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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

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TEXT
TAGS: PREL, JO, AU
SUBJECT: WALDHEIM ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED IN
- JORDAN (JULY 1-4, 1987)

REFS: A) FBIS AU022031, B) FBIS JN030730,
- C) FBIS JN010802, D) VIENNA 9611, E) AMMAN 7439

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SUMMARY. KING HUSSEIN AND THE GOJ LAID OUT JORDAN'S MOST EXTRAVAGANT RED CARPET FOR THE JULY 1-4, 1987 VISIT OF AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT DR. KURT WALDHEIM AND A DELEGATION INCLUDING FONMIN ALOIS MOCK. WALDHEIM AND MOCK OFFERED SOME HINT OF AUSTRIAN INTEREST IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE WEST BANK DEVELOPMENT PLAN, BUT THE VISIT PRIMARILY EMPHASIZED PUBLIC CEREMONY AND THE REITERATION OF BILATERAL GOODWILL. ALTHOUGH THE CONTROVERSY WHICH HAS PURSUED THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT MOMENTARILY INTRUDED--WITH WALDHEIM REPORTEDLY TAKING OFFENSE AT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S DECLINING TO PARTICIPATE IN DIPLOMATIC

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FUNCTIONS TO MARK THE VISIT--THE JORDANIAN PEOPLE GAVE THEIR AUSTRIAN GUESTS AN EXUBERANTLY WARM WELCOME. HUSSEIN'S DECISION TO RECEIVE WALDHEIM WAS VERY POPULAR DOMESTICALLY, A REACTION THAT THE GOJ EXPECTS WILL MORE THAN BALANCE ANY NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS IN ISRAEL, OR IN RELATIONS WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

A RED CARPET RECEPTION

3. THE GOJ SPARED NO EFFORT IN ROLLING OUT ITS MOST EXTRAVAGANT RED CARPET FOR THE JULY 1-4 VISIT OF AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT DR. KURT WALDHEIM. AFTER AN AIRPORT WELCOME INCLUDING A 21-GUN SALUTE AND A CEREMONIAL FLYOVER BY A SQUADRON OF RJAF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, THE VISITING DELEGATION, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER DR. ALOIS MOCK, WAS WHISKED AWAY THROUGH AMMAN STREETS RESPLENDENT WITH HUNDREDS OF AUSTRIAN AND JORDANIAN FLAGS, BANNERS WITH PRO-AUSTRIAN SLOGANS IN ARABIC AND GERMAN, AND GIANT PHOTOGRAPHS OF KING HUSSEIN AND THE AUSTRIAN HEAD OF STATE. EARLIER IN THE WEEK, A SPECIAL TELEVISION PROGRAM ON AUSTRIA (EMPHASIZING THE COUNTRY'S TRADITION OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES), AN ADVANCE INTERVIEW WITH WALDHEIM IN A LOCAL NEWSPAPER, AND LOCAL COVERAGE OF A SIMILAR INTERVIEW WITH HUSSEIN IN AN AUSTRIAN JOURNAL FURTHER SET THE STAGE FOR WHAT WAS TO BE THE MOST PUBLICLY EXUBERANT AND THOROUGHLY PUBLICIZED VISIT TO JORDAN BY A FOREIGN DIGNITARY IN RECENT MEMORY.

