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TEXT
TAGS: PREL, AU
SUBJECT: AUSTRIA: WHO SHOULD SEE PRESIDENT
CLINTON FIRST?

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: CHANCELLOR FRANZ VRANITZKY, PRESIDENT THOMAS KLESTIL, AND POSSIBLY FOREIGN MINISTER ALOIS MOCK ARE SEEKING EARLY MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON, EACH WITH HIS OWN AGENDA. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH BOTH KLESTIL AND VRANITZKY WOULD BE DESIRABLE, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. IF ONLY ONE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WITH AN AUSTRIAN CAN BE ACCOMMODATED, HOWEVER, VRANITZKY IS THE PRESIDENT'S PROPER INTERLOCUTOR FOR POLICY ISSUES AND INITIATIVES, SUCH AS THE MIDDLE EAST. RECOMMEND THAT THE SECRETARY RECEIVE MOCK AND OTHER CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE (CEI) FOREIGN MINISTERS, SHOULD THEIR VISIT MATERIALIZE. END SUMMARY.

3. AS REPORTED REFEELS, AUSTRIA'S HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND HEAD OF STATE ARE SEEKING MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT IN LATE SEPTEMBER AND EARLY OCTOBER, RESPECTIVELY. FM MOCK IS ALSO THINKING OF VISITING WASHINGTON, ALONG WITH THE POLISH AND HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS REPRESENTING THE CEI. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT SHOULD THIS INITIATIVE MATERIALIZE, THE MINISTERS WOULD BE LIKELY TO SEEK AN

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APPOINTMENT WITH THE SECRETARY, NOT THE PRESIDENT. HUNGARIAN FM JESZENSZKY, WHO IS CONSIDERING MOCK'S IDEA, WOULD TAKE THE LEAD.

KLESTIL

4. THE CASE FOR A MEETING WITH KLESTIL IS A COMPELLING ONE FOR THE AUSTRIANS. KLESTIL SUCCEEDED **KURT WALDHEIM**, WHO BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL PARIAS FOR SIX YEARS AFTER THE USG PUT HIM ON THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S "WATCHLIST" FOR HIS WARTIME ACTIVITIES IN THE BALKANS. KLESTIL WAS ELECTED IN THE EXPECTATION THAT HE COULD REBUILD AUSTRIA'S IMAGE IN THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY THE U.S., WHERE HE HAD SERVED AS AMBASSADOR. SINCE HIS ELECTION, KLESTIL HAS ENERGETICALLY SOUGHT TO REBUILD AUSTRIA'S REPUTATION BY VISITING EUROPEAN CAPITALS. KLESTIL, HOWEVER, PASSED UP AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON IN APRIL FOR THE OPENING OF THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM, ON THE GROUNDS THAT HE WAS NOT OFFERED A SEPARATE OVAL OFFICE MEETING, AS WERE WALESIA AND HAVEL. KLESTIL WAS CONCERNED THAT ANYTHING LESS COULD BE PERCEIVED AT HOME AS SOMEHOW CONNOTING LINGERING U.S. DOUBTS ABOUT AUSTRIA'S WARTIME PAST. SUBSEQUENTLY, MANY OBSERVERS HERE THOUGHT THAT KLESTIL MADE A MISTAKE AND SHOULD HAVE ACCEPTED THE WHITE HOUSE PULL-ASIDE/PHOTO-OP AS SUFFICIENT FOR HIS PURPOSE.

VRANITZKY

5. LIKE HIS COUNTERPART IN GERMANY, THE CHANCELLOR AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IS THE SENIOR AUSTRIAN POLICYMAKER WITH WHOM WE CAN DO BUSINESS. THE CHANCELLOR'S REASONS FOR SEEKING A MEETING NOW WITH THE PRESIDENT--TO DISCUSS THE MIDDLE EAST--WERE REPORTED IN REF B. IF WE WISH TO USE A MEETING TO PURSUE POLICY GOALS OTHER THAN SYMBOLISM, THE CHANCELLOR IS THE MAN TO SEE. IN ADDITION TO THE MIDDLE EAST, DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE NIS--WHERE AUSTRIA PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE--WOULD BE FRUITFUL TOPICS TO TAKE UP WITH THE CHANCELLOR.

RECOMMENDATION

6. GIVEN THE UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WALDHEIM ERA AND THE OTHERWISE PREEMINENT ROLE OF CHANCELLOR VRANITZKY AS THE PRESIDENT'S NATURAL INTERLOCUTOR, THE IDEAL OUTCOME WOULD BE TO ACCOMMODATE BOTH KLESTIL AND VRANITZKY. THIS MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED BY OFFERING KLESTIL AN ENHANCED PHOTO-OP IN OCTOBER, FOLLOWED BY A MORE SUBSTANTIVE, BUT STILL BRIEF (30 MINUTES) MEETING WITH VRANITZKY IN NOVEMBER, WHEN THE CHANCELLOR WILL BE VISITING MEXICO. IF THIS WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR THE TRAFFIC TO BEAR, WE WOULD RECOMMEND MAKING A CHOICE ON THE BASIS OF WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH. IF OUR PURPOSE IS TO PLEASE THE AUSTRIANS AND CLEAR THE AIR OF THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR, THE PRESIDENT SHOULD SEE KLESTIL AND DEFER THE CHANCELLOR TO A LATER DATE. IF, HOWEVER, WE WANT TO ENGAGE THE AUSTRIANS ON THE MIDDLE EAST OR FOR OTHER PURPOSES, THE CHANCELLOR IS THE MORE IMPORTANT FIGURE.

SWIHART

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ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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