

WASHINGTON DATELINE

By TRUDE B. FELDMAN

ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

Golda Meir conferred with President Nixon for 95 minutes in the White House Oval Office last week. It was the fourth time the President received the Prime Minister since he has been Chief Executive, and she, Israel's Premier. Their previous meetings were September, 1969; September, 1970, and December, 1971.

Sitting in the meeting were Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin; Ambassador-designate from Israel to the U. S., Simcha Dinitz; Presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, and his assistant, Gen. Brent Scowcroft, who is also Military Assistant to the President.

During the chit-chat period, the President told Mrs. Meir that he hopes she will make "good use" of Gen. Rabin when he returns to Israel this month. She quipped: "We'll see how he behaves when he comes home."

Mr. Nixon recalled how he first met Rabin. "It was--let's see--in my suite at The Mayflower Hotel here in Washington--wasn't it?" the President asked. "He had just come from Israel and it was during the Presidential campaign in 1968. . . ."

Rabin was celebrating his 51st birthday that day, and Mr. Nixon also commented that he didn't look his age.

As photographers clicked away, the President remarked that they had taken pictures of the two during prior visits. This prompted Mrs. Meir to say: "They want to see if there are any changes. . . ."

Prior to the meeting, Presidential Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said Mr. Nixon wanted to hear Mrs. Meir's views about the possibilities for peace in the Middle East. After their conference, he characterized the talks as candid and useful both to the U. S. and to Israel. He said they were conducted in the friendly atmosphere--which is the "usual atmosphere that exists when Mrs. Meir and Mr. Nixon hold discussions. . . ."

"The President and Mrs. Meir discussed the

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present situation in the Mideast," he said, "and particular ways of moving toward peace. The President assured Mrs. Meir of continuing U. S. support."

Mrs. Meir expressed appreciation for past U. S. assistance and described Israel's present military and economic position. The U. S. provides Israel with economic and military support, PL 480 programs and various credit assistance programs.

"There has been a period of long confrontation in the Mideast," said Ziegler, "and we should not expect immediate solutions, but as the President has said, 'we're interested in doing what we can to contribute to a peaceful solution to the situation.'"

Asked if, as a result of the meetings with King Hussein, with Egyptian National Security adviser Ismail and with Golda Meir, the President now believes we are going to move off dead center, Ziegler said: "We're going to remain in contact, and as a result of these very constructive discussions, it would not be advisable to expect any easy or instant or immediate results. The objective remains one of what we can contribute to moving toward peace in the area."

He added that the U. S. position is still that there cannot be a final settlement without direct talks between the parties involved.

Ziegler said that we've had a long period where the hostilities have been quite low and that the President is hopeful that the situation will continue and that the area will move to a position where a settlement can be reached.

Mrs. Meir also met with Defense Secretary Elliot Richardson at the Pentagon; with Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush and Joseph J. Sisco of the Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs office of the State Department. They later joined Henry Kissinger, Leonard Garment of the White House; and Jacob Stein, chairman of the American Conference of Major Jewish Organizations and President of United Synagogue of America, at a black-tie dinner in Mrs. Meir's honor at the Israeli Ambassador's residence. Also at the affair were Sen. and Mrs. Hubert Humphrey, Sen. and Mrs. Henry Jackson; Sen. and Mrs. Charles Percy; Sen. and Mrs. Abraham Ribicoff;

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and Arthur Goldberg, former ambassador to the United Nations and a former associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Premier spent one of her four evenings in the nation's capital with members of the Israeli Embassy Staff and their families. She chatted with them on "light" subjects and told them various stories about her travels as they sat around her at the Ambassador's residence. Among the topics she covered in her 2-hour session in Hebrew was the speculation on her alleged meeting with King Hussein. She explained why the speculation existed--mainly because she had a "free" day and the Jordanian Monarch was in Washington on that same "free" day.

At week's end, Mrs. Meir left Washington in a grand mood and with the assurance that her visit was very successful. She said she was exceptionally delighted at President Nixon's warmth and kindness towards her and the White House State dinner in her honor was a very special evening in which she had a chance to relax--after four hectic days--and listen to Van Cliburn on the piano.



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