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TEXT
TAGS: PGOV, AU
SUBJECT: NEW YORK "DAILY NEWS" ARTICLES ON SIMON
WIESENTHAL'S VIEWS OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WALDHEIM
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1. (LOU) THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY HAS CALLED TO OUR ATTENTION AND PROVIDED US WITH COPIES OF TWO STORIES WHICH APPEARED IN THE MAY 16 EDITION OF THE NEW YORK "DAILY NEWS."
2. (UNCL) THE BANNER HEADLINE OF THE MAY 16 EDITION READ: "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW - TOP NAZI HUNTER: LAY OFF KURT - WIESENTHAL SEES NO WAR CRIME EVIDENCE."
3. (UNCL) BEGIN TEXT OF ARTICLE BY LARS-ERIK NELSON:

VIENNA -- VETERAN NAZI-HUNTER SIMON WIESENTHAL INSISTED YESTERDAY HE HAD SEEN NO DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE THAT FORMER UN SECRETARY GENERAL **KURT WALDHEIM** IS A WAR CRIMINAL -- AND WARNED THAT A WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST WALDHEIM IS REVIVING ANTI-SEMITISM IN AUSTRIA.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE "DAILY NEWS," WIESENTHAL VOICED ANGER AT WJC TACTICS, ESPECIALLY A TELEVISION INTERVIEW

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BROADCAST HERE IN WHICH WJC OFFICIALS THREATENED TO HARASS THE ENTIRE AUSTRIAN PEOPLE FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS IF THEY ELECT WALDHEIM PRESIDENT IN RUNOFF ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MONTH.

WIESENTHAL, 77, THE UNDISPUTED EXPERT ON TRACKING DOWN NAZI FUGITIVES, ALSO CRITICIZED "THE NEW YORK TIMES" FOR GIVING PROMINENCE TO STORIES THAT IMPLY THAT WALDHEIM IS GUILTY OF WAR CRIMES.

"I TOLD "THE NEW YORK TIMES," "YOU WILL LOSE YOUR REPUTATION," HE SAID.

AS A RESIDENT OF AUSTRIA, WIESENTHAL MAY BE IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION WHEN A MAJOR POLITICAL CANDIDATE LIKE WALDHEIM IS CHARGED WITH SERVING THE NAZIS. BUT HE DID NOT APPEAR INTERESTED IN PROTECTING WALDHEIM BECAUSE OF ANY POLITICAL MOTIVES.

RATHER, WIESENTHAL APPEARED CONCERNED THAT HASTY ATTACKS ON PEOPLE LIKE WALDHEIM WHO SERVED HITLER -- AND, ESPECIALLY, HASTY ATTACKS BY JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS -- WOULD UNDERMINE HIS EFFORTS TO BUILD SOLID, UNCHALLENGABLE CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST MAJOR OFFENDERS.

UN FACTOR

HE SUGGESTED THAT PART OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST WALDHEIM WAS MOTIVATED BY AMERICA'S DISLIKE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS, WHICH WALDHEIM SERVED AS SECRETARY GENERAL FOR TWO TERMS.

"IF KHADAFY COMES TO THE UN AND SAYS THE WORLD IS NOT ROUND, IT'S A CUBE, HE'LL GET 120 VOTES," WIESENTHAL SAID. "SO AMERICANS WANT TO EXPEL THE UN. BUT YOU CANNOT MAKE WALDHEIM RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING THE UN DID."

WIESENTHAL WAS PARTICULARLY BITTER AT THE WJC OFFICIALS WHO, IN INTERVIEWS BROADCAST HERE, SUGGESTED THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR ANY HOLDER OF AN AUSTRIAN PASSPORT IF WALDHEIM IS ELECTED.

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS REVIVING ANTI-SEMITISM HERE?" HE ASKED. "IT IS NOT THEIR REVELATIONS ABOUT WALDHEIM'S PAST. NO. IT IS AN INTERVIEW BY ISRAEL SINGER (GENERAL SECRETARY) OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS, TELLING AUSTRIANS THAT BITBURG WAS ONE BITTER DAY FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN AND THAT IF AUSTRIANS ELECT WALDHEIM, THE POPULATION OF AUSTRIA IS GOING TO GET SIX YEARS OF BITBURG.

"THIS MAKES ANTI-SEMITES OF YOUNG PEOPLE -- AND 70 OF THE POPULATION WAS BORN AFTER THE WAR. YOU CANNOT MAKE COLLECTIVE THREATS AGAINST A COUNTRY."

