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JUSTICE FOR KORTEN

E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

SUBJECT: SPECIAL REPORT: WALDHEIM COVERAGE ON AUSTRIAN
TV/RADIO OF FEBRUARY 18, 88

1. CONFLICT ORF - PEOPLE'S PARTY:

A CONFLICT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE (CONSERVATIVE)
PEOPLE'S PARTY, O EVP, AND THE AUSTRIAN BROADCASTING
CORPORATION, ORF, ON THE SUBJECT OF ORF'S COVERAGE OF
THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY,
O EVP PARTY CHAIRMAN VICE CHANCELLOR MOCK ATTACKED THE
ORF AND SAID ITS COVERAGE HAD BEEN "OUTRAGEOUSLY
PREJUDICED AND ONE-SIDED. THERE WAS AN ABUNDANCE OF
MANIPULATED BROADCASTS." MOCK REFERRED TO THE ORF
COVERAGE AS "BRAINWASHING."

ORF DIRECTOR GENERAL THADDAEUS PODGORSKI REJECTED THIS

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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COMPLAINT IN A STATEMENT SAYING THAT ORF TV AND RADIO PROGRAMS ARE BASED ON LEGAL PROVISIONS AND PROGRAMMING GUIDELINES, AND ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF OBJECTIVITY AND BALANCED REPORTING. ORF DIRECTOR OF NEWS JOHANNES KUNZ WROTE A LETTER TO THE VICE CHANCELLOR IN WHICH HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT WALDHEIM AND OEPV TOP PARTY OFFICIALS HAVE HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR NUMEROUS TV STATEMENTS, BUT HAVE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS REFUSED TO GIVE INTERVIEWS TO ORF.

BOTH MOCK'S ATTACK AND THE ORF OFFICIALS' REPLIES WERE AIRED ON THE MAIN ORF NEWS PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS STRONG PROTESTS BY THE ORF'S EDITORS' CONFERENCE.

2. ABC INTERVIEW WITH WALDHEIM AIRED IN AUSTRIA: ON FEB. 18, ORF AIRED 40 MINUTES OF THE 70-MINUTE TV INTERVIEW THAT ABC NEWSMEN PIERRE SALINGER AND TED KOPPEL HAD WITH THE PRESIDENT EARLIER THIS WEEK. INTRODUCING THE BROADCAST, ORF NEWSMAN PETER RABL SAID:

"THE QUESTION EVERYONE IS ASKING TODAY IS: WHAT DO THE AUSTRIANS THINK OF THEIR PRESIDENT NOW, AFTER THE CRITICAL HISTORIANS' REPORT, AFTER THE DRAMATIC TV INTERVIEW OF CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY (IN WHICH VRANITZKY IMPLIED HE MAY RESIGN IF 60 PERCENT OF HIS WORK TIME CONTINUES TO BE TAKEN UP BY DEFENDING THE PRESIDENT), AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S TV ADDRESS? THE OPINION POLL FIGURES DIVERGE, BUT THEY SHOW AT BEST A PLURALITY IN FAVOR OF WALDHEIM'S CONTINUATION IN OFFICE, WHILE SOME EVEN INDICATE A PLURALITY IN FAVOR OF HIS RESIGNATION. THIS IS A LANDSLIDE IN PUBLIC OPINION, COMPARED TO FIGURES ONE WEEK AGO WHEN TWO OUT OF THREE AUSTRIANS - OR EVEN MORE - STILL SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT. BUT **KURT WALDHEIM** HIMSELF IS UNBROKEN. AS BEFORE HIS ELECTION, HE SEEMS TO HOPE THAT CRITICISM IN AUSTRIA AND ABROAD WILL EVENTUALLY SUBSIDE. THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO INDICATION THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE THE CASE.

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTIES HAS ERUPTED ABOUT THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR, IN WHICH THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS AT LEAST DISTANCING ITSELF FROM THE PRESIDENT, AND A STRONG FACTION WITHIN THE PARTY IS OPENLY OPPOSING HIM, WHILE THE PEOPLE'S PARTY - AT LEAST ITS TOP OFFICIALS - IS STILL SUPPORTING HIM STAUNCHLY. BEHIND THE SCENES, THERE ARE JOINT EFFORTS OF BOTH PARTIES TO AVOID THE THREAT OF A POLITICAL IMPASSE. EVERYONE AGREES ON ONE POINT - AND THE AUSTRIAN CONSTITUTION WILL HARDLY PROVIDE ANOTHER WAY OUT: THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF HOLDS THE KEY TO A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

BUT PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT ON HIS SITUATION AFTER THE SUBMISSION OF THE HISTORIANS' REPORT HAVE BEEN VERY RARE. THROUGHOUT THIS DRAMATIC WEEK, HE GAVE ONLY ONE MAJOR TV INTERVIEW - TO AN AMERICAN TV TEAM. THIS HAS LED TO THE GROTESQUE SITUATION THAT THE PRESIDENT

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WILL BE PRESENTED IN ENGLISH ON ORF, INSTEAD OF ANSWERING TO OUR QUESTIONS...

3. ORF INTERVIEW WITH JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN PAT KORTEN:

ORF ALSO AIRED A SHORT INTERVIEW OF ITS U.S. CORRESPONDENT KLAUS EMMERICH WITH JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN PATRICK KORTEN. BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION, EMMERICH SAID THAT CONGRESS IS PRESENTLY CONSIDERING UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 VIENNA 01918

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REOPENING THE FILES ON THE WATCH LIST DECISION.

EMMERICH ASKED KORTEN WHETHER THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS NOW OFFERING A NEW POSSIBILITY FOR WALDHEIM TO APPEAL AGAINST THE DECISION, TO WHICH KORTEN REPLIED THAT THERE IS NO SUCH OFFER AND THAT WALDHEIM HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO APPLY FOR A VISA IN VIENNA WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A U.S. HEARING BEFORE AN IMMIGRATION JUDGE. IF HE WANTED TO APPEAL HIGHER, KORTEN SAID, THE MATTER COULD GO TO A FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT (WHICH ORF TRANSLATED AS "HOCHSTGERICHT"). EMMERICH SAID THIS CANNOT REASONABLY BE EXPECTED OF A HEAD OF STATE, AND ASKED KORTEN WHETHER HE HAD NOT SUGGESTED WALDHEIM SHOULD WRITE A LETTER TO ATTORNEY GENERAL MEESE, WHICH WOULD BE "A NEWLY OPENED DOOR". KORTEN DENIED HAVING MADE THIS SUGGESTION AND REITERATED THE U.S. VIEWPOINT THAT THIS DECISION WAS TAKEN BEFORE WALDHEIM BECAME PRESIDENT OF AUSTRIA, WITHOUT REGARD FOR HIS FUNCTIONS, AND THAT IT WAS REQUIRED BY U.S. LAW. TO EMMERICH'S QUESTION WHY IT HAS BEEN SO DIFFICULT FOR THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESIDENT TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE FILES IN QUESTION, KORTEN REPLIED THAT IT IS THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY NOT TO RELEASE INTERNAL DOCUMENTS, AND THAT, MOREOVER, MOST DOCUMENTS ARE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE, ADDING THAT THE HISTORIANS' COMMISSION USED MORE DOCUMENTS THAN THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT. WHEN EMMERICH MENTIONED THE NEW DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE APPEARED ACCORDING TO THE "NEW YORK TIMES", KORTEN SAID THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS NOT TAKING THE CASE UP AGAIN. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE DECISION IS FINAL. O'CONNOR

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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