CONFIDENTIAL

SANTIAGO 01107

FOR CA/OS/EYB/ARA AND ARA/SC

E.O. 12336: DECL: OADR
TAGS: CASC, CI (WEISFEILER, BORSI)
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF WEISFEILER DISAPPEARANCE CASE: DEVELOPMENTS SINCE JUNE 1987

REFS: (a) 87 SANTIAGO 4667, (b) 87 SANTIAGO 5308.
(c) 87 STATE 352312, (d) 87 BONN 29144,
(e) 87 BONN 36234, (f) 86 TORONTO 4473,
(g) 87 SANTIAGO 9617, (h) 87 SANTIAGO 9832,
(i) 87 BONN 364440, (J) TORONTO 86, (k) SANTIAGO 275.
(l) SANTIAGO MEMORANDUM DATED JAN. 11, 1988

1. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY. THIS CABLE SUMMARIZES EMBASSY’S EFFORTS RE THE WEISFEILER CASE SINCE THE LAST SUMMARY SENT (REF A) IN JUNE 1987. THREE YEARS AFTER BORSI WEISFEILER DISAPPEARED WHILE HIKING IN CHILE, THE CASE REMAINS OPEN AND SANTIAGO CONTINUES TO PURSUE ALL LEADS IN AN EFFORT TO FIND SOME INFORMATION WHICH MAY HELP TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM. SINCE JUNE 1987 WE HAVE PURSUED ALL POSSIBLE LEADS IN THE REPORT ON COLONIA DIGNIDAD, AND CONTINUE TO FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS THERE. WE HAVE ALSO GONE BACK TO THE CARABINEROS TO LEARN MORE INFORMATION ON DISCREPANCIES AND GAPS IN THEIR REPORTS OR THEORIES ABOUT WEISFEILER’S FATE, INCLUDING THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF THE DEATH BY DROWNING. EXT SUMMARY.

3. UNTIL MID-JUNE 1987 WE HAD NO FIRM LEADS ON WEISFEILER’S FATE AND KNEW ONLY THAT INFORMATION IN THE GOVT’S INVESTIGATION WAS INCOMPLETE AND CONTRADICTORY (RE: A). RE: MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA, AS WELL AS THEORIES THAT WEISFEILER HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE CARABINEROS OR THE ARMY, OR THAT HE HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO COLONIA DIGNIDAD, SEEMED ONLY TO BE SPECULATION.

4. IN MID-JUNE 1987 THE FOCUS OF OUR EFFORTS SHIFTED
AFTER A PERSON APPEARED WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE INFORMATION THAT WEISFEILER WAS STILL ALIVE AND BEING HELD PRISONER AT COLONIA DIGNIDAD (REF B), THE SOURCE, WHO CLAIMED TO BE A NON-COMMISSIONED CHILEAN ARMY OFFICER ASSIGNED TO THE CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, SAID HE WAS PART OF AN ARMY PATROL WHICH PICKED WEISFEILER UP AND DELIVERED HIM TO COLONIA DIGNIDAD. (SOURCE CALLED HIMSELF "DANIÉL" AND WILL BE REFERRED TO AS SUCH.) HE PRESENTED HIMSELF TO MAXIMO PACHECO, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHILEAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND A LAWYER FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN ITS SUIT AGAINST COLONIA DIGNIDAD. CLAIMING HIS CONSCIENCE WAS BOtherED BY HIS KNOWLEDGE OF WEISFEILER'S FATE. DANIÉL WAS INTERVIEWED TWICE IN JUNE BY PACHECO AND ONCE ON JULY 2 BY TWO CONSULAR OFFICERS. HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH MANY OF THE DETAILS OF THE CASE AND POSSESSED WHAT SEEMED EXTENSIVE INFORMATION ABOUT COLONIA DIGNIDAD. WE TOOK SERIOUSLY THE POSSIBILITY OF DANIÉL'S VERACITY AND MADE EVERY EFFORT TO CHECK HIS INFORMATION BEFORE TRYING TO DECIDE HOW TO ACT ON THE REPORT SHOULDN'T WE BE CONVINCED OF IT.


