts an island off Quảng Ngãi Prefecture, labeled as 葛鑽處 (*Cát Vàng xứ*). The third map similarly depicts an island off Quảng Ngãi Prefecture, labeled as 摆葛鑽 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*).

- *Nam Việt bản đồ* (anonymous) from the 19th century has a map depicting the topography of Thang Hoa and Quảng Ngãi prefectures and the offshore area. The top of this map contains annotations in China characters describing the distance from the mainland to an island off Quảng Ngãi Prefecture, named 罢葛鑽 (*Bãi Cát Vàng*), and its geographical features and resources.

- *An Nam dư địa chí* from the 19th century has a map depicting Vietnam from north to south. This map depicts an island named 黄沙渚 (*Hoàng Sa chủ*: Hoàng Sa sandbank) off Thừa Thiên Prefecture.

Other horizontal maps titled *Bản quốc địa đồ* depict Vietnam from north to south, appearing in many 19th-century works, such as:

- *Khải đồng thuyết ước* by Phạm Vọng (1853), edited by Dr. Ngô Thế Vinh and printed in 1881 during King Tự Đức's reign (1848 - 1883), used as a primary school textbook. This book includes a map titled *Bản quốc địa đồ*, depicting an island named 黄沙渚 (*Hoàng Sa chủ*) off central Vietnam. Including this map in a primary school textbook shows that the Nguyễn Dynasty highly valued sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago and instilled this sense of sovereignty in the younger generation.

- *Nam Việt địa dư trích lục*, a geographical survey of Nguyễn-era provinces, includes a map titled *Bản quốc địa đồ*, depicting an island named 黄沙渚 (*Hoàng Sa chủ*) off central Vietnam.



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- *Nam Việt địa đồ quốc hiệu sơn thủy bảo hóa cựu lục*, a survey of national titles, dynastic eras, and notable mountains and rivers, also includes a map titled *Bản quốc địa đồ*, depicting an island named 黃沙渚 (*Hoàng Sa chủ*) off central Vietnam.

The greatest achievement in Nguyễn Dynasty map-making was the creation of the *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* in 1838. This was the first vertical map of Vietnam and updated many new, relatively accurate pieces of information about Vietnamese sea and islands at the time. In this map, the shape of Vietnam is depicted similarly to its shape on Western maps from the 17th to 19th centuries, with an S-shaped eastern coastline and the depiction of the *Hoàng Sa* and *Vạn Lý Trường Sa* archipelagos within Vietnamese waters. This is the first administrative map of the Nguyễn Dynasty distinguishing between the *Hoàng Sa* and *Trường Sa* archipelagos, though an incomplete line still surrounds both archipelagos, suggesting an undifferentiated entity. Additionally, King Minh Mạng had a series of maps compiled and published, including a map depicting two island chains named *Hoàng Sa* and *Vạn Lý Trường Sa*.

King Thiệu Trị (1841 - 1847) continued the mapping work of his predecessors by completing and publishing *Đại Nam toàn đồ*. This multi-colored map series includes a national map and maps of the provinces. *Đại Nam toàn đồ*, also a vertical map, follows Western mapping techniques, listing 72 ports from north to south and including Vietnam's offshore islands, including 黃沙 (*Hoàng Sa*) off central Vietnam.

Under King Tự Đức' reign (1848 - 1883), the court published *Nam Bắc kỳ hội đồ*, based on revised *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* from Minh Mạng's reign, updating and adding many place names in Vietnam, both inland and offshore, including *Hoàng Sa* and *Vạn Lý Trường Sa*.

Overall, Nguyễn-era maps marked a significant advancement in mapping techniques, transitioning from traditional horizontal maps to vertical maps with more modern surveying techniques, providing a more accurate representation of Vietnam. However, the most crucial point is that whether drawn traditionally or modernly, Vietnamese maps from the 17th to 19th centuries consistently depict or name the *Hoàng Sa* Archipelago in Nôm or Chinese characters. This indicates that the *Hoàng Sa* (and *Trường Sa*) Archipelagoes have been integral parts of Vietnam for centuries, and neither the feudal governments nor the Vietnamese scholars and intellectuals of the 17th to 19th centuries ever neglected the national sovereignty over these archipelagoes.

3. ANCIENT FOREIGN LITERATURE PROVING VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HOÀNG SA ARCHIPELAGO

3.1. General Evaluation



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We have collected over 100 foreign documents discussing the Hoàng Sa Archipelago and the process by which Vietnam discovered, occupied, and established sovereignty over this archipelago. These include sea voyage logs by crew members; memoirs, travelogues, and notes by geographical explorers; letters by missionaries; geography textbooks; encyclopedias of world geography; and research works on the history and geography of the Asia-Pacific region by Western scholars. These documents are printed in various languages, including French, English, German, Spanish, Italian, and Dutch.

Regarding the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, these documents have recorded the following points:

1. Descriptions of the geographical location, natural conditions, and climate of these archipelagos and related islands in the South China Sea.
2. The contemporary Western perception of these archipelagos and the potential dangers they posed to ships passing through the region.
3. Introductions to the fauna and flora living on the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos and the surrounding seas.
4. Records of Vietnamese activities such as fishing, salvaging goods from shipwrecks, and harvesting bird nests on these islands since the 17th century.
5. Recognition of the geographical relationship between the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos and the territory on the western shore of the South China Sea, which is now central Vietnam.
6. Records of Vietnam's process of occupying and establishing sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

3.2. Representative Documents

3.2.1. Documents from the 17th to 18th centuries

- Correspondence between the Dutch trading post representatives in Hoi An and the Đàng Trong authorities regarding the wreck of the Dutch ship Grootebroek on July 21, 1634, in the Hoàng Sa waters: These letters detail how the Đàng Trong government dispatched people to rescue the stranded ship in the Hoàng Sa region and confiscated its assets. The owners of Grootebroek complied with this order but later filed a grievance against the ruling, which was promised to be compensated appropriately. This demonstrates that by the early 17th century, the Đàng Trong government had control over the Hoàng Sa archipelago and managed activities in its waters, enforcing their regulations on foreign ships and addressing conflicts of interest.



