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ACTION: USIS2 INFO AMB DCM POL PM PC EC 7

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 OO RUEHMD  
 DE RUEHFO #7879/01 3180112  
 ZNR UUUUU  
 O R 130110Z NOV 84  
 FM USINFO WASHDC  
 TO ALL AR WF MONITORING POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 ALL EUA ALPHA POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 RUEHPS/USIS PARIS IMMEDIATE  
 ALL EUB PETA POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 RUFHOM/AMCONSUL MILAN IMMEDIATE  
 ALL AF WKND SERVICE POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 ALL NEAR EAST POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 ALL SOUTH ASIA POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 ALL EA WF MONITORING POSTS IMMEDIATE  
 RUHQHQ/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
 RUMVC/AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN IMMEDIATE  
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LOC: DISK 38 694  
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 CN: 22161  
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USIS ROUTING
ACTION: <i>RDP</i>
INFO: .....
OTHER: .....
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USINFO

USIS PAO/IO FROM P/PFO

EO 12356 N/A 11/12

SUBJECT: U.S. SPACE ACTIVITIES (700)  
 U.S. SHUTTLE ASTRONAUTS RETRIEVE SATELLITE FROM SPACE  
 (ARTICLE ON NASA BRIEFING)  
 BY JIM FULLER  
 USIA SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER, TEXAS -- ASTRONAUTS ABOARD THE U.S. SPACE SHUTTLE DISCOVERY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY RETRIEVED A STRANDED SATELLITE FROM SPACE, COMPLETING ONE OF THE BOLDEST MISSIONS EVER UNDERTAKEN IN THE SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM.

SPACE-WALKING ASTRONAUT JOSEPH ALLEN AND DALE GARDNER SPENT MORE THAN SIX HOURS WORKING IN SPACE NOVEMBER 12 TO CAPTURE THE PALAPA B-2 SATELLITE AND CLAMP IT SAFELY DOWN IN DISCOVERY'S CARGO BAY FOR RETURN TO EARTH.

IN A SPECTACULAR RESCUE EFFORT, THE TWO ASTRONAUTS WERE FORCED INTO A BACK-UP PLAN TO SUCCESSFULLY CAPTURE THE SATELLITE.

AT ONE POINT WHEN DISCOVERY'S MECHANICAL ARM WAS UNABLE TO GRAPPLE THE SATELLITE, ALLEN HELD ONTO THE HUGE FREE-FLOATING SPACE CRAFT WITH HIS HANDS WHILE GARDNER ATTACHED AN ADAPTER SO IT COULD BE LOCKED INTO THE CARGO BAY.

PALAPA B-2, ORIGINALLY LAUNCHED FOR INDONESIA, WAS ONE OF TWO SATELLITES THAT WERE PLACED IN IMPROPER ORBITS LAST FEBRUARY AFTER THEIR BOOSTER MOTORS MISFIRED. ON NOVEMBER 14, THE ASTRONAUTS WILL ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE OTHER SATELLITE, WESTAR SIX, LAUNCHED FOR WESTERN UNION.

ASTRONAUTS ALLEN AND GARDNER, WEARING SPACE SUITS, STEPPED INTO THE SHUTTLE'S OPEN CARGO BAY AT 1325 GMT AFTER COMMANDER FREDERICK HAUCK AND PILOT DAVID WALKER SLOWLY MANEUVERED DISCOVERY TO WITHIN 10.5 METERS OF THE PALAPA

SATELLITE.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT IT'S LIKE OUT HERE -- MAGNIFICANT -- ENDLESSLY FULFILLING," EXCLAIMED ALLEN AS HE STEPPED INTO SPACE. "HOLY SMOKES, LOOK AT THAT SATELLITE."

"YEAH, IT'S GORGEOUS," REPLIED GARDNER.

