

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
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TEXT  
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SUBJECT: WIESENTHAL CHIDES WJC FOR CRITICIZING WALDHEIM  
MEETING WITH GERMAN CHANCELLOR KOHL

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
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1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO AUSTRIAN PRESS REPORTS ON MARCH 30, SIMON WIESENTHAL HAS REJECTED THE RECENT CRITICISM BY THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS OF GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT KOHL'S DECISION TO MEET WITH AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT WALDHEIM MARCH 27. EXCEPT FOR WIESENTHAL'S COMMENT, THE AUSTRIAN PRESS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN KOHL AND THE GERMAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, AND ON CRITICAL STATEMENTS MADE BY ISRAELI OFFICIALS. IN THE WANING DAYS OF WALDHEIM'S TENURE AS PRESIDENT, HIS LUNCH WITH HELMUT KOHL IS NOT A MAJOR EVENT FOR VIENNA. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRIAN PAPERS HAVE REPORTED THE CONTROVERSIAL MEETING IN MUNICH BETWEEN KOHL AND KURT WALDHEIM ON MARCH 27 IN A BASICALLY FACTUAL, NON-SENSATIONAL MANNER. REPORTS FOCUS ON THE CRITICAL REACTIONS OF THE GERMAN JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS (WJC) TO KOHL'S DECISION TO MEET WITH THE OUTGOING AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT. IN SMALL FOLLOW-UP REPORTS ON THE MEETING,

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MOST AUSTRIAN DAILIES ON MARCH 30 PRINTED A STATEMENT BY SIMON WIESENTHAL, HEAD OF THE JEWISH DOCUMENTATION CENTER, THAT BEARS HIS NAME. IN THIS STATEMENT, WIESENTHAL DISTANCED HIMSELF FROM THE CRITICISM EXPRESSED BY THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS OF THE MEETING BETWEEN KOHL AND WALDHEIM.

3. WIESENTHAL IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE WJC "SHOULD NOT INTERVENE INTO THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A COUNTRY." WIESENTHAL WENT ON TO SAY IT WAS DOUBTFUL "WHETHER THE WORLD CONGRESS REPRESENTS ALL JEWISH PEOPLE." HE ALSO "DEEPLY DEPLORED" THAT THE WJC DID NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE SITUATION OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. FOR EXAMPLE, "THE ORGANIZATION HAD COMMENTED ON GERMAN UNIFICATION WITHOUT INFORMING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF JEWS IN GERMANY." IN SHORT, WIESENTHAL'S COMMENTS SIDESTEPED ANY DISCUSSION OF THE POLITICAL DECISIONS WHICH BROUGHT KOHL AND WALDHEIM TO THE SAME LUNCH TABLE.

4. THE MASS-DAILY "KRONENZEITUNG", WHICH HAS DEFENDED WALDHEIM AGAINST INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR IN 1986, POINTED OUT THAT "U.S. PAPERS FROM THE EAST COAST AND OFFICIALS IN ISRAEL NEVERTHELESS CONTINUED THEIR RAGING ATTACKS AGAINST THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR." IN A SEPARATE ARTICLE ON MARCH 28, THE PAPER REPORTED THAT ONE OF THE FOREMOST CRITICS OF THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT, U.S. CONGRESSMAN STEPHEN SOLARZ, IS NOW HIMSELF THE OBJECT OF CRITICISM IN CONNECTION WITH CHECK KITING IN THE U.S. CONGRESS. A MARCH 29 COMMENTARY IN THE LIBERAL DAILY "DER STANDARD", WHOSE REPORTING ON WALDHEIM HAS BEEN PREDOMINANTLY CRITICAL, CONCLUDES THAT, WHILE JEWISH SENSIBILITIES ARE CLEARLY UNDERSTANDABLE, WALDHEIM DESERVES "MERCY" AS WELL AS "RESPECT FOR APOLOGIZING AND CHANGING HIS ATTITUDE."

5. COMMENT: WALDHEIM IS 73 YEARS OLD, AND WILL LEAVE OFFICE TO ENTER RETIREMENT IN JULY. IN THE FINAL MONTHS OF HIS TENURE, HE HAS SOUGHT TO RETRIEVE HIS REPUTATION BY MEETING WITH THOSE WHO WOULD RECEIVE HIM, AND BY A FEW STATE VISITS, BY SUCH NOTABLES AS PRESIDENT MOI OF KENYA. HE HAS ABSOLUTELY NO ROLE IN THE ONGOING PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. THAT WOULD BE THE KISS OF DEATH AND HIS PARTY KNOWS IT. WHILE FEW WILL SAY SO PUBLICALLY, AND WHILE AUSTRIAN VOTERS RALLIED TO AN EMBATTLED WALDHEIM IN THE 1986 CAMPAIGN, HIS CANDIDACY AND THE VICIOUS ATTACKS IT PROVOKED DID MUCH TO UNDERMINE THE PEOPLES PARTY AS A PARTY OF POWER IN AUSTRIA. THE OVP CONTINUES TO PAY THE BILL AT THE POLLS, AND MAY DO SO AGAIN ON APRIL 26. FROM A VIENNA PERSPECTIVE, WALDHEIM'S MEETING WITH KOHL WAS PERSONAL, NOT POLITICAL, AND INsofar AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO HANDLE THE FLACK AS SUCH, THE GOA WILL DO SO. THE PROBLEM FOR THE GOA IS THAT THE PRESIDENT IS NOT YET A PRIVATE CITIZEN. END COMMENT.  
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