

SECRET
 Press Coverage
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I S R A E L

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REPORTAGE, COMMENT ON KISSINGER VISIT, POW LIST RELEASE

Kissinger's Arrival Statement

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 27 Feb 74 M

[Text] Henry Kissinger arrived in Israel from Damascus about three quarters of an hour ago, and after landing at Ben-Gurion airport said that good progress had been made in Damascus on several of the subjects which are of great interest to Israel. He said he was going to meet Prime Minister Mrs Meir in Jerusalem, and she will decide the proper time for the release of the information he has brought with him. Dr Kissinger added that his talks in Israel will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendship and trust, as was the rule during the disengagement of forces talks with Egypt. He expressed his hope that the results will be similarly successful. He was received at the airport by Foreign Minister Abba Eban, U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Keating and officials from the Foreign Office. Dr Kissinger and his party are now arriving in Jerusalem.

Radio on Prospects for Negotiations

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1705 GMT 27 Feb 74 M

[Text] The prime minister and Ministers Allon, Dayan, and Eban have been meeting for a few hours with Dr Kissinger and his party at the prime minister's office in Jerusalem. Chief of Staff Lt Gen David El'azar and Ambassador Simcha Dinitz are also taking part in the meeting. We shall now switch over to our political correspondent Arye Mekel:

[Mekel] The details reported in the news, quoting the White House spokesman, are also known here in the prime minister's office. These are that Dr Kissinger has brought from Damascus a list of the Israeli prisoners containing 65 names. Mrs Meir is expected to make a public address this evening on this matter.

The meeting, which began about 90 minutes ago, between Dr Kissinger, and his aides and Prime Minister Golda Meir, Ministers Allon, Eban, and Dayan, the chief of staff and senior officials is continuing. Before this meeting started, Mrs Meir had a 60-minute meeting with Dr Kissinger, at which Ambassador Dinitz was the only other participant.

Now that the list of the Israeli prisoners is in Israel, and after the Red Cross visits the prisoners the day after tomorrow, it appears that the door will be open for actual negotiations between Israel and Syria on separation of forces. The cabinet will apparently meet tomorrow to formulate proposals on a separation of forces with Syria. When Kissinger arrives for his second visit to Israel on Friday morning he will receive the Israeli proposals and will pass them to Damascus.

This evening Mrs Meir will hold what is described as a working dinner at her house in honor of Dr Kissinger. Ministers Alon, Eban, and Dayan as well as Minister Moshe Qol will take part in the working dinner.

It is almost certain now that the principles of negotiations for a separation of forces between Israel and Syria are being discussed at the prime minister's office. I will only recall that Israel believes that the separation line should pass within the territory taken in the Yom Kippur war by the IDF.

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As for the place where the negotiations might take place, Israel is apparently prepared to be flexible, and it will agree to talks at any point on the Al-Qunaytirah-Damascus road or in Geneva.

Meir Announcement on POW List

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 27 Feb 74 M

[Prime Minister Golda Meir statement--recorded]

[Text] Good evening. As has already been reported, U.S. Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger arrived in Jerusalem from Damascus today within the framework of his efforts to promote an agreement between Israel and Syria on a separation of forces. I am happy to announce to you that Dr Kissinger brought with him and had been authorized by the Syrian Government to submit to us the list of all of our soldiers now held in Syrian captivity. The list contains 65 names. The Syrian Government promised that the Red Cross will begin visiting our prisoners on Friday. The IDF has notified every one of the families.

The people of Israel have been living with great concern for the prisoners in Syria. We have all identified ourselves with the great concern of some families for their beloved ones from the time of the news about their captivity until the receipt of the report that they are still alive. But this joy is mixed with sorrow. We all share the great pain of those families who learned today that their sons are not included in the list.

We greatly appreciate the receipt of this list of our prisoners, since this is the first authoritative news that they are still alive. I hope that this is a first step toward their release and return home. We shall not relax our efforts until every one of our sons is released from captivity.

When the cease-fire came into effect, we proposed to the government of Syria that an exchange of prisoners be carried out. But Syria has not yet accepted our proposal. We are holding 286 prisoners--Syrian and others, soldiers and officers. I declare once again that we are prepared to carry out an exchange of prisoners at any time.

I am informed by the general staff that on 27 February 1974 the number of our missing soldiers on the Syrian front was 80 men. Sixty-two of the 65 names on the list we received are IDF soldiers, and the other three are Arab citizens. There are 18 men who are still missing. We have evidence that some of them fell in the battles. Efforts will be continued to secure precise information on the fate of each one.

We are all thankful to the U.S. secretary of state, Dr Kissinger. He deserves our full appreciation for his unrelenting efforts to secure the list of the prisoners, to insure Red Cross visits, and to secure an exchange of prisoners. Our thanks also go to all the political and public elements in the world and to various figures and organizations who raised their voice for the release of our prisoners.

