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DOCUMENT_ID: 136236780
INQNO: DOC4D 00391810
DOCNO: TEL 016890 86
PRODUCER: TEL AVIV
SOURCE: STATE
DOCTYPE: IN
DOR: 19861129
TOR: 063639
DOCPREC: R
ORIGDATE: 198611281620
MHFNO: 86 3001908
DOCCLASS: C

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
2000

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HEADER
RR RUEAIIB
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
UTS0187
RR RUEHC
DE RUFHTV #6890 3321620
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 281620Z NOV 86
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3840
INFO RUFHLD/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3886
RUFHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 1792
RUFHBE/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 0638
BT

CONTROLS
CONFIDENTIAL TEL AVIV 16890

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TEXT
TAGS: PREL, IS, AU
SUBJECT: ISRAELI-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS
REF: TEL AVIV 8200

STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW
Retain class'n _____
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with concurrence of _____
after _____
EO 12958, 25X _____
Date: 8/26/01
IPS/CR/IR by _____

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SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2001 2007

1. (U) THE JERUSALEM POST REPORTED NOVEMBER 24 THAT AN ISRAELI JUSTICE MINISTRY REPORT FOUND ONLY WEAK EVIDENCE LINKING AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT **KURT WALDHEIM** WITH CRIMES AGAINST THE JEWISH PEOPLE. THE REPORT, ORDERED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER PERES IN APRIL 1986, WAS PREPARED BY THE JUSTICE MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, DENNIS GOULDMAN.

2. (C) IN A CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF, GOULDMAN'S AIDE ELI GABAY SAID THAT THE POST ARTICLE WAS REFERRING TO A MAY 30 REPORT ON WALDHEIM (REFTEL). HE DENIED THAT ANY SUBSEQUENT REPORT HAD BEEN WRITTEN. GABAY ADDED THAT HE CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT, WHILE THERE IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AGAINST WALDHEIM FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION, THERE IS NOT, AT PRESENT, ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO INDICT WALDHEIM OR TO ACCUSE HIM OF COMMITTING WAR CRIMES.

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3. (U) DESPITE FOREIGN MINISTER PERES' STATEMENT LAST WEEK THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE NAMING A NEW AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA "AT THIS STAGE", THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IN THE PRESS HERE THAT, IF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST WALDHEIM IS WEAK, ISRAEL MIGHT DO EXACTLY THAT. FOR EXAMPLE, ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA ELITZUR TOLD THE VOICE OF ISRAEL THAT, GIVEN THE JUSTICE MINISTRY OPINION, THERE WAS PLACE FOR ISRAEL TO REASSESS ITS POLICY TOWARD AUSTRIA.

4. (C) MFA EUROPE I DEPUTY DIRECTOR AVI PROSSER (FORMER ISRAELI DCM IN VIENNA) DISCOUNTS ANY REPORTS OF AN IMMINENT ISRAELI DECISION TO BREAK OUT OF THE IMPASSE WITH AUSTRIA, PARTICULARLY GIVEN FOREIGN MINISTER PERES' PUBLIC POSITION. HE TOLD US ON NOVEMBER 25 THAT ISRAEL IS LIKELY TO AWAIT A U.S. DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO PLACE WALDHEIM ON THE WATCH LIST BEFORE TAKING A DECISION OF ITS OWN. HE INDICATED THAT ISRAEL IS ALSO WATCHING TO SEE HOW OTHER COUNTRIES (E.G., THE UNITED KINGDOM) MIGHT PROCEED GIVEN NEW REPORTS ABOUT WALDHEIM WHICH HAVE COME TO LIGHT IN RECENT WEEKS. PROSSER ASKED IF WE HAD ANY INFORMATION WE COULD SHARE WITH HIM ON THE PROGRESS OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S EXAMINATION OF THE WALDHEIM CASE.

5. (C) ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT PROBE WHICH WE CAN SHARE WITH THE MFA. PICKERING

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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