

Reds Free 'Big' Minh, 18 Other Officials

By United Press International

The Viet Cong radio said Sunday that Duong Van "Big" Minh, who surrendered Saigon to the Communists in the last act of his two-day presidency of South Vietnam, and 18 other former top government officials are being released from custody.

Radio Saigon, now also known as Liberation radio, said the decision to let Minh and the others return to their families was made following a meeting of the officials with the "military management committee" that is now administering the capital.

The 11-man committee is headed by Col. Gen. Tran Van Tra, a North Vietnamese army soldier who is the top Communist commander in South Vietnam. The broadcast did not say where or how the officials were detained.

Although the broadcast took a conciliatory tone in the announcement, monitored in Bangkok, it also ordered former members of the South Vietnamese general military staff to turn themselves in or face death.

In Paris, the French Foreign Ministry said Sunday its embassy in Saigon has reported that all foreigners in the city, including 38 newsmen, are being treated well and can travel throughout Saigon without restriction.

"We have been receiving very positive reports as to the general atmosphere in Saigon," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "All foreigners are being well-treated and there have been no incidents as far as we know."

"We have been receiving regular reports from our embassy there, but other communications are still cut off," he said.

The spokesman said the embassy had reported that the foreign journalists, including five United Press International newsmen, were free to move throughout the city.

The ministry also announced, however, that photographer Michel Laurent of the Gamm agency had been found shot to death north of Saigon and journalist Christian Hoche of

the newspaper Le Figaro was hospitalized in good condition. Both men were last seen more than a week ago.

Liberation radio said the 18 other former government officials being released included Vice President Nguyen Van Huyen and Premier Vu Van Mau.

Minh was sworn in as president April 28 and less than 48 hours later made the formal, unconditional surrender of Saigon to the Communists, giving them victory after a 35-year war against Japan, France, the United States and South Vietnam.

Nguyen Van Thieu, who resigned as president April 21, is in exile on Taiwan. Thieu was succeeded by Tran Van Huong, who stepped aside for Minh.

Saigon radio said Saturday that a large number of officers and men of "the general headquarters of the Saigon puppet army" already have registered with the new rulers and ordered the rest to do so by Monday afternoon.

The radio said those who did not do so and turn in their weapons will be "severely punished," a Vietnamese Communist euphemism for death.

They were ordered to report to a school in a town just north of Saigon, a possible indication it was being turned into a indoctrination center.

Radio Hanoi, meanwhile, broadcast the text of a diplomatic note it said had been sent to Thailand supporting the Viet Cong's demand that ships and planes brought to that country by fleeing refugees be sent back.

Refugees brought a total of 129 military aircraft into Thailand during the last days of the war, all of them supplied under U.S. military aid. The United States contends the aircraft cannot be given back to South Vietnam.

The note said it hoped that Thailand would honor the request "for the sake of the common peace in the region." It added that "the Thai government's correct attitude on this question will constitute an important contribution" to



American vehicles and equipment destroyed junkyard in Hue, South Vietnam. (AP)

peace and to future relations between the two countries.

Saigon radio, which is believed to be broadcasting from Hanoi, said two generals, one colonel and seven civilians make up the military management committee with Tra, 57, a member of the Central Committee of North Vietnam's Communist party.

The radio referred to Tra as a "Colonel General," an apparent promotion. He had last been listed by U.S. intelligence sources as a lieutenant general who was the senior military commander in the south, reporting directly to Hanoi.

Liberation radio also announced that Saigon's first newspaper since all publications were suspended after the surrender last Wednesday would be on the street within

hours. It told newsboys to report to pick up copies for distribution. The newspaper is named "Saigon Giai Phong" — Saigon Liberation.

In Moscow, the Soviet news agency Tass carried a dispatch from Hanoi saying South Vietnam's new rulers called on citizens to launch "a week of cleaning the city of the dirt inherited from the puppet regime."

"The population is clearing from the walls of houses posters and slogans daubed in

the time of the puppets," Tass said.

Communications from Saigon to the outside world remained blacked out, except for the occasional radio broadcasts and some Communist dispatches.

Hanoi radio and news reports said Saturday water, electricity and textile plants had resumed operation in South Vietnam and that the first plane flying the Viet Cong's colors had landed in Saigon—the capital the Communists renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

Report Surrender Of Viet Armada

By The Associated Press

Hundreds of South Vietnamese ships have anchored at offshore islands flying white flags after their crews surrendered to Saigon's new rulers, Hanoi Radio reported Sunday.

It added that thousands of soldiers and sailors, including 1,503 officers, "reported themselves to the People's Liberation Army." Radio reports from South Vietnam said former navy men were being urged to bring in their warships from off the coast and not "run after the Americans."

"All those who brought their ships back to the revolution were well treated by the revolutionary government in conformity with its policies already promulgated," Hanoi said, quoting Viet Cong Radio.

A broadcast by Saigon Radio said South Vietnam's new rulers have formed a military committee to provide security for Saigon and return the city to normal. Named to head the committee was Gen. Tran Van Tra, who ran the 1968 Tet offensive against Saigon.

Other broadcasts said the revolutionary government, which took over after Saigon's surrender last Wednesday, directed South Vietnamese diplomats to turn over money and embassy property to the new regime.

They also announced that it wants South Vietnam's place at the United Nations. South Vietnam has had observer status at the world body.

Cremation Rites For Khmer Queen

TOKYO (AP) — The remains of Prince Norodom Sihanouk's mother, Queen Kossamak of Cambodia, were cremated in a Peking ceremony Sunday, China's official Hsinhua news agency reported.

Sihanouk, who has lived in Peking since he was deposed in 1970 recently was named chief of state of Cambodia by the new government in Phnom Penh. His mother's death April 27 reportedly postponed Sihanouk's return to Cambodia.

Adm. Orders Depot: Get Me Chopsticks

AGANA, Guam (AP) — The Naval Supply Depot here is trying to fill an urgent need at Vietnamese evacuee camps: chopsticks.

"We have ordered 40,000 pairs of chopsticks," said Adm. George Morrison, Commander of Naval Forces in the Marianas Islands.

Morrison said the refugees, who are being fed a diet based on rice, had asked for the utensils of their homeland.

"We can't get them locally," he said. "I don't know where they will come from. I simply told the supply depot: 'Get me chopsticks.'"

'Yanks Got 3Gs Per Signature'

NORFOLK, Va. (AP)—A retired Air Force colonel said Sunday many South Vietnamese evacuated in the hours before the fall of Saigon were sold affidavit signatures by Americans for as much as \$3,000.

"One American bragged he had signed for some 46 Vietnamese at \$3,000 each and then unrolled a tremendous wad of money," said Olson, who with two other Newport News men had left here last Sunday hoping to evacuate about 30 of their in-laws from Saigon.

The three got only as far as Clark AB in the Philippines before giving up their rescue mission.

The three men, all of whom are married to South Vietnamese, borrowed about \$10,000 to make the unsuccessful trip. They returned home Saturday.

Olson said he found evidence at Clark that many of the evacuees from Saigon were neither friends nor relatives of Americans but had been sold affidavit signatures so they could get out of South Vietnam.

"Vietnamese are getting out who have no family ties and really would have no reason for being here (at Clark) except that they were frightened and scared," said Olson, who operates an Asian food store in Newport News.

Olson did not identify any of those he said were involved in the sale of affidavit signatures.