

UNCLASSIFIED

JW-00153

Page: 1

PB-1

Case Number: S1999000030

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Chile Project (#S199900030)  
U.S. Department of State  
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PAGE 01 SANTI A 04667 01 OF 06 301705Z  
ACTION OCS-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2072

EXCISE

UNCLASSIFIED  
CONFIDENTIAL

I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 SANTIAGO 04667

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: CASC, CI, KPRP (WEISFEILER, BORIS)  
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF W/W CASE OF BORIS WEISFEILER

1. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: THIS CABLE REVIEWS THE CASE OF PROFESSOR BORIS WEISFEILER, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN WHO DISAPPEARED IN JANUARY, 1985, WHILE BACKPACKING IN SOUTH CENTRAL CHILE. AFTER OFFERING A BASIC DESCRIPTION, THE CABLE DISCUSSES THE EFFORTS MADE TO LOCATE PROFESSOR WEISFEILER, AS WELL AS THE JUDICIAL AND INVESTIGATORY ASPECTS OF THE CASE. INFORMATION ONLY RECENTLY RECEIVED BY THE EMBASSY WOULD, IF CONFIRMED, THROW A WHOLE NEW LIGHT ON WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. THIS INFORMATION IS CURRENTLY BEING EVALUATED. SEPTEL WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

IN THE MEANTIME, THIS TELEGRAM REMAINS VALID AS A REPORT ON EMBASSY ACTIONS TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

3. BASIC DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE: MR. BORIS WEISFEILER, A NATURALIZED AMERICAN CITIZEN BORN IN THE SOVIET UNION, AND PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY TRAVELED TO CHILE ON DECEMBER 25, 1984 INTENDING TO SPEND SEVERAL WEEKS IN A SOLITARY BACKPACKING EXPEDITION

CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 SANTI A 04667 01 OF 06 301705Z

IN THE MOUNTAINS ALONG THE ARGENTINE-CHILEAN FRONTIER IN THE LOS ANGELES-CHILLAN AREA OF CHILE. WEISFEILER HAD PURCHASED A ROUND-TRIP TICKET TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES AND WAS CARRYING COPIES OF TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS OF THIS SECTION OF CHILE WHICH HE HAD OBTAINED IN THE UNITED STATES. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM FRIENDS AND

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

Page:

Case Number: S1999000030

RELATIVES, WEISFEILER WAS A HIGHLY EXPERIENCED BACKPACKER AND HAD TAKEN SOLITARY BACKPACKING TRIPS IN SPAIN AND ALASKA ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THE SOVIET UNION IN 1975 BY WALKING OUT OVERLAND. PROFESSOR WEISFEILER SPOKE LITTLE SPANISH.

4. ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF TWO HOTEL EMPLOYEES CONTAINED IN A REPORT PREPARED BY CHILEAN INVESTIGATIONS POLICE, WEISFEILER SPENT THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 26, 198 IN THE HOTEL MARISCAL ALCAZAR IN THE CHILEAN CITY OF LOS ANGELES, LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 500 KILOMETERS TO THE SOUTH OF SANTIAGO. ON JANUARY 3RD, 1985 AROUND 1730 HOURS, WEISFEILER WAS REPORTEDLY SEEN IN THE NUBLE CANYON, LOCATED ABOUT 125 KILOMETERS AS THE CROW FLIES TO THE NORTHEAST OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, BY A LOCAL RESIDENT NAMED JOSE ANIBAL LOPEZ BENAVIDES, ALSO KNOWN LOCALLY AS "CHECO." COMMENT: EXACTLY HOW WEISFEILER TRAVELED BETWEEN LOS ANGELES AND THE NUBLE CANYON, ASSUMING HE IN FACT DID SPEND THE NIGHT IN LOS ANGELES, IS UNCLEAR. SEVERAL POTENTIAL ROUTES ARE AVAILABLE, ONE OF WHICH INVOLVES CROSSING THE CHILEAN-ARGENTINE FRONTIER. EACH POTENTIAL ROUTE, HOWEVER, WOULD PRESENT DIFFICULTIES EVEN FOR AN EXPERIENCED BACKPACKER. END COMMENT.

5. ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF JOSE LOPEZ, WEISFEILER AND HE CONVERSED THROUGH SIGN LANGUAGE AND USING WEISFEILER'S MINIMAL SPANISH CAPABILITIES, SHARED FOOD,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PAGE 03 SANTIA 04667 01 OF 06 301705Z

