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STATE FOR EUR/CE; FOR HABIB AND NESVIG

WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE

JUSTICE FOR GALEBACH/DUNLOP AND SHER

E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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SUBJECT: AUSTRIA MEDIA REACTION

1. WALDHEIM ON WATCH LIST: THE "KURIER" AND THE "WIENER ZEITUNG" TODAY PLAYED UP WALDHEIM'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN INNSBRUCK THAT, IN ORDER TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST THE "MONSTROUS SLANDERS," HE WILL TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST U.S. AND POSSIBLY AUSTRIAN NEWSPAPERS AS WELL. HE WILL MAKE IT CLEAR IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS WHICH MEDIA WILL BE AFFECTED. U.S. AND AUSTRIAN LAWYERS ARE EXAMINING IN WHICH FORM THESE PROCEEDINGS OUGHT TO BE CONDUCTED. AS FOR ACTION AGAINST ATTORNEY GENERAL MEESE, WALDHEIM HAS POINTED OUT THAT THIS WOULD BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE ACT, BUT THIS OPTION, TOO, IS BEING CONSIDERED.

THE "KURIER" COVERED SIMON WIESENTHAL'S DENIAL OF A UPI STORY WHICH SAID THAT WALDHEIM PROMISED HIM HE'D RESIGN IF A COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS CORROBORATED THE CHARGES. WIESENTHAL SAID THAT HE DID NOT EVEN DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH WALDHEIM. "DIE PRESSE" STRESSED THE FACT THAT NOT MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN SETTING UP THE COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS. FOREIGN MINISTER ALOIS MOCK STATED BEFORE JOURNALISTS ON MONDAY THAT, IN CONSULTATION WITH WALDHEIM, THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT WILL DECIDE ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF THIS COMMISSION. "DIE PRESSE" QUOTED MOCK AS HAVING SAID "WE MUST NOT PERMIT FOREIGN GROUPS TO DECIDE ABOUT THIS. WE ARE NO ASSAL STATE." REGARDING THE "WHITE BOOK" THAT WALDHEIM HAS RECEIVED ASSISTANCE IN WRITING AND WHICH IS NOW IN DRAFT FORM, MOCK SAID THAT IT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC. MOCK HAS STRONG DOUBTS THAT THE U.S. DOCUMENTS, BECAUSE ON WHICH WALDHEIM HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE WATCH LIST, CONTAIN ANY NEW FACTS. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WILL STILL BE "SOME PEOPLE WHO WILL GO ABOUT LYING," MOCK COMPLAINED.

ACCORDING TO THE "NEUE AZ," HISTORIAN ERIKA WEINZIERL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA IS OF THE OPINION THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG IF THE COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS WERE COMPOSED OF AUSTRIANS ONLY. SHE SAID THIS WOULD GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT A WALL IS BEING ERECTED TO PROTECT WALDHEIM. THIS OPINION IS SHARED BY SIMON WIESENTHAL. THE "KURIER" REPORTED THAT ANOTHER HISTORIAN, PROF. GERHARD BOTZ OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG, HAS COMPLAINED ABOUT PRESSURE BEING EXERTED ON HISTORIANS BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF HAS BEEN ASKED "NOT TO TALK SO NEGATIVELY ABOUT AUSTRIA."

ACCORDING TO THE "NEUE AZ" AND THE "WIENER ZEITUNG," SECRETARY GENERAL NORBERT GUGERBAUER OF THE FREEDOM PARTY HAS ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO INSIST ON EARLY SUBMISSION OF THE DOCUMENTS ON WHICH THE U.S. DECISION IS BASED. UNLESS THESE FILES ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO AUSTRIA BEFORE VRANITZKY'S TRIP TO THE U.S., THIS VISIT SHOULD BE CANCELED, GUGERBAUER ADDED.

