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TEXT
TAGS: PGOV, AU
SUBJECT: THE EARLY PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST

1. SURPRISINGLY, INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FREDA MEISSNER-BLAU HAS ALREADY LOGGED MORE TIME IN WESTERN AUSTRIA ON HER PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN THAN EITHER PEOPLES PARTY(VP)-SUPPORTED **KURT WALDHEIM** OR SOCIALIST PARTY(SP) CANDIDATE KURT STEYRER. PERHAPS MEISSNER-BLAU DECIDED TO SPEND ALMOST FIVE DAYS IN THE SPARSELY POPULATED PROVINCE OF VORARLBERG(CONTAINING ONLY THREE PERCENT OF THE POPULATION) BECAUSE IT IS UNIQUE AMONG AUSTRIAS PROVINCES WITH FOUR "GREEN" DELEGATES IN THE LANDTAG. SHE ATTENDED SEVEN SCHEDULED EVENTS IN THREE FULL DAYS OF CAMPAIGNING DURING WHICH SHE ADDRESSED EXCLUSIVELY DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONCERNS, E.G., TOO MUCH MONEY SPENT ON ROADS AND NOT ENOUGH ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, HER DISABILITY PENSION COMPARED TO WALDHEIMS AND STEYRERS RESPECTIVE INCOMES, ETC.

2. DURING HER APPEARANCES MEISSNER-BLAU INDICATED THAT ONE OF HER ELECTION GOALS IS TO FORCE A RUNOFF ELECTION

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BETWEEN WALDHEIM AND STEYRER. SHE SAID THIS WOULD BE A GREAT MORAL VICTORY IF SHE WERE TO SUCCEED. ALSO, SHE PROFESSED TO BE UPSET BECAUSE SHE HAS NOT BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAM WITH THE TWO MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATES SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 4.

3. BOTH STEYRER AND WALDHEIM VISITED SALZBURG PROVINCE ON CAMPAIGN SWINGS EARLIER THIS MONTH. STEYRER SPENT A FULL DAY ON MARCH 3 VISITING VARIOUS FACTORIES -- INCLUDING THE ATOMIC SKI FACTORY -- IN A SOUTHERN SALZBURG DISTRICT. THESE STOPS AFFORDED HIM THE OPPORTUNITY OF MEETING WITH THE PREDOMINANTLY SOCIALIST-LEANING WORKERS. WALDHEIM TOO TROOPED THROUGH A SOUTHERN "GAU" ON MARCH 7 PRECEDED BY A SOUND TRUCK FROM VIENNA BLARING OUT THE HIT SONG "NEW YORK, NEW YORK." DURING HIS STOPS IN THREE TOWNS WALDHEIM EMPHASIZED HIS EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DECRIED THE PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM. HE REPORTEDLY MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION AS A NON-STODGY DIPLOMAT, MINGLING EASILY WITH THE CROWD WHICH WAS LARGER THAN EXPECTED, PROBABLY DUE TO A CERTAIN EXTENT TO THE PRESS REVELATIONS CONCERNING HIS PAST. WALDHEIM IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO SALZBURGS FAMOUS RESORT OF BAD GASTEIN ON MARCH 13 FOR MORE CAMPAIGNING.

4. WHETHER MEISSNER-BLAU ACHIEVES HER GOAL OF FORCING A RUNOFF ELECTION MAY DEPEND UPON HOW MANY CANDIDATES QUALIFY FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE. IN THE VIEW OF A SENIOR SALZBURG FREEDOM PARTY(FP) OFFICIAL, A RUNOFF IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION SHOULD BOTH MEISSNER-BLAU AND FP MAVERICK OTTO SCRINZI SECURE ENOUGH SIGNATURES TO WIN A PLACE ON THE BALLOT. HOWEVER, AGAIN ACCORDING TO THIS OFFICIAL, SCRINZI IS APPARENTLY HAVING PROBLEMS AND IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED OF OBTAINING THE REQUIRED SUPPORT. SHOULD ONLY THREE CANDIDATES CONTEST THE MAY 4 ELECTION, THEN EITHER WALDHEIM OR STEYRER COULD CONCEIVABLY SECURE THE NECESSARY MAJORITY THAT DAY.

5. ACCORDING TO LOCAL VP AND SP SOURCES, BOTH WALDHEIM AND STEYRER WILL HOLD LARGE, FINAL RALLIES IN SALZBURG AROUND THE MIDDLE OF APRIL.

THOMS

END OF MESSAGE

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