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TAGS: AU PREL PGOV  
COMBINE: COMPLETE

SUBJECT: SPECIAL REPORT: AUSTRIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF  
AMBASSADOR'S FIRST PRESS BRIEFING

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SUMMARY  
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1. ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, THE DAY AFTER SHE PRESENTED  
HER CREDENTIALS TO AUSTRIA'S PRESIDENT, THOMAS KLESTIL,  
AMBASSADOR HUNT MET FOR AN HOUR, AT HER RESIDENCE, WITH

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FOREIGN EDITORS OF MAJOR AUSTRIAN DAILIES AND WEEKLIES. THE QUESTIONS RANGED WIDELY. MOST NOTABLY, THE EDITORS ASKED WHETHER IT MIGHT STILL BE POSSIBLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE U.S.'S DECISION TO PUT (NOW FORMER) PRESIDENT **KURT WALDHEIM** ON THE WATCH LIST; WHEN PRESIDENT KLESTIL MIGHT BE INVITED TO MEET PRESIDENT CLINTON; WHETHER AUSTRIA SHOULD JOIN NATO; HOW THE AMBASSADOR VIEWED AUSTRIA'S NEUTRALITY; AND HOW AMERICA VIEWS AUSTRIA'S

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2. IN THE MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY "KURIER," FOREIGN EDITOR HANS RAUSCHER WROTE:

"AMAZING OPENESS, ALMOST NAIVE ENTHUSIASM, AND BENEATH IT ALL STRONG DETERMINATION AND SELF-ASSURANCE: THIS MIXTURE, TYPICAL OF AN AMERICAN, IS IDEALLY EMBODIED IN THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA, SWANEE HUNT, BILL CLINTON'S PERSONAL CHOICE FOR THIS POSITION. SHE SENDS OUT SIGNALS OF WARMTH AND DETERMINATION AT THE SAME TIME."

"SHE TELLS WITH FRANKNESS THE STORY OF HOW SHE BECAME AMBASSADOR: SHE HEARD A SPEECH BY BILL CLINTON AND THOUGHT 'THIS GUY GET'S IT,' HE UNDERSTANDS WHAT TODAY'S AMERICA NEEDS: TO FIGHT BACKWARDNESS AT HOME IN ORDER TO SECURE ITS ROLE AS A SUPER-POWER."

"INVOLVEMENT IN THE CAMPAIGN FOLLOWED AND THE POSITION OF AMBASSADOR AS 'POLITICAL APPOINTEE.'...SWANEE HUNT AND BILL CLINTON HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: UNTIL RECENTLY THEY WERE MAINLY INTERESTED IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. 'FOREIGN POLICY IS NEW TO ME,' SHE SAYS AND SEES THIS AS 'HER WEAKNESS,' POINTING AT THE SAME TIME SELF-ASSUREDLY TO HER STRENGTHS: 'I AM WELL CONNECTED TO SOME IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON.'"

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DIE PRESSE: "ROSES FROM THE AMBASSADOR -- THE 'HOME-COMING' OF SWANEE HUNT"

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3. IN THE CONSERVATIVE NATIONAL DAILY "DIE PRESSE," FOREIGN EDITOR ANDREAS UNTERBERGER REPORTED ON THE INTERVIEW THIS WAY:

"A WOMAN WHO IS NOT SHY ABOUT TALKING ABOUT HER TEARS AFTER A LONG VISIT TO THE SOS KINDERDORF (A VILLAGE FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN). A WOMAN WHO PUBLICLY ADMITS THAT HER MAIN INTEREST LIES WITH U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY, BUT WHO IS THOROUGHLY WELL PREPARED TO GIVE ALL THE STANDARD ANSWERS TO FOREIGN POLICY QUESTIONS. AND A WOMAN WHO COMBINES CHARM AND PERSONAL MODESTY WITH SELF-ASSURANCE PRESIDENT KLESTIL'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON. HUNT EXPLAINS THIS ELEGANTLY AS PROOF OF THE STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, BUT ALSO ADMITS THAT PRESIDENT CLINTON IS TOTALLY CONCENTRATED ON DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, ON TRADE AND ON ONLY A FEW FOREIGN POLICY CRISIS AREAS."

