

# The President Changes His Tune



**Jack Anderson**

**P**RESIDENT FORD has been trying delicately to extricate his foot from his mouth ever since the Saigon surrender.

The sudden collapse of South Vietnam caught him with some bygone rhetoric stuck in his throat. He has been obliged to make some quick revisions, to wit:

- The President had persistently sounded the warning that the United States would lose credibility with its other allies if more military aid weren't rushed to Saigon. The new line, according to our White House sources, is that U.S. credibility is still high and that our allies can depend upon U.S. commitments.

- The President had preached that a Communist victory in Vietnam would cause its Asian neighbors to fall like dominoes. Now he is spreading the word that he doesn't believe the domino theory after all.

- Mr. Ford had implied that Congress was to blame for South Vietnam's military reverses for refusing to vote more aid. This line was eagerly adopted by Saigon leaders looking for a scapegoat for their own mishandling of the war. Now the President is trying to correct the impression that the United States was responsible for the fall of South Vietnam.

- The President had called for an emergency appropriation of \$700 million in military aid to save Saigon. At the same time, the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged

that billions worth of military equipment should be hauled out of South Vietnam before it fell into Communist hands. It would have made the President look silly, however, to remove weapons while he was pushing for more military aid.

Therefore, U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin blocked U.S. forces from salvaging an enormous arsenal, which the Communists have now inherited. The irony is that the Communists now possess far more U.S. equipment than they ever received from their own Russian and Chinese allies. This contradicts still another Ford implication that Hanoi got more assistance than did Saigon.

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**C**HARLES COLSON, the former House tough guy and Christian, has his