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TEXT

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SUBJECT: HAVEL IN SALZBURG

REF: (A) VIENNA 8433, (B) SALZBURG 30
1. (U) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: CZECHOSLOVAK PRESIDENT HAVEL DID NOT VISIT AUSTRIA FOR SIX MONTHS AFTER HIS ELECTION, THE ONLY ONE OF THE CSFR'S NEIGHBORS SO NEGLECTED. HE FINALLY PAID A PRIVATE VISIT TO SALZBURG TO ATTEND THE JULY 26 OPENING OF THE SALZBURG FESTIVAL. TWO MAJOR ISSUES DOMINATED THE VISIT: HIS JOINT APPEARANCE WITH AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT KURT WALDHEIM, AND THE

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AUSTRO-CSFR CONTROVERSY OVER THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AT BOHUNICE (SEPTEL). ACCOMPANIED BY FRG PRESIDENT VON WEIZSAECKER, HAVEL PARTICIPATED IN THE OPENING CEREMONY AND AT A LUNCH; ON BOTH OCCASIONS WALDHEIM WAS ALSO PRESENT, SEATED NEXT TO VON WEIZSAECKER AND HAVEL. WALDHEIM CRITICS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA AND ELSEWHERE HAD WARNED AGAINST SUCH A "REHABILITATION" OF THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT, BUT HAVEL CAME ANYWAY. HIS OPENING SPEECH, THOUGH, CONTAINED AN OBLIQUE BUT POINTED REFERENCE TO WALDHEIM'S PROBLEMATIC PAST, AN APPEAL TO CONFRONT THE PAST IN TRUTHFULNESS RATHER THAN "REWRITING BIOGRAPHIES." THIS WAS CLEARLY AIMED AT BLUNTING ANY USE OF HIS PRESENCE FOR REHABILITATING WALDHEIM. IN A TELEVISED INTERVIEW AFTER THE SPEECH, WALDHEIM REJECTED ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN HAVEL'S WARNINGS AND HIS PERSONAL HISTORY. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER WALDHEIM'S FIRST MEETING WITH SENIOR WESTERN LEADERS WILL PROVE TO BE A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE DE FACTO BOYCOTT OF THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT SINCE HIS 1987 ELECTION. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

2.(U) BACKGROUND: AT THE JULY 26 OPENING OF THE SALZBURG FESTIVAL IN THE IMPRESSIVE "FELSENREITSCHULE" HALL, AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT **KURT WALDHEIM** FOUND HIMSELF IN THE UNPRECEDENTED COMPANY OF TWO PROMINENT HEADS OF STATE FROM DEMOCRATIC EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, THE FRG'S RICHARD VON WEIZSAECKER AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S VACLAV HAVEL. THE LATTERS' ATTENDANCE HAD BEEN CRITICIZED BY WALDHEIM'S OPPONENTS WHO ARGUED THAT THEIR PRESENCE WOULD BE USED TO REHABILITE HIM. HAVEL, HOWEVER, POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD INTENDED TO ATTEND LONG BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT, AND THAT HE CAME AS A PRIVATE PERSON. SHORTLY BEFORE THE EVENT, FRG PRESIDENT VON WEIZSAECKER AGREED TO "ACCOMPANY" HAVEL AND TO TRAVEL TO SALZBURG WITH THE CSFR PRESIDENT AFTER THEIR JOINT ATTENDANCE AT THE WEST GERMAN BAYREUTH FESTIVAL. VON WEIZSAECKER MADE ONE SINGLE BRIEF COMMENT ON HIS ATTENDANCE IN THE COURSE OF THE VISIT, STATING THAT HE HAD COME "BECAUSE PRESIDENT HAVELPASKED ME TO, AND BECAUSE I WANTED TO EXPRESS MY RESPECT FOR THE AUSTRIAN PEOPLE". ALTHOUGH THEY WERE SEATED NEXT TO EACH OTHER (ORDER: WALDHEIM - VON WEIZSAECKER - HAVEL) IN THE FIRST ROW OF THE HALL, THE TELEVISED OPENING CEREMONY SHOWED LITTLE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN WALDHEIM AND THE OTHER TWO PRESIDENTS. THE OVERWHELMING APPLAUSE FOR VON WEIZSAECKER AND HAVEL CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH THE POLITE WELCOME FOR WALDHEIM. WHEN WALDHEIM FIRST GREETED HAVEL AND VON WEIZSAECKER IN THE FOYER OF THE FESTIVAL HALL, AT LEAST TWO DEMONSTRATORS - ONE OF THEM NEW YORK RABBI AVI WEISS - TRIED TO DISTURB THEM WHEN THEY SHOOK HANDS.