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"SWANEE HUNT IS ALSO UNABLE TO ALTER THE WATCH-LIST DECISION ON **KURT WALDHEIM**: 'THAT IS A CLOSED CHAPTER, BUT I AM ALWAYS DISMAYED WHEN PEOPLE FEEL MISUNDERSTOOD.' SHE CONCERNED HERSELF WITH THAT ISSUE DURING HER PREPARATORY BRIEFINGS SINCE IT IS A 'DISTURBING ASPECT IN OUR RELATIONS.'"

"SWANEE HUNT IS NOT A BORN DIPLOMAT. SHE KNOWS, HOWEVER, HOW TO USE THIS AS HER ASSET: 'I AM NOT VERY GOOD AT EVADING.' THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS WILL DETERMINE WHETHER VIENNA WILL APPRECIATE THIS OR SEE IT AS PROBLEMATIC. AT ANY RATE, HER START WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL."

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DER STANDARD: "U.S. AMBASSADOR HUNT: OPEN HOUSE, OPEN EARS"  
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4. IN THE LIBERAL NATIONAL DAILY "DER STANDARD," FOREIGN AFFAIRS WRITER ERIC FREY REPORTED:

"'KEEP YOUR EAR TO THE GROUND,' PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON ADVISED HER BEFORE SENDING HER OFF TO VIENNA AS THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR. ONE DAY AFTER SHE HAD PRESENTED HER CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT KLESTIL, SWANEE HUNT TOLD THIS TO A GROUP OF AUSTRIAN JOURNALISTS. IN A CHARMING CHATTY WAY HUNT SPEAKS OF HER LOVE FOR MUSIC AND FOR THE MOUNTAINS AND OF HER DECADES-LONG INVOLVEMENT IN DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS. SHE WANTS TO KEEP AN OPEN HOUSE IN VIENNA AND MEET AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. SHE HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN POLICY BUT THROUGH HER ENGAGEMENT IN THE CLINTON CAMPAIGN SHE HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS WITH THE TOP PEOPLE IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. CLINTON SEES AUSTRIA AS A CONTROL POINT FOR THE CENTRAL VIENNA"

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4. THE VIENNA CORRESPONDENT OF THE SALZBURG-BASED BUT NATIONALLY CIRCULATING DAILY "SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN," HELMUT SPUDICH, HAD THIS TO SAY:

"'IT IS A NEW LIFE FOR ME,' (IS HOW) HUNT DESCRIBES HER MOVE FROM DENVER, COLORADO TO VIENNA AND THE CONNECTED CAREER CHANGE FROM THE OIL BUSINESS AND SOCIAL POLITICS TO FOREIGN POLICY. SHE DOES NOT HIDE THE FACT THAT SHE LACKS EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN POLICY AND 'I DO NOT APOLOGIZE FOR IT. I AM NOT COMING TO THIS JOB ENTIRELY WET BEHIND THE EARS,' SAYS SHE ABOUT HER FIVE MONTHS OF THOROUGH PREPARATION IN WASHINGTON."

"THIS MODESTY IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT, FOR MRS. HUNT BRINGS MUCH MORE IN EXPERIENCE TO THE VIENNA AMBASSADORSHIP THAN SHE ADMITS IN THE DISCUSSION. SHE LEARNED POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AT HOME EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD 'DIFFERENT VIEWS' FROM HER FATHER, AN EXTREME ANTI-COMMUNIST. 'BUT I ADMIRER HIM FOR WORKING FOR HIS

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COUNTRY SIX DAYS A WEEK, 12 HOURS A DAY.'"

"AND EVEN THOUGH SHE STILL NEEDS TO WORK HERSELF INTO THE JOB, SHE DOES NOT SHY AWAY FROM BILATERAL QUESTIONS....NEUTRALITY AND THE STATE TREATY, SAYS MRS. HUNT, ARE IN ESSENCE A DOMESTIC MATTER FOR THE AUSTRIANS, TO WHOM SHE BRINGS NO MESSAGE FROM WASHINGTON."

"WHAT REMAINS IS THE OBLIGATORY QUESTION ABOUT THE SORE POINT IN AUSTRO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, THE PROHIBITION OF FORMER PRESIDENT WALDHEIM FROM TRAVEL TO THE U.S. 'THERE IS NO WAY TO APPEAL THIS U.S. LAW, THEREFORE THERE IS NO CHANGE IN SIGHT. BUT I AM ALWAYS SORRY IF PEOPLE FEEL MISUNDERSTOOD.' MRS. HUNT HAS, WITHOUT DOUBT, ASSUMED A NEW ROLE AS A DIPLOMAT."