4. WHILE WALDHEIM AND HUSSEIN HELD SEVERAL ROUNDS OF PRIVATE TALKS DURING THE VISIT, THE VIRTUAL UNANIMITY OF THEIR VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES ALLOWED THE VISIT TO EMPHASIZE CEREMONIAL MOMENTS AND ENCOMIA TO THE HARMONY OF AUSTRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS. PRESIDENT AND MRS. WALDHEIM WERE FILMED, PHOTOGRAPHED AND QUOTED IN VIRTUALLY EVERY CORNER OF JORDAN--INCLUDING THE JORDAN VALLEY/EAST GHOR CANAL AREA, WHERE THEY WERE BRIEFED ON WATER ISSUES BY SENIOR JORDANIAN OFFICIALS; UMM QAIS (OVERLOOKING THE GOLAN HIGHTS AND THE JUNCTION OF THE JORDANIAN, SYRIAN AND ISRAELI BORDERS), WHERE WALDHEIM OBSERVED THAT SECURITY IS "A FRAME OF MIND" BASED ON "A JUST PEACE;" THE ROMAN CITY OF JERASH, ON A TOUR CONDUCTED BY INFORMATION/CULTURE/TOURISM/ANTIQUITIES MINISTER MOHAMMAD KHATIB; THE ARAB POTASH COMPANY PLANT ON THE DEAD SEA, WHICH, ALTHOUGH SUBSTANTIALLY FINANCED IN ITS EARLY STAGES BY USAID--WITH COMPARATIVELY MINOR SUPPORT FROM AUSTRIA--WAS DESCRIBED IN PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE VISIT AS "AUSTRIAN BUILT;" THE FAMOUS NABATAEN CITY OF PETRA, WHICH, TO THE ANNOYANCE OF MANY TOURISTS,

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WAS ABRUPTLY CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE DAY OF THE WALDHEIM VISIT; AND THE RESORT CITY OF AQABA IN THE SOUTH, WHERE THEY WERE REJOINED BY HUSSEIN AND QUEEN NOOR ON THE LAST DAY OF THEIR STAY. WALDHEIM WARMLY EXTOLLED JORDANIAN HOSPITALITY AND INGENUITY, AND CALLED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONCERENCE TO RESOLVE THE ARAB-ISRAELI
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CONFLICT. THE AWARDING OF JORDAN'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN DECORATION (THE HUSSEIN IBN ALI MEDAL) TO DR. WALDHEIM AND SIMILAR HONORS TO MRS. WALDHEIM AND DR. MOCK ADDED AN EXTRA TOUCH TO THE OVERALL PAGEANTRY OF THE VISIT.

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HINTS ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

5. THE CLEAREST (AND MAYBE ONLY) HINT OF POLITICAL SUBSTANCE ARISING FROM THE VISIT CAME FROM DR. MOCK DURING HIS 45-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE (UNCHARACTERISTICALLY TELEVISED IN ITS ENTIRETY ON JORDAN'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE CHANNEL) ON THE EVENING OF JULY 2 (REF B). IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON THE AUSTRIAN ATTITUDE TO JORDAN'S WEST BANK DEVELOPMENT PLAN, HE STATED THAT HE WOULD BE RECEIVING "MORE DETAILED INFORMATION, (INCLUDING) PROJECT LISTS" FOR THE PLAN DURING THE VISIT, CONCLUDING THAT AUSTRIA WOULD "CERTAINLY FIND WAYS AND MEANS OF CONTRIBUTING." IN HIS DEPARTURE STATEMENT, DR. WALDHEIM NOTED THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ON INCREASING AUSTRIAN SUPPORT FOR "JORDAN'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS," BUT NO DETAILS HAVE YET BECOME AVAILABLE.

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ELEMENTS OF CONTROVERSY AND PIQUE---

6. DESPITE THE UNREMITTINGLY POSITIVE TONE OF THE VISIT, ELEMENTS OF THE CONTROVERSY WHICH HAVE DOGGED WALDHEIM AS PRESIDENT CREPT IN. ON JULY 2, NAZI HUNTER BEATE KLARSFELD ARRIVED IN JORDAN TO PRESENT THE GOJ WITH STATEMENTS ON WALDHEIM'S ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN NAZI WAR CRIMES DURING WORLD WAR II (REF C). KLARSFELD'S PRESENCE WENT UNREPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS UNTIL JULY 5, WHEN SHE WAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED BY A COLUMNIST IN AL-RA'Y (AN ARABIC DAILY).