AND SPENT THE NIGHT TOGETHER ALONG WITH A THIRD PERSON WHO IS A SHEEPHERDER IN THE AREA. WEISFEILER SHOWED LOPEZ VARIOUS ITEMS INDICATING THAT HE WAS AN AMERICAN, AND OFFERED HIM A SMALL AMOUNT OF AMERICAN MONEY, WHICH LOPEZ STATED HE REFUSED WHEN HE NOTICED THAT WEISFEILER WAS CARRYING LITTLE MONEY. ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 4, ABOUT 0900 HOURS, LOPEZ AND THE SHEEPHERDER, BY SOME ACCOUNTS HELPED WEISFEILER CROSS FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH BANK OF THE NUBLE RIVER BY HORSEBACK AT A LOCATION KNOWN AS "VALLE HERMOSO." COMMENT: BECAUSE OF THE TURNS IN THE NUBLE RIVER, WE HAVE USED THE CONVENTION OF REFERRING TO THE LEFT BANK OF THE RIVER AS SOUTH, AND THE RIGHT BANK AS NORTH, AS VIEWED LOOKING DOWNSTREAM. ENDCOMME LOPEZ STATED THAT HE TRIED TO INDICATE TO WEISFEILER THE LOCATION OF A CABLEWAY NORMALLY USED TO CROSS THE LOS SAUCES TRIBUTARY OF THE NUBLE RIVER, WHICH HE WOULD HAVE TO CROSS IF HE TRAVELLED DOWNSTREAM ALONG THE NORTH BANK VIA A PATH ON THE NORTH BANK OF THE NUBLE. THIS PATH IS THE MAIN ONE USED TO ARRIVE AT SAN FABIAN DE

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Case Number 3181100030

ALICO, FROM WHERE WEISFEILER HOPED TO CATCH A RETURN BUS TO SANTIAGO, ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF JOSE LOPEZ.

6. LUIS ALBERTO LOPEZ B., THE BROTHER OF JOSE LOPEZ LATER TESTIFIED THAT ABOUT 1700 HOURS ON THE SAME DAY OF JANUARY 4, 1985, HE OBSERVED AN INDIVIDUAL DRESSED IN MILITARY-TYPE CLOTHING AND WEARING A BACKPACK WHO PASSED IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE GOING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE EL ROBLE CARABINERO STATION. THE EL ROBLE CARABINERO OUTPOST IS LOCATED IN THE NUBLE RIVER VALLEY 18 KILOMETER NORTHWEST (THAT IS, DOWNSTREAM FROM THE LOCATION WHERE WEISFEILER REPORTEDLY CROSSED THE NUBLE ON HORSEBACK WITH JOSE LOPEZ AND THE SHEEPHERDER. THE EL ROBLE OUTPO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PAGE 01-- SANTIA 04667 02 OF 06 301706Z  
ACTION OCS-06

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 ENR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2073

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ L SECTION 02 OF 06 SANTIAGO 04667

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: CASC, CI, KPRP (WEISFEILER, BORIS)  
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF W/W CASE OF BORIS WEISFEILER

IS SITUATED SO AS TO PERMIT CONTROL OF ANYONE ATTEMPTING TO ENTER OR EXIT CHILE BY MEANS OF THE SEVERAL FRONTIER PASSES LOCATED IN THE VICINITY. LUIS LOPEZ TESTIFIED THAT SINCE HE THOUGHT THIS PERSON MIGHT BE SOMEONE CROSSING THE CHILEAN-ARGENTINE FRONTIER ILLEGALLY, POSSIBLY AN "EXTREMIST", AND SINCE HE HAD ORDERS TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ALL STRANGERS IN THE AREA IMMEDIATELY TO THE CARABINEROS, HE SET OFF ON HORSEBACK FOR THE EL ROBLE OUTPOST AND ARRIVED APPROXIMATELY 45 MINUTES LATER. LUIS LOPEZ CLAIMS NOT TO HAVE CONVERSED WITH THIS STRANGER, BUT LATER IDENTIFIED HIM AS WEISFEILER FROM PHOTOGRAPHS. LUIS LOPEZ REPORTED THE PRESENCE OF THE STRANGER TO THE COMMANDER OF THE EL ROBLE OUTPOST, SARGEANO 2ND CLASS JORGE COFRE VEGA. FOLLOWING LOPEZ'S REPORT, THE CARABINEROS APPARENTLY SET OFF ON HORSEBACK

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

TO SEARCH FOR THE STRANGER, EVEN THOUGH THE REPORTED PATH OF WEISFEILER DOWN THE NUBLE RIVER VALLEY SHOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM DIRECTLY PAST THE CARABINERO OUTPOST. ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF SGT. COFRE THE CARABINEROS WERE ASSISTED IN THEIR SEARCH BY A MILITARY PATROL FROM AN ARMY REGIMENT BASED IN CONCEPCION WHICH HAPPENED TO

CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 SANTIA 04667 02 OF 06 301706Z

BE IN THE AREA ON THE DAY OF JANUARY 4, 1985. LUIS LOPEZ IS THE LAST PERSON WHO REPORTEDLY SAW BORIS WEISFEILER.

