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NHAN DAN EDITORIAL HAILS 1968 VICTORIES

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[24 December NHAN DAN editorial: "A year of extremely great and all-out victories"]

[Text] The year 1968 is entering our people's history as a great milestone. It has been an outstanding year of the anti-U.S. national salvation struggle, which has unfolded precisely as President Ho's new year wishes. Indeed, this year opened with a spring far outshining previous springs, and throughout it has been a valiant fight with south and north emulating each other in fighting the U.S. aggressor throughout it has been a valiant fight with south and north emulating each other in fighting the U.S. aggressor throughout the land come happy tidings of victories.

It has been a year in which the great frontline launched its general offensive and simultaneous uprisings, the great rear defeated the U.S. aggressors' war of destruction, and our entire people's anti-U.S. national salvation struggle won unprecedented great and overall victories, crossing a new turning point to vigorously and steadily advance toward complete victory. The year 1968 has been a great year for our people, with heroic, country-rocking fighting and glorious world-resounding victories, (?a year) in which the most overwhelming, grandiose, and deeply significant epic of Vietnam in 1968 is the heroic south's fight.

Souring with a sky-filling spirit since its early spring general offensive the great frontline has fought well, continuously attacking, arising, and winning victories, making 1968 an unprecedentedly glorious year in the anti-U.S. national salvation struggle.

In the closing days of this year, we are extremely encouraged by the PLAF Command's 20 December 1968 communique. It is a solemn report from the great frontline to respected and beloved Uncle Ho and a happy announcement from the kith-and-kin south to compatriots nationwide and our friends throughout the five continents on the glorious victories scored by the southern armed forces and people in 1968. Never have we heard so exciting an annual recapitulative report from the great frontline.

In terms of military offensives, according to incomplete, preliminary documents, our southern combatants and compatriots annihilated 630,000 enemy troops, including more than 230,000 U.S. and satellite troops, disintegrated hundreds of thousands of puppet troops, annihilated or decimated one brigade, seven regiments and battle groups, 187 battalions, 18 armored carrier companies, and more than 750 companies of U.S., puppet and satellite troops; downed, destroyed or crippled 6,000 aircraft, destroyed or crippled 13,500 military vehicles, including more than 7,000 tanks and armored cars, sank or set ablaze 1,000 battleships and transport vessels, destroyed more than 1,100 artillery pieces, set ablaze more than 700 bomb, ammunition, gas, and oil depots, crumbled more than 700 bridges and sewage facilities, and leveled--or forced the occupants to surrender or withdraw from--more than 1,500 military posts and subsectors.

These achievements have far exceeded those of 1966 and 1967 together. The total number of U.S. troops killed this year almost equaled the total of U.S. troops killed during the past seven years, from 1961 to 1967. All the most seasoned U.S.-puppet units suffered losses, from 50 percent upward. All their lairs in cities, provincial capitals, and district capitals were attacked many times.

Meanwhile, the three categories of troops of the PLAF grew tremendously; the more they fought, the stronger they became and the greater victories they won. They crushed the search-and-destroy strategy and are defeating the passive clear-and-hold strategy of the U.S. aggressors.

In the political field, in close coordination with military attacks and military proselyting activities, the stormy uprisings of millions of our compatriots have wiped away the puppet administrative machinery by large chunks, regained control of more than 1,000 hamlets, inhabited by more than 2 million compatriots, set up revolutionary administration in vast areas, brought the people's war to all areas even to cities, and developed the military proselyting network among the people.

With the birth of the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, the development of the great national solidarity bloc has made another step forward. The treacherous face and the state of complete isolation of the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique have become more obvious. The NFLSV's role, force, and prestige have become more prominent in the country and abroad. The truth is very brilliant. [words indistinct] combatants and compatriots have dealt very heavy blows at the U.S. troops and at the material bases of their aggressive war, reducing their morale and fighting efficiency. Our combatants and compatriots have caused the U.S. aggressors to lose confidence in their military strategies, strongly shaken their aggressive will, and helped them realize that there is only one path for them to follow--to accept defeat and withdraw their troops.

The struggle of the heroic south is the decisive factor forcing the U.S. aggressors to accept two new defeats: their unconditional halting of all bombardments against the entire northern territory and their agreeing to talk with the NFLSV representative in Paris to discuss the ending of their war of aggression.

The most important meaning of the 1968 victories on the great frontline is that they have initiated a new situation in the struggle, one in which the southern revolution will progress by big leaps, strongly and firmly, toward complete victory, while the U.S. aggressors, still sticking to their ruined aggressive work, will fall increasingly quickly into the abyss of complete defeat.

This situation has been proved by the 1968 events. On the battlefield, the entire U.S. aggressive army has fallen into a state of being attacked and encircled strategically. It has been unable to carry out any mission and has become increasingly passive and bogged down. It has been attacked repeatedly, even when entrenched in its last lairs, not knowing when and where the blows came from. The disintegration of the puppet administration and army is inevitable.

