

II. 2 Jan 69

N O R T H V I E T N A M

HO CHI MINH, HANOI PAPERS GREET NEW YEAR

Ho Message

Hanoi VNA International Service in English 1655 GMT 31 Dec 68 B

[Text] Hanoi VNA January 1st--Following is President Ho Chi Minh's New Year message:

Beloved compatriots and fighters, 1968 was a year of very glorious victories for our armed forces and people throughout the country. The U.S. imperialists had to end unconditionally their war of destruction in the north. Since early spring 1968, our compatriots and fighters in heroic South Vietnam have continually attacked and continually risen up, and have recorded very brilliant victories.

Certainly the U.S. aggressors will meet with complete failure. Our armed forces and people throughout the country, dashing forward with the impetus of victories, will surely win complete victory.

On the occasion of New Year 1969, on behalf of the people throughout our country, I wish to convey my warm greetings and thanks to the brotherly socialist countries, friendly countries and peace- and justice-loving people in the world, including the progressive people in the United States, for their whole-hearted support and assistance to the Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation.

I cordially send my best wishes of solidarity, struggle and success in the new year to our compatriots, fighters and cadres and Chinese residents in both South and North Vietnam, and to our fellow-countrymen living abroad.

I dedicate the following lines to the new spring:

Last year was full of glorious victories.
This year the forefront's sure to win still bigger ones.
For independence, for freedom,
Let's fight so the Yanks quit, and the puppets topple.
Forward! Fighters, country-men!

North and south reunited, could there be happier spring!

NHAN DAN Editorial

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[Text] Hanoi VNA January 1st--Forward To Win Complete Victory! is the headline of the New Year editorial of the Hanoi daily NHAN DAN today. The editorial is published below a big portrait of President Ho Chi Minh and his framed New Year message. The editorial reads:

1968 was a year of unprecedentedly big and all-round victories for the Vietnamese people's fight against U.S. aggression, for national salvation. It marked a great turning point, opening a new stage of the struggle, one of general offensive and wide-spread uprising at the great front, one of vigorous and steady strides of the Vietnamese people toward complete victory. 1968 was a Vietnam year of the people in many countries and at many important international conferences. 1968 was a great year in our nation's history of resisting U.S. aggression to save the country, exerting deep influence on our struggle and the revolutionary struggle of the whole progressive mankind. 1968 was a year of very brilliant victories for the armed forces and people throughout our country.

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In South Vietnam, after driving 1.2 million enemy troops into passive defence, the patriotic armed forces and people sprang a most daring and wonderful strategic surprise attack: the early spring general offensive. The U.S. aggressors and their henchmen were struck with admiration. The hide-outs of the U.S.-puppets in all towns and cities, almost all provincial capitals and district towns, military sub-sectors, hundreds of airfields, base camps, and storages of the enemy came under stormy and repeated attacks. The puppet army and administration cracked by chunks and became rickety from top to bottom.

The series of attacks following the Lunar New Year festival on February 17 and 18 and others in early March dealt a mortal blow at the U.S. aggressors and their hirelings, wiping out or disbanding one third of the total of U.S. puppet and satellite effectives, putting out of action or heavily decimating one third of the number of puppet battalions, destroying two fifths of the total of aircraft, one third of the armoured cars and half the logistical reserves of the U.S. aggressors, liberating 100 more villages and more than 600 additional hamlets (between January 30 and March 15).

The defeat of the U.S. in both the military and political fields became evident, and its war of aggression was irretrievably doomed. This was evidenced by the dismissal of W.C. Westmoreland and Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential election and his order on the limited bombing of North Vietnam.

Again in May, the South Vietnam PLAF struck a hammer blow at the gaping wound of the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys. Within a month, 72,000 enemy troops, including 32,000 GI's and mercenaries, were wiped out; more than 1,000 aircraft, 2,100 military vehicles, 120 vessels and motor-launches and 230 cannons of the U.S.-puppets were destroyed.

Launched at a time when the U.S.-puppets had considerably strengthened their defences, the powerful and simultaneous attacks, which lasted many days in a row and brought new records in wiping out enemy live force and destroying his war materials, particularly the attacks in the Saigon-Cholon-Gia Dinh area, proved the unprecedented growth of the South Vietnam revolution and the losing position of the enemy, who from now on can never recover from his defeat. These attacks also signalled the failure of the U.S. clear and hold strategy.

Together with the May attacks, the Khe Sanh victory bore a tremendous significance. It showed that the South Vietnam armed forces and people had become strong enough to mount series of powerful attacks right on the enemy hide-outs in the cities and, at the same time, to dislodge him from his most strongly fortified positions. The Khe Sanh siege has smashed the symbol of the U.S. determination.

