

Vietnam Cautious in Response to Chinese Missiles Bases Near Border

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OE Watch Commentary

On 4 February *thanhvien.vn*, the widely read Vietnamese-language pro-government publication focusing on social affairs, published the excerpted article regarding China's construction of a surface-to-air missile base in Guangxi province—only 20 km from the Vietnamese border. When asked to comment on this missile base, Vietnam's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman stated that Vietnam was still verifying information about the reports. The article nevertheless compared this issue with China's military presence in the South China Sea.

When dealing with competing claims in the South China Sea, the article noted that Vietnam appeals to peace, order, stability, and international legal treaties. The article further noted that Vietnam, the UK, Japan, and other powers oppose any unilateral actions to undermine the status quo in the South China Sea. Moreover, the British navy, according to the article, has announced plans to deploy an aircraft carrier to the South China Sea in response to China's actions. A subsequent 25 February Vietnamese-language article from



Chinese honor guard in column.

Source: Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen (USAF), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_honor_guard_in_column_070322-F-0193C-014.JPEG, Attribution: CC x 2.0

the mainstream online newspaper *vietnamnet.vn* noted that Vietnam responded to an additional report about a second Chinese missile base being built in Yunnan Province, which also borders Guangxi and Vietnam. Like the missile base in Guangxi, Vietnam stated that the defense policies of all countries must contribute to peace, harmony, stability, development, and cooperation. Vietnam did not specifically name or criticize China, but rather proposed a response based on shared principles, again showing restraint and patience in its China policy.

“Vietnam supports the maintenance of peace, regional stability, security, safety, and freedom of navigation and overflight, and adherence to the principle of upholding the law on the seas and oceans, in accordance with the provisions of international law.”

Source: “Xác minh thông tin Trung Quốc xây căn cứ tên lửa cách biên giới Việt Nam 20km (Verifying the information that China built a missile base 20km from the Vietnamese border),” *thanhvien.vn* (widely read pro-government Vietnamese language publication), 4 February 2021. <https://thanhvien.vn/thoi-su/xac-minh-thong-tin-trung-quoc-xay-can-cu-ten-lua-cach-bien-gioi-viet-nam-20km-1338550.html>

Vietnam will verify that a surface-to-air missile base is being completed by China in Ninh Minh district in Guangxi province, China, about 20 kilometers from the Vietnamese border, according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang answered many questions from the press about the South China Sea issue. Specifically, a reporter noted the ministers of Britain and Japan issued a joint statement on Tuesday expressing deep concerns about the situation of the East Sea, and opposed unilateral behavior to change the status quo; the UK also plans to deploy the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth to the Indo-Pacific region.

In response to a question, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang emphasized that Vietnam supports the maintenance of peace, regional stability, security, safety, and freedom of navigation and overflight, and adherence to the principle of upholding the law on the seas and oceans, in accordance with the provisions of international law, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982).

In a previous request to provide information and comment on the current presence of some satellite images and some information showing that a surface-to-air missile base is being completed by China in Ninh Minh district in Guangxi province, China, about 20 kilometers from the border of Vietnam, Le Thi Thu Hang said she would verify the information as asked by the reporter.

Source: “Việt Nam lên tiếng việc Trung Quốc xây căn cứ tên lửa gần biên giới hai nước (Vietnam raises voice about China's construction of a missile base near the border of the two countries),” *vietnamnet.vn* (mainstream Vietnamese online newspaper), 25 February 2021. <https://vietnamnet.vn/vn/thoi-su/chinh-tri/viet-nam-binh-luan-viec-trung-quoc-xay-can-cu-ten-lua-gan-bien-gioi-hai-nuoc-715518.html>

A reporter asked to clarify whether China may be building a land missile base, with the second in Yunnan province near the border with Vietnam. The Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Le Thi Thu Hang responded that Vietnam's point of view is that the defense policies of all countries need to make a positive and practical contribution to maintaining peace, stability, and harmony and further cooperation and development in the region and the world.