

Saigon Blackout Is Ended

City's Leaders Introduced at Victory Rally

From News Dispatches

SAIGON, May 7—International communications were restored Wednesday by the new government of South Vietnam after a week-long blackout to coincide with the first public appearance of the new leaders of the city's military government.

The city was back to normal with major hotels functioning, the markets open and no restrictions on the movements of more than 100 foreign newsmen. Between the Communist takeover of Saigon at noon April 30 and the resumption of communications, the only reports of events in Saigon had come from radio broadcasts monitored in countries bordering South Vietnam.

Saigon's main post office was open for a few hours today to allow reporters to send dispatches by governmental telegraph, but the wire services' own telecommunications systems were not in operation. Reuter and United Press International said they were receiving dispatches from Saigon via Hanoi in North Vietnam.

Journalists said they were asked by Saigon authorities to write only in English or French and to submit in duplicate.

About 30,000 persons gathered in front of the Independence Palace for the celebration Wednesday of the week-old victory by the Vietcong and the Provisional Revolu-

tionary Government, Reuter reported.

[The Vietcong's Liberation radio, monitored in Singapore, said that the main speech by Gen. Tran Van Tra, chairman of the 11-man military management committee introduced at the rally, was heard by a million persons gathered at loudspeaker installations at various centers in Saigon.]

Gen. Tran Van Tra introduced the military management committee, which is governing the capital city, but there was no indication when PRG leaders would arrive to organize a national government. Foreign correspondents, however, were invited to attend a press conference Thursday.

There was speculation among political observers that a fight was underway between hard-line Communists, particularly North Vietnamese government authorities, and Vietcong Communists, who are believed to be softer, UPI reported. The analysts said the Vietcong appeared to want to give anti-Communists a voice in the government of South Vietnam.

There have been no reports of Vietcong reprisals, and life in Saigon returned to normal within 48 hours of the Com-

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minist takeover, the agency reports said.

During the week's blackout, about 120 reporters from 13 countries still in Saigon were able to work normally and move about without hindrance. Authorities cited technical reasons to explain why stories could not be field.

The atmosphere is relaxed. Tuesday British journalists were principally occupied in making sure that the British consul's residence — with a swimming pool — was accepted by the new authorities as the British press club.

Several British reporters spent the day at the pool enjoying Beaujolais wine and a lunch prepared by the local consular staff, Reuter said. Non-British journalists are trying to find a pool of their own.

Saigon time has been put back an hour to conform with Hanoi time, and the change has confused Vietnamese and foreigners alike. Reporters who travelled outside Saigon to My Tho and other cities in the Mekong Delta said they were well received and there was little sign of fighting.

The area, however, is littered with abandoned equipment of the old government's armed forces.

In Saigon, entrepreneurs set up corner stalls selling flags of the PRG — red on top, blue on the bottom with a gold star in the center. The flags, which flew from virtually every building and vehicle within a day of the surrender, sold for about \$1 each.

Market prices in Saigon rose slightly for most meat and vegetables in the first day or two after the takeover, but then began to level out, UPI said.

Buddhist pagodas and Roman Catholic churches, were allowed to operate normally, except for routine identification checks of priests and nuns. Attendance was down, particularly at the pagodas. PRG soldiers attended Sunday mass at the Saigon basilica.

A new newspaper, Saigon Giai Phong (Saigon Liberation), appeared on Sunday, with a picture of Ho Chi

Minh on the front page and an analysis of how the Vietnamese people had defeated American imperialism.

On Monday the new authorities urged the population to destroy the primary symbols of the old regime, Reuter said, and several dozen youths then pulled down the statue of two soldiers standing in threatening posture that had faced the National Assembly building.

Black markets continue to flourish, UPI said, dealing now with American, South Vietnamese and North Vietnamese currencies. Some black markets are stocked with looted materials from the American PX. No banks are open, spurring the money black markets even more.

There are fewer cars on the streets because of a gasoline shortage, and because gas costs \$8 a gallon.

Former President Duong Van (Big) Minh and other former leaders are free and living at their homes in town. Some have told reporters that they have been offered jobs with the new government.

Vietcong soldiers troop into the hall of the Caravelle Hotel in downtown Saigon every night to watch television Reu-

ter reported. An American straggler, apparently high on drugs, often joins the barefoot guerrillas to laugh at the television cartoons of former American President Nixon.

Several Americans who missed the frenzied helicopter evacuation have surfaced. They profess to be worried about their future, but they spend most of the day on the terrace of the Continental Hotel, sometimes drinking and joking with Communist officers.

Wednesday a memorial service was being organized at the French military hospital for Gamma Agency photographer Michel Laurent, who was killed last month and whose body was brought to Saigon by a French television crew this week.

Security in the city has been more or less on the honor system, UPI said, with only the threat of swift curbside justice by Communist forces holding back looting and hooliganism.

New Saigon Leader Promises Leniency

From News Dispatches

Gen. Tran Van Tra, leader of the 11-man military manage-

ment committee that is now governing Saigon, spoke at a rally celebrating the week-old victory at the capital's Independence Palace.

Addressing a cheering multitude of Saigon residents, Tra spoke on the palace balcony under a giant portrait of the late Ho Chi Minh. He promised leniency toward Vietnamese who had worked for Americans or the former Saigon government, but warned that "those who continued to resist will be severely punished."

He praised the citizens' "fierce anti-American spirit," but warned that a few South Vietnamese are still "continuing to serve as henchmen for foreign countries."

The rally also marked the 21st anniversary of the Vietnam victory against the French at Dienbienphu.

Mrs. Phan Thi Minh, a member of the Provisional Revolutionary Government delegation in Paris, was in London Wednesday to discuss an early recognition of the new Saigon government with the British. The Foreign Office indicated that recognition will not be long delayed.

Mrs. Minh, a member of the team that negotiated the Paris cease-fire accords of 1973,

made clear that that agreement, providing that South Vietnam be governed by representatives of the old government, neutralists and the PRG, was now a dead letter.

These other developments were reported:

- The Swiss Foreign Ministry said in Berne that Switzerland has effectively granted recognition to the new government. The ministry said the Swiss ambassador had been instructed to explain that Switzerland recognizes countries, not governments.

- Soviet Defense Ministry delegation arrived in Hanoi Tuesday at the invitation of North Vietnam's Defense Ministry, the North Vietnam news agency reported.

- The Central Committee of the North Vietnamese Communist Party ordered party workers to prepare for victory celebrations in both North and South Vietnam.

- The Taipei Central News Agency reported that Nationalist Chinese troops still occupy the Spratley Islands in the South China Sea.

- Hanoi authorities began a drive to collect books and periodicals to send to Saigon and Hue.