

AFP REPORTS 13 MAR BATTLE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Hong Kong AFP in English 1416 GMT 13 Mar 75 BK

[Excerpts] Saigon, March 13 (AFP)--Communist and South Vietnamese government soldiers today battled from house to house inside the town of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands 240 kilometres (150 miles) northeast of Saigon as communist forces seized a nearby district town and were reported to have downed a civilian airliner with a missile, killing 15 foreigners among the 26 persons aboard.

Closer to Saigon, the South Vietnamese high command said two North Vietnamese PT-76 assault tanks were knocked out by air strikes between the capital and the beleaguered town of Tay Ninh 90 kilometres (55 miles) to the northwest. Air strikes close to the Cambodian border near Tay Ninh killed 77 communists, the spokesman claimed:

The government lost another position close to the district town of Tri Tam in rubber plantations 60 kilometres (40 miles) north of Saigon which fell yesterday. The high command said radio contact was lost with the outpost of Ben Cui after 3 hours of fighting.

In the far north of the country there was heavy fighting along Highway 1, the legendary "street without joy," to the north of the old imperial capital of Hue, while 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the south the South Vietnamese 2d Division launched an operation to retake the district town of Tien Phuoc.

Tien Phuoc fell to the communists on Monday. The high command said 367 communist troops had been killed or wounded in the past 2 days in the north and that government losses in this region (?were) six dead and 23 wounded.

SAIGON REPORTS FIERCE FIGHTING CONTINUES ON BAN ME THUOT FRONT

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 0500 GMT 14 Mar 75 SG

[Text] According to the latest reports received from the Ban Me Thuot front, our reinforcement columns are on their way to Ban Me Thuot city, determined to drive the aggressors out of the beloved city and to uphold their firm oath to use their own blood to check the advance of the cruel enemy who is causing suffering and bloodshed in Ban Me Thuot.

In an area adjacent to the city, the compatriots who had fled from the embattled city clamorously hailed our big reinforcement columns on their way to the city. Some old men requested that they be given weapons and allowed to follow the reinforcements into the city. Children have informed our units of communist troop concentrations. As a result, our units have directed accurate blows at the enemy, inflicting heavy losses on him. On 13 March, acting on information furnished by the local compatriots, aircraft of our 2d and 6th Air Force divisions destroyed the command headquarters of one division, one regiment and one battalion of the communist aggressors, decimating the bloodthirsty communist aggressors.

The enemy will certainly sustain appropriate punitive blows, which will make him realize the consequences of aggression that runs counter to the aspirations of our compatriots who are yearning for peace.

After our aircraft destroyed their leading command headquarters, the communist aggressors on the Ban Me Thuot battlefield became confused. A lull prevailed from the evening of 13 March to 0700 on 14 March, our aircraft have silenced the enemy's heavy guns, thus creating favorable conditions for our huge reinforcement columns to move toward the city.

On 13 March, our heroic air force combatants flew 52 missions, directing thunderous blows at the enemy, killing 185 communist aggressors and destroying nine tanks, two 130mm guns, many 37mm antiaircraft gun emplacements and two other crew-served weapons.

On 13 March, Maj Gen Pham Van Phu, commander of the 2d Army Corps and Military Region [MR] II, flew all day long over the battlefield to motivate our combatants on the ground, who were fighting resolutely to frustrate the aggressive ambitions of the communist forces. His helicopter landed at various places, where he gave the necessary instructions to the reinforcements moving toward Ban Me Thuot city.

According to the latest news received at 1130 fierce fighting has broken out at the Phung Duc airfield between the combatants of our 23d Infantry Division and a unit of the newly fielded North Vietnamese communist 613th [as heard] Division. Our combatants have knocked out four more communist tanks and our aircraft knocked out another. At this reporting, fierce the fighting is continuing.

PRISONER AFFIRMS REINFORCEMENTS FROM LAOS TO BAN ME THUOT

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1100 GMT 13 Mar 75 SG

[Excerpt] According to the RVN Government military spokesman at a press briefing at the press liaison center, a North Vietnamese communist soldier captured by our forces outside Ban Me Thuot city declared that he belonged to the 316th North Vietnamese Communist Division, the general reserve force of Hanoi which had recently come to RVN territory from southern Laos to replace a regiment of the 320th North Vietnamese Communist Division, which has been battered by our combatants over the past few days of attacks against Ban Me Thuot city.

The communist side must be held entirely responsible for all grave consequences resulting from its cruel policy of aggression.

MINISTRY DENIES REPORT OF REACTIVATED FULRO SIDING WITH COMMUNISTS

Saigon VIETNAM PRESS in English 14 Mar 75 Evening Edition SG

[Text] Saigon (VP) March 14--The Ethnic Development Ministry this morning asserted that since Feb. 1, 1969, when the entire Fulro force returned to the RVN Government side, this movement has been disbanded and to date no Montagnard organization of such name has existed.

A communique of the Ethnic Development Ministry was made public by the government spokesman this morning to deny an AFP dispatch reported by some Saigon dailies on Mar 12 that after 6 years of cooperation with the RVN Government, the Fulro movement has been re-activated and is working with the communists.

It is pure fabrication, the communique said.

Since the Fulro force's return to the government side on Feb. 1, 1969, besides those members who chose to retire to normal life in Montagnard villages and hamlets, the rest have been serving in the RVN Armed Forces and administrative agencies.

