

President 'Upset' By Opposition to Refugees' Entry

He Rejects Hill Inquiry On Vietnam

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Ford said last night he was "very upset" by opposition in some quarters in this country to the admission of South Vietnamese refugees and declared that they ought to be welcomed here.

"I understand the attitude of some," he said. "We have serious economic problems. But out of 120,000 refugees here or on the way, 60 per cent are children (and) . . . only 35,000 are heads of families."

In his first news conference since the fall of South Vietnam, Mr. Ford praised several American groups, including the AFL-CIO, the American Jewish Congress, and a number of governors who have said they support the refugee program.

"This is the right attitude for the American people to take," the President said.

The President said he did not believe there should be a congressional inquiry into how the country got into and out of Vietnam.

Declaring that such an inquiry would be "divisive, not helpful," Mr. Ford said he thought it would be "unfortunate for us to rehash allegations as to individuals that might be to blame or administrations that might be at fault."

Reasserting his belief that the war is over and behind us, the President said, "We ought to look ahead."

"I think the lessons of the past in Vietnam have already been learned, learned by Presidents, learned by Congress, learned by the American people, and we should have our focus on the future, and as far as I am concerned that's where we will concentrate."

Mr. Ford, when asked about the sacrifices of Americans in Vietnam, said thousands suffered crippling wounds or lost their lives but he did not believe their contribution was in vain.

"I think we should praise them, congratulate them," the President said. "And we have an unbelievable commitment to them in the future. All we can say is thank you very much for what they have done for freedom."

Asked about his political plans, the President said more affirmatively than ever before that he plans to be a candidate in 1976 and that an informal group of advisers headed by Dean Burch, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and Sen. Barry M. Goldwater's 1964 campaign manager, was working on campaign plans.

The President said he could not understand why some

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members of his party doubted he would be a candidate.

Discussing the economic outlook, Mr. Ford said "I think we are at the end of the recession," and he added "we can look forward to some improvement" in the third and fourth quarters of this year.

In answer to a political question regarding the economy during next year's campaign, Mr. Ford said he cannot believe the economic conditions then will be comparable to those today. There will be a further improvement in 1976, he said.

The President acknowledged that the fall of Vietnam was "a difficult time" and that there have been some questions from foreign

governments about America's commitment in the future.

But he declared that the United States is a powerful country that will stand by its friends and "stand up" to any potential adversary.

"We are strong and we are going to maintain our leadership on a world-wide basis," Mr. Ford said.

He declined to discuss evidence being presented to the Rockefeller Commission investigating the Central Intelligence Agency. But he declared that the Warren Commission which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy found no evidence of a connection between Cuba and the assassination. "We found no evidence of a conspiracy," the President said, either at home or abroad.

Mr. Ford said he was looking forward to meetings next month with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, but he hinted that the American reassessment of Middle East policy would not be completed until after those meetings.

The President reasserted his confidence in the effectiveness of Graham A. Martin, the last American ambassador to South Vietnam. He said he knew of the criticisms being made of the ambassador, but "I never had much faith in Monday morning quarterbacks or grandstand quarterbacks."

Asked about the foreign policy outlook after Vietnam the President predicted progress in the negotiations for a second agreement with the

Soviet Union to control nuclear arms and said he believed there would be progress in relations with Europe.

Mr. Ford also said that he believed "we can move ahead even in the Pacific," declaring that it is his aim "to tie

more closely together the United States and South Korea, to reaffirm our commitments to Taiwan, to work more closely with the Indonesians, with the Philippines and with other Pacific nations."