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**Ford Insists  
U.S. Aid Cut  
Lost Vietnam**

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President Ford yesterday refused to blame Peking and Moscow for the debacle in Vietnam and asserted that if the United States had maintained its aid commitment, "this whole tragedy could have been eliminated."

The President made his comment in a question-and-answer session at a luncheon meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors here.

He disclosed formally for the first time that he had ordered an evacuation of "all nonessential U.S. personnel in South Vietnam" and said that, "we are phasing down on a daily basis such U.S. personnel who have no responsibilities."

He refused to give any figures on the number being withdrawn.

If the United States had agreed to make available "reasonable sums" for military and economic aid to South Vietnam over the next three years, it could "have met any military challenges," the President maintained.

The amount of aid required would have been "just a relatively small additional commitment" compared to the \$150 billion the nation spent in Vietnam in the last decade, he argued.

Since the United States did not provide the additional assistance, "we are faced with this human tragedy," Mr. Ford said. "It just makes me sick every day I hear about it, read about and see it."

The President's strong words came at the same time that he pledged cooperation with Congress on foreign policy and predicted that he and the legislators could cooperate in continuing "a successful foreign policy."

Asked if the Chinese and  
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Russian supplies to Hanoi were not in violation of the spirit of detente, Mr. Ford said: "I don't think we can blame the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China in this case. If we had done with our allies what we promised, I think this whole tragedy could have been eliminated."

"I am absolutely convinced if Congress made available \$722 million in military assistance by the time I made—or sometime shortly thereafter — the South Vietnamese could stabilize the military situation in Vietnam today."

The President has struggled for months to persuade Congress to provide additional assistance to Vietnam and Cambodia and last week requested \$722 million in assistance for Vietnam.

Mr. Ford said that this country is not now in direct negotiations with Hanoi to seek a cease-fire in Vietnam. He said he did not believe that deposed Cambodian chief of state Prince Sihanouk was in a position to negotiate a Cambodian settlement.

Sihanouk is in Peking but his influence with the Khmer Rouge, the Communist-led insurgents in Cambodia, is not regarded as significant.

The United States will do what it can to bring about a Cambodian cease-fire, Mr. Ford said, adding that he is working through the signatories of the Paris accord of 1973 to bring about a cease-fire in South Vietnam.

On domestic issues, the President told the editors that the nation must make a "two-pronged" attack on inflation and recession.

"I don't think you can ignore one and over emphasize the other," he said.

Inflation is still a problem and will continue to be a problem even if further reduced, he said.

The President said he was "very concerned" about the "dangerous trends of our growing dependence and worsening dependence on overseas shipments of oil."

"The situation is going to get worse, not better, unless we find a way to develop all domestic sources including the outer continental shelf," he said.

Only last year, he said, domestic oil production was at the rate of roughly 10 million barrels a day and imports averaged 6 million barrels a day.

But now domestic production has decreased to about 9 million barrels a day and imports have increased to 7 million barrels a day, he said.

the outer continental oil fields "on all our coasts, in Alaska, on the Eastern seaboard, in the Gulf and off our West coast," he said.