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TEXT

TAGS: KPAL, PBTS, IS, JO, AU
SUBJECT: MAYOR FREIJ ON ARAB VIEW OF WALDHEIM'S JORDAN
VISIT

FOR COORDINATION WITH STATE

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. ACTING CONGEN AND POLOFF ACCOMPANIED TWO VISITING AMERICANS FROM THE NEW ISRAEL FUND, DR. MICHAEL NEIDITCH AND MADLYN LEE, ON A VISIT TO MAJOR FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM ON JULY 18. DURING THE COURSE OF A WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION, NEIDITCH EXPRESSED HIS OWN AND MANY JEWISH AMERICANS' FRUSTRATION AND "DESPAIR" OVER FORMER UN SECRETARY GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM'S VISIT TO JORDAN, IN LIGHT OF THE PAST YEAR'S REVELATIONS ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT'S WAR RECORD. THE ELABORATE RECEPTION AND HIGH PUBLICITY ACCORDED WALDHEIM BY THE GOJ DISTURBS AND OFFENDS MANY JEWISH AMERICANS, SAID NEIDITCH, WHO FURTHER REMARKED HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT JORDANIANS BE MADE AWARE OF THESE FEELINGS. (FREIJ HAD DISCUSSED HIS FREQUENT VISITS TO AMMAN EARLIER.)

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3. EMPHASIZING THAT HE WAS EXPLAINING A GENERAL ARAB VIEWPOINT, NOT NECESSARILY HIS OWN, MAYOR FREIJ SAID THAT ARABS SEE WALDHEIM AS A HEAD OF STATE AND FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS WHO SHOULD BE ACCORDED THE RESPECT AND TRIBUTE SUCH A POSITION DESERVES. WALDHEIM HAD SERVED FOR TEN YEARS AS UNSYG AND HIS ELECTION HAD BEEN SUPPORTED BY ISRAEL AT THE TIME. FREIJ SAID ARABS DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WALDHEIM'S PAST HAS BEEN DREDGED UP NOW BY JEWS, UNLESS IT IS BECAUSE OF HIS RECORD AS SECRETARY GENERAL, PARTICULARLY AS HE PRESIDED OVER THE 1975 "ZIONISM EQUALS RACISM" RESOLUTION. FREIJ SAID THAT ARABS SAW THE WALDHEIM CONTROVERSY AS A PURELY JEWISH/ISRAELI-INITIATED EFFORT, AND POINTED TO APPARENT RUSSIAN, GREEK AND YUGOSLAV LACK OF REACTION TO THE REVELATIONS ABOUT WALDHEIM'S ALLEGED NAZI ACTIVITY AGAINST GREEK AND YUGOSLAV "PATRIOTS" AS FURTHER INDICATIONS THAT THERE WAS NO REAL SUBSTANCE TO THE CHARGES. FREIJ, WHILE ALWAYS DISTANCING HIMSELF FROM THIS VIEW, SAID THAT ARABS THOUGHT THAT WALDHEIM'S BACKGROUND HAD ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN BY ISRAEL, SINCE THE MOSSAD IS PERCEIVED OF AS AN OMNISCIENT "SUPERMAN."

4. WHEN ACG SAID WALDHEIM'S VISIT TO JORDAN HAD GIVEN PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR AMMUNITION IN HIS CONTEST WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PERES OVER THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ISSUE, FREIJ ADMITTED THAT "THE TIMING WAS UNFORTUNATE." YET FREIJ FELT THAT WALDHEIM'S VISIT WAS NOT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE SINCE WALDHEIM'S ROLE IS NOT SUBSTANTIVE. ISRAEL, FREIJ SAID, SHOULD "JUST KEEP QUIET" ABOUT WALDHEIM'S TRAVELS AND NOT LET THEM AFFECT ITS APPROACH TO THE PEACE PROCESS. NEIDITCH CLOSED OUT THIS PORTION OF THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT SYMBOLISM IS CENTRAL TO THE ISRAEL/ARAB CONFLICT, AND THAT WALDHEIM AND HIS VISITS WERE NOW SYMBOLS THAT WOULD DAMAGE PROGRESS.

5. COMMENT: WHILE FREIJ REPEATEDLY SAID HE WAS JUST REPORTING WHAT ARABS THINK, IT WAS FAIRLY EVIDENT THAT HE SHARES THE GENERAL VIEW HE WAS EXPLAINING. THAT EVEN FREIJ, WHO IS INITIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH THE SENSIBILITIES OF ISRAELIS AND JEWISH AMERICANS, COULD SHRUG OFF THE IMPORT OF WALDHEIM'S VISIT ILLUSTRATES THE CHASM BETWEEN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN WORLD VIEWS.
CUBBISON

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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