



MEDIA REACTION REPORT

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OF CURRENT ISSUES SUBJ.

U.S. Statements on
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Summary

West European media reported President Ford's Florida press conference in the context of earlier statements by himself and Secretaries Kissinger and Schlesinger on the need for continued military aid to save the Phnom Penh and Saigon Governments.

A number of influential commentators were dubious about the Administration position in view of the foreign policy debate with Congress. The London Financial Times said "the tussle over military aid to Vietnam and Cambodia is only the latest of a growing number of conflicts between Congress and the Administration over American foreign policy, which (Mr. Kissinger) believes are undermining his diplomacy." A writer in Le Quotidien de Paris alleged that "the White House is no longer trying to maintain the regimes of Phnom Penh and Saigon. It merely wants to camouflage its defeat..."

On the other hand, many editors accepted the thesis that U.S. credibility is at stake. The London Daily Express declared that "if America fails to honor her obligations in Cambodia and South Vietnam, the Russians and Chinese could draw the conclusion that America will not honor her commitments anywhere. That would be very bad news indeed for Asia, the Middle East--and especially for Western Europe." Similar thoughts were expressed by Die Welt of Hamburg, Die Presse of Vienna and the Times of Malta.

Meanwhile, several East Asian editors stated immediate fears. Donga Ilbo of Seoul said U.S. failure to act would "generate psychological uneasiness and distrust among Asian allies."

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The Daily Telegraph

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