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- *El atlas abreviado* (2 volumes) by Francisco Giutisniani, published in 1739. Page 139 (volume 2) lists locations in the *Kingdom of Cochinchina*, including *Sinoe* (Thuận Hóa), *Quehao* (Quy Nhơn?), *Baubom* (?), *Faifo* or *Haifo* (Hội An), and *Paracel Infla* (the Hoàng Sa Archipelago).

- *The Modern Part of an Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time*, volume VII, published in London in 1759. Page 450, under “History of Kochinchina,” states, “Before leaving this kingdom, we must describe a few significant islands belonging to it, locally called *Pullos* (islands), along the coast, including: 1. *Pullo Sicca*, a desolate island; 2. *Pullo Secca de Mare*, another desolate rocky island stretching from the shoals called *Paracels*; 3. *Pullo Cambir*, 15 leagues offshore, although large, uninhabited.” The phrase “belonging to it (the kingdom of Kochinchina)” acknowledges that *Paracels* (and listed islands) belong to the kingdom of Kochinchina.

- *Hedendaagsche historie of het Vervolg van de Algemeene historie*, published in Amsterdam and Leiden (Netherlands) in 1772. Page 673 lists islands belonging to the kingdom of Kochinchina such as *Pullo Sicca*, *Pullo Secca de Mare*, *Pullo Cambir*, *Pullo Canton*. *Pullo Secca de Mare* is described as a chain of desolate rocky islands beginning from dangerous shoals named *Paracels*.

- *Reis van Lord Macartneij naar China*, published in Amsterdam (Netherlands) in 1799. This is the Dutch version of the memoir detailing the journey to China (1792 - 1794) led by British envoy George Macartney. The Macartney mission visited Đà Nẵng port in 1793. This book includes several passages on the kingdom of Kochinchina and locations like *Pulo Kambir de Terre* (Cù Lao Xanh), *Pulo Cecir de Mer* (Cù Lao Thu), *Quinong* (Quy Nhơn), *Varella* (Mũi Đại Lãnh), *Pulo Ratan* or *Pulo Kanton* (Cù Lao Ré), *Turon* (Da Nang), *Donnai* (Dong Nai), and *Paracels*. Page 223 acknowledges *Paracels* as part of the kingdom of Kochinchina.

3.2.2. Documents from the 19th century

- *Allgemeine Geographische Ephemeriden* by F.J. Bertuch, published in Weimar in 1815. Page 116 lists locations in the kingdom of Cochinchina, including *Tschiampa* (Champa), *Donnai* (Đông Nai), *Saigong* (Saigon), *Paracels*, and *Condor* (Con Dao).

- *Le mémoire sur la Cochinchine* by Jean-Baptiste Chaigneau, written around 1820. This memoir states, “The kingdom of Cochinchina, whose current king (Gia Long) claims the title of emperor, includes the southern region, northern region, part of the kingdom of Cambodia, several inhabited islands near the coast, and the *Paracel* archipelago, composed of small islands, shoals, and uninhabited rocks. It was only in 1816 that the current emperor took possession of this archipelago.”



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- *Vollständige und Neueste Erdberschreibung*, edited by Georg Hassel, published in Weimar in 1822. Page 736 discusses the Paracels archipelago and the provinces of *Quảng Ngãi*, *Quy Nhơn*, and *Phú Yên* as distinct geographical regions of the kingdom of Annam. The book lists *Paracels* islands such as *Tree Islands* (đảo Cây), *Woody Islands* (đảo Phú Lâm), *Rocky Island* (đảo Hòn Đá), *Amphitrite* (nhóm An Vĩnh), *Lincoln* (đảo Linh Côn), *Pattle* (đảo Hoàng Sa), *Roberts* (đảo Hửu Nhật), *Money Island* (đảo Quang Ảnh), *Duncan* (đảo Quang Hoa), *Passoo Keah* (đá Rùa Trắng), *Drummond* (đảo Duy Mộng), and *Triton* (đảo Tri Tôn).

- *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, 2 volumes, edited by John Crawfurd, published in London in 1830. Volume II, pages 243-244, lists major islands belonging to Cochin China, such as *Pulo Condore*, *Pulo Canton* also known as *Collao Ray* (Cù Lao Ré), *Cham collao* also known as *Collao Cham* (Cù Lao Chàm), stating: “In 1816, the king of Cochin China took possession of an uninhabited and rugged archipelago consisting of rocks, small islands, and sandbanks... called *Paracels*, declaring it under his sovereignty, which would likely go unchallenged.”

- *Allgemeines historisch statistisch seografisches. Handlungs, Post und Zeitungs-Lexikon*, edited by Theophit Friedrich Ehrnamm, Heinrich Schorch, and Karl Gottfried Richter, published in Erfurt and Gotha (Germany) in 1830. Page 242, under the letter R, includes entries for “*Roberts Island of Annam, part of Paracels*” and “*Rocky Island of Annam, part of Paracels*.”

- *Nuovo dizionario geografico universale statistico - storico - commerciale*, edited by Arrowsmith, Buesching, Balbi, and Cannabich, volume IV, part I, published in Venice (Italy) in 1831. Page 680 describes: “*The Paracels archipelago lies equidistant from Hainan Island and the coast of Cochinchina, belonging to the kingdom of Annam*.”

- *Traité élémentaire de géographie: contenant un abrégé méthodique du précis de la géographie universelle*, edited by Malter-Brun, volume II, published in Paris in 1831. Page 221 states: “*Situated equidistant from the coast of Cochinchina and Hainan Island (China), the Paracels archipelago belongs to the Annamese empire*.”

