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'Self-Destruct'

## Ford Worried by Attitude in U.S.

### Washington

President Ford says America is afflicted with "self-destruct" feelings and "there's no reason why it should be."

That, he says, "is what we've got to lick."

"We're condemning ourselves so much we're hurting ourselves when we should be doing just the opposite," Mr. Ford said in an interview last Monday with AP special correspondent Saul Pett on the return trip from Mexico.

Offering a thesis that suggests Americans suffer a malaise that has grown out of a vague masochism, not from the seeds of wrong policy or leaders who misled, Mr. Ford said, "The feeling that does worry me is this . . . There is a self-destruct kind of feeling (among Americans).

"I don't point the finger at the press or anyone. But you look at it. It sort of started when they were giving Jack Kennedy hell. You know, in the last days before the assassination . . ."

Mr. Ford was asked if by "they" he meant the press.

"Well, no. People in political life," he replied. "I wouldn't say the press in that case, but there was high criticism of Kennedy. And then it began really in an uphill crescendo toward LBJ and they drove him out of office, literally. Then, there was sort of a hiatus with Nixon. Then, because of Watergate, it just burst forward . . ."

In a refrain reminiscent of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, who said the country needs to talk less about what's wrong with America and more about what's right, Mr. Ford declared:

"And that's what we've got to overcome. There is no reason why it should be. I don't blame the press. I don't blame partisanship. Somehow, we've gotten that attitude, that we're condemning ourselves so much. We're hurting ourselves when we should be doing just the opposite."

Associated Press