

2/28/70

Pol 23-8

Files

SUBJ

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Alleged Torture by Government Officials

DATE: Saturday, February 28, 1970

PLACE: Tijuca Beach

PARTICIPANTS: Miller N. Hudson, Jr., Scientific Attaché
Three Students

On Saturday, February 28, I was contacted by an engineering student friend of mine whom I have carefully cultivated for the past 2 1/4 years. He has been a most reliable contact and is head of a local informal scientific club with members from all of the Rio and Petropolis universities. The student members range from undergraduate juniors to graduate students about ready to receive their doctorates.

He said he wanted to welcome me back from home leave and that he had a couple of "friends" who wanted to talk to me. We agreed to get together at a mutually known location on one of the local beaches. When they arrived, it turned out that one of the boys was one of those who was among the group who met with me in Petropolis shortly after the Ambassador's abduction (see Memcom of 12 Sept 1969, Subj: Political Conditions, Participants; SCIATT and about 15 university students). He was still going by the name, Sergio, but neither of the boys would give me their last names. The second individual called himself Paulo.

According to Sergio, he was picked up by the "military police" in November, shortly after I left on home leave. When finally released he was not able to identify how long he had been held by the police. His parents and friends told him that he had disappeared for almost a month. According to him, he was picked up and interrogated in a reasonably civilized manner for about 12 days, at the end of which time he was placed in a closed van and transferred to another location. He was unable to identify with certainty where that second location was, but he said he thought it was well out in the suburbs because of the length of time it took to get there. Once there, a "military officer" asked him again if he would

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

care to make a voluntary deposition concerning his terrorist activities. When he declined on the grounds that he had not been involved in such activities, the officer expressed regret and left him. That night the beatings commenced. He said he had no idea how long or how many times he was beaten, as there were teams of three who did it for what seemed "an eternity". Unfortunately, from his point of view, they did it so expertly that he never completely lost consciousness throughout the whole ordeal. As proof to substantiate his story, he lowered his trousers and showed me a massive resolving hematoma in the lower right groin area, which was an ugly-looking thing indeed. Subsequent checking with Dr. Scheer indicated that it was possible that a massive bruise of this sort could take four months or even longer to resolve itself.

Sergio is about 5' 10" to 6' 0" tall, fair-complected and sandy-haired. He could well be an Anglo-Brazilian from appearance, and claims to have studied physics under Leite Lopes. He speaks perfect English and appears to be totally bilingual.

The second boy, who called himself Paulo, apparently encountered rather more refined operators. He claims that he was picked up in late January and after a very short period of questioning similarly transferred to an unknown location where he was placed in solitary confinement. According to him, it was a small room no more than 3 x 6 meters with a very high ceiling. A barred window had been boarded over leaving just sufficient lighting to barely make out the contours of the room. Once placed in solitary confinement, he says he was given no solid food but only water and never permitted to see or hear any other human. The cell was crawling with cockroaches and other "bichos". He, too, claims to have lost track of time, but according to his friends he disappeared for only a week. He said he worked mathematics problems in his head to try and keep from dwelling on the stench of his own wastes and the bugs. When he failed to provide any useful information after the solitary treatment, he was released with the admonition to be more careful who he picked for his friends.

Paulo is a smaller (5' 4" - 5' 6"), rather dark, typically Brazilian boy with a small mustache. He claims to have been an engineering student at Rio, and speaks only broken English, preferring to speak in Portuguese.

My primary contact who introduced me to the two boys above indicated that I would not be able to meet again with several of the friends I had previously made in the group he heads up. The reason, . . . they did not wish to subject themselves to the danger of such treatment and had gone "incomunicado". When I asked him if their fears were justifiable, he simply shrugged his shoulders and said, "Who knows? In Brazil these days each individual has to do what he thinks best." When I inquired why Sergio and Paulo wanted to tell me these things, Sergio replied, "We know we can trust you and we want to be sure you Americans really know what is going on here in Brazil."

Copies to:

AMB
DCM
POE
POL/R
SCIATT (2)
DEAN
POLLACK/SCI
ENR/CS/BR
ENR/RAR/LA
ARA/LA/BR
FILES (2)

SCIATT: MNH : vb