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TEXT

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SUBJECT: WALDHEIM PRESENTS "THE ANSWER"

SUMMARY

1. FORMER AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT KURT WALDHEIM'S NEWLY PRESENTED BOOK "DIE ANTWORT" ("THE ANSWER") IS AN ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCES DURING THE AFFAIR SURROUNDING HIS WARTIME PAST, SUPPLEMENTED BY A LOOK AT HIS LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER THAT ERA. THE BOOK REFLECTS STANDARD WALDHEIM PERSPECTIVES OF HIS WORLD WAR II MILITARY SERVICE AS "DUTY" WHICH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED, BUT ALSO SHOWS SOME INSIGHT INTO MISTAKES WALDHEIM MADE IN CONFRONTING THAT PAST. WALDHEIM GIVES A RELATIVELY SOBER AND SOMETIMES BITTER DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN U.S. POLICY LEADING UP TO THE WATCHLIST DECISION AND ASSERTS ITS VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW STANDARDS. ON THE MARGINS OF HIS JUNE 11 BOOK PRESENTATION, WALDHEIM EXPRESSED THE HOPE TO JOURNALISTS THAT THE WATCHLIST

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DECISION WOULD EVENTUALLY BE SUSPENDED. END SUMMARY.

 BOOK PRESENTATION

2. WALDHEIM'S PRESENTATION OF HIS BOOK IN THE PARLIAMENT'S FESTIVE SALON ON JUNE 11 DREW A LARGE CROWD, AMONG THEM LEADING PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP) AND FREEDOM MOVEMENT (F) POLITICIANS, MFA OFFICIALS AND MOSTLY MID-LEVEL DIPLOMATS FROM WESTERN EMBASSIES. INTRODUCING WALDHEIM, SECOND PARLIAMENTARY PRESIDENT HEINRICH NEISSER (OVP) EMPHASIZED, "IN RETROSPECT, TEN YEARS LATER, IT CAN BE STATED THAT THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WALDHEIM WERE UNSUBSTANTIATED." NEISSER ALSO OBSERVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR HAD PRODUCED A "NEW PUBLIC FEEL FOR AUSTRIA'S WARTIME PAST." PUBLISHER HERBERT FLEISSNER NOTED AT THE PRESENTATION THAT THE BOOK WILL SOON BE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, AND THAT WALDHEIM HAD GIVEN AN INTERVIEW TO THE "NEW YORK TIMES." (COMMENT: TALKING TO EMBOFF, A STAFFER WHO HAD ASSISTED WALDHEIM IN WRITING THE BOOK COULD NOT CONFIRM THIS. END COMMENT.) FLEISSNER STRESSED THE BOOK COULD CONTRIBUTE "TO REVISE THE UNTENABLE WATCHLIST DECISION." ON THE MARGINS ON THE BOOK PRESENTATION, WALDHEIM ALSO TOLD JOURNALISTS HE HOPED "THE DAY WILL COME WHEN THE WATCHLIST DECISION WILL BE SUSPENDED." HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE WISH HIS OPPONENTS WOULD READ THE BOOK, WITHOUT BIAS.

 "THE ANSWER"

3. WALDHEIM DESCRIBED HIS BOOK AS "PRODUCT OF A LONG REFLECTION PROCESS," "NEITHER MEANT AS REPRISAL NOR AS JUSTIFICATION," BUT AS "ACCOUNT OF AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE." IN WRITING IT, WALDHEIM SAID HE SAW A CHANCE TO CONTEMPLATE, AND TO REALIZE MISTAKES HE MADE, AS WELL AS REALITIES AND PARADIGMS DEFINING LIFE. THE 328-PAGE BOOK STARTS OUT WITH WALDHEIM'S ACCOUNT OF HIS WARTIME SERVICE, GENERALLY REFLECTING HIS PERSPECTIVE THAT HE HAD HAD NO OTHER OPTION THAN DOING HIS MILITARY SERVICE, AND THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN A TOP INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, BUT HAD PERFORMED SECRETARIAL DUTIES WITHOUT COMMAND POWER IN HIS SERVICE ON THE BALKANS.

4. WALDHEIM THEN GIVES HIS VIEW OF THE AUSTRIAN START OF THE "AFFAIR WALDHEIM," INSTIGATED BY SOCIAL DEMOCRAT OFFICIALS, AND THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE U.S. LEADING TO THE WATCHLIST DECISION ON WALDHEIM. WALDHEIM ASSERTS THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL EDWIN MEESE AND SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ WERE PUT UNDER PRESSURE BY WJC PRESIDENT EDGAR BRONFMAN TO PUT HIM ON THE WATCHLIST. BRONFMAN THREATENED, ACCORDING TO WALDHEIM, TO OTHERWISE NOT BE SUPPORTIVE IN THE 1988 U.S. ELECTION CAMPAIGN. WALDHEIM NOTES "RELIABLE SOURCES" TOLD THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT IN THE STATE

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DEPARTMENT'S DISCUSSIONS ON THE WATCHLIST DECISION SECRETARY SHULTZ HAD BEEN THE ONLY ONE IN FAVOR OF THE DECISION. WALDHEIM MAINTAINS THAT NEITHER DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE WHITEHEAD NOR THEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE RICHARD SHIFTER FAVORED PUTTING WALDHEIM ON THE WATCHLIST. SHIFTER'S POSITION, EXPLAINS WALDHEIM, "ONCE AGAIN PROVES" HOW WRONG ANY GENERALIZATIONS ON THE ATTITUDES OF EMIGRANTS TOWARD THEIR HOME COUNTRY WERE.