6. THE JOSEF MENGELE ANGLE CAST IMMEDIATE DOUBT ON DANIÉL'S CREDIBILITY, AND ALTHOUGH WE TOOK SERIOUSLY THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TRUTH OF HIS INFORMATION AND SINCERITY OF HIS MOTIVES, WE BEGAN TO REALLY DOUBT HIS CREDIBILITY OVER THE COMING MONTHS. INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONS FAMILIAR WITH COLONIA DIGNIDAD REVEALED THAT SOME OF DANIÉL'S INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMUNITY WAS WRONG. DANIÉL CLAIMED TO HAVE GOTTEN HIS INFORMATION THAT WEISFEILER WAS STILL ALIVE FROM A GUARD ON THE PERIMETER OF THE COLONIA'S PROPERTY. ALL FORMER RESIDENTS INTERVIEWED SAID IT WOULD
UNTHINKABLE FOR A GUARD TO FULL DUTY ALONE. CASTING DOUBT ON DANIÈL’S SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND THUS ON HIS MOTIVES AND WHOLE STORY. FURTHERMORE, IN EARLY NOVEMBER DANIÈL APPEARED AGAIN AT MAXIMO PACHECO’S OFFICE, WARNING PACHECO THAT HIS LIFE WAS THREATENED. HE THEN ACCOMPANIED PACHECO IN A TAXI TO A FUNERAL OF A PROMINENT CHILEAN GENERAL. SOURCE HAD ALWAYS CLAIMED TO BE IN FEAR FOR HIS LIFE SHOULD THE CHILEN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE KNOW THAT HE WAS TALKING TO PACHECO AND TO THE US EMBASSY. NEVERTHELESS, HE RODE TO THE FUNERAL, WHICH WAS HEAVILY ATTENDED BY SECURITY FORCES, WITH PACHECO, A WELL-KNOWN FIGURE. THIS RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER DANIÈL FEARED THE SECURITY FORCES OR WAS SENT BY THEM TO MISLEAD THE EMBASSY IN THE CASE.

7. BY WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN STRANGE COINCIDENCE, HEINZ KUHN, A FORMER COLONIA DIGNIDAD RESIDENT, APPEARED AT MAXIMO PACHECO’S OFFICE AT THE END OF JULY. HE DID NOT CLAIM TO HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT WEISFEILER, BUT RATHER SAID HE WANTED TO GIVE PACHECO INFORMATION ABOUT TORTURE AND ABUSE AT THE COLONIA. PACHECO IS REPRESENTING AMNEST INTERNATIONAL IN A LIBEL SUIT FILED AGAINST IT BY COLONIA DIGNIDAD FOR A REPORT BY ITS GERMAN CHAPTER ON TORTURE AT THE COLONIA. KUHN LEFT THE COLONIA IN 1988, BUT STIL LIVES NEAR BY, AND STILL HAS CONTACT WITH RESIDENTS. HE CLAIMED THAT IT WAS USED AS A TORTURE CENTER AFTER THE 1973 COUP AND THAT MILITARY INCLUDING PINOCHE AND FORMER DINA CHIEF, MANUAL CONTRERAS, VISIT THERE REGULARLY. A CONSULAR OFFICER INTERVIEWED KUHN TWICE, BUT HE HAD NO INFORMATION ABOUT ANYTHING FITTING WEISFEILER’S DESCRIPTION. KUHN ALSO TALKED TO THE CONSULAR OFFICER AGAIN IN NOVEMBER ABOUT HIS RECENT TRIP TO GERMANY WHERE HE TALKED TO COURT OFFICIALS INVESTIGATING COLONIA DIGNIDAD IN CONNECTION WITH THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CASE. KUHN SAID THAT INTRUDERS WERE OCCASIONALLY KILLED BY COLONIA SECURITY FORCES AND GAVE THE CONSULAR OFFICER A TAPE WHICH HE CLAIMED WAS A RADIO CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO COLONIA RESIDENTS ABOUT THE KILLING OF AN INTRUDER IN APRIL 1985. KUHN APPARENTLY GAVE THE SAME TAPE TO GERMAN AUTHORITIES (REF C). THE CONVERSATION IS SO ELLIPTICAL; HOWEVER, THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW IF THIS IS WHAT IS BEING DISCUSSED. TEUS, ANY RELATION OF THIS TAPE TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT WEISFEILER WAS KILLED AT THE COLONIA AS AN INTRUER CANNOT BE ENSURED. AGAIN, AS WITH DANIÈL, WE HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT KUHN’S MOTIVES AND VERACITY. MUCH OF THE INFORMATION HE PROVIDED ABOUT THE COLONIA (INCLUDING A STORY THAT AN ORPHAN NEPHEW OF A CHILEAN CARABINERO IS BEING KEPT THERE) FITS WITH DANIÈL’S INFORMATION. SOME OF THE DETAILS CONFLICT. KUHN’S CONTINUING CONTACT WITH THE COLONIA REMAINS SUSPICIOUS. AND GERMAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED THEIR DOUBTS REGARDING KUHN’S CREDIBILITY. IN ANY CASE, KUHN HAD NO HARD INFORMATION ABOUT WEISFEILER.

