Cooperation with Other Governments: Latin America: Panama
CROSS REFERENCE ON COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS:

LATIN AMERICAN (PANAMA)

FOR:

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

FOR MATERIAL RE LATIN AMERICAN REPUBLICS' ASSURANCES TO SWITZERLAND SIMILAR TO THOSE GIVEN BY THIS GOVERNMENT RE ISSUANCE OF UP TO 4000 IMMIGRATION VISAS TO REFUGEE CHILDREN FROM AXIS TERRITORY.

SEE:

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

(EVACUATION OF ABANDONED CHILDREN FROM FRANCE)
EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Panama, R. P., September 26, 1944

AIR MAIL
No. 639

SUBJECT: Visit by Jacob LANDAU of Jewish...Relief Committee to Panama

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular telegram of July 13, 1944, 12:30 p.m. and to report that Mr. Jacob LANDAU of the American Jewish Committee, New York, called on me this morning in connection with his trip to certain Latin American countries, sponsored by the War Refugee Board. He stated that he would be here only overnight but that upon his return in about a month he planned to approach the Foreign Ministry and hoped for my support, with a view to obtaining a modification of Article 15 of Panamanian Law No. 51 of December 21, 1938, so as to eliminate Palestinians from the list of nationalities whose admission into Panama is prohibited by that law. The restriction referred to is reinforced by the Panamanian Constitution of 1941, which in Article 23 of Title II states that the immigration into Panama of the following races is prohibited:

"The negro race whose original language is other than Spanish; The yellow race and the races originating in India, Asia Minor and North Africa."

I suggested to Mr. Landau that he confer with my British colleague and offered to arrange an interview. My colleague has informed me that he has requested instructions from his Government as to the attitude which he should take regarding Mr. Landau's proposal and I should appreciate being informed similarly by the Department before Mr. Landau's return to Panama on or about October 25.

Respectfully yours,

A. H. Warren

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972
Hull,

References are to your 84 of July 16.

Please inform the Foreign Minister of France that the Department and War Refugee Board appreciate the offer of economic aid in the emergency refugee sheltering program made by France in note 961 of July 16.

Hull.

Doll.

B Hull.

Doll.

Walter H. H. Hull

8/21/44

CoA
AIRGRAM TO EMBASSY, PANAMA

References made to your 94 of July 14.

Please inform the Foreign Minister of Panama that the
Department and War Refugee Board appreciate the offer of
economic aid in the emergency refugee sheltering program
made by Panamanian note 961 of July 10.

9:30 a.m.
August 18, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamsen, Cohn, DeBois, Friedman,
Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

A

Nakshad 8/16/44 L.S.L.
Panama, July 25, 1944

No. 116

S.R.G. War Refugee Board

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
Washington

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular airgram, June 12, 1944, regarding the President's special message to Congress reporting on the efforts of the Government to rescue the Jews and other victims of enemy oppression from Axis-occupied Europe.

There are forwarded attached copy and office translation of the Foreign Office's reply to this Embassy's memorandum transmitting a copy of the special message in question in which President адhes to this undertaking back.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador

John J. Finlay
Counselor of Embassy

Enclosure:

Copy and office translation of
President's message of July 12, 1944.

VLC/wm
Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores.

El Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores ha recibido el
memorial de la U.N.O. de las Naciones Unidas de América,
de fecha 25 de junio último, en el cual se transcribe la
misión especial que el presidente señor presidente de la
sociedad índica con el gobernador de su misión, en el
que se hace sello en el de los Estados Unidos de su Gobierno en
respec a las naciones y comisión especial de la parte de la
misión, y que de hacer acordar este acto de la acción por
el Presidente, para establecer un esfuerzo de cooperación con los
países en el mundo, en Fortaleza, Brasil, 12 de julio de
este año.

El Gobierno de Brasil, que se ha identificado con
el de los Estados Unidos y con los de las demás naciones en la
gran causa de la proclamación del derecho de los
pueblos perdidos y de la realización de los derechos de los
indígenas, acuerda con el acuerdo hemisférico y dispone la
iniciativa del Premio Nobel Roosevelt, un acto noble,
inspirado en los más altos principios de humanidad, la
realización práctica de esos elevados propósitos. El mismo se
inscribe en la corriente de actos de solidaridad del
movimiento universal, de avance de bienes y sana
generación, que constituyen una nueva era de la nueva una
que hoy se une en el mundo.

