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TEXT  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, AU  
SUBJECT: MRS. WALDHEIM'S WARTIME ACTIVITY.

1. SUMMARY: THE AUSTRIAN QUARTERLY "FORUM" HAS PUBLISHED AN INTERIM REPORT ON ITS RESEARCHES INTO FRAU WALDHEIM'S WARTIME ACTIVITY. THAT THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE HAD APPLIED TO JOIN THE NAZI PARTY ON OCTOBER 12, 1940 AT THE AGE OF 18 WAS ALREADY KNOWN BUT HAS BEEN LITTLE NOTED HERE. ACCORDING TO HER LAWYER, SHE LEFT THE PARTY IN NOVEMBER 1943 ON THE OCCASION OF HER ENGAGEMENT TO KURT WALDHEIM. FRAU WALDHEIM ADMITS SHE PERFORMED NATIONAL SERVICE IN 1940 BUT DENIES SHE WAS EVER ATTACHED TO A LUFTWAFFE AUXILIARY UNIT

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IN POLAND OR "THE BROWN SISTERS." "FORUM" PROMISES MORE INFORMATION IN ITS SPRING ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1987 ISSUE OF "FORUM," AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER 1939, THE FUTURE MRS. WALDHEIM'S SCHOOL TEACHER TOLD HER STUDENTS THAT THEIR COLLEAGUE, LIESELOTTE (SHORT FOR ELIZABETH CHARLOTTE) RITSCHER (MAIDEN NAME) WOULD NOT BE JOINING THEM BECAUSE SHE HAD "VOLUNTEERED FOR AN IMPORTANT TASK IN THE EAST." "FORUM" NOTES THAT A COMPANY OF FEMALE "AIR SERVICE INFORMATION ASSISTANTS" HAD BEEN FORMED IN VIENNA IN AUGUST AND THEN SENT TO POLAND FOR THREE OR FOUR MONTHS. ON LIESELOTTE RITSCHER'S ACTIVITIES AT THIS TIME (I.E., BEFORE APRIL 1940) HER LAWYER WOULD SAY ONLY THAT SHE WORKED "BRIEFLY AS A TELEPHONE HELPER (TELEPHONHILFSDIENST) IN VIENNA" BEFORE BEING SENT TO THE RHINELAND TO PERFORM COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE AS A MEMBER OF THE REICHSARBEITSDIENST (RAD). "FORUM" ASKS IF SHE WAS EVER A MEMBER OF THE "BROWN SISTERS" -- EVIDENTLY A SEMI-MILITARY NAZI AUXILIARY ORGANIZATION. MRS. WALDHEIM AND HER LAWYER BOTH CLAIM THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A GROUP. "FORUM" PROMISES FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS POINT IN ITS NEXT ISSUE.

3. HER LAWYER STATES THAT THE FUTURE MRS. WALDHEIM "WAS TRANSFERRED" TO THE NAZI PARTY FROM THE "BUND DEUTSCHER MAEDSCHEN" (BDM), WHICH WAS THE FEMALE VERSION OF THE HITLER YOUTH, AND COMPULSORY FOR ALL GIRLS OF A CERTAIN AGE. THE LAWYER LISTS "YOUTH" AS HER MOTIVATION. (COMMENT: "TRANSFERRED" IS OBVIOUSLY AN INAPPROPRIATE WORD HERE SINCE ONE HAD TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NAZI PARTY. END COMMENT.) HER LAWYER THEN REPORTS THAT SHE LEFT THE PARTY IN 1943 IN CONNECTION WITH HER ENGAGEMENT TO **KURT WALDHEIM** AND WAS, THEREFORE, NOT REQUIRED TO REGISTER (AS A NAZI) WITH THE POST-WAR AUTHORITIES IN BADEN.

4. "FORUM" CITES A "PROFIL" ARTICLE OF JUNE 30, 1986 IN WHICH A FRIEND OF THE FUTURE MRS. WALDHEIM DESCRIBES HER AS REMAINING TRUE TO HER NAZI CONVICTIONS EVEN IN JANUARY 1945: "KURT HAS BEEN IN VIENNA AGAIN; WE MUST HOLD OUT. FINAL VICTORY WILL COME."

5. COMMENT: THE AUSTRIAN PUBLIC'S ATTITUDE ON THE QUESTION OF MRS. WALDHEIM'S PAST, AN ATTITUDE WELL REFLECTED BY MOST OF THE ORGANS OF THE MEDIA, IS LARGELY THAT THE LESS SAID, THE BETTER. SCANDAL FOR SCANDAL'S SAKE IS NOT THE STYLE THE AUSTRIAN ESTABLISHMENT PREFERS, ESPECIALLY IN MATTERS TOUCHING THE NAZI PERIOD. THEREFORE, IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW REVELATIONS SIGNIFICANTLY AT VARIANCE WITH SISSY WALDHEIM'S STATEMENTS, WE DO NOT EXPECT THAT "FORUM" WILL BE ABLE TO CREATE A BIG STIR HERE. ALL THE SAME, THE APPARENT EFFORTS BY THE WALDHEIMS TO CONTINUE STONEWALLING ON THIS ISSUE CAN ONLY FURTHER ERODE THE CREDIBILITY OF AUSTRIA'S FIRST FAMILY. BLOCH

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END OF MESSAGE

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