4. (UNCL) BEGIN TEXT OF COLUMN BY LARS-ERIK NELSON

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ENTITLED, "NAZI-HUNTER AND NAZI HATERS:"

VIENNA -- ON THE DAY AFTER CROATION WAR CRIMINAL ANDRIJA ARTUKOVIC WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR HIS PART IN THE MURDER OF 700,000 SERBS, JEWS AND GYPSIES, THE VETERAN NAZI-HUNTER SIMON WIESENTHAL WAS ANGRY.

BUT NOT ABOUT ARTUKOVIC, WIESENTHAL DISMISSED ARTUKOVIC WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND. "WHAT THIS PERSON HAS DONE CANNOT BE PUNISHED," HE SAID IN HIS BOOK-LINED VIENNA STUDY. "A MAN WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR 70,000 (SIC) DEATHS CANNOT BE PUNISHED. AND HE WON'T GO BEFORE THE FIRING SQUAD. HE'LL APPEAL THE SENTENCE AND IN A COUPLE OF YEARS HE WILL DIE IN PRISON."

WIESENTHAL, WHO HAS SPENT 41 YEARS TRACKING DOWN WAR CRIMINALS, TOOK SOME COLD SATISFACTION FROM THE CONVICTION. "I LOOK AT IT AS A WARNING TO THE MURDERERS OF TOMORROW: EVEN 40 YEARS AFTER YOUR CRIMES AND 10,000 MILES AWAY, YOU WHO ARE INVOLVED IN GENOCIDE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO DIE IN PEACE."

BUT WIESENTHAL IS OUTRAGED AT THE CONTINUING EFFORT BY THE WORLD JEWISH COUNCIL TO PAINT AUSTRIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE **KURT WALDHEIM** AS A WAR CRIMINAL, TOO.

WIESENTHAL SAID HE HAD SEEN NO EVIDENCE TO IMPLICATE WALDHEIM IN CARRYING OUT ANY ATROCITIES, AND VOICED CONCERN THAT THE WJC CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM MIGHT LEAD THE PUBLIC TO DISMISS THE HUNT FOR REAL NAZI CRIMINALS AS "MERE JEWISH VENGEANCE."

WHAT EXASPERATED WIESENTHAL WAS THE IGNORANCE OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION ABOUT THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. HE HAS SCORN FOR NAIVE U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND OTHERS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THE "LEGEND" THAT FASCISTS LIKE ARTUKOVIC HAD THE REDEEMING QUALITY OF BEING ANTI-COMMUNIST. HE IS URKED BY FELLOW JEWS WHO BRAND ENTIRE PEOPLES, LIKE THE UKRANIANS, AS ANTI-SEMITIC.

WIESENTHAL IS EVEN MAD AT "THE NEW YORK TIMES," WHICH HAS GIVEN PUBLICITY TO THE INVESTIGATION OF WALDHEIM'S WORLD

WAR II SERVICE, ESPECIALLY THE SERVICE IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST YUGOSLAV GUERRILLAS AND IN GREECE, AL OF WHICH WALDHEIM CONCEALED. WIESENTHAL THINKS THE "TIMES" HAS GONE TOO FAR.

"I TOLD "THE NEW YORK TIMES," "YOU WILL LOSE YOUR REPUTATION. "THE NEW YORK TIMES" IS A VERY IMPORTANT WEAPON FOR DEMOCRACY AND TRUTH. YOU SHOULD BE VERY CAREFUL IN MAKING ACCUSATIONS."

WIESENTHAL'S OFFICE IS AROUND THE CORNER FROM A GRASSY LITTLE SQUARE WITH A SCULPTURE OF A MAN STANDING IN A

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DUNGEON. YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND GERMAN TO READ THE CHILLING INSCRIPTION: "HIER STAND DAS HAUS DER GASTAPO."

HE REFLECTED ON THE IRONIES OF THE WAR: THAT GESTAPO AND SOVIET NKVD OFFICERS MET IN POLAND TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON HOW TO CRUSH THE POLISH RESISTANCE, THAT SOME SOVIET JEWISH COMMUNISTS HAD DONE BRUTAL THINGS TO POLES AND UKRANIANS BEFORE THE NAZIS MOVED EAST IN 1941; THAT HIS OWN LIFE WAS SAVED BY ONE OF THE UKRANIAN POLICEMEN, WHO WERE NOTORIOUS FOR THEIR CRUELTY TO JEWS.

