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RADIO REPORTS TRAN VAN TRA'S 3 JUN PRESS CONFERENCE

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 2200 GMT 4 Jun 75 BK

[Saigon-Gia Dinh Military Management Committee Chairman Col Gen Tran Van Tra's 3 June meeting with socialist and friendly countries' journalists--quoted passages are recorded--for an earlier report on this press conference, see the item entitled "VNA Report of Interview" published on pp 3-5 in the 4 June Asia & Pacific DAILY REPORT]

[Text] "Dear comrades and friends: I am very glad to meet you in liberated Saigon-Gia Dinh city, the heroic city of Ho Chi Minh. You have come here to share the joy felt by us and the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh city and, at the same time, to encourage us to perform our new tasks at present. On behalf of the Military Management Committee and the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh city, I warmly convey my greetings to all of you, comrades and friends. [applause]

"We have just recorded a great victory and, in particular, have completely liberated Saigon-Gia Dinh--a large city with a large population--and then completely liberated all of the south. In view of this, we can never forget the assistance and encouragement given to us by all our comrades and friends throughout the five continents. Today the work facing us and the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh city is fraught with many difficulties and great efforts are needed to completely manage this big city and to rebuild our country after the war. However, we believe that with our persistent struggle and with the assistance of friends, we will fulfill our mission despite all difficulties.

"I hope that all of you friends here have the necessary conditions to perform your work in making people everywhere understand our Saigon-Gia Dinh city. Once again, I, on behalf of the Military Management Committee, convey my greetings to you, comrades and friends, and wish you good health so you can continue fulfilling your mission. [applause]"

Next, Col Gen Tran Van Tra answered the correspondents' questions about the situation in Saigon-Gia Dinh in the month and more following its liberation, pointing out the achievements scored by its people.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM

"Comrades and friends, you must understand that after 30 years of war, all the people of the south longed for the return of peace. However, the U.S.-lackey Thieu administration directed by the U.S. imperialists continued the war policy. Therefore, the people's opposition grew ever stronger against this lackey administration and, on the day of liberation, the people rose up along with liberation troops to liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh city.

"With regard to Saigon's military situation at that time, it was clear that after the [words indistinct] and prior to our coming in to liberate the city, the situation in the city was like a state of war. Thieu's troops were increasingly concentrated here to defend Saigon, their last lair. After suffering heavy defeats in the highlands and central Vietnam along the coast, they concentrated their forces in the Saigon area with the III Army Corps taking up positions around Saigon. Based on a plan of inner and outer defense and concentration of all the forces, they attempted to hold Saigon at all costs. Despite this, the situation in Saigon at that time could be described as utter confusion, because even Saigon's troops had no confidence in their ability to hold the city while the people became more and more convinced that the Thieu regime would collapse. That is why although the large number of troops concentrated in Saigon implemented a defense plan that seemed outwardly strong, in fact, it was rotten at the core.

"This was an extremely favorable opportunity for us--all the liberation forces in this region--to, together with the people in Saigon-Gia Dinh, carry out the general offensive and uprising in the great Ho Chi Ming campaign to liberate the Saigon-Gia Dinh city and the rest of South Vietnam. Our forces simultaneously smashed the defense line and forces at the outer ring of Saigon-Cholon while marching from several directions and on different (?roads) directly into the center of Saigon to liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh.

"When the liberation armed forces marched into the city center from different directions, the people in several wards and subwards in Saigon-Gia Dinh rose up to liberate themselves before our armed forces arrived. This was a characteristic of Saigon-Gia Dinh. The U.S. imperialists on several occasions have clamored that the South Vietnamese people did not respond to the NFL's call for uprising. In fact, Saigon-Cholon rose up simultaneously to liberate themselves before the liberation armed forces' entrance and thereby rendered very powerful assistance to the liberation armed forces in their advance into the center of Saigon. Thus, it may be said that our liberation armed forces entered Saigon with an extremely overwhelming strength--their own military strength and utilizing the campaign tactic of lightning speed.

