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LIBERATED ZONE HAS REACHED EDGES OF CITIES

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[Text] Hanoi VNA December 16--Big achievements have been recorded in the liberated areas of South Vietnam since the beginning early this year of the general offensive and concerted uprisings by the South Vietnamese Liberation Armed Forces and people. The puppet administrative machine in the countryside of the delta regions and in mountain areas has virtually been smashed or paralyzed and hundreds of additional villages and millions of people have been liberated. The liberated zone has now reached the edges of the towns including Saigon, Hue, and Da Nang.

Within the first 45 days of the general offensive and simultaneous uprising, several thousand strategic hamlets of the U.S.-puppets were destroyed, and 1.6 million people liberated from the enemy's rule. In Quang Tri-Thua Thien-Hue region, the people have taken control of most of the countryside, even areas surrounding Hue city. Of the 380,000 inhabitants of the region, 330,000 have been freed from the enemy yoke. The 170-day battle at Khe Sanh resulted in the complete liberation of Huong Hoa district and over 10,000 people. During the concerted attacks and simultaneous uprising during the month ended November 20, 1968 the PLAF and people smashed 284 concentration camps and liberated 13 villages and 51 hamlets inhabited by nearly 119,000 people.

In the plains of central Vietnam vast areas with some 210,000 people have been added to the liberated zone. In Gia Lai Province alone, 49 villages with 10,000 people have become free. People in villages close to Pleiku town have broken loose the enemy's grip. In Tra Vinh Province in the Mekong delta, 210 enemy posts have been demolished, and 100,000 inhabitants have become master of their destiny.

Along with the expansion of the liberated zone, elections have been held to set up people's revolutionary power in almost all the 44 provinces of South Vietnam. People's liberation committees at province and town levels have been established in Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Hue, Gia Lai, Quang Ngai, Da Nang, Ca Mau, My Tho, and Kien Phong.

Frightened at the past expansion of the liberated zone, the U.S.-puppets have since last October mustered their troops in Da Nang and a number of provincial capitals, stopping at no barbarous crimes against the civilian population. With their resolve to defend revolutionary power, however, the people have intercepted the raiders, wiping out thousands of them, and baffling the accelerated pacification program.

The new life in the liberated zone is blooming. The land policy laid out in the Front's political program has been implemented to the great joy of the 11 million people in the Front-controlled areas. Young people in the newly liberated areas have enthusiastically joined the PLAF, guerrilla units to fight the enemy, or volunteer brigades to serve the front.

Revolutionary mass organizations, especially the peasant liberation associations, have been consolidated, serving as a solid group for the revolutionary power. Peasants are zealously stepping up production as an active, concrete contribution to the fight. In spite of the U.S.-puppets' wanton bombings and shellings, they are working hard to put the whole acreage under crops. In the recent harvest crop, the new planted acreage in mountain regions in Binh Thuan Province, for instance, went up 12 percent. Education and public health, and cultural and art activities have steadily developed. In Gia Dinh Province, where fierce fighting is a daily occurrence, 40 more primary classes had been opened for more than 2,500 pupils by early last July.

Besides region hospitals, there are now two or three medical establishments in each province or district. Many villages in the liberated zone have each from one to four medical attendants or midwives. By late September 1968, 78 percent of the villages in the central part of Nam Bo, South Vietnam proper, had their medical staff. In Ca Mau Province in the western part of Nam Bo, 20 out of the 46 villages have been provided with middle-level physicians. Many kinds of Eastern and Western medicines have been turned out in the free zone to meet the needs of armymen and the civil population. The output of medicine in a three-month period now in the central part of central Vietnam would equal that of 1967 for the region.

One of the most striking features that mark the growth of South Vietnam's revolutionary art was the holding on October 20 of an exhibition where more than 2,000 oil paintings, sketches, woodcuts, posters and cartoons by more than 50 South Vietnamese painters were displayed depicting the multifacet life in struggle and production of the South Vietnamese people.