El Gobierno de Brasil se une a este acto noble con una
tripartita obra que el de la justicia y el de los
indígenas de un mundo nuevo, ha entendido y lleva adelante el
conocimiento bilateral.
Panama, July 14, 1944

AIR MAIL
No. 54

SUBJECT: War Refugees Board

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular circular
airgram of June 20, 1944, regarding the President's an-
nouncement of the use of the Army Camp Fort Ontario at Oswego, New
York, as an emergency refugee shelter to house one thousand refu-
gees who are being brought to the United States from Italy without
regard to the regular immigration procedure. The contents of the
secret circular airgram were brought to the attention of the Foreign
Minister of Panama and there is forwarded attached a copy and of-
ce translation of Note D. P. No. 961, July 10, 1944, in reply.
It should be noted that in the reply above mentioned the Foreign
Minister states that it is the policy of the Government of Panama
to cooperate to the best of its abilities in this effort to rescue
the victims of Nazi oppression. The Foreign Minister also states
that the Government of Panama will offer its economic aid in pro-
portion to Panama's capacity.

The Foreign Minister has also requested that the President
of the United States be informed of the proposal of the Govern-
ment of Panama, and should this offer be accepted, that the Gov-
ernment of Panama be so informed in order that the amount which
the Panamanian Government will contribute to this great work of
salvation may be set aside.

Respectfully yours,

A. M. Warren

Enclosures:

Copy and translation of Note No. 961
of July 10, 1944.

VLC/WW

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter: 1-11-78
By: R. H. Porter, Tass
Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 43, dated July 14, 1944, from Embassy, Panamá

COPY

Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores
Departamento Diplomático

D. P. No. 961

Panamá, 10 de julio de 1944

Señor Embajador:

Tengo a honra avisar a Vuestro Excelencia recibo de su atenta nota No. 7, del 27 de junio próximo pasado, en la cual tiene a bien referirse a mi comunicación No. 828, del 13 del mismo mes y a las otras comunicaciones cruzadas entre esa Embajada y este Ministerio, en relación con los planes de la Junta de Refugiados de Guerra, para facilitar el escape de las numerosas personas oprimidas y perseguidas en los países ocupados por Alemania.

Vuestro Excelencia ha tenido a bien informarme en detalle con respecto a la intervención directa del Excelentísimo Presidente de los Estados Unidos, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, en el sentido de disponer que el Campo del Ejército situado en el Puente de Ontario, Oswego, New York, fuese destinado a refugio de emergencia para mil refugiados que serán traídos inmediatamente a los Estados Unidos desde Italia, sin tomar en cuenta los procedimientos ordinarios de inmigración. Este acto, sin duda, reafirma de manera fahaciente al espíritu humanitario del Presidente Roosevelt, del cual ya ha dado numerosas y palpables muestras.

Me informa además Vuestro Excelencia de las otras medidas ordenadas por el Presidente de los Estados Unidos y que están siendo llevadas a cabo por la Junta de Refugiados de Guerra que tienen por propósito salvar a numerosas víctimas de los crueles efectos de la política inhumana de Hitler.

Mi Gobierno ha visto con singular simpatía las diferentes medidas, reafirmadas por acciones, de humanidad, caridad y ayuda que el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos, por iniciativa de su Presidente, ha dado en estos momentos de difícil situación para gran sector de los pueblos europeos. Existe en el ánimo de mi Gobierno el deseo de cooperar en la medida de sus posibilidades en este esfuerzo por rescatar a las víctimas de la opresión nazi.

Aun cuando el Gobierno de Panamá está aislado de la mayor buena voluntad para cooperar eficazmente en esta noble cruzada de liberación humana, se ha encontrado con que las facilidades...

Su Excelencia,
Avra M. Warren,
Embajador Extraordinario y Plenipotenciario de los Estados Unidos de América,
Ciudad.
facilidades de refugio adecuado en el territorio de la República, aún para personas conocidas, son casi nulas. Por tal motivo, mi Gobierno, deseoso siempre de coadyuvar en esta empresa, está dispuesto a ofrecer su cooperación económica en proporción a sus posibilidades.

Me permítas, pues, solicitar a Vuestra Excelencia que haga del conocimiento del señor Presidente de los Estados Unidos, los propósitos de mi Gobierno, y de ser aceptada su oferta, agradeceré a Vuestra Excelencia comunicármelo para disponer el monto con el cual mi Gobierno contribuirá en esta magna obra de salvamento.

Válgame de la oportunidad para reiterar a Vuestra Excelencia las seguridades de mi más alta y distinguida consideración.

