

moba media

COMMUNICATIONS

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APPEALS TO ATIYEH

Channel 6      KOIN-TV      3/29/84      5:37

Mark Hendricks

Syria leaders have tried to win Governor Atiyeh's support by urging him to be a devoted American first but an Arab son second.

The Syrian's argue that would be unlike Jewish American's whose first loyalty they claim is to Israel.

Not all of the appeals have been verbal however.

On special assignment with the Governor, Mike Donahue and photographer Dale Burkholtz saw perhaps Syria's most emotional argument.

Mike Donahue

This was Conatryra, a peaceful farming town on the road to Damascus. A fork in the road with branches leading to Lebanon, Jordan and Israel.

Even more strategic was Conatryra's proximity to the Gohlan Heights, the high ground.

Driving the road from Damascus you are struck by Conatryra's security and its vulnerability. Its northern plane protected by the snowcap peaks of Mt. Herman but exposed to the south where Syria has been conquered by countless evading armies over the centuries.

Today, United Nations forces patrol this no mans land, a narrow buffer between two nations each expecting to be attacked by the other at any moment.

During the six-day war of 1976, Israel captured Conatryra and occupied it until the U.N. drew new boundaries in June of 1974.

Translator

Historically we share the same thing.

Mike Donahue

As Conatryra's governor tells it, when the Syrians' re-entered the city on June 26 and President Assad raised this flag in the town square to hail its liberation they were shocked to find that Conatryra had been leveled. Its houses, shops, churches and hospital destroyed.

(more)

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APPEALS TO ATIYEH, Channel 6, KOIN-TV, 3/29/84

Mike Donahue  
cont.)

Allegedly boomed, dynamited and bulldozed by the withdrawing Israeli forces.

The Syrians even charge that the enemy desicrated the graves in the cemetary which is now a memorial containing the bodies of those residents who resisted.

Ask what happened to the living, Conatyra's governor claims that they were forced to evacuate after the Israeli's executed a few as an example of what would happen to all unless they left.

That is the Syrian's side of the story and they are eager to show and tell it.

Translator

We have always appreciated our American friends. They are loved for freedom and justice.

Mike Donahue

When Conatyra was the city of the living it was best known for its flower and vegetable gardens.

Reputdely, every home had one.

Today, a city of the dead, Conatyra's most important product is tourism.

The same day Governor Atiyeh visited, a dozen bus loads of Iranians were touring the damaged, visiting the shell (mumble) ruin of the local hospital.

Waiving their snapshots of the Ayatollah, they made the Oregonians feel a bit uncomfortable to be surrounded by Shite moslems like those who had ransacked our embassy in Tehran.

On this day however, they appeared innocent and friendly, or at least civil to the Oregonians. Some of whom imagined themselves being taken hostage.

Translator

(mumble) fought.

Mike Donahue

The Iranians no doubt heard the same account of Conatyra's death and the same Syrian vow to return some day to liberate the other two-thirds of this provence still occupied by Israeli forces.

As Conatyra's governor told Atiyeh, we want peace but we will never give up the right to our land.

(more)

3-3-3-3

APPEALS TO ATIYEH, Channel 6, KOIN-TV, 3/29/84

Gov. Atiyeh

There has to be peace, there can't be any under circumstances, whose to blame or how it happened, you know you ask these questions.

Those aren't critical questions to ask, its done and should be a real symbol of anything else that all of the fighting must stop.

Mike Donahue

East and West Berlin have their wall and Syria and Israel their Gohlan Heights.

Right now the Israeli's sit atop that wall with their electronic eyes and ears monitoring activities below.

We were told that this road leading to the Israeli occupied Gohlan is mined.

When Governor Atiyeh goes to Israel next week, he will probably be taken up there to see and hear the views from the other side.

To hear the Israeli's claim to ownership to Conatyra and how its troops humanly tried to evacuate the city before calling in air strikes.

As the Oregon Governor is learning in the Middle East, truth is in the eye of the beholder.

Today a new Conatyra is being built, just outside the U.N. Checkpoint, but one can't help wondering if some day it will suffer the same fate.

Translator

We hope to come back as beautiful as it was before.

Mike Donahue

From the modern city of Conatyra in the shadow of the Gohlan Heights, I'm Mike Donahue reporting for Newsroom 6.

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