TO RETRIEVE PALAPA, SLOWLY SPINNING AT ONE REVOLUTION PER MINUTE JUST ABOVE THE SPACE SHUTTLE, ALLEN EFFORTLESSLY FLEW OUT OF THE CARGO BAY, WEARING A JET-POWERED BACK PACK TO STABILIZE HIMSELF AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ERRANT SATELLITE, ALLEN INSERTED A 1.8 METER-LONG STEEL ROD KNOWN AS AN APOGEE KICK MOTOR CAPTURE DEVICE, OR "STRINGER," INTO THE THROAT OF THE SATELLITE'S BURNED-OUT ROCKET MOTOR.

ALIEN RELEASED FOUR SPRING-LOADED FINGERS, EXPANDING LIKE AN UMBRELLA, AT THE END OF THE STRINGER TO ATTACH HIMSELF TO THE SATELLITE.

HE THEN USED A CRANK TO PULL THE SATELLITE DOWN UNTIL HE WAS FIRMLY ATTACHED.

"SOFT DOCK, SOFT DOCK," ALLEN SAID AS HE LOCKED ON TO THE SATELLITE. "CRANK, CRANK, CRANK. IT'S PULLING RIGHT DOWN. STOP THE CLOCK, WE GOT A TIE."

SPECIAL BRAKE PADS THEN ALLOWED ALLEN TO USE HIS MANEUVERING UNIT JETS TO STOP THE ROTATION OF THE SATELLITE.

ASTRONAUT ANNA FISHER, OPERATING DISCOVERY'S 15-METER LONG MECHANICAL ARM FROM INSIDE THE SHUTTLE, GRAPPLED A SPECIAL FIXTURE MOUNTED ON THE STRINGER AND SLOWLY LOWERED THE SATELLITE WITH ALLEN STILL ATTACHED DOWN TOWARD THE CARGO BAY.

AT THIS POINT A PROBLEM DEVELOPED WHEN GARDNER, ATTACHED TO A SPECIAL SUPPORT PLATFORM IN THE CARGO BAY, WAS UNABLE TO CLAMP A SEPARATE A-FRAME STRUCTURE TO THE TOP OF THE SATELLITE. THE BRIDGE STRUCTURE, WHICH WOULD NOT FIT INTO THE SATELLITE, WAS NEEDED FOR THE ARM TO GRASP THE TOP OF THE SPACECRAFT AND LOWER IT INTO THE CARGO BAY WHERE IT WOULD BE LATCHED DOWN FOR THE RETURN TO EARTH.

ALLEN ATTACHED THE SPECIAL SUPPORT PLATFORM, THEN GRABBED THE TOP OF THE 540-KILOGRAM SATELLITE WITH HIS HANDS

AND HELD IT FOR MORE THAN 90 MINUTES AS GARDNER WORKED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SATELLITE, REPLACING THE STINGER WITH A SPECIAL ADAPTER RING. THE ADAPTER WAS THEN USE TO LATCH THE SATELLITE SECURELY TO ITS PLATFORM IN THE CARGO BAY.

"ALLEN IS THE FIRST ASTRONAUT TO HOLD A 540-KILOGRAM COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE OVER HIS HEAD FOR ONE TRIP AROUND THE WORLD," SAID MISSION CONTROL IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL RETRIEVAL.

"IT'S REALLY MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, BUT IT WORKS," ALLEN REPLIED.

"I WAS TERRIBLY EXCITED," SAID A SPOKESMAN FOR HUGHES COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, WHICH BUILT THE PALAPA SATELLITE. "THIS WAS ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS THAT HAS EVER BEEN DONE IN SPACE. THE A-FRAME DID NOT FIT, BUT THE CONTINGENCY PLANNING DONE BY NASA PAID OFF, SO I THINK IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL RETRIEVAL MISSION."

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS WHO NOW OWN THE PALAPA AND WESTAR SATELLITES ARE PAYING THE U.S. NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA) 5.5 MILLION DOLLARS TO RETRIEVE THE SPACECRAFT AND RETURN THEM TO EARTH FOR REFURBISHMENT. IF THE SATELLITES ARE SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED THE UNDERWRITERS WILL OFFER THEM FOR SALE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

ITEM

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