

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1973

Saigon Puts All Troops on Full Alert To Counter Expected Drive by Enemy

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Tuesday, Jan. 23—South Vietnamese troops throughout the country have been put on full alert and security measures here and in the other major cities are being sharply intensified in anticipation of Communist attacks before the expected signing of a cease-fire agreement.

The military officers who disclosed the moves said that today and tomorrow a battalion of 300 to 500 military policemen and an equal number of combat policemen—soldiers who are commanded by the police—would begin taking positions on street corners in Saigon and on the main highways into the capital. Similar forces have been ordered to reinforce the regular policemen in such cities as Da Nang, Hue, Pleiku and Can Tho.

One senior officer said that the usual random inspection of identification papers would be intensified and that vehicles entering the cities would be thoroughly searched for contraband.

In addition, the officer said, the police have been ordered to sweep through residential sections after the 11 A.M. curfew and to make house-to-house inspections to insure that only the authorized residents are present.

Toward the end of last October, when a cease-fire first seemed near, Communist troops occupied about 30 hamlets near Saigon in a series of small, quick thrusts.

Allied officials say orders have been issued for a similar drive now, but they say they strongly doubt the Communists' ability to duplicate their earlier success.

With this in mind, some

critics say they believe the heightened vigilance has been ordered out of concern for a political rather than military threat to the Saigon Government.

Cease-Fire Preparations

The measures outlined by the officers were reportedly included in a set of broad instructions on preparations for a cease-fire that President Nguyen Van Thieu issued to his principal military commanders at a meeting at the presidential palace last Wednesday.

The President is said to have reminded the commanders that under the present state of martial law the police and armed forces are authorized to shoot on the spot people who incite riots and "applaud the communists."

He also pointed out that they were empowered to arrest summarily anyone who distributed Communist propaganda, flew a Communist flag, interfered with Government officials attempting to maintain order or urged others to move to Communist-controlled areas. Anybody engaging in political activities as "neutralist or pro-Communists" or issuing currency to the Communists are subject to arrest, he noted.

In some cases, people who resist arrest, including common thieves, can also be shot on the spot under the martial-law provisions.

After the Cease-Fire

According to the semiofficial newspaper Tin Song, which is partly financed by President Thieu's closest aide, these harsh tactics will remain in effect in Government-controlled areas after a cease-fire goes into effect.

"Whoever thinks that when there is a cease-fire the national sovereignty will not belong to the authorities of the Government, the police and the armed forces are wrong," the newspaper quoted what it said was a reliable source as saying last night.

The article continued, "All the structures of the Republic of Vietnam Government will be retained with all the authorities and powers granted by the Constitution and laws of the South until a new single political formula has been agreed upon by all sides."

At the meeting with his commanders, President Thieu also called for a renewed drive to retake territory and population lost to the Communists in their spring offensive last year.

The result has been several sharp clashes in Quang Tri Province, at the far north of South Vietnam, in the Que Son Valley, south of Da Nang, near Kontum in the Central Highlands and in Chuong Thien Province in the geographic center of the Mekong River Delta.

Most of the fighting has been well removed from the principal cities and a senior South Vietnamese officer said yesterday that the troops that threatened Saigon last fall had dropped back to their traditional bases at least 30 to 40 miles from the capital.