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E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA MEDIA REACTION

1. WALDHEIM ON WATCH LIST: THE "KURIER" REPORTED TODAY THAT WALDHEIM HAS ASKED HIS LAWYERS TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER HIS INCLUSION ON THE WATCH LIST IS SUBJECT TO LEGAL ACTION. THE PAPER QUOTED HIM AS FOLLOWS: "I'VE NO REASON TO HESITATE ANY LONGER. BEFORE, I DID NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE UNITED STATES. IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I'LL INFORM THE PUBLIC SPECIFICALLY REGARDING WHAT MY NEXT STEPS WILL BE." POINTING OUT THAT WALDHEIM IS THINKING ABOUT LETTING A COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS EXAMINE HIS CASE, THE "KURIER"

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REPORTED THAT CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY WANTS SUCH A COMMISSION TO BE SET UP BY THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT OR BY THE FOREIGN POLICY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT.

ON MAY 1, THE MEDIA COVERED VRANITZKY'S DECISION TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES AS SCHEDULED. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL "WIENER ZEITUNG" QUOTED THE CHANCELLOR'S EXPLANATION THAT "I'M AWARE OF THE FACT THAT I'VE MADE THIS DECISION IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION AND THAT OPINIONS DIFFER. IT IS, HOWEVER, ALSO THE CHANCELLOR'S DUTY TO DEFEND OUR COUNTRY'S INTERESTS IN THIS SITUATION." THE "WIENER ZEITUNG" THEN PARAPHRASED VRANITZKY'S REMARK THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT EXPLICITLY ASKED VIENNA THAT THE TRIP BE MADE AS SCHEDULED, BUT IT HAS CLEARLY INDICATED ITS HOPE THAT THE VISIT WILL COME ABOUT.

TODAY'S "KRONEN-ZEITUNG" MENTIONED THE DEMAND MADE BY PEOPLE'S PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL MICHAEL GRAFF THAT THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT ASK THE U.S. AUTHORITIES TO LET EVERYBODY EXAMINE THE DOCUMENTS PURPORTEDLY INCRIMINATING WALDHEIM. THE SAME PAPER RAN A LEAD HEADLINE "WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS THREATENED BY ROW BECAUSE OF WALDHEIM." THE "KRONEN-ZEITUNG" QUOTED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF JEWS IN GERMANY, WERNER NACHMANN, AS HAVING SAID IN AN INTERVIEW FOR THE "WELT AM SONNTAG" THAT, AT THE BUDAPEST MEETING OF THE WJC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THIS WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, HE WILL INSIST THAT THE DOCUMENTS INCRIMINATING WALDHEIM BE PUT ON THE TABLE. NACHMANN ADDED THAT NOTHING CONCRETE HAS AS YET COME TO LIGHT AND THAT, IF THE EVIDENCE IS NOT CONCLUSIVE, THE ANTI-WALDHEIM CAMPAIGN SHOULD BE STOPPED IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE IT IS DETRIMENTAL TO JEWRY.

ON MAY 1, THE "KRONEN-ZEITUNG" PLAYED UP THE RESULTS OF AN OPINION POLL WHICH SHOWED THAT 74 PERCENT OF AUSTRIANS ARE AGAINST WALDHEIM'S RESIGNATION. ALSO AS A LEAD STORY, THE "KURIER" OF MAY 3 COVERED U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL PEREZ DE CUELLAR'S DECISION TO ACCEPT A PRIVATE INVITATION BY WALDHEIM, WITH WHOM HE IS TO MEET IN VIENNA NEXT MONTH DURING THE U.N. ANTI-NARCOTICS CONFERENCE.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT: UNDER THE PAGE 3 HEADLINE "THE CHANCE," PETER GNAM COMMENTED IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY "KRONEN-ZEITUNG" OF MAY 1 ON VRANITZKY'S DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE U.S.: "OF COURSE, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND VRANITZKY'S DECISION. THEY THINK THAT A BEATEN DOG SHOULD NOT COME BACK CRINGING THE NEXT MOMENT. THERE SURELY IS SOMETHING TO THIS LINE OF REASONING, BUT IN VIEW OF THE INJUSTICE DONE TO WALDHEIM IT IS HIGH TIME THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA ADVOCATES AUSTRIA'S VIEWPOINT ON THE SPOT; THAT IS, IN WASHINGTON. ... VRANITZKY HAS THE GREAT CHANCE TO SPEAK IN THE U.S. ON BEHALF OF AUSTRIA BECAUSE IT CANNOT BE IMPUTED TO HIM THAT HE IS PREJUDICED IN THE WALDHEIM CASE. BUT ALSO WALDHEIM HIMSELF OUGHT TO TAKE ACTION TO