7. THE CARABINEROS AND ARMY PATROL SEARCHED THE NORTH BANK OF THE NUBLE RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARY THE LOS SAUCES FROM THEIR OUTPOST TO A POINT SLIGHTLY NORTH OF THE CONFLUENCE OF THE TWO RIVERS WHERE THE CABLEWAY IS LOCATED. THE SEARCH PARTY REPORTEDLY ENCOUNTERED FOOTPRINT(S) IN THE AREA BETWEEN THE CABLEWAY AND THE RIVERS' CONFLUENCE. COURT TESTIMONY AND INTERVIEWS, HOWEVER, HAVE PRODUCED DIFFERING ACCOUNTS CONCERNING THE FOOTPRINTS (SEE JUDICIAL SECTION). DESPITE THE APPARENT PRESENCE OF FOOTPRINTS INDICATING THAT SOMEONE HAD APPROACHED THE CABLEWAY, THEN DOUBLED BACK TOWARD THE CONFLUENCE OF THE NUBLE AND LOS SAUCES RIVERS, NO SEARCH DOWNSTREAM FROM THE CONFLUENCE WAS MADE ON JANUARY 4, 1985. THE ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE IT WAS ALMOST DARK WHEN THE SEARCH PARTY REACHED THE EDGE OF THE RIVER. RATHER, THIS WAS POSTPONED UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAY, JANUARY 5, 1985. VARIOUS SOURCES AGREE THAT THE WATERS OF THE LOS SAUCES AND NUBLE RIVERS ARE SWIFT FLOWING IN THE PRESUMED AREA OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE, AND THAT ON THE PARTICULAR DAY OF HIS DISAPPEARANCE THE WATER WAS HIGH IN BOTH RIVERS. COMMENT: IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT DAY LENGTH REACHES ITS MAXIMUM DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY IN CHILE. END COMMENT.

8. ON JANUARY 14TH OR 15TH, 1985, A BACKPACK LATER CONFIRMED TO CONTAIN ITEMS BELONGING TO BORIS WEISFEILER WAS RECOVERED. NEAR THE NUBLE RIVER (DRY OR WET, NORTH OR SOUTH EDGE DEPENDING ON WHICH ACCOUNT YOU BELIEVE).

CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 SANTIA 04667 02 OF 06 301706Z

APPROXIMATELY 1800 METERS DOWNSTREAM FROM THE CONFLUENCE

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Case Number: SI999000030

(SEE JUDICIAL SECTION). NO BODY HAS EVER BEEN FOUND. WEISFEILER'S PASSPORT AND HIS RETURN PLANE TICKET TO THE UNITED STATES ARE MISSING, ALONG WITH APPARENTLY A SMALL AMOUNT OF AMERICAN CURRENCY. EVEN THOUGH A CONSULAR OFFICER FIRST VISITED THE AREA ON JANUARY 24, 1985, HE APPARENTLY WAS NOT INFORMED OF THE RECOVERY OF THE BACKPACK. IN ADDITION, THE CHILEAN JUDGE INITIALLY ASSIGNED TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE WAS NOT NOTIFIED OF THE FINDING OF THE BACKPACK UNTIL TWENTY DAYS AFTER ITS REPORTED DISCOVERY, THAT IS ON FEBRUARY 3 OR 4TH. ON FEBRUARY 4TH, 1985, BORIS WEISFEILER WAS DECLARED PRESUMED DEAD BY THE COURT OF SAN FABIAN CHILE. ON MARCH 6TH, 1985, THE WEISFEILER INQUEST WAS TEMPORARILY CLOSED. IN APRIL, 1985, ALL OF THE CHILEAN CARABINEROS SERVING AT THE EL ROBLE OUTPOST-CEASED TO SERVE IN THE AREA.

THE OUTPOST'S COMMANDER, SGT. COFRE VEGA RETIRED, WHILE THE REMAINING MEMBERS WERE TRANSFERRED TO POSITIONS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF CHILE. SOMETIME DURING THE LATTER PART OF 1986, LUIS ALBERTO LOPEZ, ONE OF THE KEY WITNESSES IN THE CASE, WAS FOUND DEAD, APPARENTLY HANGING FROM ONE OF THE CABLES SUPPORTING THE CABLEWAY NORMALLY USED TO CROSS THE LOS SAUCES IN THE AREA WHERE BORIS WEISFEILER APPARENTLY DISAPPEARED. THE EXACT DATE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOPEZ'S DEATH ARE NOT KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY. ACCORDING TO A CARABINEROS INVESTIGATION, HE COMMITTED SUICIDE BECAUSE HIS GIRLFRIEND LEFT HIM FOR ANOTHER MAN. CARABINEROS CLAIM THEIR SOURCE WAS THE GIRL'S MOTHER. THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF CHILEAN AUTHORITIES HAS BEEN AND REMAINS THAT BORIS WEISFEILER

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
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PAGE 01 SANTIAGO 04667 03 OF 06 301707Z  
ACTION OCS-06

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2074

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L SECTION 03 OF 06 SANTIAGO 04667

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

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CONFIDENTIAL  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Case Number: S1999000030

TAGS: CASC, CI, KPRP (WEISFEILER, BORIS)  
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF W/W CASE OF BORIS WEISFEILER

