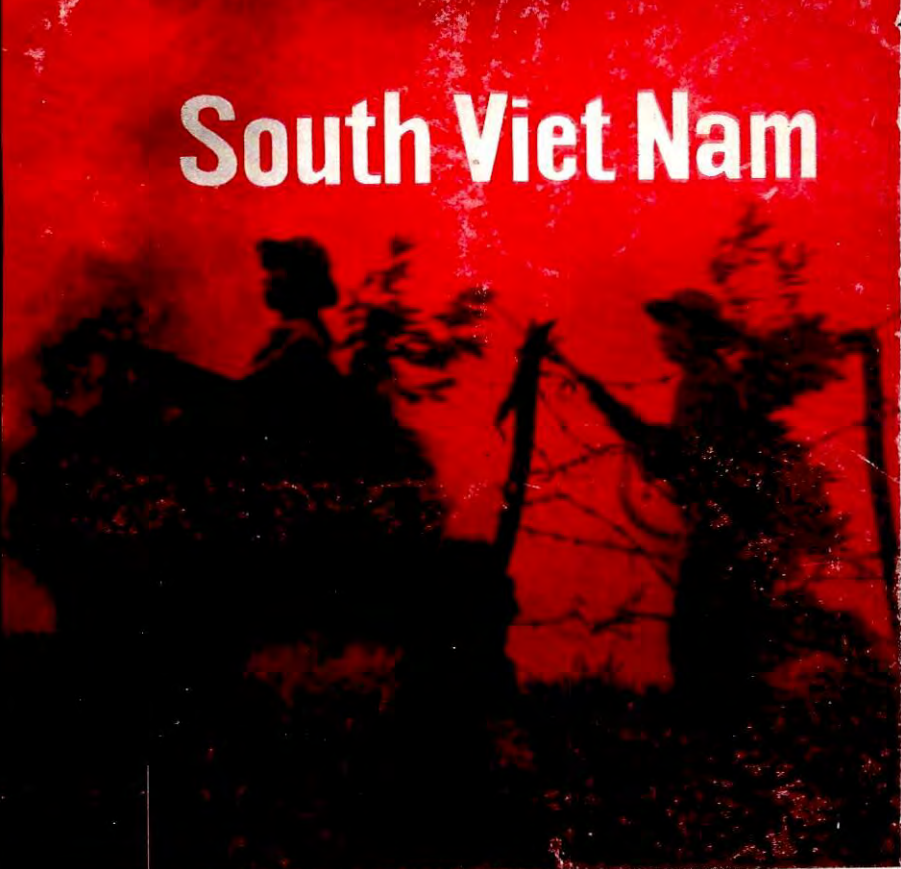


South Viet Nam



A MONTH OF UNPRECEDENTED OFFENSIVE AND UPRISING

GIAI PHONG PUBLISHING HOUSE – MARCH 1968

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Early in the spring of 1968 a revolutionary storm with unprecedented violence swept South Viet Nam. The offensive of the revolutionary forces and the simultaneous uprising of the population utterly shook more than sixty urban centres, including Saigon, Hue and Da Nang, and hit at nearly all of the enemy's military and logistic bases.

The balance-sheet of the first people's onslaught described by a Western journalist as an "extraordinary display of force, efficaciousness and heroism", was disastrous for the American aggressors and their lackeys.

The adversary suffered important losses in men and matériel. The disintegration of the puppet army had assumed a new, precipitated rate, and all strategic communications, blocked or cut off.

The Saigon administration, which forms with the puppet army the two props of U.S. neo-colonialism, found itself in disorganization or collapse at all levels.

In the wake of the almost complete demolition of the "strategic hamlet" network the rural-oppression apparatus had been broken down.

Thus driven to a more defensive position, the enemy saw their strategic plan upset. Their "two-prong" strategy — "search and destroy" and "rural pacification" — had backfired. The morale of their troops just as the prestige of the United States, which had been ever more isolated in the world and divided at home as a result of its war in Viet Nam, had received a serious blow.

Meanwhile, the South Vietnamese people had scored new points. They controlled numerous urban centres and liberated almost all the rural areas thus far under the enemy's grip. The largely mobilized masses rose up and co-ordinated their action with that of the armed forces. The Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, the National and Peace Alliance and other patriotic organizations came into being. People's revolutionary committees were set up in Hue, Thua Thien province and other places. The military and political offensive took place at the same time in towns, in the countryside and mountain regions. The revolutionary forces — both military and political — grew up rapidly in number and quality as well. With varied strata of the urban population siding with them, even functionaries and militarymen of the Saigon administration and army

defecting or rebelling against the puppets and their American masters, the front of national union had been strengthened.

Solid bases, therefore, had been created for the final victory of the Vietnamese people.

Enraged by their own setbacks the American aggressors and Thieu-Ky did not shrink from any means worthy of another age. They struck at the population with bombs, gas, toxic chemicals, burning down entire urban quarters and agglomerations, rendering hundreds of thousands homeless. Their farce of relief to the war victims and their rage will not save them from defeat.

The whole world is on our side. Rejoicing at the recent successes of our people's struggle against U.S. imperialism are the Party and Government leaders of the Soviet Union, China and the other socialist countries, newly independent countries, Communist and Workers' Parties around the world as well as national and international organizations, prominent political and social figures, peace-, freedom- and justice-loving people of all countries, including the United States.

For our readers we have gathered in this booklet documents related to the first thirty days of the popular storm which continues to rage over the length and breath of South Viet Nam, documents necessary to the understanding of the present phase of the South Vietnamese people's resistance war.

GIAI PHONG PUBLISHING HOUSE

1968

A P P E A L
OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM
N.F.L. CENTRAL COMMITTEE

February 3, 1968

Since the night of January 30, 1968, i. e. the *Mau Than* Lunar New Year's Day, in response to rousing orders from the Presidium of the Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, the armed forces and people of South Viet Nam have been pushing forward, resolved to mete out deserved punishment to the American aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique of traitors, who have trampled underfoot all aspirations and interests of our people and continued their bombing and shelling, massacre and repression of our compatriots even during *Tet*, our traditional festival day.

From Quang Tri - Thua Thien - Hue to Cape Ca Mau, from Saigon, Nha Trang, Da Nang, to Dalat and the Western High Plateaux, in waves of tempestuous assaults, inspired by anger and hatred accumulated over the years for the sworn enemy of the nation, our compatriots and fighters of the People's Liberation

Armed Forces have been fighting valiantly, striking hard blows on all fronts, making deep thrusts into scores of enemy key bases, achieving brilliant feats, unprecedented in their resistance against American aggression for national salvation.

The armed forces and people of the South have revived the historic days of the victories at Bach Dang, Chi Lang, Dong Da *, the Nam Ky insurrection **, the August Revolution ***, the Dien Bien Phu victory, carried on the tradition of our forefathers, and shed glorious light on the history of the heroic Vietnamese people's struggle against foreign invasion. In co-ordination with the People's Liberation Armed Forces, everywhere people of all walks of life have rushed forward to fight the American aggressors and annihilate their puppets, liberate towns and villages, and set up revolutionary power. Large numbers of officers and men, whole units of the puppet army, and many functionaries of the puppet administration have seized upon this unique opportunity to return to the side of the people, and serve the fatherland.

The victories won early this spring by our army men and compatriots are bringing joy and enthusiasm to our entire people and to our friends on the five continents, sowing fear and panic among the American aggressors and the Thieu - Ky clique of traitors, and causing their rapid collapse.

* Decisive victories won by the Vietnamese people over foreign aggression in the 14th, 15th and 18th centuries. *Pub.*

** Armed insurrection in 1940 in the Mekong delta. *Pub.*

*** Successful insurrection in August 1945 throughout Viet Nam, after which the D.R.V.N. was born. *Pub.*

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation warmly praises and commends the brilliant exploits of the fighters and cadres of the People's Liberation Armed Forces, the forces waging political struggle, the members of the Associations for Liberation, all patriots and volunteer fighters in town and country, delta and mountain, all over South Viet Nam.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation warmly hails the Alliance of National and Peace Forces and the National, Democratic and Peace Alliance and other revolutionary organizations born at this historic hour and engaged in the fight for national salvation together with the entire people.

The American aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique, driven to madness by their shameful defeats, are conducting savage terror and repression against our compatriots of all strata, bombing and shelling populous areas, pagodas, etc. in the hope of crushing the indomitable will of our armed forces and people, thus revealing their warlike, mulish and blood-thirsty nature.

In face of this situation, the Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation calls on:

— The entire armed forces and people to rush forward on the impetus of their victories, strike even harder, deeper and on a wider front, launch a general offensive to annihilate the American aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique and achieve still greater successes;

— People of all walks of life in the cities and regions still under the control of the enemy, irrespective of age, sex, political conviction, religious belief and nationality, to unite and rise up in armed insurrection, use whatever weapon they have in hand, act in co-ordination with the revolutionary armed forces, smash the puppet administrative machinery, put an end to their servitude, wrest back the right to be masters of their destinies, and achieve peace, independence, freedom and a decent livelihood ;

— The people in the newly-liberated areas to quickly assemble in revolutionary organizations, set up armed self-defence groups, establish and defend revolutionary power, crush all the enemy's counter-attacks or attempts to counter-attack ;

— The people of the old liberated areas and the revolutionary bases to devote all their efforts to serving the front, production work and combat, and achieving still more resounding exploits.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation calls on the Chinese and other foreign residents to side with the South Vietnamese people against the American aggressors and their lackeys.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation urges officers and men of the puppet army, officials of the puppet administration to quickly seize upon this favourable opportunity and, together with the people of all strata and the revolutionary armed forces, rise up and turn their guns on the American aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique, in order to save themselves, their families and the fatherland.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation calls on the American and satellite troops to disobey their warlike commanders, refuse to be driven to a shameful death and to oppose the patriotic activities of the Vietnamese people, resolutely demand their repatriation and an end to this dirty war of aggression.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation warmly welcomes the 17 million blood-sealed compatriots in the North, who have been ceaselessly giving encouragement to the armed forces and people of the South and standing shoulder to shoulder with them in the sacred resistance against American aggression, for national salvation.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation solemnly calls on the peoples of fraternal Cambodia and Laos, the peoples of the friendly countries, the American and all peace- and justice-loving people in the world to give still stronger support and assistance to the South Vietnamese people's struggle against American aggression, for national salvation.

Compatriots and fighters,

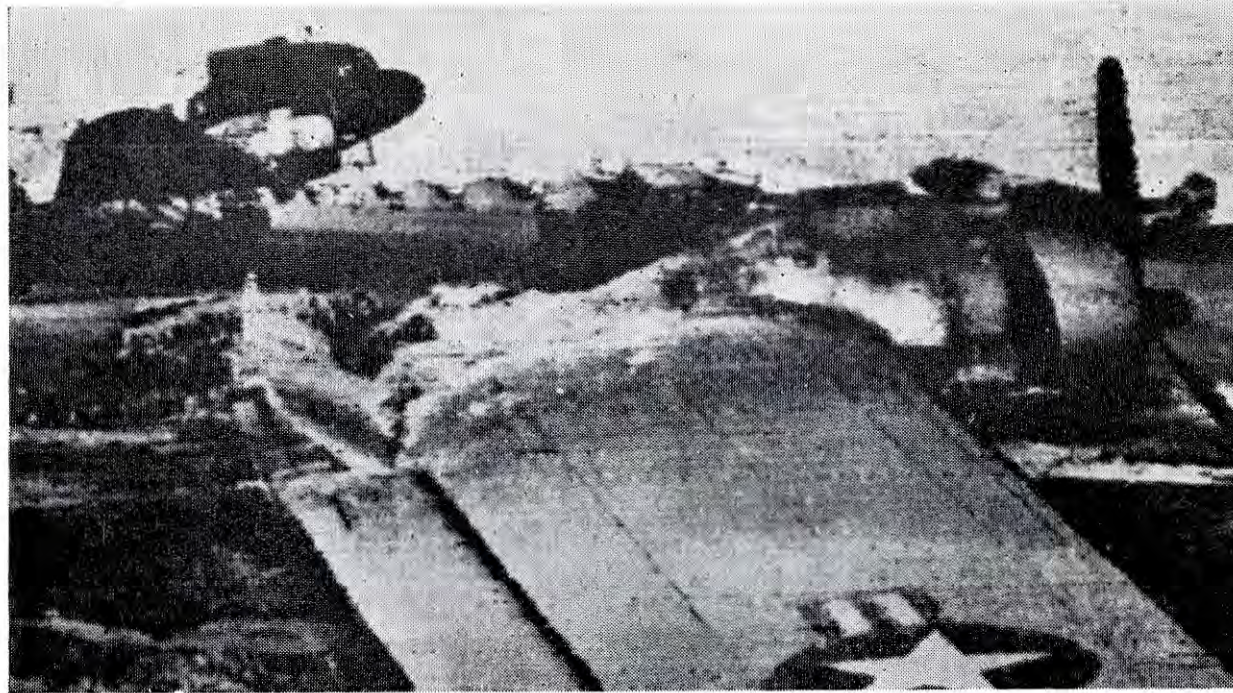
The hour has struck! Let the 14 million South Vietnamese rise up and deal mortal blows at the American aggressors, overthrow the Thieu - Ky clique of traitors, win complete victory, liberate the South, build an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous South Viet Nam, and advance towards national reunification.

