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SUBJECT: HAVEL CONFRONTS WALDHEIM IN SALZBURG

1. SUMMARY - IN A NON-OFFICIAL SIX HOUR VISIT TO AUSTRIA, CZECHOSLOVAK PRESIDENT VACLAV HAVEL, ACCOMPANIED BY WEST GERMAN PRESIDENT RICHARD VON WEIZSAECKER, MADE THE OPENING SPEECH AT THE 1990 SALZBURG SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL IN THE PRESENCE OF AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT **KURT WALDHEIM**. WHAT HAD STARTED OUT AS AN INVITATION TO A DISSIDENT PLAYWRITE TO OPEN AUSTRIA'S PREMIER CULTURAL EVENT TURNED INTO A DAMAGE-LIMITATION EXERCISE BY THE THREE COUNTRIES CONCERNED. HAVEL STRUCK A CONCILIATORY NOTE IN A NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW THE DAY BEFORE THE VISIT, DEFENDING HIS MEETING WITH WALDHEIM AS AN ATTEMPT TO RESIST THE PRESSURE TO GO ALONG WITH A BOYCOTT WHICH HAS BECOME NOTHING MORE THAN A MEANINGLESS CLICHE. IN HIS FESTIVAL SPEECH, HOWEVER, HAVEL SUBTLY BUT UNAMBIGUOUSLY CHIDED WALDHEIM BY REFERRING TO THOSE WHO HAVE HIDDEN THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR PAST. SOME OF THE PRESS ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED FROM WALDHEIM BY PROTESTERS

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CRITICAL OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER WEEKS OF SECRET NEGOTIATIONS, THE LAST DETAILS OF THE VISIT WERE FINALLY AGREED UPON SHORTLY BEFORE HAVEL AND VON WEIZSAECKER ARRIVED IN SALZBURG BY HELICOPTER. A SOURCE IN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INDICATED TO US THAT THE PLANNING FOR THE VISIT WAS NOWHERE NEAR AS CONTROVERSIAL AS THE PRESS MADE IT OUT TO BE. HAVEL S PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTIVAL, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS NEVER ONCE DRAWN INTO QUESTION. THE SOURCE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FINAL PROGRAM FOR HAVEL S VISIT WAS MUCH SHORTER THAN ORIGINALLY INTENDED. HE ADDED THAT ALL PARTIES CONCERNED AGREED THAT IT WAS BEST NOT TO PROLONG A SITUATION IN WHICH TWO NEIGHBORING HEADS OF STATE, PRESIDENT **KURT WALDHEIM** AND A HORDE OF IDLE JOURNALISTS WERE MINGLING TOGETHER.

3. IN A JULY 25 INTERVIEW WITH THE SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN, HAVEL DESCRIBED THE BOYCOTT OF PRESIDENT WALDHEIM BY FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE AS A GAME. WHILE ORIGINALLY THE BOYCOTT HAD SOME MORAL OR ETHICAL BASIS, IT HAS NOW BECOME A CLICHE WHICH NO LONGER MAKES ANY SENSE. HAVEL ADDED THAT IN CENTRAL EUROPE (INCLUDING AUSTRIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA), THERE IS NO ONE WHO IS WITHOUT SOME STAIN IN HIS PAST. PEOPLE THEREFORE PREFER TO CHOOSE AN INDIVIDUAL TO SERVE AS A SYMBOLIC FIGURE; A SORT OF "LIGHTNING ROD FOR THEIR BAD CONSCIENCES." BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL, MANY PROMINENT SALZBURGERS WERE QUOTING THESE WORDS OF HAVEL WITH APPROVAL, CREDITING THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESIDENT WITH BOTH ELOQUENCE AND COURAGE.

4. FOLLOWING A CHAMPAIGN BREAKFAST WITH AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FIGURES, HAVEL AND VON WEIZSAECKER WERE BROUGHT TO THE FESTIVAL HALL WHERE THEY WERE INTRODUCED TO PRESIDENT WALDHEIM. THE THREE MEN THEN STRODE INTO THE HALL AND TOOK THEIR SEATS, WITH WALDHEIM AND HAVEL FLANKING VON WEIZSAECKER. GOVERNOR KATSCHHALER S WELCOMING REMARKS WERE PUNCTUATED BY POLITE APPLAUSE FOR WALDHEIM AND A LENGTHY STANDING OVATION FOR THE TWO VISITING PRESIDENTS WHO WERE JOINTLY INTRODUCED. IN HIS SPEECH, PRESIDENT WALDHEIM STATED THAT HE VIEWED THE PRESENCE OF THE TWO HEADS OF NEIGHBORING STATES AS A SIGN OF THEIR HIGH REGARD FOR SALZBURG AND ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE. HE ALSO PRAISED PRESIDENT HAVEL AS A COURAGEOUS INTELLECTUAL AND A FITTING SPEAKER FOR THE OPENING OF THE 70TH MUSIC FESTIVAL IN SALZBURG.