3.(U) HAVEL'S SPEECH: GIVING THE KEYNOTE SPEECH FOR THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL, HAVEL DISCUSSED THE PHENOMENON OF ANXIETY AND WHAT HE CALLED THE "MITTELEUROPA CHARACTERISTICS" OF FEAR AND DEPRESSION, INCLUDING A VERY PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF HIS OWN EXPERIENCES IN RECENT MONTHS. HE STRESSED THAT FANATISM AND NATIONALISM WERE OFTEN THE RESULT OF FEAR. HAVEL CONTINUED WITH OTHER

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SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF FEAR AND ANXIETY. "APART FROM THESE FEARS OF UNCERTAINTY AND EVEN FREEDOM, THE FEAR OF HISTORY IS ALSO WIDESPREAD HERE IN MITTELEUROPA," NOTED HAVEL. "FEAR OF HISTORY IS NOT ONLY FEAR OF THE FUTURE, BUT ALSO FEAR OF THE PAST... HE WHO FEARS WHAT IS TO COME IS ALSO AFRAID TO LOOK AT THE FACE OF THE PAST... IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, THE FEAR OF ONE LIE OFTEN CREATES ANOTHER LIE, IN THE FOOLISH HOPE THAT BEING SAVED FROM THE FIRST LIE MEANS TO BE SAVED FROM LIES IN GENERAL." FOR EXAMPLE THE STALINIST LIE OF A SOCIALIST PARADISE DID NOT SAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM ANYTHING. "THOSE WHO FORGE HISTORY DO NOT SAVE THE FREEDOM OF A NATION BUT ENDANGER IT. BELIEVING THAT ONE CAN FIDDLE WITH HISTORY UNPUNISHED AND REWRITE ONE'S OWN BIOGRAPHY IS A MITTELEUROPA DELUSION. HE WHO ATTEMPTS TO DO THIS HARMS HIMSELF AS WELL AS HIS FELLOW CITIZENS...MANY HERE HAVE BECOME GUILTY IN THIS RESPECT...TO CONFESS ONE'S OWN MISTAKES LIBERATES". HE, HAVEL, HAD EXPERIENCED THAT HIMSELF. "...TRUTH RELIEVES A PERSON FROM FEAR." THE MITTELEUROPA FEARS HAD CREATED A LOT OF DAMAGE, CONCLUDED HAVEL, PRODUCING VIOLENCE, BRUTALITY AND FANATIC HATRED. THEREFORE, HE STRESSED, HE WANTED TO END HIS SPEECH WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE APPEAL TO ALL IN MITTELEUROPA. "WE SHOULD CONFRONT OUR TRADITIONAL FEARS BY SYSTEMATICALLY ELIMINATING ALL REASONS FOR THEM. LET US CONSTRUCT A SYSTEM OF MUTUAL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL TIES IN EUROPE WHICH WOULD GRADUALLY AND DEFINITELY REMOVE ALL POTENTIAL THREATS HIDDEN IN OUR COMMON FUTURE AND THEREBY ALSO ALL REASON FOR OUR POTENTIAL FEARS." HAVEL CALLED FOR A NEW EUROPEAN SELF-AWARENESS, LOOKING BEYOND THE PRESENT. HE RECEIVED STANDING OVATIONS FOR HIS SPEECH.

4. (U) WALDHEIM REACTION: AT THE LUNCH, WALDHEIM REACTED IN HIS TOAST TO HAVEL'S SPEECH. HE STRESSED THAT "WHERE THERE IS INDIVIDUAL GUILT, IT HAS TO BE CONFESSED," IMPLYING THAT HIS CASE WAS ONE OF COLLECTIVE GUILT. IN A SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW ON TELEVISION, WALDHEIM WAS ASKED WHETHER HE SAW ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN HAVEL'S WORDS AND HIS OWN PAST. THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NOT REWRITTEN HIS PAST, AND NEVER HAD DENIED ANYTHING. ALSO, SEVERAL COMMISSIONS HAD PROVEN THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN ANY WAR CRIMES OR OTHER GUILTY BEHAVIOR. "I THINK THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE GUILT."

5. (U) ASKED WHETHER THE SALZBURG MEETING WITH HAVEL AND VON WEIZSAECKER CONSTITUTED A BREAKTHROUGH IN HIS POLITICAL ISOLATION IN THE WEST, WALDHEIM SAID THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER HIMSELF TO BE SO ISOLATED AND THUS WOULD NOT OVERESTIMATE THE ENCOUNTER OR CALL IT A BREAKTHROUGH. HE DID THINK THE TALKS WERE HELPFUL, HOWEVER, IN IMPROVING THE POLITICAL CLIMATE. WALDHEIM SAID THAT HE DID TALK TO VON WEIZSAECKER ABOUT AN INVITATION TO BONN, ALTHOUGH HE PREPARED THE GROUND WITHOUT MAKING CONCRETE PLANS. HAVEL, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO VIENNA, BUT A DATE

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HAD NOT YET BEEN SET. ASKED ABOUT WHETHER HE THOUGHT THAT THE U.S. WATCHLIST DECISION WOULD BE REVISED, HE NOTED THAT THIS "ADMINISTRATIVE AMERICAN DECISION" SHOULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED, AND HE REMAINED VAGUE ABOUT WHETHER IT MIGHT BE REVISED.

