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file

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, SHUM, UR, S, US
SUBJECT: (U) WALLENBERG HEARINGS

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 0176 (U) FBIS 151756Z JAN 81

1. (LOU) SUMMARY, THE WALLENBERG HEARINGS CONTINUED AFTER THE OPENING SESSION (DESCRIBED IN REFTEL A) WITH THE PRESENTATION OF "NEW EVIDENCE" ON WALLENBERG'S FATE, A RENewed COMMITMENT BY THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT TO KEEP THE MATTER ALIVE WITH THE USSR, AND A TORCHLIGHT PROTEST AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY. POOR ORGANIZATION AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE CREDIBILITY OF SOME "WITNESSES" WERE SUBSUMED BY THE GENERALLY FAVORABLE PUBLICITY GENERATED HERE BY THE HEARINGS. THE ORGANIZERS FEEL THEIR OBJECTIVES OF SPREADING THE WALLENBERG STORY AND BUILDING PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR GOVERNMENTAL ACTION WERE ACHIEVED. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE HEARINGS, ORGANIZED BY SWEDEN'S RAUL WALLENBERG ASSOCIATION, INCLUDED, IN ADDITION TO THE OPENING SESSION DESCRIBED IN REFTEL A, A PRESENTATION OF "NEW EVIDENCE," ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION, AND A

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PRESS CONFERENCE. FOREIGN MINISTER ULLSTEN ADDRESSED AN OPEN LETTER TO THE HEARINGS AND PERSONALLY RECEIVED A DELEGATION THAT PRESENTED THE HEARINGS' RESOLUTION. THE CAPSTONE TO THE EVENT WAS A TORCHLIGHT PROTEST JANUARY 17 AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY, WHICH REMAINED CLOSED AND, AS IN PAST INSTANCES, REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION. APPROXIMATELY 300 DEMONSTRATORS, LED BY THE WALLEMBERG ASSOCIATION, TOOK PART, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS. THE ORGANIZERS OF THE HEARINGS TOOK PAINS THROUGHOUT THE PROCEEDINGS TO EMPHASIZE THAT THEIR INTEREST IN WALLEMBERG'S FATE WAS HUMANITARIAN, NOT POLITICALLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE USSR.

3. (U) SIMON WIESENTHAL AND LENA WIORCKA-KAPLAN (CHAIRMAN OF NEW YORK'S RAUL WALLEMBERG COMMITTEE) PRESENTED INDIRECT ACCOUNTS OF PERSONS WHO CLAIM TO HAVE BEEN OR MET WALLEMBERG IN SOVIET PRISONS SINCE JULY 1947. WHEN THE SOVIETS SAY HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK. GREGORY LUMANSKY, EDITOR OF THE "USSR NEWS BRIEF" PUBLISHED IN MUNICH, REPORTED INFORMATION HE HAD RECEIVED OF AN "OLD SWEDEN," BELIEVED TO BE WALLEMBERG, IN BLAGOVESHCHENSK SPECIAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL IN 1970. A FORMER AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONER IN THE USSR, MARVIN W. MAKINEN, SAID THAT A SWEDEN, PROBABLY WALLEMBERG, WAS ALIVE IN VLADIMIR PRISON IN THE LATE 1950'S. THE MOST DRAMATIC OF THE "WITNESSES" WAS A POLITICAL PRISONER OF 20 YEARS NAMED ANDRE SCHIMKEVITSCH, WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE SPENT TWO YEARS WITH WALLEMBERG IN A CELL IN LJUBJANKA PRISON IN DECEMBER 1947. SCHIMKEVITSCH'S INITIAL REFUSAL TO PROVIDE ANY CLARIFICATION OF HIS INFORMATION TO THE PRESS LED TO VOCAL DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LOOSELY ORGANIZED, SOMETIMES CHAOTIC PROCEEDINGS AND THE QUALITY OF THE "EVIDENCE" OFFERED.

4. (U) BY ACCLAMATION THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED AT THE HEARINGS:

QUOTE: AT THE PUBLIC HEARING HELD IN STOCKHOLM ON JANUARY 15-16, 1981, SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE HAS BEEN OFFERED TO PROVE THAT THE STATEMENT OF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES CONCERNING RAUL WALLEMBERG'S ALLEGED DEATH IN JULY 1947 COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CORRECT. MANY FORMER PRISONERS IN THE SOVIET UNION HAVE SEEN RAUL WALLEMBERG ALIVE SUBSEQUENT TO THIS DATE.

