

May 75

Communists Take Over Saigon; U.S. Rescue Fleet Is Picking Up Vietnamese Who Fled In Boats

'HO CHI MINH CITY'

Communications Cut Soon After Raising of Victory Flag

By GEORGE ESPER The Associated Press

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 30—Communist troops of North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam poured into Saigon today as a century of Western influence came to an end.

Scores of North Vietnamese tanks, armored vehicles and camouflaged Chinese-built trucks rolled to the presidential palace.

The President of the former non-Communist Government of South Vietnam, Gen. Duong Van Minh, who had gone on radio and television to announce his administration's surrender, was taken to a microphone later by North Vietnamese soldiers for another announcement. He appealed to Saigon troops to lay down their arms and was taken by the North Vietnamese soldiers to an undisclosed destination.

[Soon after the take-over, symbolized by the raising of the Vietcong flag over the presidential palace at 12:15 P.M., normal telephone and telegraph communications with Saigon ceased. The Associated Press said that its wire link was lost at 7 P.M. (7 A.M. Wednesday, New York time).

[The Saigon radio fell silent shortly after midday following several victory

broadcasts by representatives of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.]

[A Hanoi broadcast monitored in Tokyo said Saigon had been renamed Ho Chi Minh City in honor of the late North Vietnamese leader. Another broadcast, by South Vietnamese Communists said that Saigon forces in eight provinces south of the capital had not yet surrendered, but no fighting was mentioned.]

Hundreds in Saigon Cheer

Hundreds of Saigon residents cheered and applauded as North Vietnamese military vehicles moved to the palace grounds from which the war against the Communists had been directed by President Nguyen Van Thieu, who resigned April 21, and by President Ngo Dinh Diem, who was killed in a coup in 1963.

Broadcasting today in th

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A War History

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early hours of the Communist takeover, the Provisional Revolutionary Government's representatives said:

"We representatives of the liberation forces of Saigon formally proclaim that Saigon has been totally liberated. We accept the unconditional surrender of Gen. Duong Van Minh, President of the former Government."

Colonel Shoots Himself

Meanwhile, many former soldiers sought to lose themselves in the populace. However, one police colonel walked up to an army memorial statue, saluted and shot himself. He died later in a hospital.

Shots rang out at one point around the City Hall. A North Vietnamese infantry platoon, dressed in olive-drab uniforms and black rubber sandals, took up defense positions in the square in front of the building. They exchanged shots with a few holdouts. Some people on motorbikes looked apprehensively to see where the firing was coming from. In a short while it subsided.

Coastal Ships Jammed

Between General Minh's surrender broadcast and the entry of the Communist forces into the city, South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians jammed aboard several coastal freighters tied up along the Saigon River, hoping to escape. They dejectedly left the ships as the Communist troops drove along the waterfront in jeeps and trucks, waving National Liberation Front flags and cheering.

As the Communist troops drove past, knots of civilians stood in doorways and watched without apparent emotion. Later, as more North Vietnamese troops poured into the city, many people began cheering.

Ky Nhan, a Vietnamese who had been submitting photographs to The Associated Press for three years, came to the agency's office with a Communist friend and two North Vietnamese soldiers and said, "I guarantee the safety of everybody here."

"I have been a revolutionary for 10 years," said Mr. Nhan. "My job in the Vietcong was liaison with the international press."

This correspondent served them Coca-Cola and some leftover cake.

One of the soldiers, 25-year-old Sergeant Namgd Binh Huan Lam, said he was from Hanoi and had been a soldier for 10 years.

"I have not married because it was not necessary during the war," he said.

Arrival Described

After smoking a cigarette, Tran Viet Ca, a 24-year-old private, told the Americans he had served seven years in the North Vietnamese Army.

"Two days ago we attacked Bien Hoa," he said. "Today we drove down the highway past the United States Army base at Long Binh. Our forces were led

by a brigade of tanks. There was a little resistance, but most Saigon soldiers had already run away. Then we drove into Saigon."

Loud explosions were heard in the late afternoon in Saigon. They were said to have taken place aboard an ammunition barge burnisg in the Saigon River, but no damage was reported in the city except at the United States Embassy and other American buildings,

whic Saigonese looted. At the embassy they took virtually everything, including the kitchen sinks and a machine to shed secret documents.

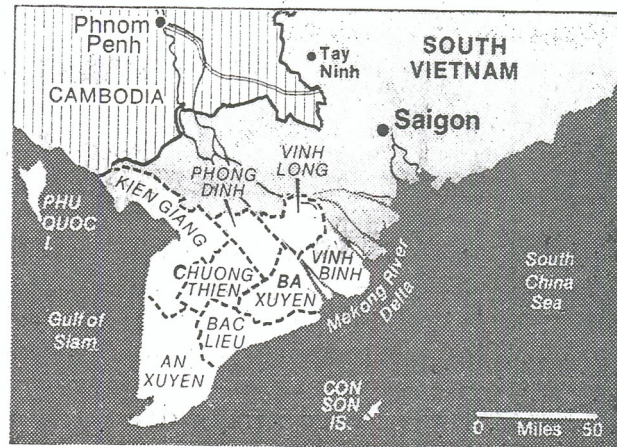
A bronze plaque with the names of five American servicemen who died in a 1968 attack by Communist guerrillas was torn from the lobby wall. An Associated Press correspondent retrieved it.

Another memento from the embassy that was saved was a color portrait of former President Richard M. Nixon and his family, inscribed "To Ambassador and Mrs. Graham Martin with appreciation for their service to the nation. From Richard Nixon."

A French businessman who said he was taking refuge in the New Zealand Embassy grabbed the picture.

"I know the ambassador," he said. "I will personally deliver it to him in the United States some time in the future."

Outside the embassy, Thong Nhut Boulevard was littered with burned cars.



The New York Times/May 1, 1975

A Communist broadcast said some Saigon troops in eight provinces [shown in white] still refused to surrender.



The New York Times/May 1, 1975

As the Communists took over Saigon, North Vietnamese tanks rolled into grounds of the presidential palace.