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TEXT

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA MEDIA REACTION

1. WALDHEIM ON WATCH LIST: ALL VIENNA DAILIES AS WELL AS THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA HAVE PLAYED UP WALDHEIM'S DECISION TO SUE WJC PRESIDENT EDGAR BRONFMAN FOR SLANDER. IN A LETTER AUTHORIZING VIENNA DISTRICT ATTORNEY WERNER OLSCHER TO TAKE THIS ACTION, WALDHEIM HAS EXPLAINED THAT HE REGARDS IN PARTICULAR THREE OF MR. BRONFMAN'S REMARKS IN BUDAPEST AS ACTIONABLE - THAT WALDHEIM WAS PART OF THE NAZI KILLING MACHINE; THAT IT IS ALMOST A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY IF SOMEBODY HAS DEALINGS WITH WALDHEIM AS A PERSON; AND THAT, IF WALDHEIM HAD A MODICUM OF PATRIOTISM IN HIS HEART, HE WOULD ASK HIS PHYSICIANS TO FIND A REASON FOR HIS RESIGNATION. THE MEDIA HAVE QUOTED MR. BRONFMAN'S COMMENT THAT HE DOES NOT TAKE THE LAWSUIT SERIOUSLY, THAT HE DOES NOT TAKE WALDHEIM AS A PERSON SERIOUSLY, BUT THAT HE TAKES AUSTRIA SERIOUSLY. SEVERAL PAPERS CALLED ATTENTION TO MR. BRONFMAN'S PREVIOUS PROMISE THAT HE WOULD APPEAR IN COURT IN VIENNA IF HE WERE SUED. ACCORDING TO THE "KRONEN-ZEITUNG," HE WOULD, IF CONVICTED, FACE A ONE-YEAR PRISON TERM OR A HIGH FINE CALCULATED ON A PER DIEM BASIS FOR 360 DAYS. MR. BRONFMAN MEANWHILE HAS REITERATED HIS WISH FOR A MEETING WITH VRANITZKY DURING THE CHANCELLOR'S VISIT TO THE U.S. THE "KURIER" QUOTED HIS REMARK THAT HE WANTS TO GIVE AN "OLIVE BRANCH" TO THE AUSTRIAN PEOPLE BECAUSE HE UNDERSTANDS THAT THE NATION FEELS HURT. ACCORDING TO THE SAME PAPER, PRESIDENT PAUL GROSZ OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN AUSTRIA HAS SAID THAT EUROPEAN JEWS ARE DISGRUNTLED BECAUSE THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN MAKING POLICY OVER THE HEADS OF THE EUROPEANS.

"DIE PRESSE" REPORTED THAT YESTERDAY'S MEETING OF WALDHEIM WITH VRANITZKY PRODUCED NO RESULT IN REGARD TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS. THE SAME PAPER STRESSED THE FACT THAT SOCIALIST PARTY FLOOR LEADER HEINZ FISCHER HAS TURNED DOWN A MOTION OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY THAT PARLIAMENT PASS A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING WALDHEIM. FISCHER SAID THAT THIS MOTION IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE SOCIALISTS IN ITS PRESENT FORM. WHAT THE PEOPLE'S PARTY IS TRYING TO DO BY MEANS OF THIS MOTION IS TO COMMIT CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY DURING HIS VISIT TO THE U.S. TO INSIST ON DELETION OF WALDHEIM'S NAME FROM THE WATCH LIST, "DIE PRESSE" EXPLAINED. FISCHER ALSO THINKS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN THE APPOINTMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS. HE MAINTAINED THAT ITS WORK WILL BE THE BETTER THE MORE INDEPENDENT IT IS AND THE MORE REMOVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

THE "WIENER ZEITUNG" TOOK NOTE OF THE OPINION OF PEOPLE'S PARTY M.P. ANDREAS KHOL THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUE ON WALDHEIM'S BEHALF. HE SAID THAT THE LEGAL EXPENSES WILL BE EXORBITANT AND THAT WALDHEIM CANNOT AFFORD TO DEFRAY THEM HIMSELF. AS FOR WALDHEIM'S "WHITE

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BOOK," PEOPLE'S PARTY M.P. MARGA HUBINEK TERMED IT LIKELY THAT THE HISTORIANS' COMMISSION WOULD EXAMINE IT, TOO. SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO DECIDE IN WHICH FORM TO PUBLISH THE WHITE BOOK.

AN OPINION POLL COMMISSIONED BY THE INDEPENDENT WEEKLY "DIE GANZE WOCHE" SHOWED THAT WALDHEIM WOULD NO LONGER
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BE SUPPORTED BY A MAJORITY OF VOTERS IF A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WERE HELD NOW. OF THE 500 PERSONS QUESTIONED, 51 PER CENT SAID THAT THEY WOULD NOT VOTE FOR WALDHEIM WHEREAS 44 PER CENT WOULD. ASKED WHETHER THEY THINK THAT AUSTRIA'S PRESTIGE IN THE WORLD HAS SUFFERED, 67 PER CENT ANSWERED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE AND 31 PERCENT IN THE NEGATIVE. THE "NEUE AZ" HAS CONTRASTED THESE RESULTS WITH THOSE OF A GALLUP OPINION POLL COMMISSIONED BY THE NEWS MAGAZINE "WOCHENPRESSE." IT SHOWED THAT 69 PERCENT ARE AGAINST THE U.S. BAN ON WALDHEIM'S ENTRY AND THAT THIS OPPOSITION IS ESPECIALLY STRONG AMONG SUPPORTERS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

ACCORDING TO "DIE GANZE WOCHE," THERE HAS BEEN A DISCUSSION BOTH IN AUSTRIA AND ABROAD OF WHETHER IT WOULD BE EXPEDIENT TO ASK FORMER PRESIDENT RUDOLF KIRCHSCHLAEGER TO ACT AS A ROVING AMBASSADOR, TRYING TO IMPROVE AUSTRIA'S IMAGE. THE PAPER QUOTED PEOPLE'S PARTY M.P. WALTER HEINZINGER AS HAVING SAID THAT KIRCHSCHLAEGER'S GOOD REPUTATION COULD BE VERY USEFUL AND THAT THIS INTERESTING IDEA OUGHT TO BE DISCUSSED BY THE GOVERNMENT WITH WALDHEIM.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT: COMMENTING ON WALDHEIM'S DECISION TO SUE MR. BRONFMAN, DIETER KINDERMANN WROTE IN THE INDEPENDENT, MASS-CIRCULATION TABLOID "KRONEN-ZEITUNG": "EDGAR BRONFMAN NOW HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP HIS PROMISE THAT HE WOULD APPEAR IN A VIENNA COURT IF **KURT WALDHEIM** SUED HIM. ... I AM CONVINCED THAT EDGAR BRONFMAN WILL GET IN VIENNA A FAIR TRIAL IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RULE OF THE LAW, INCLUDING PROSECUTION AND DEFENSE, WITNESSES AND EXPERT OPINIONS - PLUS THE NECESSARY LESSON ABOUT HISTORY." KOHL

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END OF MESSAGE

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