MOST LIKELY DROWNED WHILE TRYING TO CROSS AT THE CON-  
FLUENCE OF THE NUBLE AND LOS SAUCES RIVERS. THE CON-  
FLUENCE OF THE TWO RIVERS IS LOCATED SOME 25 KILOMETERS  
AS THE CROW FLIES FROM THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OF THE  
COLONIA DIGNIDAD, A CONTROVERSIAL PERFECTIONIST RELIGIOUS  
COMMUNITY FOUNDED IN THE EARLY 1960'S BY EMIGRANTS FROM  
GERMANY. A NUMBER OF PUBLISHED SOURCES ALLEGE THAT  
PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL IN THE COLONIA,  
AND THAT COLONIA DIGNIDAD WAS USED AS A TORTURE CENTER  
BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE IN THE PERIOD 1973-1977. A  
LOCAL RESIDENT TOLD CONOFF THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE  
COLONIA IN THE VICINITY TENDS TO MAKE THE AREA ESPECIALLY  
SENSITIVE TO THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT.

9. THE SEARCH FOR PROFESSOR WEISFEILER: ON JANUARY 21,  
1985, GENERAL CLAUDIO CALDERON MORAG OF THE CHILEAN  
CARABINEROS NOTIFIED THE EMBASSY OF THE DISAPPEARANCE  
IN THE NUBLE CANYON OF A POSSIBLE AMERICAN CITIZEN.  
A VICE-CONSUL ARRIVED IN THE AREA ON JANUARY 24, 1985,  
AND REQUESTED THE OPENING OF A JUDICIAL INQUEST IN THE  
COURT OF SAN FABIAN DE ALICO DURING THIS VISIT. ACCORDING

CONFIDENTIAL  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02           SANTIA 04667 03 OF 06 301707Z

TO A CARABINERO REPORT OF JUNE 3, 1986, THE EMBASSY WAS  
NOTIFIED OF THE RECOVERY OF WEISFEILER'S BACKPACK ON  
JANUARY 21, 1985. CONOFF NOTES ARE NOT CLEAR ON EXACTLY  
WHEN THIS INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED. A SECOND VISIT TO  
THE AREA WAS MADE BY A CONSULAR OFFICER FEBRUARY 11-12,  
1985, UPON THE DISCOVERY OF A BODY THOUGHT INCORRECTLY  
TO BE THAT OF BORIS WEISFEILER. A NUMBER OF SEARCHES  
HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY CHILEANS IN ADDITION TO THOSE  
MENTIONED ABOVE. TWELVE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN FROM SAN  
FABIAN DE ALICO SEARCHED THE BANKS OF THE RIVER NUBLE  
SOME 20 KILOMETERS DOWNSTREAM FROM ITS CONFLUENCE ON  
JANUARY 19, 1985. ON FEBRUARY 3RD, 1985 A HELICOPTER  
INSPECTION OF THE AREA WAS MADE, AND ON THE 6TH AND 7TH  
OF THE SAME MONTH, NAVY FROGMEN SEARCHED THE NUBLE RIVER  
FROM ITS CONFLUENCE TO A POINT 3 KILOMETERS DOWNSTREAM.  
ON THE SAME DATE, THIRTY CARABINEROS SEARCHED BOTH BANKS  
OF THE NUBLE FROM ITS CONFLUENCE TO AN AREA DOWNSTREAM  
KNOWN AS LAS MERCEDES. FINALLY, ON FEBRUARY 19TH,

CHILEAN FIREMEN RETURNED TO THE AREA, INTERVIEWED  
INDIVIDUALS ABOUT THE CASE, AND SEARCHED THE RIVER  
BANKS FOR 24 KILOMETERS DOWNSTREAM. TELEXES WERE SENT

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CONFIDENTIAL  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

CONFIDENTIAL

Case Number: SI99900030

UNCLASSIFIED

BY CHILEAN AUTHORITIES TO THE CRIMINAL COURTS OF QUIRHUE, COLEMU AND CHILLAN TO DETERMINE IF A DEATH OF ANYONE FITTING WEISFEILER'S DESCRIPTION HAD BEEN REPORTED. A STANDING ORDER WAS ALSO ISSUED TO REPORT THE APPEARANCE OF ANY UNIDENTIFIED BODIES RESEMBLING WEISFEILER. A THIRD CONSULAR VISIT TO THE AREA OF DISAPPEARANCE WAS MADE IN OCTOBER, 1985. AT THIS POINT, A NUMBER OF WITNESSES TO THE CASE WERE INTERVIEWED, AS WELL AS THE LOCAL JUDGE ORIGINALLY ASSIGNED TO THE CASE. COMMENT: BY THIS TIME THE JUDGE HAD RETIRED AND THE CASE HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE SECOND CRIMINAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANTIAGO 04667 03 OF 06 301707Z

COURT OF SAN CARLOS. END COMMENT. OTHER PERSONS HAVING INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THE CASE WERE INTERVIEWED IN THE SANTIAGO AREA.