Under the glorious and invincible banner of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, forward!

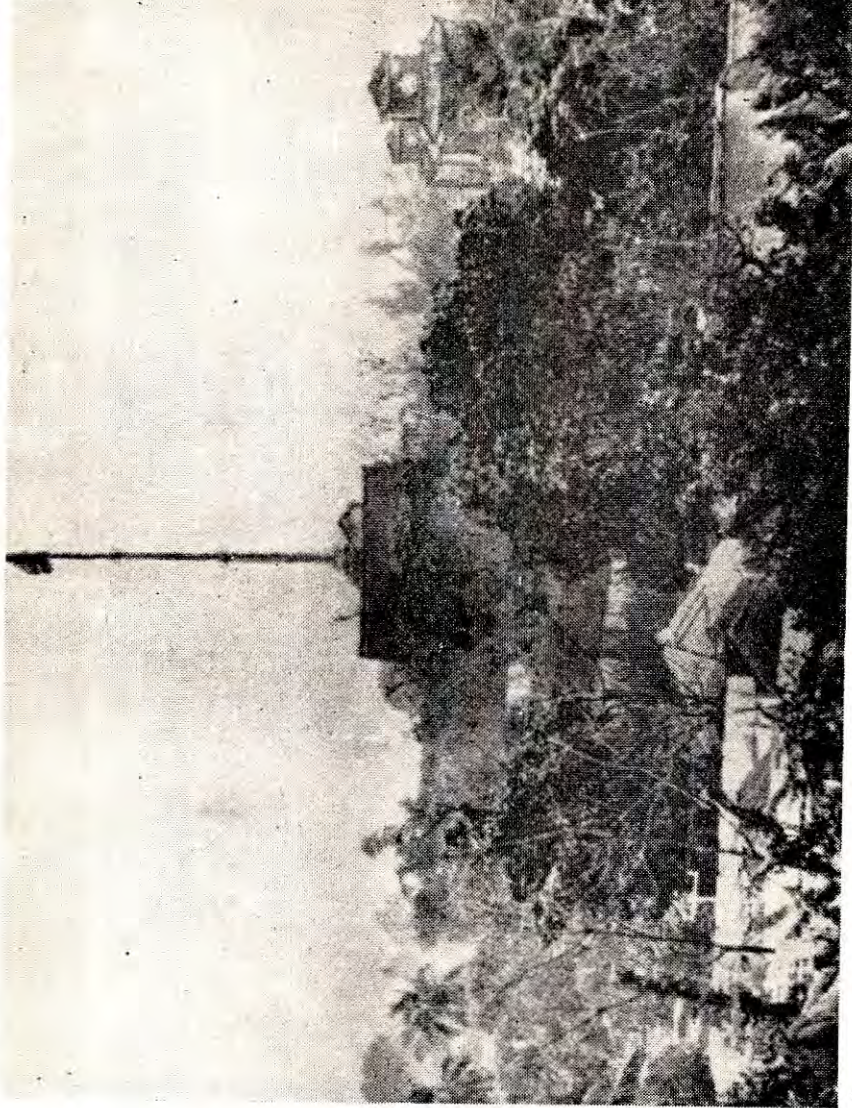
Saigon



United States Embassy...



...and the Tan Son Nhat airfield a few minutes after the P.L.A.F. launched their attack



Hue

The N.F.L. flag fluttered forty-three metres from above Viet Nam's ancient capital during nearly a month



G.I.'s in a quarter of the city

Khe Sanh



Under the P.L.A.F. continual pounding
American positions were set on fire...

...and the G.I.'s hurriedly evacuated their dead and wounded





▲
P.L.A.F, attacks ▶



COMMUNIQUE
OF THE ENLARGED EXTRAORDINARY SESSION
OF THE PRESIDIUM
OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM N.F.L.
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

February 13, 1968

On February 11 and 12, 1968, the Presidium of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee convened an enlarged extraordinary session presided over by its President Nguyen Huu Tho, to have an over-all survey of the situation in South Viet Nam since the opening of the Front's large-scale offensive, draw appropriate conclusions and set immediate tasks for the Front.

The Session was attended by all members of the Presidium and the Secretariat of the Central Committee, as well as by representatives of the People's Liberation Armed Forces Command, of the political parties and organizations — members of the Front — and by many high-ranking cadres in charge of various branches of activities attached to the Committee.

The Session heard :

— Tran Nam Trung, Vice-President of the Presidium and President of the Military Commission attached to

the Central Committee, reporting on the development of the military situation on the various South Viet Nam battlefronts ;

— Huynh Tan Phat, Vice-President of the Presidium and Secretary General of the Central Committee, reporting on the over-all situation in Saigon, Cho Lon, Hue, Da Nang, towns and townships throughout South Viet Nam as well as on the situation in the rural areas still under enemy control before the offensive ;

— Y Bit Aleo, Vice-President of the Presidium and President of the Western Plateaux Nationalities Movement for Self-Determination, reporting on the situation in the region ;

— Tran Buu Kiem, Presidium member and President of the Commission for Relations with Foreign Countries attached to the Central Committee, reporting on world repercussions as a result of the victories won by the South Vietnamese armed forces and people in the early days of spring.

The Session devoted much time to assess the over-all situation and discuss immediate tasks for the Front.

1. The Session unanimously held that within a brief period, from January 30 to February 10, 1968, in response to the appeal made by the Front, the people and the People's Liberation Armed Forces had conducted big, simultaneous attacks and uprisings on all battlefields from Quang Tri to Ca Mau, winning major all-round victories unheard-of in our great patriotic war for the liberation of South Viet Nam from the ruthless rule of the U.S. imperialists and the Thieu - Ky clique of traitors.

Our armed forces and people have attacked in all the large cities, almost all the provincial capitals and townships, military sectors and sub sectors, a series of military bases, airfields and storages of the U.S.-puppets, even many of their last hideouts ; they have thus killed or wounded a large number of U.S. troops, wiped out and disorganized a very important part of the puppet army, including regiment-or battalion-sized units crossed out from the call-roll, destroying leading organs and military headquarters of various levels and millions of tons of weapons and other war means cutting off or paralysing strategic highways, forcing the surrender of a series of posts, capturing a number of American and puppet officers and soldiers, crushing grass-root puppet administrative organs and upsetting or paralysing central ones.

Prompted by high revolutionary mettle, people of all strata in urban and rural areas so far under enemy control rose up as tidal waves, smashing the enemy's grip, punishing cruel agents and traitors, liberating vast expanses in the countryside, many district towns and townships, establishing people's revolutionary power, breaking the enemy's "pacification prong", occupying and controlling many provincial capitals, towns and townships, repelling enemy counter-attacks, and winning far-reaching successes.

In this revolutionary storm sweeping the urban and rural areas our people are developing their political and military forces by leaps and bounds. Millions of them freshly freed from enemy rule, regardless of age, sex, religious belief and nationality, are being organized ;

tens of thousands of boys and girls enlist to fight for the defence of the fatherland.

The alliance of national, democratic and peace forces has come into existence and is working in the large cities and, shoulder to shoulder with other patriotic organizations, has assumed its glorious task before the nation. The united front of solidarity against U.S. aggression, for national salvation of our entire people has been consolidated and broadened more than ever before.

The whole world is attentively following our struggle and all progressive mankind warmly hails our resounding victories won in these early days of spring, and encouraging us to march forward to complete victory.

These big, all-round victories are of considerable importance.

Once more these victories prove the complete correctness of our political and military lines and policies. These result from a resolute and creative leadership which attaches equal importance to both military and political struggles, both urban and rural areas. These victories testify to the invincible strength of people's war. On the other hand, they point to the irretrievable bankruptcy of the entire strategy and all the policies of U.S. imperialism in its "limited war" of aggression, aimed at imposing the yoke of neo-colonialism on our people; they also lay bare the utter rottenness and inevitable collapse of the puppet army and administration created by U.S. imperialism.

Our victories have dealt a very heavy blow at the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists, thus giving

rise to quick and important changes in the current balance of forces between us and the enemy, and generating most favourable conditions and a firm basis for our people to achieve final, complete victory.

2. In an atmosphere full of enthusiasm and confidence the Session paid high tribute to the extraordinary combativeness and splendid, resourcefulness of all the cadres and fighters of the People's Liberation Armed Forces, offspring of the heroic Vietnamese people, to their three categories of forces—regular army, regional troops, militia and guerillas—who had been attacking on all battlefields, dealing telling blows at and striking fright into the enemy, performing brilliant exploits. On the seventh anniversary of the historic merging of all the South Viet Nam People's Liberation Armed Forces, the Session called on their cadres and fighters to promote with might and main the fine tradition of a revolutionary army which is theirs, to march forward valiantly, launch continual attacks, score victory after victory and fulfil the glorious task entrusted them by the people.

The Session paid high tribute to the patriotism, solidarity and dauntless struggle of our compatriots in Saigon, Gia Dinh, Hue, Da Nang and other cities, provincial capitals and townships throughout South Viet Nam who, animated with deep hatred for the enemy, evincing heroism, ready to make any sacrifice rather than be enslaved, and firmly convinced that "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom," had valiantly stood up, smashed the grip of the Americans and their puppets and their regime

of oppression and exploitation, wrested back control, quickly developed their political and military strength, wholeheartedly assisted and supplied the Liberation forces, thus largely contributing to the brilliant victories of the entire South Vietnamese army and people in the early days of spring.

The Session paid high tribute to our compatriots still living under the enemy's control in the plains and mountain regions who had simultaneously risen up, shattered the enemy's grip, liberated vast areas and established their own revolutionary power ; it warmly hails those in the newly-liberated zones and in the base areas for their great contribution in human and material resources to the victories of our entire people. The Session greeted and welcomed the emergence of the alliance of national, democratic and peace forces and various patriotic organizations set up by the people and rallied army-men as well as other revolutionary armed organizations. It was firmly convinced that the bloc of national union constitutes the invincible force that enables our people to fulfil the glorious task entrusted them by the nation and history, and lead the struggle against U.S. aggression for national salvation to complete victory.

The Session acknowledged the meritorious deeds of the patriotic officers, soldiers, personnel and units of the puppet army and functionaries of the puppet administration, who, aware of the trend of the situation, had completely dissociated themselves from the enemy, rallied to the just cause of our people and together with our people, struggled against U.S. aggression. It

urged those who still remained in the puppet army and administration to clearly realize the present situation and timely choose the correct path by returning to the people's side and contributing to the liberation of the fatherland.

3. Basing itself on the over-all analysis of the situation on ours and the enemy's side, the Session with the firmest determination arrived at decisions on tasks, policies and immediate measures to make our entire people and their armed forces, in the thrust of their victories, rush forward, enhance their seething revolutionary mettle, strive to maintain and accentuate the impact of their great successes, launch continual attacks and simultaneous uprisings, resolutely defeat the U.S. imperialists' war of aggression, overthrow the puppet administration and secure complete victory.

