

By Marilyn Berger

Washington Post Staff Writer

As one of his first official acts, President Ford yesterday met with envoys from 57 countries to assure them that American foreign policy would remain on course.

Throughout the afternoon and early evening at the White House, the new President dropped into meetings set up by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to chat first with diplomats from NATO, then with Arab and North African ambassadors, and finally with Latin American envoys. He met separately in the Oval Office with the ambassadors from Japan, China, Israel, Vietnam and the charge d'affaires of the Soviet Union.

Underlining the vote of confidence he had given Kissinger the night before by naming him as the first man he had asked to stay on, Mr. Ford told the group of Arab envoys: "I'll rely on Henry for all the tough international negotiations."

Apparently at ease in his new surroundings, Mr. Ford talked informally during each meeting. He, too, he said, had had experience in negotiations — 25 years in Congress. "You had to negotiate not only with the opposition but with your own party sometimes," the President recalled.

To the head of the Chinese liaison office, Ambassador Huang Chen, whom he received in his office, Mr.

Ford remarked that Kissinger — who says that the more he negotiates the more he eats — is on a diet. "I have a rule," Mr. Ford told Huang, "I don't go to embassies for dinner. But that doesn't apply to the liaison office." Mr. Ford recalled that he had visited China in 1972.

One diplomat noted what an extraordinary day this had been for the United States. "A hard day," Mr. Ford replied, "but we have to go through these more difficult times."

Many of the diplomats who came to the White House were their country's charges d'affaires, August

being a traditional time for the ambassadors to take their holidays.

In the group meetings Kissinger first met with the envoys and assured them that the policies that had been carried on under the Nixon administration would be continued. Then the President came in to chat and to be introduced to the envoys. Mr. Ford went around the table shaking hands and talking to each person.

"The President along with Secretary Kissinger underlined the continuity of bipartisan American foreign policy," White House press spokesman Jerald T. TerHorst said. With the NATO

group, Mr. Ford "underlined the fact that NATO is the central element in our foreign policy" and that the principles of the declaration recently signed would continue to serve as a basis for American participation.

NATO diplomats expressed gratification with the rapidity with which Kissinger brought them together and the swiftness with which Mr. Ford saw them to underline the importance of the alliance.

To the Arab envoys who met in the Roosevelt Room, Mr. Ford again sought to emphasize the continuity of policy and his desire to achieve a lasting, durable peace and friendship with all of these countries, according to one of the ambassadors present.

With Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz there were reminiscences of meeting with Yitzhak Rabin when he was the envoy here, before becoming Prime Minister. Of the Israeli President, Ephraim Katzir, Kissinger noted that he was a distinguished scientist. "You don't trust us politicians," Ford said.

TerHorst said that Kissinger has been asked to remain in his post as head of the National Security Council, as well as in the job of first Cabinet Minister, Secretary of State. Thus Kissinger will continue to wear two hats.

Egyptian Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal told Mr.

Ford that "it has certainly been a tremendous decision that Henry Kissinger will continue. He has earned the esteem, respect and affection of everyone in the world." The President responded that "in the United States the overwhelming majority of people feel the same way."

When Soviet charge d'affaires Yull M. Vorontsov came into the Oval Office, Mr. Ford chatted about So-

viet Communist Party leader Leonid M. Brezhnev and Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin, who has been envoy to the United States since 1962. "He seems to go on and on," Mr. Ford observed. "He must have started when he was 17," Vorontsov quipped.

Today Kissinger will meet with other envoys and will be assisted in the task by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Ingersoll and Under

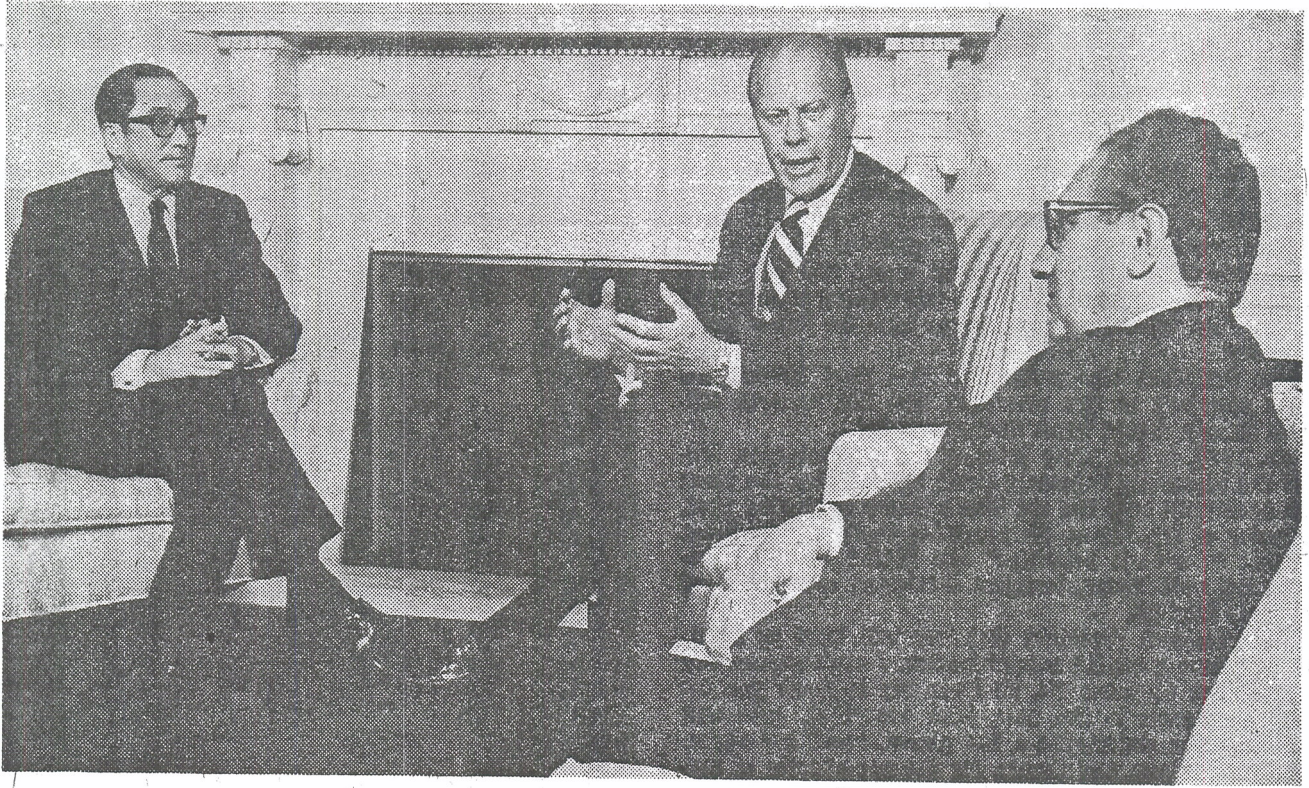
Secretary Joseph J. Sisco.

TerHorst said that Mr. Ford had begun sending letters to heads of state around the world, again reaffirming the basic continuity of American foreign policy. The letters went to key allies as well as to China and the Soviet Union.

State Department spokesman Robert Anderson said that the secretary also is sending messages to all foreign ministers, again also

to emphasize the continuity of American foreign policy.

But a message had also gone out to all overseas State Department posts reminding political appointees to submit pro forma resignations. There has been no thought given to which of these will be accepted, informed officials said, but with the repeated emphasis on continuity no one is expecting changes very rapidly.



Photos by Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

**President Ford chats with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Japanese Ambassador Takeshi Yasukawa.**