

W. Post

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'A Major . . . Achievement'

United Press International

Here is the text of President Nixon's announcement of the disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria:

Ladies and gentlemen: I have an announcement that will also be made today in Jerusalem and Damascus. The announcement reads as follows:

"The discussions conducted by United States Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger with Syria and Israel have led to an agreement on the disengagement of Syrian and Israeli forces. The agreement will be signed by Syrian and Israeli military representatives in the Egyptian-Israeli military working group of the Geneva conference on Friday, this Friday, May 31."

Just a word about the significance of this development. It is obviously a major diplomatic achievement and Secretary Kissinger deserves enormous credit for the work that he has done along with members of his

team in keeping this negotiation going and finally reaching an agreement when at many times over the past weeks it seemed that the negotiations would break down.

Also credit goes to the governments concerned which had great differences that had to be resolved. I have sent messages of congratulations to Prime Minister Meir of Israel and also to President Assad of Syria, congratulating them with regard to the statesmanship they have shown in resolving differences that seemed totally without any prospect of resolution a month or so ago, and even, as a matter of fact, over the past month.

This particular agreement, together with the agreement that was reached earlier on disengagement of Egyptian and Israeli forces now paves the way for progress in Geneva and, of course, with the various governments involved, toward our objective, and we trust their objective as well, of achieving a permanent

peace settlement for the entire Mideast area.

However, we should have in mind that despite the fact that these two agreements have now been reached that there are many difficulties ahead before a permanent settlement is reached. However, what was a major road block to any permanent settlement has now been removed, and I think the most difficult roadblock, the roadblock being the differences that had long existed between Israel and Syria.

As far as the United States is concerned, we shall continue with our diplomatic initiatives, working with all government in the area, working toward achieving the goal of a permanent settlement, a permanent peace and I can only say that based on the success in reaching this agreement in which the differences were so great that the prospect for reaching agreement on a permanent basis, I think now are better than they have been at any time over the past 25 years.