Cooperation with Other Governments: Latin America: Costa Rica
CROSS REFERENCE ON COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS:
LATIN AMERICAN (COSTA RICA)

FOR:

- Amendment to this License
- Extension of this License
- Renewal of this License
- Correspondence concerning this application
- Other (Specify)

1. FOR MATERIAL REASSURANCES BY THE LATIN AMERICAN REPUBLICS TO SWITZERLAND, SIMILAR TO THOSE GIVEN BY THIS GOVERNMENT, RE ISSUANCE OF UP TO 4000 IMMIGRATION VISAS TO REFUGEES CHILDREN FROM AXIS TERRITORY

2. FOR MATERIAL RE APPROVAL OF COSTA RICA RE THIS GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT, WITH VIEW TO ARRANGING AN EXCHANGE AGAINST GERMAN NATIONALS IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE OF INTERNEES HOLDING LATIN AMERICAN PASSPORTS AND PAPERS

SEE:

1. PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND
   (EVACUATION OF ABANDONED CHILDREN FROM FRANCE)

2. PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUES
   (RECOGNITION OF LATIN AMERICAN PASSPORTS)
Reference Department's telegram No. 390 of August 10, 5 p.m. concerning refugee children.

The embassy is reluctant to request the Costa Rican Government to "extend its acceptance" to children from Hungary, since no formal acceptance has as yet been received from the Foreign Office.

As reported in my telegram No. 496 of June 16, 10 a.m., the discussions on this subject were between the embassy and the head of a semi-official welfare agency. It was indicated at that time that, if the Costa Rican Government could be given assurances as to the permanency of stay of any refugee children to be accepted, it would formally agree to accept them. To such assurances have been received, however, and it is felt that the Foreign Office would not care to commit itself until this point has been clarified.

Further instructions are requested.

DAS FOYTLS

SAL
L.P./em

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, San Jose
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: May 16, 1944
NUMBER: 304

Formal consent to upholding validity of all Costa Rican passports held by persons whose lives may otherwise be in danger has been given by the Costa Rican Government. On the understanding that they do not come to Costa Rica, such persons may be declared eligible for exchange.

In regard to Jules Grunstein and wife (see my cable of May 13, no. 299) no special mention has been made and, although they are not eligible for entry into the country until written assurances are received, they should be considered in the category of persons holding valid Costa Rican passports.

The original note will be transmitted by despatch to follow.

The foregoing message is in reference to Embassy's despatch 1279, April 17 and Department's secret airgrams dated May 1 and 10.

DESPORTES

CC: Secretary, Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, Dubois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Paul Fehle, Reins, Sarsoy, Smith, Stainish, Stewart, Weinstein, White, Files.
No. 1400

Subject: Costa Rica consents to uphold validity of all Costa Rican passports held by persons whose lives might otherwise be in danger.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

With reference to my telegram no. 304 of May 16, 4 p. m., concerning the precarious situation of a number of persons holding passports issued in the name of the Costa Rican Government and the Costa Rican Government's agreement to uphold the validity of such passports, I have the honor to enclose the original note, No. 948-B of May 15, 1944, from the Foreign Office, together with the translation of that note, confirming the verbal assurance which had previously been given to me by then Foreign Minister Echandi.

While the matter was taken up orally with the Foreign Minister, he requested that a written note presenting the views of the United States Government be sent him for the archives. The enclosed note is his reply.

The attached note does not state specifically that the persons holding these Costa Rican passports may be considered eligible as Costa Rican citizens for inclusion in the exchange of German and Costa Rican nationals, but I have received verbal assurances from the Foreign Office that the language of the note implies such an inclusion since the Costa Rican Government cannot deny citizenship to the holders of such passports at the same time they uphold the validity of the passports. However, while the note in question also omits specific mention of the fact that the Costa Rican Government would not welcome the holders of such passports to Costa Rican territory, this connotation is likewise brought out in the second sentence of the first paragraph of the Foreign Minister's note where he refers to the fact that the United States Government will assume the responsibility for all the arrangements necessary for the transportation of such persons to non-Costa Rican territories.

The Foreign Minister appears to be of the opinion that his note No. 948-B gives the Costa Rican Government's consent to all the recommendations set forth in the
Department's secret airgrams of March 31, April 11 and May 1 and 10, and unless the Department thinks it advisable or necessary I shall not approach him again to formulate a demand addressed to the German Government, through the protecting power, that the lives of all persons holding Costa Rican passports be safeguarded and that they be given all rights, privileges and immunities accorded to civilian internees of enemy nationality to which the Geneva Conferences regarding the treatment of prisoners of war is applied by analogy, since the United States Government is the channel of communication for the Costa Rican Government to the Swiss Government which is protecting Costa Rican interests.

Respectfully yours,

Fay Allen Des Fortes

Enclosures:

1) Original note dated May 15, 1944 from Costa Rican Minister for Foreign Affairs;

2) Translation of note.
Señor Embajador:

Tengo el honor de anunciar a Vuestra Excelencia el recibo de su muy atenta nota N° 251, estrictamente confidencial, de fecha 15 de este mes, en la que se sirve recabar la opinión del Gobierno de Costa Rica respecto de la posibilidad de mantener su valor legal a varios pasaportes poseídos por europeos, generalmente polacos y judíos, sobre cuya legitimidad expedición pudiera haber alguna duda, a fin de proteger a sus tenedores contra actos de crueldad de las autoridades alemanas. Agrega Vuestra Excelencia que su Gobierno asumirá la responsabilidad para todos los arreglos necesarios al traslado de los portadores de tales pasaportes a territorios no costarricenses, en gage de todos los derechos que por analogía les otorga la Convención de Ginebra sobre Prisioneros de Guerra.