(Fdo) Samuel Lewis
Samuel Lewis
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores

Copied: mw
Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 84
dated July 14, 1944, from Embassy, Panama

TRANSLATION

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Diplomatic Department

D. F. No. 961
Panama, July 10, 1944

Mr. Ambassador:

I have the honor to advise Your Excellency of the receipt of your Note No. 7 dated June 27, 1944, in which you referred to my Note No. 828 dated June 13, and other communications which have been exchanged between the Embassy and this Ministry in relation to the plans of the War Refugees Board to facilitate the escape of numerous oppressed and persecuted peoples in the countries occupied by Germany.

Your Excellency informed me in detail regarding the direct intervention of the President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in setting aside the Army Camp at Fort Ontario, at Oswego, New York, as an emergency refugee shelter for one thousand refugees who are being brought immediately to the United States from Italy without regard to the regular immigration procedure. This gain reaffirms in a convincing manner the humanitarian spirit of President Roosevelt, which has been shown repeatedly in many ways.

Your Excellency also informed me of the other measures ordered by the President of the United States and being carried out by the War Refugees Board for the purpose of saving the numerous victims of Hitler's inhuman cruelties.

My Government has viewed with sympathy the various examples, reaffirmed by actions, of humanitarianism, charity and aid which the Government of the United States, through the initiative of the President, has offered in these difficult moments for a large part of the European states. It is my Government's intention to cooperate to the best of its abilities in this effort to rescue the victims of Nazi oppression.

Although my Government has the greatest desire to cooperate effectively in this noble cause to free these peoples, it has found the facilities for refugees in the territory of the Republic, even for a small number of victims, to be insufficient. For this reason, my Government, always willing to cooperate in this undertaking, is disposed to offer its economic aid in accordance with its capacity.

His Excellency

Permit

Avra M. Warren,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the United States of America.
 Permit me to request that Your Excellency bring to the attention of the President of the United States the intention of my Government, and should this offer be accepted, that the Government of Panama be so informed in order that the amount which the Panamanian Government will contribute to this great work of salvation may be set aside.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

(Sgd) Samuel Lewis
Samuel Lewis
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Translated...
AIR MAIL
No. 5538
SUBJECT: War Refugee Board

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's confidential circular airgram, April 15, 1944, 7:00 p.m., regarding the plan of the War Refugee Board to facilitate the escape to Switzerland of orphaned and abandoned children.

The substance of this airgram was duly transmitted to the Panamanian Foreign Office by Note No. 871, April 28, 1944, but up to the present time, despite several informal reminders, no answer or acknowledgment of any kind has been received.

By memorandum dated April 27 the Embassy also advanced the suggestion that the Panamanian reply of February 10 to the Embassy's memorandum notifying Panama of the President's Executive Order of January 22, 1944, establishing the War Refugee Board (see my despatch No. 5166, February 12, 1944) be further implemented by the issuance of a declaration of policy similar to that contained in the Executive Order mentioned, as requested in the Department's circular airgram of February 29, 1944, 7:30 p.m. Up to the present moment, however, no reply to this memorandum has been received.

In this connection I might mention that when The Honorable Elihu D. STONE visited Panama in May, 1944, I escorted him to Panama and made a courtesy call on the President of Panama. At this time Mr. Stone explained the program for assisting Jewish refugees that he was engaged in, and although the President showed interest in the matter, he did not indicate any tangible contribution that Panama might make in this regard. In this connection, I refer to my despatch No. 5133, February 4, 1944.

I shall not fail to report any further developments.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

[Signature]
No. 5166

Panama, February 12, 1944

SUBJECT: Memorandum Received from Foreign Office in Connection with Reception of War Refugees by Panama.

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

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 5133 of February 4, 1944, which reported in part that in compliance with the instructions contained in the Department's circularagram of January 26 concerning the measures ordered by President ROOSEVELT for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution, I had sent a memorandum to the Foreign Office explaining the policies expressed in the President's Executive Order concerning war refugees and stating the President's hope that the United Nations would be disposed to cooperate in this connection.

There are now enclosed a copy and informal office translation of the memorandum in reply received from the Foreign Office on February 12.

Respectfully yours,

John A. Succi
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

Enclosure:
Copy and translation of Foreign Office Memorandum

SR:mr
Translation

MEMORANDUM

The Ministry of Foreign Relations has received the Memorandum of the United States Embassy dated February 4 stating that the President of the United States has issued an Executive Order by means of which there is created a Board composed of the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and War in order to work for the rescue and relief of the Jews and other victims of Axis oppression who are in imminent danger of death. In said Memorandum it is also stated that it is the hope of the President of the United States that all members of the United Nations and other Governments will cooperate in the realization of this difficult but important task.

