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QUAN DOI NHAN DAN HAILS SOUTHERN STRUGGLE IN EARLY 1975

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[Review of 17 February QUAN DOI NHAN DAN commentary: "Early This Year, the South Resolutely Opposes the U.S.-Thieu Clique's Pacification and Encroachment Schemes"]

[Text] In 1975, the U.S.-Thieu clique is frenziedly continuing to step up the war; sabotage the Paris agreement; increase pacification, encroachment, rice-looting and crop-ravaging operations; and commit more crimes against our compatriots. In early January 1975, it launched the so-called special spontaneous uprising campaign in all four military regions with a view to relieving many areas from PLAF military pressure, encroaching on many liberated areas, and savagely terrorizing and putting down the people's struggle movement.

Since the early days of 1975, the southern armed forces and people have firmly resisted the U.S.-Thieu clique in every respect and by all means. From Tri-Thien to western Nam Bo, our armed forces and people have repeatedly punished the pacifiers and nibblers. In the first 20 days of January, the Thua Thien liberation armed forces annihilated or captured more than 600 enemy troops. In the plains of central Trung Bo, 1,725 enemy troops were put out of action in January. In eastern Nam Bo, the Phuoc Long armed forces and people punished the enemy in many bases from which he was launching nibbling operations, putting thousands of enemy troops out of action.

Closely coordinating their military and political struggles, our compatriots have risen up in many areas to annihilate the thugs and win back their right to be masters and, with the liberation troops, they have encircled and threatened enemy posts, prevented the enemy from conducting sweeps and nibbling operations, and called on Saigon troops to return to the people, thus further foiling the enemy's pacification and nibbling plans.

In the face of our compatriots' vigorous struggle, enemy troops manning many military posts in My Tho, Tra Vinh, and Rach Gia have had to abandon their posts. Our compatriots have leveled enemy posts, destroyed strategic hamlets and people-herding centers, and returned to their former locales to earn a living. In the Mekong Delta provinces, hundreds of thousands more compatriots rose up to win back their right to be masters, driving the Americans and Thieu into an increasingly critical situation.

In the areas still under temporary enemy control, our compatriots have stepped up their political struggle to demand that the enemy stop shelling indiscriminately, massacring our people, stop grabbing land and arresting people, and that he pay compensation for our compatriots' losses and return their loved ones to them that he had pressganged and so forth.

Also in January, hundreds of thousands of our compatriots in Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Gia Lai, Binh Thuan, Bien Hoa, and Thu Dau Mot provinces and in the Mekong Delta provinces took to the streets and staged face-to-face struggles against members of the puppet administration in villages and capitals. In many areas, our compatriots have successfully prevented the enemy from perpetrating crimes and have forced him to agree to our people's demands.

Using various forms of propaganda, our compatriots have motivated Saigon troops, persuading them to support our just cause. Many Saigon army units, including main force units, have taken antiwar action or risen up and returned to our people. A total 2,000 Saigon troops deserted in January in western Nam Bo. From January through mid-February, hundreds of Saigon troops deserted in every province from Tri-Thien to the Nam Bo provinces, thus further decreasing the Saigon army's numerical strength and impairing the morale of its troops.

The strength of our armed forces' and people's struggle has further accelerated the struggle movement of the southern urbanites of various strata to achieve peace, a decent life, freedom and national reconciliation and concord and to demand an end to the U.S. military involvement and interference in the south and the ouster of Thieu and his faction. The seething struggle impetus of our compatriots has further embarrassed the Americans and Thieu and worsened their isolated position.

The situation in the south in the first months of this year proves that the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys are still very stubborn and bellicose. However, the southern armed forces and people are now in a very fine situation, are more determined in their struggle to punish the Americans and Thieu, who are sabotaging the Paris agreement, and will certainly achieve many new victories..