

WXPost MAY 6 1975
; 'Tiger Cages' Emptied

Vietcong Wins First U.N. Recognition

From News Dispatches

The new Communist government of South Vietnam has released all prisoners from the Conson Island prison where inmates were held in notorious "tiger cage" cells, the Vietcong radio said yesterday.

The move came as the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government continued to tighten its control over the country and won its first recognition from the United Nations as the successor of the former Saigon government.

The PRG ordered all officials of the former government to report to authorities by Thursday and extended to May 31 the deadline for members of the defeated armed forces to turn themselves in. Saigon Radio also reiterated its order for military equipment to be turned in immediately.

The Vietcong's Giai Phong Radio,

monitored by the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug, did not give the number of prisoners released from Conson Island prison, but it said they would be reunited with their families.

Former U.S. Rep. William R. Anderson (D-Tenn.) once referred to the "tiger cages" of Conson Island as "the most shocking treatment of human beings I have ever seen" after touring the prison where 10,000 persons were held, most of them for political reasons.

During the height of the U.S. opposition to involvement in the Vietnam war, reports on the "tiger cages" raised a furor in the United States. At one point, 116 South Vietnamese political prisoners claimed that they had been paralyzed from maltreatment on the island and from being kept in the "cages."

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The radio also reported that former officials of the defeated Saigon government, including former President Duong Van (Big) Minh, had been returned to their families in Saigon.

The officials were told upon their release that it was hoped that they would contribute to rebuilding the country, the radio said. Minh responded by saying he "welcomed the victory of the liberation forces and said he was happy to be a citizen of the independent Vietnam," the radio said.

Meanwhile, Saigons' new rulers ordered the immediate closure of all overseas missions set up by the previous government and indicated that the new envoys would be sent out soon to take over.

In a three-point directive, the Foreign Ministry ordered all heads of mission to cease operations and close their embassies and to draw up lists of documents, equipment and property for handover to new representatives who would be sent out soon, and warned that acts of sabotage and illegal removal of funds would be punished.

The directive was the new government's first order to the former government's dozens of embassies, the largest of which are in Washington and Paris.

Domestic proclamations by the PRG have dealt thus far with the reconstruction of the country and the establishment of administrative machinery. Essential services have reportedly been restored and many factories are said to be in full operation. Communications with the outside world, however, have not been restored, and news has been confined to radio broadcasts monitored outside South Vietnam.

In Paris, Agence France-Presse reported that Hanoi ambassador to France, Vo Van Sung, met with "third force" leader Col. Tran Dinh Lan and assured him the "third force" would play an "appropriate role" in a policy of national reconciliation.

In Wellington, New Zealand, a U.N. official said that almost all the displaced persons in Vietnam are expected to be resettled in their villages by the end of May. The U.N. official said his agency, the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, is

working closely with the new Saigon government to provide medicines, food, tools and seeds.

The North Vietnamese news agency in Hanoi reported that the television station in Hue has resumed broadcasting and Gai Phong Radio said a group of dancers from Hanoi performed in the former imperial capital on Sunday.

The radio also reported that Saigon citizens are scraping walls and cleaning up streets and market places. Old movie posters and posters of the Thieu regime have been replaced by revolutionary slogans, the radio said.

At the United Nations, the U.N. Economic and Social Council recognized the PRG as the successor government to the former Saigon regime yesterday, despite American "regrets" at the "pre-mature" decision.

In a public debate on the recognition, other U.N. delegates suggested that the U.S. statement indicated that Washington would recognize the PRG "in the coming days."

U.S. representative Clarence Ferguson responded, "We will not recognize any government-in-exile, but that is not an either-or proposition. As of this moment, we do not recognize the authorities in Saigon."

Ferguson said the United States was "uncertain as to an eventuality of double representation."

A U.S. official said later that Ferguson's statement was "intended as a signal to see if the government in Saigon is run by Hanoi or Moscow." The official said the United States wants this answered before it extends recognition.

The PRG's earlier application for membership in two U.N. bodies—the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization—has indicated to some observers that the new Communist rulers in the South are preparing for a prolonged period of diplomatic activity independent of North Vietnam.

Diplomats said U.N. General Assembly President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, has urged U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to admit the PRG to the world body promptly. The previous South Vietnam government had "observer" status.

The PRG gained "ob-

server" status through the U.N. subsidiary body of ECOSOC yesterday without going through the formal process of a membership application.

Monday's action at the United Nations was prompted by a request from Senegal that the PRG be invited

to attend the U.N. International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in July.

Meanwhile, the Soviet news agency Tass reported that two Soviet ships had docked in Danang and brought 4,000 tons of food and fuel to the city. The Soviet vessels were the first

ships to enter the port since the Communist government took control.

Western diplomats in Moscow said they expected the Soviet government to move quickly to supply the South Vietnamese Communists in a move to blunt Chinese influence in the area.