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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TEXT  
TAGS: PREL, AU, US  
SUBJECT: READOUT ON RIEGLER VISIT TO NEW YORK

1. CONFIDENTIAL ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: VICE CHANCELLOR JOSEF RIEGLER'S APRIL 25-26 VISIT TO NEW YORK WAS VIEWED AS A SUCCESS FOR U.S.-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS BY A POLITICIAN WHO SEEMS TO HAVE A GENUINE AFFECTION FOR THE UNITED STATES. RIEGLER WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT DURING THE TRIP, BUT HE HOPES TO DO SO LATER THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

3. OTTO DITZ, FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR TO VICE CHANCELLOR RIEGLER, HAS PROVIDED US WITH A READOUT ON RIEGLER'S APRIL 25-26 VISIT TO NEW YORK CITY. AN ARTICLE IN THE APRIL 30 EDITION OF THE NEWSWEEKLY "PROFIL" DESCRIBED THE VISIT AS ARRANGED BY RIEGLER'S POLITICAL HANDLERS TO POLISH HIS FOREIGN AFFAIRS CREDENTIALS IN THIS ELECTION YEAR. DITZ AT FIRST DESCRIBED THE "PROFIL" ANGLE AS EXAGGERATION, BUT HE VIRTUALLY CONFIRMED THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TRIP IN THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION.

4. DITZ DESCRIBED RIEGLER AS A GREAT ADMIRER OF THE

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UNITED STATES WHO IS, FOR EXAMPLE, RELUCTANT TO SHARE THE RECRIMINATIONS OF OTHERS IN HIS CONSERVATIVE PEOPLES PARTY (OVP) ABOUT THE WALDHEIM WATCHLIST DECISION. (RIEGLER WAS TRUE TO THIS DESCRIPTION IN A MAY 7 PARTY SPEECH; SEE PARA 8, BELOW.) THE OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE OF THE NEW YORK TRIP WAS AN ADDRESS AT THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, RIEGLER'S SHORT STAY WAS CRAMMED WITH A VARIETY OF OTHER EVENTS, INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH OVERSEAS AUSTRIANS (LIKELY TO BE HEAVY OVP SUPPORTERS WHEN THEY ARE GIVEN THE FRANCHISE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTION), BUSINESSMEN INTERESTED IN INVESTING IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS.

5. RIEGLER MET WITH AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE FOR JEWISH CLAIMS ON AUSTRIA. DITZ DESCRIBED BOTH AS SUCCESSFUL IN ESTABLISHING BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE OVP, TRADITIONALLY THE AUSTRIAN GROUP MOST RESENTFUL OF THE WATCHLIST DECISION. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE CLAIMS COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN WHICH THE GOA WILL PROVIDE AS 300 MILLION (25 MILLION) OVER FIVE YEARS FOR PROJECTS FOR AUSTRIAN HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WAS PUT BACK ON TRACK. (THE COMMITTEE HAD WORKED OUT THE PROGRAM WITH CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY AND OTHER SOCIALIST MEMBERS OF THE GOA LAST YEAR, ONLY TO HAVE THE OVP, ALSO A GOA COALITION PARTY, THREATEN EARLY THIS YEAR TO BLOCK THE PROGRAM BECAUSE IT HAS NOT BEEN CONSULTED. RIEGLER APPARENTLY PORTRAYED HIMSELF AS AN ALLY OF THE CLAIMS COMMITTEE ON THE SUBJECT IN THE NEW YORK MEETING.)

6. DITZ CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS THAT RIEGLER MET WITH IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VELAYTI IN NEW YORK. THIS WAS ONE OF SEVERAL SUCH DIPLOMATIC ENCOUNTERS (THE OTHERS WERE WITH YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER LONCAR, ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DIMICHELIS AND A REPRESENTATIVE FROM BURUNDI). DITZ SAID THAT VELAYTI INVITED RIEGLER TO THE MEETING; UNDER PRESSURE FROM MFA RIEGLER AGREED TO IT AGAINST THE ADVICE OF HIS POLITICAL STAFF. IN THE EVENT, THE MEETING LASTED ONLY TEN MINUTES AND WAS LARGELY CONFINED TO ECONOMIC ISSUES, INCLUDING AGREEMENT TO CONVENE A JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION. RIEGLER STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT DITZ SUGGESTED THIS INTERVENTION MADE NO VISIBLE IMPRESSION ON VELAYTI. RIEGLER WAS INVITED TO TEHRAN, BUT NO DATE WAS SET FOR A VISIT.

7. DITZ SAID THAT RIEGLER WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT IN WASHINGTON. HE HOPES TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES SOON AND WOULD STILL LIKE TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT.

8. RIEGLER'S PRO-AMERICANISM WAS EVIDENT IN A MAY 7 REPORT TO THE OVP PARTY FAITHFUL WHICH WAS IN EFFECT A THEMATIC KICKOFF TO THE NATIONAL ELECTION. RIEGLER BEGAN THE SECTION OF THE SPEECH DEVOTED TO FOREIGN

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POLICY WITH THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE: "FIRST, IN THIS YEAR OF HAPPY NEW BEGINNINGS IN EUROPE, I WOULD LIKE ESPECIALLY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTION THE USA HAS MADE AND IS MAKING TO THE DEFENSE AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY NOT ONLY IN EUROPE BUT IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD." THIS IS A SENTIMENT WHICH HAS LONG BEEN PREVALENT IN THE OVP, C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 VIENNA 05338

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BUT WHICH HAS SEEN LITTLE PUBLIC EXPRESSION SINCE **KURT WALDHEIM** WAS PLACED ON THE WATCHLIST. (INTERESTINGLY, MFA TOLD US THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR COMPLAINED TO THEM ABOUT THE LACK OF BALANCE IN THE SPEECH - GORBACHEV WAS NOT MENTIONED.) RIEGLER SEEMS TO BE BOTH GENUINELY FOND OF THE U.S. AND READY TO PUT A MORE POSITIVE TONE ON U.S.-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS. BILLO

ADMIN  
END OF MESSAGE

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