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TEXT
TAGS: PHUM, PREL, SCUL, PGOV, UR, US, XF, LU
SUBJECT: WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS PRESIDENT
- BRONFMAN ON MIDDLE EAST, SOVIET UNION;
- ASIDES ON US ADMINISTRATION, AUSTRIA;
- GOL BALANCED

1. SUMMARY. DURING A WHIRLWIND ONE-DAY VISIT

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
2000

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TO LUXEMBOURG, WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS PRESIDENT EDGAR BRONFMAN MET JANUARY 23 WITH THE HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS, AND ADDRESSED THE LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE PRESS. IN THE ABSENCE OF SERIOUS LOCAL ISSUES, HIS FOCUS WAS PRIMARILY ON THE INTRACTABLE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SOVIET UNION, WITH ASIDES ON THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION (DISTINCT RESERVATIONS) AND AUSTRIA/WALDHEIM (GIVING NO QUARTER). END SUMMARY.

2. BRONFMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY PROFESSOR/RABBI ISRAEL SINGER, MR. STEINBERG AND ENTOURAGE, SAW IN ONE LONG WORKING DAY GRAND DUKE JEAN, PRIME MINISTER JACQUES SANTER, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ROBERT GOEBBELS AND PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION LEADER COLETTE FLESCHE, LUNCHEDED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND LOCAL AND AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN, AND SPENT LONG HOURS WITH THE LOCAL JEWISH LEADERS BEFORE ADDRESSING THE LARGER JEWISH COMMUNITY AND INVITED GUESTS IN THE EVENING. HE HELD A BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE THE FOLLOWING MORNING. WHILE THANKING THE GOL FOR ITS INTERVENTIONS WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES ON BEHALF OF JEWISH REFUSEES DURING RECENT TRIPS TO MOSCOW, BRONFMAN IS REPORTED TO HAVE HANDED THE GOL A LIST OF 139 LUXEMBOURG NAZI WAR CRIMINALS STILL LIVING. BRONFMAN EXPLAINED TO THE PRESS THAT THE UNDERLYING REASON FOR THE VISIT WAS TO MAKE UP FOR YEARS OF NEGLECT BY THE CONGRESS VIS-A-VIS NUMEROUS WESTERN COUNTRIES AS THE CONGRESS' FOCUS HAD BEEN MORE DIRECTLY ON THE PLIGHT OF JEWS IN THE EAST.

3. GOL BALANCED POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST.

IN HOSTING LUNCH FOR BRONFMAN AND PROMINENT U.S. AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, PRIME MINISTER SANTER FIRST STRESSED LUXEMBOURG'S COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL ON VARIOUS GROUNDS WHICH PARALLEL MOST OF THOSE OF RELEVANCE FOR THE U.S., AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT POST-ELECTION IMMOBILITY IN ISRAEL WAS BEING OVERCOME. STRIKING A BALANCE, HE THEN NOTED THAT "IF THE PALESTINIANS MUST STICK TO THEIR RENUNCIATION OF ANY FORM OF TERRORISM, ISRAEL SHOULD NOW EQUALLY REFRAIN FROM RESORTING TO MILITARY VIOLENCE OR FROM REINFORCING IT." HE STRESSED THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF ISRAEL WAS AT STAKE AND ASKED BRONFMAN TO USE HIS INFLUENCE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THAT OUTCOME.

