

《中国否认拒绝与越南对话》

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A senior diplomat dismissed on Friday Vietnamese reports that Beijing has rejected Hanoi's suggestion to hold a bilateral summit and high-level meetings.

Communications between the two neighbors are smooth regarding territorial disputes, said Yi Xianliang, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs.

Yi also said China has exercised maximum restraint in handling confrontations over a Chinese oil rig in the South China Sea.

"Since May 2, we have talked more than 30 times at various levels. Communications take place every day," Yi told a media briefing, adding that most of the communications are proposed by China.

Referring to reports that Beijing has refused to hold dialogue with Hanoi, Yi said, "Some people in Vietnam might expect to solve the problem by other means" — through international lawsuits.

Yi said Beijing will never accept this.

He also dismissed Vietnamese reports that a Vietnamese vessel was capsized by a Chinese ship on May 26 and that the Chinese had halted attempts to rescue the fishermen. Yi said the report might be aimed at serving "ulterior purposes".

He said the Vietnamese boat capsized when it intentionally collided with a Chinese fishing boat.

The Chinese wanted to save the fishermen, but found this impossible as more than 30 Vietnamese vessels quickly surrounded the capsized boat before the crew was rescued.

Since the confrontation started more than one month ago, Vietnamese vessels have rammed Chinese ships 1,547 times, Yi said.

He showed reporters videos and photographs of the collisions and said Vietnam has placed many large fishing nets in the area to hamper operations by the Chinese oil rig, posing "great threats" to Chinese and foreign vessels.

China had salvaged 30 such floating obstacles in the area and 61 Vietnamese boats were still at the site.

Yi said that China's determination and capability to protect its sovereignty should not be doubted.

China has said it does not recognize territorial disputes with Vietnam over the Xisha Islands. The operational area of the oil rig was 31 km from the baseline of the Xisha Islands territorial waters.

Chen Xiangyang, a researcher at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, said that although Beijing does not want a military conflict, it is not solely up to China to decide how the situation will evolve.

"The Chinese navy has to be prepared."