"We enjoyed very important assistance from the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh. As I said earlier, not only did the Saigon people warmly received the liberation armed forces, but they liberated themselves in many areas right inside Saigon-Gia Dinh. That is why the people here were extremely enthusiastic about the liberation armed forces' entrance. It can be said that this was the Saigon people's greatest revolutionary day and their happiest and most seething day.

After the liberation of Saigon, it can be said that from the very first day there has not been an interruption in the (?activities) of Saigon-Gia Dinh. Life seems to go on. The markets continue to operate, traffic continues to move and power and water remains sufficient. All of this had been undertaken voluntarily by the Saigon-Cholon people in coordination with the liberation armed forces. The workers at the enterprises managed their enterprises and protected their machinery. That is why from the very first days utilities, such as power and water, necessary for the Saigon-Gia Dinh people's normal life have been maintained without any interruption.

As you have seen, there is a great deal of traffic on Saigon's roads. In the past, prior to the liberation, there were as many as 200 to 300 automobile accidents. Yet, after the liberation, on the first days before our traffic police were on duty, the people regulated the traffic themselves. It can be said that the Saigon-Gia Dinh people have participated in all phases of activities in Saigon, and there have been cases when they have managed for a time when we were unable to take over. Thanks to this, many good results have been achieved in maintaining order and security and in the normalization of life."

Finally, the colonel general pointed out some immediate tasks which the military management committee has performed, is doing and will undertake.

"After the liberation of Saigon-Gia Dinh, our government appointed the city Military Management Committee. Its first and most immediate task was to positively maintain public order and security in this big city. From the time of its establishment to the present, as well as in the future, our committee is charged with two tasks: to firmly maintain public order and security and to stabilize a secure and happy life for the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh. These are our primordial tasks as well as our permanent concern. The second task (?no less importance) is how to stabilize the life of the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh who number more than 3 million--that is, how to care for the unemployed who were numerous even prior to liberation; how to resolve the starvation scourage left behind in Saigon-Gia Dinh following the U.S. imperialists' withdrawal and the collapse of the Thieu regime, which is plaguing a large number of people; how to provide jobs for all the people living in the city; and how to return all those who were forcibly herded into Saigon-Gia Dinh to their native villages so they can earn a living.

These must be done in order to stabilize the life of the Saigon-Gia Dinh people. In recent days and over the past month, tens of thousands of people have been helped to return to their native places to participate in agricultural production. This figure includes only those who have been provided with transportation and money. I have (?no exact figure yet) on those who returned to their native places on their own. The repatriation of those who were herded from the countryside to Saigon by the enemy is continuing, and we hope that, at the present rate of repatriation, the population of Saigon will drop considerably in the future.

As for problem of relieving starvation, as of today we have made the following efforts: for the poor who are greatly suffering from starvation, we have sent out about 300,000 people with thousands of tons of rice. Although efforts to relieve starvation are continuing this is by no means a basic way to resolve the problem.

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We still must provide employment for many jobless people. We have allowed and will allow some banks to resume operation and will encourage and guide enterprises to reopen [words indistinct] so as to provide jobs for workers. We have encouraged personnel and civil servants of the puppet administration to resume work at their offices and have established a fixed scale of salaries and allowances for them. All this, coupled with the departure of a large number of rural people and families, will gradually help achieve greater progress in tackling the starvation problem. [end recording]

Before ending the meeting, in answering a Bulgarian newsman's question about aid from socialist countries and friends throughout the world, Col Gen Tran Van Tra once again conveyed his thanks to friends throughout the five continents. He said;

"Within the past month, we have received aid in the form of grain and food, fuel, raw materials and medicines from many fraternal socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, China and others. This has deeply moved us and greatly encouraged the Saigon people. Now that we are discussing this subject, I, on behalf of the Military Management Committee and the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh, ask all of you, comrades and friends, to convey our warm gratitude to the parties, government and peoples of the fraternal socialist countries."