

# China prefers later date for opening of peace talks

United Press International  
BANGKOK, Thailand — China turned down Vietnam's proposal to begin peace talks this week and proposed instead that negotiations should begin in about nine days in Hanoi.

Responding to Vietnam's proposal for talks to begin Friday either in Hanoi or at a site on the border, Peking's official New China News

Agency said the negotiations should begin "about March 28" and held alternately between Hanoi and Peking.

There was no initial reaction by Hanoi to the Chinese proposal, which came at the end of a day of harsh rhetoric by Vietnam against Peking.

Vietnamese Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, Maj. Gen. Cao Van

Khanh, told a Hanoi news conference that Vietnamese troops had killed or wounded 62,500 Chinese in 30 days of fighting that ended Sunday.

Hanoi news media called Chinese leaders "liars" for claiming China had completed a withdrawal of its army from Vietnam. Hanoi said Chinese still occupied Vietnamese territory today, a claim backed by

Western intelligence sources.

"The Chinese government specifically proposes that Sino-Vietnamese negotiations at the level of vice-foreign ministers start about March 28," the Chinese Foreign Ministry note to Vietnam said.

Vietnam's call for peace talks, made Saturday, was unclear on whether it would negotiate if Chinese forces remained on territory claimed by Hanoi.

Western intelligence sources said Monday some of China's invasion army remains up to a mile inside Vietnam, with other forces on war alert across the border in China.

But they reported there were Chinese up to one mile inside territory the Vietnamese had occupied in at least one place along the frontier before the Feb. 17 invasion by China.

Vietnam has claimed the Chinese occupy villages in five of the six border provinces.

Both nations have agreed there are disputed areas along the frontier, but each has blamed the other for moving border markers.

The New China News Agency Sunday set out for the first time China's three specific aims of its Feb. 17 invasion.

— Making the Chinese border area stable.

— Checking further Vietnamese expansion such as the Cambodian invasion.

— Protecting "the peace and security of the Southeast Asian countries."

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Battalion photo by Colin O...

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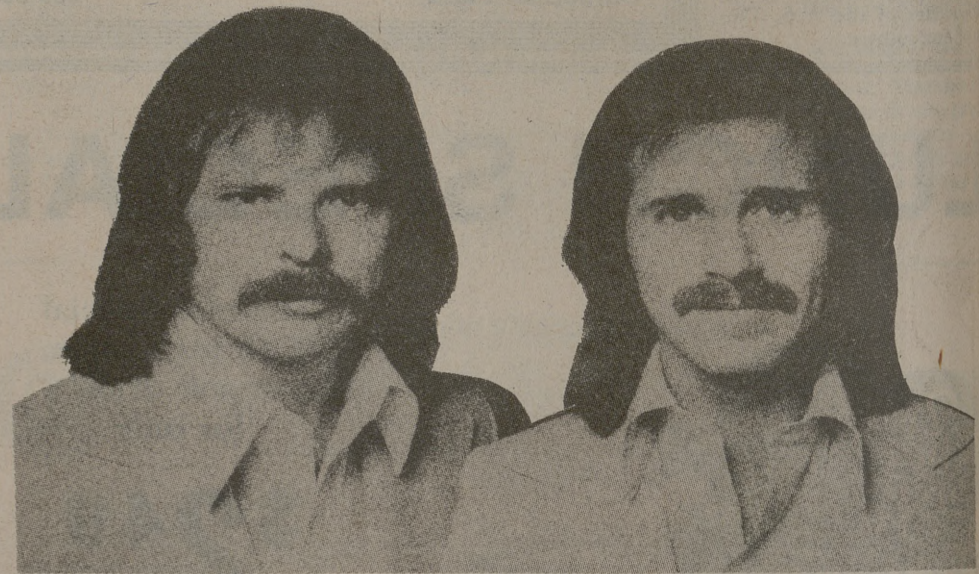
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