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## Ford sets 3-year limit on all aid to Saigon

Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — President Ford says he is willing to terminate all U.S. military and economic aid to South Vietnam within three years.

In an interview marking the end of his first six months in office, the President said he would insist on "significantly large" Congressional appropriations over the next three fiscal years.

"As far as I am concerned, if we could agree on a figure and agree on a time span," he said. "... that would be the end."

Ford's comments, representing the administration's first offer of compromise in the dispute with Congress over continuing military aid, were made Thursday as Defense Secretary James Schlesinger told congressional leaders that U.S. assistance might be needed in South Vietnam for another decade.

President Ford's new budget calls for \$1.3 billion for South Vietnam over the next two years and \$497 million in military assistance to Cambodia.

The President chastised

### A move to get Congress support

Congress for too little action on the economy and too much interference in foreign affairs, and promised a continuing battle on both fronts.

Ford said he alone made the final decisions on both domestic and foreign affairs with strong contributions from Donald Rumsfeld, his chief of staff, and Secretary of State Kissinger.

During the interview, the President also:

- Predicted an improvement in the economy by this fall, beyond the forecast of his economic advisers. "I have more faith . . . in the confidence of the American people than I do in some readout of a computer, and that is what those figures are," he said.

- Indicated he will compromise with Congress on his energy proposals but

dodged questions on whether he will keep the oil tariff in effect should Congress reject his proposed taxes on domestic and foreign crude oil.

- Hinted that an agreement is in the works which will restore U.S. aid to Turkey and avoid the threatened loss of U.S. military installations there.

- Emphasized the U.S. commitment to Israel and rejected the suggestion that Sen. Charles Percy, R. Ill., may have been articulating an administration position in recent statements outlining a more conciliatory attitude toward Arab demands in the Middle East.

- Justified South Vietnamese President Thieu's closing of critical newspapers because of the country's "wartime status." "At least on a comparative basis freedom of the press exists to a far greater degree in South Vietnam" than in Hanoi, he said.

Ford expressed disappointment at the lack of support by conservative friends in Congress for his budget. And he said he did not think his six months in the presidency had altered his political philosophy.