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EXCLUSIVE

Waldheim's shock file cover-up

NEW EVIDENCE that Austrian President Kurt Waldheim was being hunted by the Allies as a top Nazi officer even before the end of the Second World War was last night at the centre of a cover-up row between London and Washington.

Today for the first time the Sunday Express can reveal there WAS a cover-up. It involved the very highest levels in the American government.

American Intelligence sources claim that three separate attempts have been made by Washington to persuade Britain that the evidence should be made public.

The last approach was three months ago.

But last night a Foreign Office spokesman rejected these claims.

"At no stage have the Americans approached us with a request for that document to be made public," he said.

Admitted

But the Foreign Office admitted that a secret file on Waldheim DOES exist.

"We are aware of a report of April 28, 1945 prepared by the Allied forces," he said.

Just what is in that file, and why it is still being kept secret after more than 40 years, is certain to become the focus of new attempts to uncover the secrets of Waldheim's past.

British Intelligence compiled a list of senior intelligence officers serving with the Nazis in the Balkans whose capture was regarded as vital to the Allied cause.

One of the names on that list was Kurt Waldheim.

"This may be the most shocking revelation to date in the light of the Historical Commission's report on Waldheim's lies," said the executive director of the World Jewish Congress, Eitan Stemberg.

A file containing the names—together with detailed physical descriptions of the wanted men to make capture easier—was passed to the Americans on April 26, 1945.

Both American and British copies of the file were classified top secret and have remained secret since.

Last night Mr Stemberg said: "If British and American agents were looking for him, it can scarcely be argued that he was an unimportant low-ranking officer in the first channel."

In fact, Waldheim was picked up by the

By CHARLES ASHMAN and MICHAEL TONER

Americans shortly after the British file containing his name was given to them.

He was debriefed by American Intelligence in the town of Bad Tölz and released.

Unofficial sources in Washington suggest that Waldheim was identified as a key figure in Nazi Intelligence, but was released because of his potential for becoming a high-flier in post-war Austria.

There seems little doubt that Allied Intelligence believed they had evidence to hang over Waldheim's head.

While there is a flat denial from the Foreign Office that Britain has suppressed the file despite American appeals that it should be made public, other Whitehall sources confirm that there have been "contacts" between London and Washington recently about its contents.

Letter

The evidence of an American cover-up comes from an exchange of letters in 1980 between a U.S. Congressman and the then CIA director, Admiral John William Warner.

At the time the CIA assured him there was no evidence Waldheim had been involved in war crimes. The CIA said it believed in 1944 and 1945 Waldheim had been a student in Vienna.

But in a letter seven years later, the CIA admitted it knew of the file of April 1945.

The correspondence is now in the possession of the Sunday Express.

Waldheim is related to the Royal Family, according to the publisher of Burke's peerage. Waldheim and the Queen are "very distantly related, but the link to Prince Philip is closer, through the Schleswig-Holstein family," said Mr Harold Brooks-Baker.

Sunday People

WALDHEIM LINK TO QUEEN

By NIGEL NELSON, Political Editor

AUSTRIAN president Kurt Waldheim -- who has been accused of links with Nazi war crimes -- is related to the Queen, it was revealed last night.



WALDHEIM: Royal link

The news is sure to embarrass the Royal Family, as Waldheim's service in the German Army is currently under investigation.

His link with the royals through the Hapsburg family was discovered by Britain's top royal expert, Harold Brooks-Baker, publisher of Burke's Peerage.

Mr Brooks-Baker says Prince Philip has even closer links with Waldheim through the Schleswig-Holstein family.

Now American, British and French sources have come to light last week link-

ing Waldheim with the interrogation and torture of six British commandos who were subsequently executed by the Nazis in 1944. British officials are now studying the new American information.

President Reagan and French President Francois Mitterand also get a mention as distant relatives of the Queen in a cover story by Mr Brooks-Baker.

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13