5. HAVEL S SPEECH WAS A TWENTY FIVE MINUTE DISCOURSE ON THE SUBJECT OF FEAR. HE SPOKE PERSONALLY ABOUT THE FEARS HE EXPERIENCED AS HE FOUND HIMSELF, AN ARTIST, THRUST INTO A HISTORICAL ROLE AS A POLITICIAN. HE REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO FEAR OF HISTORY AND HIS OWN TREPIDATION ABOUT THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. THEN, TOWARDS THE END, HE REFERRED TO FEAR OF THE PAST AND THOSE WHO REFUSED TO FACE THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR PAST, WHETHER IT BE UNDER STALINISM OR NAZISM. AS IF HE THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE TOO SUBTLE FOR HIS AUDIENCE, HAVEL EVEN MENTIONED THE FEAR OF THE PAST EXHIBITED BY THOSE WHO REWRITE THEIR BIOGRAPHIES TO OMIT UNPLEASANT TRUTHS. CURIOUSLY, THE UNAMBIGUOUS MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT WALDHEIM

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EITHER SAILED OVER THE HEADS OF THE AUDIENCE OR THEY POLITELY CHOSE TO IGNORE IT. HAVEL RECEIVED A STANDING OVATION WITH OVP VICE CHANCELLOR JOSEF RIEGLER ONE OF THE FIRST TO RISE IN APPLAUSE. WALDHEIM WAS ONE OF THE LAST TO STAND, BUT DID NOT EXHIBIT ANY SIGNS OF IRRITATION AT THE BROADSIDE.

6. AN ODD COALITION OF PEOPLE S PARTY CONSERVATIVES, SOCIALISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS DEFLECTED SOME OF THE ATTENTION FROM PRESIDENT WALDHEIM BY FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS IN THE CSFR NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY. WHAT WAS BILLED AS "THE WORLD S LONGEST ANTINUCLEAR POSTER" -- A SERIES OF BEDSHEETS STITCHED TOGETHER AND STRETCHING FROM THE AIRPORT SEVEN HUNDRED METERS TOWARD THE FESTIVAL HALL GREETED HAVEL UPON HIS ARRIVAL. THE ISSUE WAS ALSO REPORTEDLY RAISED BY AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY AT A LUNCHEON FOR THE THREE PRESIDENTS HOSTED BY SALZBURG GOVERNOR DR. HANS KATSCHTHALER.

7. FOLLOWING THE GOVERNOR S LUNCH, HAVEL MET WITH AND ACCEPTED A PETITION FROM A LOCAL GROUP KNOWN AS THE PLATFORM AGAINST THE NUCLEAR MENACE. AFTER LISTENING TO THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY PROBLEMS AT THE BOHUNICE POWER PLANT NEAR BRATISSAVA, HAVEL POINTED TO THE ENERGY DILEMMA FACING HIS COUNTRY: WIDE-RANGING ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE BURNING OF BROWN COAL AND THE DAMMING OF RIVERS FOR HYDROELECTRIC POWER AND A THIRTY PERCENT DROP IN THE SUPPLY OF OIL FROM THE SOVIET UNION MEANT THAT THERE WERE NO SAFE ALTERNATIVES TO NUCLEAR ENERGY. HE SAID THE CSFR GOVERNMENT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVISING AN ENERGY STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THIS DILEMMA.

8. HAVEL AND VON WEIZSAECKER WERE THEN WHISKED TO THEIR WAITING HELICOPTER. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS, THEY DID NOT PROCEED TO NEARBY ST. GILGEN TO CALL ON THE VACATIONING CHANCELLOR HELMUT KOHL. FOR HIS PART, PRESIDENT WALDHEIM CAN POINT TO HIS CONTACT WITH VON WEIZSAECKER AND HAVEL, HOWEVER BRIEF AND UNOFFICIAL IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, AS AN END TO THE ISOLATION HE HAS EXPERIENCED SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE AFTER A CAMPAIGN DURING WHICH HIS PAST AS AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER WITH THE WEHRMACHT IN YUGOSLAVIA DURING WORLD WAR II WAS BROUGHT TO PUBLIC ATTENTION. WE SUSPECT THE MORNING-AFTER APPRAISAL OF HAVEL S SALZBURG SPEECH BY THE SUPPORTERS OF PRESIDENT WALDHEIM WILL BE LESS FAVORABLE THAN THE STANDING OVATION WOULD INDICATE.

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ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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