5. RECALLING THAT THE EVIDENCE ON WHICH OSI BASED ITS RECOMMENDATION FOR THE WATCHLIST DECISION WAS ONLY RELEASED IN 1994 -- "NOT LEAST DUE TO PRESSURE FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO," AS WALDHEIM EXPLAINS -- WALDHEIM ALSO NOTES THAT TWO AMERICAN CITIZENS HAD SUED THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION FOR THE RELEASE OF THE FILES ON THE BASIS OF THE "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT." WALDHEIM EXPLAINS THAT ONE OF THESE TWO U.S. CITIZENS, JOHN R. MAPOTHER, HAD PREVIOUSLY WORKED FOR THE CIA AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY VIENNA.

6. WALDHEIM ALSO STRESSES HIS VIEW THAT THE WATCHLIST DECISION WAS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.S. LAW, BUT IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ALL LEGAL PRINCIPLES WHICH THE U.S. RECOGNIZE. DE FACTO, ARGUES WALDHEIM, THE WATCHLIST WAS BASED ON A COLLECTIVE GUILT PRINCIPLE, SINCE MEMBERSHIP IN CERTAIN MILITARY UNITS SUFFICED AS PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE THAT FORMED THE BASIS OF THE DECISION. FORMER AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA HELENE VON DAMM'S BIOGRAPHY IS ALSO QUOTED IN THE BOOK. IN THAT BIOGRAPHY, VON DAMM, WHO WAS AMBASSADOR BEFORE THE START OF THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR, SAID SHE SHARED THE VIEW OF THOSE WHO ARGUE THE WATCHLIST WAS IN CONTRADICTION WITH THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE OF "INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY."

7. IN THE LAST SECTIONS OF HIS BOOK, WALDHEIM DESCRIBES HIS ISOLATION IN THE WESTERN DEMOCRATIC WORLD. WALDHEIM DEPICTS THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS "AN EVEN SADDER CHAPTER" THAN THE WATCHLIST DECISION SINCE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS FOLLOWED THE U.S. EXAMPLE "COMPLETELY UNCRITICALLY," "CHUMMING UP" TO WASHINGTON BY OSTRACIZING THE FREELY ELECTED AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT. WALDHEIM CONCEDES, HOWEVER, THAT THESE GOVERNMENTS ALSO WERE UNDER HEAVY MEDIA PRESSURE TO ISOLATE HIM. WALDHEIM CONCLUDES HIS BOOK WITH AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS FOLLOWING HIS PRESIDENCY -- THE END OF THE COLD WAR, DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EU, THE UN, THE U.S. AND ASIA.

COMMENT

8. GENERALLY, WALDHEIM'S BOOK IS A RELATIVELY SOBER AND REASONABLY REALISTIC, BUT OCCASIONALLY BITTER, ACCOUNT OF HIS PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COURSE OF THE "WALDHEIM AFFAIR." AT ONE POINT IN THE BOOK, WALDHEIM NOTES "A SIMPLE COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS EXPLAINS WHY U.S.

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POLITICIANS DO NOT OPPOSE THE WATCHLIST DECISION, SINCE IT WOULD NOT ENTAIL ANY POLITICAL PROFIT AT HOME, BUT WOULD, ON THE CONTRARY, TRIGGER STRONG RESENTMENTS AMONG LEADING OPINION MAKERS." WALDHEIM'S EXPRESSION OF HOPE THAT THE WATCHLIST DECISION WILL EVENTUALLY BE SUSPENDED, VOICED ON THE MARGINS OF THE BOOK PRESENTATION, INDICATES HE DOES NOT SEEM TO CONSIDER THAT PHENOMENON AS STILL LASTING TODAY.

9. THE AUSTRIAN REACTION TO THE BOOK HAS BEEN RATHER LOW-KEY. APART FROM A SIX-PART SERIES ON THE BOOK CARRIED BY THE MASS-TABLOID DAILY "KRONENZEITUNG," WHICH HAD BEEN THE LEADING PAPER IN DEFENDING WALDHEIM AGAINST THE ALLEGATIONS REGARDING HIS WARTIME PAST, THE BOOK AND ITS PRESENTATION HAVE NOT STIRRED MUCH COMMOTION IN THE AUSTRIAN MEDIA, AND IS NOT LIKELY TO PRODUCE REMINISCENCES OF THE HEATED CLIMATE AT THE PEAK OF THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR. THE POLARIZATION IN AUSTRIA OVER WALDHEIM SEEMS TO HAVE SHRUNK TO RESENTMENTS OVER THE UNFAIRNESS OF THE WATCHLIST DECISION AMONG WALDHEIM SUPPORTERS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND, AMONG WALDHEIM'S CRITICS, ON THE OTHER HAND, DISSATISFACTION WITH HIS ETHICS AND LACK OF SENSITIVITY TOWARD THE NAZI ERA AND THE HOLOCAUST. HUNT

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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