In the past few days, Montagnard combatants, former members of the Fulro movement, have bravely fought side by side with ARVN combatants against the communist attacks on Thuan Man, Ban Me Thuot, Buon Ho, Duc Lap....

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Following is a report by RVN Government military spokesman Lt Col Le Trung Hien on this communist prisoner's statement [recorded]:

In particular, at 1300 today one of our units, while engaging the enemy outside of Ban Me Thuot city, captured an enemy soldier. The prisoner declared that he belonged to the 149th Regiment of the 316th North Vietnamese Communist Division. As you know, this communist division belongs to communist North Vietnam's general reserve force.

In addition, the prisoner declared that the 316th Division had infiltrated into RVN territory from southern Laos on 28 February is serving as a support unit to the 320th Division, which 2 days before was sent to the Ban Me Thuot battlefield as a reinforcement unit.

According to this prisoner's statement, the 149th Regiment of the 316th Division is to replace the 198th communist regiment, which had taken part in the Ban Me Thuot fighting and was wiped out in battles over the past few days in the area. [end recording]

Lt Col Le Trung Hien quoted a news source from the Two-Party JMC which said that two ICCS officers, an Indonesian and an Iranian, are still stranded at the ICCS headquarters in Ban Me Thuot city. ARVN units have been ordered to be careful while reoccupying this area in order to protect the lives of these officers.

Newsmen attending the press briefing asked about contact between the MR II corps headquarters and our units present in Ban Me Thuot. Following are the newsman's question and Lt Col Le Trung Hien's answer [recorded]:

[Question] Can the MR II corps headquarters establish contact with any of our commands in Ban Me Thuot city?

[Answer] Yes, contact has been made with nearly all units in the city and outside and with reinforcement units.

FRONT RADIO CITES NEW THAI PREMIER ON U.S. TROOPS, CAMBODIAN WAR

Liberation Radio [Clandestine] in Vietnamese to South Vietnam 0300 GMT 14 Mar 75 SG

[Text] According to AFP, on 13 March, receiving 135 votes out of 269 [as heard] Thai national assemblymen Mr Khukrit Pramot was elected the new Thai prime minister.

According to UPI, answering a question concerning the presence of some 25,000 U.S. troops on four major air bases in Thailand, Mr Khukrit Pramot said he favors the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Thailand as soon as possible.

Previously, Prime Minister Seni Pramot, Khukrit Pramot's older brother, also advocated the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Thailand within 18 months. Answering a question concerning Cambodia, Mr Khukrit Pramot said: We will not intervene in Cambodia. It is not an affair of the Thai Government. We only follow the situation and guarantee that the Cambodian revolution will not expand to our country.

FRONT RADIO SCORES AID TO CAMBODIA VIA THAILAND

Liberation Radio [Clandestine] in Vietnamese to South Vietnam 1400 GMT 13 Mar 75 SG

[Text] According to UPI, a U.S. military spokesman in Bangkok on 12 March revealed that the United States is accelerating a campaign to transport weapons and ammunition by road to Cambodia from Thailand. In January and February 1975 alone, hundreds of U.S. trucks transported 1,855 tons of weapons and ammunition from a U.S. logistics base on the Gulf of Thailand near the Cambodian border to Battambang in northwestern Cambodia.

This fact shows that the United States and Thailand are brazenly continuing their military involvement and interference in the internal affairs of the Cambodian people.

RADIO REPORT LISTS 'CRIMES' OF ARVN 2D INFANTRY DIVISION

Liberation Radio [Clandestine] in Vietnamese to South Vietnam 1000 GMT 13 Mar 75 SG

[Text] Since the signing of the Paris agreement, Thieu's 2d Infantry Division has committed 29,448 violations of the agreement; fired some 2,921,500 artillery rounds and mortars into and dropped 16,754 bombs on the liberated areas; supported thousands of nibbling operations; and committed many towering crimes against our compatriots in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces.

According to still incomplete statistics, over the past 2 years, units of this division have killed 2,079; wounded 3,876; brutally beat up 11,331, mostly old people, women and children, including 740 who were crippled as a result; arrested, detained or liquidated 4,670; raped 759 women including 52 young girls 12 to 13 years old and 43 women over 60; herded some 120,900 compatriots into 43 people-hearding centers or concentration camps; and relocated 4,200 compatriots.

The units of this division have used bombs, shells and tractors to raze 144 hamlets, driving more than 6,400 families with more than 20,540 members out of their homes and gardens and depriving them of their livelihood. They burned 11,907 homes, 68 schools and 142 shops in the liberated areas; destroyed five pagodas and 72 public health stations; destroyed 15,697 hectares of rice and secondary crops and hundreds of thousands of hectares of fruit trees of the local compatriots; razed 1,826 shelters; and filled 294 wells. They have looted hundreds of tons of rice valued at more than 4 billion piasters [as heard].

You will recall that units of this division conducted sweeps and nibbling operations in the Sa Huynh area from 30 January to 22 February 1973; in the southern part of Nghia Hanh from 23 April 1973 to July 1974; in the western part of Son Tinh from June 1973 to October 1974; in Tien Phuoc and the area southwest of Tam Ky, Quang Nam Province, from March 1973 to November 1974; and in many other areas, committing many bloody crimes against our compatriots in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces.

The 2d Division of Thieu's army will certainly be appropriately punished for its towering crimes.