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ONE EXPLANATION MAY BE THAT A TRAGIC MISINFORMATION WAS GIVEN BY A PRISON DOCTOR AT THE LJULBJANKA JAIL IN THE STALING PERIOD. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT RAUL WALLEMBERG LIVED AFTER THE 17TH OF JULY 1947 AND THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT RAUL WALLEMBERG IS STILL ALIVE.

THE HEARING REQUESTS THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO REEXAMINE THE CASE PROMPTLY AND TO RETURN RAUL WALLEMBERG TO HIS FAMILY. END QUOTE.

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5. (U) PRIOR TO THE HEARINGS, GORAN BENG (FOREIGN MINISTRY'S WALLEMBERG EXPERT) SPOKE WITH THE PRESS ON THE WALLEMBERG CASE, AND REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE MINISTRY BELIEVES THE USSR IS LYING. FOREIGN MINISTER ULLSTEN ADDRESSED THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE HEARING:

QUOTE THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WELCOMES ALL EFFORTS THAT CAN BRING CLARITY ABOUT THE FATE OF RAUL WALLEMBERG. FOR MANY YEARS THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT HAS EXAMINED AND TRIED TO VERIFY ALL INFORMATION THAT HAS BECOME AVAILABLE. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED THEIR CONCLUSION THAT RAUL WALLEMBERG DIED IN 1947, THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER ACCEPTED THIS AS THE FINAL ANSWER IN THIS CASE.

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS NEW INFORMATION HAS PROMPTED THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT ON TWO OCCASIONS TO DIRECT INQUIRIES TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, I HAVE PERSONALLY RAISED RAUL WALLEMBERG'S CASE WITH THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER. THE UNHELPFUL SOVIET ATTITUDE IS ALL THE MORE UNACCEPTABLE, WHEN WE CONSIDER THE HUMANITARIAN MISSION WHICH RAUL WALLEMBERG PERFORMED SO SPLENDIDLY IN SAVING THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF HUMAN BEINGS FROM NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

I NEED NOT TELL YOU THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WILL EXAMINE ALL NEW RELEVANT INFORMATION THAT EMERGES DURING YOUR HEARING. END QUOTE.

ULLSTEN ALSO RECEIVED THE HEARINGS' RESOLUTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COLLECTED WALLEMBERG COMMITTEES AND PROMISED, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THE CASE WITH THE USSR.

6. (LOU) COMMENTS: THE HEARINGS PROBABLY ADDED NOTHING

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NEW TO SWEDISH CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WALLEMBERG CASE, BUT PRESS COVERAGE OUTSIDE SWEDEN MAY BOOST INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS, BESIDES BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR GOVERNMENTAL ACTION THROUGH PUBLIC PRESSURE, INCLUDING ON THE USG. THE SPREAD OF THE WALLEMBERG STORY WILL, HIS CHAMPIONS HOPE, ELICITE NEW SOURCES AND PIECES OF EVIDENCE THAT DISPROVE THE SOVIET VERSION OF HIS FATE. DURING A RECEPTION HOSTED BY CHARGE FOR THE AMERICAN AND PRINCIPAL SWEDISH ATTENDANTS AT THE HEARINGS, AND A RECEPTION HE ATTENDED HOSTED BY THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, SEVERAL OF THE PARTICIPANTS VOICED SYMPATHY WITH THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE PRESS CONCERNING THE LAXITY OF THE EVIDENTIARY PRESENTATIONS. GIDEON HAUSNER (CHAIRMAN OF THE ISRAELI COMMITTEE), LENA BJORK-KAPLAN, AND SIMON WIESENTHAL TOOK SOME TROUBLE PUBLICLY TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFICULTIES OF ACQUIRING INFORMATION ON WALLEMBERG, ESPECIALLY FROM INFORMANTS WITH RELATIVES IN THE USSR. DESPITE THESE EXPLANATIONS AND THE SERIOUS PURPOSE OF THE HEARINGS, THEY OCCASIONALLY EVOKED A CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE. THE PRESENTATIONAL PROBLEMS STIMMED, IN PART, FROM THE VERY SUCCESS OF THE HEARINGS; MEDIA ATTENTION WAS LARGER AND BROUGHT WRITERS AND REPORTERS OF HIGHER QUALITY THAN THE ORGANIZERS SEEM TO HAVE ANTICIPATED.

7. (LOU) AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS, IN PARTICULAR, NOTED THAT AN ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC SENTIMENT WOULD HAVE BENEFITED FROM USE OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL. THEY FELT THE EFFORT OVERTHEMILE; NONETHELESS, WITH REACTIONS RANGING FROM SATISFACTION TO ELATION, END COMMENT.

8. (U) ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MATERIALS FROM THE HEARINGS ARE BEING POUCHED TO EUR/NE.
HAMILTON

END OF MESSAGE

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