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TEXT
TAGS: PREL, UK, AU
SUBJECT: UK ISSUES NEW REPORT ON KURT WALDHEIM

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. ON OCTOBER 17 THE UK MOD RELEASED A REPORT OF THE FINDINGS OF ITS INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF **KURT WALDHEIM** IN THE TORTURE AND DEATHS OF BRITISH SERVICEMEN WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN PRISONER BY GERMAN FORCES IN GREECE IN WWII. A STATEMENT ON THE FINDINGS OF THE INVESTIGATING COMMISSION IS TO BE MADE IN PARLIAMENT. ASPECTS OF THE REPORT WERE LEAKED TO A JOURNALIST AND PRINTED IN THE OCTOBER 17 EDITION OF THE UK NEWSPAPER "THE DAILY TELEGRAPH."
3. MOD OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT THE COMMISSION FORMED LAST YEAR TO STUDY THE ISSUE HAD REACHED A FEW MIXED CONCLUSIONS AND THE COMMISSION HEAD, A CAMBRIDGE HISTORY PROFESSOR, HAD CONSULTED WITH THE MOD ABOUT THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS. THE FINAL REPORT SKIRTS WIDELY AROUND THE GENERAL ISSUE OF WHETHER WALDHEIM SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A WAR CRIME SUSPECT FOR HIS OVERALL ROLE AS A GERMAN OFFICER IN THE WAR AND INSTEAD SPECIFICALLY AND ONLY ADDRESSES WALDHEIM'S ROLE,

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IF ANY, IN THE HANDLING OF A SPECIFIED GROUP OF UK PRISONERS OF WAR IN GREECE. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT THE COMMITTEE DID NOT FIND EVIDENCE THAT WALDHEIM WAS PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN DECISIONS TO MISTREAT OR EXECUTE THE UK SOLDIERS OR IN CARRYING OUT SUCH DECISIONS, SO THAT HE IS NOT A WAR CRIMINAL IN THOSE PARTICULAR CASES. THE REPORT CAREFULLY REMINDS THE READER, HOWEVER, THAT THIS FINDING DOES NOT MEAN THAT WALDHEIM WAS UNAWARE OF THE ILLEGAL KILLING OF UK SOLDIERS -- HE SIMPLY COULD NOT BE FOUND RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE KILLINGS.

4. THEN-FOREIGN SECRETARY HOWE TOLD PARLIAMENT IN 1986 THAT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE UK ON THESE CASES DID NOT OFFER "EVIDENCE OF ANY CRIMINAL ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF LIEUTENANT WALDHEIM." MIXED CONCLUSIONS OF INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT IN OTHER COUNTRIES AFTER HOWE'S STATEMENT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW UK COMMISSION IN 1988. ITS FINDINGS WERE THEN GIVEN TO THE UK'S DIRECTOR OF ARMY LEGAL SERVICES, WHO SAYS OF THE REPORT: "...THEN LIEUTENANT WALDHEIM WAS A MERE JUNIOR STAFF OFFICER. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE HERE ... OF RELEVANT DELEGATED EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY OR OF ANY CAUSATIVE, OVERT ACT OR OMISSION FROM WHICH HIS GUILT OF A WAR CRIME MAY BE INFERRED."

5. IN THE CASE OF ONE UK SERVICEMAN'S MISTREATMENT WHILE A PRISONER OF THE GERMANS, THE COMMISSION CONCLUDED THAT "THE ACTIONS ACREDITED TO LT. WALDHEIM ... WERE APPARENTLY INTENDED TO AID THE PRISONER, PERHAPS SAVING HIS LIFE."

6. AN MOD PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS OFFICER TOLD US HE EXPECTS THE RELEASE OF THE REPORT TO RENEW PRESS AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN WALDHEIM, AT LEAST BRIEFLY, BUT HE THINKS THE REPORT WILL PUT AN END TO CHARGES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT DONE ENOUGH TO INVESTIGATE WALDHEIM'S POSSIBLE CONNECTION TO THE KILLINGS IN GREECE. HE TOLD US THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS A FEW MP'S TO STAND UP AND REPEAT OLD DEMANDS FOR A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT CONDEMNING WALDHEIM AND "FOREVER BANNING HIM FROM THE REALM," BUT THAT THESE WILL DIE DOWN WITH NO ACTION TAKEN BY PARLIAMENT OR HMG.

7. WE ARE POUCHING A COPY OF THE REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT.

CATTO

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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