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TEXT

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WALDHEIM

TRIBUNE DE GENEVE (CENTRIST) COMMENTED EDITORIALY THIS
AFTERNOON: (BEGIN EXTRACTS) WAS AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT **KURT
WALDHEIM** GUILTY OF WAR CRIMES? THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF HISTORIANS CHARGED WITH INVESTIGATING HIS
NAZI-ARMY PAST HASN'T MANAGED, EVEN AFTER FIVE MONTHS OF
WORK, TO SHED ALL THE REQUIRED LIGHT ON THE AFFAIR. THE
DOCUMENTS THEY CONSULTED ARGUE FOR INNOCENCE, BUT THE
DISCOVERY OF OTHER INFORMATION LATER ON COULD WELL
INVALIDATE THEIR VERDICT. THE POSITION OF AUSTRIA'S HEAD
OF STATE REMAINS FRAGILE.

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
2000

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IN APPOINTING THE COMMITTEE, THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT
WANTED TO PUT AN END TO THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT WALDHEIM

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THAT HAS BEEN TARNISHING AUSTRIA'S REPUTATION FOR TWO YEARS OR MORE. BUT THE REPORT PRESENTED YESTERDAY WON'T DO IT. NOTHING IS REALLY SETTLED. FURTHER REVELATIONS ARE ALWAYS POSSIBLE. ONLY RECENTLY, A COPY OF A PURPORTED TELEGRAM INCRIMINATING WALDHEIM WAS PUBLISHED BY THE WEST GERMAN MAGAZINE DER SPIEGEL. IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO TRACE THE ORIGINAL--YET.

FOR THE MOMENT, THE COMMISSION HAS ONLY BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM SOMETHING WE KNEW ALREADY: THAT PRESIDENT WALDHEIM APPEARS TO SUFFER FROM AMNESIA ABOUT HIS PAST, AS SHOWN BY HIS MANY EVASIVE AND CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS AND THE GAPS IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY. HE IS REGARDED AS AN OPPORTUNIST--A MAN WHOSE AMBITION HAS ALWAYS BEEN STRONGER THAN HIS CONVICTIONS.

IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD CLINCH THE MATTER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE POLEMICS OVER WALDHEIM WILL END EVEN NOW. TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ARE OPPOSED: ON THE ONE HAND, THE AUSTRIANS--OR THE MAJORITY WHO SUPPORT WALDHEIM--WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO FORGET A SOMBER PERIOD IN THEIR RECENT PAST; ON THE OTHER, THE ORGANIZATIONS OF JEWS AND RESISTANCE MEMBERS, WHO DOGGEDLY PURSUE THE TRUTH OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE MEMORY OF THEIR SLAUGHTERED COMRADES AND RELATIVES.

NO COMMITTEE OF HISTORIANS COULD BRIDGE THIS GAP. THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION. (END EXTRACTS)
(2/9/88) HENZE

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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