This initiative, which constitutes a new proof of the noble principles of human solidarity which inspire His Excellency Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, is received with all sympathy and enthusiasm by the Government of the Republic of Panama, which will lend its decided cooperation to the realization of this noble project.

The Government of the Republic of Panama hopes that the rapid and opportune intervention of the United Nations and of Friendly Governments will effectively contribute to put an end to the horrors of persecution which so many victims are suffering in Europe.

Panama, February 10, 1944

(Signed)
I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular airgram of January 26 concerning the measures ordered by President ROOSEVELT for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution. The airgram directed that a report be made concerning such action as Panama might be taking to assist in the rescue of Jews and other persecuted minorities.

Because of the situation which exists here today, Panama has not been extending aid to war refugees, and it is not likely that the Republic will be anxious in the future to receive Jews and members of other minorities who are being persecuted abroad. During the years 1936, 1937, and 1938 a great many refugees from Europe, mostly Jews, arrived in Panama in transit to South and Central America. Some actually intended to go on but experienced unexpected difficulties in connection with securing visas for the countries further to the North and South. Others, in obtaining Panamanian transit visas, apparently never had any intention of proceeding any further. At any rate, they settled in the capital cities of Panama and Colon and for the most part entered into commercial activities, in which they were extremely successful, to the alarm of Panamanian businessmen who accused them of low business ethics and commercial skullduggery of all kinds. In fact, so many Jewish refugees from Europe established themselves in Panama that even resident Jews of foreign birth in business here became alarmed and discontinued their efforts to assist the migration of these people. Of late Panamanian businessmen have been increasingly vociferous in their denunciation of the foreign refugees who have settled here, and

who
who have become most successful commercial competitors. The Nationalization of Commerce Law, which subsequently was implemented by decree, restricts the participation of foreigners in Panamanian trade, and, according to responsible officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, was drafted and passed solely for the purpose of protecting Panamanian businessmen from the commercial activities of European refugees, accused of operating under low ethical standards and of contributing nothing to the social and economic welfare of the country. For these reasons, the Republic of Panama has so far taken no steps to encourage the immigration of further war refugees, particularly those who are Jewish.

The migration of a great many war refugees is effectively prohibited by Decree No. 110 of December 22, 1941, which places in the class of those persons whose immigration is absolutely prohibited all persons born in Axis countries or in those countries at war with Panama or any of her Allies. The Decree also rigidly restricts immigration from all countries occupied by the Axis or by any nation at war with Panama or any of her Allies. No effort has been made to alter this Decree, and it does not appear that any effort will be made under the actual circumstances. Because of the Decree no war refugees are reported to have entered Panama for some time, and in fact it is very likely that if a war refugee now resident in Panama but not a citizen of the Republic should leave the country for any reason he would find it exceedingly difficult to return.

In view of the fact that the Government of Panama has effectively prohibited the migration of war refugees and is actively engaged in discriminating against those already resident here, I do not feel that it would be appropriate at this time to attempt to make strong representations looking toward inducing the Republic to cooperate in the policy of rescuing the victims of enemy oppression. It is possible that Panama might accept a few refugees of the agricultural class but I believe the Government would not be sympathetic to the idea of aiding in the relief and rescue of victims of enemy oppression as a whole. The obstacle which is interfering with Panamanian cooperation in this regard is, as stated, the fear that war refugees would immediately enter into commercial activities here, in opposition to the prevailing spirit of nationalism. Panama presents excellent opportunities in the retail commercial field and so far foreigners have apparently always been able to exploit these opportunities better than have the Panamanians themselves.

With regard to inducing Panama to cooperate in carrying out the policy of the rescuing of war refugees, it would
would first be necessary to persuade the Government to modify the Decree mentioned above. I believe that no little pressure would have to be applied to accomplish this. Once it had been done, the Panamanian Government might be persuaded to accept refugees who are experts in agriculture. But it must be recalled that the influx of even a limited number of refugees is quite noticeable in a country with in the neighborhood of only 600,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom are concentrated in the two largest cities. On the other hand, there are large areas in the Republic which are uninhabited and undeveloped. The Panamanian Government might be more favorably inclined to accept refugees who were willing to undergo the rigors of colonization of undeveloped areas in a tropical climate.

In compliance with the instructions contained in the Department's airmgram under reference, I have sent a memorandum to the Foreign Office explaining the policies expressed in the President's Executive Order concerning war refugees, and expressing the President's hope that the United Nations will be disposed to cooperate in this connection. I am frank to say that I am not sanguine that Panama will take effective cooperative action.

The Embassy will of course do everything within its own power to make effective the policy of our Government.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

Chargé d'Affaires a.i.