

# Ford Visits Indonesia, Says The U.S. Won't Abandon Asia

## Jakarta

President Ford, fresh from a four-day summit meeting in China, attempted yesterday to reassure south Asian leaders that the United States has not turned its back on this part of the world.

Mr. Ford met with Indonesian President Suharto and after a two-hour conference today said there will be periodic consultations between the two nations and

added that the substantial American aid to Indonesia will be continued.

The U.S. President then flew to Manila, where he'll meet with President Ferdinand Marcos before returning to the United States.

"No area of the world is more important to us than Asia," the President told Suharto at a banquet in the presidential palace.

"We remain firmly committed to peace and security in Southeast Asia and throughout Asia," Mr. Ford said.

"We see our own prosperity and progress linked with vast populations, the dynamic economies, the abundant resources and the rich cultures of this great region of the world."

Mr. Ford's visit was designed to reassure this country's jittery military government that the prospects of continued and improved U.S. relations with China have not diminished American interest in Indonesia.

The government here has been plagued by financial scandal and war on the island of Timor. The Ford administration has promised the Indonesian government military aid of \$44.9 million in fiscal 1976, more than double last year's military aid of \$20.9 million.

This request is pending in Congress, along with a request of \$86 million in economic assistance. In the past 25 years the United States has poured \$2 billion in economic aid into Indonesia.

On the American side there is a continued interest in the crude oil exports of Indonesia, which broke with oil-producing countries during the Arab oil embargo and provides significant amounts of oil to the United States below the oil cartel prices. Since Indonesia's creation, the United States has usually bought between one-sixth and one-fourth of the country's exports.

The fact of Mr. Ford's visit here was as important as anything, he said to Suharto. The Indonesian government was aware of what seemed to be Chinese disapproval of Mr. Ford's stopovers at other Asian nations on his return home from China.

In acknowledging Mr. Ford's toast last night, Suharto delicately reflected some of the concern of his government that the United States might lose interest in south Asia because of its experiences in Vietnam.

He said that creation of "patterns of cooperation" is more important than ever in view of the developments in the Southeast Asian region with the termination of the Vietnam war.

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