The U.S. aggressors have suffered from acute internal division and contradictions. They have encountered insurmountable contradictions in all fields. Their tragic situation has been reflected by their panic-stricken attitude during the early spring days of this year; by their project of gradually reducing their participation in the aggressive war; by their defeats on the battlefields--especially in Saigon, Hue, Da Nang,

and Khe Sanh; by their present fear over the prospect of new attacks by liberation troops; by Westy's lonely strolling en route home; by Johnson's sadness when announcing his decision not to run for the presidency, when announcing the limited bombing, and when announcing the halt in the bombardment of North Vietnam; by the defeat of the Democratic Party in the U.S. presidential race; by the devaluation of the U.S. dollar; and by the hot discussions among U.S. authorities about their global strategy.

The struggle of the southern combatants and compatriots has been very fierce. Firmly demonstrating the initiative on the battlefield, the PLAF have attacked the enemy continually in all areas, attacked and encircled him strategically. The large-scale attacks and strong uprisings, which have led the people's war to a new summit, have been repeatedly launched at the U.S.-puppet heads, so repeatedly that their last props in the cities have completely decayed.

Progressing by big leaps in the military as well as the political fields, in the qualitative as well as the quantitative fields, the revolutionary forces have created new advantages and new capabilities which have helped it advance more strongly.

The picture of the struggle on the great frontline is very brilliant. It represents groups of valiant liberation troops advancing toward cities to annihilate the enemy in his own lairs. It represents millions of our compatriots rising up to seize power. It represents hundreds of thousands of youths in newly liberated areas happily organizing farewell parties for those who are leaving to join the liberation army and annihilate the U.S. aggressors. It represents millions of ballots dropped by our compatriots to elect village, district, or provincial people's revolutionary committees. It represents the birth of the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces. It represents world admiration for our South Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces. It represents world admiration for our South Vietnam and public opinion's warm welcome to the NFLSV delegation to the Paris conference.

The new situation on the great frontline substantiates the truth that the U.S. defeat is very obvious and that the southern armed forces and people have won great victories and will surely win complete victory. The great and comprehensive victories by southern combatants and compatriots in 1968 are primarily due to the NFLSV's correct line. The Front's revolutionary line and people's war line are a creative application of revolutionary theories to the concrete conditions in our country.

Correct lines in coordination with correct revolutionary methods have created an invincible combined strength. The Front's decision to launch the general offensive and simultaneous uprisings since early spring this year is consistent with the objective requirement of developing the anti-U.S. national salvation struggle. It demonstrates the Front's revolutionary spirit and boundless confidence in millions of revolutionary people, ready to advance and fulfill the national liberation task.

The great, comprehensive victories in 1968 are the results of the extremely heroic struggle and outstanding efforts of our South Vietnamese combatants and people, from Quang Tri to Ca Mau, in Saigon, in Hue, as well as in Tri Thien, the western highlands, southern Trung Bo, central Trung Bo delta, eastern Nam Bo, and the Mekong River delta. Our combatants and people have overcome all difficulties and hardships, unanimously surging forward to develop highly the indomitable tradition and revolutionary heroism, and forgetting themselves in the combat for independence and freedom.

This is the result of the north-south blood-sealed brotherhood and the close unity between the vast rear base and the great frontline which have helped bring about our people's victories. This is also the result of the unanimous moral and material support from socialist countries and progressive mankind, including the U.S. people, to our people's anti-U.S. national salvation struggle.

Our entire people warmly welcome the enormous victories of the great frontline in 1968 and heroic South Vietnamese combatants and people for their general offensive and concerted uprisings which have made this year a year crowned with unprecedentedly great, comprehensive victories. They also welcome the NFLSV, the organizer and leader of our anti-U.S. national salvation struggle to liberate the south, protect the north, and proceed toward the reunification of our country.

Our people countrywide also heartily welcome the increasingly steady unity bloc of our South Vietnamese people and the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces. The U.S. aggressors have been frenziedly squirming in stalemate. The fighting on the great frontline will have to undergo many hardships and sacrifices, but the conditions are highly favorable and conducive to final victory.

The 31 million people of our country are united and persevering and determined to put into practice President Ho's teaching: "So long as there remains one aggressor in our land, we will have to keep on fighting to sweep him away." For the sake of independence and freedom of our fatherland, let our people advance! Complete victory will be ours!

#### GRECHKO GREETINGS TO GIAP ON VPA ANNIVERSARY

Moscow RED STAR 22 Dec 68 p 1 L

[Text] To Deputy Prime Minister and DRV Minister of National Defense Army General Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap, Hanoi:

Dear comrade minister! On behalf of the Soviet Union's armed forces and myself personally, I send you and all the heroic Vietnamese warriors a fraternal battle greeting and hearty congratulations on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the Vietnamese People's Army.

The Soviet soldiers note this significant date in the life of the fraternal Vietnamese people with a feeling of sincere friendship toward their fighting friends, the Vietnamese soldiers, and solidarity with their courageous struggle against the armed aggression of American imperialism for the freedom and independence of their country. They condemn in the most resolute manner the criminal actions of the American militarists in Vietnam and unanimously support the policy of our party and the Soviet Government aimed at rendering comprehensive aid to the Vietnamese people.

On the day of the anniversary of the Vietnamese People's Army, the personnel of the Soviet armed forces wish their brothers in arms, the Vietnamese Soldiers, new successes in the strengthening the country's defense capacity and in raising combat skill and combat readiness.

Long live the unbreakable fraternal friendship between the peoples and armed forces of the Soviet Union and the DRV!

With communist greetings, (signed) A. Grechko, marshal of the Soviet Union and USSR minister of defense.