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RESTORE HIS HONOR, AT BEST BY FILING A LAWSUIT IN AN AMERICAN COURT. THIS WOULD BE THE BEST SUPPORT FOR VRANITZKY IN HIS DELICATE TALKS WITH U.S. POLITICIANS AND THE POWERFUL AMERICAN MEDIA."

IN THE "KRONEN-ZEITUNG" OF MAY 4, PETER GNAM EDITORIALIZED AGAIN: "PRO-WALDHEIM STATEMENTS BY UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 VIENNA 06971

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PROMINENT AUSTRIAN, GERMAN AND EVEN ISRAELI JEWS WHO ARE EXPERTS IN NAZI AFFAIRS SHOW THAT THE INQUISITORIAL U.S. RULING RESTS ON FEET OF CLAY. THIS WEEK, THE WALDHEIM CASE WILL BE DISCUSSED EVEN AT A WJC MEETING IN BUDAPEST BECAUSE, EVEN IN THAT ORGANIZATION, THERE ARE DOUBTS WHETHER WALDHEIM CAN REALLY BE CALLED A NAZI, LET ALONE A WAR CRIMINAL. IF THIS ISN'T FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR THOSE AMERICAN POLITICIANS WHO HAVE PRONOUNCED WALDHEIM GUILTY WITHOUT FAIR PROCEEDINGS, WHAT ELSE CAN BE FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR THEM?"

IN A PAGE 2 EDITORIAL, ENTITLED "NO END IN SIGHT," HANS RAUSCHER REMARKED IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY "KURIER" OF MAY 2: "IN TERMS OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, KURT WALDHEIM WILL NOT RECOVER FROM THIS BLOW. HE WILL REMAIN BRANDED IN THE DEMOCRATIC WESTERN COUNTRIES EVEN IF HE SUCCEEDED BY SOME MIRACLE -- A COMPLAINT OF UNCONSTITUTIONALITY, FOR EXAMPLE -- IN HAVING HIS INCLUSION IN THE WATCH LIST RESCINDED. ... HIS PERSECUTORS WILL TRY TO FORCE HIM TO RESIGN. THEY MUST NOT SUCCEED IN THIS BECAUSE IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THE AUSTRIANS' FAITH IN DEMOCRACY IF THEIR CLEAR-CUT ELECTION DECISION (IN FAVOR OF WALDHEIM) WERE ABROGATED THIS WAY. WHAT IS ESPECIALLY AWFUL ABOUT THE SITUATION IS THE FACT THAT NO END IS IN SIGHT. KURT WALDHEIM, AND AUSTRIA TOO, WILL NEED STRONG NERVES."

"DIE PRESSE" OF MAY 4 POINTED OUT EDITORIALY THAT CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY LAST WEEKEND VISITED THE NETHERLANDS TO ATTEND THE OPENING OF A JEWISH MUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM AND THAT HE WILL SOON TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES. ALSO CALLING ATTENTION TO THE WESTERN CONTACTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER ALOIS MOCK -- WHO TODAY WILL RECEIVE HIS BELGIAN COLLEAGUE TINDEMANS -- EDITORIAL

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WRITER ENGELBERT WASHIETL REMARKED: "DOES THIS MEAN THAT EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT? YES, BUT ONLY WITH THE SERIOUS RESERVATION THAT AUSTRIAN'S CULTIVATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE WEST HAS BECOME MERE CRISIS MANAGEMENT NOW THAT THE NORTH AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS AND SEVERAL OF THEIR WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS ARE KEEPING THEIR DISTANCE FROM AUSTRIA. VRANITZKY AND MOCK WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO THEIR INTERLOCUTORS THAT THE MANY ANTI-AUSTRIAN PINPRICKS BY ONLY ONE SIDE -- THE WEST -- IN THE LONG RUN WILL INEVITABLY ENTAIL CONSEQUENCES FOR AUSTRIA'S POSITION. IS THERE ANYONE IN THE WEST WHO STILL UNDERSTANDS THIS?" KOHL

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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