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TEXT

TAGS: PREL, GE, AU
SUBJECT: FRG REACTION TO U.S. EXCLUSION OF WALDHEIM

REF: VIENNA 6785

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: FRG OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY SILENT ON THE USG EXCLUSION OF AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT WALDHEIM, BUT EDITORIAL COMMENTARY HAS BEEN VIVID. MOST, BUT NOT ALL, COMMENT HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE U.S. DECISION. A FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL SAID PRIVATELY THAT THE FRG REGRETTED THE DIFFICULTIES OCCURRING BETWEEN TWO OF ITS BEST FRIENDS. END SUMMARY

3. EDITORIAL COMMENT IN WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPERS HAS BEEN LARGELY CRITICAL OF THE USG DECISION TO EXCLUDE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT **KURT WALDHEIM** FROM THE UNITED STATES AS A PRIVATE PERSON. KNOWLEDGE THAT HE COULD, NONETHELESS, VISIT THE U.S. TECHNICALLY AS A CHIEF OF STATE SEEMS TO HAVE MADE NO DIFFERENCE TO GERMAN OPINION. MUCH OF THE PRINTED CRITICISM HAS FOCUSED ON THE THEME OF "GUILTY

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WITHOUT A TRIAL." THE "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE" SUGGESTED FURTHER THAT, ALTHOUGH THE U.S. OVERLOOKED THE WAR CRIMES OF NUMEROUS FOREIGN OFFICIALS FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II BECAUSE THE U.S. NEEDED THESE COUNTRIES, IT NOW APPEARED THAT WASHINGTON ARBITRARILY WANTED TO PRESSURE SMALL AND NEUTRAL AUSTRIA. THE NEWSPAPER WONDERED IF SUCH A MOVE WAS REALLY WORTH THE COST.

4. THE "NEUE OSNABRUECKER ZEITUNG" OBSERVED THAT THE U.S. MOVE TO EXCLUDE A CHIEF OF STATE ON A PERSONAL BASIS WAS UNPRECEDENTED IN THE HISTORY OF STATECRAFT AND LEFT ITSELF OPEN TO ARBITRARY INTERPRETATION. IT NOTED WALDHEIM'S INCREASING INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION, DESPITE HIS PREVIOUS USE OF SHIFTING TACTICS TO DEAL WITH HIS PAST. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT WALDHEIM COULD HAVE SERVED HIS COUNTRY BETTER IF HE HAD THOUGHT EARLIER ABOUT THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM, EVEN THOUGH THE AUSTRIANS WERE CLOSING RANKS BEHIND HIM NOW.

5. THE BONN "GENERAL ANZEIGER" SAID THAT WALDHEIM HAS NOW BECOME A SURROGATE FOR GERMANS WHO SHARED HIS FATE, RECALLING THE NUREMBERG TRIALS IN WHICH ONE WAS INITIALLY GUILTY IF ONE HAD WORN THE WRONG UNIFORM. THE "STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN" AND THE "FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU" OPINED THAT WASHINGTON'S MOVE REFLECTED POORLY ON THE POLITICAL WISDOM OF THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION. SMALLER NEWSPAPERS WITHHELD FEWER PUNCHES. ONE COMPARED PRESIDENT REAGAN'S LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR TO WALDHEIM'S FORGETFULNESS ABOUT DETAILS OF HIS MILITARY SERVICE (MUNICH "ABENDZEITUNG"). TWO PREDICTED A CONSEQUENT REKINDLING OF ANTI-SEMITISM (DORTMUND "RUHR NACHRICHTEN" AND "AUGSBURGER ALLEGEMEINE"). ANOTHER ASKED WHETHER THE U.S. MOVE WAS LATE RETALIATION ON BEHALF OF JEWISH VOTERS FOR WALDHEIM'S FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ARABS WHILE HE WAS UNSYG ("ASCHNER VOLKSZEITUNG").

6. BONN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS THUS FAR HAVE BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY SILENT ON THE SUBJECT, HOPING TO AVOID POTENTIAL POLITICAL DAMAGE FROM BEING DRAWN INTO THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION. GERMAN CITIZENS OF DIFFERING POLITICAL PERSUASIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE COMMENTED PRIVATELY THAT THE U.S. MOVE IS UNFAIR AND UNJUST.

7. WE ASKED FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR WEST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS HOLTHOFF WHAT EFFECTS THE U.S. EXCLUSION OF WALDHEIM MIGHT HAVE FOR THE FRG. HOLTHOFF EXPRESSED REGRET THAT TWO OF THE FRG'S CLOSEST FRIENDS (THE U.S. AND AUSTRIA) WERE HAVING DIFFICULTIES IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT WAS RELIEVED THAT AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY APPARENTLY STILL INTENDED TO VISIT WASHINGTON. HE ADDED THAT THE U.S. EXCLUSION OF WALDHEIM WILL INEVITABLY HAVE THE EFFECT OF PROLONGING THE ISOLATION OF AUSTRIA. THINKING FURTHER, SAID HOLTHOFF, INASMUCH AS AUSTRIAN AND WEST GERMAN SECURITY ARE INTERWOVEN (EVEN THOUGH AUSTRIA TECHNICALLY IS NEUTRAL), A WEAKENING OF AUSTRIA'S

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INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE IS A DEVELOPMENT WHICH THE FRG MUST
TAKE INTO ACCOUNT. NEVERTHELESS, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN
HOW EFFECTIVELY AUSTRIA AS A COUNTRY WILL BE ABLE TO
RECOVER ITS INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE.

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ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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