4. BRONFMAN ON THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION.

WITH THE DEPARTURE FROM THE U.S. POLITICAL SCENE OF SUCH TRUE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL AS RONALD REAGAN AND GEORGE SHULTZ, BRONFMAN SAID JEWISH UNITY WOULD BE PUT SORELY TO THE TEST DURING A LESS

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UNDERSTANDING BUSH PRESIDENCY. HE ASSERTED THAT THE PREMATURE U.S. DECISION TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO WAS TAKEN BY THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY TEAM OF BUSH, BAKER AND SCOWCROFT, AND CHARACTERIZED THE MOVE AS "CLEVERLY DONE" BY THEM TO MAKE IT LOOK AS THOUGH IT WERE A REAGAN/SHULTZ DECISION. REAGAN HAD GONE ALONG WITH IT AS A GIFT TO BUSH. BRONFMAN INSISTED THAT THE TRUE STORY WAS VISIBLE, AMONG OTHER WAYS, IN THE USE BY SHULTZ, WHO HAD ALWAYS SEEN EYE-TO-EYE
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WITH THE PRESIDENT ON THIS ISSUE, OF THE FORMULATION THAT HE WAS ANNOUNCING THE DECISION "UNDER INSTRUCTIONS." (SEE ALSO 5.A. BELOW.)

5. BRONFMAN ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

A. THE ONLY WORKABLE PROCESS FOR FINDING A MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION, BRONFMAN SAID, WILL ULTIMATELY PROVE TO BE ONE OF U.S. AND SOVIET INTERMEDIATION IN THE REGION, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN THE PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL, INCLUDING WITH THE BACKING OF THE "EUROPEAN BLOCK." IN THAT PROCESS, ISRAEL MUST NOT BE SACRIFICED, HE WARNED, ON THE ALTER OF THE U.S. DESIRE FOR FURTHER RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE USSR.

B. AT THE SAME TIME, BRONFMAN REJECTED CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT ISRAELI STANCE, ESPECIALLY THE USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE AGAINST WEST BANK YOUTH AND THE CATEGORICAL NATURE OF SHAMIR'S REJECTION OF DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO.

C. NEVERTHELESS, HE EXPRESSED COMPLETE SYMPATHY FOR THE REASONS WHY SHAMIR AND OTHER ISRAELIS ARE SO CAUTIOUS ABOUT ARAFAT AND THE PLO. HE CITED THE SHARP CONTRAST BETWEEN ARAFAT'S SPECIFIC REJECTION OF TERRORISM, GIVEN IN ENGLISH BEFORE A WESTERN AUDIENCE AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, AND HIS VERY DIFFERENT WORDS, GIVEN IN ARABIC TO AN ARAB AUDIENCE IN KUWAIT IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, IN WHICH HE WARNED OF THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES WHICH COULD BEFALL WEST BANK ARAB OFFICIALS. WHICH OF THESE TWO CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS COULD ONE EXPECT MR. SHAMIR TO BELIEVE, BRONFMAN ASKED RHETORICALLY. IT IS EASY TO ASK FROM YOUR COMFORTABLE ARMCHAIR IN LUXEMBOURG OR THE U.S. FOR ISRAELI MODERATION AND ACCOMMODATION. THE

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PERSPECTIVE IS DIFFERENT WHEN IT IS YOUR OWN COUNTRY'S AND PEOPLE'S FUTURE AT STAKE.

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D. NOTING MR. PERES' ABANDONMENT OF SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AS A VEHICLE TO LAUNCH A NEW REGIONAL PEACE INITIATIVE, BRONFMAN POINTED OUT WHY THE OTHER THREE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE UNSC WERE DISQUALIFIED IN ISRAELI EYES FROM A LEAD ROLE. THE PRC DID NOTHING BUT SPEW AN UNEDITED ARAB LINE IN DEALING WITH MIDDLE EASTERN QUESTIONS. FOR SHAMIR, IT WOULD BE MORE THAN DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT AS A GOOD FAITH INTERMEDIARY THE UK, WHICH HAD ONCE HAD HIM PERSONALLY ON ITS MOST WANTED LIST FOR TEN YEARS. AND NO ONE, HE FELT, SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO ACCEPT THE FICKLE AND "TOTALLY SELF-SERVING" FRENCH. (THUS HIS CONCLUSION IN 5.A., ABOVE.)

