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SOUTH VIETNAM

VNA CORRESPONDENT VISITS CENTRAL HIGHLANDS HOSPITAL

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[Visiting Phu Bon hospital in Central Highlands, by a VNA correspondent--VNA heading]

[Text] Hanoi VNA April 8--We were shown around the Phu Bon hospital in the town of Cheo Reo by Le Dieng, head of the provincial medical committee. Cheo Reo is the capital of Phu Bon Province in the central Vietnam highlands which were liberated from the Thieu junta in the early days of the current uprising and offensive of the South Vietnamese people.

A Provisional Revolutionary Government flag fluttered atop the flag pole. On the walls of the hospital we read freshly painted slogans: "Wholeheartedly serve the patients". "A good doctor must also be a tender mother".

Le Dieng told us that before fleeing, Thieu's men had destroyed most of the medical equipment. Yet, only a day later the hospital was already taking in new patients. Doctor Vu Dinh Hop, director of the hospital, told us about the busy post-liberation days:

"At first we had only six doctors and assistant doctors, which was too small a staff to handle so many patients. We worked day and night to save seriously ill patients or those wounded by enemy bombs and shells.

"At present, the hospital has 79 patients in various departments: Obstetrics, internal diseases and surgical. Most of the hospital's former doctors and nurses asked to be reassigned. Nguyen Van Cuong, a former dentist at an army hospital of the Thieu administration, also came to work at the Phu Bon hospital".

At the surgical department we saw many people wounded by Thieu's bombs. Six former officers of the puppet army were also being treated.

Lieutenants Nguyen Cuong Trang and Ho Dang Chuong and corporal Le Xuan Hoa showed visible emotion as we inquired into their condition. Le Xuan Hoa said: "We'll never forget what the revolution had done for us. Your actions are better than any propaganda". He said he wished to join the liberation armed forces after recovery in order to contribute to the defence of his native village and start a new life.

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Thanh of Pleiku was in labour when she was forced to "evacuate" by Thieu's agents. She dropped unconscious on the road and was brought to the hospital in time for delivery by liberation combatants.

Over the past few days, the hospital has treated a number of similar cases. The newly born babies were sleeping peacefully in white, clean cribs.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM