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DOCUMENT\_ID: 30754365  
INQNO: DOC5D 00593516  
DOCNO: TEL 006755 87  
PRODUCER: VIENNA  
SOURCE: STATE  
DOCTYPE: IN  
DOR: 19870428  
TOR: 141906  
DOCPREC: O  
ORIGDATE: 198704281505  
MHFNO: 87 4625093  
DOCCLASS: U

HEADER  
OO RUEAIIB  
ZNR UUUUU ZOC STATE ZZH  
UTS6121  
OO RUEHC  
DE RUFHVI #6755/01 1181509  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 281505Z APR 87  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
TO RUEHFO/USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2935  
RUEBWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASH IMMEDIATE  
RUEADWW/WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
BT

CONTROLS  
UNCLAS VIENNA 06755

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FOR P/P, P/M, P/FN, P/FW, EU-SCHLOEDER, VOA/BX

STATE FOR EUR/CE; FOR HABIB AND NESVIG

JUSTICE FOR GALEBACH/DUNLOP AND SHERR

WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE

E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA MEDIA REACTION

1. WALDHEIM ON WATCH LIST: ALL FIVE VIENNA DAILIES OF APRIL 28 CARRIED TOP STORIES. HEADLINES: "U.S. PLACES WALDHEIM ON WATCH LIST - VIENNA GOVERNMENT DISMAYED" ("DIE PRESSE"); "MOCK: 'AUSTRIA WILL NOT LET ITSELF BE EXTORTED'" ("KURIER"); "WALDHEIM BARRED FROM ENTRY TO U.S. AS 'PRIVATE CITIZEN'" ("NEUE AZ"); "WALDHEIM ON U.S. WATCH LIST" ("WIENER ZEITUNG"); "U.S. BLACKLISTS WALDHEIM WITHOUT EVIDENCE" ("KRONEN-ZEITUNG").

VERY EXTENSIVE COVERAGE ALSO BY THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3828  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
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MONDAY NIGHT AND TUESDAY MORNING: CHANCELLOR FRANZ VRANITZKY SPOKE OF "A VERY, VERY SERIOUS AND DISMAYING MATTER," BUT HE ADDED THAT AUSTRIANS SHOULD REMAIN LEVEL-HEADED, EVEN THOUGH FEELING DISMAYED AND INSULTED. ASKED IF HE WOULD TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE THIRD WEEK OF MAY AS SCHEDULED, VRANITZKY DID NOT GIVE A DIRECT ANSWER, BUT HE SAID THAT THIS VISIT COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARD "THE CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN MATTERS." HE STRESSED THE SERVICES RENDERED BY THE UNITED STATES IN ENSURING THE FREEDOM OF AUSTRIA AND MENTIONED THE FACT THAT, EXACTLY ON THIS DAY 42 YEARS AGO, AUSTRIA WAS LIBERATED FROM THE NAZI REGIME.

FOREIGN MINISTER ALOIS MOCK STATED THAT "THE DECISION BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS CAUSED UTMOST DISMAY AND MUST BE REJECTED CATEGORICALLY." IN HIS OPINION, THE RULING IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH EUROPEAN LEGAL PRACTICE BECAUSE, IF HE WANTED TO ENTER THE U.S. AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN, WALDHEIM WOULD HAVE TO PROVE HIS INNOCENCE RATHER THAN THE U.S. AUTHORITIES PROVE HIS GUILT. MOCK HAS RECALLED AMBASSADOR THOMAS KLESTIL TO VIENNA FOR CONSULTATIONS. KLESTIL HIMSELF HAS EXPRESSED EMBITTERMENT BECAUSE, IN HIS OPINION, "MORE IMPORTANCE HAS BEEN ATTACHED TO U.S. DOMESTIC POLITICS THAN TO RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA."

THE "KURIER" REPORTED ON THE FIRST REACTION BY AN UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE'S PARTY MEMBER OF THE AUSTRIAN CABINET. HE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS: (1) VRANITZKY SHOULD CANCEL HIS VISIT TO THE U.S.; (2) AUSTRIA OUGHT TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO AMBASSADOR LAUDER THAT IT WANTS THE U.S. TO BE REPRESENTED BY A CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ONLY; (3) AUSTRIA, FOR ITS PART, SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN WASHINGTON ONLY BY A CHARGE D'AFFAIRES.