- *Die Erdkunde von Asien*, volume III, by Carl Ritter, published in Berlin in 1834. Page 922 describes islands belonging to the kingdom of Cochinchina, such as *Pulo Canton* or *Collao Roe* (Cù Lao Ré), *Collao Cham* (Cù Lao Chàm), and the *Paracels Archipelago* as “*a chain of dangerous coral reefs known for turtles and fish, lying southeast of Hainan Island. These sand and seaweed-covered islands were claimed by the Cochinchina emperor in 1816 without any objections from neighboring countries*.”

- *Geografia fisica e politica*, volume III, by Luigi Galanti, published in Naples in 1834. Page 197 describes Hoàng Sa: “*Parcel or Parcels consists of many rocks with deep waters and covers less area than depicted on common maps, belonging to the Annamese empire*.”



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- *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, published in Calcutta (India) in 1837: Volume VI, part II, includes an article *Note on the Geography of Cochin China* by Bishop Jean Louis Taberd affirming: “*The Pracel or Paracels archipelago is a region filled with small islands, reefs, and sandbanks... The Cochin-Chinese people call this area Côn Vàng.*” Notably, page 745 states: “*Although this type of archipelago consists of only reefs with no other features, and the sea depth promises more inconvenience than benefit, Gia Long still believed that he had strengthened his territorial rule by this poor annexation. In 1816, the king solemnly planted his flag and formally maintained sovereignty over these reefs, undoubtedly without any competition.*”

- *Géographie moderne: redigée d'après les matériaux les plus récents sur le plan de l'ouvrage*, edited by Victor Levasseur, published in Paris in 1839. Page 200, under the Empire d'Annam ou de Viet-nam, records: “*Bordered by China to the north, Thailand to the west, the South China Sea, and the Gulf of Tonkin to the east and south. This empire, founded by Ngai-en-Choung (Nguyễn Ánh) or Gia Long at the beginning of the century (XIX), includes the geographical areas: the kingdom of Cochinchina or Southern Annam with the Paracels archipelago, the kingdom of Tonquin or Northern Annam with the Pirates islands in the Gulf of Tonkin, and the kingdom of Tsiampa (Champa) occupied by self-governing tribes.*”

- *Taschenbuch zur Verbreitung geographischer Kenntnisse*, edited by Johann Gottfried Sommer, published in Prague (Czech) in 1839. Page 296, under Cochinchina (Đàng Trong), states: “*Beyond the sea of the Cochinchina kingdom are many islands... In the [South] China Sea, only the following islands under Cochinchina sovereignty are important: Pulo-Condore, Pulo-Canton or Col-lao-Ray, and Tscham-col-lao or Col-lao-Tscham. Additionally, in 1816, the king of Cochinchina claimed the dangerous and uninhabited coral reef area, including many reefs and sandbanks, named Paracels. Hardly anyone can dispute Cochinchina's sovereignty over this newly claimed territory.*”

- *Geographisch-Statistisches Handwörterbuch*, edited by J.H. Möller, published in Gotha (Germany) in 1840. Page 46, under the letter A, includes the entry: “*Amfitrite (An Vĩnh), part of the Paracel Archipelago: One of the northernmost island groups of the Paracel Archipelago of the kingdom of Annam.*”

- *Del vario grado d'importanza degli stati odierni* by Cristoforo Negri, published in Milan (Italy) in 1841. Page 421 records: “*In 1816, the king of Cochinchina (Gia Long) claimed the Paracel Archipelago.*”

- *Voyage pittoresque en Asie et en Afrique* by J.B. Eyriès, published in Paris in 1841. Page 201 states: “*There are many islands in the Annamese empire: we note southeast of Hainan Island is the Paracels Archipelago, a chain of very dangerous reefs surrounded by sandbanks and rocks. These uninhabited islands are abundant with tortoises and fish, leading the Annamese emperor to occupy them in 1816 without any objections from neighboring countries.*”



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- *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique avec quelques relations nouvelles des missions et des notes géographiques et historiques* by M.L. Aimé-Martin, volume 3, published in Paris in 1843. This collection of letters concerning missionary activities and geographical and historical notes in Asia, Africa, and America includes a 1701 ship log from the *Amphitrite* passing through the Paracels. The final page notes: "*The Paracels archipelago belongs to the Annamese empire.*"

- *Moeur usages et costumes de tous les peuples du monde* by Auguste Wahlen, published in Brussels in 1843. Page 235 discusses the Annamese empire, stating: "*The entire coast of Annam is surrounded by many small rocky islands. The main islands under this empire's control are Phú Quốc Island in the Gulf of Thailand, Pirates islands in the Gulf of Tonkin, Côn Đảo, and the Paracel Archipelago.*"

- *Geografia elementare* by Luigi Galanti, published in Lugano (Italy) in 1846. Page 122 discusses islands in the Southeast Asian sea, mentioning the Paracels archipelago and confirming "*the Paracels archipelago of Annam.*"

- *L'Univers: Histoire et description de tous les peuples*, edited by Jean Yanoski and Jules David, published in Paris in 1848. Page 555 summarizes the history of the Annamese kingdom from the 17th century, starting from *Tong-King* in the north, gradually expanding southward to form *Cochinchina*. The book notes: "*We observe that for over 34 years, the Paracels archipelago (called Cát Vàng by the Annamese) has been occupied by Annamese people... We are unsure if they have established a base here, perhaps to protect fishing activities; but it is certain that Gia Long was determined to add this little flower to his crown, as he deemed it necessary to personally take possession of it, and in 1816, the king ceremoniously planted the flag of Annam here.*"

- *Geography of the Cochin-Chinese Empire* by T.S. Gutzlaff, published in the *Journal of Royal the Geographical Society*, volume 19, London, 1849. Page 93 describes *Hoàng Sa*: "*The Paracels archipelago (also known as Katvang) lies 15 to 20 leagues off the Annamese coast, visited by Cochin-Chinese and Hainan islanders for fishing and salvaging from shipwrecks. The Annamese government, recognizing the benefits, established tax collection stations and a small military outpost here to levy taxes on foreign fishing boats and assist local fishermen. These activities gradually led to significant transactions here.*"