On the proposal of the Emulation Committee attached to the Front Central Committee, the Session decided to commend the urban and other areas and the People's Liberation Armed Forces units which had recorded outstanding achievements early this spring.

The Session also heard reports by Dr Phung Van Cung, Vice-President of the Presidium of the Front Central Committee and President of the Liberation Red Cross, and by Superior Thich Thien Hao, representative of the patriotic Buddhist members of the Front, and President of the Commission for Denouncing the U.S. and puppets' War Crimes in South Viet Nam, on the barbarous crimes perpetrated by the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys against the population in Saigon, Hue and other centres. It strongly condemned

and denounced to world public opinion the most barbarous revanchist measures taken by the U.S. imperialist aggressors and the Thieu-Ky against the civilian population by massacring them en masse with bombs and toxic gases, devastating their houses, compelling tens of thousands of them to live in very hard conditions.

The Session called on the townsfolk and the People's Liberation Armed Forces to translate their hatred into a material force, so as to strike the criminals well-deserved blows, defeat the U.S. imperialist aggressors, overthrow the puppet administration, smash their extremely cruel domination once for all, liberate the cherished South of the Fatherland, and at the same time, unite and help one another in daily life.

The enemy of our people are finding themselves in a most difficult situation and in an utterly confused and seriously dead locked battle-array.

Aggressive and bellicose, obdurate and cruel by nature, they are frenziedly thrashing about, resorting to ruthless war methods. Nevertheless, their undertaking is crumbling and doomed to complete failure.

Our people's fight has reached quite a new phase in which it requires a considerable sense of urgency, assumes considerable relentlessness and progresses by leaps and bounds.

We have made a really good start.

Our position is very steady, our strength is manifold greater.

Compatriots and fighters, unite millions like one, overcome every hardship, make every sacrifice and take

advantage of our successes to forge ahead; attack unremittingly, rise up in force and score victories daily and hourly in our rush towards complete victory, thereby fulfilling the great and glorious tasks you are entrusted by the nation and history so as to build an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous South Viet Nam, pending the reunification of the fatherland.

SOUTH VIET NAM P.L.A.F. COMMAND
THIRD SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE

February 26, 1968

Since the night of January 29, 1968, the People's Liberation Armed Forces, together with the entire people of South Viet Nam, have been continually stepping up their attacks and uprisings of unprecedented violence.

In nearly thirty days and nights of extremely valiant fighting, our armed forces and people have launched attacks against the enemy and risen up in all urban centres and provincial capitals of South Viet Nam, striking accurately at almost all key positions of the enemy, big and small, from the central to the local level and from Saigon and Hue cities to the provinces, seized control of many places and inflicted heavy losses on the U.S., puppet and satellite troops as well as the puppet administration. In many areas, we have struck the enemy again and again and smashed their counter-attacks. Most outstanding and glorious exploits have been recorded by our armed forces and people in Saigon and Hue and the cities or provincial capitals of

Da Nang, Hoi An, Da Lat, Phan Thiet, Ban Me Thuot, My Tho, Ben Tre, Vinh Long.

Our armed forces and people have

- attacked the enemy and risen up in hundreds of district towns and townships ;

- attacked the enemy and risen up simultaneously in all the rural areas still under the enemy's grip and seized control of nearly all these areas ;

- attacked a series of enemy command posts of various levels, U.S. operational headquarters, puppet army corps headquarters, headquarters of puppet arms and services and of U.S., puppet and satellite divisions, brigades and regiments as well as military sectors and sub-sectors of the puppet army ;

- attacked a series of military bases and defence lines of the enemy, the most outstanding victory in this connection being the complete destruction of the Lang Vay position ;

- attacked 45 airfields, causing to the enemy enormous losses in planes, bombs, ammunition and fuel, as well as in technical and flying personnel. The biggest U.S. airbases in South Viet Nam such as Da Nang, Chu Lai, Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhat, Phu Bai have also been struck. Many airfields have been repeatedly attacked such as Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhat, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Pleiku, Tra Noc, Tan Canh ;

- attacked a series of enemy storages, seized or destroyed millions of tons of bombs and ammunition, fuel and other war material, among them big storage complexes such as Long Binh, Hanh Thong Tay, Nha Be, Bau Mac, Lien Chieu, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Phu Bai,

Hue, Kontum, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Qui Nhon, Soc Trang. Many of these dumps such as Long Binh have been attacked many times ;

— attacked a series of harbours such as Cua Viet and Thu Thiem and naval bases such as Tra Vinh, Xeo Ro (Rach Gia), Dong Tam (My Tho), Nha Be and Vinh Long ; attacked enemy ships and launches moving along the Huong River * and rivers in Ben Tre, An Giang, Vinh Long, Kien Tuong, My Tho, Long An, Ba Ria and Saigon. We have thus inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy in terms of warships, combat launches and other water transport means as well as in port facilities ;

— cut off the enemy's communication lines, including such important ones as Highways Nos 1, 4, 14, 15, 19 and 20 which were paralysed for many days, blew up hundreds of bridges and attacked a series of truck parks, destroying thousands of military vehicles ;

— demolished dozens of jails, thereby releasing tens of thousands of patriots detained by the enemy.

The offensive and uprising of our armed forces and people is still going on.

In nearly thirty days and nights of continual fighting they have scored very great and all-sided victories.

We have wiped out a large part of the enemy's effectives. According to preliminary data, we have killed, wounded or captured more than 90,000 enemy troops, among them over 20,000 American and satellite.

* Better known to foreigners as Perfume River. *Pub*

We have annihilated many units, including 3 armoured regiments and 39 infantry, engineer, combat-police and motorized transport battalions (mostly infantry battalions), 8 squadrons of armoured cars and 120 companies. This is a very great achievement. In only four weeks we put out of action as many enemy troops as in three months on the average in 1967. The number of enemy battalions entirely wiped out equals the average of a nine-month period in 1967, the year of biggest victories as compared with any previous year. In face of the general offensive of our armed forces and people, the puppet army has disintegrated by big chunks. In the early days of February 1968, the number of puppet troops disbanded ran into 200,000. At present, this disintegration is accelerating at an alarming rate and the enemy has no hope to stop it. Most of the puppet militia, regional and police forces have been disbanded. In Hue city, 700 functionaries of the puppet administration made public apology, the puppet troops at 14 posts surrendered while nearly 1,000 officers and men took side with the people to fight the U.S. aggressors and the puppets. In Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, 169 civil-guard platoons went over to the people's side to take part in the resistance against the U.S. aggressors, for national salvation. In Ben Tre, My Tho, Kien Phong and An Giang provinces, up to February 10, the puppet troops in more than 80 posts had surrendered and handed over their weapons to the revolutionary forces. In Tra Vinh province, puppet troops at 13 posts revolted. So also did puppet troops at 36 posts in Cho Lach district, Ben Tre, within six days, and those at 21 posts in Chau Thanh district,

Tra Vinh. The puppet regular forces are also in a serious process of disintegration. Within a few days, 950 troops of the 7th Division in Central Nam Bo deserted. In Cai Lay district, My Tho, 500 soldiers left their ranks. The 4th Battalion of the 16th Regiment in Vinh Long has no more than 30 men.

We have destroyed a large part of the enemy war means. According to statistics available, we have shot down or destroyed on the ground more than 1,800 aircraft, knocked out more than 1,300 tanks and armoured cars, and thousands of other military vehicles, sunk or damaged 90 warships and combat launches, and destroyed millions of tons of bombs, ammunition and fuel. This is also a great achievement of our armed forces and people. Enemy losses in four weeks equal three-fifths of their total losses in 1967 in aircraft, one-third in armoured cars and two-fifths in warships or combat launches. This at the same time constitutes a very heavy defeat for the enemy. Their fire-power and mobility have been seriously weakened. Their combat units in many places are running short of ammunition, food, and fuel and are meeting with enormous difficulties in their movement just as in rescue operations. The U.S. First Airmobile Cavalry Division has only half of its normal aircraft strength left.

What the enemy regard as their strongest points and actually forms the main props of their troops has been badly hit. As a consequence, the morale of U.S., puppet and satellite troops has dropped to a new low. Our armed forces and people are continuing to bring into full play their tradition of striking accurately and continually, in day-time as at night, at the enemy airbases,

ports, storages, war material and transport means, of continually cutting off their communication lines, thus landing them in a still more critical situation, in the military and economic fields, with regard to both morale and matériel.

We have dealt shattering blows at the puppet administrative machine and expanded the people's control.

The puppet regime of the Thieu-Ky clique of traitors at the centre has come under heavy attacks and is being paralysed and disarrayed. The puppet administration at the provincial and district levels is also in a moribund state. Its machine of repression and its reactionary organizations in almost all villages and hamlets have been in the main wiped out. We have destroyed, captured, or forced enemy troops to withdraw from more than 700 posts and watch-towers. We have completely smashed the "rural pacification" plan which was so vital to the adversary. 1,200,000 more of our compatriots have been liberated from their grip. Our people have won the control of the most part of the vast countryside and many urban areas, and are speedily setting up revolutionary power at all levels. The Thua Thien-Hue People's Revolutionary Committee has come into being to assume the tasks of a provincial and municipal people's administrative organ. This is another of our far-reaching successes. Our rear, a permanent factor of our victory, and our resistance areas have been considerably expanded, stretching from the Truong Son Range and the immense High Plateaux down to the vast plains of Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces and Central Trung Bo, from the mountain regions of

Eastern Nam Bo down to the Plain of Reeds and the immense Mekong Delta. Our manpower and material resources have increased quickly and steadily.

That at the same time is another very heavy failure for the enemy. The puppet administration, one of the main props of U.S. neo-colonialism, is now merely a decaying tree on the point of being pulled down by the revolutionary storm of our armed forces and people. The enemy's rear, the area and source of their plundering activities, has been narrowed down to an extent hitherto unknown.

In short, we have won victories of very important strategic significance, both militarily and politically. The aggressors and their puppets are suffering heaviest losses, very hard to be retrieved. They have failed to achieve the strategic objectives which they had long been pursuing such as to "search and destroy" the South Vietnamese people's armed forces, "pacify" the countryside, build up the puppet administration, consolidate the puppet army. In future, having to deal with a much more difficult situation, they will have still less chance to realize these objectives.

Precisely, because they have sustained so heavy losses and so bitter a setback the Americans and Thieu-Ky have recently cooked up and told fantastic tales over and over again in the hope of making black white, bolstering up the morale of the puppet troops and administrative personnel, and deceiving public opinion. However, they cannot hide an elephant with a basket. The truth is that our armed forces and people have won

unprecedented victories while the position of the Americans and their henchmen who have suffered unheard-of bitter failure, is becoming shakier with every passing hour, in everybody's eyes. That is why all their odious distortions have exploded like soap bubbles. Also to conceal their defeats and intimidate the Vietnamese people, they have used bombs and shells, toxic gas and noxious chemicals to massacre our people, set afire their houses, thus rendering tens of thousands of them homeless. Most cruel and cowardly pirates, while thus killing and burning, they call for "assistance" to those whose relatives are victims to their crimes. They want to put the blame on others, but their savage and vile acts cannot deceive our people. Neither can their bombs and shells intimidate our people. Like pouring oil on the flame, they embitter our people's hatred which will come down on their heads like thunderbolts. They will certainly have to repay ten times for their crimes. Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom, nothing can shake our people's determination to fight and to win, to die rather than live in slavery.

The glorious victories of our armed forces and people have given rise to a new situation on the battlefield, which is particularly favourable to us and unfavourable to the enemy.

Never before have the enemy forces — American, satellite and puppet alike — been so weak as now in terms of organization, morale, effectives and material bases as well. A very important part of their troops has been either wiped out or disbanded. A big quantity of their matériel has been destroyed. The morale of their soldiers is sinking and has reached a new low.

As a result of their heavy losses in combat or from desertion and disbandment, troop shortage in both the American and puppet forces has become more acute than ever before. Apart from those completely wiped out, all the remaining American units are now under-strength. Many U.S. marine battalions have only half of their effective left. The 173rd Paratroop Brigade has lost two-thirds of its men. The 1st and 25th Divisions, the 1st Airmobile Cavalry Division and Division *Americal* have suffered heavy losses.