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6. BRONFMAN ON JEWS IN THE USSR

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A. IN THE USSR, BRONFMAN SAID, THERE HAD BEEN A VIRTUAL "SEA CHANGE" IN DOMESTIC ACCEPTANCE OF JEWS AND JUDAISM. THIS EVEN INCLUDED THE IMPENDING OPENING OF A JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER IN WHAT HAD BEEN A MOSCOW SYNAGOGUE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ADDED, THE COMMITMENT WAS REAL TO RESOLVING JEWISH EMIGRATION, EVEN IF MUCH OF THE IMPETUS WAS PURELY PRAGMATIC.

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B. THE PROBLEM WAS, HE FELT, THAT EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON GORBACHEV "AND I AM SKEPTICAL ABOUT HIS ABILITY TO SURVIVE." HE ACCOMPANIED THIS JUDGMENT WITH A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS
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GORBACHEV FACES, NOTING THAT THE ONLY TWO GROUPS NOW BACKING HIM WERE THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE KGB.

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C. ON EMIGRATION, WITH A PRACTICAL CEILING OF 35- TO 40 THOUSAND ANNUALLY, IT WOULD TAKE AT LEAST TEN YEARS TO GET OUT THE ESTIMATED 400 THOUSAND WHO NOW WANT OUT.

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D. ON BEHALF OF THOSE WHO, THEREFORE, WILL HAVE TO WAIT, PLUS THE ESTIMATED TWO MILLION ADDITIONAL JEWS IN THE USSR WHO HAVE NOT EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO LEAVE, THE WESTERN JEWISH COMMUNITY MUST SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST

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IN THE RESTORATION OF JUDAISM IN THE USSR, AN OPPORTUNITY WHICH MAY LAST ONLY AS LONG AS GORBACHEV HIMSELF. SOME CONCRETE STEPS WOULD BE TO SEND RABBIS, ENTREPRENEURS, ETC.

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E. MEANWHILE, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF JEWS WHO WISH TO LEAVE THE USSR DO NOT MEET THE DEFINITION OF A REFUGEE, AND THEREFORE WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT THE NECESSITY OF OPTING FOR ISRAEL AS THEIR DESTINATION.

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7. BRONFMAN ON OTHER TOPICS

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A. "NEGATIVE" VS "POSITIVE" EMIGRATION FROM USSR. POINT 6.E. LED BRONFMAN TO COMMENT WITH REGRET THAT THE CURRENT PHENOMENON OF EMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION IS WHAT HE DEFINES AS "JEWISHLY NEGATIVE." THAT IS, IT IS PEOPLE SEEKING TO ESCAPE BEING LABELED AS "JEW" AND TAKING THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH GO WITH THE LABEL. THOSE ARE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF EMIGRANTS WHO SEEK TODAY TO GO TO THE WEST, INCLUDING THE U.S., WHERE OPPORTUNITY AND ANONYMITY ARE GREATER. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE "JEWISHLY POSITIVE" EMIGRATION, WHICH WOULD BE, IN HIS DEFINITION, JEWS SEEKING TO GO TO ISRAEL IN ORDER TO DECLARE THEIR FAITH AND PREPARED TO WORK ON ITS BEHALF.

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B. AUSTRIA AND **KURT WALDHEIM**. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION DURING HIS MEETING WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, BRONFMAN EXCORIATED WALDHEIM AND TOOK SATISFACTION IN HIS PROPER "EXPOSURE FOR WHAT HE WAS AND IS." HE HAD EQUALLY LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR AUSTRIA ITSELF, WHICH HAD NOT, HE STRESSED, FACED UP TO ITS UNDENIABLE INVOLVEMENT IN THE HOLOCAUST OR, CONSEQUENTLY, SOUGHT TO ATONE. HE CONTRASTED THAT BEHAVIOR TO THAT OF THE FRG, WHICH HAD ADMITTED OPENLY WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND PROCEEDED TO TAKE CONCRETE STEPS TO AT LEAST EASE THE CONSEQUENCES. HAMILTON

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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