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USVIENNA FOR CFE AND UNVIE

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TEXT
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, AU, UK
SUBJECT: CONTINUING UK INTEREST IN KURT WALDHEIM

REF: VIENNA 1715

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. IT APPEARS THAT AUSTRIAN PRESS ACCOUNTS (REFTEL) ARE AT LEAST AS COMPLETE AS THOSE IN THE UK REGARDING CONTINUING BRITISH INTEREST IN KURT WALDHEIM'S WARTIME ROLE. COVERAGE OF THE ISSUE IN THE MAIN NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN LIMITED, AS FAR AS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE, TO A SINGLE UPDATE ARTICLE IN THE "TIMES" OF FEBRUARY 6 AND A FEW SCATTERED REPORTS OF STATEMENTS BY INTERESTED MP'S. THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT A FRONT PAGE ISSUE HERE FOR THE TIME BEING, BUT COULD BECOME PROMINENT AGAIN IF THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE GOVERNMENT STUDY.

3. THE UK MOD IS CONDUCTING THE OFFICIAL INQUIRY INTO WALDHEIM'S POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEATHS OF

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CAPTURED BRITISH SERVICEMEN. THE MOD INFORMED US THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE STUDY FOR MONTHS. PRESS REPORTS ARE INCORRECT IN CLAIMING THAT PUBLICATION OF RESULTS OF THE STUDY IS OVERDUE, THE MOD TOLD US, SINCE NO DEADLINE WAS EVER SET FOR COMPLETION OF THE STUDY.

4. THE FCO'S WESTERN EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT SAID TO US THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST OVERALL HAS NOT DIMINISHED, BUT CONFIRMED THAT THERE SIMPLY HAVE BEEN NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS RECENTLY IN THE COURSE OF THE INQUIRY WHICH WOULD PROMPT ANY OFFICIAL STATEMENT. ANY PRESS REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY ARE NOT ACCURATE, SAID THE FCO.

PRICE

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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