

President and Kissinger Confer With the Envoys of 60 Nations

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 9 — President Ford undertook to convince foreign governments today that he would pursue the same foreign policy objectives that brought respect to Richard M. Nixon abroad.

Two hours after taking the oath as President, Mr. Ford assisted by Secretary of State Kissinger, who will retain his office, began meeting with about 60 envoys—some in groups and some individually—in brief sessions that lasted into the early evening.

The substance of what was said was, in general, a reaffirmation of well-known American policy positions. But Mr.

Ford and Mr. Kissinger believed the exercise to be necessary to emphasize that there would be no significant change during the transition period in which Mr. Ford, who is less experienced in foreign affairs than his predecessor, makes his leadership felt.

Priority was given to a group meeting in the Roosevelt Room of the White House with members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In a pattern followed in the other sessions, Mr. Kissinger and members of his staff met with 13 envoys for about 20 minutes

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and then Mr. Ford entered, was introduced to those present — Luxembourg's envoy was absent — and made some general comments.

He told the NATO diplomats, according to one who participated, that the alliance was the basis of American foreign policy and that he intended to live up to the declaration of principles on allied cooperation signed by Mr. Nixon in Brussels in June.

"We all know that internal affairs is probably the President's main interest," a European envoy said, "but everyone appreciated that only two hours after taking over he saw and greeted the NATO chiefs of mission. That's the most important point."

The new President, aware

that he is considered to be deficient in expertise on foreign policy, has made it clear that he intends to rely heavily on Mr. Kissinger to guide the nation's foreign affairs. His announcement last night, before being sworn in, that Mr. Kissinger was staying on, was meant to demonstrate Mr. Ford's faith in the Nixon Administration's foreign policy.

Several diplomats and State Department officials said that the heavy stress of the past 24 hours on continuity in foreign policy was designed to head off apprehension both in allied capitals and in Moscow and Peking.

On the other hand, experts interviewed today expressed the belief that Mr. Ford will inevitably begin to leave his imprint, just as his predecessors did.

For instance, a State Department official noted, he will have to make some fairly quick decisions on Indochina. Congress had indicated that it plans a sharp cut in the Nixon Administration's aid request of more than \$3-billion. The official, who supports a big aid program, asked, Will Mr. Ford follow Mr. Nixon's lead — backed up by Mr. Kissinger — and argue strongly for a major aid program or will he stay away from Vietnam-related issues for domestic political reasons and avoid identification with that controversial area?

In the session with the 15 Arab diplomats, Mr. Ford, in the presence of newsmen, recalled his 25 years in Congress and said, "Negotiating not only with opponents but with your own party is difficult, too."

He then assured them that Mr. Kissinger would continue to conduct Middle East negotiations as he did for Mr. Nixon.

Middle East Problems

This led Egypt's Ambassador, Dr. Ashraf Ghorbal, to respond: "Dr. Kissinger has gained the esteem of everyone."

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

With the Japanese Ambassador, Takeshi Yasukawa, Mr. Ford, who met with 10 members of Japan's parliament earlier in the week, said, "I didn't know you had so many parties." The Ambassador politely said that Mr. Ford had answered their questions well.

The President also has a major task in persuading the Arab Governments that he will be as even-handed on Middle East problems as Mr. Nixon has been in the last eight months. The Ford Administration's Mid-

dle East policy will get its first test in the coming week when the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmy, and King Hussein of Jordan arrive separately for talks.

The Arabs have expressed concern because of Mr. Ford's frequent speeches on behalf of Israel. Like most Congressmen he has supported a strong Israel, but his aides have insisted that this did not preclude support efforts to attain a Middle East settlement and to improve American ties with the Arab world.

After the meeting with the NATO envoys, Mr. Ford and Mr. Kissinger conferred in succession with the ambassadors or heads of mission from the following: Japan, the Soviet Union, the Middle East nations except Israel, China, the Latin-American nations, Israel and South Vietnam.

Mr. Kissinger and his top aides, Robert S. Ingersoll, Deputy Secretary, and Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, will meet with other representatives at the State Department tomorrow. The Africans were among those not represented today.

The new Administration has also begun sending messages to heads of governments and to foreign ministers affirming policy.

The meeting with the Soviet chargé d'affaires, Yuli M. Vorontsov, was regarded as important by American officials, who were aware of concern in Moscow over the viability of the détente policy under the new Administration.

Meanwhile, Nixon photographs in the corridor to the President's office have been replaced by those of Mr. Ford, meeting with, among others, the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, who is on vacation at home.

Mr. Ford had also met the Chinese Ambassador, Huang Chen, in connection with his trip to China in 1972 while minority leader of the House of Representatives and at Washington dinners.

Mr. Ford has indicated that he will keep the foreign-policy machinery intact, at least for the moment. He has asked Mr. Kissinger to retain his other hat as special assistant to the President for national security affairs, which means that he directs the National Security Council staff as well as the State Department.

Maj. Gen. Brent Scowcroft will remain as the deputy director of the National Security Council staff.