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NHAN DAN: PLAF HAS RIGHT TO MAKE 'FIRM RIPOSTES'

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[Text] Hanoi VNA January 6--Firm ripostes by the South Vietnam People's Liberation Armed Forces against Saigon's acts of war are legitimate measures in defence of the Paris agreement, says NHAN DAN today. The main Hanoi paper notes: "Distortions have been made time and again about the causes of the present military situation in the Mekong River delta. Many top officials in the United States and in the Saigon administration, including a spokesman for President Ford, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Habib, and a spokesman for Thieu, General Phan Hoa Hiep, have successively made slanderous and provocative claims.

"The saboteurs of the Paris agreement are sustaining heavy losses. As a matter of fact, Saigon troops received the heaviest counter-blows wherever they committed the most heinous crimes," the paper says. It continues, "In Phuoc Long Province, north of Saigon, carrying out Thieu's land-flooding plan, Saigon regular troops together with "civil guard," "militia" and police forces have over the last two years conducted many land-grabbing operations against liberated areas in the districts of Duc Phong, Bu Na, Dong Xoai, Bo Duc and Phuoc Binh. They have time and again under taken provocative actions along the buffer zone, preventing the movement of people along rivers and roads, and stealing their property. From Ba Ra air base near the district town of Phuoc Binh, Saigon aircraft have repeatedly flown deep into the airspace of the Provisional Revolutionary Government to reconnoitre or bomb liberated areas in Loc Ninh and Bu Dop. During their attacks, many hospitals, schools, and pagodas have been destroyed and many civilians killed or wounded. Meanwhile, from artillery sites around Phuoc Binh, Saigon troops have wantonly fired into densely populated areas in the liberated zone, ignoring the warnings of the local revolutionary administration and liberation armed forces. The Thieu junta has recently nominated Phuoc Long Province as a free-fire zone. Last month, Saigon civil guard forces used many armoured cars to devastate and burn ripening ricefields in Phuoc Long, Binh Long, Tay Ninh and other provinces in the Mekong River delta."

The paper goes on: "It is public knowledge that the U.S. has left in the farmlands of South Vietnam countless bomb and shell fragments and even unexploded cartridges and bombs. The peasants have had to work hard, paying with their sweat and even their blood for a new harvest. Devastating fields of rice and other crops is an intolerable crime against the South Vietnamese people and the whole of civilized mankind at a time when food supplies are a pressing worldwide question."

The paper stresses: "The Ford administration must bear major responsibility for these crimes committed by the Thieu administration. A network of U.S. officers is commanding the Saigon army. American aircraft continue spying on PRG territory to guide Saigon troops in the conduct of their acts of war. Billions of U.S. dollars sent to Thieu have been turned into bombs and shells. U.S. gasoline is used to burn the people's rice. In spite of its many economic and financial difficulties, the Ford administration persists in spending billions of dollars collected from taxes imposed on the American people for the sabotage of the Paris agreement, thus running counter to the demands of the American people and the world's people in general for a complete end to U.S. military involvement in South Vietnam, and respect for the independence and sovereignty of Vietnam, and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination.

"The right of the South Vietnam People's Liberation Armed Forces to make firm ripostes to the Saigon cease-fire breakers' attacks in the Mekong River delta, Tay Ninh, Binh Tuy, Binh Phuoc and elsewhere is a legitimate part of the defence of the Paris agreement.

"Reason, justice and legality are completely on the side of the South Vietnamese patriotic forces," the paper concludes.