- *Das Ausland*, published in Stuttgart and Tübingen (Germany) in 1850. Page 397, under *Geographie von Cochinchina (Geography of Cochinchina)*, states: "*Far northeast (15-20 leguas from the Annamese coast, latitude 13-17) is the Paracels (Katvang) archipelago... These islands are of little value unless they provide a significant fish catch. Therefore, many fishing boats from Hainan have sailed here for ages. Despite the risk of one out of ten trips failing, the remaining successful trips provide a sufficient fish yield. The Cochinchina government has not overlooked this fact, sending ships to monitor and issuing a law to protect their fishermen.*"



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- *L'univers. Histoire et description de tous les peuples. Japon, Indo-Chine, etc.* by Adolphe Dubois de Jancigny, published in Paris in 1850. Page 555 states: "... For over 34 years, the Paracels archipelago (called Cat Vang by the Annamese), a winding chain of islands with many submerged and exposed islands, very dangerous for mariners, has been occupied by the Annamese. We do not know if they have established their base here, but it is certain that Gia Long decided to secure this place for his dynasty, as he saw the necessity of personally taking possession of it, and in 1816 the king solemnly planted the Annamese flag here."

- *Compendio di geografia universale* by renowned Italian geographer Adriano Balbi, published in Livorno in 1850. Pages 437-438 in the section *l'Impero di An-nam* (Empire of Annam) discuss the geographical location, topography, area, and population of Annam in the 18th century, noting: "The empire also includes the Paracel Archipelago, Pirates archipelago, and Côn Sơn archipelago."

- *La geografia universal* by Malte-Brun, volume I, published in Madrid and Barcelona in 1853. Pages 791-802 provide a detailed description of the Annamese kingdom, listing many locations within the kingdom, including *Paracelso* (the Hoàng Sa archipelago). Page 799 describes: "Paracelso is a group of islands, rocks, and reefs extending up to 50 leagues, to the south of Hainan Island, facing the Cochinchina coast... It comprises many island groups, including *Amphitritos*, *Discovery*, and *Voadore*. Some islands are forested, used by the Cochinchina people for fishing."

- *Neues Konversations-Lexikon für alle Stände* by Hermann J. Meger, volume XII, published in Pilburghansen and New York in 1859. Page 153, under the letter P, includes the entry: "Paracels (Paracel Islands): Archipelago and reef in the Indo-Chinese peninsula (East Asia), part of the Cochinchina province of the kingdom of Annam, in the South China Sea southeast of Hainan Island. Some islands are green, others barren. All islands are rich in birds (sea swallows), turtles, and abundant fish."

- *Pierer's Universal-Lexikon*, published in Altenburg (Germany) in 1861. Page 659, under the letter P, includes the entry: "Paracels: Archipelago belonging to the kingdom of Annam, in the South China Sea. Mainly coral reefs. Some islands are green. All islands are rich in birds, turtles, and provide good fishing grounds."

- *Aus der Natur*, published in Leipzig (Germany) in 1867. Page 696, under *Das Königreich An-Nam* (Kingdom of Annam), states: "The kingdom of Annam covers almost the entire Indo-Chinese peninsula, including the territories of Cochinchina, Tonquin, part of Cambodia, several islands along the coast, and the Paracels archipelago."

- *Souvenirs de Hué (Cochinchine)* by Michel Đứrc Chaigneau, published in Paris in 1867. Page 13 states: "The kingdom of Annam includes Cochinchina, Tonquin, part of Cambodia, and the Paracels archipelago..."



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The information related to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, along with other islands belonging to Vietnam in the South China Sea, as documented in many ancient Western literature, provides factual observations about the geographical location, topography, and historical exploitation and occupation of these islands by scholars, geographers, and mariners from the 16th to 19th centuries. These documents objectively acknowledge that the Vietnamese have had a long history of discovering, exploiting, establishing, and exercising sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

4. ANCIENT FOREIGN MAPS PROVING VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE PARACEL AND SPRATLY ISLANDS

4.1. Western Ancient Maps Proving Vietnam's Sovereignty Over the Paracel and Spratly Islands

In addition to ancient documents, numerous maps created and published by Western geographers, navigators, and cartographers from the 16th to 19th centuries contribute to proving Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos.

The earliest maps published in the West depicting the Hoàng Sa Archipelago is possibly two maps drawn by Portuguese cartographers in 1560: one by Bartholomen Velho and the other by João de Lisboa. Both maps illustrate a chain of islands stretching and curving like a blade opposite the coast of present-day central Vietnam. The northernmost part of this chain shows a group of islands corresponding to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago is labeled *I. bas do Pracell* (Pracell Shoal). The southernmost part is labeled *Pulo Ceciss*, which is Cù Lao Thu (Phú Quý Island).

Next is the map *Cabo Comorim, Japao, Moluco e Note in Atlas*, part of an 8-piece world atlas by Fernão Vaz Dourado, a Portuguese cartographer, drawn in 1571. This map also depicts a chain of islands off the coast of Đàng Trong, resembling a straight-edged blade rather than the curved shape on Velho and Lisboa's maps. The northern part of this chain is named *I. des baixos Cachina* (Giao Chỉ Shoal), and the southern end is labeled *Pulo Sissi* (Cù Lao Thu). To the west of this chain are coastal islands labeled *P. Champello* (Cù Lao Chàm), *P. Cotaio* (Cù Lao Ré), and *P. Cambiz* (Cù Lao Xanh). Thus, from 1571, Dourado distinguished *I. des baixos Cachina* (Giao Chỉ Shoal, i.e., the Hoàng Sa Archipelago) from coastal islands like *Cù Lao Chàm*, *Cù Lao Ré*, and *Cù Lao Xanh*.

In 1576, Fernão Vaz Dourado published another map of Southeast Asia, which similarly depicts a chain of islands off the coast of Đàng Trong. However, the name for the Paracel Islands on this map is *I. do Pracell*, not *I. des baixos Cachina* as on his 1571 map.

In the 1590s, more Western maps related to the Hoàng Sa Archipelago were published by cartographers such as Bartholomen Lasso, Van Langren, Linschoten, and Petrus Plancius.



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Bartholomen Lasso created two maps in 1590 and 1592-1594. These maps depict the *Pracel* as a long blade-like shape in the South China Sea, including the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, and other smaller islands to the south. The western coastline features names like *Varella* (Mũi Nạy, or Đại Lãnh Cape), *Pulo Cambi* (Cù Lao Xanh), *Pulo Cantão* (Cù Lao Ré, or Lý Sơn Island), and *Sinoa* (Thuận Hóa). Notably, the coast adjacent to *Pulo Cantão* is labeled *Costa de Pracel*, indicating that by the late 16th century, Western cartographers recognized a geographical link between Quảng Ngãi Province, Cù Lao Ré, and the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

The map *Insullae Moluccae* by Petrus Plancius (1552 - 1622) in 1592 also names the Paracel Islands as *Pracel*, encompassing both Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa, and some southern islands. The western coastline facing *Pracel* is called *Costa da Pracel*. The northern part of this chain is labeled *Doa Tavaquero*, replacing names like *I. des baixos Cachina* or *I. do Pracell* found on earlier Portuguese maps.

In 1595, the Van Langren brothers from the Netherlands published a comprehensive and detailed map of East Asia. This map also features a blade-shaped chain of islands off the coast of Đàng Trong, with the northern cluster labeled *I. de Pracel* and the adjacent western coast named *Costa de Pracel*. This depiction is more accurate than previous maps, limited to the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, and distinguishes these from coastal and southern islands. This map marks a shift in maritime dominance in the South China Sea from Portuguese to Dutch navigators.

The map by Linschoten published in 1599 is perhaps the last Western maritime map of the 16th century depicting the Paracel Islands. It confirms details from the Van Langren brothers' map but is more precise. Three coastal islands are named: *Polo Cecir* (Cù Lao Thu) in the south, the *Pracel* shoal east of *Polo Cambir* (Cù Lao Xanh), and *Pulo Ampelo* (Cù Lao Chàm). The northernmost islands lie parallel to *Pulo Ampelo* near the shore.

In the 17th century, more Western maps featured the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, often labeled *Parcels*, *Paracels*, or *Paracel Islands*, acknowledging their connection to Vietnamese territory. Examples include: *India Orientalis* (Jodocus Hondius, 1606), *Insulæ Indiæ Orientalis Praecipuæ* (Jodocus Hondius, 1613), *Asia noviter delineata* (Willem Janszoon Blaeu, 1617), *Asia* (John Speed, 1626), *India Orientalis* (Gerard Mercator, 1630), *Insulæ Indiæ Orientalis* (Jodocus Hondius, 1632), *An anonymous map* (Pedro Berthelot, 1635), *Asia* (Herman Moll, 1636), *Carte de l'Asie* (Van Lochem, 1640), *India quæ Orientalis dicitur, et Insulæ Adiacentes* (Willem Janszoon Blaeu, 1645), *Indiæ Orientalis Nova Descriptio* (Janssouius, 1645), *Tabula Indiæ Orientalis* (F. De Wit, 1662), *Indiæ Orientalis* (Visscher, 1680), *Carte du Royaume de Siam et des pays circonvoisins* (P. du Val, 1686), *The East Indies* in W. Dampier's travelogue (1688).



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These maps often merge the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, with labels moving closer to their actual positions. Some maps use names like *I. de Pracel* (Janssouius, 1645; F. De Wit, 1662; Visscher, 1680), *Island Pracell* (Thornton, 1669), and *Shoales of Pracel* (W. Dampier, 1688).

In the 18th century, additional maps of the South China Sea and the Paracel Islands were published in the West. Noteworthy examples include: *L' Asia* (Dressée, 1700), *Carte des Costes de l'Asie sur l'océan contenant les bancs isles et costes & c.* (Alexis Hubert Jaillot, 1720), *India Orientalis* (Seutter, 1720), *A Map of the Continental of the East-Indie* (Herman Moll, 1736), *Carte de l'Asie* (Homann Heirs, 1744), *Carte de Costes de Cochinchine, Tunquin et partie de celles de la Chine* (Kaat van de Kusten, 1754), *Seconde partie de la carte d'Asie* (Jean Baptiste d'Anville, 1752), *A New and Elegant Imperial Sheet Atlas* (Robert Laurie, 1794), *East Indies* (Thomas Salmon, 1767), *Karte von dem Morgenländischen Ocean oder dem Indischen Meere* (Jacques Nicolas Bellin, c. 1770), *Carte generale des Indes orientales et des Isles Adiacentes* (Marianne, 1790), *Carte Hydro-Geographique des Indes Orientales* (M. Bonne, 1791).

Of particular note is *Carte de Costes de Cochinchine, Tunquin et partie de celles de la Chine* by Kaat van de Kusten (1754). Despite “the blade” outline enclosing the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos under the name *Le Paracel*, it differentiates the eastern *Les Lunettes* (Nguyệt Thiêm Group) from the remaining western islands of the Hoàng Sa Archipelago.

The map in *Neptune Oriental* by A. de Manneville (1775) is noted for its progress over earlier Portuguese maps, with a clear description of the Paracel Islands: “*Paracels is a large shoal, extending from north to south off the coast of Đàng Trong. Most maps record its length at approximately 92 miles, from latitude 12°10' to 16°45' North, with a width of about 20 miles. In recent years, it has been recognized that this area contains many different large and small islands, with sand and rock shoals in many places.*”

The 19th century saw a significant increase in maps affirming Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. Besides French, German, and Belgian maps, many British and American maps emerged, reflecting these nations' growing maritime ambitions. Examples include: *An Accurate map of the East Indies* (Thomas Banke, London, 1805), *Chart of the East India Islands* (Longman Hurst Rees & Orme Paternoster Row, England, 1808), *A New Map of the East India Isles* (J. Carry, 1811), *East India Isles* (John Thomson, 1817), *East India Islands* (Samuel Walker, USA, 1834), *An Nam đại quốc họa đồ* (Bishop Jean Louis Taberd, 1838), *Ost-Indien* (Stieler's Hand-Atlas, Germany, 1870), *Map of Indo-China* (Scottish Geographica Magazine, England, 1886), *Asia* (McNally & Company's, USA, 1887), *Siam and the Malay Archipelago* (The Times Atlas, Printing House Square, England, 1896).

