

# Memorandum

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: December 4, 1973

TO : NEA - Mr. Sisco  
FROM : NEA - Mr. Atherton

FROM : NEA/ARN - David A. Korn <sup>WV</sup>  
**1973-12-4, Assad, Swiss, Release**

SUBJECT: Syrians Release Amcitt Richard Seidenberg

On December 4 Amconsul Adana received a telegram from Richard Seidenberg reporting that he departed Syria on November 30 and is currently in Alanya, Turkey. You will recall that Seidenberg, a Jewish boy from upstate New York, entered Syria from Turkey on October 7 and had not been heard from since that time. We approached the Syrians, through the Italian Embassy in Damascus, to ask for information about him and his parents were in contact with the Syrian Mission to the UN.

Mr. and Mrs. Seidenberg were immediately informed of Richard's return to Turkey and have subsequently spoken with him on the phone. Richard was reluctant to discuss the details of his Syrian experience on the phone, but did state that he was arrested on October 9 in Damascus and was not mistreated during his detention. Seidenberg told his parents that he would visit the Consulate in Adana during the next two or three days and give a complete account of what happened to him in Syria.

Seidenberg's release may be attributable to our intervention through the Italians, to his parents efforts with the Syrian Mission to the UN, to a Syrian desire to make a good-will gesture prior to the Secretary's visit to Damascus, or perhaps simply to good luck. Since appeals through the Italians or to the Syrians in New York have not been particularly effective in the past, and good luck has been elusive, it seems reasonable to assume that the Secretary's trip to Damascus had something to do with the Syrian decision to release Seidenberg.

With Seidenberg's release, Jonathan Bates is now the only American citizen known to be held in Syria. The next hearing on the Bates case is scheduled for December 9. If the Syrians decide to drop charges against Bates at that time, it would provide additional evidence of a Syrian desire to clear the slate and establish better relations with the United States.

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GDS--DECLAS. Dec. 31, 1979

NEA/ARN:SE <sup>WV</sup>gard:gcb

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