While the Khe Sanh victory had not ceased to echo throughout the world, the PLAF struck again in August and September. The hide-outs of the enemy in 30 cities and provincial capitals, more than 200 townships, district capitals, and military subsectors, nearly 30 airfields and hundreds of storages were attacked fiercely and repeatedly. 123,000 enemy troops including 45,000 GI's and mercenaries were wiped out, and large quantities of war means were destroyed. The clarion of victory in Quang Nam, Da Nang, Tay Ninh, Binh Long, the high plateaux, Ben Tre...warned the U.S. aggressors that their defence in depth strategy was doomed and no defence of any kind could save them from inevitable defeat. In the past few months, the brilliant victories recorded on all the battlefields--Quang Nam, Da Nang, Tay Ninh, Quang Ngai, Ben Tre, Binh Thanh...were more crushing blows dealt at the enemy in his defensive position.

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At present, the South Vietnam patriotic forces and people are dashing forward to greater victories, continually attacking the enemy in his hide-outs in the towns and cities, wiping out his forces at his defence lines, and breaking off his operation under the accelerated pacification plan while speedily building the revolutionary power in vast areas. The U.S. aggressors are haunted day and night by a new offensive drive of the People's Liberation Armed Forces of which they know neither the direction nor the time.

In the north, we have smashed every frantic step of war escalation taken by the U.S. aggressors, fighting while stepping up socialist construction and wholeheartedly supporting our blood-sealed compatriots in the south.

The North Vietnamese armed forces and people have pushed U.S. plane losses past the 3,200 mark while boosting production, expanding the network of local industries, overcoming the difficulties caused by national calamities and enemy destruction, keeping communications open, maintaining order and security, and furthering culture, education and public health. Patriotism, socialist thought, and revolutionary heroism have become the motive of the daily acts of our people, especially those in the southern provinces near the military demarcation line. Our people's fight in both parts of the country has brought to failure the U.S. war of destruction against the north. We have forced them to limit and then stop unconditionally their bombardments on the whole territory of North Vietnam.

On a world scale, a popular front in solidarity with, and support for, Vietnam's fight against the U.S. imperialist aggression has been practically formed and is growing in scope and strength. The government and peoples of the fraternal socialist countries have continued to support and actively assist our people both morally and materially, and affirmed their all-round assistance as long as necessary, until we have completely defeated the U.S. aggressors. The movement of the world's people, including the progressive American people, to support Vietnam has developed far and wide, bringing us all-sided support and assistance.

1968 has brought about a leaping change in the balance of forces between the Vietnamese people and the enemy. Militarily, the two strategic forces of the enemy on the battlefield--the U.S. and puppet troops--have been both badly mauled. Their losses in manpower and war means are irremediable, and their fighting efficiency is dropping markedly. The U.S. aggressors' army has found itself in a position where it is constantly attacked and beleaguered strategically all over the battlefield and has got into impasses, both strategically and tactically.

For their part, the three kinds of armed forces of the South Vietnam People's Liberation Armed Forces have grown rapidly in number and quality and have matured in combat methods. The PLAF and South Vietnamese people have brought war to the last hideouts of the enemy in cities and towns, are developing their offensive position and besieging the enemy strategically, and are in a position to attack the enemy wherever and whenever they like.

The immediate rear area of our people's fight has expanded, greatly accounting for four-fifths of South Vietnam's territory, whereas the U.S. and its puppets have lost nearly all their foothold and sources of manpower and materials.

Politically, the puppet administration and army, the prop for the U.S. war of aggression, have broken down and lost efficiency. The aggressors and the traitors are facing utter isolation amid the sea of people's war in South Vietnam. They are also seriously isolated in the world.

Meanwhile, the political forces of the South Vietnamese people have risen at an unprecedented rate. The national unity bloc has become stronger and firmer with the emergency of the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces and with the expansion of the ranks of the organizations in the National Front for Liberation. Revolutionary power has been set up in many places. The justice of our cause and the prestige, strength and role of the National Front for Liberation stand out more and more strikingly. Progressive mankind unanimously points out that the Front is the master of the situation in South Vietnam and the authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people.

Morally, all over the great front there prevails a high determination to fight for independence and freedom. A great campaign is unfolding, aimed at completely defeating the U.S. aggressors and their flunkys. From realities of the fight the South Vietnam armed forces and people have seen the weak position of the enemy and their own big capability of defeating enemy, and have drawn many valuable experiences for new battles.

The morale of the U.S. and puppets is seriously dwindling. Their soldiers are war weary and plagued by defeatism. The U.S. and puppet clique are rent with sharp contradictions and inner conflicts. The U.S. imperialists' aggressive will has been shaken seriously. The fact that they are considering reduction of American involvement is an acknowledgement of the error and failure of their policy of bringing U.S. expeditionary troops to South Vietnam to keep the puppet army and administration from falling down.

The leaping change in the balance of forces between the Vietnamese people and the enemy, plus many difficulties the latter are encountering in the economic and financial fields as well as in their global strategy, have forced the U.S. aggressors to recognize new significant setbacks: They (?had) to stop unconditionally their bombardments on the whole territory of North Vietnam and accept talks with the representatives of the National Front for Liberation in Paris to find a way to end the war.

This is the logical result of their all-round setbacks in both parts of our country. This is the beginning of the process of their total failure. Reality has taught them that they have but one way--that is, to accept defeat and bring their troops home. No matter how frantically they may struggle, their total failure is inevitable.

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