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TEXT
TAGS: PREL, GE, AU
SUBJECT: WHAT TO TELL THE GERMANS ABOUT KURT WALDHEIM

REF: (A) BONN 20589; (B) STATE 209536; (C) VIENNA 9698;
(D) BONN 18858

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. THE US DECISION TO PLACE KURT WALDHEIM ON THE "WATCH LIST" KEEPS RECURRING IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR GERMAN OFFICIALS. IN ORDER TO PROPERLY REPRESENT US INTERESTS IN THIS MATTER, WE REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT SUPPLY US WITH INFORMATION ON THE FACTUAL BASIS FOR THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE WALDHEIM, FOR OUR OWN BACKGROUND USE AND, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR USE WITH OUR GERMAN INTERLOCUTORS. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS MATERIAL ALREADY PROVIDED (REFS B-D), WHICH EXPLAINS THE PROCEDURAL BASIS FOR THE WALDHEIM DECISION, BUT WE BELIEVE THIS IS INSUFFICIENT FOR ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED TO THE AMBASSADOR, SENIOR US VISITORS AND OTHER EMBASSY STAFF.

3. MANY OF OUR GERMAN INTERLOCUTORS BEGIN FROM THE PRESUMPTION THAT WALDHEIM WAS LITTLE MORE THAN AN ORDINARY WEHRMACHT JUNIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN A UNIT WHICH,

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LIKE MANY OTHERS, HAD OCCUPATION AND INTERNAL SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES -- IN SHORT, THAT WALDHEIM'S WARTIME RECORD WAS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THAT OF THOUSANDS OF GERMANS WHO SERVED IN THE MILITARY DURING THE WAR. THEY HENCE REGARD THE US EXCLUSION OF WALDHEIM AS AN EXTRAORDINARY STEP, ONE BASED LESS ON THE NATURE OF HIS WARTIME ACTIVITIES THAN ON NOTORIETY DUE TO HIS UN SERVICE AND HIS LONG-MAINTAINED DECEPTION ABOUT HIS PAST. WE OF COURSE REBUT THIS VIEW BY EXPLAINING HOW THE USG WENT ABOUT DECIDING TO PUT WALDHEIM ON THE WATCH LIST. WE NEED HOWEVER TO SUPPLEMENT THESE ESSENTIALLY PROCEDURAL POINTS WITH MORE FACTUAL PRESENTATION, INDICATING THE PERSONAL ACTS FOR WHICH WALDHEIM IS RESPONSIBLE AND WHICH LED TO HIS BEING PUT ON THE WATCH LIST, AND IF POSSIBLE SHOWING HOW THESE ACTS DISTINGUISH HIS CONDUCT FROM THAT OF OTHER FORMER GERMAN OFFICERS AGAINST WHOM WE HAVE NOT TAKEN SUCH STEPS.
BURT

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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