

Saigon Says Refugees Flow Homeward

HONG KONG, May 19 (Agence France-Presse)—Tens of thousands of refugees are returning to their homes in the central provinces of South Vietnam, the Saigon radio reported today.

It said in a broadcast monitored here that the first phase of a return-home program had been completed, with soldiers among those who had received passes for the journey.

The broadcast gave details of the program, after it reported on a meeting between South Vietnam's new leaders and representatives of Communist and nonaligned countries. The representatives pledged help with solving immediate problems, it said.

Broadcasts from Saigon indicated that refugees had high immediate priority. Some towns and villages in the central provinces were almost depopulated when great columns of refugees fled southward in advance of the Communist spring offensive, which culminated in the surrender of Saigon on April 30.

Countryside Organizaiton

The radio reported that a countrywide organization to deal with refugee resettlement and allied postwar problems was set up at the same time as South Vietnam's new administration.

Travel documents have been issued to tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers for return to the central provinces, it said.

It said that temporary housing in Saigon had been found for those without means to return home and who had lived on sidewalks of the capital.

More than 1,000 tons of rice have been distributed to 223,569 people, the radio said, but it gave no details of where this had been done. It said that 8,000 more tons of rice had been stored for those returning home.

At the meeting of South Vietnamese leaders with representatives of Communist and nonaligned states, the radio said, South Vietnam was represented by Nguyen Huu Tho, president of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front; Huynh Tan Phat, President of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, and Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh.

The radio described the meeting as cordial and said that the South Vietnamese had stressed the historic dimension of their victory.

Crime Rises in Saigon

SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 19 (Reuters) — Housebreaking and robberies are mounting rapidly in this sprawling city of three million and creating a law-and-order problem that is worrying the new Communist authorities.

The increase in crime has been related to the number of jobless former soldiers of the ousted regime and to civilians who have not received salaries since the banks were closed at the end of last month.

Motorized police patrols have been augmented by foot patrols that move about mainly at night to combat hoodlums.

Summary executions of thieves have been reported. One person reported having seen the

body of a gaudily dressed man lying in the middle of a residential street near the presidential palace Saturday night.

Residents of the area, mainly businessmen and affluent families, said the man was a would-be robber who had been caught by a patrol and shot in the temple and legs.

More Return to Saigon

SAIGON, May 19 (AP)—Two ships have docked in Saigon with Vietnamese passengers who opposed or supported the former anti-Communist government, the new government's radio reported.

One ship carried several hundred political prisoners from Son Island, site of the so-called "tiger cages" in which foes of the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu were confined in cramped solitude until their limbs atrophied, the radio said.

It said that the second ship was manned by navy men who were returning voluntarily after having fled when the former regime surrendered. The radio said that this ship had turned back from Indonesian waters in response to an appeal from the new Government.

It said that the 45 persons aboard, including "officers, noncommissioned officers and police officers," surrendered on their arrival in Saigon.

The radio indicated that with a total of three ships now having arrived from Son Island, more than 1,300 political prisoners had returned from the island which is in the South China Sea.