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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

March 23, 2009

The Honorable Joseph Biden
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

I understand that you will meet with Chilean President Michelle Bachelet at the upcoming Summit of Progressive Leaders in Santiago, Chile. I am contacting you to urge that at this meeting you ask the government of Chile to place a higher priority on its efforts to resolve the case of Boris Weisfeiler, an American citizen who disappeared in Chile in 1985.

As you may be aware, Mr. Weisfeiler's case is the only outstanding Pinochet-era case involving a missing American citizen. Despite the vigorous efforts by his surviving relatives to determine his fate, and the strong support from Members of Congress and the Department of State, there has never been a full accounting of the circumstances surrounding his disappearance. Although the case officially remains under investigation by Chilean authorities, efforts to move toward a final accounting clearly seem to have stalled.

Several members of Congress, including myself, wrote last year to President Bachelet to urge two crucial changes in the way the case is being investigated that, if adopted, could help move the investigation forward in a constructive direction. First, we asked that the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation be allowed to cooperate fully with Chilean investigators, in the hope that allowing FBI personnel to take an active role could potentially yield valuable new findings about the case. Secondly, we urged that the Defense Council of State (CDE) take an active role in the Weisfeiler case, both to bring more internal resources into the effort, and as a signal that the Chilean government places an especially high priority on accounting for Mr. Weisfeiler's whereabouts.

I am strongly urging that you reiterate these two suggestions in your upcoming talks, as well as conveying in general to President Bachelet that the Obama Administration is and will remain strongly committed to pressing hard for a final resolution of this case.


BARNEY FRANK

BF/mr