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SEPTEMBER 1, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary
-----THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The interim agreement being initialed by Egypt and Israel this evening reduces the risk of war in the Middle East and provides fresh opportunities for further progress toward peace for a troubled area whose turmoil has affected the lives and prosperity of peoples of all nations.

Under the agreement Israel will withdraw its forces from the Sinai Passes and oil fields, both parties agree not to resort to force, and to continue their efforts to negotiate a final peace settlement. I have consistently worked for this outcome. I am deeply gratified by it and proud of the contribution America has made. By reducing the dangers of military and economic warfare this agreement is of great significance for the well-being of every American.

The Parties have taken an important and indispensable step on the long and hard road to peace. The countries concerned made clear that they wanted America's effort to continue. Following my meetings with President Sadat in Salzburg and with Prime Minister Rabin in Washington, the United States intensified its active mediation.

The agreement is fair and balanced, and we hope that as a further practical test of peace on the ground it will contribute to building the confidence between the two sides which is required if ultimate peace is to be achieved.

The United States does not consider this agreement an end in itself, and it is strongly committed to continue to help make progress on all aspects of the problem.

I will be speaking personally with Prime Minister Rabin of Israel and President Sadat of Egypt to congratulate them on their leadership and statesmanship which in large measure made the agreement possible. I commend Secretary Kissinger for his tireless efforts in bringing about a successful conclusion to the negotiations.

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