

**WASHINGTON DATELINE**

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN

**ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT**

On May 24 Zalman Shazar will step down as Israel's third president. The 83-year-old scholar has served as president of the 25-year-old Jewish state for ten years.

"The ten years have been long and difficult ones; yet very fruitful," President Shazar said in an interview at The Mayflower here. "I'm glad I could be president, but two terms are enough. I want to leave the presidency while I'm still in form. I have much to do—I'm writing and preparing two more books. . . ."

Shazar, a man of letters, is the author of political and historical books as well as his recent memoris. He also writes poetry on a variety of subjects. He even wrote one about President Nixon, who received him when he came to represent Israel at Harry Truman's Memorial Service. (He also was here for Lyndon Johnson's funeral services.)

The Israeli president was particularly impressed when Secretary of State William Rogers arranged his visit with President Nixon early on that Friday so that he was back at his hotel before the Sabbath began. He said that Mr. Rogers and Mr. Nixon were informed, and showed interest, in the reasons for the scheduling.

During an earlier visit with President Nixon, Shazar had met Dr. Henry Kissinger. During the exclusive interview, Shazar said it would be "a great thing" if Dr. Kissinger would now be "real concerned" about problems in the Middle East.

"Dr. Kissinger has an honest reputation," Shazar said, "and I think he will give good advice on the Mideast. We have common friends and he is talked about very highly. He certainly did an excellent job in Vietnam. He was successful, and the results are good; but there is still much to do there. I hope he will try for similar results in the Mideast."

Asked if the Vietnam settlement could possibly help to expedite peace in the Mideast, Shazar said that the settlement will help "all of mankind".

"It's something like a pattern, like an estab-

lished relationship. It's a great help from the point of view of direct conversations and negotiations. It may take a long time, but the idea is now planted that the nearest way to peace is direct conversations.

"I hope the Vietnam agreement helps every nation in conflict to find a lasting peace. Yes, with that agreement, we are now much nearer to peace in the Middle East."

Shazar indicated that President Nixon also has high hopes for a Middle East settlement in light of the latest Vietnam negotiations. He also said President Nixon would now turn his attention toward the Mideast.

"I believe there will eventually be peace in the Mideast," he said. "We're closer now than ever before. . . .in my ten-year tenure."

As for his wishes for Israel on her 25th birthday, he said: "I would like to have peace with Israel and the Arabs, a great immigration from the Soviet Union and also one from American Jewry to Israel. We need, and are prepared, to take in every one. I especially want young people because they are the future of Israel."

The Israeli President, who often visits for hours at a time with Mrs. Meir, fervently hopes that she will not retire from the premiership this year. "She's doing a wonderful job," he said. "I know of no one who can replace her leadership. It would be a disaster if she leaves now. . . .because we very much need the hand of Golda. . . ."

A Zionist for 60 years, Shazar had not often meddled in politics. The presidency of Israel is not a political position. He accepts foreign ambassadors' credentials, signs treaties and laws, and represents the country in various ceremonial activities.

Zalman Shazar does not like to talk about himself. His aide de camp described him as being sensitive to everything and everyone surrounding him.

"He has a surplus of warmth to give," Col. Yarkonia said, "and he also needs love and affection. He is a wise and brilliant man who is often tempted to write poetry. But because he is an artist and poet, he also has a temper like one. He is easy to work with, yet a demanding person. He has a fantastic memory, as well as

the ability to swiftly size up a situation." The aide added that Shazar placed more importance on his scholarly work than he did on the presidency.

On his recent trip to Washington, D. C., Shazar visited the Library of Congress. There, 20 years ago, as head of the Cultural Department of the Zionist Organization, he began to develop a collection on Israel and her presidents. He said the Library now has a "remarkable collection" of materials -- in several languages -- on himself and on Israel's first two presidents, the late Dr. Chaim Weizmann and the late Yitzhak Ben Zvi.

"No where in the United States is there a better collection of works of Israel's presidents as there is in your nation's capital," the retiring scholarly president said.

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