All the puppet units are more seriously under-strength. At least 30 per cent of their regular battalions have either been wiped out or heavily decimated, among them 8 of the 15 general-reserve battalions. 4 paratroop battalions — the 2nd, 5th, 7th and 9th — have by now about 100 men each. Some divisions such as the 1st, 5th and 7th have been heavily thinned out. Some regiments and dozens of battalions are deprived of their fighting capacity. At present, the puppets are hastily drafting the youth and pushing them to the battlefield. Obviously, instead of increasing the fighting power of their troops, this will only render them more disparate. The Americans are dispatching one more brigade and one more regiment to South Viet Nam but how can they hope to extinguish a bush fire with a few cupfuls of water?

Never has our force been so powerful as now, both at the front and in the rear, in number as well as in quality.

In particular, our three kinds of armed forces have made a leaping advance in fighting capacity. More

clearly than ever before, the Liberation Armed Forces have shown their noble traditions of boundless loyalty, valiancy and invincibility. Our armed forces and people are excellent in fighting in the jungle, in the plains as well as in towns, in attacking enemy airfields, ports, rear bases, storages and communication lines. Courageous and resourceful in offensive, they are intrepid and staunch in defensive even in the plains and towns. They can mount successful attacks and neatly repel enemy counter-attacks; they can make skilful use of the surprise factor to assail the adversary, and at the same time can detect the weak points of their defence to hit them and win victory. All the three kinds of our armed forces have grown up and been co-ordinating their actions harmoniously. Our infantry, artillery, engineer, liaison, transport and other services have displayed high valiancy, consummate skill, close unity and splendid co-ordination. A new development has been recorded with regard to our capacity of co-ordinating attacks on different battlefields. Their ability to fight continually just as their combat tempo and effectiveness have also been raised. Big progress has been made at all levels in combining fighting with building up forces, and as a result, the more we fight, the stronger our three kinds of armed forces become.

Never has the enemy's field array been so confused and so bad as now. Their losing position, passiveness and weakening is in a more critical situation than ever. After sustaining bitter setbacks during two "dry season counter-offensives" and in the course of the implementation of their "two-prong" plan in 1967, since the

beginning of this year the U.S. aggressors have been gradually switching to the defensive on all battlefields and forced to carry on their extremely perfidious "two-prong" plan. But the simultaneous offensive and uprising of our armed forces and people have completely upset their strategic plans and their field array. Their 1968 plans and schemes have gone bankrupt even before they could be put into practice. The enemy's defence lines have been broken. They are compelled to pull back their forces from other places to cope with our attacks in areas much more important for them, that is, the towns and cities and a number of communication arteries. The war has flared up in the very last dens of the enemy. Their battle-ground which has already been narrowed down, is split up, encircled and assailed from all sides.

Never have our winning position, our initiative and offensive been so developed and so steady as now. Our frontline is encircling the enemy's key positions so far regarded by them as the most secure. We have thrust deep into their rear in the cities, including Saigon and Hue, and dragged a wide net around other urban centres. Behind our frontline lies a solid rear which embraces the vast rural, jungle and mountain areas controlled by the people, and constitutes a source of inexhaustible strength for us to win victory.

Never have the enemy experienced so serious a political decline and decay as now. The "constitutional government" of the clique of traitors is controlling nobody and is like a flickering light in a hurricane. The so-called "People's National Salvation Front" recently rigged up by the U.S. imperialists in the part of Saigon

still under their temporary control cannot fool anybody nor conceal the isolation of the traitors who were notorious henchmen of the French colonialists and Japanese fascists, and are now lackeys of the U.S. imperialists. Whatever camouflage it may be given this organization remains an anti-popular and abortive creature. Genuine patriots do not pay attention to it and hold it in utter contempt. This is also a political move closely in line with the U.S. imperialists' policy of changing horse midstream.

No better than the clique of traitors, the U.S. aggressors have become more and more isolated in face of public opinion at home and in the world. The sharp contradictions within the ranks of the U.S. aggressors, the bitter conflicts within the Thieu-Ky clique of traitors and the serious contradictions between the U.S. aggressors on the one hand and the puppets and satellites on the other, have become more and more acute. The aggressive will of the U.S. aggressors is weakening.

Never has the unrivalled political and moral superiority of our armed forces and people reached such a high and been turned into so powerful a material force as now.

Our armed forces and people, millions united like one, are living exciting days of victory. They are filled with confidence and more determined than ever to rise up and defeat the enemy.

Millions of people have courageously taken to the streets to confront the enemy and set up combat units equipped with captured weapons. Our political army has become a mighty force and is more experienced than ever.

Our people and the Liberation Armed Forces are united like blood-sealed brothers who are supporting one another in the fight till complete victory. The Liberation Armed Forces are bringing into full play their fine nature and tradition, that of an army born of the people and serving the people. This army people solidarity guarantees our victory and constitutes a source of fright for the enemy. The radiant prestige of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, the organizer and promoter of all victories of the South Vietnamese people, is on the rise. The workers, peasants and other labouring people are playing the role of shock-units in the current offensive and uprising of our entire people.

Personalities, intellectuals, students, pupils, youths, women, businessmen and people of other walks of life are actively contributing to the cause of national independence.

The "Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces" in Saigon, the "National, Democratic and Peace Alliance" in Hue, and many other patriotic organizations have come into being and are siding with the entire people to step up the struggle for national liberation.

Our kith and kin in the North are supporting us with might and main and constantly encouraging the struggle of our armed forces and people.

Our people's resistance against U.S. aggression for national salvation is enjoying the warmest and greatest sympathy and support from the whole socialist camp

and progressive mankind, including the progressive American people.

We are being provided with the most favourable conditions and the firmest bases to achieve our aims.

Our position and strength is growing like the radiant rising sun.

The enemy position and strength is flickering like a dying flame.

We shall certainly win complete victory

The enemy are doomed to complete failure.

The U.S. invaders and the Thieu-Ky clique of traitors are still stubbornly resorting to many wicked schemes and tricks. The war remains hard and fierce.

At this hour decisive for the fate of our nation, the Command of the People's Liberation Armed Forces, on orders from the Presidium of the National Front for Liberation Central Committee, solemnly calls on the whole armed forces and people to push ahead on the impetus of their victories, to overcome all obstacles and hardships, boldly trample on the adversary in their rush forward, to attack and rise up unremittingly, wipe out as many enemies as possible, smash the puppet army and overthrow the puppet administration with a view to frustrating the U.S. aggressive will, completely liberating the South, contributing to the defence of the North and proceeding towards the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

Let all cadres and fighters of the Liberation Armed Forces forge a thorough, unswerving stand in combat, the strongest determination and fighting spirit ; let them

continually attack and pursue the enemy and repel all their counter-attacks; let them constantly consolidate and develop their strength, wipe out as many adverse forces, as possible, strive to score successes daily, hourly so as to win complete victory.

Dear compatriots in rural and urban areas!

Let our compatriots in towns resolutely rise up and valiantly struggle for their vital rights, help one another and tide over difficulties caused by the enemy, be resolved to crush all their schemes and activities aimed at dividing, terrorizing and massacring them.

Let all of you resolutely stand up, kill wicked agents, break up the enemy's grip, overthrow the Thieu-Ky traitors and wrest power for the people, fight shoulder to shoulder with the Liberation Armed Forces. Everything for the front, everything for victory over the U.S. aggressors.

Dear young friends,

Enthusiastically join the militia, self-defence units, regional troops and regular forces. This is a golden opportunity for you to dedicate your strength, talent and mind to the accomplishment of our task and avenge our fatherland and your own families. Let those who are still living in the areas under the enemy's temporary control resolutely smash their draft scheme.

Officers and men, policemen and officials in the puppet army and administration,

The fate of the U.S. aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique is sealed; our people are determined to make

them repay their enormous blood debt. Dissociate yourselves from the gloomy lot of the invaders and their valets. Rise up, stage mutinies and achieve feats to save the fatherland and yourselves.

Dear fighters and compatriots !

Our people have a history of four thousand years during which they have written brilliant pages in their resistance to foreign invasion ; possessed of glorious traditions, they fought against stronger and more numerous enemies and won splendid victories such as at Bach Dang, Chi Lang, Dong Da and Dien Bien Phu.

Over the past ten years South Viet Nam, the Brass Wall of our Fatherland, has repeatedly got the better of the U.S. aggressors. Clearly, they and their lackeys are doomed to complete defeat.

The charge is being sounded all over our country.

The Truong Son Range is shaking.

The Mekong River is surging.

Fighters and compatriots, heroically march forward !

STATEMENT
OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM N.F.L. CENTRAL
COMMITTEE ON THE AMERICANS' AND
PUPPETS' CRIMES AGAINST THE SOUTH
VIETNAMESE TOWNSFOLK

February 15, 1968

Refusing to live in humiliation and misery under the rule of the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys, and burning with hatred at the enemy's monstrous crimes, the people in various cities and towns of South Viet Nam, in close co-ordination with the People's Liberation Armed Forces and other patriotic armed forces, have stood up as one man to attack the strongholds of the U.S. aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique of traitors and wrest back their sacred national rights.

At the end of their tether, the U.S. aggressors and Thieu-Ky frenziedly thrash about and perpetrate still more bloody crimes in the hope of stamping out the South Vietnamese people's patriotic tide.

They have barbarously bombed heavily populated areas, destroying thousands of houses, schools, churches, pagodas, temples and age-old cultural and historical

relics inside and outside Saigon, Hue, Da Nang, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, My Tho, Ben Tre, Can Tho, Vinh Long and other urban centres.

Their bombs and poison gas have killed or wounded thousands of civilians, mostly women, children and old aged people including Buddhist believers, soldiers and personnel of the puppet army and administration and members of their families. The U.S. aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique have moreover taken advantage of the difficulties they caused to the population to herd them into concentration camps, pressgang the youth, crack down upon the patriotic and peace-loving people and oppress the population in the areas still under their control. To mask their crimes, they hypocritically staged the farce of " relief work " which is actually intended to extort the people's property and prevent them from assisting one another.

The crimes committed by the U.S. aggressors and the Thieu-Ky against the South Vietnamese people are piling up like mountains. Their frenzied terror only exposes their ignominious failure, their complete powerlessness and their utter despair right in the areas which a few days ago they considered their most secure places.

The more crimes they commit against the South Vietnamese townsfolk, the deeper the hatred of the South Vietnamese and the entire Vietnamese people for the criminals, the closer their solidarity and the stronger their determination to fight and bring to complete victory their struggle against the U.S. aggressors, for national salvation.

Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. No violence can extinguish the flame of struggle which is raging across the cities and countryside of South Viet Nam.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation denounces to public opinion at home and abroad the monstrous crimes of the U.S. aggressors and Thieu-Ky against the South Vietnamese townsfolk. It severely warns the criminals that they will have to pay for their crimes.

The South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee calls on the urban population together with all the South Vietnamese armed forces and people, to rush forward on the impetus of their victories, to fight unremittingly and more valiantly, to smash all enemy counter-attacks and acts of oppression and terror, to wipe out the U.S. aggressors, annihilate, thin out and disintegrate the puppet army, to crush the puppet administration machine from top to bottom and wrest back power. Let them promote their tradition of indomitability, unite and assist one another to overcome difficulties in their daily life, adequately organize civilian air defence and fight the enemy to the bitter end.

The South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee calls on the rural population throughout South Viet Nam to assist with might and main their compatriots in the towns who are facing difficulties due to the enemy's terror and massacre, and to materialize militant solidarity in a resolute fight against the common enemy.

The Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation appeals to:

The Governments and people of the socialist countries, the Governments and people of the newly-independent countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America ;

The Governments and people of all countries and the progressive people of the United States ;

The peace and democratic organizations of workers, women, youth, students, intellectuals and religious followers in the world ;

The scientists, lawyers, cultural and art workers and progressive personalities of all countries ;

To sternly condemn the U.S. aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique and take timely actions to check their crimes against the population of Saigon, Hue and other cities of South Viet Nam, step up their actions and all practical deeds in support and assistance to the South Vietnamese people with a view to their complete victory !

