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PRGRSV FOREIGN MINISTRY 16 JAN STATEMENT ON PRISONER RETURN

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Hanoi in Vietnamese to Vietnam 0000 GMT 17 Jan 74 S

[Text of 16 January PRGRSV Foreign Ministry statement]

[Text] Prompted by its just stand and humanitarian policy and in the spirit of seriously implementing the Paris agreement on Vietnam, the PRGRSV has always tried its best to insure that the return of captured and detained Vietnamese militarymen and civilians is carried out thoroughly and considers this one of the most important and urgent tasks in creating preliminary conditions for achieving national reconciliation and concord and for reaching a political solution to the South Vietnam problem. In this spirit, the PRGRSV previously returned all captured and detained U.S. militarymen and foreign civilian detainees before the deadline. On many occasions it also advanced proposals to the Saigon administration for the return of all Vietnamese captured and detained militarymen and civilians before the deadline.

Yet, so far, defying the condemnation of broad sections of public opinion at home and abroad and disregarding what it agreed upon at the various meetings of the Two-Party JMC, the Saigon administration, prompted and directed by the United States, has resorted to many deceitful and cunning moves against the return plan.

Far from returning all captured and detained personnel, the Saigon administration has cruelly tortured and ill-treated tens of thousands of patriotic detainees. Worse still, this administration has secretly liquidated them en masse. In various pacification and police operations, the Saigon administration has arrested and detained tens of thousands of additional people because they struggle for peace, national reconciliation and concord and the implementation of the Paris agreement. Moreover, Nguyen Van Thieu brazenly denies the existence of political prisoners in South Vietnam.

Consequently, the return of captured and detained militarymen and civilians has been delayed for 7 months now. On 14 December 1973, the PRGRSV military delegation to the Two-Party JMC proposed that the return plan agreed upon by both sides on 17 July 1973--but which the Saigon side then unilaterally postponed--be resumed on the occasion of Christmas and the New Year. Yet, this proposal was again rejected by the Saigon administration.

Pressed by public opinion and the persistent struggle of the PRGRSV side, at the meeting of the heads of the delegations to the central Two-Party JMC on 4 January 1974, the Saigon administration had to agree in principle to the resumption of the return plan of 17 July 1973. Accordingly, the return was to begin on 9 January and end on 21 January 1974 at the latest so that the captured and detained personnel could rejoin their families for the traditional Tet holidays. Yet, the Saigon administration immediately again adopted a double-dealing attitude by repeating its unreasonable demand that the time, number of personnel to be returned and return sites--which both sides had previously agreed upon--be changed.

More brazen still, on 11 January 1974, the very day when the two sides of the JMC had agreed to jointly inspect the return site at Duc Nghiep, Saigon aircraft made more than 100 sorties to bomb Duc Nghiep and Duc Co, killing two persons and injuring three others who were working on the return operation. They also bombed many other return sites.

It is obvious that the Saigon administration has tried by every means possible not to implement the 4 January 1974 agreement on the completion of the return phase prior to Tet.

These schemes are part of the U.S. and Saigon administration's overall policy aimed at sabotaging the Paris agreement and are contrary to the South Vietnamese people's aspirations for peace, independence, democracy and national reconciliation and concord. The good will trick and hypocritical words which the Saigon administration has never ceased ballyhooing can never fool public opinion in the country, nor can they cover up their towering crimes against hundreds of thousands of captured and detained patriotic people and their new military adventures.

The PRGRSV strongly denounces and severely condemns this double-dealing attitude of the Saigon administration which refuses to implement the provisions on the return as specified by the Paris agreement. The Saigon administration must return all civilian and military personnel it still holds. It must, first of all, implement without delay the return plan agreed upon on 17 July 1973 and complete this plan prior to Tet. This is the deep concern and the earnest demand of the people and the PRGRSV.

The PRGRSV earnestly calls on the signatory governments of the act of the international conference on Vietnam, the peoples and governments of peace- and justice-loving countries, and the democratic, social and humanitarian organizations worldwide to adopt effective measures to help check the criminal schemes and acts of the United States and Saigon administration; to demand that they strictly respect and correctly implement the Paris agreement on Vietnam and the 13 June 1973 joint communique, that the Saigon administration return without delay all Vietnamese civilian and military personnel it is still illegally detaining, that it immediately end the barbarous torture and liquidation of patriotic people, return all civilian detainees belonging to the forces which side with neither party and assure their safe and quick return to their organizations and families in the areas under the control of either side.

The United States and Saigon administration must be held responsible for any delay in the return of Vietnamese civilian and military detainees, as well as for their crimes against the patriotic people whom they are detaining in South Vietnam.

#### PRG JMC OFFICIAL COUNTERS U.S. STATEMENT ON MIA SEARCH

Liberation Radio [Clandestine] in Vietnamese to South Vietnam 1000 GMT 16 Jan 74 S

[Text] The press officer of the PRGRSV military delegation to the Four-Party JMC team has been authorized to reject a recent statement by the U.S. Defense Department spokesman which maintained that the United States had to suspend the search for persons killed or missing in South Vietnam because the PLAF had been instructed to set traps in order to inflict casualties on Americans conducting search missions.

This, the press officer of the PRGRSV military delegation said, is a crafty U.S. trick aimed at slandering the PRGRSV side and denying before public opinion the fact that the Americans were recently denounced and condemned for abusing the name of the JMC and facilities bearing JMC markings, and for using the search for persons killed or missing as a pretext to illegally search PRGRSV-controlled areas and to serve as advisers to the Saigon administration forces conducting nibbling operations and sabotaging the cease-fire.