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TEXT  
TAGS: PREL, AU, IS  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL'S NEXT STEPS REGARDING KURT WALDHEIM

REF: TEL AVIV 7506

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY  
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MFA'S AUSTRIAN DESK OFFICER HAS TOLD US THAT THE GOI HAS BEGUN A DISCUSSION OF ISRAEL'S REACTION TO KURT WALDHEIM'S VICTORY IN THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. SOURCES CLOSE TO FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMIR HAVE TOLD US THAT THE FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE IN A SHAMIR/PERES MEETING LATER THIS WEEK. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES IT APPEARS THAT THE MOST LIKELY RESPONSE WILL BE TO NOT APPOINT A NEW AMBASSADOR WHEN THE PRESENT AMBASSADOR RETURNS TO ISRAEL THIS SUMMER. END SUMMARY.

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3. ACCORDING TO THE MFA'S AUSTRIAN DESK OFFICER THE GOI HAS BEGUN A DISCUSSION OF HOW ISRAEL SHOULD REACT TO **KURT WALDHEIM'S** ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF AUSTRIA. SOURCES CLOSE TO FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMIR TOLD US THAT A FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE DURING A PERES/SHAMIR MEETING LATER THIS WEEK. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES A CUTTING OFF OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND A RETURN TO "BUSINESS AS USUAL" ARE NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION. THUS SOME SORT OF RESPONSE, BEYOND THE JUNE 9 RECALL OF ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR ELITZUR FOR CONSULTATIONS, CAN BE EXPECTED. ISRAEL IS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED THAT IF AMBASSADOR ELITZUR WERE TO LEAVE VIENNA THIS SUMMER, AS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED, HIS SUCCESSOR WOULD HAVE TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS TO WALDHEIM.

4. ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCES THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME IS ONE IN WHICH ISRAEL WOULD ALLOW ELITZUR TO LEAVE, AND NOT APPOINT A SUCCESSOR. SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION WOULD CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE ISRAEL'S OPPOSITION TO WALDHEIM WITHOUT, IT IS HOPED, IRREPARABLY DAMAGING AUSTRIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS. IT WOULD ALSO LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF SENDING AN AMBASSADOR AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

5. COMMENT

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WHILE EMOTIONAL OPPOSITION TO WALDHEIM HAS NOT DIMINISHED AMONG MANY ISRAELIS, MORE SOBER ANALYSTS HAVE WARNED AGAINST LETTING EMOTIONS DETERMINE DECISION MAKING. PRESIDENT HERZOG HAS BEEN QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "WHATEVER THE DECISION, IT SHOULD BENEFIT ISRAEL." OTHER OFFICIALS HAVE COMMENTED ON AUSTRIA'S ROLE IN FACILITATING THE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS. AT THE SAME TIME, EVEN THOSE URGING RESTRAINT HAVE NOTHING GOOD TO SAY ABOUT WALDHEIM OR THE AUSTRIANS. AVIGDOR DAGAN, ISRAEL'S FORMER AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA, SUMMED UP MANY PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE WHEN HE SAID THAT A STRONG ISRAELI REACTION "WON'T SOLVE ANYTHING BECAUSE AUSTRIA IS FULL OF LITTLE WALDHEIMS." PICKERING  
END OF MESSAGE

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