For their sacred cause of national liberation, for the fulfilment of their lofty obligations toward the peoples now struggling against U.S. imperialism for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress, the South Vietnamese people are determined to accomplish the glorious task assigned them by history.

HUE : THIRTY DAYS AND NIGHTS OF DOGGED FIGHTING

Hue, one of the greatest U.S. bases in South Viet Nam, is the seat of many American and puppet leading organs, such as the First Division Command, the First Army Corps Field Command. It is protected by several infantry and armoured regiments, two combat police battalions and eight other puppet companies. With thick, solid defence lines around them, these organs and army units constitute the headquarters of the U.S. war machinery on the Quang Tri - Thua Thien - Hue battlefield.

Fourteen kilometres to the east-southeast of Hue, along Highway No 1, stands Phu Bai, a major American base, comprising an airfield and artillery sites, the Command post of the First Marine Division and the Fifth Marine Regiment, and a brigade of the 101st Paratroop Division. It is constantly protected by two or three mobile battalions. The enemy keeps close watch over the road section between Hue and Phu Bai.

South of Hue lies a hilly region swarmed with positions at Long Tho, Nam Giao, Tam Thai, Nam Hoa — a district town — and many artillery emplacements.

To the west and southwest, along Highway No 1, there are many enemy positions and strongholds at Tu Ha, Mom Xanh, An Lo, Dong Lam, etc. At Dong Lam, besides the commands of the First Airmobile Cavalry Division and the Third Mobile Cavalry Brigade, the Americans have at any time three or four battalions of First Cav.

Facing Hue to the north is Huong Tra district serving as the shield of the city. Along the Huong River, from the sea to the city, patrol warships of the Seventh Fleet and planes of the U.S. Air Force protect this supply waterway.

A SIMULTANEOUS UPRISING

On the night of January 30 to January 31, 1968, the People's Liberation Armed Forces, in co-ordination with the guerillas and regional troops, and with the wholehearted support of the people, rapidly penetrated all the adversary's thick defence lines, took up their positions at Nam Pho, Vi Da, Xuan Hoa, Dap Da, An Cuu, Ngu Binh, Nam Giao, Long Tho, Kim Luong, An Hoa, Duong Xuan, Bao Vinh, etc., thus tightening the noose around Hue.

At 0.45 a.m. on January 31, a thundering explosion was heard inside the city, on the left bank of the Huong

River. The townsfolk rose up when the P.L.A.F. heavy guns opened an intense fire at the enemy artillery sites, the U.S. armoured regiment positions, the Phu Bai base and other places. In next to no time the American troops stationed there were paralysed.

Simultaneously, one prong of the P.L.A.F. stormed and occupied the base of the puppet Seventh Armoured Regiment at Tam Thai, southeast of the city, after having blown up its barbed wire entanglements with explosive charges and shells.

Within an hour, the P.L.A.F. literally annihilated the said regiment, including its staff and two armoured squadrons, destroyed or damaged thirty-five armoured cars, and seized a number of tanks and self-propelled cannons. Once masters of the Tam Thai position, they controlled Highway No 1 from Phu Bai to Hue, thereby actively supporting other units fighting their way into the city.

From the north and northwest a detachment of the P.L.A.F. crossed Highway No 1, wiped out the civil guards and militiamen who were watching over it, isolated the enemy in Hue from their big positions at Tu Ha, An Lo, Dong Lam and Pho Trach. In the meantime, it rushed to Bao Vinh, rapidly put the puppet troops in this area out of action and occupied the Minh Thuong sector and the Sinh confluent, controlling this section of the Huong River and cutting off the enemy supply ensured by warships from the sea.

Following these attacks the P.L.A.F. broke into Hue, dashed toward the Citadel, blocked the Dong Ba, Thuong Tu, Nha Do, Huu, Chanh Tay, An Hoa and

Hau Gates, spread over the rampart, encircled the enemy and stormed their key positions at Mang Ca, the Tay Loc airfield, the ancient imperial palace area. Wholeheartedly supported by the people the Liberation Forces, in combined action with militiamen, self-defence units and patriotic dissident armymen, rapidly occupied and controlled these places.

At the Mang Ca sector, together with the latter, they unexpectedly shelled the enemy when four of their prongs broke in from the Huu Gate, Kho Bridge, Nguyen Thanh and Huynh Thuc Khang Streets. In a matter of minutes they annihilated most of the defenders and seized both the Great and Small Mang Ca redans. In the imperial palace area the bulk of the "Black Tigers" company — notorious for their cruelty — hid behind the solid rampart to resist desperately. Starting from Yet Kieu Street a shock detachment of the P.L.A.F. immediately crossed Hoa Binh Street and pressed forward through the back gate to take hold of the bridgehead and draw the enemy fire. Meanwhile, another prong, together with the city's armed units and patriotic dissident armymen in the Thuan Cat, Trung Tich and Trung Hau quarters, occupied the Ngo Mon, Ta and Huu Gates.

They fanned out all over the imperial palace area and after wiping out the "Black Tigers" from behind and their flanks, lay control over it.

Some minutes later, another prong of the P.L.A.F. which was entrusted with the task of seizing the Flag-tower brought down the puppets' "Three Stripes" flag and hoisted that of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation.

In the meantime, from the An Hoa and Chanh Tay Gates and the Thuy Quan Sluice, the P.L.A.F. assaulted the Tay Loc airfield, put the enemy out of action, destroyed all the helicopters and reconnaissance planes, burnt down all the American storages and matériel.

The Front's starred blue-red flag fluttering over the Citadel stirred up the armed forces and people on the right bank of the Huong River. In waves they rushed on Le Loi, Phan Thanh Gian, Ly Thuong Kiet, Trung Trac, Nguyen Truong To, Lam Son Streets, to storm and occupy the U.S.-puppets' dens in the Railway Station-An Cuu-Trang Tien triangle. The city broadcasting station here fell into the hands of people's forces right in the first minutes of the onslaught.

By 4.30 a.m. on January 31, the armed forces and people on the right bank of the Huong River alone had scored outstanding feats, wiping out the bulk of the enemy. They put out of action an armoured regiment of the puppets and heavily damaged another of the Americans, three infantry battalions of the puppet regiment, two sapper battalions, fourteen civil-guard and combat-police companies and platoons, downing six planes and destroying thirty five armoured vehicles of various kinds.

Actively combining their efforts with those of the P.L.A.F. and the population, other self-defence and armed units of the city arrested and called to surrender the surviving functionaries of the puppet administration and officers and men of the puppet army who were skulking. Die-hard cruel agents were punished.

A WALL OF STEEL

February 1 to 10

After suffering a crushing blow on January 31, the Americans and their puppets in Hue were unable to recover their balance, while more and more powerful punches were rained on them by the armed forces and people of Hue. The National, Democratic and Peace Alliance, and the People's Revolutionary Committee came into being in those first days of the uprising and imparted even stronger impetus to the armed forces and the people.

Like a mortally wounded wild beast, the American aggressors threw themselves about frantically. U.S. aircraft and Seventh Fleet warships poured shells and bombs wantonly on the city in the hope of shaking the people's forces and preparing the way for counter-attacks aimed at recapturing the city.

Several battalions of puppet infantry and paratroops were mustered together with U.S. troops and hurled against the city gates in the first days of February. But maintaining a firm hold on the city, the Hue armed forces and people combined their actions with those of the suburban peasants, launched attacks from within and without the walls of the city and foiled all enemy counter-attacks. Meanwhile, they deployed south of the city (right bank of the Huong River) and recorded new exploits.

On February 3, at the same time as assaults were made on remaining key organs of the puppet administration — the residence of the province chief of Thua Thien,

the offices of the puppet central government in Hue (the so-called Delegation), etc. — the Liberation Forces overran the Thua Phu jail amidst the cheers of prisoners, among whom were many revolutionaries.

As soon as the revolutionary fighters opened fire on the guards, patriotic elements among the puppet soldiers turned their guns on the enemy, made away with the jailers and broke the prison doors open. Immediately the 2,200 prisoners burst out from their cells and joined the revolutionary ranks, in spite of their ill health and body injuries.

Their strength renewed by infinite hatred, the revolutionary armed forces stormed ahead to destroy the remaining enemy positions, in particular the Phuoc Qua post, four kilometres from the centre of the city. Ring-leaders of bloodthirsty ruffians who had escaped our blows on the right bank of the Huong River had taken refuge there, hoping to rely on the fortifications and underground galleries of Phuoc Qua to carry on resistance to the onslaught of the revolutionary forces.

The latter opened violent fire on the position then gave the assault. They penetrated deep into the enemy dispositions, cut them up and destroyed one group after another. Within 30 minutes of stormy attacks, the enemy den had been totally destroyed, 200 troops killed on the spot (among them 50 officers), nearly 300 others captured; a great quantity of weapons and ammunition, as well as many important documents, had fallen into our hands.

Fired by those victories, on the morning of February 4, the revolutionary forces attacked and entirely

destroyed the Le Loi supply depot south of the city, wiped out one motorized transport battalion, captured five supply dumps, four tanks, four self-propelled guns and used them against the enemy.

Those stirring successes had an exhilarating effect on the Hue people, both inside the city and in the suburbs. Rising up in a violent upsurge, they acted in co-ordination with revolutionary forces, hunted down remnants of enemy troops who were fleeing in disorder, built combat positions and field works in the city streets, and get ready to repel all of the adversary's counter-attacks.

In all the city wards, thousands upon thousands of people, particularly the women, served the fighting by cooking food for the Liberation Forces and looking after the wounded. Thousands of high-school and college students joined the armed forces and self-defence units, armed themselves with weapons captured from the enemy, and participated in the fight in the city streets or encircled enemy positions at Nam Giao, the railway station, the An Cuu district, etc.

Smarting under the blow, on February 4, the American poured hundreds of tons of bombs, shells and toxic chemicals on the city and mustered four puppet paratroop battalions for four successive counter-attacks.

But the P.L.A.F. held firm all their positions along the wall of the old citadel from the Dong Ba Gate to the Flag-tower, and in a series of continuous encounters on that day put out of action 200 enemy troops and set afire four tanks. The enemy was stopped dead at the Mai Thuc Loan-Dinh Bo Linh crossroads and at the

Dong Ba and Thuong Tu Gates. At the Dong Ba Gate, on which the enemy poured tens of tons of bombs and shells, a squad of the P.L.A.F. broke three or four counter-attacks from different directions. Our combatants waited for the enemy to come within close range before pouncing upon them: each bullet brought down an enemy soldier, each grenade five to seven.

On the following days, the P.L.A.F. continued to pin down the puppet paratroops and hammer at them, at the same time attacking other columns coming to their rescue. They also cut up supply lines and destroyed supply dumps. On February 6, while stopping enemy counter-attacks on the old citadel, they started the offensive in the railway station and Bo Ghe areas. Simultaneously, they encircled and destroyed a supply company and flotilla of supply vessels sailing in from the Thuan An estuary, sinking or damaging seven, thus depriving enemy troops of food and ammunition. Meanwhile, our artillery kept pouring shells on Phu Bai. The airfield was completely paralysed: not a single plane was able to take off.

After several days of unsuccessful counter-attacks, the enemy paratroops had suffered heavy casualties. The morale of the remainder was sinking, their ranks thrown into disarray. The Americans were forced to send to their rescue the only remaining battalion of the Second Regiment, the Fourth, from Dong Ha (Quang Tri). This column, which landed at the Tay Loc airfield then took the Tang Bat Ho and Trieu Quang Phuc roads, fell into an ambush at the Thuy Quan Sluice, west of Hue. Pinning the enemy down with a violent

fire, the P.L.A.F. caught them in a vice: one prong, starting from north of Thuy Quan Sluice crossed the Dang Nghi Road (north of the Nhi Ha River), pounced on the enemy at Tay Loc and across the Vinh Loi Bridge; the other, starting from the Huu Gate, took the Yet Kieu Road, went up the Cuong De Road and encircled the enemy in the Pho Tri Vu area.

In spite of an intense enemy air and artillery bombardment, the P.L.A.F. closed all escape routes, cut up enemy units into small groups and annihilated them one after another in hand-to-hand combat. In that battle, the whole Fourth Battalion of the puppet Second Brigade and many paratroops were put out of action.

