

In Eyes of U.S., Ford Says, War in Indochina Is Ended

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By RICHARD L. MADDEN APR 24 1975
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NEW ORLEANS, April 25—President Ford, calling on the nation to develop an agenda for the future, declared today that the war in Indochina was finished "as far as America is concerned."

Mr. Ford urged the beginning of what he called "a great national reconciliation" and added:

"We are saddened, indeed, by events in Indochina. But these events, tragic as they are,

Excerpts from the President's speech are on Page 19.

portend neither the end of the world nor of America's leadership in the world. Some seem to feel that if we do not succeed in everything everywhere, then we have succeeded in nothing anywhere."

Mr. Ford said he rejected "such polarized thinking." He said the United States could and should help others to help themselves.

"But," he went on, "the fate of responsible men and women everywhere in the final decision rests in their own hands."

The President made his remarks in a speech prepared for delivery to the student body of Tulane University.

The speech was clearly intended to put an end to the debate over the nation's involvement in Indochina and the recent Communist successes while urging the United States

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to look instead to the future.

Ron Nessen, Mr. Ford's press secretary, said the Administration was not dropping its request to Congress for nearly \$1-billion in military and humanitarian aid for South Vietnam. He said the aid was still needed to stabilize the deteriorating situation there.

Mr. Ford noted that the

United States won with a victory over the British in New Orleans in 1815, two weeks after the signing in Europe of an armistice of the War of 1812. Thousands died, he said, because the combatants in the Battle of New Orleans had not got the word of the peace agreement.

"Today America can regain the sense of pride that existed before Vietnam," Mr. Ford said.

"But it cannot be achieved by refighting a war that is finished — as far as America is concerned," he said. "The time has come 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."

In New Orleans, he said, "a great battle was fought after a war was over."

"In New Orleans tonight," he continued, "we can begin a great national reconciliation. The first engagement must be with the problems of today—and of the future."

Continuing to sound the theme of "reconciliation, not recrimination" that he had used in a speech on Saturday in Concord, Mass., Mr. Ford asked today "that we stop refighting the battles and recriminations of the past." He added:

"I ask that we look now at what is right with America, at our possibilities and our potentialities for change and growth, and achievement, and sharing. I ask that we accept the responsibilities of leadership as a good neighbor to all peoples and the enemy of none. I ask that we strive to become, in the finest American tradition, something more tomorrow than we are today."

Ground-Breaking Ceremony

Mr. Ford flew to New Orleans this morning to take part in a ground-breaking ceremony for a museum to house memorabilia of Representative F. Edward Hébert, the 73-year-old Louisiana Democrat who was ousted last January as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. A large crowd, including many schoolchildren, applauded as the President put on a white hard hat and, with Mr. Hébert, turned a shovel of dirt at the site of the proposed library, which is adjacent to an amusement park.

Later, at a luncheon speech to the 73d annual convention of the Navy League at the Fairmont Hotel, Mr. Ford told a receptive audience that the nation could not afford any further cuts in defense spending without endangering national security.

"However good their intentions, those who claim that America is over-armed and over-spending on defense are dead wrong," he said.

Later, the President flew by helicopter to an offshore oil-drilling rig operated by the Gulf Oil Corporation 35 miles off the mouth of the Mississippi River.