8. OUR MAJOR FOCUS IN TRYING TO CHECK DANIÈL’S REPORTS WAS TO ASK EMBASSY BONN AND CONSULATE TORONTO TO CONTACT PERSONS FAMILIAR WITH COLONIA DIGNIDAD TO SEE...
IF THEY HAD ANY INFORMATION ABOUT WEISSEFLER AND IN
GENERAL TO CHECK DANIEL'S INFORMATION ABOUT COLONIA
DIGNIDAD. NO ONE INTERVIEWED HAD ANY INFORMATION ABOUT
ANY-ONE FITTING WEISSEFLER'S DESCRIPTION.

9. IN SEPTEMBER, BCNN CONSULAR OFFICER MET WITH DR.
HELMUT NEUMAN, THE GERMAN LAWYER HANDLING ANNE BEUZEN
INTERNATIONAL'S CASE, AND HELMUT FRENZ, FORMERLY LUTHERAN
BISHOP IN CHILE (REF D). (BOTH NAMES WERE GIVEN US BY
FACECO.) NEUMAN CHECKED THE NAMES OF THE MANY PEOPLE
THE HAVE GIVEN SWORN STATEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE
LAW SUIT. BUT COULD FIND NO ONE THAT WAS PRESENT IN
COLONIA DIGNIDAD AFTER JANUARY 1985. FACE CO. HAD NO
INFORMATION EITHER, BUT ADDED THAT HE DOUBTED WEISSEFLER
WOULD BE THERE.

10. BCNN ALSO INTERVIEWED THE FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE
COLONIA CHARITABLE SOCIETY, HUGO BARR, AND HIS WIFE
VALTRUZ, LONG-TIME RESIDENTS OF COLONIA DIGNIDAD (REF E).
THE BARRS LEFT IN APRIL 1985, FOUR MONTHS AFTER
WEISSEFLER'S DISAPPEARANCE, BUT HAD NEITHER HEARD OF
NOR SEEN ANYONE FITTING HIS DESCRIPTION. THE BARRS CON-
FIRMED MANY OF THE DETAILS OF DANIEL'S DESCRIPTION OF
COLONIA DIGNIDAD, BUT ALSO CONTRADICTED SOME DETAILS OF
HIS STORY. THEY SAID GUARDS WOULD NEVER PULL DUTY ALONE
(WHICH WOULD CAST DOUBT ON THE SOURCE'S CLAIM TO HAVE)
14. WE HAVE ALSO TRIED TO GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT THE GOC HAS DONE TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE. IN MID-OCTOBER A CONSULAR OFFICER INTERVIEWED MILIC ZAMBRANO, A FORMER CARABINERO OFFICER WHO IS NOW A LAWYER IN PRIVATE PRACTICE. ZAMBRANO WAS AT FIRST VERY RELUCTANT TO MEET WITH THE CONSULAR OFFICER, AND THEN BEGAN TO OFFER ADVICE WHICH EMBASSY THOUGHT WAS QUESTIONABLE. IN HIS FIRST DISCUSSION WITH CONCFF, ZAMBRANO REVEALED THAT IN MID-1986, WHEN HE WAS HEAD OF THE CARABINERO'S INTERNAL INVESTIGATIVE UNIT, CS-7, HE HAD CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. ACCORDING TO ZAMBRANO'S DESCRIPTION, THE INVESTIGATION WAS SKETCHY. NO ONE INTERVIEWED EVEN CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN WEISFEILER, BUT FROM ZAMBRANO'S DESCRIPTION ONLY PEOPLE LIVING IN THE TOWN OF PARRAL WERE CONTACTED. EVEN THE CARABINEROS STATIONED IN THE AREA AT THE TIME OF THE DISAPPEARANCE WERE NOT INTERVIEWED. HE SAID THAT THE EMBASSY SHOULD ASK SPECIFICALLY FOR THAT PARRAL SERGEANT'S REPORT IF IT WANTED MORE INFORMATION.

15. FURTHER CONTACTS WITH ZAMBRANO LED EMBASSY TO QUESTION THE RELIABILITY OF HIS ADVICE. IN A SECOND MEETING WITH CONCFF, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE EMBASSY'S
EFFECTS TO GAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CASE SHOULD NOT BE DONE ON A DIPLOMATIC LEVEL. BUT RATHER THAT AN EMBASSY OFFICER SHOULD WRITE TO A LOWER LEVEL CARABINERO OFFICIAL WITH SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CASE. HE SAID THAT CONTACTS ON THE ORDER OF A DIPLOMATIC NOTE WOULD ONLY EXCITE NATIONALISTIC PASSION AND MAKE COOPERATION LESS LIKELY. HE THOUGHT THE BEST APPROACH WOULD BE FOR AN EMBASSY OFFICER TO ACT AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN IN FILING A DEMAND FOR INFORMATION IN THE CASE. ZAMBRANO THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT COLONIA DIGNIDAD HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. IN THE END, THE NATURE OF HIS ADVICE MADE US WARY OF HIS MOTIVES, AND CONTACTS WITH HIM WERE NOT PURSUED.