Meanwhile, the P.L.A.F. set up an ambush near Quoc An Pagoda (northwest of Mount Ngu Binh) in which they wiped out an American military convoy bringing relief troops from the An Cuu crossroads to Nam Giao. Fourteen trucks were destroyed, over 100 American troops killed. That very night (Feb. 7) an enemy armoury was completely destroyed, over 300 fire-arms captured.

After ten days of continuous fighting (Feb. 1 to 10) the armed forces and people of Hue had killed and wounded over 1,500 men of the puppet paratroops task force and completely annihilated the Fourth Battalion of the Second Regiment. The remnants of those units were taken by the enemy to Mang Ca.

Filled with joy by the victories scored by the patriotic forces, the city people gave them all the help and support they could provide in spite of enemy shells and bombs, bringing them supplies and evacuating the

wounded. In particular, the sampan women on the Huong River were very active in helping carry Liberation troops, ammunition and supplies across.

From February 11 to 20

The puppet paratroops task force and that of puppet marines, as well as the puppet regional troops mustered on the spot having suffered crippling casualties, the Americans had to send in three battalions of American marines, four battalions of "airmobile cavalry" and two battalions of American paratroops from Quang Tri, Dong Lam, Tu Ha, Ru Lau and Lieu Coc Thuong. In all, about ten battalions of fresh mobile troops had been sent in, not including the remnants of puppet troops.

In spite of their large numbers and abundant equipment, the Americans, both men and officers, were shaking with fear and advancing along Hue streets only at a snail's pace.

The unit of Liberation troops defending the Dong Ba Gate, when hearing that another unit would be sent to relieve them, unanimously said, "We'll stay here and fight until the last man!"

On the night of the 11th, our artillery rained shells on Phu Bai and Dong Lam, the jumping-off grounds and supply bases of the Americans for their counter-attacks on the city. Many storage depots and aircraft were set afire and the enemy were thus greatly hindered in their movements right at the start. Only after strenuous efforts did they succeed, on the 11th and 12th, in ferrying one battalion of puppet marines and two American

companies to Mang Ca, instead of the important forces they planned to muster for a big counter-offensive.

Having vainly sacrificed thousands of "elite troops" from the puppet general strategic reserves, the enemy concentrated their efforts on continuous counter-attacks, but all of these were crushed. The puppet troops resigned themselves to their defeats and turned tail. As to the Americans, every one of their attempts was foiled: hardly had G.I.'s popped their heads above the citadel walls when they were hammered down.

On the 14th, the combined American-puppet forces, supported by a dozen tanks, launched five attacks on the northern corner of the old citadel. Their bombs and shells knocked off whole chunks of the walls, but the Liberation troops quickly consolidated their positions. While pinning the assault groups down, they moved out in two prongs, northwest and northeast, and together with the city's self-defence units, attacked the enemy in the rear. Clinging to each house and street-corner, the self-defence units fought in splendid co-ordination with the Liberation troops from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., destroyed five M. 113 armoured personnel carriers, shot down two helicopters, and razed ten gun emplacements.

On the 15th, the enemy changed their tactics: in co-ordination with a main spearhead driven against the Dong Ba Gate, they launched several secondary attacks on the Chanh Tay, Huu, and Thuong Tu Gates, mustering for these tasks four American and puppet battalions, and over 20 tanks and armoured cars. Against the Dong Ba Gate, they hurled two battalions and eight armoured vehicles. American jets, including B.57 bombers, flew

65 sorties, taking off from Phu Bai, Tu Ha and the Seventh Fleet.

At the Dong Ba Gate, the enemy launched three prongs of attack, in the most massive and reckless attempt so far. But this was also a day of the most heroic exploits for the Liberation troops. Fighting from morning till night, they foiled all enemy counter-attacks from whatever direction they came.

At the Dong Ba Gate, the P.L.A.F. engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy from 6 in the morning to 9 at night. A combatant was found holding his gun firm to his last breath, his bayonet stuck in the chest of an American aggressor.

In the old citadel, the P.L.A.F. not only held their positions firmly after putting out of action over 400 enemy troops, shooting down five aircraft (one crashed right inside the citadel) and blowing up six M.113 armoured personnel carriers, but even staged several sorties, annihilating enemy troops at the Tay Loc airfield, the armoury, the Mang Ca post, and capturing the Cuong De-Thai Phien crossroads, the rest home and hospital area, the northwest part of the Tay Loc airfield and Tran Quoc Toan Road.

On the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th, the Americans brought in four battalions of the Air Cav. and one battalion of American paratroops from An Lo, Tu Ha, Trieu Son Tay (northwest of Hue) as reinforcements, but all their counter-attacks were repelled with heavy losses.

On the 16th, the P.L.A.F. drove back three counter-attacks, putting out of action 200 enemy troops, among them 100 Americans.

On the 17th, they beat back four counter-attacks, putting out of action 250 enemy troops, among them nearly 100 Americans, entirely annihilating a battalion command and a company of puppet marines on Tang Bat Ho Road.

On the 18th, they foiled two enemy counter-attacks, killing and wounding 190 enemy troops, among them 120 Americans, and assaulted a den of wicked enemy agents at Con Hen, killing and capturing nearly 380.

On the 19th and 20th, they repelled a total of seven enemy drives, putting out of action 365, among them 200 Americans.

On these days, the Liberation troops fought the enemy both inside the city and in the suburbs, attacking a series of enemy bases at Nam Giao, Long Tho, Tam Thai, Van Bridge, Ben Ngu Bridge, Lo Ren Bridge, An Cuu Bridge, Dap Da, Phao Lac, Vi Da, etc. At Bon Tri, Bon Pho, Que Chu, La Chu in particular, they engaged four battalions of the Air Cav. and one battalion of American paratroops, putting out of action 300, preventing all enemy concentration with a view to an attack on Hue citadel.

From February 21 to 29

On February 21 the enemy once again changed their tactics. No longer daring to launch massive attacks, the Americans switched to sneak attacks by small units, mainly relying on their artillery to wear down the Liberation troops. They also called in two battalions of puppet rangers (the 21st and the 39th) from Da Nang to rescue their men in eastern Hue.

But whatever the tactics used and schemes resorted to, the Americans and their puppets failed in all their attempts.

On the 22nd, an all-women self-defence squad at Van Duong waged a fierce engagement against a whole battalion of American and puppet troops, killing 120.

On the 24th, a Liberation unit annihilated an entire enemy company at Tien Non, 400 metres north of Mang Ca.

Northwest of Hue, from February 21 to 29, the Liberation troops waged 30 engagements against American Air Cav. and paratroops units at Que Chu, La Chu, Lai Bang, Bon Tri, Bon Pho, putting out of action 1,350.

The battle was still going on the 30th. The armed forces and people of Hue still held the initiative, encircling the enemy without the city and holding them in check within. The enemy had suffered very heavy setbacks and were finding themselves in an everworsening situation. Supply vessels continued to be sunk on the Huong River. The road linking Da Nang to Hue remained cut up. The people's forces were exploited to the full and more and more enemy troops and matériel were destroyed.

Over a period of 30 days, from January 31 to February 29, the armed forces and people of Hue had fought courageously, recorded very brilliant exploits, smashed the puppet administrative machinery down to the grass-root level, won control for the people, set up revolutionary power, driven back hundreds of frantic

American-puppet counter-attacks, putting out of action 20,290 enemy troops, among them 5,100 Americans, killing and wounding 13,723, capturing 1,770, disbanding 4,797, destroying an armoured regiment, nine battalions, (two infantry, two Police Field Force, one ranger, one transport, one provincial militia, two engineer), twenty companies (among them four American and one Pak Jung Hi) and 50 platoons. The armed forces and people of Hue had also knocked down the puppet First Infantry Division, put out of action a puppet paratroops task force comprising three battalions, badly mauled a puppet marine task force comprising three battalions, crippled three American marine battalions, three battalions of the Air Cav., one armoured regiment and one battalion of American paratroops.

The armed forces and people of Hue had destroyed 39 military positions, badly damaged 11 others, destroyed and damaged 562 military vehicles of all types, among them 100 tanks and armoured cars, 15 field guns, shot down or destroyed on the ground 212 aircraft, sunk or damaged 50 vessels and combat launches; blew up fourteen bridges; captured dozens of weapon and ammunition, food and military equipment storage depots, etc.

The victories won by the armed forces and people of Hue were a crushing blow for the aggressors and shook the world. The Western press carried whole series of articles exposing the pitiful all-sided failures of the Americans and their valets in Hue.

An A.F.P. despatch of Feb. 21 contained the following confession by the American general Robert

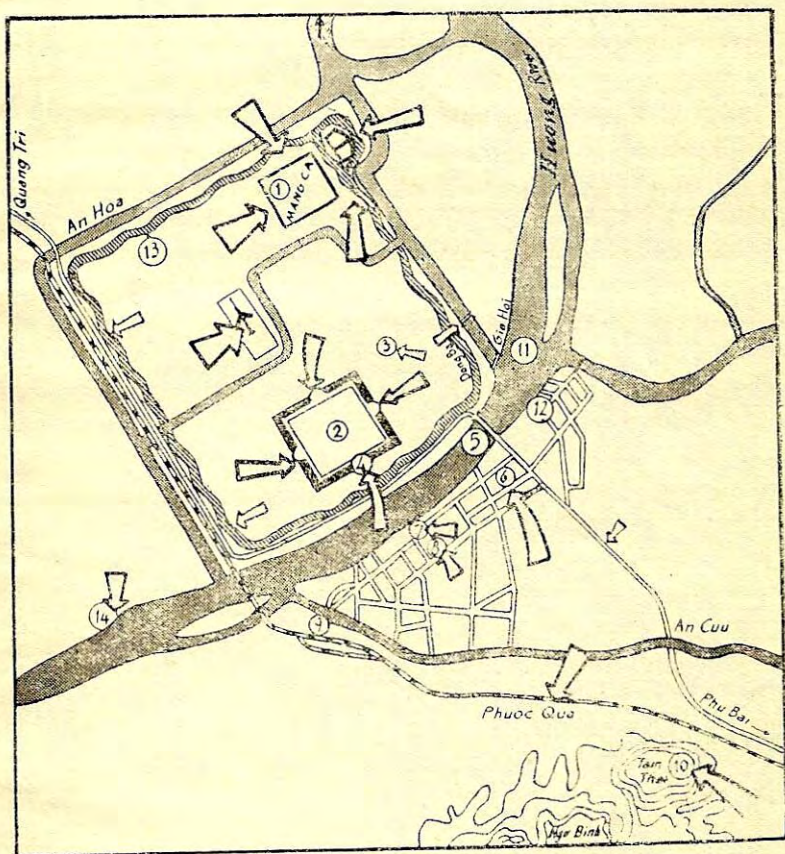
Cushman, commander of U.S. forces in the First Corps Area: "There is fighting in Hue. The Communists are causing difficulties and infinite dangers to the Americans. I want to send fresh troops to Hue, but it is quite a problem getting them in. I think that they (the American troops caught inside the city, *Pub.*) are exhausted; the marines need reinforcements, but troop movements around Hue are meeting with great difficulties and dangers. The helicopters have flown 446 sorties; 60 have been hit... Meanwhile, the Communists still control the Citadel; they have field works and the allied forces are not strong enough to try and recapture strong points along the walls of the Citadel..."

A despatch dated February 20 of the British *Daily Mirror* described the defeat of the Americans and their valets in Hue and added that at the week-end battle, the bloodiest in twenty-one days of fighting for the control of Hue, he understood that this city was a hell in the bloody American expedition in Viet Nam.

The resounding exploits recorded by the armed forces and people of Hue over the past thirty days show the new development of the revolutionary forces. They have contributed to changing the aspect of the war in the whole of South Viet Nam; the enemy's weakest spots have been hit, many units of the American-puppet general strategic reserves have been smashed right inside the city, the enemy's defensive system within and without the city has been shaken, and new conditions and possibilities have appeared for our total victory.