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NEUE KRONENZEITUNG: "SWANEE HUNT: 'UNFORTUNATELY I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR WALDHEIM...'"  
AMERICA AND AUSTRIA AND THEN TOUCHES ON THE SORE POINT IN THESE RELATIONS. **KURT WALDHEIM** IS STILL PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE UNITED STATES. WILL THE WATCH-LIST DECISION CHANGE UNDER SWANEE HUNT? A REGRETFUL SMILE FROM HER STEEL BLUE EYES: 'I AM AFRAID NOT, I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR WALDHEIM.' NEITHER PRESIDENT KLESTIL NOT FOREIGN MINISTER MOCK HAVE RAISED THE ISSUE WITH HER, SHE STRESSED, AS IF TO REINFORCE THE POINT OF VIEW WHICH SHE HAS TO REPRESENT. AND THE ISSUE WAS NEVER MENTIONED BETWEEN HER AND BILL CLINTON"

"CLINTON GAVE HER ONE PIECE OF ADVICE ON HER WAY TO AUSTRIA: 'SWANEE, LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE THERE.' THE UNITED STATES SEES AUSTRIA AS THE CENTER OF A EUROPE IN TRANSITION, AS THE SWITCHING STATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. HUNT DID NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE NEUTRALITY DEBATE: 'IT WOULD BE INCORRECT FOR US TO MEDDLE.' ON AUSTRIA'S RELATIONS WITH NATO SHE SAID THAT FROM THE U.S. SIDE THE SECURITY ALLIANCE IS ALSO OPEN TO AUSTRIA."

"THERE REMAINS A FEELING OF WARMTH WHEN WE SAY GOOD-BYE TO HER AND SHE SAYS: 'I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOON. JUST GIVE ME A CALL.'"

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KLEINE ZEITUNG: "TO BE AMBASSADOR IN THE COUNTRY OF FREUD AND ADLER"  
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6.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST HANS WINKLER, THE FOREIGN EDITOR OF THE INFLUENTIAL PROVINCIAL DAILY "KLEINE ZEITUNG," REPORTED ON THE PRESS BRIEFING THIS WAY:

"SWANEE HUNT, THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA, WANTS TO CREATE, AS SHE PUTS IT, 'A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE AROUND HER.' ONE BELIEVES HER AND FEELS HOW HARD SHE

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WORKS ON IT."

"BUT SHE CANNOT HIDE A CERTAIN NERVOUSNESS WHEN SHE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER POLITICAL LIFE, HAS TO WEIGH EVERY WORD SHE SAYS AND WHEN SHE HAS TO TALK ABOUT THINGS WHICH ARE NEW TO HER AND NOT SO FAMILIAR. UP TO NOW, FRIENDLINESS THAT SHE EXUDES WOULD FORBID THAT FROM HER GUESTS"

"ONE LEARNS WHAT REALLY MOVES HER WHEN SHE ENTHUSIASTICALLY SPEAKS OF THE SOS KINDERDOERFER AND (FOUNDER) HERMANN GMEINER. THE LIFE-LONG ENGAGEMENT OF THE WOMEN WHO DEDICATE THEIR LIVES TO THESE CHILDREN SHE SEES AS EXEMPLARY. SWANEE HUNT STUDIED THEOLOGY. SHE HAS A STRONG PHILANTHROPIC MOTIVATION, WHICH EARLIER HAD BEEN TRADITIONAL FOR RICH AMERICAN FAMILIES."

"SHE DOES NOT COME FROM A BACKGROUND THAT WOULD NATURALLY LEAD TO HER WORKING FOR A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT, WHO IS ALSO CALLED A LIBERAL PROGRESSIVE. HER FATHER WAS AN ARCH-CONSERVATIVE AND THE EMANCIPATION FROM THIS STRONG PERSONALITY TOOK ITS TOLL, FOR SHE MENTIONS IT IN ALMOST EVERY INTERVIEW. BUT ONE UNDERSTANDS THIS IN THE "COUNTRY OF FREUD AND ADLER."  
END EXCERPTS.  
SPRINGER

ADMIN  
END OF MESSAGE

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