

'Selfie' diplomacy: Michelle Obama looks unamused by Barack's joking with Danish prime minister

First lady appears to fail to see the funny side as her husband takes a 'selfie' with Helle Thorning-Schmidt and David Cameron

Raf Sanchez in Washington

6:38PM GMT 10 Dec 2013

For a memorial service it was a remarkably jovial scene: Barack Obama, David Cameron and Helle Thorning-Schmidt, the Danish prime minister, huddled together for a smart phone photograph.

But one person looked distinctly less amused by the world leaders' "selfie" - Michelle Obama.

The First Lady stared straight ahead, hands clasped in her lap, while her husband laughed with the Europeans at Nelson Mandela's memorial in Johannesburg.

Another photograph shows her looking on, unsmiling, as Mr Obama shared a joke with Ms Thorning-Schmidt and patted her on the shoulder.



In a later photograph, the Obamas appeared to have switched seats with the First Lady separating her husband from the Danish prime minister.

The joking appears to have stopped by then, with Mrs Obama's back turned slightly to Ms Thorning-Schmidt and Mr Obama staring determinedly ahead.

The Scandinavian leader meanwhile looks down at what appears to be her phone.





Ms Thorning-Schmidt is married to Stephen Kinnock, the son of former Labour leader Neil Kinnock.

The interaction between the Obamas and Ms Thorning-Schmidt was closely monitored by three of the President's closest aides - Susan Rice, the White House National Security advisor; Valerie Jarrett, a senior advisor; and Eric Holder; the US attorney general - who were sat behind.

The gathering of world leaders at the 95,000 capacity FNB Stadium is thought to be the largest since Winston Churchill's 1965 state funeral.

Mr Cameron defended posing for the photograph during Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday.