

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 29, 1976

Dear Ed:

I wish to inform you of my serious reservations regarding several provisions of H. R. 12203, the foreign assistance appropriations bill, which you will soon consider in conference committee.

The security assistance levels I requested for FY 76 and the Transition Quarter were subject to the most rigorous study and analysis before their submission, and in my judgment represent a balanced and adequate program, sufficient for the minimum needs of our friends abroad but within the budgetary limits required in a period of austerity at home. Accordingly, I must oppose both the significant reductions and additions which have been made to my original budget proposals.

I strongly oppose Senate action adding nearly \$800 million in program terms to my budget requests for Foreign Military Sales Credits and Security Supporting Assistance for the Transition Quarter. In formulating my proposals for FY 1976, I took into account the added requirements of the Transition Quarter. Although I would like to be able to do more for our allies and friends, I am firmly convinced that the total level of funds already requested in FY 1976, as distributed in my original request, are adequate to meet the minimum needs of the recipients without placing unacceptable strains on our budget. In view of pressing and unmet needs in other areas of the budget, such an increase in funding for FMS and Supporting Assistance in the Transition Quarter is not warranted. Moreover, its proposed narrow distribution--particularly when taken together with the cuts in MAP--will be seriously disruptive of our relations with many countries. I will regard as unacceptable foreign assistance appropriations which include such substantial and inequitably distributed additional funding.

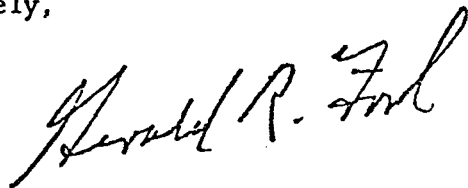
I am further deeply disturbed with the "express approval" requirement contained in Title I of the Senate bill. This provision represents an unwarranted and unconstitutional intrusion on the powers of the Executive Branch by attempting to substitute the judgment of

congressional committees for that of the Executive Branch agencies duly constituted to administer our foreign assistance programs. It raises the spectre of lengthy delays while individual projects or project amendments are reviewed in detail by congressional staffs, thus hampering the ability of the United States to respond rapidly to unpredictable changes in world events. Even if prior approval by the full Congress were appropriate, the provision is still constitutionally defective in that it delegates the legislative functions of the entire Congress to the respective committees. While we are fully prepared to keep the Congress informed of significant program changes during the fiscal year, the Senate provision is unacceptable and I would urge that it be stricken.

Finally, I am profoundly disappointed that both the Senate and House have approved only \$225.0 million for grant military assistance-- considerably below my requested level of \$394.5 million. This action will mean substantial cuts in many grant military aid programs of great importance to the United States. Serious reductions will be necessary in the program for Jordan, reducing the incentive for this moderate Arab country to play a helpful role in the Middle East; in the program for the Philippines, where pending base negotiations could be jeopardized; and in the Korean program, inhibiting that country's progress toward military self-sufficiency and weakening it in face of the Communist threat. Many other important country programs will suffer as well, to the detriment of our foreign policy interests. This deep cut can only be seen abroad as a further sign that the United States is no longer willing to stand behind commitments of long-standing to its friends and allies, at a time when our national will is already being questioned by both friend and foe.

I hope you, as conferees, will bear these reservations in mind as you consider the bills and that your deliberations will produce acceptable legislation which I can sign.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Edward W. Brooke
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

*Sent to Inouye, Passman
& Shriver*