16. THE OTHER MAJOR POSSIBILITY WHICH WE HAVE HAD TO CONSIDER (APART FROM ACCIDENTAL DROWNING) IS THAT WEISFEILER WAS KILLED BY EITHER AN ARMY OR CARABINERO PATROL IN THE AREA. IN LATE NOVEMBER, ANOTHER EMBASSY ELEMENT 5 SOURCE REPORTED THAT A CARABINERO NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER WHO HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO POSTS IN THE GENERAL AREA WHERE WEISFEILER DISAPPEARED SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT WEISFEILER WAS DETAINED BY EITHER A CARABINERO OR ARMY PATROL, INTERROGATED, AND BEATEN TO DEATH. SOURCE SAID A ELLIC CARABINERO NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER TOLD HIM THAT, SERGEANT JORGE COFRE VEGA, ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PATROL THAT SEARCHED FOR WEISFEILER, SAID THAT THE ARMY PATROL THAT FOUND WEISFEILER FATALLY BEAT HIM WHILE INTERROGATING HIM. SOURCE SAID IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NATURAL FOR THE ARMY PATROL TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF A FOREIGNER TRAVELLING IN THE AREA AND TO THINK SUCH A PERSON COULD BE A SPY INfiltrATING CHILE FROM ARGENTINA. HE FURTHER STATED THAT AMONG THE GROUPS SENT OUT TO SEARCH FOR WEISFEILER WAS A GROUP OF (CNI) AGENTS WHOM SOURCE BELIEVES WERE SENT TO CLEAN THE AREA OF ANY EVIDENCE OF WEISFEILER'S MURDER. SOURCE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT WEISFEILER WOULD HAVE BEEN HANDED OVER TO COLONIA DIGNIDAD, GIVEN THE DISTANCE OF THE COLONIA FROM THE AREA WHERE WEISFEILER DISAPPEARED. SOURCE SAID IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE CARABINEROS SERVING IN THE AREA THAT WEISFEILER HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE ARMY PATROL.

17. ALTHOUGH WE COULD NOT VERIFY OR DISCOUNT ANY OF THE STORIES ABOUT WEISFEILER'S FATE, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE GOC INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE HAD BEEN INCOMPLETE AND THAT ASPECTS OF REPORTS AND CONCLUSIONS IN GOVERNMENT REPORTS WERE CONTRADICTORY. ON NOVEMBER 12, 1987, IN A MEETING WITH GENERAL STANGE, HEAD OF THE CARABINEROS, THE EMBASSADOR RAISED THE ISSUE OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. HE SAID THAT THE EMBASSY FELT THERE WERE STILL MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND WOULD LIKE THE CARABINEROS TO REOPEN THE INVESTIGATION. HE LEFT WITH STANGE A LIST OF POSSIBLE AREAS OF FURTHER INQUIRY IN THE CASE, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS THAT THERE BE SEPARATE INTERVIEWS WITH ALL THE CARABINEROS INVOLVED; INTERVIEWS WITH THE ARMY PATROL AT THE SITE; AN INTERVIEW WITH THE THIRD PERSON WHO SPENT THE NIGHT WITH WEISFEILER AND LOPEZ; AND THAT THE CARABINEROS FOLLOW ANY OTHER LEADS THEY MAY HAVE IN THE CASE. STANGE SUGGESTED THAT THE EMBASSY CONTACT General
Gabriel Ormenc, currently head of Carabineros in Santiago district, who previously was in charge of the Carabineros in the Eighth Region and had at one point visited the area where Weisfeiler disappeared.

16. Consul General and Army Attaché met with Ormenc on November 19 and again on December 11, 1987. At both meetings he appeared to be forthcoming and interested in helping. He immediately admitted three possibilities: that Weisfeiler had drowned, died at the hands of Carabineros, or been imprisoned at Colonia Dignidad. In the first meeting he said that reports that army patrols were seen in the area were in error, and that these must have been Carabineros in training who appeared to be army to persons not familiar with their uniforms. At the second meeting he referred to the presence of army patrols without explaining why he previously asserted there were no military in the area; by the time of the second meeting Ormenc had also reviewed the statements made by all four of the Carabineros in the search team (it was not clear to us previously that each had been interviewed separately at the time of the investigation in 1985), and had located and interviewed the third person.


20. CONCLUSION. DESPITE THE NUMBER OF LEADS THAT DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE NO FIRMER KNOWLEDGE OF WEISFEILER'S FATE THAN BEFORE. OUR CURRENT EFFORTS ARE DIRECTED AT GETTING AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE FROM THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INITIAL SEARCH FOR WEISFEILER. EMBASSY PLANS TO ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMY PATROL WHO WERE IN THE AREA AT THE TIME OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. WE WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT ADVISED OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. JONES ET

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