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7. WALDHEIM REPORTEDLY TOOK OFFENSE AT THE FAILURE OF SEVERAL WESTERN AMBASSADORS--INCLUDING THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR--TO ATTEND CEREMONIES IN

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HIS HONOR. THE GOJ, IN A LAST MINUTE DEPARTURE FROM THE PRACTICE OF THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, INVITED THE ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO ATTEND BOTH THE WELCOMING CEREMONY AT THE AIRPORT AND A DINNER HOSTED BY P.M. ZAID RIFA'I THE NEXT EVENING. (NOTE: A FORMER CHIEF OF PALACE PROTOCOL HAS EXPRESSED TO US HIS SURPRISE AT SUCH AN EXPANSIVE GESTURE, NOTING THAT EVEN QUEEN ELIZABETH II OF BRITAIN WAS NOT AFFORDED SUCH HONORS WHEN SHE VISITED JORDAN SEVERAL YEARS AGO.) AMEMBASSY AMMAN WAS REPRESENTED AT THE AIRPORT CEREMONY, BUT ELECTED NOT TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE DINNER. ALTHOUGH THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR --WHO ATTENDED THE AIRPORT WELCOME BUT NOT THE DINNER--AND THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR--WHO BOYCOTTED BOTH FUNCTIONS--ALSO DECLINED TO TAKE PART IN FUNCTIONS FOR WALDHEIM, AUSTRIAN FONMIN MOCK SINGLED OUT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR FOR CRITICISM UPON RETURNING TO AUSTRIA. MOCK STATED THAT "THE AMBASSADOR'S ABSENCE CONTRADICTS REPEATED ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION THAT IT IS INTERESTED IN GOOD RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA AND THAT IT NATURALLY RESPECTS AUSTRIA'S ELECTED HEAD OF STATE" (REF A). PALACE OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO MENTIONED TO US THEIR IRRITATION, AND THAT OF THE AUSTRIANS, OVER THE U.S. POSITION ON PARTICIPATION IN THE CEREMONIES.

---BUT A GOOD SHOW, NONETHELESS

8. LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE WAS UNANIMOUS, EMPHATIC AND VERBOSE IN DEFENDING WALDHEIM AGAINST THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF PAST IMPROPRIETY. AL-DUSTUR (ARABIC DAILY) SERIALIZED EXTENSIVE EXCERPTS FROM WALDHEIM'S MEMOIRS DURING THE WEEK OF THE VISIT, AND IN ALL NEWSPAPERS MANY MERCHANTS CHOSE TO DESIGN THEIR WEEKLY ADVERTISEMENTS AROUND PHOTOGRAPHS OF KING HUSSEIN AND HIS
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AUSTRIAN GUEST. OP-ED COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS ATTACKED THE "SLANDER POLICY" AND "SPITEFUL RANCOROUS MOTIVES" OF WALDHEIM'S DETRACTORS. OVERALL, HOWEVER, THE TONE OF COVERAGE WAS MUCH MORE POSITIVE THAN NEGATIVE, EMPHASIZING (A) THE TRADITION OF CLOSE JORDANIAN-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS ESTABLISHED UNDER PAST AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT BRUNO KRIESKY; (B) THE WARM RECEPTION AFFORDED KING HUSSEIN AND QUEEN NOOR DURING PAST VISITS TO AUSTRIA--PARTICULARLY MARCH 1987, WHEN THEY WERE ENTERTAINED BY WALDHEIM (NOTE: WALDHEIM

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HIMSELF MADE MUCH OF THIS POINT IN HIS TOAST TO HIS HOSTS ON THE NIGHT OF HIS ARRIVAL, POINTING OUT THE NOT-WIDELY-KNOWN ((IN AMMAN AT LEAST)) FACT THAT HUSSEIN OWNS A "PERSONAL RETREAT FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY IN THE VIENNA WOODS OVERLOOKING THE CITY"); AND (C) WALDHEIM'S "EVEN-HANDED" APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST ISSUES AND "DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE ARAB CAUSE" DURING HIS TENURE AS UN SECRETARY GENERAL.

