

# Atiyeh Mideast-bound on peace, trade trip

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Gov. Vic Atiyeh left New York's Kennedy Airport Thursday night en route to a tour of the Middle East that will include an attempt to sell Oregon products in the oil-rich region and a personal peace mission in his ancestral homeland, Syria.

Atiyeh met Thursday afternoon with the Syrian ambassador to the United States, Rafic Jouejati, at the diplomat's home in Washington, D.C. Dennis G. Miles, Atiyeh's press aide, said the governor was told his requested visit with Syrian President Hafez Assad was being arranged.

Atiyeh has said he hopes to plea for peace in a meeting with Assad and believes that his background will increase his credibility. He is the son of a Syrian father and Lebanese mother.

"This is not high diplomacy. I'm not naive. But certainly they know who I am and have known," Atiyeh said Monday. "Who knows? I wouldn't want to do anything to hurt our cause. And it might help.

"I'm saying why can't we live together? Why do we have to keep shooting at each other and killing one another?" he added.

Atiyeh was in Washington this week for discussions with members of Congress about the budget and was a guest of the J.C. Penney Co.

Joining Atiyeh in New York were seven Oregon businessmen, who will be part of his trade mission. Their first stop is Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

His entourage will be in Saudi Arabia for eight days. From there, they travel to Egypt on March 24 and Syria on March 26. Atiyeh will leave Syria March 31 en route to an 11-day stay in Israel. The governor then travels to Egypt for several days of sightseeing before returning to Oregon.

Atiyeh has said the Syrian visit, which will include a tour of his late father's home village, Amar, will be a "return to the homeland" in which he has no official diplomatic role. He said he had met with State Department officials and at least one National Security Council member in recent weeks but received no specific instructions.

He first announced the Syrian trip Jan. 5, two days after the Syrians agreed to release Robert O. Goodman Jr., a captured U.S. Navy pilot. Goodman was released at the request of Democratic presidential candidate Jesse L. Jackson.

The Syrian visit was added on to a trip that Atiyeh had earlier agreed to make to Israel in April, as were plans for a trade mission in the region.

State officials rushed to put together the trade mission itinerary after the announcement. Four

businessmen plan to join Atiyeh in Syria, but many details of that portion of the trip remain undecided.

The businessmen who agreed to accompany Atiyeh will pay their own way as well as a \$1,500 fee to the state to cover its organizing costs, according to Douglas V. Frengle, manager of the international trade division of the Department of Economic Development.

Frengle said the Middle East represented an especially inviting target for Oregon exports because of its wealth in oil. Egypt and Saudi Arabia were Oregon's fifth and 17th best export customers in 1982, when they accounted for \$279 million of Oregon's export trade.

State officials said the full cost of the trip for the state has yet to be computed, but will include travel expenses for a state trade expert, a U.S. Department of Commerce representative and some expenses of Atiyeh and his bodyguard, Oregon State Police Lt. Lon E. Holbrook.

Frengle said Atiyeh and members of his entourage would be the guest in Israel of Jewish National Fund in Israel, which is expected also to pick up half of Atiyeh's airfare for the entire Middle East trip. In addition, Frengle said the entourage would be the guest of the government of Saudi Arabia.

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