

Ford's Strong Defense of Kissinger

FORD
AD

Chicago

President Ford, in a final day of campaigning here before Tuesday's Illinois primary, yesterday strongly defended Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who increasingly is becoming a central issue in the presidential campaign.

Answering questions before 2500 students and faculty members at Wheaton College west of here, the President said U.S. foreign policy "is moving forward constructively."

"Under those circumstances," he said, "I would not, under any circumstances, want Henry Kissinger to quit, period."

The President also told the Wheaton audience that he considers Kissinger "one of the great secretaries of state."

Later, in a speech at the Palmer House before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Ford said that Kissinger and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld — often thought of as rivals within the Ford Administration — are working together smoothly "carrying out a single United States policy."

Kissinger has come under increasingly sharper attack as the presidential primary campaigning has continued, first from Mr. Ford's Republican rival, Ronald Reagan, and more recently from Democratic presidential contenders Senator Henry Jackson (DemWash.) and former Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter.

Kissinger interjected himself into the campaign rhetoric Thursday in a speech in Boston.

Without mentioning any of the President's political rivals by name, Kissinger called for an end to divisions over foreign policy. He said the combined weight of criticism from both liberals and conservatives could wreck the United States' ability to conduct foreign policy and lead to "paralysis."

Mr. Ford picked up that same theme while campaigning here yesterday. He told the Council on Foreign Relations, in answer to a question, that he "regrets" that foreign policy has become embroiled in the primary races.

"When we have deep divisions in our country over foreign policy, our allies begin to question what direction America is going, our adversaries are tempted to exploit or seek to exploit what they see as weaknesses."

Most of the criticism of the

President and Kissinger has come from conservative candidates Reagan and Jackson. They contend the United States has fallen behind the Soviet Union in military strength and has received little in return for its policy of detente toward the Soviets.

To counter that criticism, Mr. Ford yesterday stressed hard-line stances on defense and foreign policy issues while attempting to explain what has become, in effect, his campaign slogan on foreign policy — "peace through strength."

Employing some of the sternest language he has used so far, the President said at Wheaton College that the United States will not tolerate additional military actions by the Soviet Union or Cuba in Africa, particularly in Rhodesia, considered a likely next target for Soviet- and Cuban-backed insurgents.

"We have all kinds of contingency plans for all kinds of potential action that might be taken by the Soviet Union or Cuba . . ." he said. "I can assure you that we will strongly oppose any action by the Soviet Union and Cuba because that is pure international adventurism. The problems ought to be solved differently, and we are working to help in that regard."

Washington Post