6. (U) HAVEL TELEVISION INTERVIEW: IN HIS OWN INTERVIEW, PRESIDENT HAVEL EXPLAINED THE REASONS FOR HIS PRESENCE AT THE FESTIVAL, REPEATING VERBATIM SOME OF THE ARGUMENTS HE HAD USED IN A JULY 25 NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW (REF A) HE NOTED THAT HE WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED IT "RIDICULOUS" NOT TO COME. COMMENTING ON CRITICISM OF HIS ATTENDANCE FROM THE ANTI-WALDHEIM CAMP, HAVEL SAID THAT THE WALDHEIM ISSUE HAD TURNED INTO A GAME IN WHICH MORALLY CORRECT SUBSTANCE HAD BEEN RITUALIZED. WALDHEIM HAD TURNED INTO AN "ERSATZ VICTIM," PERHAPS TO PROTECT SOME PEOPLE'S BAD CONSCIENCES. TRUTH AND JUSTICE COULD NEVER PREVAIL IF ONE LOOKED FOR SCAPEGOATS ON THE ONE HAND, AND, ON THE OTHER, "SHOOK HANDS WITH SOMEBODY WHO PRESUMABLY HAD A MUCH DARKER PAST."

7. (U) MEDIA REACTION: BY CARRYING THE TWO INTERVIEWS AND EXTENSIVE REPORTING IN ITS GENERAL NEWS COVERAGE, AUSTRIAN TELEVISION GAVE AN OBJECTIVE, PERHAPS MILDLY WALDHEIM-CRITICAL, ACCOUNT OF THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL. COMMENTARIES IN THE PRINT MEDIA, ON THE OTHER HAND, NEARLY ALL NOTED THE MESSAGE TO WALDHEIM CONTAINED IN HAVEL'S SPEECH. THE PRO-WALDHEIM MASS TABLOID "KRONENZEITUNG" WAS THE ONLY ONE HIGHLIGHTING THE HAVEL-WALDHEIM HANDSHAKE AS A "HISTORIC EVENT" (WITHOUT, HOWEVER, COMING UP WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF THAT HANDSHAKE; HAVEL APPARENTLY TRIED TO AVOID SUCH A PICTURE, WITH SUCCESS). IN GENERAL, THE PRESS COVERAGE DID NOT PUT A STRONG EMPHASIS ON THE FACT THAT WALDHEIM FOUND HIMSELF, FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN THE COMPANY OF TWO PROMINENT HEADS OF STATE FROM DEMOCRATIC EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

8. (LOU) COMMENT: THE MEETING BETWEEN WALDHEIM AND VON WEIZSACKER AND HAVEL MAY PROVE TO BE A BREAK-THROUGH FOR THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT, AT LEAST PUTTING A DENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT IN EFFECT SINCE HIS 1987 ELECTION. ONLY TIME WILL TELL IF THAT IS THE CASE. WHAT IS CLEAR AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, IS HOW HAVEL'S PRESENCE UNDERSCORES THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SUBJECT. HAVEL WAS AS CAREFUL AS ANY OTHER POLITICIAN WOULD HAVE BEEN IN EMPHASIZING HIS ATTENDANCE ONLY AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN WHO ACCEPTED THE INVITATION BECAUSE IT CAME TO HIM A YEAR AGO WHEN HE WAS AN OUTCAST IN HIS OWN COUNTRY. BUT HIS INTERVIEW IN THE "SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN" ON JULY 25 TERMING THE BOYCOTT AN EMPTY RITUALIZATION WENT BEYOND SIMPLY RATIONALIZING HIS MEETING WITH WALDHEIM. AND HIS SPEECH AT THE OPENING, WITH ITS REFERENCES TO CONFRONTING THE FEARS AND THE LIES OF THE PAST, WASN'T SIMPLY AN ATTACK ON WALDHEIM DESIGNED TO MOLLIFY CRITICS. IT CERTAINLY DID PERTAIN TO WALDHEIM, WHO STANDS ACCUSED OF MODIFYING HIS BIOGRAPHY AND "FORGETTING" PART OF HIS PAST. BUT THE LESSONS OF HAVEL'S SPEECH SEEM TO

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US TO APPLY EVEN MORE APTLY (AND WE THINK THAT IS WHERE THEY WERE DIRECTED) TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE OTHER EMERGING DEMOCRACIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE. THE SPEECH, CONTAINED IN FBIS VIENNA AU2607133090, IS A DEEPLY PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE CHALLENGES HAVEL FACES IN BRINGING HIS COUNTRY OUT OF ITS DARK COMMUNIST PAST INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF EUROPEAN LIFE. IT HAS AN ELOQUENCE AND A VALUE WHICH TRANSCENDS THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR. END COMMENT.
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END OF MESSAGE

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