FREEDOM PARTY CHAIRMAN JORG HAIDER COMPLAINED ABOUT "AN ADMISSIBLE CHARGE OF COLLECTIVE GUILT, LEVELED AGAINST THE WHOLE GENERATION OF (WORLD WAR II) SOLDIERS IN AUSTRIA."

ON TV, WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT KLAUS EMMERICH MAINTAINED THAT THE U.S. AUTHORITIES "DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING." TV COMMENTATOR HUGO PORTISCH SUGGESTED THAT WALDHEIM FILE A LAWSUIT, JUST AS ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER SHARON DID THIS AGAINST "TIME" MAGAZINE WHEN HE WAS ACCUSED OF HAVING MASTERMINDED THE KILLING OF PALESTINIAN INMATES OF A REFUGEE CAMP IN LEBANON. PORTISCH WOUND UP HIS COMMENTARY BY STRESSING FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S. AND THE SERVICES RENDERED BY THE U.S. TO AUSTRIA, INCLUDING THE MARSHALL PLAN.

WALDHEIM STATED THAT HE WILL MAINTAIN HIS COMPOSURE AND THAT HIS CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR. INTERIOR MINISTER KARL BLECHA, WHO MET WITH MR. MEESE IN BRUSSELS ON MONDAY, POINTED OUT THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PRAISED AUSTRIA AND EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST AUSTRIA, BUT ONLY AGAINST WALDHEIM PERSONALLY. BLECHA

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SAID AUSTRIA IS VERY DISAPPOINTED BECAUSE WALDHEIN WAS ELECTED WITH A CLEAR-CUT MAJORITY AND SINCE THEN HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY ALL AUSTRIANS.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT: ALL VIENNA PAPERS EDITORIALIZED. UNDER THE FRONT PAGE HEADLINE "THE DECISION," CHIEF EDITOR THOMAS CHORHERR REMARKED IN THE UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 VIENNA 06755

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SUBJECT: AUSTRIA MEDIA REACTION

INDEPENDENT DAILY "DIE PRESSE": "FOR THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT, WHO WAS ELECTED IN A FREE, DEMOCRATIC VOTE BY A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE, THIS DECISION IS BITTER. IT IS EQUALLY BITTER FOR ALL THOSE WHO ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO THE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. ... THIS DECISION IS CERTAINLY NOT CONDUCIVE TO ADVANCING MUTUAL RELATIONS. CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY, WHO WANTED TO PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE U.S., WILL BE THE FIRST WHO WILL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT DRAWING THE CONSEQUENCES."

FOREIGN EDITOR KURT SEINITZ IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION TABLOID "KRONEN-ZEITUNG" UNDER THE PAGE 3 HEADLINE "INQUISITION!": "LET'S NOT CHERISH ANY ILLUSIONS: THE 'FALLOUT' FROM THIS POLITICAL 'CHERNOBYL' WILL CERTAINLY COME. IT WILL ASSUME THE FORM OF PRECIPITATION CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND THE UNITED STATES. ... THE ANTI-WALDHEIM ACTION IN THE UNITED STATES REMINDS US OF INQUISITION IN THE DARK MIDDLE AGES. THE VERDICT OF "GUILTY" HAS BEEN RENDERED WITHOUT EVIDENCE. ... IT IS ESPECIALLY OBJECTIONABLE THAT THIS DECISION WAS ANNOUNCED ONLY THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE CHANCELLOR'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. SUCH A SLAP IN THE FACE HAS BEEN DEALT TO A COUNTRY WHICH IS REGARDED AS SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT AND OF WHICH ONE THINKS THAT IT CANNOT AND WILL NOT DEFEND ITSELF POLITICALLY."