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THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION TABLOID
"KRONEN-ZEITUNG" CARRIED AN ARTICLE BASED ON AN
INTERVIEW WITH ECONOMICS MINISTER ROBERT GRAF OF THE
, PEOPLE'S PARTY. HE SAID THAT, FOR SEVERAL MONTHS,
AUSTRIA SHOULD NOT BE REPRESENTED BY AN AMBASSADOR IN
WASHINGTON, EVEN IF THE U.S. REACTED TO THIS BY
RECALLING ITS AMBASSADOR FROM VIENNA. GRAF ALLEGED THAT
AMBASSADOR LAUDER HAS BEEN BEHAVING LIKE A (ROMAN)
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"PROCONSUL." ON THE OTHER HAND, GRAF EXPRESSED HIS
APPROVAL OF VRANITZKY'S DECISION TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S.
AS SCHEDULED. THIS WILL ENABLE THE CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT
TO MAKE IT CLEAR AT PRESS CONFERENCES IN WASHINGTON AND
NEW YORK THAT AUSTRIA FORMS PART OF DEMOCRATIC WESTERN
EUROPE, GRAF ADDED.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT: UNDER THE PAGE 2 HEADLINE
"WALDHEIM'S LONG WAY TO LEGAL ACTION," ERWIN J. FRASL
WROTE IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY
"KURIER": "TAKING LEGAL ACTION IN THE U.S. IS NOT EASY,
AND THE COSTS WILL BE EXORBITANT, AMOUNTING TO MILLIONS
OF DOLLARS. BEHIND THE POLITICAL SCENES, THERE ARE
NUMEROUS DISCUSSIONS AS TO WHETHER THE REPUBLIC OF
AUSTRIA OUGHT TO FINANCE THIS LAWSUIT. THERE IS
RESISTANCE TO THIS NOT ONLY IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY, BUT
ALSO IN THE PEOPLE'S PARTY." AS FOR WALDHEIM'S "WHITE
BOOK," FRASL REMARKED: "IN MY OPINION, THIS IS A
DANGEROUS STEP. IF EVEN THE SLIGHTEST ERROR IS PROVED,
THIS WOULD BE AN ADDITIONAL LITTLE MOSAIC STONE IN THE
IMAGE OF A MAN OF WHOSE DOCUMENTS ABOUT HIS PAST THE
INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC THINKS THAT THEY ARE MARKED BY
'ERRORS.' THE CONSEQUENCES OF EVEN THE SLIGHTEST
OMISSION WOULD BE DISASTROUS."

IN A SHORT FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL, ENTITLED "WILL ACTION
NOW BE TAKEN?," HANS WERNER SCHEIDL MAINTAINED IN "DIE
PRESSE": "A COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS IS ALL RIGHT, BUT
WHO SHALL CONVOKE IT? THE 'WHITE BOOK' IS READY, BUT
WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH IT? ALSO THE TENTATIVE PLAN
THAT PARLIAMENT DEFEND THE CHIEF OF STATE BY MEANS OF A
RESOLUTION DOES NOT LOOK PROMISING. THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN GIVEN ENOUGH SUPPORT (TO WALDHEIM)

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SO THAT THERE IS NO NEED FOR A SHIELD OFFERED BY PARLIAMENT, TOO. KURT WALDHEIM IS THE CHIEF OF THE STATE. HE HAS A RIGHT TO SOLIDARITY BY THIS REPUBLIC, BUT HE HIMSELF MUST TAKE ACTION IN THE FIRST PLACE."

PETER PELINKA WROTE IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY DAILY "NEUE AZ": "NO COMMISSION CAN RESOLVE AUSTRIA'S 'IMAGE PROBLEM.' WHAT WE NEED IS A BROAD DISCUSSION ABOUT AUSTRIA'S ROLE IN THE NAZI REGIME, ABOUT THE THOUSANDS ,OF MURDERED RESISTANCE FIGHTERS AND ABOUT THE TENS OF THOUSANDS WHO COMMITTED CRIMES OR WERE FELLOW TRAVELERS. AND ALSO ABOUT THE TERRIBLE IDEOLOGY WHICH STILL EXISTS TODAY."

IN A THREE-PAGE EDITORIAL, CHIEF EDITOR PETER MICHAEL LINGENS SAID IN VIENNA'S INDEPENDENT NEWS MAGAZINE "PROFIL" OF MAY 4: "NEARLY ALL (AUSTRIAN) NEWSPAPERS WRITE ABOUT 'A SLAP IN AUSTRIA'S FACE.' THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THE NO-ENTRY DECISION AGAINST WALDHEIM WAS PRIMARLY A POLITICAL ACT. THIS IS NOT CORRECT. THE DECISION BY ATTORNEY GENERAL MEESE IS ABOVE ALL A JURISTIC ACT - WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. IN VIEW OF THE AMERICAN LEGAL SITUATION, HE WAS HARDLY ABLE TO DECIDE OTHERWISE THAN HE HAS. ... WALDHEIM WAS INVOLVED. HIS UNIT HAD - TO WHAT EXTENT IS CONTROVERSIAL - PARTICIPATED IN DEPORTATIONS, AND IT HAD ORDERED MASS EXECUTIONS OF HOSTAGES. ... THIS DOES NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT WALDHEIM IS PERSONALLY GUILTY."

KOHL

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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