

Minh Released From Custody, Vietcong Say

18 Others Also Allowed To Go Home

From News Dispatches

The Vietcong radio said Sunday that Duong Van 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 newly announced 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 monitored in Bangkok, took a conciliatory tone in the announcement, it also ordered former members of the South Vietnamese general military staff to turn themselves in or face death.

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

Saigon Radio said two generals, one colonel and seven civilians make up the Saigon 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 been listed by U.S. intelligence sources as a lieutenant general who was the senior military commander in the south, reporting directly to Hanoi.

A member of the new government of South Vietnam said Sunday that one of the most important tasks now facing the country is the reunification of North and South Vietnam, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug reported from Hanoi.

Nguyen Van Thiyen, who also heads the Vietcong's permanent mission in North

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Vietnam, said there are no immediate plans for wide-scale nationalization and agrarian reforms in South Vietnam.

"Now, when all our country is liberated, our most important tasks are the reconstruction of economy and the reunification of North and South Vietnam into a united state of the Vietnamese people," Thiyen said.

Saigon Radio also announced Sunday that the city'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.

The Vietcong's Gai Phong News Agency reported the country was getting back to normal.

Provincial revolutionary committees—intended to form the backbone of the new administrative system—had been welcomed at mass meetings in many towns and villages, it said.

Saigon's water, power and telephone services were said to be in full operation, traffic on the streets was reported back to normal and the country's biggest textile plant, which used to produce 2 million yards a month was said to have resumed work.

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," the spokesman said. "The situation is very calm."

"Soldiers are cleaning the streets, sidewalks and walls. There is a general cleanup program in process in Saigon," the spokesman said.

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