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10/20/87

SA 011c
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: October 20, 1987REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Consular Section -- Larry D. Huffman *LDH*SUBJECT: Memorandum of conversation: Oct. 19, 1987, Emilio Zambrano W. concerning
the disappearance of Boris Weisfeillor

Chile Project (#S199900030)

U.S. Department of State

TO: Chargé -- George F. Jones
THROUGH: Consular Section -- William H. BarkellRelease Excise _____ Deny _____Declassify: In Part _____ In Full

Exemption(s)

SUMMARY: Zambrano, in mid-1986 while head of OS-7 of Carabineros, conducted an investigation of Weisfeillor's disappearance. The investigation was quite perfunctory and he said that his men found no trace even of anyone who claimed to have seen Weisfeillor. Zambrano dismissed the idea that the Colonia Dignidad was involved in the disappearance, and said that his men had not interviewed anyone from there. Zambrano said that the U.S. Embassy had not asked particularly for a copy of the original report done by a Carabinero sergeant in Parral, and presumably in the files of the Linares Carabinero office, which has jurisdiction over Parral. Zambrano said that he would be glad to advise the Embassy on strategy and procedure to get information from the Carabineros. Zambrano was quite apprehensive about the interview, failing to return to his office for our first meeting, postponing the second, and during the third asking me not to take notes and stating that he would deny having talked to me if asked about the meeting by government officials or the press. END SUMMARY

Zambrano failed to return to his office on the afternoon of October 8, when we first had decided to meet. I left after 45 minutes. Having set up another meeting for mid-day of October 16th, I called his office and learned that he wasn't returning from Vina del Mar that day. When I finally ran him to ground on October 19th, he opened the discussion by stating that the interview was off the record, and that he would deny having talked to me if asked about the meeting by some third person. When I started to take notes, he asked me to desist.

During the interview, Zambrano was quite voluble, but gave me almost no information. The only new item was the fact that OS-7 had been ordered to conduct an investigation into the disappearance in mid-1986.

This investigation, going by Zambrano's description, was incredibly sketchy. Zambrano said that he had only four teams of investigators in OS-7 at the time, and that he had had over 200 investigations to do. He sent a team to the Linares area to do several of these, and they spent a day or so looking into Weisfeillor's mystery. Zambrano mentioned only interviews in Parral--apparently the investigators only interviewed people in that town. They were "unable" to find anyone who even claimed to have seen Weisfeillor, and in particular did not interview the shepard who had claimed to have spent the night in camp with him. When I pressed Zambrano on this, he talked quite rapidly and left the impression that he doubted the existence of such a shepard. He also went on at considerable length about how there was no real evidence that Weisfeillor had ever even been in the area--that someone else might have brought in the backpack and dumped it by the stream, etc.

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ZAMBRANO MEMCON, 10/20/87

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The OS-7 team did not even attempt to interview the Carabineros who had been at the reten on the Nuble at the time of the disappearance--they talked to the ones who were there in mid-1986! When I asked if they had tried to see the original Carabineros, Zambrano said that they would have had to have been called in from there various posts around the country, and that "there wasn't time."

When I asked if Colonia Dignidad had had anything to do with the disappearance, he dismissed the possibility out of hand, saying that the Colonia was "far away," and stating that he had been posted to Linares years ago, knew all about the Colonia, and that they couldn't have had anything to do with Weisfeillor. COMMENT: I got the impression that he didn't want to talk about the Colonia. END COMMENT

Zambrano said that the U.S. Embassy had not asked the Carabineros the right questions about the Weisfeillor case, and that we should ask the Carabineros for a copy of the Parral sergant's report, which he said should be on file in Linares, as that Carabinero base had supervisory responsibility over Parral. He offered to guide us in the best procedures to use to get the information.. COMMENT: The inference is clear: unless we specify where to look for a particular document, the Carabineros won't volunteer the information on their own. The Embassy has to lead them by the hand through their own organization. I'm sure that Zambrano did not want to convey this impression, but did it inadvertently. END COMMENT

10/26

BFJ - Should we not ask Larry Pen to follow up and get some ideas, at least before I talk to Starg? TB

The note says:

BFJ
Should we not ask Larry then to follow up and get some ideas, at least before I talk to Starg?

copies sent
Hall, Keane, Penn,
De Stago

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