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USIA

FROM AMEMBASSY VATICAN PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISOR: VATICAN
MESSAGE NO. 403/87

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TEXT

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - VATICAN REPLIES TO CRITICS
OF DECISION TO RECEIVE WALDHEIM

SUMMARY: VATICAN ISSUED STATEMENT ON DECISION TO
RECEIVE WALDHEIM. POPE "SURPRISED AND SADDENED" BY
CLAMOR. IN GERMANY AND IN POLAND POPE HAD ISSUED
STRONG STATEMENTS AGAINST PERSECUTION OF JEWS. HOLY
SEE "RESPECTS AUSTRIA, A NOBLE AND OLD CATHOLIC
COUNTRY". "AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT OFFICIALLY REQUESTED A
VISIT TO HOLY SEE". FULL TEXT FOLLOWS.

1. VATICAN PRESS OFFICE RELEASED LATE SATURDAY
FOLLOWING STATEMENT: (VATICAN IS) SURPRISED AND DEEPLY
SADDENED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VISIT OF
PRESIDENT KURT WALDHEIM TO THE HOLY FATHER COULD HAVE
LED ANYONE - (AS IT HAS) CLEARLY AND CLAMOROUSLY - TO

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SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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QUESTION AND DOUBT THE CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT OF THE POPE AND THE HOLY SEE TOWARD THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND ESPECIALLY TOWARD THE INHUMAN PERSECUTIONS THAT BEFELL THEM.

ONLY TWO MONTHS AGO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, DURING THE PASTORAL VISIT OF JOHN PAUL II TO GERMANY, GAVE AMPLE, AND JUSTLY SO, REPORTAGE TO THE HOMILIES AND SPEECHES OF THE HOLY FATHER IN WHICH HE, ESPECIALLY IN HONORING THE THREE GREAT FIGURES OF EDITH STEIN, RUPERT MAYER, AND CARDINAL VON GALEN, HAD CONDEMNED "THE MADNESS OF DISHUMAN RACISM" AND HAD REPEATED HIS ABHORRENCE OF THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN WHICH MILLIONS OF JEWS, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER VICTIMS, WERE SACRIFICED.

AGAIN ON SUNDAY JUNE 14, SPEAKING IN WARSAW TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE POLISH JEWISH COMMUNITY, THE HOLY FATHER RECALLED "THE TERRIBLE REALITY OF EXTERMINATION" OF THEIR NATION AND SAID "THE NATION OF ISRAEL TODAY, PROBABLY MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, IS THE CENTER OF ATTENTION OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD...BECAUSE OF THIS TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE BECOME A GREAT VOICE OF WARNING FOR ALL MANKIND, ALL THE NATIONS, ALL THE POWERS OF THIS WORLD, ALL SYSTEMS, AND ALL MEN".

AT THE SAME TIME, THE CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT, WHICH THE HOLY SEE IS REQUIRED TO HAVE WITH EVERY NATION OR PEOPLE, IS CLEAR, IN THE PRESENT CASE, TOWARD AUSTRIA, AN OLD AND NOBLE CATHOLIC COUNTRY LINKED BY CENTURIES-OLD AND CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE HOLY SEE.

LAST YEAR, THE AUSTRIAN PEOPLE DEMOCRATICALLY CHOSE AS PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC MR. **KURT WALDHEIM**, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED TWO TERMS AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AN ELECTION WHICH REQUIRED THE APPROVAL OF THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE U.N.. (WALDHEIM) CARRIED OUT MISSIONS OF GREAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT HAD OFFICIALLY EXPRESSED THE WISH TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE HOLY FATHER, IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC.

BY ACCEPTING THIS REQUEST, THE HOLY SEE MEANT TO FULFIL AN ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT RELATES TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SAME COUNTRY.

LATTANZI

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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