

Standing by Commitments, Ford Assures U.S. Allies

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By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

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WASHINGTON, May 6 — President Ford, declaring that the United States had learned the lessons of Vietnam, said tonight that he would pursue a vigorous leadership "on a worldwide basis."

He acknowledged, in a nationally televised news conference, that United States allies had doubts, following the loss of Cambodia and Vietnam to the Communists, about this country's commitments.

But he said such doubts were "not a reality" because the United States would remain strong militarily and economically.

"We want our friends to know that we will stand by

them and we want any potential adversaries to know that we will stand up to them," Mr. Ford asserted.

He also pledged "forward movements in foreign policy that will be beneficial to peace," including efforts to strengthen United States ties to South Korea and to reassure such Asian allies as Nationalist China, Indonesia and the Philippines of continuing support.

The President said that the "atmosphere is good" for a strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union, although the negotiations would be "hard."

The President declined at the

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FORD REASSURES AMERICA'S ALLIES

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outset to entertain the suggestion that a Congressional inquiry might somehow determine where the policy of five President and six congresses had erred in Indochina. And he urged the nation to look ahead rather than back as it began the post-Vietnam era.

"It seems to me that it's over," Mr. Ford said of the Vietnam experience.

He said that the war had been "sad and tragic in many respects" and that it would merely foster continued divisiveness to "rehash allegations as to individuals that might be to blame, or administrations that might be at fault."

"I think the lessons of the past in Vietnam have already been learned," Mr. Ford declared. "Learned by Presidents, learned by Congress, learned by the American people, and we should have our focus on the future."

The news conference, in the spacious theater in the Executive Office Building next to the White House, was Mr. Ford's

first since the fall of Phnom Penh on April 17 and the surrender of Saigon last Wednesday. As a result it was dominated by the causes and consequences of the two events, which Mr. Ford said last week "closes a chapter in the American experience."

The President, evidently pursuing domestic unity as a prelude to efforts at strengthening United States diplomacy, had set the tone for his appearance tonight by proposing that "reconciliation, not recrimination" be the theme of the post-Vietnam era.

The President was said to believe that if he did not rally Americans behind his policies allies and potential foreign opponents might conclude that the political instability that has marked the last decade in the United States was likely to continue.

At his last full-dress news conference, on April 3 in San Diego, Mr. Ford noted the refusal of Congress to supply military assistance to South Vietnam and Cambodia and said it was "up to the American people to pass judgment on who was at fault and where the blame may rest" if those two nations should fall.

More recently, however, the President has led the Administration away from such suggestions. Secretary of State Kissinger told a Washington

audience that the Congressional verdict on military aid would be accepted "without recrimination or vindictiveness."

And Mr. Ford, in a speech at Tulane university in New Orleans on April 23, proposed "a great national reconciliation." The time has arrived, he said, "to look forward to an agenda for the future, to unity, to binding up the nation's wounds and restoring it to health and optimistic self-confidence."

To Confer With Premiers

The President will begin specific discussions on diplomatic relations tomorrow in a series of private meetings here with Prime Ministers Harold Wilson of Britain, Gough Whitlam of Australia and Wallace E. Rowling of New Zealand. On Thursday, he will confer with Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore.

Later this month Mr. Ford will embark on a European trip, his first as President, during which he will meet with Western leaders at a conference of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels. He will later to Spain, Austria and Italy and confer during the trip with President Anwar El-Sadat of Egypt.

Mr. Ford will meet her next month with Premier Yitzhak Rabin of Israel.

Aquino Reported Hospitalized In Philippine Hunger Strike

MANILA, May 6 (Reuters)—Benigno S. Aquino, the imprisoned opposition leader who is on a hunger strike, has been taken to a hospital because of his deteriorating health, a family spokesman said today.

Mr. Aquino, a 42-year-old former senator and presidential contender, began his hunger strike on April 4 to protest a military court decision ordering him to attend every phase of his trial. He is charged with subversion, murder and illegal possession of firearms. The charges carry the death penalty.

He attended the resumption of his trial yesterday aided by two security men, apparently because he could no longer stand up on his own.

Mr. Aquino was arrested shortly before martial law was declared on Sept. 21, 1972.

Girl on High School Team

JERSEY CITY (AP)—Ann Cortellino, 17 years old, has become the first female to make a New Jersey high school baseball team. The 5-foot-5-inch junior of St. Mary's High School here has never played in organized baseball. She learned the game from playing with her younger brother, Lenny, and with a softball team.