10. A SERIES OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED ON THE WEISFEILER CASE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL NOTIFICATION BY LETTER ON JANUARY 21, 1985, AND THE FEBRUARY 4TH DECLARATION BY THE CHILEANS THAT WEISFEILER WAS MISSING AND PRESUMED DEAD, THE EMBASSY SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE #18 EXPRESSING THANKS FOR THE EFFORTS MADE TO LOCATE WEISFEILER AND REQUESTING THE CONTINUATION OF SUCH EFFORTS. WHEN NO REPLY HAD BEEN RECEIVED, THE EMBASSY SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE #24 ON APRIL 4, 1985 REQUESTING A REPLY TO OUR NOTE #18, AS WELL AS SPECIAL EFFORTS TO LOCATE WEISFEILER. ON APRIL 26, 1985 WE RECEIVED CHILEAN NOTE #09226 IN REPLY. THIS NOTE INDICATED THE NATURE OF THE INFORMATION GIVEN CHILEAN AUTHORITIES BY INDIVIDUALS IN THE AREA OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE, INCLUDING THE TWO LOPEZ BROTHERS, AND RECOUNTED THE VARIOUS SEARCH EFFORTS WHICH HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN. OUR NOTE #38 OF MAY 15, 1985 THANKED THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR NOTE #09226, AND INQUIRED AS TO WHAT FUTURE EFFORTS WERE ENVISAGED. WHEN NO REPLY WAS RECEIVED, THE EMBASSY SENT FOLLOW-UP NOTE #68 ON AUGUST 19, 1985 WHICH AGAIN ASKED WHAT ACTIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN SINCE APRIL, 1985 AND WHAT WAS CONTEMPLATED FOR THE FUTURE.

THIS SECOND NOTE FROM THE EMBASSY (#68) PRECIPITATED TWO RESPONSES FROM THE CHILEAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1985 WE RECEIVED NOTE #21298 WHICH REITERATED THE ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE SEARCH FOR

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UNCLASSIFIED

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CONFIDENTIAL  
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Case Number: S1999000030

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PAGE 01 SANTI A 04667 04 OF 06 301708Z  
ACTION OCS-06

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
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OES-09 FAIM-01 SPPR-03 /035 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2075

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 04 OF 06 SANTIAGO 04667

E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR

TAGS: CASC, CI, KPRP (WEISFEILER, BORIS)  
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MR. WEISFEILER AND NOTIFIED US THAT ALL JUDICIAL  
PROCEEDINGS HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE SECOND CRIMINAL  
COURT OF SAN CARLOS, CHILE. ON 7 OCTOBER, 1985,  
WE RECEIVED A SECOND NOTE NUMBERED 22506 WHICH AGAIN  
REITERATED THE EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN, AND ALSO INCLUDED A  
LIST OF THE PERSONS QUESTIONED BY JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.  
NOTE 22506 STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS  
IN THE CASE. ON DECEMBER 5, 1985 THE EMBASSY SENT NOTE  
#87 CONCERNING THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING  
THE CASE. ON JUNE 3, 1986, CARABINERO GENERAL TORRES  
WROTE THE CONSUL GENERAL A SIX-PAGE REPORT ON THE POLICE  
INVESTIGATION. ON AUGUST 18, 1986, AMBASSADOR BARNES  
WAS GIVEN A COPY OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S FILE ON THE  
WEISFEILER CASE DURING A MEETING IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED  
THE CASE WITH CHILEAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS  
JAIME DEL VALLE.

11. ON AUGUST 26, 1986, THE EMBASSY SENT NOTE #072  
EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR RECEIPT OF THE FOREIGN  
MINISTRY'S FILE, AND POSING SIX SPECIFIC QUESTIONS  
CONCERNING THE CASE. THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF INQUIRY

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PAGE 02 SANTI A 04667 04 OF 06 301708Z

WERE RAISED BY NOTE #072: BY WHOM, WHEN AND WHERE WAS  
WEISFEILER'S BACKPACK FOUND; WHERE AND WHEN WERE THE  
FOOTPRINTS SEEN, AND BY WHOM; WHAT DID THE BACKPACK  
CONTAIN AT THE TIME OF ITS FINDING WHICH ALLOWED IT  
TO BE IDENTIFIED AS BELONGING TO WEISFEILER; AT WHAT  
TIME DID WEISFEILER ARRIVE AND LEAVE THE HOTEL IN

