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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)
SUBJECT: TRAVELING PRESS REPORTAGE: RADIO/TV

FOR ANDERSON FROM KING

1. SUMMARY: ALL THREE TV NETWORK NEWS SHOWS TUESDAY EVENING HIGHLIGHTED UNEXPECTED RETURN TO DAMASCUS, THEREBY SERVING AS PRELUDE TO WEDNESDAY MORNING REPORTS OF EXPECTED IMMINENCE OF DISENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. WEDNESDAY MORNING:

-- ANDERSON (GROUP W NEWS): THE AVAILABLE SIGNS INDICATE THAT AGREEMENT IS VERY CLOSE ON DISENGAGEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL AND AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THAT AGREEMENT WILL BE MADE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW HOURS. SYRIAN SOURCES SAY THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE FOR THE FIRST STEP IN THE DEAL, THE EXCHANGE OF WOUNDED PRISONERS. ISRAELI SOURCES AFTER SEVERAL EARLY MORNING CABINET MEETINGS SAID THAT THE FINAL DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN REMOVED AFTER A SUDDEN TRIP BY KISSINGER TO DAMASCUS, HIS 13TH IN THIS ROUND OF SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY. AMERICAN SOURCES HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT THE TWO SIDES ARE AGONIZINGLY CLOSE AND THAT IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE TWO SIDES COULD COME SO CLOSE WITHOUT REMOVING THE FINAL FEW DETAILS THAT STAND IN THE WAY. BOTH GOVERNMENTS APPEAR TO HAVE OVERCOME THE HARD-LINERS IN THEIR OWN RANKS AND IT MADE, ACCORDING TO SENIOR

AMERICAN OFFICIALS, ALL THE CONCESSIONS THAT WERE POSSIBLE-- AS ONE CAN JUDGE FROM THE PEOPLE WHO STOP AMERICAN REPORTERS ON THE STREET AND TELEPHONE OPERATORS WHO QUESTION THOSE REPORTERS, ANY AGREEMENT THAT WILL PUT AN END TO THE CURRENT WAR OF ATTRITION, HARASSMENT AND TERROR WILL BE EXTREMELY POPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE IN BOTH COUNTRIES.

KALB (CBS RADIO): THE SCHEDULE FOR THIS CLIMAX HAS BEEN FANTASTIC. KISSINGER SPENT SIX HOURS IN DAMASCUS LAST NIGHT, FOUR WITH PRESIDENT ASAD DURING WHICH SYRIA AGREED

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TO MOST POINTS IN THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. A HALF-HOUR WITH GROMYKO BASICALLY A COURTESY GESTURE, GROMYKO'S CONTRIBUTION BEING THAT HE DID NOT SABOTAGE THE AGREEMENT. THEN EARLY TODAY BACK HERE IN ISRAEL, FROM 2 TO 4 A.M. KISSINGER MET WITH THE OUTGOING MEIR. HE SAID NOTHING AFTERWARDS BUT INFORMATION MINISTER PERES SAID COYLY, "HE WAS SLIGHTLY OPTIMISTIC." 7:30 TO 10 A.M. A CRITICAL MEETING OF THE ISRAELI CABINET. AFTERWARDS PERES ADDING A FULL FLEDGED DECISION WILL BE ANNOUNCED THIS AFTERNOON. ISRAELI RADIO THEN BROADCAST THIS SIMPLE STATEMENT: "MRS. MEIR WILL REPORT TO THE KENESSET, ISRAEL'S PARLIAMENT, TOMORROW MORNING ON THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA." SO ON THE 32ND DAY OF KISSINGER'S EXTRAORDINARY SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY, AN HISTORIC AGREEMENT SEEMS ALL BUT CHRISTENED.

KALB (CBS-TV): FROM EVERY OVERT SIGN HERE THAT DECISION WILL BE A POSITIVE ONE AND ON THE 32ND DAY OF KISSINGER'S EXTRAORDINARY DIPLOMATIC MISSION A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL WILL BE ANNOUNCED. KISSINGER CONFERS WITH THE OUTGOING MEIR IN BETWEEN ISRAELI CABINET MEETINGS. ACCORDING TO ISRAELI RADIO, MRS. MEIR WILL REPORT TO THE KENESSET, ISRAEL'S PARLIAMENT, TOMORROW MORNING ON WHAT THE RADIO DESCRIBED AS THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA. LAST NIGHT SYRIA ANNOUNCED THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON MOST POINTS. EVERYTHING SEEMED THEN TO HANG ON ISRAEL'S DECISION. TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE. THE AGREEMENT, THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF SECRET LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN KISSINGER AND ISRAEL ON THE ONE HAND AND KISSINGER AND SYRIA ON THE OTHER. THE SECRETARY WILL CELEBRATE HIS TRIUMPH TONIGHT MORE THAN LIKELY IN CAIRO, WHERE DISENGAGEMENT BECAME RESPECTABLE LAST JANUARY.

