

42 Statement About Display of the Flag in Honor of Returning Prisoners of War. *February 13, 1973*

TODAY begins the final week of national mourning for President Lyndon Johnson. This morning in a telephone conversation with Mrs. Johnson, we both remarked how much her husband would have liked to share in the moments of joy as our first prisoners of war return from Indochina.

Mrs. Johnson and I agreed that for the American flag to be flying high on the day that the first prisoners return to American soil would be the finest possible tribute both to her husband's memory and to the heroism of the prisoners and their families—as well as to the missing men, the men who gave their lives, and all who helped to win peace with honor in Vietnam.

I am therefore signing a proclamation [4188] this afternoon ordering the flag of the United States returned to full staff on the morning of the day they arrive in America.

In an earlier war, another American prisoner—Francis Scott Key—asked that stirring question whether the star-spangled banner yet waved “o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.” As our prisoners come home to America, let our answer be the same today as it was then.

NOTE: The statement was read by Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler during an afternoon news briefing at the White House.