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The South Vietnamese on their own with our financial assistance, our military assistance have done very well; but the Congress did not fully fund the requested military assistance that was requested. I believe that if the Congress funds the additional money that I have proposed for this fiscal year and continues the money that I have recommended for next fiscal year, the South Vietnamese can and will be able to defend themselves against the aggressors from the North.

Q. The question is, if the Congress fails to do that, what options will you have then?

President Ford: I do not think that the time for me to answer that question is at the present. I, in the first place, believe Congress will fund the money that I have requested; and if they do, then I have no need to look at any other options, because they will be capable of defending themselves. The good judgment of the Congress will fund, the South Vietnamese will defend themselves, and I do not think there will be any other needed options.

President Ford's News Conference at Atlanta February 4 174

Following are excerpts relating to foreign policy from the transcript of a news conference held by President Ford at Atlanta, Ga., on February 4.¹

Q. In the last 24 hours you have spoken at length about domestic concerns. I would like to ask you what options you will have to help maintain a non-Communist government in Viet-Nam if the Congress does not go along with your supplemental appropriation request as well as this fiscal year '76 request for Viet-Nam?

President Ford: If the Congress does not respond to the requested additional military assistance for the current fiscal year, an amount which the Congress last year previously authorized, it will certainly complicate the military situation from the point of view of the South Vietnamese.

¹ For the complete transcript, see Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents dated Feb. 10, 1974.

Q. Mr. President, when you left Vladivostok in November, we were led to understand that General Secretary Brezhnev would be in Washington in May or June. The time is running short, a lot has happened in American-Soviet relations since then. Do you still look forward to welcoming Mr. Brezhnev just three or four months from now?

President Ford: Mr. Cormier [Frank Cormier, Associated Press], I look forward to having the General Secretary in the United States in the summer of 1975. The negotiations which we concluded in Vladivostok are moving along in the negotiations that are necessary to put the final draft. These negotiations are taking place in Geneva.

I see no reason why we cannot reconcile any of the relatively minor differences. The basic agreement is still in effect, and I am confident that we can welcome the General Secretary to the United States in the summer of 1975, and I look forward to it.