

## Mr. Ford's Illusion

In a desperate effort to shore up his request for a massive new dose of military aid to Saigon, President Ford has now told the world that the debacle in Vietnam was caused by the fact that the Soviet Union and Communist China honored their commitments, while the United States failed to do so. It is as incredible as it is inaccurate for the President of the United States to justify a bankrupt policy by portraying the two Communist superpowers as more trustworthy than the United States.

Disregarding all military and political realities in and around Saigon, President Ford told the American Society of Newspaper Editors that he remains "absolutely convinced" that the situation in South Vietnam could be "stabilized" if only Congress allowed him to infuse another \$722 million in military aid.

Neither the disaster in the wake of President Thieu's precipitate withdrawal from the Central Highlands nor the political isolation and governmental paralysis in the Presidential palace have changed Mr. Ford's faith in the storybook accounts warmed over once again by his policy advisers—that "now we are faced with this human tragedy" only because the United States is not making available "reasonable sums" for a few more years. Mr. Ford refuses to acknowledge that the collapse of South Vietnam's military leadership has deprived such an assessment of even the semblance of credibility.

These illusory views stand in the way of giving the proper priority to humanitarian concerns, the one area in which there is both need and opportunity for help. Mr. Ford appeared uncomprehending in his talk yesterday about the urgency of massive humanitarian and economic aid. The perfunctory attention that issue seems to be receiving at the White House makes it imperative for Congress to earmark specific appropriations for humanitarian purposes instead of merely giving "contingency" funds to an Administration whose mind still seems fixed on military solutions.

The United States has properly called on all the signatories to the 1973 Vietnam accord to end the bloodshed. While prospects for a favorable response to such pleas are at best far from bright, they are further dimmed as long as the President clings to his hopes for a military stabilization divorced from the prerequisite of basic political changes in Saigon.