9. COMMENT: WHILE ISRAELI CRITICISM OF HUSSEIN'S DECISION TO INVITE THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT DREW SHARP REBUKES FROM SOME JORDANIAN COMMENTATORS, GENUINE REGARD FOR WALDHEIM AND THE FRIENDLY COUNTRY WHICH HE REPRESENTS--RATHER THAN A DESIRE TO DEFY OR AFFRONT THE ISRAELIS--WAS THE MAIN SOURCE OF THE POPULAR ENTHUSIASM WHICH SURROUNDED THE VISIT. WHAT THE AUSTRIAN PRESS HAD DESCRIBED AS AN "ANTI-ISRAEL PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN" (REF D) MIGHT BETTER HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN EFFUSIVE PRO-WALDHEIM CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH MOST JORDANIANS SIMPLY DO NOT ACCEPT THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST WALDHEIM AS SUFFICIENTLY PROVEN, THE HEART OF THE MATTER MAY--AS ALWAYS--HAVE MORE TO DO WITH POPULAR EMOTIONS. A MODERATE PALESTINIAN ACADEMIC SUMMED IT UP THIS WAY: "EVEN IF HE WERE ONE OF THE WORST OF THE NAZIS, HIS UN CAREER HAS ATONED FOR IT;" AND ISRAELI REACTIONS ARE SOMEHOW NEUTRALIZED BY "WHAT THE ISRAELIS DID, AND ARE STILL DOING, TO MY PEOPLE."

10. THE WALDHEIM VISIT WAS FINANCIALLY COSTLY FOR JORDAN. IN ADDITION TO THE LAVISH HOSPITALITY PROVIDED THROUGHOUT THE FOUR DAYS OF THE DELEGATION'S STAY, ROYAL JORDANIAN TOOK THE UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF PROVIDING A TRISTAR AIRLINER TO FLY THE AUSTRIAN GROUP HOME DIRECTLY FROM AQABA. THE DOMESTIC RETURN ON THAT INVESTMENT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLE, HOWEVER. IN RECEIVING WALDHEIM, HUSSEIN DEMONSTRATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO STAND WITH AN EMBATTLED FRIEND DESPITE INTERNATIONAL--SPECIFICALLY AMERICAN--OPPOSITION. EVEN JORDANIANS WITH LITTLE INTEREST IN WALDHEIM HIMSELF HAVE EXPRESSED PRIDE AT SEEING THEIR KING TAKE SUCH A DEFIANTLY INDEPENDENT AND, IN THEIR EYES, MORALLY CORRECT, ACTION. BALANCED AGAINST SUCH DOMESTIC DIVIDENDS, THE GOJ EXPECTS TO INCUR NO COSTS FROM THE VISIT IN THE PEACE PROCESS OR RELATIONS WITH FRIENDLY WESTERN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, WHICH OBJECT TO WALDHEIM. WALDHEIM'S RECENT VISIT TO THE VATICAN WORKED TO JORDAN'S ADVANTAGE IN THIS RESPECT, AS IT DIFFUSED WHATEVER INTERNATIONAL OPPROBRIUM MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST JORDAN HAD THE VISIT HERE BEEN THE AUSTRIAN

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PRESIDENT'S FIRST OFFICIAL TRIP RATHER THAN HIS SECOND. AS ONE JORDANIAN OFFICIAL PUT IT, "HUSSEIN IS NOW ON THE SAME MORAL PLANE AS THE POPE--SURELY NOT A BAD PLACE TO BE." THE FORMAL INVITATION ISSUED BY DR. AND MRS. WALDHEIM SETS THE STAGE FOR THE MOST PREDICTABLE, IF NOT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT, RESULT OF THEIR FOUR-DAY VISIT TO JORDAN: A RETURN VISIT TO VIENNA NEXT WINTER BY KING HUSSEIN AND QUEEN NOOR. BOEKER

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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