LEGEND

1. Mang Ca barracks
2. Ancient Imperial Palace
3. Mai Thuc Loan Street where a U.S. infantry section and an American colonel were captured on February 4, 1968
4. Mast where the N.F.L. flag was hoisted since the first hours of the uprising
5. Trang Tien Bridge over the Perfume River, destroyed by the revolutionary forces on February 6, 1968
6. Thuan Hoa hotel, the U.S. officers' lodging quarters
7. Puppet provincial governor's residence
8. Provincial prison
9. Railway station
10. Camp of the puppet 7th armoured regiment
11. Destruction of a U.S. river flotilla on February 4, 1968
12. Le Loi quarter of the puppet intendance attacked on February 4, 1968
13. Hue citadel rampart
14. Victories of the revolutionary forces over the enemy relief columns on January 31 and February 4, 1968



FIGHTING SAIGON

POPULAR UPRISING

Our troops stormed across the C. bridge. A photo-reporter of the *Giai Phong* Press Agency rushed ahead to take snapshots. But he was stopped by a young man carrying a submachinegun, who said he was a member of the street self defence corps and wanted to see his papers. The flag of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation was flapping in the wind atop an electric pylon at the end of the bridge. On both sides of the street, from the shacks and also from the many-storeyed houses, people rushed out and stood at their doors or on their balconies watching the Liberation troops march into the city. All vehicles had pulled up along the kerb to let the troops pass and also for the people riding on them to look more closely at the revolutionary fighters, those sons of Saigon whose images they had for so long cherished. From the Y-shaped bridge onward, groups of young people neatly dressed and carrying submachineguns stood at intervals of a few score yards on the pavements. All were wearing red armbands with the following inscription in yellow or white letters: "Revolutionary self defence corps". They were youngsters, school or college students, workers and labourers

engaged in ensuring security for their wards and streets, and also for the revolutionary cadres and troops.

A young man in oil-stained worker's clothes was helping a friend carry a heavy bench from a house to a barricade being built. Seeing a girl with a first-aid kit pass by, he called to her: "Hey Nam, rush to the other end of the street, Bay's son has just been wounded by bullets from a helicopter." As the girl started running in the direction indicated, two armed young men hastened to follow her, probably to see to her security. The people were now masters of their wards and streets, self-defence units and first-aid people were busy all day. We had won control over these quarters for only a few days and a lot of work had to be done to put things in order. The wicked agents of the enemy had either been punished or had taken to their heels, leaving behind things to be cleaned up. Very few of the owners of big stores and factories had remained, and so self-defence units had to stand guard to protect their property. The people, including young men whom the puppet administration had labelled as "stray" or "insubordinate" elements, were keeping everything in good order. Local self-management committees were appointed to look after local affairs. The first thing to do was to set up armed self-defence units to foil all counter-attacks by the enemy and liquidate remnants of enemy agents. Then first-aid teams and fire brigades had to be organized to help cope with the damage done by enemy artillery and air raids. At the same time workers and other people were sent to take care of stores, factories and depots. Rice, firewood and foodstuffs were distributed to the people. Cadres were sent to every street and home to advise

people on how to dig trenches and build shelters for their own protection against enemy bombing and shelling.

While such urgent matters were being dealt with, enemy planes turned up. Workers' huts were set afire by rocket and napalm. Reports streamed in: "Some puppet soldiers have been killed by their own planes... Send men to bury them"... — "Houses have been set afire by napalm... A fire brigade should be sent immediately..."

In those days in which power was in their hands, the people had to look after everything: organizing relief to stricken areas, providing help to revolutionary cadres and troops, either by hunting down enemy agents or carrying ammunition, etc.

It was the first opportunity for a very long time for the people in this ward to meet an entire unit of young and strong revolutionary troops. At Binh Thoi an elderly woman was seen stroking the hair of a young Liberation armyman, praising him for his good health and good look, and telling him how he reminded her of her own son. "Those puppets of the Americans have been saying that Viet Cong troops are all pale and sickly. What shameless liars!" She told him that her only son had been labelled as an insubordinate element by the Thieu-Ky administration. But after revolutionary troops had entered the central part of the city, she said, a local cadre had told her that her son had been given a gun and an armband with the inscription "revolutionary self-defence corps".

Everywhere, old folk, young people and even children belonging to all social strata were helping in the attack

There were instances in which revolutionary units fought for many days and nights on end without having time to look after their own supplies: the people then brought them food and drink. Cakes and balls of rice, carefully wrapped and bearing the words "Supplies for Liberation troops" were piled up in front of every house.

As the revolutionary troops penetrated deeper into the city, the fight became ever fiercer. Hard street-fighting took place. But even then, setting at defiance enemy bombs and shells, the people came out of their houses, bringing to the revolutionary troops cakes, fruit, beer and other refreshments. A young girl with permed hair was seen handing a lemonade through a window to a Liberation armyman in the street and stammering with emotion: "Drink, drink, brother..."

Right at this moment, her mother handed her a water-melon and told her to pass it on to the N.F.L. fighter. That day, the fight lasted until nightfall.

The N.F.L. cadre who told me the above story added: "The support and encouragement given us by the Saigon people have instilled into us even more enthusiasm and pride. And that's why we are determined to fight to the end, until the aggressors and traitors are all destroyed."

BARRICADES IN THE STREETS

The tank shivered, spewed a thick cloud of bluish smoke which spread all over the street, then stopped dead. Quick as lightning, three black-clad N.F.L.

fighters darted out from a back alley and rushed to the vehicle. A sharp burst of submachinegun made away with the last of its occupants. From several houses, other men ran into the street, their guns slung before their chests. A young man wearing a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles and blue clothes, appeared from behind a bullet-riddled door panel, carrying two wooden chairs, and staggered towards the tank. Following on his heels was a chubby dark-complexioned girl in tight-fitting black clothes; she carried on her shoulders a brand new armchair. On the other side of the street a man about thirty with a checkered scarf round his neck and a gun in his hand was pulling a few cement bags. After looking right and left he shouted, "Comrades, beware! There may be other armoured cars ahead!"

Within a matter of minutes, two barricades were erected in the street. The three black-clad men lay on their stomachs behind the smoking tank, their guns pointed forward. The other three took up position behind a second barricade made up of a fallen tree, pieces of furniture, cement bags and empty oil drums.

A roar of tank engines came from the distance. Cannon shells burst on roofs and tree tops throwing fragments of bricks and tiles and branches around the men.

It was the third day since the offensive was launched in Saigon.

The sun was beating down hard. The shadows of electric poles gradually shortened, then disappeared altogether. The roar of tanks now sounded more distant.

The street was deserted, a lull that heralded more fighting. On the barricades, the men began to feel hungry. From behind the tank, a voice with a strong Trung Bo accent rose :

"I wonder whether the unit knows we've gone that far! Gosh, I've eaten two bowlfuls of rice this morning and yet I am now so damn hungry! What a big stomach I've got!"

His friends chuckled, but their shining eyes kept scanning the street carefully. One said, "This morning I saw two girls hand you a few sandwiches, but you refused! Why should you be so shy?"

The third man said in a Saigon drawl, "Don't worry, boys, I know how to get food..."

He winked and jerked his head in the direction of the other barricade behind which the other people were also talking. The girl was putting in order the sight of her shining submachinegun. She said in a somewhat reproachful voice :

"They just stick to principles! Before evacuating their places, the people had left plenty of food behind, for the Liberation troops. But they wouldn't touch it! Why should they refuse to eat this food? They fully deserve it. They are fighting the enemy, not just loitering around!"

The young man in gold-rimmed specs took a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and tossed it to the other barricade. "Have a smoke, boys," he shouted.

The three black-clad N.F.L. men smiled and nodded a thank, then lit their cigarettes. The oldest man in the other group, a Chinese worker probably, looked

toward the rear and said to his two friends: "It's noon and the supply team hasn't come yet. Let's invite the N.F.L. men to lunch, what do you think?"

The girl sat up, still clasping her submachinegun. She steadied a pistol holster on her hip and told him, "I'll go home and fetch some rice." But the young man in specs sprang to his feet and beat the dust off his clothes: "I'll go," he said. "I've been too long in those stuffy classrooms: lying in the sun makes me tired. I'd rather have a walk and get some fresh air..."

The girl knew that what he said was not quite true: for three days this young student had been fighting by their side and had given proof of his courage and ability to endure hardships (showing himself not in the least inferior to her, who, being a labourer, was much more used to a hard life); besides, what he was going to do was no pleasure walk! But she nodded her assent all the same. However, before the young man could start on his journey, the girl pulled at his shirt and made him lie down. She herself took cover behind a tree. In the distance, a figure was weaving his way toward them, running from behind a tree to the next, with things like grenades at the end of his swinging arms. The Chinese worker also lay flat on his stomach and carefully observed the approaching shadow. Then he sprang to his feet, rubbed his hands and said with a smile: "Don't shoot! It's old Nam's little boy!"

The boy was now quite near. Sweat was trickling down his chubby red cheeks. He didn't seem to be quite 14. His dark shining eyes looked right and left at the street then at the carcass of the tank. He smiled

mischievously and told the people on the barricade, "He're some beer-grenades and sandwich-rockets for you! From the uncles and aunties in town!"

He let a fat knapsack bulging with all kinds of food, which he was wearing soldier-style, slip from his shoulder, lay down and seized a submachinegun. "I wish I could get one of these," he said enthusiastically. The others looked affectionately at him and smiled.

Suddenly there was an outburst of gunfire. From both barricades guns were immediately pointed forward. The girl told the young boy in a serious voice, "Take cover, Hai. Do what I say, will you?"

Bullets ripped the road. On barricade No 1, the anti-tank gun moved to the right. The Chinese worker half rose to have a look. Bullets hit the cement bags in front of him with a sharp whizz. As he ducked for cover, a voice rang from somewhere above, "Beware! some of those bastards have slipped into the drugstore and are firing from there!"

Everybody looked up, but only for a few seconds, for the clank of tanks was heard. The little boy was standing on the balcony of a nearby house. Grasping the railing with both hands, he craned his neck and kept vigilant watch.

"Get down, kid!" a black-clad N.F.L. man was shouting. "It's no time and place to play bo-peep!"

On the right side of the street ahead, a few enemy troops with grenades in their hands were crawling toward them.

Before the little boy could say a word, a burst of quickfire submachinegun hit the window-panes of the next house. A puppet soldier was getting nearer and nearer, taking cover behind fallen trees. All of a sudden, he sprang up and was about to lob a grenade when a burst from the girl's gun caught him and knocked him down. He lay with his arms outstretched on a heap of rubbish. A man again shouted at the boy, "Get down, those bastards are firing at you. Get down, quick!"

But the young boy seemed not to hear. He tried to reach out even farther off the balcony to observe the enemy. "Tanks coming," he shouted, "with infantry behind! Shoot at them!"

But now the men in the drugstore had seen him. A burst of machinegun crashed. From the barricade a B. 40 anti-tank rocket whizzed forth, hit the drugstore and silenced the gun. But on the balcony, the young boy had staggered. One of his hands had left the railing, the other, though still keeping its hold, was shaking. The people on the barricades were deeply shocked: they rose and were about to rush up to his rescue. But they stopped, bit their lips and pointed their weapons forward. A tank, cannon blazing, was rushing toward barricade No 2, trying to crush the people defending it. But again, from barricade No 1, the B. 40 bazooka let go a rocket with a roar. The tank shook, crawled forward a few more yards, then stopped dead, fire and smoke gushing from its side. The G.I.'s behind it took to their heels. Many were felled by angry bursts of submachinegun from the barricades.

The enemy beat a hasty retreat. All six people on the barricades looked up to the balcony. The girl smiled and heaved a sigh of relief. The young boy had recovered his balance, with both hands now clutching at the wooden rail. One of his sleeves was stained with blood. A gust of wind lifted a flap of his shirt and one could see a holster strapped to a black leather belt.

A N.F.L. man, the one with the Trung Bo accent, came up to him and carried him down on his back. The girl blinked and said in a warm voice, "He is a very courageous boy. Only yesterday, he meted out due punishment to two wicked agents of the enemy."

The student took off his glasses and wiped them. Trying hard to contain his emotion, he told his friends the story of Gavroche.

The heat had somewhat subsided. The two barricades had now been moved a hundred yards up the street. The little boy was now lying beside his friends, a newly-captured carbine in his hands, his pistol laid on the ground, just beneath his chest. Some distance away, a group of enemy soldiers were bracing themselves up for an attack. The battle on the streets of Saigon had only begun...