These maps consistently illustrate the Hoàng Sa Archipelago under various names, such as *I. de Paracel*, *Paracels*, *Paracel Islands*, and *I. Ciampa* (Champa Island).



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Two 19th-century maps definitively affirm Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago. These are *Partie de la Cochinchine* in the *Atlas Universel* by Belgian geographer Philippe Vandermaelen, published in Brussels in 1827, and *An Nam đại quốc họa đồ* by Bishop Jean Louis Taberd, published in the *Latin-Annamese dictionary* in 1838.

Partie de la Cochinchine is map number 106 in volume 2 (Asie) of the *Atlas Universel*. This map depicts the central Vietnamese coast from latitude 12 to 16, including regions like *Bink-Kang* (Bình Khang, old name for Khánh Hòa Province), with place names such as *Carmraigne havre* (Cam Ranh port), *Nhiatrang* (Nha Trang); *Quin-Hone* (Quy Nhơn), with names like *Phuyen havre* (Phú Yên port), *Cambir B.* (Cù Lao Xanh, now Nhơn Châu Commune in Quy Nhơn City), *P. Quinhone* (Quy Nhơn), *Batangan* (Ba Làng An cape, Bình Sơn, Quảng Ngãi). It also features a chain of coastal islands, starting from islands in Cam Ranh Bay in the south, running northwards with over 20 islands and ending at *Cham Collac ou Champella* (Cù Lao Chàm) off the Quảng Nam coast.

The most important detail is the depiction of the *Paracels* in the central part of the map, between latitudes 160 to 170 and longitudes 1090 to 1110, including islands like *I. Pattles* (Hoàng Sa Island), *I. Dccan* (Duncan Island, now Quang Hòa Island), *Tree I.* (đảo Cây Island), *I. Lincoln* (đảo Linh Côn Island), *Triton* (đảo Tri Tôn), and *Rocher au dessus de l'eau* (Đá Bông Bay). The positions of these islands, reefs, and groups on the map are relatively accurate compared to current coordinates.

To the right of the Paracels illustration is a rectangular box labeled *Empire d'An-nam* (Annam Empire), briefly introducing the kingdom of Annam in French, divided into sections: *Phisique* (Physical), *Politique* (Political), *Statistique* (Statistical), and *Minéralogie* (Mineralogy).

Naming the map *Partie de la Cochinchine*, depicting the mainland, coastal islands, and the Paracels off Vietnam's coast, and introducing Annam in the *Atlas Universel*, shows the author acknowledged the Paracels as part of Annam's territory. The map was produced by a Western geographer and officially published by the Belgian Royal Geographical Society, lending it high scientific and legal value.

It is also noteworthy that since the 16th century, Western geographers and navigators, starting with the Portuguese, mapped the Hoàng Sa region and named it *Pracel* (or *Parcel*, *Paracels*) to denote the group of islands called *Bãi Cát Vàng* or *Hoàng Sa* by the Vietnamese. They also named the coastline opposite *Pracel* to the west as *Costa de Pracel* / *Coste de Paracels* (Paracel Coast). However, the positions of the Paracels on Western maps and the Hoàng Sa Islands on ancient Vietnamese maps were not precisely located. *Paracels* and *Hoàng Sa* included the present-day Trường Sa Archipelago and some nearshore islands in the South-Central region. Still, the *Partie de la Cochinchine* map distinguishes coastal islands



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like *Cham Collac ou Champella* (Cù Lao Chàm), *Cambir B.* (Cù Lao Xanh), and *P. Canton ou Cacitam* (Cù Lao Ré, Lý Sơn Island) from the *Paracels* in the middle of the South China Sea.

After Philippe Vandermaelen, Bishop Jean Louis Taberd published a map named in three languages: Hán, Quốc ngữ, and Latin: 安南大國畫圖 / *An Nam đại quốc họa đồ* / *Tabula Geografica Imperii Anamiciti* in the 1838 Latin-Annamese dictionary. This map depicts 9 small dots symbolizing the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, with coordinates nearly matching reality, and includes the annotation “*Paracel seu Cát Vàng*” (Paracel or Cát Vàng). In his article *Note on the Geography of Cochin China* in *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Vol. 6, Part II, 1837), Bishop Taberd wrote: “*Paracel, or Pracel, i.e., Hoàng Sa - Côn Vàng, belongs to Cochin China*”, and confirmed that in 1816, King Gia Long had a flag planted and sovereignty declared over these islands without facing any disputes.

Together, Philippe Vandermaelen’s *Partie de la Cochinchine* and Jean Louis Taberd’s *An Nam đại quốc họa đồ* affirm that *Paracels* is *Cát Vàng* or the Hoàng Sa Archipelago, belonging to Vietnam. This refutes Chinese scholars’ claims that Hoàng Sa Archipelago is *Xisha Qundao* belonging to China, while the Vietnamese Hoàng Sa Archipelago only refer to nearshore islands like *Cù Lao Chàm* and *Cù Lao Ré*, unrelated to *Paracels*.

Thus, along with verified historical events and written sources in multiple languages, Western ancient maps from nearly five centuries ago confirm that Vietnam established sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. These maps, created and published by Western cartographers, navigators, and geographers from the 16th to 19th centuries, provide valuable evidence supporting Vietnam’s indisputable sovereignty over these islands.

4.2. Chinese Ancient Maps Proving the Paracel and Spratly Islands Do Not Belong to China

Since China began disputing Vietnam’s sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa Archipelago in 1909, Chinese authorities and scholars have sought ancient documents and maps to prove that the Paracel and Spratly Islands, which they call *Xisha Qundao* and *Nansha Qundao*, belong to China.

However, ancient documents and maps from the Qin - Han to the Ming -Qing dynasties, spanning nearly 2,000 years, consistently show that the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos never belonged to China, as claimed in recent decades.

Regarding ancient maps, Vietnamese and international scholars have extensively studied hundreds of national maps, provincial map of southern Chinese provinces, drawn and published by Chinese authorities and scholars from the Qin - Han to the Republic of China. These confirm that the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos are absent from Chinese maps. Maps by Chinese imperial authorities and scholars from the Ming and



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earlier periods either mark Hainan Island as China's southernmost point, excluding the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos from Chinese territory, or label them *Wanli Changsha* and *Tianli Shitang*, noting them as islands belonging to "foreign countries" (*Fanguo*). In other words, ancient Chinese maps confirm these islands do not belong to China.

Under the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911), the Chinese empire emphasized national and provincial mapping. They adopted advanced Western cartography techniques, achieving significant progress in surveying, mapping, and printing Chinese maps. In 1708, Emperor Kangxi employed Jesuit missionaries from the West to survey and map China, culminating in the comprehensive 皇輿全覽圖 in 1717. This detailed, woodblock-printed map series, at scales of 1:4,000,000 to 1:5,000,000, includes 28 maps covering Mongolia and Manchuria but excludes Xinjiang and Tibet. This authoritative Qing map set ends at Hainan Island in the southeast.

In 1728, the Qing dynasty published the extensive encyclopedia 古今圖書集成, comprising 216 maps depicting China's history. However, this large collection does not include maps showing the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos as part of China. Volume 1, in the section Maps of administrative units, contains maps like, 廣東崗域圖, and 瓊州府崗域圖, depicting southern China's territory under Kangxi reign (1661 - 1722). These maps do not extend beyond Hainan Island. Similarly, the 廣東歷史地圖集 includes maps from the 廣東通誌 compiled during the Ming Jiajing reign (1522 - 1566), which limit Chinese islands to Qiongzhou (Hainan Island).

Beyond the 皇輿全覽分省圖 and 古今圖與集成, other official Qing and provincial maps do not recognize the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos. Notable examples include: 皇輿全覽分省圖 (c. 1717), 二京十八省圖 and 廣東全圖 in 清二京十八省疆域全圖 (1850), 皇輿全圖 (1899), 廣東省 in 地輿圖考 (Guangxu reign, 1875 - 1908), 皇朝直省地輿全圖 (1904), 大清帝國, in 清大地圖集 (1905), 大清帝國 and 廣東省 in 大清帝國全圖 (1908), 中華民國分省新圖.

These maps consistently show China's southern boundary ending at Hainan Island.

Additionally, the book 海國圖誌 by Wei Yuan (1842) features the map 東南洋各國延隔圖, detailing *Wanli Changsha* and *Tianli Shitang*, corresponding to today's Chinese claims of *Xisha Qundao* and *Nansha Qundao*. However, Wei Yuan's map places these islands outside China's territory, as reflected in the map's title.

From 1908 to 1933, the Qing dynasty and later the Republic of China organized and published four comprehensive atlases using Western cartographic techniques, detailing China's administrative and postal maps. These atlases include:



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- *Atlas of the Chinese Empire / 中國地圖* (English, 1908), comprising an Index Map and 22 provincial maps (31 cm x 41 cm each), compiled by the China Inland Mission in Shanghai with technical assistance from Edward Stanford. This was the first Western-style atlas published in China, supported by the Qing Post Office.

- *Complete Atlas of the China / 中國全圖* (English, 1917), a reprint of the 1908 atlas with the same format.

- *Atlas Postal de Chine / 中華郵政與圖 / Postal Atlas of China* (trilingual: Chinese-English-French, 1919), published by the Republic of China's Postal Department in Nanjing, comprising an Index Map and 46 provincial maps (61 cm x 71 cm each).

- *Atlas Postal de Chine / 中華郵政與圖 / Postal Atlas of China* (trilingual: Chinese-English-French, 1933), a revised and expanded edition of the 1919 atlas, including an Index Map and 29 provincial maps (61 cm x 71 cm each), covering Tibet and Mongolia. Map 23 depicts Guangdong Province and Hainan Island, with Hainan inset in the top left corner.

These atlases, products of the Qing's 1906 cartographic initiative continued by the Republic of China, show detailed provincial maps and postal routes. Areas outside China's territory was not depicted. Thus, these atlases consistently limit China's southern boundary to Hainan Island, excluding the Paracel and Spratly Islands. The detailed indexes list no places named *Xisha Qundao* or *Nansha Qundao*. This evidence shows that until the 1908 *Atlas of the Chinese Empire*, the 1917 *Complete Atlas of the China*, and the 1919 and 1933 *Atlas Postal de Chine / Postal Atlas of China*, the Paracel and Spratly Islands, which China now claims as *Xisha Qundao* and *Nansha Qundao*, were outside their so-called "historical sovereignty."

In 2016, during research in the United States, we found additional late 19th-century Chinese maps also limiting China's territory to Hainan Island:

- *Atlas von China* (Berlin, 1885), a 2-volume atlas (55 cm x 45 cm) by Verlag von Dietrich Reimer, with 16 pages of German text and 55 color maps, covering Beijing and 26 provinces under the Guangxu reign (1875 - 1908). The first map in Volume I shows China's overall territory, ending at Hainan Island.

- 乾龍十三摺銅本與地圖 (1760), an atlas of around 200 copperplate-printed maps detailing China's geography under the Qianlong reign (1735 - 1796), from the mainland to surrounding seas. This atlas contains no maps or references to *Xisha Qundao* or *Nansha qundao*. The final map depicting China's southern seas ends at Hainan Island, with the area below left blank, indicating it was outside China's recognized territory.

Thus, ancient Chinese documents, maps, and physical evidence consistently affirm that China's southern boundary ends at Hainan Island. The Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos belong to Vietnam and are not part of China's current territorial claims.



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CONCLUSION

Historical documents and ancient maps compiled, printed, and circulated by Vietnam, Western countries, and China from the 16th to the 19th centuries affirm Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos, or they acknowledge Vietnam's close ties to these islands for many centuries.

These historical sources and ancient maps objectively reflect that the Vietnamese people discovered, explored, established, and exercised sovereignty over the Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa archipelagos long ago. This has been recognized by Westerners and Chinese in their documents and maps. These are valuable historical records and sources of supplementary, authentic information that have historical and legal value, proving Vietnam's long-standing sovereignty over these islands and many other maritime areas.

T.Đ.A.S.

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International Law as a Component of Argumentation in Disputes Involving Imperialist Powers

This presentation explores the role of international law in disputes between imperialist powers and non-imperialist states. It challenges the dualistic perception that sees international relations solely through the lenses of power politics or normative order. Drawing from Kantian theory, it argues that legal interpretation involves judgment and persuasion rather than objective truth. While legal arguments are crucial, they are just one facet of a complex array of arguments, including economic, moral, and historical considerations. The presentation emphasizes the importance of convincing the audience by appealing to their underlying moral and political values. Ultimately, it suggests that despite challenges, making effective legal arguments remains essential, even when facing imperialist powers in sensitive sovereignty disputes. This perspective seeks to move beyond traditional dichotomies and foster a more nuanced understanding of the role of international law in global affairs.



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MILITARY BUILD UP IN SOUTH CHINA SEA A VIEW FROM VIETNAM'S SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

From the perspective not only of countries within the region such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan, but also from broader considerations, maintaining security, stability, and freedom of navigation in and around the South China Sea is a pivotal goal of their policies. These nations, reliant on maritime transportation, find themselves in a particularly challenging situation, but the issue also impacts other states, as developments in the South China Sea reverberate across regions, including the West. Unfortunately, in recent years, concerning trends have emerged, including escalating provocations, military activities, and confrontational actions, as well as armament buildup. The latter reflects the anxieties harbored by states in the region.

The aim of this presentation is to analyze key trends of military buildup in recent years, including actions that pose a threat to regional stability. These phenomena will be discussed from the perspective of Vietnam, which remains a key player in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea. To achieve this, modernization initiatives and challenges faced by Vietnam will also be presented.



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POLISH GEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN VIETNAM HISTORY AND PROSPECTS

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Cooperation between Poland and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has a long tradition. It dates back to the 1950s, when Poland began training personnel for Vietnam and diplomatic relations were established between our countries. Over the years, scientists from Poland and Vietnam have produced many joint publications, projects and initiatives. One of these projects is the reconstruction of the depositional environment of the basins associated with the Red River Fault Zone. There are at least a dozen small areas in northern Vietnam where Paleogene and Neogene deposits are exposed. In most cases, these are small erosional patches, remnants of a larger sedimentary terrestrial system. Only a few of them are large enough to be treated as basins with fully developed sedimentary patterns. Among these, the Cao Bang and Na Duong basins and the Hoanh Bo Trough, which is filled with a thick series of Late Eocene-Early Oligocene terrestrial deposits, deserve special attention.



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In addition, studies of volcanoclastic successions in central Vietnam have begun in recent years. In 2023, a Polish-Vietnamese "New Opening Conference" was held in Hanoi. It was attended by more than 250 people from Vietnam and Poland. Also in 2023, a Polish-Vietnamese Tropical Research Station was opened in cooperation with the Vietnam Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources. The cooperation is ongoing and developing intensively. As a result, a conference "History and Perspectives of Polish-Vietnamese Research Cooperation" was held in Hanoi in April 2024, and a film about Polish-Vietnamese scientific cooperation in the field of geology and archaeology was produced.



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POLISH-VIETNAMESE COLLABORATIVE REEF RESEARCH PROGRAM

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Abstract

Today's reef environments stand among the most susceptible marine ecosystems facing the impacts of shifting climatic conditions. Projections from climate change models, accounting for rising atmospheric CO₂ concentrations, paint a grim picture, foreseeing the extinction of a significant portion of contemporary shallow-water reef corals and other reef biota by the century's end, owing to acidification and escalating surface water temperatures. However, amidst this gloom, compelling evidence emerges, indicating taxon-specific physiological adaptations that engender more nuanced responses and heightened resilience in select taxa against stressors like ocean acidification, warming, and local perturbations.

Unlocking the intricacies of these adaptations and discerning the survival potential of reef taxa necessitates a thorough exploration of their evolutionary history. This imperative forms the crux of a proposed threefold, long-term collaborative reef research program between Poland and Vietnam. The program comprises three integral packages:

1. The paleontological package delves into the Holocene evolution of the monsoon climate along coastal Vietnam, leveraging fossils and contemporary skeletal proxies of corals and reef organisms. For instance, well-preserved coral skeletons will be



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scrutinized to elucidate trends in calcification performance, extension rates, and aragonite saturation states over time.

2. The biological package entails comprehensive morphological and molecular taxonomic assessments, alongside investigations into the adaptive mechanisms of coral reef organisms, particularly corals, within varying seascape conditions.
3. The experimental biology component aims to gauge the impacts of ocean acidification and nano/microplastic exposures on reef biota growth, employing experimental aquaria facilities.

An exciting prospect for cementing the longevity and efficacy of the research program lies in establishing a joint marine research station in central Vietnam. Initial reconnaissance identifies Ba Lang An as a potential location. Collaboration with foreign partners, leveraging their specialized expertise, augments the program's robustness. Furthermore, active engagement with Vietnamese partners promises to catalyze the dissemination of scientific knowledge and foster a deeper understanding of coral reefs within Vietnamese society.



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fot. Monika Rogozińska

ARCHAEOLOGY, RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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The Film "**Against Sand of the Time**"

- The Polish Achievements in Archaeology, Restoration and Conservation of Cultural Heritage.

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