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January 25, 1974

ACTION MEMO

TO: ARA - ~~Mr. Jack B. Kubisch~~

THRU: ARA - Ambassador Bowdler *WJB*

FROM: ARA/BR - Stephen Low *el*

SUBJECT: Disappearance of Paul Stuart Wright in Brazil

The Department has received inquiries from numerous Congressmen, journalists (including Jack Anderson) and others concerning the welfare and whereabouts of Mr. Paul (or Paulo) Stuart Wright, who according to members of his family was arrested in Brazil last September. Subsequent efforts by his family and friends as well as Brazilian journalists, lawyers, congressmen and clerics to ascertain his location or condition have been fruitless. The New York Times published a lengthy article on the case. There are attached two proposed replies to outstanding congressional inquiries. You are requested to choose one of these or suggest a third.

Mr. Wright was born in Brazil of American missionary parents and consequently acquired dual nationality. He received a US passport in the 1950's when he came to the United States to attend college briefly. He returned to Brazil and according to members of his family decided to live there and chose to keep his Brazilian citizenship. He became deeply involved in local politics and was elected to a state legislature. After the 1964 overthrow of President Goulart by the armed forces and their allies, Wright's term as a representative was summarily terminated by the federal government, apparently because of his close association with radical elements of the Goulart group. According to his brother James Wright, field representative for the United Presbyterian Church in Brazil, Paulo then began to live "underground most of the time" and his family had only rare contact with him. In 1970 the Brazilian press reported that Paulo Wright and 80 other people had been formally accused of belonging to a subversive organization named Popular Action (AP).

Declassified
Authority: 43265 By:
Amanda Weimer Date:
05-11-2015

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Mr. Wright's alleged arrest and disappearance first came to the Department's attention in November 1973 when Senator Proxmire forwarded a letter from Paulo's brother, Latham Wright, expressing his concern as to whether Paulo was alive and requesting any assistance the Senator might be able to provide. The Department determined that Wright probably had lost his US citizenship by virtue of his having become a Brazilian state representative. Nevertheless, it forwarded all the information it had concerning the case to Amembassy Brasilia and requested that the Embassy approach the Brazilian government about his whereabouts on the grounds that his American relatives were deeply concerned about his welfare. The Embassy contacted the Brazilian Foreign Ministry which replied that a check of all possible security authorities indicated that none had Mr. Wright in their custody or knew of his whereabouts. It added that some admitted that in view of his record they would very much like to have him. The Ministry also stated that, even if Wright had dual citizenship, the Brazilian Government would probably recognize only his Brazilian nationality. Two other sources subsequently have speculated to the Embassy that Wright probably was killed by security forces.

Up to the present time, the Department has only informed inquirers that it is probable that Mr. Wright has lost his United States citizenship by committing an expatriating act, but that we have, nevertheless, made inquiry at the Foreign Office as to his welfare and whereabouts.

We believe there are a number of options open to us in responding to the many Congressional inquiries which we have received in the last few days. Two of these seem appropriate. In both cases we would respond by clarifying the nationality question by explaining that though Mr. Wright was born with dual nationality he probably forfeited his American citizenship when he ran and was elected to the

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State Legislature. We would then say that in spite of that we have made inquiry of the Foreign Office but that the Brazilian government considers him to be a Brazilian citizen and does not recognize our right to intervene in the matter. We would have the choice of either stopping there or going on to explain that the Foreign Office has told us that Mr. Wright is not in the custody of the security authorities but that due to the continuing uncertainty over his whereabouts we have asked the Embassy to try again to ascertain from the Brazilian government the facts regarding the situation.

If we were to follow the second option, we would then instruct the Embassy to send a formal note inquiring about Wright and explain orally to the Foreign Office that there have been many inquiries from highly placed persons in the Congress and elsewhere on the subject; that we have heard various reports about Wright's past activities and about his possible subsequent death, but because of our lack of the facts we feel it would be up to the GOB to clarify these matters.

We have discussed this matter with Ambassador Crimmins. He notes that a formal note on this subject is another thing from the oral inquiries we have made. He is willing to send such a note, however, if we feel that it is necessary.

At the moment we have personal letters to be responded to from Senators Fulbright, McGovern, Abourezk, Cranston, Jackson and Magnuson as well as from Congressman Dellums.

The proposed alternative letters and instruction are attached here to.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Brazilians would not be pleased to receive a new representation on this subject from us. They will consider that we are lacking in sympathy to pursue a case involving a known subversive. In spite of this, however, we favor the second option since we believe we should avoid putting ourselves in the position of having to answer for their transgressions.

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ACTION REQUESTED:

That you approve one of the following three options:

Prefer shorter form _____

Prefer second option _____

Prefer third alternative as follows:

*but make approach
oral again, holding
written demarche
open for later use
if necessary.*

W. B.

Honorable Ronald V. Dellums
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Dellums:

I have received your letter of January 8, 1974 concerning the welfare and whereabouts of Paulo Stuart Wright as well as the letter you wrote to Mr. Stephen Low on January 16, 1974 on the same subject.

According to our information Mr. Wright was born in Brazil of American missionary parents and consequently acquired dual nationality. He spent most of his early years in Brazil and according to members of his family decided to live there and keep his Brazilian citizenship. In the early 1960's he ran for and was elected to the state legislature in Santa Catarina. Such an act probably caused him to lose his American citizenship.

In spite of this, however, we inquired concerning his whereabouts and welfare at the Brazilian Foreign Office and expressed the great concern of his relatives in the United States as well as other citizens of this country. The Foreign Ministry indicated that it considered Mr. Wright to be exclusively a Brazilian citizen and that it would not recognize the right of the United States to intervene in his behalf.

I hope this information has been helpful.

Sincerely,

Honorable Ronald V. Dellums
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

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I have received your letter of January 8, 1974 concerning the welfare and whereabouts of Paulo Stuart Wright as well as the letter you wrote to Mr. Stephen Low on January 16, 1974 on the same subject.

According to our information Mr. Wright was born in Brazil of American missionary parents and consequently acquired dual nationality. He spent most of his early years in Brazil and according to members of his family decided to live there and keep his Brazilian citizenship. In the early 1960's he ran for and was elected to the state legislature in Santa Catarina. ~~Such~~^{T45} act probably caused him to lose his American citizenship.

In spite of this, however, we inquired concerning his whereabouts and welfare at the Brazilian Foreign Office and expressed the great concern of his relatives in the United States as well as other citizens of this country. The Foreign Office replied that Mr. Wright is not in the custody of the security forces and that they do not know his whereabouts. The Foreign Ministry indicated that it considered Mr. Wright to be exclusively a Brazilian citizen and that it would not recognize the right of the United States to intervene in his behalf.

Nevertheless, in view of the continued uncertainty over Mr. Wright's whereabouts, we have instructed our Embassy to try again to ascertain from the Brazilian government the facts regarding the situation.

Sincerely,

INSTRUCTION TO THE EMBASSY

Embassy is requested to send a formal note to the Foreign Office inquiring about the welfare and whereabouts of Paulo Wright on behalf of his relatives and others who have asked and expressed their concern to the Department.

In presenting the note the Embassy should explain orally that the Department has received a large number of inquiries on this subject from members of the House and Senate as well as from private citizens all over the country. It should also note that we have received various reports about Wright's activities during recent years as well as concerning his present whereabouts. You should note that it is even said in some quarters that he is dead. We are hesitant to pass along any of this information because we are not in possession of the facts and would very much appreciate clarification of the matter by the GOB.