"I WAS A BUILDING ENGINEER AND I WAS STANDING IN A LINE OF PEOPLE TO BE EXECUTED. HE WAS A MASON, AND HE RECOGNIZED ME. HE LED ME AWAY, AND HE SAVED MY LIFE," WIESENTHAL SAID. "AND HE WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE."

BUT THE 77-YEAR-OLD WIESENTHAL LEAPED FROM THE RED CORDUROY EASY CHAIR IN HIS DEN WHEN HE SPOKE OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS.

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS REVIVING ANTI-SEMITISM HERE?" HE DEMANDED. "IT IS NOT REVELATIONS ABOUT WALDHEIM'S PAST. NO. IT IS AN INTERVIEW BY ISRAEL SINGER OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS, TELLING AUSTRIANS THAT BITBURG WAS ONE BITTER DAY FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN AND THAT IF AUSTRIANS ELECT WALDHEIM THE POPULATION OF AUSTRIA IS GOING TO GET SIX YEARS OF BITBURG."

"THEY HAVE LIT A FIRE," WIESENTHAL COMPLAINS. "YOU CAN'T MAKE A COLLECTIVE THREAT AGAINST AN ENTIRE COUNTRY AND THEN PRETEND YOU CAN ENFORCE IT."

WIESENTHAL ONLY PARTIALLY DEFENDS WALDHEIM FROM CHARGES THAT HE HELPED TO CARRY OUT NAZI PERSECUTIONS, PORGROMS AND DEPORTATIONS IN THE BALKANS: "I TOLD HIM TO HIS FACE, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WHEN YOU SAY YOU KNEW NOTHING. YOU KNEW MORE AND BETTER THAN ALL THE OTHERS."

"BUT THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE THE MAN WAS INVOLVED IN CRIMES."

WHAT MAKES WIESENTHAL ESPECIALLY INDIGNANT IS THAT HE HAS SPENT 41 YEARS OF CAREFUL RESEARCH TO HUNT DOWN NAZI CRIMINALS. HE KNOWS OF THOUSANDS -- 6,000 FORMER UKRANIAN SS TROOPS LIVE IN CANADA, HE SAYS -- AND HE HAS BROUGHT 1,100 TO JUSTICE.

"IN 41 YEARS, I HAVE ONLY BEEN SUED FOUR TIMES FOR LIBEL. THREE CASES THEY LOST, AND THE FOURTH ONE WAS DROPPED. BUT I WAS VERY CAREFUL SO THAT NO ONE COULD CREATE THE LEGEND THAT THE JEWS ARE JUST OUT FOR REVENGE AND ARE ACCUSING INNOCENT PEOPLE. WHEN YOU CALL A MAN A CRIMINAL WITHOUT EVIDENCE, YOU LET PEOPLE SAY THAT IT IS ONLY A JEWISH ACCUSATION."

THE EVIDENCE SO FAR DOES NOT CONVINCING WIESENTHAL, NOT

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EVEN THE GERMAN MILITARY RECORDS THAT HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE UNITED STATES. "A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW HOW TO READ GERMAN DON'T KNOW HOW TO READ A GERMAN MILITARY DOCUMENT," HE SAID.

WALDHEIM, HE SAID, SPENT THE WAR AS AN INTERPRETER AND LIAISON OFFICER, TELLING THE GERMANS WHERE THEY NEEDED TO SEND TROOPS TO FIGHT YUGOSLAV PARTISANS. HE COLLECTED FIELD REPORTS FROM GERMAN UNITS ACROSS YUGOSLAVIA EVERY MORNING AND EVENING, WIESENTHAL SAID. "HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN AT THE FRONT. UP TO THIS MOMENT, I HAVE NOT SEEN ONE DOCUMENT OF EVIDENCE OF WAR CRIMES -- EXCEPT FOR ONE DOCUMENT IN THE UN FILE -- AND THAT IS NOT CREDIBLE."

"AUSTRIA IS ENTITLED TO HAVE WHATEVER PRESIDENT IT WANTS," WIESENTHAL SAID.

"PEOPLE ASK ME, WHY DO I DEFEND WALDHEIM, WHY DO I DEFEND THE UKRANIANS?" WIESENTHAL SAID FINALLY. "I DON'T DEFEND THEM. I DEFEND THE TRUTH." SHULTZ

END OF MESSAGE

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