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TEXT  
TAGS: PREL, PROP, PL  
SUBJECT: POLISH PRESS ON KURT WALDHEIM

1. TWO POLISH NEWSPAPERS RECENTLY HAVE PROVIDED THE FIRST OFFICIAL MEDIA COMMENT HERE ON THE KURT WALDHEIM CASE. PARTY WEEKLY "POLITYKA" CARRIED AN EXTENSIVE ARTICLE BY ANDRZEJ WOJTOWICZ ENTITLED "A CASE NOT ONLY OF WALDHEIM" AND THE WEEKEND EDITION OF WARSAW DAILY "ZYCIE WARSZAWY" RAN A PIECE BY KAROL SZYNDZIELORZ ENTITLED "THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT WALDHEIM."

2. THE "POLITYKA" PIECE, WHICH OCCUPIES ALMOST A FULL PAGE, PROVIDES SOME BACKGROUND ON THE CHARGES AGAINST WALDHEIM AND NOTES THAT "THE PAST IN AUSTRIA IS A DELICATE AND VERY COMPLICATED QUESTION. MANY OLDER PEOPLE WOULD ASK,

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WHO DIDN'T SERVE IN THE WEHRMACHT DURING THE WAR. OTHERS WOULD ADD THAT WALDHEIM'S ENTIRE GENERATION DID AS HE DID IN FULFILLING ITS OBLIGATION." POLITYKA GOES ON TO CRITICIZE WALDHEIM FOR NOT BEING FORTHCOMING AND SUPPORTS ITS POINT BY REPRINTING EXCERPTS FROM WALDHEIM'S 1985 MEMOIRS, "IN THE EYE OF THE STORM," WHICH DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM DETAILS ABOUT HIS PAST WHICH HE HAS SINCE ADMITTED. THE PAPER CRITICIZES HIM FOR NOT CONDEMNING NAZISM IN AN APRIL 10 TELEVISION ADDRESS TO THE AUSTRIAN NATION, AND CHARGES HIM WITH BEING "EVASIVE" WHEN CONFRONTED WITH LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS PAST. "HE OFTEN MIXES EVENTS FROM THE YEARS ON THE FRONT OR CLAIMS SIMPLY NOT TO REMEMBER. IS THIS SIMPLY A TACTIC OR DOES HE REALLY FEEL INNOCENT?" POLITYKA ASKS.

3. THE "ZYCIE WARSZAWY" ARTICLE IS MUCH SHORTER, BUT NO LESS HARSH IN ITS CRITICISM. SZYNDZIELORZ ALSO TAKES WALDHEIM TO TASK FOR NOT BEING FORTHCOMING ABOUT HIS PAST, WRITING THAT "IT IS NOT ALWAYS CONVENIENT TO RECALL THE BRUTAL PAST. BUT, AMNESIA IS EQUALLY HARMFUL, BE IT FEIGNED OR REAL." HE QUESTIONS WHETHER WALDHEIM IS THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENCY SAYING "...THE PRESIDENT SHOULD UNIFY THE COUNTRY, NOT DIVIDE IT INTO CAMPS." IN CONCLUSION, SZYNDZIELORZ CHARGES, "THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY MISINTERPRETATIONS, CORRECTIONS, EXPLANATIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS TO AVOID THE QUESTION. WHAT IS THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT THIS MAN WHO IS KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD?"

4. COMMENT: THE STORM SURROUNDING WALDHEIM CREATES A DELICATE ISSUE FOR POLAND, GIVEN THE COUNTRY'S RELATIVELY GOOD RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA. FURTHER, THERE IS THE EMBARRASSING FACT OF EASTERN SUPPORT FOR WALDHEIM'S CANDIDACY FOR THE U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL POST IN 1971 AND DURING HIS RE-ELECTION BIDS.

DAVIS

END OF MESSAGE

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