VALERIANI (NBC-TV): THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST MAJOR AGREEMENT EVER BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS MOST MILITANT NEIGHBOUR. IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME SYRIA INDEPENDENTLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST IN THIS PART

OF THE WORLD. IT WOULD DEFUSE THE EXPLOSIVE MILITARY SITUATION AND CHOK OFF FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER MAJOR OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING. IT WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR A FINAL PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT AND IT WOULD MAKE POSSIBLE TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH IN TURN HAS A CHANCE OF PRODUCING A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. EXTREMELY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS

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TABLE WITH GOVERNMENT LEADERS THIS AFTERNOON FOLLOWING AN ISRAELI CABINET SESSION THAT DEALT WITH SOME AMERICAN IDEAS ON HOW TO CLOSE THE NEGOTIATING GAP. KISSINGER PRESENTED THOSE IDEAS TO THE ISRAELIS IN A SESSION LAST NIGHT THAT LASTED PAST MIDNIGHT. THERE WAS ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY IN THE ISRAELI POSITION TO PERSUADE KISSINGER TO FLY BACK TO DAMASCUS TO MAKE AT LEAST ONE MORE TRY IN COMPLETING A DISENGAGEMENT DEAL, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY LAST NIGHT HE WOULD NOT RETURN TO THE SYRIAN CAPITAL.

AT THIS PRECISE STAGE OF THE TALKS KISSINGER FINDS HIMSELF IN PRECISELY THE TRAP HE HAD HOPED TO AVOID, SHUTTLING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA SO OFTEN THAT IT SEEMS HE IS BEING EXPLOITED BY BOTH COUNTRIES. HE HAS STAYED OUT HERE SO LONG AND CHANGED HIS MIND SO MANY TIMES THAT IT APPEARS THE UNITED STATES WANTS A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT EVEN MORE THAN THE COUNTRIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED. THEN ON VERY SHORT NOTICE KISSINGER ROARED OUT OF HIS HOTEL IN JERUSALEM AND TOOK OFF ON SHUTTLE NO. 13 TO DAMASCUS. THE SUDDEN CHANGE IN PLANS REVIVED HOPES THAT KISSINGER MIGHT PULL OFF AN AGREEMENT ON THIS MISSION AFTER ALL, SOMETHING THAT SEEMED REMOTE LAST NIGHT.

JOHN CHANCELLOR: VALERIANI ACCOMPANIED THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO DAMASCUS AND HERE IS REPORT ON THAT TRIP BY RADIO FROM DAMASCUS:

ON THE FLIGHT FROM TEL AVIV AMERICAN OFFICIALS SAID KISSINGER MADE HIS SURPRISE RETURN TO DAMASCUS WITH A GOOD CHANCE OF NAILING DOWN A COMPLETE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. A SENIOR U.S. OFFICIAL SAID AN AGREEMENT IS NOW VERY, VERY CLOSE. ALL THE SIGNS HERE ARE "GO" FOR AN AGREEMENT. CAMERAMEN SAID THAT AFTER A ROUTINE PICTURE TAKING SESSION AT THE PALACE, PRESIDENT ASSAD LOOKED AT THE CAMERAS AND SMILED FOR THE FIRST TIME. A SYRIAN RADIO STATION SAID THAT RED CROSS PLANES ARE STANDING BY TO EVACUATE WOUNDED WAR PRISONERS WHICH WOULD BE PART OF ANY AGREEMENT. AND FINALLY FOR THE ANTI-SUPERSTITIOUS THIS IS SHUTTLE NO. 13 WHICH MAY TURN OUT TO BE LUCKY.

BARY DUNSMORE (ABC-TV): TODAY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE DAY OF DECISION, A DECISION WHICH WAS TO COME WITH TODAY'S ISRAELI CABINET MEETING. THE MEETING WAS TO CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF KISSINGER-S LAST TWO DAYS OF TALKS IN SYRIA AND ACCORDING TO AN ISRAELI OFFICIAL TO MAKE A DECISION FROM THE WHOLE DISENGAGEMENT PACKAGE. HOWEVER, AT THE END OF THE FIVE-HOUR MEETING THE ONLY DECISION THAT WAS MADE PUBLIC WAS TO ASK THE AMERICANS AND THE

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SYRIANS FOR FURTHER QUALIFICATIONS- WHEN HE MET WITH PREMIER MEIR AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAM KISSINGER WAS TOLD ISRAEL'S LATEST STAND AND WHEN THAT MEETING WAS OVER THE SECRETARY ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION TO MAKE ONE MORE TRIP TO DAMASCUS.

--SECRETARY KISSINGER: I JUST THOUGHT THAT HAVING CARRIED EVERY PREVIOUS ISRAELI CLARIFICATION AND VIEW TO DAMASCUS I SHOULD DO THE FINAL LAP MYSELF. I OWED IT TO EVERYTHING THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE PUT INTO IT TO MAKE THE EFFORT PERSONAL. I AM GOING IN AN HOUR AND I WILL BE BACK TONIGHT-

--QUESTION BY REPORTER: DO YOU THINK THAT AGREEMENT IS NOW WITHIN GRASP?

--SECRETARY KISSINGER: I WON'T MAKE ANY SPECULATION.

DUNSMORE: THE DEPARTURE CAME SO HURRIEDLY THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE PARTY WERE LEFT BEHIND. SOME NUANCES IT IS SAID ARE STILL LEFT TO SETTLE -- TERRORISM AND LINKING DISENGAGEMENT TO A FINAL SETTLEMENT. WE ARE NOW VERY VERY CLOSE, THE SENIOR OFFICIAL SAYS. - COULD GO EITHER WAY BUT THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE FOR A SETTLEMENT. AND ONCE AGAIN WE ARE TOLD TOMORROW WILL BE THE DAY. BROWN

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