Dr Kissinger arrived in Israel today within the framework of his efforts to secure an agreement on the separation of forces on the Syrian front. Israel is prepared to assist in achieving this aim. On 1 March we shall convey to Dr Kissinger our ideas concerning the separation of Israeli and Syrian forces in order to personally pass them to the Government of Syria.

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The receipt of the list was the result of our unceasing efforts. We shall continue our efforts until the complete release of all of our prisoners is secured.

[The radio announcer then reads the names of the prisoners in the list submitted by Syria]

Expectation of Prisoner Exchange

Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 2230 GMT 27 Feb 74 M

[Text] A senior official accompanying American Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger said in Jerusalem tonight that the exchange of prisoners between Israel and Syria will take place within the troop disengagement agreement on the Golan Heights. The spokesman said that Dr Kissinger and a number of Israeli officials knew about the number of Israeli prisoners in Syria last week but decided not to make it public until the list of names of these prisoners is presented.

Red Cross Awaits Permission

Jerusalem International Service in English 0500 GMT 28 Feb 74 L

[Text] The International Red Cross Committee in Geneva last night said it has not yet been informed of Syria's decision to let the Red Cross visit Israeli war prisoners. A spokesman said they had no confirmation at headquarters in Geneva or from Red Cross representatives in the Middle East of the new development. Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad has promised American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that such visits would be permitted.

Press Comment on POW Issue

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 28 Feb 74 M

[Press review]

[Excerpts] Most papers write about the feelings of relief and joy at the receipt of the list of the Israeli prisoners of war--a joy mixed with sorrow for all those whose names are not included in the list. The papers point out that Israel will now have to work for the complete release of the prisoners.

AL HAMISHMAR hopes that with the active help of world opinion coupled with Israel's steadfast stand, the prisoners will soon be released. The paper concludes from the response of the Syrians to Israel's demands that the Syrians are somewhat prepared for a settlement.

HA'AREZ stresses that all the prisoners should rightly be returned to Israel before the start of a separation of forces. As part of a military agreement Israel will agree to a compromise whereby the IDF will withdraw from the northern end of the enclave captured in the October war and a buffer zone will be established between the two armies. Anyhow, it is clear that under no circumstances will Israel give up the Golan Heights.

The Jerusalem POST says that the submission of the list of prisoners yesterday will make it possible to start disengagement talks with Syria, but the paper fears that the Syrians will now attempt to extract concessions from Israel in return for the repatriation of the prisoners. The paper expresses certain optimism regarding the possibility of reaching a settlement with the Syrians in view of the interests which all the parties involved have in such a settlement.

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DAVAR also draws attention to the pledge regarding an exchange of prisoners which Dr Kissinger gave in October without any connection with a separation of forces but because of our agreement to a cease-fire. The paper stresses that a separation of forces agreement should not be tied in with an exchange of prisoners, which should be carried out prior to any settlement.

HAZOFE expresses the fear that the prisoner issue will be the subject of bargaining in a partial or an overall political settlement. In the paper's opinion, we must not allow the Syrians to exploit our sensitivity toward the prisoner problem, and we must not display weakness on this matter.

SHE'ARIM says that Kissinger's visit will indicate to what degree the United States is prepared to exert pressure on Israel and to force it to make concessions to Syria. One thing is clear: If the United States exerts painful pressure on Israel for the good of Damascus, this will be contemptuous of the United States and all people will realize that this is submission to the oil blackmail.

Kissinger Leaves Israel

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 28 Feb 74 M

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger and his party left Ben-Gurion Airport about 40 minutes ago on their way to Cairo. Our correspondent says that heavy rain fell from Jerusalem to Lod which slowed down the convoy taking Dr Kissinger to the airport. Dr Kissinger was seen off at the airport by Foreign Minister Abba Eban, U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Keating and Israeli ambassador in Washington Simcha Dinitz.

Our correspondent has learned that Dr Kissinger will return to Israel tomorrow at 1045, and will spend about 6 hours in the country, after which he will leave for Damascus.

MEIR GRANTED EXTENSION FOR CABINET FORMATION

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1200 GMT 27 Feb 74 M

[Text] Prime Minister Golda Meir has made known to President Professor Efrayim Katzir that she is still attempting to form a new cabinet and reported to him her plans about the distribution of portfolios. The report, delivered to the president by messenger, says that the premier is still trying to join ministers from the National Religious Party and a number of Alignment representatives. The prime minister intends to present the new cabinet to the Knesset on 5 March. Consequently, the president decided to grant the premier a 1-week extension to enable her to execute her plans.