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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Vietnamese Canadian Federation welcomes National Geographic Society's new policy of designating Parcel Islands (Hoang Sa)**

On March 22, 2010 Ut V. Ngo, President of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation, sent to the National Geographic Society an email message expressing the Federation's concern regarding the Society's recent release of a map of the China Sea, on which the Parcel Islands – which belong to Vietnam and are called Hoang Sa – were designated with a Chinese name.

The Federation's letter adds its voice to the appeal by the U.S.-based Nguyen Thai Hoc Foundation, which called for support of its petition requesting the National Geographic Society to correct this serious error. Over 10,000 people worldwide have signed this petition.

The Federation was pleased to receive the following response from the National Geographic Society with an updated version of its previous Press Release. This version appropriately reflects the true circumstances regarding the international status of these islands.

The Federation applauds the initiative undertaken by the Nguyen Thai Hoc Foundation and other organizations to publicize this issue. As well, it welcomes the policy adopted by the National Geographic Society to address the concerns that have been raised by Vietnamese all over the world.

#### **UPDATE, March 25, 2010 (National Geographic Society)**

**The National Geographic Society's Map Policy Committee has recently met to discuss this matter in greater detail. Based on the best information and research available, the Map Policy Committee seeks to make independent judgments about future changes or clarifications on its maps, as well as to correct any errors.**

**The naming conventions of the Parcel Islands on our maps will be revised as follows:**

- **Smaller-scale world maps: Use conventional name - Parcel Islands; omit possession label.**
- **Larger-scale regional, continental, and sectional maps: Use conventional name - Parcel Islands. Expand possession qualifier: Occupied by China in 1974, which calls them Xisha Qundao; claimed by Vietnam, which calls them Hoàng Sa.**

**These conventions will apply on future printings of our maps, and will be reflected online in short order.**

Date of release: March 28, 2010

Ut V. Ngo  
President, Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
[www.vietfederation.ca](http://www.vietfederation.ca)

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Letter from the Vietnamese Canadian Federation to the National Geographic Society

Ottawa, March 22, 2010  
Mr. Chris Jones  
Editor, National Geographic Society  
1145 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036-4688

Re. Map of South China Sea

Dear Sir:

I'm writing with regard to the latest version of the National Geographic Society's map of the South China Sea, in which the Society labels the Paracels as belonging to China.

In fact, these islands belong to Vietnam, which had administered them over hundreds of years until the Chinese armed forces invaded their Eastern part in 1956 and then their Western part in 1974.

By labelling Paracels as belonging to the Chinese, you have sided with an aggressor instead of respecting world history or at least remaining neutral by keeping the islands' original name "Paracels".

As you recall, in 1990 Saddam Hussein used his armed forces to invade Kuwait and established it as Iraq's 19th province. Would the National Geographic Society have accepted Saddam Hussein's victory and his new designation of Kuwait at that time?

I'd greatly appreciate receiving your clarification of this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Ut V. Ngo  
President, Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
[www.vietfederation.ca](http://www.vietfederation.ca)

Response from the National Geographic Society

from **Cindy Beidel** <cbeidel@ngs.org>  
to vcfottawa@gmail.com  
date Thu, Mar 25, 2010 at 6:20 PM  
subject Recent map of the South China Sea

Thank you for your recent email.

Please see our statement regarding the Paracel Islands:  
[http://press.nationalgeographic.com/pressroom/index.jsp?pageID=pressReleases\\_detail&siteID=1&cid=1268771677039](http://press.nationalgeographic.com/pressroom/index.jsp?pageID=pressReleases_detail&siteID=1&cid=1268771677039)

Best,  
Cindy

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PARACEL ISLANDS STATEMENT

In pursuit of a consistent and accurate Map Policy over the National Geographic Society's 122-year history as a not-for-profit scientific and educational institution, we strive to be apolitical, to consult multiple authoritative sources, and to make independent decisions based on extensive research. We do not seek to resolve or take sides in recognized disputes regarding territory or names, but to pursue a de facto policy — that is, to portray for any reader or viewer to the best of our judgment the current reality of a situation.

With respect to the Paracel Islands (the traditional name), National Geographic has recognized that this archipelago has been occupied and administered by the Chinese government since 1974, and as a result, the Society recognizes the Chinese name Xisha Qundao as the primary name. This is consistent with our Map Policy. On our regional and other maps of sufficient scale, we specifically also recognize and designate the alternative Vietnamese name Hoàng Sa, and the traditional name Paracel Islands, and include a note indicating that while China occupies and administers the archipelago, Vietnam claims the archipelago as its own. We believe that is the current reality from everything we know.

We have recently received complaints about the particular depiction on our World Map, the scale of which makes it difficult to include detailed information about a small land mass such as the

Paracel Islands. We have carefully reviewed the situation and recognize that simply denoting the archipelago with the Chinese name and the word "China" in parenthesis without further explanation can be misleading and misinterpreted. In the future, we will either provide the additional explanation that is included on our other maps as described above, or we will omit any designation. We hope this better clarifies the de facto situation that is described on our other maps in greater detail.

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