

## **UBCV leader Thich Quang Do calls on Vietnamese at home and abroad to boycott Chinese goods**

PARIS, 6 October 2009 (IBIB) - The Most Venerable **Thich Quang Do**, Patriarch of the outlawed Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) has urged Vietnamese at home and abroad to boycott Chinese goods in a common stand for democracy in Vietnam. The UBCV leader and 2009 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, 80, sent the **“Appeal for a Boycott of Chinese Goods”** to the International Buddhist Information Bureau from the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery in Saigon, where he is under effective house arrest.

This call for a boycott is a follow-up to his **“Appeal for a month of Civil Disobedience”** (29.3.2009) for a *“movement of non-violent resistance”* to protest the security risks and environmental dangers of Bauxite mining in the Central Highlands and China’s encroachment on Vietnamese national sovereignty. *“There is no doubt about it”*, says Thich Quang Do, *“be it defending Vietnam’s territory or protecting its economic interests, the Communist Party and the government have put our fate into China’s hands”*.

For the first time in history, he says, after 2,000 years of struggle against foreign aggression, the Vietnamese people are caught between two forces, the *“foreign invader”* (China) and the *“inside invader”* - the Vietnamese Communist Party, China’s 5th column, which is undermining the people’s thinking, politics, culture and economy from within. The boycott is *“a weapon”*, says Thich Quang Do, to help Vietnamese *“overcome these two invasions from without and within”*.

Thich Quang Do stresses that he does not seek to stir up ultra-nationalism or anti-Chinese sentiments: *“boycotting Chinese goods is not an expression of narrow chauvinism aimed at opposing the people of China or Chinese workers settling in Vietnam. On the contrary, the Chinese people and workers are the victims of Communist Party policies, just like the people, workers and peasants of Vietnam. Boycotting Chinese goods means boycotting the hegemony and expansionist policies of Beijing’s Communist rulers”*.

Thich Quang Do stresses that the boycott *“is not prompted by political reasons alone, but by the grave effects of poor quality and toxic Chinese goods on the health and environment of Vietnamese consumers”*. The massive influx of cheap Chinese goods on the Vietnamese market in this period of economic crisis is also causing grave labour concerns in Vietnam.

Although the bad quality of Chinese products is well-known, all criticism is forbidden in Vietnam. Concerns expressed by eminent economists and China specialists such as

Pham Chi Lan of the Institute of Development Studies (VietnamNet, 16-18.6.2009) had met with angry protests from the Chinese Ambassador in Hanoi, who demanded that Hanoi censor all negative portrayals of China in the State-controlled media. One month later, Vietnam adopted Decree 97, which severely restricts scientific research, and the Institute of Development Studies announced that it was closing down. *“Could it be”, asked Thich Quang Do, “that Decision 97, adopted by the Prime Minister on 24.7.2009, which prohibits all scientific and technical organisations from expressing ideas at odds with the Party lines, directives and policies, responds to Beijing’s pressure to forbid Vietnamese people from criticising China?”*

China’s creeping influence on Vietnam could also be seen, he adds, by the recent article on the Communist Party’s official online newspaper (4.9.2009) on a military operation in the Paracel islands described as an effort to *“defend the fatherland’s southern sea frontier.”* The “fatherland” in question was China, not Vietnam...

Thich Quang Do stressed that the use of a boycott as a means of non-violent action is especially important in Vietnam’s one-Party State, where people have no right to *participate in the political process. “The Vietnamese people have no freedom of expression, freedom of press or assembly. They have no government and no army to directly intervene to defend them against aggression, whether it be military, ideological or economic. Today, in the struggle for freedom, we oppressed peoples have but one weapon - our political stand. We must take a political stand to resist foreign invasion from inside and outside, and to claim our democratic freedoms”.*

***(See full text of appeal on our website, <http://www.queme.net>)***