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SAUDI ROYALTY

Channel 6 KOIN-TV

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5:01

This a very big day for Oregon Governor Vic Atiyeh currently on a trade mission to the Mideast. Today he met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The meeting gave a big lift to the would be diplomat Atiyeh who had earlier failed in his efforts to meet the King of Saudi Arabia.

Mike Donahue is on special assignment with the Oregon delegation to the Mideast.

Donahue

Expecting to get an audience with King Faud, Governor Atiyeh was outranked and upstaged by the surprise visit of the Queen of Denmark who kept the King busy out of town but, as one trade mission members commented, who can blame the King, she's prettier.

meeting

So, for the Governor, this prince will have to do.

prince

(conversation in Arabic)

Donahue

There are 30 princes in the ryal line of King Faud but this one is among the most influential. Prince Majid Bin Abdul Aziz is Governor of both Jeddah and the holy city of Mecca as well as a former ambassador.

Frankly, he told Atiyeh, U.S. policy in the Middle East is naive.

Atiyeh

I've run into this, a real anger, sadness, I guess you'd say that the Governor of Riyhad and the Governor here and some others, kind of sad. Why doesn't the United States understand us?

Donahue

In Jeddah, Atiyeh faced the nation in the form of these reporters from Saudi Arabia's newspapers and its one state-controlled television station. On the panel was Patrick Werr on Enterprise, Oregon, five months with the Saudi Gazette.

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Donahue The Governor was expecting to field some politically sensitive questions but instead he was pitched mostly softballs like where will you visit.

Atiyeh And we started in Riyhad. We were there for four days. We are here in Jeddah. We'll go from here to Cairo...

Donahue The hardballs came from the Oregon news media questions the Saudis may have been afraid to ask.

reporter As an Arab-American, what is your personal feelings about the need for a homeland for the Palestinians on the West Bank or Gaza?

Atiyeh That, of course, is the, the piece of geography that's being discussed and I really am not, that seems legitimate and that seems appropriate but I answer your question in the broader scale say that the settlement of the Palestinians really is at the very heart of a final solution to the problems in the Middle East.

Donahue At the U.S. Embassy in Jeddah, the Governor met another would be American diplomat. Walter Cutler would be the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and he would live here if he could just catch up with the kind and present his credentials.

party Here only two weeks, the Cutlers are giving their first dinner party this night. Asked if the Governor should e careful what he says in Syria, the Ambassador replied no. The Arabs will appreciate his frankness.

Cutler As a person-to-person diplomat he impresses me as a gentleman who, who will do great things for our image in this part of the world.

Donahue stadium Fingering his worry beads in front of the stadium where Anwar Sadat was shot, it appeared this morning that the Governor would be stood up again. Like the King, President Mubarak had been out of town conferring with military leaders on Lybia's threat to the Sudan.

(MORE)

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Dale

Then a telephone call summoned Atiyeh to Aruba Palace in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis.

Atiyeh

I'll be heading from here to Shria and my father's village..

Donahue

Newsroom Six cameraman Dale Berkholz was the only non-Egyptian allowed to photograph the meeting which was to last 30 minutes. After 70 minutes, Mubarak, all the time speaking in English, had to be interrupted and reminded he was keeping waiting a delegation from The Sudan.

U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Veleotis had monitored the conversation and appeared to advise Atiyeh to be careful what he said to the Egyptian news media and later to us.

Veleotis, himself, called the discussion very frank.

Atiyeh

Talked about the situation Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Israel saying very strongly this whole matter and discussion in the United States now about moving the mbassy from Tel Aviv to Isreal, to Jerusalem is very disturbing.

Now, he wasn't critical in the sense of a policy in the Middle East. He's a man who's very broadminded, very understanding.

Donahue

What do you think you accomplished from the meeting?

Atiyeh

I said how can I help you. Now I don't know if he's ever going to call me again but the fact is that it was not just a one-way road.

Donahue

We were told that at the end of the meeting, an Atiyeh aide had tried to present a gift to Mubarak, a two-foot long hunting knife made by a Portland craftsman but the nervous presidential guards intercepted the knife and detained its presentor until all was explained.

From Cairo, Egypt, this Mike Donahue reporting for Newsroom Six.

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