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LOS ANGELES, AND FROM WHOM WAS THIS INFORMATION OBTAINED; WHY DID THE POLICE NOT REPORT WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE TO JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES; AND FINALLY, WHY THE CHILEAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, D.C. RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE CASE FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ONLY AFTER THE EMBASSY MADE INQUIRIES. WHEN NO REPLY HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE END OF 1986 TO OUR NOTE #072 OF AUGUST, THE EMBASSY SENT NOTE #1 OF JANUARY 6, 1987 REQUESTING A REPLY TO NOTE #072. ON APRIL 1, 1987, THE MINISTRY REPLIED THAT INQUIRY HAD BEEN MADE OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. INTERIOR HAD REPORTED THAT "NEW INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT IN REGARD TO THIS CASE HAD SO FAR PROVEN FRUITLESS," BUT THAT BOTH CARABINEROS AND THE PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVE POLICE WERE UNDER ORDER, IN THE CITY OF SAN CARLOS AS WELL AS OTHER LOCALITIES OF THE REGION, TO REPORT ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT THAT MIGHT HAVE A BEARING IN THE CASE. ON APRIL 7, 1987, THE EMBASSY'S ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE MET WITH THE CARABINERO COLONEL IN CHARGE OF INVESTIGATING THE CASE AND THE AMBASSADOR MET SEPARATELY WITH GENERAL STANGE, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CARABINEROS. ON APRIL 13, CARABINERO GENERAL PORTILLA SENT THE ATTACHE AN OFFICIAL LETTER WHICH ADDRESS THE SIX QUESTIONS POSED BY OUR AUGUST, 1986 NOTE AND REITERATED BY THE ATTACHE. THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDED NO NEW INFORMATION, BUT ADDED YET ANOTHER LAYER OF DETAILS ABOUT THE CASE, SOME OF WHICH CONTRADICTED THOSE PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED BY CHILEAN

CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03           SANTIA 04667 04 OF 06 301708Z

AUTHORITIES.

12. JUDICIAL AND INVESTIGATORY ASPECTS OF THE CASE: A NUMBER OF ASPECTS OF THE WEISFEILER CASE ARE PROBLEMATIC THERE ARE CONTRADICTIONS ON SEVERAL POINTS BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL TESTIMONY OF DIFFERENT WITNESSES, AND WITH INFORMATION OFFERED PRIVATELY TO CONOFFS. SOME IMPORTANT AVENUES WERE NEVER EXPLORED IN THE INVESTIGATION. WHILE THE GOC'S EXPLANATION--PROBABLE DEATH BY DROWNING--CANNOT BE DISMISSED, IT IS CLEARLY ONLY ONE OF THE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PROFESSOR BORIS WEISFEILER. THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRADICTIONS IN THE INFORMATION GATHERED LIE IN THREE AREAS: ONE, WHETHER OR NOT BORIS WEISFEILER ACTUALLY TRAVELLED TO LOS ANGELES AND SPENT THE NIGHT IN A HOTEL THERE; TWO, WHO SAW THE FOOTPRINTS, WHERE AND WHEN; AND THREE, WHO INITIALLY FOUND THE BACKPACK, WHERE WAS IT LOCATED, AND IN WHAT CONDITION. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF LESS IMPORTANT AREAS WHERE THE INFORMATION IS ALSO CONTRADICTORY.

Case Number: S1999000030

13. ALTHOUGH IT IS CLAIMED THAT BORIS WEISFEILER STAYED THE EVENING IN A LOS ANGELES HOTEL, THE TWO PERSONS WHO PROVIDED REGISTRATION INFORMATION ON WEISFEILER WERE NOT ACTUALLY IN THE HOTEL WHEN WEISFEILER REGISTERED, AND DO NOT CLAIM TO HAVE PERSONALLY SEEN HIM. THE HEAD COOK OF THE HOTEL, THE ONLY PERSON REPORTED TO HAVE SEEN WEISFEILER AT THE HOTEL, AND TO HAVE RESPONDED (IN ENGLISH) TO WEISFEILER'S TRAVEL QUESTIONS, MIS-IDENTIFIED HIM AS HAVING BLOND, RATHER THAN BLACK HAIR. WHILE THE HOTEL ADMINISTRATORS STATED THAT WEISFEILER PAID HIS HOTEL BILL WITH HIS VISA CARD, NO RECORD OF SUCH A CHARGE HAS EVER APPEARED ON WEISFEILER'S ACCOUNT.

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 CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTIA 04667 05 OF 06 301709Z  
 ACTION OCS-06

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
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 L SECTION 05 OF 06 SANTIAGO 04667

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
 TAGS: CASC, CI, KPRP (WEISFEILER, BORIS)  
 SUBJECT: REVIEW OF W/W CASE OF BORIS WEISFEILER

14. THE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY SECOND SERGEANT COFRE ON 31 JANUARY, 1985 INDICATES THAT A SINGLE FOOTPRINT WAS FOUND ON THE EAST BANK OF THE LOS SAUCES DURING THE INITIAL SEARCH CONDUCTED THE EVENING OF JANUARY 4, 1985 IN INTERVIEWS, JOSE LOPEZ, INDICATED FIRST THAT ON JANUARY 4, 1985 HE SAW FOOTPRINTS WHICH WENT TO THE CABLEWAY AND THEN DOUBLED BACK TOWARD THE CONFLUENCE OF THE TWO RIVERS. LATER, LOPEZ CLAIMED THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE THE FOOTPRINTS THE FOLLOWING DAY. ANOTHER SOURCE TOLD CONOFFS THAT LOPEZ TOLD HIM THAT IN FACT HE NEVER SAW FOOTPRINTS BUT WAS PRESSURED BY CARABINEROS TO TESTIFY THAT HE DID. REPORTS FROM CARABINEROS STATE THAT THE FOOTPRINTS WERE ALSO SEEN DURING THE MORE EXTENSIVE SEARCH CONDUCTED BY CARABINEROS THE DAY OF JANUARY 5, 1985. THUS, ASIDE FROM THE CARABINEROS

