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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON DEPARTURE OF  
SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER

THE SOUTH LAWN

10:15 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I have asked Secretary Kissinger, as we announced yesterday, to go to Southern Africa. It is a very important mission. It has many complicated elements in it.

It involves tremendous risks, but it is my strong feeling that the United States can play a constructive role. We have to work with the various parties to sort out the complex issues, and we can be helpful.

There is no assurance of success, but it is worth the risk, I think, for world peace on a continent that is vitally important to all of us. It seems to me that this is an area of the world where the Africans should basically settle African problems without the involvement directly of either the United States, the Soviet Union, Cuba or any outside nation.

It is a mission that has high risks, but, if successful, will be tremendously important in the years ahead for all the peoples of the world, particularly the Africans.

I wish you well, Henry. I will walk you to the car.

QUESTION: Mr. Carter has been saying within the last couple of days that you are spending too much time hiding in the White House and not out among the people.

THE PRESIDENT: My answer is that again, he is being somewhat inconsistent. A few weeks ago, I think early in August, he was complaining because I was campaigning too much and not spending enough time on Government business, and now that I am spending virtually 100 percent of my time on being President he is being critical of the fact that I am not out politicking.

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As I said before, I think his positions are inconsistent here as they have been in many other cases, and I repeat what I have said many times -- that the President ought to be President and get that job done and politic, if and when he can, on the side.

QUESTION: What about the abortion issue, Mr. President? I think he has accused you of exploiting it.

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. My position on this very emotional and very vital issue has been well-known. I have not brought it up. It is a position that the American people are interested in and his views and mine ought to be set forth on the record. I have done it, and I trust he will.

Thank you all very much.

END (AT 10:19 A.M. EDT)