

Prepare for Peace, Viet Leaders Told

SAIGON — (AP) — South Vietnamese cabinet ministers and other high-level department heads have been told in a newly issued secret directive to prepare for a cease-fire, official sources disclosed today.

The official Saigon government radio said in a commentary, meanwhile, that "if the North Vietnamese really want peace they must assure they will no longer attempt to cause a war and their assurances of peace must be written into an official agreement."

The cease-fire preparation

directive, sources said, was issued by Premier Tran Thien Khiem during the last few days.

Origin Unknown

It was not known whether it was the result of meetings in Washington between South Vietnamese envoy Nguyen Phu Duc and President Nixon.

The directive was reported to have caught some government agencies by surprise, although there is a growing feeling among both South Vietnamese and American officials that the United States and North

Vietnam will conclude a peace agreement soon, whether President Nguyen Van Thieu approves or not.

Khiem's directive calls for a strengthening of the Saigon guard and increased vigilance to prevent the Communists from exploiting a cease-fire politically and militarily, sources said.

Thousands Trained

In another development, Rep. Tran Van An, chairman of the lower house Defense Committee, said after touring the Mekong Delta

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that 250,000 soldiers and province, district and village officials in the region have received training for what he termed a political struggle against the Communists when a cease-fire comes.

An claimed that among the seven million people living in the Delta, only 20,000 are living in Communist-controlled areas and about 30,000 others are in contested regions.

The Saigon radio commentary continued to demand that North Vietnam withdraw its troops from the south.