Muy complacido comunico a Vuestra Excelencia la conformidad de mi Gobierno con el procedimiento indicado en su expresada nota, ya que, en tanto no haya constatación eficiente de motivos de nulidad de los pasaportes en referencia, han de tenerse por válidos en razón de haber sido expedidos por funcionarios consulares costarricenses, particularmente, si así se cumple un deber de humanidad.

Aprovecho esta oportunidad para reiterar a Vuestra Excelencia los sentimientos de mi más alta y distinguida consideración.

Julio Acosta

Excellentísimo Señor

Fay A. Des Forges
Embajador Extraordinario y
Plenipotenciario de Estados Unidos

Copy: me
Republic of Costa Rica
Ministry of Foreign Relations

San José, May 15, 1944.

Mr. Ambassador:

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency of the receipt of your very courteous, strictly confidential, note No. 251 of the 15th instant, by which you request the opinion of the Government of Costa Rica with respect to the possibility of preserving the legal value of various passports possessed by Europeans, usually Poles and Jews, in connection with which there might be some doubt with respect to the legality of their expedition. In order to protect their holders against acts of cruelty of the German authorities, Your Excellency adds that your Government will assume the responsibility for all the arrangements necessary for the transportation to non-Costa Rican territories of the holders of such passports by virtue of analogous rights granted to them by the Geneva Convention with regard to Prisoners of War.

I am very pleased to communicate to Your Excellency the agreement of my Government with the procedure indicated in your above cited note, since, and until there has been effective proof of the reasons for the invalidity of the passports under reference, they are to be held valid by reason of their having been issued by Costa Rican consular officials, particularly if a humane duty is thereby fulfilled.

I take this opportunity to reiterate to Your Excellency the sentiments of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

Julio Acosta

[His Excellency]

Fay A. Des Portes
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States.

Translated by: mc
Checked by: art
SAN JOSE (COSTA RICA)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AD INTERIM.

The Department and the War Refugees Board are gratified by the results reported in your 1279 of April 17. Please convey to the Costa Rican authorities this Government's appreciation of their information to cooperate on the lines indicated in the Department's airgrams of March 31 and April 11.

Since only quick action can save the victims, you are requested to press for a note to the Protecting Power regarding the validity of documents and the treatment of bearers as soon as possible. We are also awaiting a formal notification from Costa Rica to the United States indicating their approval of our declaring the persons concerned eligible for exchange, subject to the assurances contained in the Department's airgrams of April 11.

Hull
With reference to the Department's secret airgram of March 8 and April 11, 1944, I have the honor to advise the Department that on April 15th I discussed the subject with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He stated that our conversation was most opportune since he had been contemplating taking an early opportunity to recommend to President Calderson a complete investigation of all outstanding German Foreign Service complaints that have been brought to his attention in the interest of clarifying the situation to a number of interested parties.

The Minister stated he thoroughly understood the situation and would be inclined to cooperate with the Department along the lines recommended in view of the humanitarian considerations involved. As he stated, there was no other alternative but to attempt to save the people concerned from harsh treatment by the Germans.

As suggested, I recommended that the Foreign Minister address the German Government through the protecting power as soon as possible along the lines suggested in the Department's airgrams of April 11. I shall remind him of this matter either today or tomorrow.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]
Edward O. Trueblood,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 11-11-44
By R. H. Parks Date 3/3/1972
Sec. Y., Abrahamson, Arkin, Bernstein, Cohm, Dubois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodol, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannen, Marks, McCormick, Pollak, Sains, Sargoy, Smith, Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, H. D., White, Pohle, Files.
With further reference to the Department’s circular telegram of March 26, 1944, and to subsequent communications on refugee matters, you are informed that the Department has now authorized the American consular officers in Switzerland to issue up to four thousand quota immigration visas to refugee children up to sixteen years of age without regard to religion, nationality or stateless status, to close relatives residing in enemy, enemy-controlled or occupied territory or to the availability of means of transportation to the United States. The purpose of this authorization is to facilitate the escape to Switzerland of orphaned or abandoned children by giving assurances to the Swiss Government that these children will not remain in Switzerland after the termination of hostilities in Europe. The authorization contains provisions for the continued renewal of the visas until such time as adequate transportation facilities to the United States become available. Private sources have posted bond with the Attorney General of the United States to assure this Government that the evacuating children will not become public charges.

If there are private agencies in the country to which you are accredited willing and able to undertake a program for the care of refugee children, the War Refugee Board is confident that it can make arrangements to provide those agencies with adequate funds for the maintenance, education and welfare of as many children as the Government of that country would be willing to admit. Should it prove necessary, funds would undoubtedly be available to meet transportation expenses from Switzerland to that country.

Kindly approach appropriate officials of the Government to which you are accredited, inform them of the foregoing and request them to give assurance to the Swiss Government through their diplomatic mission in Bern that they will accept up to a fixed number of refugee children in a manner similar to that of this Government. For the information of the Government to which you are accredited, it is conservatively estimated that there are in France alone eight to ten thousand abandoned or orphaned refugee children. Should that Government be willing to make this humanitarian offer, please request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to authorize the chief of mission in Bern to issue the appropriate number of immigration visas and to maintain their validity until suitable
suitable transportation facilities from Switzerland to its
country become available. The Government may be informed that
the special representative of the Far Refuge Board attached to
the American Legation in Bern will be glad to cooperate with
the diplomatic and consular officers of the other American Re-
publics in this as well as in all other refuge matters.

Please report by telegram whether this suggestion has been
favorably received by the Government to which you are accredited
and, if so, the number of children it is prepared to admit.

Neil

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn,
Dobbs, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann,
Mannon, Marks, McCormick, Paul, Pahle, Pollak, Raines, Sargoy, Smith,
Standish, Stewart, Weisstein, H. D. White, Files