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WAR CRIMES COMMISSION ON U.S. WAR ESCALATION

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[Text] Hanoi VNA March 27--The commission for investigation into U.S. imperialists' war crimes in Vietnam has issued a statement on the criminal war escalation moves taken by the Nixon government since it came to power. The statement reads:

Facing heavy defeats in Vietnam and many difficulties on the home front and in the world, former U.S. President Johnson had to declare to unconditionally stop the bombardment throughout the territory of the D.R.V. and to attend the four-party conference in Paris in order to find a political solution for the Vietnam problem.

However, since his coming to power (January 20, 1969) President Nixon has not only continued the Johnson government's criminal policy of aggression, but also has intensified the war of aggression in South Vietnam, brazenly infringed upon the D.R.V. sovereignty and security, taken new steps in escalating its crimes in both South and North Vietnam with the illusion that it might obtain a position of strength on the battlefield to bring pressure to bear upon the talks.

President Nixon's inauguration speech and the news conferences held by him later, as well as the statements by U.S. Secretary of Defence Melvin Laird and several American generals made it clear that the U.S. Air Force and Navy kept ready a plan of retaliation including a resumption of the bombardment against North Vietnam within 24 hours. At the present time, the Nixon Government is carrying out a policy consisting in maintaining a strong puppet administration in an attempt to materialize U.S. neo-colonialism in South Vietnam and perpetrate the partition of Vietnam in contravention on international law and the fundamental clauses of the Geneva agreements on Vietnam, in defiance of progressive public opinion in the world and the United States.

According to the statement made on March 15, 1969 by the South Vietnam committee for denunciation of the crimes of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen in South Vietnam, the Nixon government has granted 98 million dollars of additional military credit to South Vietnam and sent an additional 3,000 U.S. expeditionary troops and 1,500 Thai mercenaries to South Vietnam. It is impulsing [as received] the accelerated pacification programme by means of terror operations and massacres of civilians, speeding up the equipment of the Thieu-Ky-Huong puppet administration with modern weapons and war means, and making massive use of B-52 planes to rain an ever growing tonnage of bombs on many heavily populated areas including those adjacent to towns and cities. It has also ordered the Thieu-Ky-Huong puppet administration to speed up forcible conscription and to apply fascist measures in repressing the population of all strata, to close down dozens of newspapers, to arrest anyone who demands the formation of a coalition government, restoration of peace, an end to the war, and democratic liberties....

The above-mentioned acts have caused many peace- and justice-loving Americans, many statesmen in the world, and even several American senators to severely criticize the policy of war of the Nixon government and condemn the monstrous crimes perpetrated by the U.S. and its lackeys in South Vietnam.

Faced with the extremely savage crimes committed by the aggressors and the traitors, the army and people of South Vietnam reserve for themselves the right to mete out well-deserved punishment to them. That is the sacred and imprescriptible right of self-defence of the South Vietnamese people.

Driven into an utter predicament, the U.S. aggressors and their henchmen hastened to cry out from all housetops about what they called Viet Cong attacks against the civilians with a view to concealing their bloody crimes and heavy military setbacks. But their trumped-up charge can deceive nobody. The French news agency AFP on March 11, 1969 pointed out that all the targets bombarded by the P.L.A.F. are strictly military. Harriman, former chief of the delegation of the U.S. Government at the Paris talks on Vietnam, in an interview granted to the New York POST magazine, said that the present offensives of the South Vietnamese Army and people were a reaction to the increasing activities of the U.S. troops.

As regards North Vietnam, the U.S. Government has sent all kinds of spy planes, with or without pilot, to reconnoitre the airspace of the D.R.V. The number of spy flights, from 190 in the first half of November 1968, rose to 400 in the last 10 days of January 1969 (the time following President Nixon's inauguration).

Since January 20, 1969, 1,200 sorties of reconnaissance planes were flown on orders from the Nixon administration to spy the airspace of almost all the provinces in North Vietnam. The Nixon administration has ordered the U.S. military commanders to escalate from conventional tactical jet planes to B-52 strategic planes and long-range artillery based on the Seventh Fleet and from the southern bank of Ben Hai River in their wanton bombardments of many populated areas from the An Province to Vinh Linh area, disrupting the normal life of the local population. Only 3 days after its inauguration, the Nixon administration sent six flights of B-52 planes to rain more than 700 tons of bombs on Quang Binh from January 23 through to January 26. On March 15, 1969, four F-4 planes dropped demolition bombs and steel pellet bombs on several localities in Bo Trach district, Quang Binh Province, and on March 20, 1969, from 1030 to 1330 hours, many flights of F-4 and F-105 planes for eight drives in succession dropped 28 demolition bombs and 4,800 steel pellet bombs and fired two rounds of rockets on a number of population centres in Minh Hoa District, Quang Binh Province.

The commission for investigation of the U.S. imperialists' war crimes in Vietnam energetically denounces to public opinion at home and abroad the extremely barbarous crimes of U.S. imperialists against the Vietnamese people. It calls on all organizations in other countries in the world for investigation into the U.S. imperialists' crimes, the Bertrand Russell international tribunal and other tribunals in the world for trial of the U.S. imperialists crimes in Vietnam, all democratic lawyers and men of conscience in the world and all peace- and justice-loving people in the United States to severely condemn the new steps of crime escalation of the Nixon administration in Vietnam, to urge that the latter stop its war of aggression, give up its neo-colonialist policy in South Vietnam as well as all acts of war infringing upon the sovereignty and security of the D.R.V., stop its bloody crimes against the Vietnamese people and recognize the four-point stand of the D.R.V. Government and the five-point political solution of the South Vietnam N.F.L.