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR HANS RAUSCHER WROTE UNDER THE FRONT PAGE HEADLINE "A CATASTROPHE" IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY "KURIER": "THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS VIRTUALLY PROCLAIMED AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT KURT WALDHEIM TO BE A LEPER. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS IS AN UNCONSCIONABLE BLOW AGAINST FRENDRY AUSTRIA, A CATASTROPHE. ... ACCORDING TO WHAT WE

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AUSTRIANS KNOW, THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST SHRED OF EVIDENCE THAT FIRST LIEUTENANT WALDHEIM HAD COMMITTED WAR CRIMES IN THE BALKANS. ... CAN CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY TRAVEL TO SEE REAGAN, AS SCHEDULED? THIS IS A BAD DAY FOR AUSTRIA."

THE "KURIER" FURTHERMORE CARRIED A SECOND EDITORIAL, SIMPLY ENTITLED "KURT WALDHEIM." THE PAPER SAID: "IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WALDHEIM DID NOT COMMIT ANY NAZI CRIMES. BUT IT IS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT HE HAS MADE MISTAKES IN DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC. ONLY OPENNESS WILL HELP US TO WEATHER THIS DIFFICULT PHASE."

UNDER THE PAGE 2 HEADLINE "THE SHOCK," CHIEF EDITOR MANFRED SCHEUCH WROTE IN THE AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST PARTY DAILY "NEUE AZ":

"WALDHEIN WOULD NOW BE IN A BETTER SITUATION IF HE HAD, AS PREVIOUSLY PROMISED, SUBMITTED HIS CASE TO AN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS. DESPITE THE U.S. ASSURANCES THAT NO HOSTILE ACT AGAINST AUSTRIA WAS INTENDED, THE U.S. DECISION CONSTITUTES A HEAVY BURDEN. KURT WALDHEIM HIMSELF COULD FREE US FROM IT BY TAKING THIS COURAGEOUS STEP."

UNDER THE PAGE 3 HEADLINE "THE BLOW FROM THE USA," CHIEF EDITOR HEINZ FAHNLER REMARKED IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY "WIENER ZEITUNG": "WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO TRY TO ENHANCE OUR IMAGE. OUR MANAGERS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET INTERNATIONAL CONTRACTS FOR OUR AILING INDUSTRY. BUT WILL ANYBODY BE WILLING ANY LONGER TO SIGN CONTRACTS WITH A COUNTRY WHOSE CHIEF OF STATE HAS BEEN PLACED BY THE U.S. ON THE WATCH LIST? WHO STILL REGARDS THIS COUNTRY AS A SERIOUS-MINDED AND RELIABLE PARTNER? ... IN ANY CASE, THE WORLD AGAIN HAS ITS HEADLINES ABOUT AUSTRIA, NO MATTER TO WHOM WE OWE THEM. ONE THING IS CERTAIN: OUR SITUATION IS MORE SERIOUS THAN WE THINK."

THE COMMUNIST DAILY "VOLKSSTIMME" IN A FRONT PAGE COMMENTARY, ENTITLED "PERSONA NON GRATA": "(WALDHEIM'S) DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN WAR CRIMES HAS NOT BEEN PROVED.  
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THE FACT THAT THE U.S. PRESIDENT HIMSELF ANNOUNCED THE DECISION (IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR KLESTIL) SHOWS HOW MUCH IMPORTANCE IS BEING ATTACHED TO THIS. WALDHEIM AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM HIS CAPACITY AS FEDERAL PRESIDENT. ... IT WOULD BE WRONG TO DRAW THE CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION HAS ACTED IN THE INTEREST OF ANTI-FASCISTS INSISTING ON FULL ELUCIDATION (OF NAZI WAR CRIMES). THAT THIS IS NOT SO IS EVIDENCED BY THE U.S. COMPLICITY WITH ALL THE FASCIST REGIMES NOW EXTANT IN THE WORLD. AND THIS IS ALSO DISPROVED BY THE ROLE THE U.S. PLAYED AFTER 1945 WHEN, IN THE COURSE OF THE COLD WAR, IT PREVENTED ANY REAL DE-NAZIFICATION IN AUSTRIA."  
KOHL

ADMIN  
END OF MESSAGE

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