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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Ng 045

G. J.

DATE: April 15, 1986

TO : Ambassador Barnes
THROUGH : DCM - George F. Jones
FROM : Consul General - Jayne L. Kobliska
SUBJECT: Case of Boris Weisfeiler

Chile Project (#S199900030)
U.S. Department of State
Release ___ Excise X Deny ___
Declassify: In Part X In Full ___
Exemption(s) B-1

P. B. - 1

Boris Weisfeiler disappeared in the south of Chile over 15 months ago. The official Chilean investigation into his disappearance is closed, the verdict being that Weisfeiler is presumed to have drowned near the confluence of the Nuble and Los Sauces rivers.

[] believes there may be another, more sinister explanation for Weisfeiler's disappearance. So does the Embassy. In September the Acting Chief of Mission George Jones approached Carabinero General Alegria and asked him to look into the Weisfeiler case. He gave him an aide memoire. Alegria promised to investigate the matter and get back to Jones, but nothing more was said. In January Chilean criminal lawyer Alfredo Etcheberry, acting on behalf of the embassy, called on his personal friend General Stange and asked him about the case. Stange's initial reaction was that Weisfeiler might have been an impostor. He also agreed to look into the matter. Etcheberry has been pursuing Stange's aide relative to a promised report. This has yet to be received and Stange has not been back in touch.*

Neither of these "informal approaches" to high level GOC officials has yielded results. What can be done now? Etcheberry has advised the embassy that further legal action could be taken. If new prima facie evidence is uncovered, the Supreme Court could be petitioned to reopen the case. The embassy has quite a bit of circumstantial evidence but no hard prima facie evidence. Moreover, if Weisfeiler is still alive, petitioning the court could endanger his life. The Department's Legal Division is of the mind that the formal legal approach will not accomplish the goal we seek.

The possibility of going to a respected member of the U.S. press corps has been discussed in Washington. If Weisfeiler is still alive and is being held captive somewhere in Chile (probably Colonia Dignidad), widespread publicity could be the best means we have of saving his life. Throughout the world there are examples of publicity protecting lives. A. Schernenko of the Soviet Union and Nelson Mandela of South Africa are among the most prominent individuals whose safety has been enhanced by media attention; but also in Chile the tactic has been employed, most recently by Sonia Teitelbaum (daughter-in-law of Velodia Teitelbaum) in protecting her children from kidnapping threats, and by Maximo Pacheco, who widely publicized the abduction of his maid after Senator Kennedy's visit. Neither Teitelbaum nor Pacheco has experienced further threats since going public.

The head of CA/OCS/EMR, John Adams, agrees that something must be done on the Weisfeiler case. Inaction is damaging. Adams is open to the idea

** Etcheberry told me 4/18 that he thought he would eventually get a reply from Stange, but that it would be negative.*

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of a calculated press leak, but he is uncertain whether this would be the best way to protect Boris Weisfeiler's life, if he is still alive. May I suggest that you telephone Adams while you are in the States to discuss our options on the Weisfeiler case and to hopefully reach a conclusion about what course of action should be taken. You can reach Adams at his office phone (202) 647-5225.

I have suggested to Adams that I be authorized to contact my personal friend George Will about the matter. Will has good access to the White House and solid conservative credentials. If he broke the case his credibility would not be challenged, and his report would be sure to reach the highest levels of attention which could bring strong pressure against the Chileans to act.

The real danger in this case is that we will delay action until it is too late to either save Weisfeiler's life or to determine the true circumstances of his death. The consulate has doggedly pursued a definitive resolution to the case, but one by one our options have been limited. On November 12th we forwarded copies of the entire Weisfeiler file to the Department due to a Freedom of Information Act request by an attorney probating his estate. The release date of these documents is not known but when these are sent to the lawyer, we will lose control of the case and in all probability be accused of inaction if we don't do something now. Thus, we have three remaining possible choices. We could petition the Supreme Court. This probably would not save Weisfeiler's life, nor would it lead to a confession of guilt on behalf of the GOC but would save the reputation of the Department of State and its' officers. Second, there is the option of going to the press and selectively leaking what we know. It is this option which I believe has the best chance of securing our goal of protecting his life if Weisfeiler is alive or determining the cause of his death. This is a calculated risk. Finally, the Weisfeiler case could be discussed at even higher levels of the Department in hopes that another option may be developed that could be successful in solving this matter.

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