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SOUTH VIETNAM

COMMANDER OF PLEIKU-KONTUM FRONT PROMOTED TO GENERAL 14 MAR

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 2300 GMT 14 Mar 75 SG

[Text] On the RVN president's order, at 1900 on 14 March Maj Gen Pham Van Phu, commander of the 2d Army Corps and MR II, exceptionally promoted Col (Pham Duy That), commander of the Pleiku-Kontum front, to functional brigadier general.

The promotion ceremony took place at the headquarters of the 2d Army Corps and MR II in the presence of many high-ranking officers.

PART OF MR II HEADQUARTERS MOVED FROM PLEIKU TO NHA TRANG

AFP Report

Hong Kong AFP in English 1051 GMT 16 Mar 75 BK

[Excerpt] Saigon, March 16 (AFP)--Part of the headquarters of the Second Military Region covering the highlands and central provinces of South Vietnam has been shifted from the highland town of Pleiku to the seaside city of Nha Trang because of the communist offensive, the South Vietnamese high command announced in Saigon today.

The high command spokesman Colonel Le Trung Hien said only the tactical portions of the headquarters had been moved and that the regional commander, General Pham Van Phu, was still in Pleiku.

Reports of the move began circulating after South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu conferred with military [words indistinct] the region on Friday and a trusted source said the meeting had taken place in Nha Trang. Pleiku has been under growing communist pressure since the communists launched a major attack in the Central Highlands a week ago.

RVN Spokesman Statement

Saigon VIETNAM PRESS in English 17 Mar 75 Morning Edition SG

[Text] Saigon March 16 (VP)--Military spokesman Lt Col Le Trung Hien Sunday rejected the news carried by some dailies which said the command of Corps II in Pleiku has moved to Nha Trang.

The command of Corps II and MR II is still in Pleiku, only the light command moved to Nha Trang due to tactical needs, he explained.

SAIGON COMMAND DENIES BAN ME THUOT IN COMMUNIST HANDS

Hong Kong AFP in English 0932 GMT 16 Mar 75 BK

[Text] Saigon, March 16 (AFP)--The South Vietnamese high command today denied communist claims that the town of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands was in their hands but for the second day in a row the South Vietnamese high command communique made no mention of fighting inside the town.

According to the communist South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), Ban Me Thuot, the capital of Darlac Province, fell to the communists on March 12. Today, the high command in Saigon spoke only of clashes about 10 kilometres (6 miles) from Ban Me Thuot, which has been out of contact with Saigon since shortly after the communists unleashed a pre-dawn attack a week ago.

17. 17 Mar 75

South Vietnamese air force fighter-bombers attacked targets inside Ban Me Thuot yesterday. The town's 75,000 inhabitants fled overland during the first days of fighting and about 20,000 were being cared for by refugee organisations in neighbouring Khanh Hoa and Ninh Thuan provinces.

President Nguyen Van Thieu conferred on Friday with military leaders of the Second Military Region which covers the Central Highlands and a trusted source said the meeting took place at the seaside city of Nha Trang rather than at Pleiku, the site of the regional headquarters in the highlands north of Ban Me Thuot.

Pleiku has been under increasing communist pressure but there were no indications in official circles to confirm reports that the entire headquarters had been shifted to Nha Trang.

At Pleiku a communist sapper team last night attacked the airport perimeter while about 40 kilometres (25 miles) to the south the military headquarters in district town of Thanh An was attacked at dawn today following a heavy bombardment during the night.

In Tay Ninh Province, another major hot spot, South Vietnamese Government forces continued to lose ground, giving up a village and two outposts close to the district town of Hieu Thien.

Hieu Thien, 60 kilometres (40 miles) northwest of Saigon, has been under attack for several days. The town is located at the point where the road to the province capital joins the main Saigon-Phnom Penh highway and the communists have been moving steadily to isolate it.

The communists also exploited their recent capture of the nearby district town of Tri Tam in a rubber-growing region by bombarding repeatedly last night the district town of Khieu Hanh, about 20 kilometres (12 miles) south of Tri Tam.

BAN ME THUOT CITIZENS CELEBRATE THEIR LIBERATION, RESTORE ORDER

LPA From North Vietnam [Glandestine] in English to East Europe and the Far East 1601 GMT  
16 Mar 75 BK

[Text] South Vietnam March 16 LPA--After the annihilation of the Saigon coercive machine in Boun Me Thuot provincial capital, the townspeople in the evening of March 11, 1975 called on their dear ones still in the Saigon army to return to their families. Meanwhile, the people together with liberation fighters tracked down Saigon tyrannical agents. All strata of the people in the provincial capital restores order and quickly stabilized normal activities.

On the following days, the people in the newly-liberated city held many meetings to express their enthusiasm before the great victories of the whole Darlac Province.

Front Radio Commentary

Liberation Radio [Glandestine] in Vietnamese to South Vietnam 1400 GMT 14 Mar 75 SG

[Station commentary: "Let Us Warmly Hail the Darlac Armed Forces and People, Who Have Fought Well, Vigorously Risen Up and Won Brilliant Victories"]

[Text] The enemy's military bases in Ban Me Thuot city, the capital of Darlac Province, were staging areas from which the Thieu clique conducted nibbling operations and committed towering crimes against the people of various nationalities in Darlac Province. The command headquarters of the Saigon puppet 23d Infantry Division was also located in Ban Me Thuot city.