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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: FRONT PAGE LEAD HEADLINES
IN THE VIENNA PRESS OF APRIL 29: "GOVERNMENT FULLY
SUPPORTS WALDHEIM - TUG OF WAR OVER VRANITZKY'S U.S.
TRIP" ("DIE PRESSE"); "WALDHEIM SHOULD AT LAST SUE
SLANDERERS" ("KRONEN-ZEITUNG"); "VRANITZKY: LET'S NOT
PUSH AUSTRIA INTO ISOLATION" ("NEUE AZ"); "GOVERNMENT TO
PROTECT WALDHEIM FROM UNWARRANTED CHARGES" ("KURIER");
"DISMAYING AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE" ("WIENER ZEITUNG").

THE SEMI-OFFICIAL "WIENER ZEITUNG" PLAYED UP THE FULL

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TEXT OF A RADIO AND TELEVISION STATEMENT BY WALDHEIM TUESDAY NIGHT. HE CALLED THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM "DISMAYING AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE" AND SAID THAT, JUST BECAUSE HE HAS ALWAYS STOOD FOR THE INTERESTS OF HUMAN BEINGS, HE CLAIMS THE RIGHT AS A HUMAN BEING NOT TO BE CONDEMNED WITHOUT EVIDENCE. ASSERTING THAT HIS CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR, HE SAID THAT HE, HIS WIFE AND HIS CHILDREN OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONFRONT THE ORDEAL.

THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE PRESS COVERED A FOUR-POINT STATEMENT BY CHANCELLOR FRANZ VRANITZKY ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT: (1) AUSTRIA IS DISMAYED AT THE DECISION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. THE CHARGES AGAINST WALDHEIM ARE NOT SUBSTANTIATED BY EVIDENCE AND MUST, THEREFORE, BE REJECTED. (2) IN VIEW OF THE TRADITIONALLY EXCELLENT AND FRIENDLY BILATERAL RELATIONS, THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT DEPLORES THIS MEASURE BY THE U.S. AUTHORITIES. (3) IT WILL BE IMPERATIVE THAT THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT DECIDES ABOUT ITS FURTHER ACTION ONLY AFTER QUIET AND MATTER-OF-FACT DELIBERATION. THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON HAS ALREADY BEEN RECALLED FOR CONSULTATIONS IN VIENNA. AUSTRIA INSISTS ON DISCLOSURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DOCUMENTS ON WHICH THE DECISION IS BASED. (4) THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE ALL STEPS NECESSARY TO PROTECT ITS ELECTED CHIEF OF STATE FROM UNWARRANTED CHARGES.

ACCORDING TO "DIE PRESSE," VRANITZKY WANTS TO MAKE HIS OFFICIAL TRIP TO THE U.S. NEXT MONTH AS SCHEDULED WHEREAS WALDHEIM IS FOR CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT. THE SAME PAPER REPORTED THAT VRANITZKY AND FOREIGN MINISTER ALOIS MOCK WILL NOT RECOMMEND THAT WALDHEIM RESIGN. MOCK DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT AMBASSADOR LAUDER WILL BE SUMMONED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. VRANITZKY POINTED OUT IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE AMBASSADOR ALREADY CAME ON HIS OWN AND HAS OFFERED TO LET THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT EXAMINE ALL THE DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE LED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DECISION. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT PROMINENT HISTORIANS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EXAMINATION. AS FOR THE VIENNA CONSULTATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR THOMAS KLESTIL, "DIE PRESSE" CALLED ATTENTION TO CONSENSUS THAT NO RASH STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN.

MEANWHILE, VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO WALDHEIM TO SUE FOR DAMAGES. ACCORDING TO THE "KRONEN-ZEITUNG," PROF. FELIX ERMACORA, THE PEOPLE'S PARTY MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND EXPERT IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, THINKS THAT WALDHEIM SHOULD SUE ATTORNEY GENERAL MEESE FOR AT LEAST HALF A MILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGES. THE SAME PAPER QUOTED FORMER CHANCELLOR BRUNO KREISKY AS HAVING SAID THAT VRANITZKY'S REACTION IS WELL-BALANCED AND THAT AUSTRIA NOW FINDS ITSELF IN A SITUATION WHICH, SINCE 1945, WAS REGARDED AS UNTHINKABLE. ACCORDING TO THE "KRONEN-ZEITUNG," THE UNION OF SOCIALIST STUDENTS HAS ASKED WALDHEIM TO RESIGN. THE SOCIALIST PARTY DAILY

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"NEUE AZ" CRITICIZED KLAUS EMMERICH, THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT OF AUSTRIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION (ORF), FOR HIS EMOTIONAL REACTION AND FOR HAVING SAID ABOUT THE U.S. AUTHORITIES THAT THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING. THE "WIENER ZEITUNG" CARRIED A TRANSLATION OF THE FULL TEXT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE STATEMENT. UNDER A BIG HEADLINE ON PAGE 5 ("A VERDICT WITHOUT UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 VIENNA 06813