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Case Number: S1999000030

INVESTIGATING THE CASE, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THERE IS INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE FOOTPRINTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, NEITHER IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE THAT WOULD SUGGEST OR CONFIRM THAT WEISFEILER DID NOT LEAVE FOOTPRINTS SOMEWHERE ALONG THE NORTH BANK OF THE RIVER. IF WE ARE TO BELIEVE LOPEZ'S TESTIMONY

CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED  
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PAGE 02           SANTIA 04667 05 OF 06 301709Z

THAT HE HELPED WEISFEILER CROSS THE RIVER TO THE NORTH BANK. OF COURSE, EVEN IF FOOTPRINTS HAD BEEN PHOTOGRAPHE AND MEASURED, WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING, IN THE ABSENCE OF A BODY, WHETHER THEY MIGHT BE WEISFEILER'S.

15. FINALLY CONTRADICTIONS EXIST OVER WHO DISCOVERED WEISFEILER'S BACKPACK. THE APRIL, 1987 CARABINEROS REPORT SAYS THE BACKPACK WAS DISCOVERED ON JANUARY 14, 1985 BY ONE ALADINO CONTRERAS, WHILE FISHING IN THE NUBLE RIVER (ON WHICH BANK IS UNSTATED). A SECOND ACCOUNT STATES THAT THE PACK WAS FOUND ON THE NORTH BANK OF THE RIVER NUBLE. THE CARABINERO REPORT OF JUNE, 1986 STATES THAT A CARABINERO PATROL ENCOUNTERED THE PACK DURI A SEARCH OPERATION ON THE NORTH BANK ON JANUARY 15, 1985. SOME ACCOUNTS STATE THAT WEISFEILER'S PACK WAS CLOSED AND DRY WHEN FIRST FOUND, OTHERS THAT THE PACK WAS OPEN AND WET, OR PARTIALLY IN THE WATER, WITH ITS CONTENTS STREWN ABOUT THE RIVER BANK.

16. CERTAIN INVESTIGATIVE LEADS WERE APPARENTLY NEVER FOLLOWED UP OR ONLY PURSUED LONG AFTER WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO VERIFY WEISFEILER'S PRESENCE IN LOS ANGELES WITH SOURCES OUTSIDE OF THE HOTEL, NOR TO CHECK WITH PARTIES WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SHED LIGHT ON THE ROUTE TAKEN BY WEISFEILER BETWEEN LOS ANGELES AND THE UPPER REACHES OF THE NUBLE RIVER VALLEY. ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE WAS TOLD BY CARABINEROS ON APRIL, 1987 THAT WEISFEILER TOOK A BUS FROM LOS ANGELES TOWARD THE NUBLE VALLEY, HOWEVER. SECONDLY, ALTHOUGH JOSE LOPEZ STATED IN COURT TESTIMONY THAT A SECOND PERSON FROM THE AREA SPENT THE EVENING OF JANUARY 3, 1985 WITH HIMSELF AND WEISFEILER, THIS PERSON WAS NEVER INTERVIEWED ABOUT THE

UNCLASSIFIED  
CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03           SANTIA 04667 05 OF 06 301709Z

CASE. NEITHER WERE MEMBERS OF THE ARMY PATROL WHO WERE

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UNCLASSIFIED

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CONFIDENTIAL  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Case Number: S1999000030

IN THE AREA ON THE PRESUMED DATE OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. FINALLY, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INDICATIO THAT BOTH JOSE AND LUIS LOPEZ WERE UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM THE CARABINEROS TO CONFIRM THE OFFICIAL STORY AND TO MINIMIZE INDEPENDENT CONTACT WITH CONSULAR OFFICERS. THE [ ] WAS INITIALLY RECEPTIVE TO APPROACHES FROM CONSULAR OFFICERS, AND IN FACT [ ] TO THE CONSULATE AFTER SHORTLY THEREAFTER,

HOWEVER, [ ] ABRUPTLY BROKE OFF ALL CONTACT WITH THE CONSULATE AND A CONOFF WAS TOLD THROUGH AN INTER-MEDIARY THAT [ ] WAS "AFRAID" TO REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY. THIS [ ] HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE CARABINEROS' HANDLING OF THE CASE, AND INTIMATED TO A CONOFF HIS FEELING THAT THE CARABINEROS WERE INVOLVED IN WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. A SECOND LOCAL SOURCE INTERVIEWED TWICE ABOUT THE CASE STATED THAT THERE WAS A HEAVY MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA DURING THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER, 1985 AND JANUARY, 1986, AND THAT [ ] HAD INTIMATED TO HIM THAT HE SUSPECTED MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS SOURCE DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY OF COLONIA DIGNIDAD'S INVOLVEMENT. AN ARTICLE ON THE CASE WHICH APPEARED IN THE CHILEAN MAGAZINE "ANALISIS" ALLEGES THAT A RELIABLE SOURCE TOLD THEM THAT "WHEN PROFESSOR WEISFEILER ATTEMPTED TO USE THE CABLEWAY HE WAS FORCED TO GIVE UP BY A GROUP OF SOLDIERS, WHO ADVISED HIM NOT TO CONTINUE ADVANCING."

