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FOR P/R, P/M, P/PFN, P/FW, P/FN, VOA/BXN,
VOA/BRN:ARABIC, NEA; MACDILL FOR USIA ADVISER BRIAN
BELL AND POLAD

E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: APRIL 30-MAY 2, 1987

1. SUMMARY:

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
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--SOVIET IMAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: ONE EDITORIAL DISCERNs A HISTORICAL SHIFT IN SUPERPOWER INFLUENCE IN FAVOR OF SOVIETS.

--WALDHEIM: ONE EDITORIAL CONTRASTS THE WALDHEIM CASE WITH THE SOFT WESTERN RESPONSE TO SHAMIR'S ACTIONS AGAINST PALESTINIANS. ONE PAPER PUBLISHES AN OPEN LETTER TO WALDHEIM, SARCASTICALLY SOURCING THE U.S. DECISION TO TEL AVIV.
END OF SUMMARY

2. SOVIET IMAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

EDITORIAL:

IN ITS MAY 2 EDITORIAL ON THE GENERAL TOPIC OF AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE, AL RIYADH SUGGESTS: "FROM THE 1950'S TO THE 1970'S AMERICA HAD ITS FEET FIRMLY IMPLANTED IN THE REGION. IN THIS DECADE, A NEW PHASE HAS BEGUN AS REAGAN'S STAR FALLS AND GORBACHEV'S STAR ASCENDS....UNDOUBTEDLY, U.S. READINESS FOR SUCH A CONFERENCE STEMS FROM TWO MAIN CONCERNS--THE QUICK SOVIET MOVE AND THE NEED TO END THE (ARAB-ISRAELI) CONFLICT...THE U.S. CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO SACRIFICE ITS GREATER INTERESTS FOR SMALLER ONES, OR TO FAVOR ISRAEL OVER ARABS."

COVERAGE:

ONLY AL RIYADH PUBLISHES AN INSIDE PAGE ARTICLE (MAY 2) HEADLINED "SOVIET MOVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WORRIES U.S...GORBACHEV TAKES ADVANTAGE OF WEAKENED AMERICAN CREDIBILITY." THE ARTICLE, SOURCED TO THE DEUTSCHE PRESS AGENCY, NOTES: "THE RECENT AND SUDDEN SOVIET ACTIVITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST MAKES U.S. OFFICIALS WONDER WHETHER MOSCOW HAS LAUNCHED A NEW INITIATIVE TO GAIN INFLUENCE IN THE REGION. DURING THE PAST WEEKS THIS INITIATIVE INVOLVED THE FOLLOWING STEPS--PROVIDING KUWAIT THREE SOVIET FLAGSHIPS TO TRANSPORT OIL, SENDING DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VLADIMIR PETROVSKI THERE, NEUTRALIZING P.L.O. INTERNAL DISPUTES, APPEALING TO SYRIA TO SOFTEN ITS OPPOSITION TO ARAFAT, CONDUCTING TALKS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS IN ROME, AND GALVANIZING SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE...EXPERTS IN WASHINGTON BELIEVE THESE MOVES ARE INDICATIVE OF GORBACHEV'S ATTEMPTS TO REACTIVATE HIS COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY AND EXPLOIT THE DETERIORATION OF U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS."

3. WALDHEIM:

EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY:

AL BILAD'S (APRIL 30) FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL SAYS: "ZIONIST EFFORTS TO SOIL WALDHEIM'S REPUTATION HAVE REACHED ASTONISHING LEVELS, SO MUCH SO THAT WASHINGTON TOOK THE DECISION TO PREVENT HIS U.S. ENTRY...DESPITE SHAMIR'S CONTINUED CRIMES AGAINST PALESTINIANS AND THOSE HE COMMITTED AGAINST BRITISH MILITARY FORCES

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DURING WORLD WAR II, NEITHER THE U.S. NOR THE U.K. DENIES HIM THE RIGHT TO ENTER THEIR COUNTRIES."

AL SHARQ AL AWSAT PUBLISHES ON ITS APRIL 30 EDITORIAL PAGE AN OPEN LETTER TO AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT KURT WALDHEIM, COMMENTING: "THERE IS NO PRECEDENT TO SUCH A STRANGE DECISION. HISTORY HAS NEVER KNOWN OF A UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 RIYADH 04451

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COUNTRY BANNING ANOTHER COUNTRY'S PRESIDENT....THE TRUTH IS THAT TEL AVIV TOOK THIS DECISION AND CHARGED THE STATE DEPARTMENT WITH THE TASK OF IMPLEMENTING IT...WASHINGTON NO LONGER HAS THE AUTHORITY TO TAKE AN AMERICAN DECISION. THAT AUTHORITY RESIDES WITH ISRAEL."

COVERAGE:

WIDE PRESS COVERAGE IS GIVEN TO VIENNA'S REACTION TO U.S. WALDHEIM DECISION. REPORTS FROM INTERNATIONAL WIRE SERVICES EMPHASIZE AUSTRIAN WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THE RISE IN WALDHEIM'S POPULARITY WITHIN AUSTRIA FOLLOWING THE MOVE TO BAR HIS ENTRY INTO THE U.S.. MILLER

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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