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EVIDENCE"), THE "KURIER" REPORTED ON THE MAIN CHARGES AGAINST WALDHEIM AND MAINTAINED THAT, IN A LAWSUIT, EVERY AMERICAN COURT WOULD RENDER A VERDICT IN FAVOR OF WALDHEIM.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT: IN A SHORT FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL, ENTITLED "TRAGIC," MARTIN MAIER WROTE IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY "KURIER": "THE U.S. DECISION TO BAR KURT WALDHEIM FROM ENTRY HAS DISMAYED NOT ONLY THOSE AUSTRIANS WHO HAD VOTED FOR HIM FOR PRESIDENT. THIS AFFAIR, UNUSUAL IN RELATIONS BETWEEN FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, HAS HIT US IN A CRITICAL PHASE (WHEN AUSTRIA IS TRYING TO RESOLVE ITS SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS). ... ONE YEAR AGO, CHERNOBYL SCARED US. NOW, AND THIS IS TRAGIC, WE ARE SADDLED WITH A KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CHERNOBYL."

ON PAGE 2, THE "KURIER" CARRIED A SECOND EDITORIAL, ENTITLED "WHAT SHOULD BE DONE NOW." DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR HANS RAUSCHER WROTE: "THE DECISION BY THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS EXCEEDINGLY UNFAIR. THERE IS NO POLITICAL REASON WHY (WALDHEIM) SHOULD RESIGN. SECOND, CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY SHOULD PAY HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, AS SCHEDULED. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS GROSSLY INSULTED AUSTRIA ..., BUT AUSTRIA SHOULD NOT WATCH IDLY AS IT IS BEING RAPIDLY DEVALUED AS A MODERN, VIABLE STATE AND MEMBER OF THE WESTERN WORLD. ... IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR VRANITZKY TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION IN WASHINGTON THAT AUSTRIA IS KISSING THE VERY FOOT WHICH HAS KICKED IT. BUT OFFENDED WITHDRAWAL INTO ISOLATION WOULD BE EVEN WORSE THAN THAT."

UNDER THE PAGE 2 HEADLINE "THE VERDICT," COLUMNIST ERNST TROST SAID IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION TABLOID

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"KRONEN-ZEITUNG": "THE AMERICANS HARDLY HAVE ANY NEW EVIDENCE. ... THEY HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED IN PROVING THAT WALDHEIM HAD COMMITTED WAR CRIMES. THEY HAVE JUST USED AN ELASTIC CLAUSE TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST HIM. UNDER THE SAME REGULATIONS, RICHARD VON WEIZSAECKER, HELMUT SCHMIDT, FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS AND ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE FORMER WEHRMACHT COULD BE ASKED BEFORE ENTERING THE U.S. TO PROVE THAT HIS ARMED UNIT WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ANY WAR CRIMES. ENJOYING 'THE PRIVILEGE OF LATE BIRTH' (IN 1937), CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS, BUT HE HAD BETTER REFRAIN FROM VISITING THE UNITED STATES."

CHIEF EDITOR MANFRED SCHEUCH OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY DAILY "NEUE AZ" IN A PAGE 2 EDITORIAL, ENTITLED "CALMNESS": "THE STATEMENT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS MARKED BY LEVEL-HEADEDNESS. SUCH AN ATTITUDE IS INDEED CALLED FOR. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT WE SHOULD ABANDON OUR FIRM STANCE IN REJECTING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED WITHOUT CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE AND IN DEFENDING THE HEAD OF STATE AGAINST UNJUSTIFIED ACCUSATIONS."

UNDER THE FRONT PAGE HEADLINE "ONLY LEVEL-HEADEDNESS AND CALMNESS CAN HELP," CHIEF EDITOR KARL HEINZ RITSCHEL REMARKED IN THE INDEPENDENT DAILY "SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN": "APPEALS (BY SOME AUSTRIANS) THAT VRANITZKY, BECAUSE OF THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR, SHOULD NOT TRAVEL TO THE U.S. ARE AS WRONG AS THE STRONG LANGUAGE USED BY THOSE WHO SAY, FOR INSTANCE, THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL MEESE IS MEAN. ... IT IS A FACT THAT **KURT WALDHEIM** IS REGARDED AS A 'PERSONA NON GRATA' IN THE U.S. THIS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE EXTORTION, CONTRARY TO WHAT FOREIGN MINISTER AND VICE CHANCELLOR MOCK SAID BEFORE TV CAMERAS IN HIS FIRST HOT-TEMPERED STATEMENT. THE U.S. DOES NOT WANT TO BLACKMAIL AUSTRIA, BUT IS MERELY SAYING THAT IT DOES NOT WANT TO SEE WALDHEIM. ... HOW SHALL THIS SITUATION BE SETTLED? A RESIGNATION OF THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT WOULD NOT RESOLVE THE PROBLEM AND WOULD, MOREOVER, CREATE A MOST UNFORTUNATE MYTH ABOUT A 'STAB IN THE BACK.' ... HE WAS NO NAZI, BUT, AS WE HAVE UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 03 VIENNA 06813

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SAID FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, HE HAD A FRIVOLOUS APPROACH TO DATES AND FIGURES ALTHOUGH HE KNEW ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH BEHAVIOR. THE OPINION (WIDESPREAD IN AUSTRIA) THAT, AFTER HIS ELECTION, THE WORLD WOULD NOT TALK ABOUT THIS ANY LONGER WAS DOWNRIGHT CHILDISH." KOHL

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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Page 5