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COMMUNICATIONS

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Governor's Office
State of Oregon

IN SYRIA

Channel 6 KOIN-TV 3/23/84 5:03

Judy Rooks

Governor Victor Atiyeh tonight is in Damascus, Syria, his ancestral homelands.

He arrived this afternoon, cutting short the trade mission to Cairo Egypt. Now that upset some of the Oregon businessmen who were forced to cancel Monday and Tuesday appointments with customers there.

Others in the delegation though are gambling that the contacts that they make in Syria will create new business.

On special assignment, Mike Donahue is travelling with the trade mission and here is his report on today's arrival in Damsacus.

Mike Donahue

At first sight of the oasis from the air, Governor Atiyeh had proclaimed, there is the father land.

Here as in Saudia Arabia and Egypt, the sky was threatening rain as we arrived but in the desert, rain is a blessing.

So it was seen as Atiyeh's homecoming gift to Syria.

Governor Atiyeh

It is very exciting. It is almost too much to express right now.

Mike Donahue

Would it be an exaggeration that it is a dream come true?

Gov. Atiyeh

Yep, I thought about it for many many years. I never thought that I would really make it to be honest with you.

Mike Donahue

The Syrians were the first to allow us to photograph an airport arrival. The Saudi's and Egyptians, nervous about security had prohibited cameras.

It was not the hero's welcome that Atiyeh had expected. But we were told that was the fault of the U.S. Embassy which had sent the greeting party home to wait for a later plane.

(more)

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IN SYRIA, Channel 6, KOIN-TV, 3/23/84

Mike Donahue
(cont.)

Rushing back, the Governor of Damascus apologized for the anti-climax and told his counterpart he hoped that he would notice Syria's progress since his last visit some 50 years ago.

NO ID

Is that because he is such a good governor?

Syrian Governor

(mumble)

Mike Donahue

Also present to say hello were two of Atiyeh's Syrian first cousins. His wife Delores who had arrived earlier and his son Tom.

A police car with sirens screaming led the Governor's motorcade through the narrow congested streets of old Damascus.

Colored in grey's and brown's, self-proclaimed the oldest city in the world, still inhabited.

There was an obvious military presence and not so obvious plain clothed police protection for the Governor.

Everywhere, pictures of a man, who now rules this country which has been ruled by so many over the centuries.

A tentative schedule for Atiyeh's visit includes tours of museums, archeological digs, modern cities and irrigation projects.

The locals obviously want to show off.

Also planned are meetings with Mayors, the Prime Minister and the Vice President.

Governor Atiyeh arrives in Syria with a promise and a possibility. A promise that he will be allowed to visit his father's village, but only a possibility of a meeting with President Asaud.

Right now thought that it is obvious that the Governor is excited just to be here. So am I.

In Damascus, Syria, I'm Mike Donahue reporting for Newsroom 6.

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