

# Ford Ends 'Vietnam Era' and Terminates G.I. Wartime Benefits

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 7 — President Ford formally declared that today was the end of "the Vietnam era" in a proclamation ending wartime veterans benefits for new military recruits.

At the same time, the President sent to Congress legislation that would set June 30 as the final date on which an individual enlisting in the military could qualify for educational benefits under the G.I. bill.

"America is no longer at war," Mr. Ford said in a statement issued at the White House. "The time has now come to terminate wartime benefits which apply to the new peacetime volunteers."

The Presidential proclamation, issued two years after the withdrawal of American combat forces from Vietnam and one week after the fall of Saigon, was a formality that terminated such benefits as burial allowances and death pensions for individuals enlisting in the armed services after today.

Mr. Ford said that the action would save \$1.5-billion

the next five years without limiting the benefits due some 7 million Americans who served in uniform during the Vietnam war.

The action served, along with several other steps taken today by Mr. Ford, to underscore his statement at a news conference last night that the United States had learned "the lessons of the past in Vietnam" and should begin now to "look ahead."

The President also created a Cabinet committee to monitor increasingly large investments in the United States by foreign governments and corporations, including those in Arab oil producing nations.

### National Arthritis Month

Without referring specifically to controversial investments to combat the Arab oil embargo, Mr. Ford instructed the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce and the Treasury and White House economic aides to determine, among other matters, if foreign investments "might have major implications for United States national interests."

Two Administration officials testified coincidentally before the Senate Commerce Committee today that foreign investments posed no present risk and that restrictive legislation would not be in order. The officials were Jack F. Bennett, Under Secretary of the Treasury, and Thomas O. Ender, an Assistant Secretary of State.

The President also sent messages today to all Federal agencies encouraging bureaucrats to use "creative talents and skills" to generate ideas that might save money and energy for the government.

He proclaimed May to be National Arthritis month, announced his acceptance of an interview to take part Saturday in a celebrity golf tournament

in nearly Locust Grove, Va., and in yet another signal of a post-Vietnam tempo, held an informal Cabinet meeting this evening aboard the White House yacht, Sequoia.

### Opposition Possible

The Potomac River cruise was Mr. Ford's first on the Sequoia since he became President last August. Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, said that the agenda included the status of energy legislation and the request for \$507-million to resettle Vietnamese refugees, crime control proposals that Mr. Ford will send to Congress next month and the prospects for better relations with Democrats on Capitol Hill.

No Congressional action was

required to terminate the wartime veterans benefits, but Mr. Ford's request for an end to the educational assistance available under the G.I. bill could face serious opposition.

Senator Vance Hartke, Democrat of Indiana, who is chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, told reporters that it would "not only be shortsighted but would be contrary to the best interests of the nation" to cut off the educational benefits.

Mr. Ford contended that his request was in line with actions taken after World War II and the Korean War and that military pay scales established for the all-volunteer Army made enlistments attractive enough without continuing the G.I. benefits.