

Ford Assures Other Nations

Washington

Ambassadors from 57 nations went to the White House yesterday to be assured by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger that U.S. foreign policy remains basically unchanged.

President Ford, sitting in on some of the sessions, declared: "I'll rely on Henry for all the tough international negotiations."

He said he was keeping Kissinger on as head of National Security Council also.

At the State Department, messages went out to all the countries in the world, emphasizing continuity despite former President Nixon's abrupt departure.

Mr. Ford began his first day at the White House receiving an hour-long foreign policy briefing from Kissinger, whose already immense authority evidently will be expanded under the relatively inexperienced new President.

The country-by-country assurances began with envoys from all the NATO allies except Luxembourg, then proceeded on to Japan,

the Soviet Union, 15 Arab states, the People's Republic of China, 24 Latin American nations, Israel and South Vietnam.

Mr. Ford's new press secretary Jerald F. TerHorst said both the President and Kissinger "underlined the fact that NATO is the central element in our foreign policy."

TerHorst announced that Donald Rumsfeld, the ambassador to NATO, would be temporarily withdrawn to help Mr. Ford in his transitional period.

The President spent some time conferring with the Arab ministers. Recalling his 25 years in Congress, he said that "negotiating not only with opponents but with your own party is difficult, too."

He then assured them that Kissinger will direct Middle East negotiations as he did for Mr. Nixon. Egypt's Ashraf Ghorbal responded: "Dr. Kissinger has gained the esteem of everyone."

Ford agreed. "The overwhelming majority of people feel the same way," he said.

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