

# Reds March Into Saigon, Call It Ho Chi Minh City

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SF Chronicle

## PRG Flag

## Is Raised

## At Palace

Saigon

North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces marched into Saigon yesterday and put an end to a century of Western influence over the often-bloodied Indochina peninsula.

To cheers and applause from some South Vietnamese, Communist troops poured into the city and raised the flag of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) over the presidential palace a few hours after President Duong Van (Big) Minh announced his government's capitulation.

Soon after the takeover, normal telephone and telegraph communications with Saigon went down.

(The Viet Cong, in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok early today, ordered its soldiers to take over economic, military and political offices in Saigon as soon as possible.

(Viet Cong troops were ordered to provide security and the public was told to remain calm. The broadcast said all looting and robbery in the capital had been halted.

(The broadcast urged all South Vietnamese soldiers to surrender and hand their weapons, aircraft and naval vessels to the Viet Cong. It warned military and civilian officials of the former Saigon government not to destroy any government documents.

(The Viet Cong announced that as of early today the Viet Cong was breaking off diplomatic relations with all governments friendly to the Saigon regime, although a statement from a PRG spokesman in Paris was vague on this point.)

A Hanoi broadcast monitored yesterday in Tokyo stressed Viet Cong announcements that Saigon had been renamed Ho Chi Minh City in honor of the late North Vietnamese leader.

President Minh, in a mid-morning broadcast, ordered

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the South Vietnamese armed forces to turn in their arms. He was later returned to a microphone by a jeepload of North Vietnamese soldiers and issued another order for the Saigon troops to turn in their arms.

The subsequent whereabouts of Minh, 51, was unknown.

The surrender did not end the shooting immediately. One battle broke out in front of the presidential palace as UPI correspondent Alan Dawson was trying to con-

tact senior Viet Cong officials to discuss news and photograph operations.

While Dawson huddled for ten minutes with two Viet Cong behind a tree, Communist forces responded with a thunderous volume of tank, machine gun and rifle fire.

Communists also battled holdout government paratroopers at the Saigon zoo on the city's northern edge, and

special forces on the southwest side.

But steadily, the Communists cleaned out the last pockets of resistance and absorbed the fallen government's military and civilian machinery—ministries, military headquarters, utilities, the radio station.

The Viet Cong made no attempt to interfere with picture or news coverage. UPI photographer Hoang Van Cuong climbed aboard one Communist tank and rode into the palace grounds with smiling, approving Viet Cong soldiers who shouted "Press guys good."

A Viet Cong broadcast said much of the Mekong Delta south and west of Saigon is "not yet liberated." The broadcast named a total of eight provinces that have not surrendered.

The broadcast, monitored in Bangkok more than 12 hours after Saigon capitulation, made no mention of fighting, but said the Viet

Cong commander "appealed to the enemy to submit themselves quickly to his government."

In Saigon, many former soldiers tried to lose themselves in the civilian population. A police colonel walked up to an army memorial statue, saluted and shot himself. He died later in a hospital.

The role of the United States, which entered Indochina shortly after French colonial rule collapsed with the 1954 defeat at Dienbienphu, ended Tuesday, in a massive helicopter airlift. U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin, about 900 other Americans and some 5600 Vietnamese were evacuated to ships of the Seventh Fleet in the South China Sea.

"At 11:30 a.m. on April 30, 1975, the flag of the Provisional Revolutionary Gov-

ernment of the Republic of South Vietnam fluttered above the palace of the puppet president and on other buildings in the city," declared Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency.

Hundreds of South Vietnamese applauded as scores of North Vietnamese tanks, armored vehicles and camouflaged Chinese trucks drove down Unity boulevard to the presidential palace from which President Nguyen Van Thieu and the late President Ngo Dinh Diem had directed the war against the Communists for nearly two decades.

The Viet Cong took over the Saigon radio station and announced: "We representatives of the liberation forces of Saigon formally proclaim that Saigon has been totally liberated. We accept the unconditional surrender of General Duong Van Minh, president of the former government."

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