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PLAF VICTORIES IN FEBRUARY FIGHTING HAILED

In Southern Trung Bo

Hanoi VNA International Service in English 0642 GMT 16 Mar 69 B

[Text] Hanoi VNA March 16--Reviewing the exploits recorded in the southern part of Trung Bo (central Vietnam) from the night of February 22 to February 25, the Hanoi daily NHAN DAN in an article today said that the Liberation Armed Forces and people in the region have brought their position of initiativeness on the battlefield to a new stage, and attained higher efficiency in fighting.

The paper draws the list of enemy losses in live force and material in that period: nearly 1,700 enemy put out of action, among them one battalion and three companies of U.S. forces, 25 aircraft shot down or destroyed on the ground, 60 military vehicles and 14 big guns wrecked two major fuel storages and many other supply depots set ablaze.

The paper recalled that the liberation fighters in the region had closely combined their attacks to penetrate deep into enemy territory, and hit accurately enemy key strongholds in the Phan Thiet and Phan Rang provincial capitals, in Thanh Son and Phan Thiet airbases, and many other places, besides they repeatedly assaulted enemy artillery sites close to the towns and 23 positions along highways, the paper added.

The PLAF in Binh Thuan Province on the night of February 22 and the following day attacked both the enemy garrison and reinforcements in E-Xe-Pic [as received] area, putting out of action one battalion and three companies of U.S. troops and one puppet company, and heavily trouncing four puppet companies. They also shot down 14 planes, and destroyed 38 military vehicles, and a large quantity of other war means. This, the paper said, was one of the most remarkable victories of the PLAF and people in the region.

The paper noted that within the night of February 22, the PLAF in Ninh Thuan Province assaulted many enemy positions in Phan Rang town, killing or wounding 200 enemy troops mostly Americans and Pak Chong-hui mercenaries. Guerrillas alone wrecked 15 aircraft, and heavily damaged the pipeline from Ninh Chu to Thanh Son it added.

All told, of the enemy casualties in that 4-day period was 50 percent higher than that in the first fortnight of February this year, and over two times much more than that in December, 1968. [as received] This proved that in their fight, the armed forces and people in Southern Trung Bo have made strenuous efforts to whittle down the enemy's forces while increasing their own strength and firmly maintaining their initiative on the battlefield, the paper pointed out.

In Central Trung Bo

Hanoi VNA International Service in English 0628 GMT 16 Mar 69 B

[Text] Hanoi VNA March 16--In its commentary today the Hanoi daily QUAN DOI NHAN DAN (PEOPLE'S ARMY) laid stress on the high combat efficiency and tremendous growth of the Liberation Armed Forces in the central part of Trung Bo (central Vietnam), and said their exploits recorded between February 23 and March 9 constituted a magnificent epic.

The paper recalled that in that period, the PLAF put out of action over 18,000 enemy (nearly half of them U.S. and satellite troops). Enemy casualties in that 15 days period were more than two times as many as that during the one-month period early spring last year and beginning the current general offensive and widespread uprising, the paper noted. [sentence as received]

It went on to say that in terms of war means and material, the PLAF shot down or destroyed on the ground nearly 300 aircraft, demolished nearly 420 military vehicles, sank 27 military ships and combat launches, and blew up 133 ammunition and fuel storages. The number of supply storages destroyed was three times bigger than that in the same one-month period as mentioned above.

The paper said: There was an excellent combination of the various battlefields on the highland, in the plains and the towns, and at the coast, and of the various services of the PLAF, who attacked the enemy continuously and simultaneously, and applied fighting methods of very high efficiency.

The PLAF in the zone [as received] assaulted repeatedly hundreds of enemy positions including various bases, command posts and nerve organs of the U.S. puppet-satellites in 11 cities and provincial capitals, 38 district towns, townships and military sub-sectors, 18 airfields, 133 storages, many artillery grounds, and several military ports. In communication warfare, the PLAF constantly harassed the enemy on communication lines, destroying dozens of military convoys on roads and waterways.

Guerrilla warfare was greatly developed both in the countryside and the towns, thus helping whittle down more enemy live force. At the same time, as a combination of armed attacks and political struggle, hundreds of thousands of people rose up to join the revolutionary armed forces in wiping out many groups of pacification agents and many lairs of enemy cruel agents, and in razing many strategic hamlets, and other concentration camps, thus greatly expanding the liberated zone.

The paper continued: The PLAF and people in the central part of central Vietnam dealt very hard blows at the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys. The U.S. Marines, the Americal Division, the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, and Pak Chong-Hui and Thailand mercenary troops, were all taken under fire and given due punishment.

Not a single position of the enemy in that region was spared, not even the military port at Cam Ranh that lies far back in enemy territory. And, it was in Da Nang and the surrounding areas where big defence efforts of the enemy had been concentrated that the enemy received the hardest blows.

In conclusion the paper stressed that in central Vietnam as well as in other parts of South Vietnam, it has become quite obvious that the enemy is weakening seriously and that he is unable to resist the onslaught of the South Vietnamese people and their armed forces.