

19 December 1980

Dear Congressman Solarz,

Thank you for your letter of 26 November..

I have not hitherto considered it necessary to react to slanders such as the one you quote from the "New Republic", although I may note in passing that Mr. Robert Ratner, President of the United Nations Association of the United States of America, did refer to one such slander in a letter to that publication on 16 February 1980 as a "McCarthyesque lie". You will, I am sure, agree with me that it would be odd, to say the least, if the Government of the United States and all other Member Governments voted twice to elect me as Secretary-General of the United Nations if they had been in any doubt as to my character and background. However, since you, as a Member of the United States Congress, have raised this matter I am, of course, willing to respond to your questions.

First of all, I wish to say that I was never associated in any way with the Nazi Youth Movement. On the contrary, my whole family were well known to be actively anti-Nazi before the Anschluss and we made no secret of our political convictions afterwards. It is correct that my father was arrested after the Anschluss and our family was forced to move because of constant harassment by the Nazi authorities.

I had served voluntarily for one year in an Austrian cavalry regiment in 1936 before going to university. Like other Austrians in the same position,

The Honourable  
Stephen J. Solarz  
Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

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I was drafted by the Nazi authorities at the beginning of the war and had no possibility to escape the draft, which was enforced. I was attached to the 45th Aufklärungs-Abteilung of the Wehrmacht. This was a reconnaissance unit, and I served on horseback in its cavalry element. It certainly had no contact or connection with extermination units. I myself was wounded on the eastern front and, being incapacitated for further service on the front, resumed my law studies at Vienna University where I graduated in 1944.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Kurt Waldheim', written in dark ink on a light background.

Kurt Waldheim