

Saigon Describes Ford's Speech as 'Encouraging'

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 11—The Saigon Government today described President Ford's speech to Congress as "encouraging" for South Vietnam.

The speech was widely reported in the South Vietnamese press and rumors spread that United States Marines had landed along the coast.

President Gerald Ford's speech, the Government spokesman said, "was most encouraging to the people and army of the Republic of Vietnam."

"It was a reaffirmation," the statement continued, of the pledges of support of the American Government in the anti-Communist struggle of the Republic of Vietnam. Once again, these pledges have demonstrated the continuity of the United States foreign policy through five Presidents.

"For the people and army of the Republic of Vietnam who are going through this most critical and difficult phase of their struggle," the statement concluded, "these pledges of support would certainly con-

tribute to their struggle for survival, and help them safeguard and build a life that is in conformance with their aspirations for peace and freedom."

Following the broadcast here today of Mr. Ford's speech, the black market street rate of Vietnamese piasters to dollars jumped from 1,200 to the dollar to 1,400.

The Ford speech apparently was not received by most South Vietnamese as especially significant.

Exit of Envoys Goes On

"If Ford can save the country, it goes without saying we shall be grateful," an army lieutenant said.

"If Ford can help us get out of Vietnam he will be a very great man," the widow of another soldier said.

Meanwhile, diplomats of many countries, including those of India, Poland and Hungary, continued to leave South Vietnam, and some residential streets were clogged with vans being loaded with diplomatic household belongings to be flown out of the country.

The American radio station

repeated statements to the American community that dependents of American officials wishing to leave South Vietnam would be assisted by the Embassy, and that other Americans should rely on commercial transportation arranged by themselves.

In one of the few political developments of the day, a leading Roman Catholic opponent of the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu, the Rev. Tran Huu Thanh, said he had proposed a cease-fire arrangement with the Communists, and that he hoped his suggestion would be relayed by the French Embassy here.

The Ford speech brought a prompt denunciation from the Hanoi radio. It described Mr. Ford's proposal to use United States troops, if necessary, to evacuate Americans as a pretext for reintroducing American forces. The broadcast also called the proposal to evacuate some Vietnamese as a "criminal denigration plan."

Hanoi said: "Ford still harbors the illusion that his protégé might gain success if only he gets more American aid." The reference was to Mr. Thieu.