ATTACK ON TAN SON NHAT AIRBASE

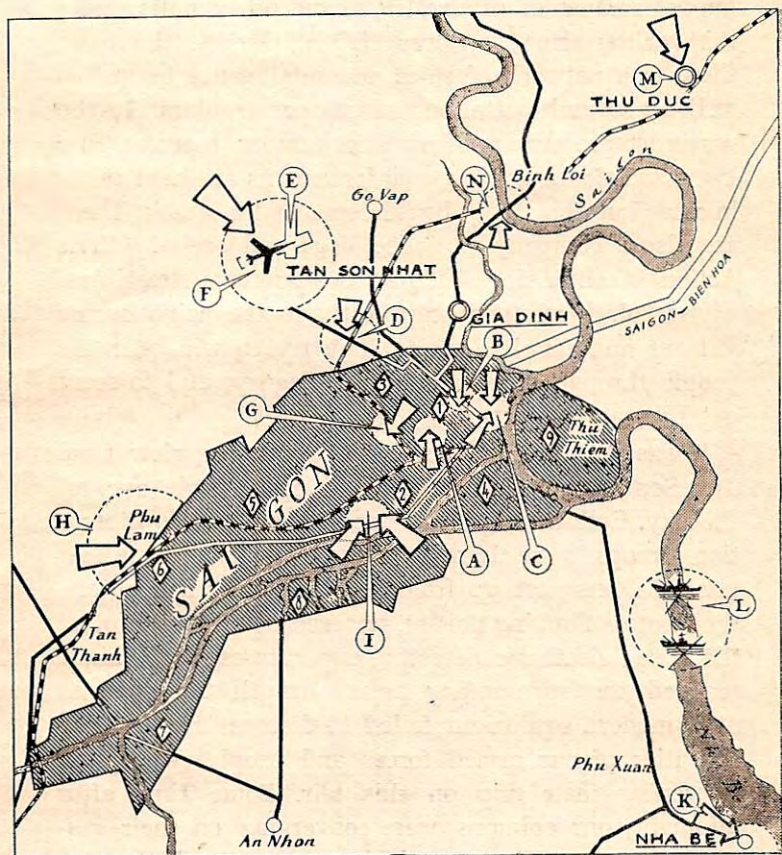
An ultra-modern airbase located north of Saigon, Tan Son Nhat is also the innermost lair of the American and puppet chieftains. Besides enlarging the

north-south civilian runway and the southwest-northeast military runway, the Americans have also urgently built two more military runways parallel to the old one, each more than three kilometres long. Nearly five hundred aircraft of every description: propeller-driven planes, jets, helicopters, fighter planes, reconnaissance planes, transport planes, etc. are housed in concrete redoubts along the runways. North of the three military runways are rows of ammunition dumps, a signal centre equipped with ultra-modern electronic gear permitting direct communication with the chief aggressors in Washington, and also a radar station whose job is to detect artillery pieces of the Liberation troops should they attack Tan Son Nhat. The area south of the runways is crammed with barracks housing about a thousand pilots and technicians, and also command offices: the H.Q. of the American Seventh Air Force, the H.Q. of the puppet Air Command, and the H.Q. of other technical services of the American and puppet forces. The puppet General Staff is also housed in a new building in the southeast of this airbase. In particular, since Saigon proved to be no safe refuge for them, Westmoreland and the American Command, as well as their valet Nguyen Cao Ky, have taken shelter at Tan Son Nhat.

The Americans have taken all kinds of security measures in the hope of ensuring the safety of this den of theirs. It is surrounded by thick barbed wire entanglements, twenty-two layers in some places. Then there is a network of blockhouses equipped with powerful searchlights, six-metre-high watchtowers and field works. On guard inside the airbase are important

LEGEND

- A. Attack on the Doc Lap Palace
- B. Attack on the United States Embassy
- C. Attack on the puppet Navy H.Q. and puppet Marine C.P.
- D. Attack on the puppet Inter-Arms General Staff
- F. Attack on the Tan Son Nhat airfield
- F. Attack on Westmoreland's H.Q.
- G. Attack on the puppet Saigon Special Sector Command
- H. Attack on the wireless centre
- I. Attack on the puppet General Police Department (General Nguyen Ngoc Loan's den) and the Saigon Police H.Q.
- K. Attack on a logistic depot at Nha Be, a U.S. naval base
- L. Two U.S. ammunition-carrying ships set on fire
- M. Attack on the power station
- N. Attack on the Binh Loi armoury
- I, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9: Saigon quarters



forces comprising a battalion of American air M.P.'s, plus a second one specially detailed to guard Westmoreland's den, a battalion of airbase security forces, two puppet companies of air M.P.'s, and other units under the various armed services H.Q.'s. Outside the base, there is a network of spies and intelligence teams, as well as several battalions of puppet regulars. In the northeast are two artillery and armour bases at Phu Dong and Co Loa, where reinforcements are kept ready in case Tan Son Nhat should come under attack. There are also a company of police dogs and one of "Civic Action" comprising Vietnamese-speaking Americans, whose job takes them constantly to the neighbouring villages and hamlets where they try to win over the people through deception and demagoguery, and to scent out Liberation troops.

It was the night of January 30, 1968. The glow from Tan Son Nhat's electric lights lit up a whole area of the sky. Following in the steps of local guides, Liberation troops were hurrying towards the airbase. At intervals, jets shot up from the air strips; helicopters, their rotors flapping noisily, hovered in the sky around the base; electronic detecting apparatuses of all kinds scanned the surrounding areas, but all the enemy's ultra-modern equipment failed to discover the feverish activities of our armed forces and people, who were tightening their grip on this lair. Some time after midnight, our columns were converging on their respective targets. The one which was to attack the airfield was already close to the barbed wire entanglements. That which was to destroy the puppet General Staff was separated from its target by only the width of a

road. The column whose job was to storm the artillery and armour bases and the arsenals at Phu Dong and Co Loa (northeast of the airbase) had also taken up its positions. In the distance, somewhere Long Binh way, flashes erupted: enemy ammunition dumps were being blown up.

At 2.20 a.m., the orders came for the attack. A terrible tempest of fire swooped on the enemy all of a sudden. The onslaught began.

The sharp spearheads of our shock groups penetrated deep into the airbase. Within five minutes, all of the twenty-two layers of barbed wire entanglements were blown up. The Liberation fighters surged ahead in a tidal wave, submerged the enemy's weak resistance and destroyed the blockhouses. The group under the command of T. rushed to the runway and recorded the first exploit of the day by blowing up a redoubt crammed with jets. The flames rose and spread rapidly to other redoubts. Past the first moments of bewilderment, enemy tanks began to appear. They rumbled into the runway, trying to stop the Liberation troops, but to no avail. The revolutionary fighters fiercely attacked and destroyed the tanks, while continuing their devastating operations. To the south of the runway, one heard American soldiers cry out in confusion. The group under Ba left the runway and rapidly headed for the quarters housing American pilots and technicians. The crack of their guns soon resounded from one house to another, from one storey to another. The place was littered with enemy bodies.

After three hours of fierce fighting, in which they freely moved about the enemy lair, the Liberation troops won full control over a large area of the airbase, paralysing all air activities after destroying more than fifty aircraft, thirty tanks, setting afire four ammunition dumps and starting chains of explosions which were to last three days and three nights successively.

WESTERN OPINIONS

Hereunder are some Western opinions gathered at random, which testify to the Tet extraordinary offensive of the Liberation armed forces and population of South Viet Nam, the complete disorganization of the puppet administration and army, as well as the bankruptcy of the "pacification" programme and the inescapable defeat of the American aggressors.

I. AN EXTRAORDINARY OFFENSIVE

The size and ferocity of the co-ordinated attacks in Saigon and other key South Vietnamese centres took the U.S. and its allies badly by surprise. (*Reuter*, 31-1-1968).

Complete surprise, utter anxiety... such is the reaction of the competent U.S. circles, at the news of violent combats in the heart of Saigon. The occupation though temporary but relatively easy of the gardens of the U.S. embassy, said to be impregnable, is a hard blow to the Americans' pride (*AFP*, 31-1-1968).

It was surprising because these dispatches unfolded the story of the most aggressive, most far-flung and best co-ordinated communist assault of the entire war. (*Wall Street Journal*, 31-1-1968).

The bold, massive communist attacks yesterday on Saigon, 8 provincial capitals and 30 other lesser towns were a shocker. American military police, having to

land on the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon under fire to recapture the supposedly "guerilla-proof" building from communists who held it six hours, that scene alone is enough to force the Johnson administration to stamp invalid its optimistic assessment that the war is showing continual and steady progress. (*Washington News*, 31-1-1968).

2. COMPLETE DISORGANIZATION OF THE PUPPET ADMINISTRATION AND ARMY

The president of South Viet Nam, general Thieu, who could not be found in the first twenty-four hours of the Viet Cong offensive and was taken back to Saigon on the insistence of the Americans has, as well as the other members of his government, given the proof of his inefficiency. The South Vietnamese military and civilian cadres are corrupt. The armed forces fought badly... Official circles in Washington asserted that the government extended its control over and its protection to three-fourths of South Viet Nam's population. The Viet Cong offensive has brutally broken this myth. (*France Soir*, 8-2-1968).

Communist victories are indicative of the weakness of the political structure on which the American military effort in Viet Nam is based. (*The New York Times*, 2-2-1968).

The Saigon political structure is no stronger today than it was three years ago in the sense of being able

on its own to govern, to defend or to rally the people of South Viet Nam. (*Mike Mansfield*, American senator, *Reuter*, 12-2-1968).

The Saigon government has utterly foiled to earn the confidence of the people. The South Vietnamese army has ceased to fight. (*Stephan Young*, American senator, *UPI*, 27-2-1968).

3. BANKRUPTCY OF THE "PACIFICATION" PROGRAMME

The "other war" this week was a dead issue. This national priority program... was perhaps, the most important casualty of the Viet Cong (People's forces) Tet offensive... As one high-ranking U.S. AID official told me this week: "These attacks have proven one thing: that Westmoreland can bring in ten more U.S. infantry divisions and he still will not pacify the country. (*Reuter*, 13-2-1968).

The communist Tet offensive virtually paralysed the Mekong delta. Five weeks, after the assaults, recovery is barely beginning and Viet Cong forces roam the countryside almost at will. (*AP*, 7-3-1968).

The rural pacification program aimed at winning loyalty of South Vietnamese peasants, is virtually paralysed as officials here try to determine whether to defend population centers or continue efforts to secure the countries' hamlets. (*Washington Post*, 16-2-1968).

After four years of steady reinforcement with men and material general Westmoreland is on the defensive in the field, and by common consent the constructive side of the war effort — the pacification of the countryside — has collapsed. (*The Times*, 11-3-1968).

4. U.S. INESCAPABLE DEFEAT

Even with a half-million troops, a thirteen-year presence, and a 66-million-dollar-a-day war expenditure, America has sensationally demonstrated that not one square inch of South Viet Nam has been secured. (*Reuter*, 5-2-1968).

The South Viet Nam Liberation troops have shown the world who is the master of Viet Nam. This is a lesson for the Americans. (*Neue Rhein Zeitung*, 2-2-68).

We think the American people should be getting ready to accept, if they have not already, the prospect that the whole Viet Nam effort may be doomed, it may be falling apart beneath our feet. (*Wall Street Journal*, 23-2-68).

The circumstances demand that the U.S. end its participation in this hopeless situation.

There are three major reasons for my proposal at this time. The time is ripe for it:

1. U.S. casualties are reaching dreadful proportions and for a futile effort.

2. We know the war cannot be won militarily and there is a feeling in this country that Defense Secretary

Robert S. McNamara has not given the American people the facts of the situation...

3. Recent events such as Viet Cong attacks on all of South Viet Nam principal cities — even the capital of Saigon — show that the South Vietnamese government is utterly inept, has in fact collapsed and has no control over the country, despite our tremendous expenditures of money and lives, and dreadful losses among the Vietnamese people. (*Ernest Gruening*, American senator, *AP*, 24-2-68).

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