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PAGE 01      SANTIA 04667 06 OF 06 301710Z  
ACTION OCS-06

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
MMO-01 NSAE-00 SSO-00 AMAD-01 SIL-01 INRE-00 CA-02  
OES-09 FAIM-01 SPPR-03 /035 W

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

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Case Number: SI999000030

TAGS: CASC, CI, KPRP (WEISFEILER, BORIS)  
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF W/W CASE OF BORIS WEISFEILER

17. THUS, NO SATISFACTORY ANSWER HAS YET BEEN GIVEN TO THE QUESTION OF WHY AN EXPERIENCED BACKPACKER SUCH AS WEISFEILER WOULD ATTEMPT A RIVER CROSSING IN AN OBVIOUSLY DANGEROUS PLACE WHEN HE APPARENTLY HAD BEEN TOLD OF A CABLEWAY'S EXISTENCE BY JOSE LOPEZ. NEITHER IS IT CLEAR HOW WEISFEILER COULD HAVE PASSED THE EL ROBLE CARABINEROS STATION, AS WELL AS THE AREA AROUND THE CABLEWAY, WHICH IS IN CLEAR SIGHT OF A HOUSE OWNED BY A LOCAL RESIDENT NAMED MARCIAL SANDOVAL, WITHOUT HAVING EVER BEEN OBSERVED BY EITHER PARTY.

18. DURING MARCH 1986, [ ] PREPARED AN INDEPENDENT DOCUMENT FOR THE EMBASSY WHICH ANALYZED THE CASE AND INDICATED SEVERAL POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION. [ ] CONSIDER FIVE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BORI WEISFEILER: VOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCE, KIDNAPPING, SUICIDE DROWNING AND HOMICIDE. HE CONCLUDED THAT VOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCE, SUICIDE AND KIDNAPPING WERE UNLIKELY, THE LATTER BECAUSE OF THE APPEARANCE OF WEISFEILER'S PACK. WHILE NOT DISCOUNTING DROWNING AS A POSSIBILITY,

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 04667 06 OF 06 301710Z

[ ] STATED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SQUARE THIS EXPLANATION WITH WEISFEILER'S BACK COUNTRY EXPERTISE, HIS APPARENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE CABLEWAY, AND THE FACT THAT HIS BODY HAS NEVER BEEN RECOVERED. (THE CARABINEROS CLAIM THERE ARE NUMEROUS UNDERWATER CAVES IN WHICH THE BODY COULD HAVE BEEN LODGED. [ ] ANALYSIS AND LOCAL SOURCES, HOWEVER, INDICATED THAT IT IS RARE THAT BODIES OR PARTS OF BODIES DROWNED IN THE RIVER HAVE NOT RESURFACED WITHIN THREE WEEKS.) AFTER DISCARDING ROBBERY-RELATED HOMICIDE AS NOT CREDIBLE BECAUSE OF THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE PACK (ALTHOUGH NOT OF THE U.S. CURRENCY), [ ] TURNED TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT WEISFEILER WAS KILLED FOR UNKNOWN REASONS BY CARABINEROS. HIS CONCLUSION WAS AS FOLLOWS: "THIS IS THE ONLY EXPLANATION WHICH TAKES ACCOUNT AT THE SAME TIME OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE CADAVER AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE FULL PACK...THE PACK AND ITS CONTENTS HAVING BEEN PLACED IN THE LOCATION WHERE THEY WERE FOUND IN ORDER TO FEIGN AN ACCIDENTAL DEATH." AT THE TIME HE PREPARED HIS MEMORANDUM, [ ] WAS NOT IN POSSESSION OF THE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE APPARENT EXTENSIVE MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA DURING THE TIME

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Case Number: S1999000030

OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. THUS, HE DID NOT CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY THAT MILITARY, RATHER THAN CARABINERO PERSONNEL WERE INVOLVED IN WEISFEILER'S DEATH. COMMENT: NEITHER DID [ ] HAVE AVAILABLE TO HIM INFORMATION RECENTLY RECEIVED BY THE EMBASSY WHICH WOULD, IF CONFIRMED, SUPPORT A DIFFERENT CONCLUSION. THIS INFORMATION IS CURRENTLY BEING EVALUATED. END COMMENT. [ ] ANALYSIS OF THE CASE WAS POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

19. ONLY VERY RECENTLY, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED NEW INFORMATION ON THE WEISFEILER CASE WHICH, IF IT STANDS

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PAGE 03                   SANTIA 04667 06 OF 06 301710Z

UP TO SCRUTINY, WOULD THROW A WHOLE NEW LIGHT ON THE CASE, AND CALL INTO QUESTION A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED AND REPORTED CONCERNING WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. SEPTEL WILL REPORT ON THIS DEVELOPMENT. BARNES

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