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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90067

April 15, 1987

Honorable Santiago Dorijos
Consul General of Panama
548 South Spring Street, Suite 1040
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Re: Nazi war criminal, Karl Linnas

Dear Mr. Dorijos:

Thank you for speaking with me today regarding Karl Linnas. As I told you, I was one of the United States Justice Department attorneys who prosecuted Linnas. I am currently an attorney in private practice in Los Angeles, and am one of the attorneys for the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Pursuant to your request, I have enclosed some written information regarding Linnas. As you can see from the enclosed decisions of the United States Courts, Mr. Linnas has been found to have been the Chief of the Nazi concentration camp in Tartu, Estonia, and to have participated in hundreds of murders of innocent men, women and children. The evidence against Linnas is summarized in my letter to the editor of the Los Angeles Times, which is enclosed.

I have heard from very reliable sources that Panama has agreed to take Karl Linnas upon his deportation from the United States. I can't help but believe that the persons in your country who decided to accept Linnas did not know his background. The grounds for accepting Linnas were "for humanitarian reasons." As you can see from the crimes Linnas committed, he deserves no humanitarian consideration. Furthermore, I think you can see the problems your country will face if it accepts a person who has been found to be a Nazi war criminal and mass murderer by United States Courts. Panama cannot try Linnas for the crimes he committed in another country. That means that he will be a free man in Panama. It is certain that there will be a great deal of protest which arises if Panama gives refuge to this criminal.

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Another Nazi war criminal, Bohdan Koziy, illegally entered Costa Rica last year. Costa Rica has had terrible problems determining what to do with him. Costa Rica has arrested Koziy, and is now determining whether they can deport him to the U.S.S.R. If Panama accepts Linnas voluntarily, it will create even greater problems than Koziy did for Costa Rica, since Costa Rica can at least say that Koziy entered illegally.

I hope you will do everything possible to see that Panama does not give refuge to Linnas. He should be deported to the Soviet Union, where his crimes took place. I believe that those in your country who made the decision to accept Linnas will greatly appreciate your bringing the true facts regarding Linnas' crimes to their attention.

Please call me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey N. Mausner

Offer of Asylum to Accused Nazi Is Withdrawn

By ROBERT GILLETTE,
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Amid bitter criticism from U.S. Jewish leaders, the government of Panama Wednesday withdrew an offer of asylum to Karl Linnas, an American emigre accused of Nazi war crimes who faces deportation to the Soviet Union and execution under a pending death sentence.

Some Justice Department officials said Wednesday that Atty. Gen. Edwin Meese III had agreed that Linnas could be deported to Panama, which had decided on Friday to grant Linnas asylum "on humanitarian grounds." Others, however, said later that Meese had learned of the asylum offer only on Wednesday morning and had decided only to order a study of its legality.

Conflicting Statements

As word of the offer leaked out, however, Linnas' fate was plunged into confusion as Panamanian diplomats in Washington and New York issued conflicting statements, one saying the grant of asylum had been suspended for further study and another saying categorically that it had been denied.

Linnas, a 67-year-old retired surveyor from Greenlawn, N.Y., has been accused by the Soviet Union of running a Nazi concentration camp in his native Estonia. The Soviet Union annexed the Baltic country during World War II under the terms of a 1939 pact with Nazi Germany. Linnas' family contends that he is innocent and has been

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ASYLUM: Panama Withdraws Its Offer

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framed by evidence the Soviet authorities manufactured in retribution for his activities as an anti-communist partisan in the war.

In Washington, the minister of the Panamanian embassy, Adolfo Arrocha, said his government initially had decided last Friday to grant Linnas asylum "on humanitarian grounds," but that on Wednesday afternoon it "suspended action pending a more profound study of the case." Arrocha emphasized that Linnas' request had not been denied.

In New York, however, Panamanian Consul General Jose Blandon issued a statement saying his government had "decided to deny [the] request for political asylum of Karl Linnas" and "condemns the crimes committed by fascism."

"In this way, the government of the Republic of Panama echoes the concern of important sectors of the Jewish community and the rest of the world as well as of our country," Blandon said, according to United Press International. Panamanian officials were not available to resolve the conflict.

Jews Urge Deportation

The World Jewish Congress, among other groups, has strongly urged the Justice Department to deport Linnas to the Soviet Union. A variety of much smaller East European and Baltic emigre groups, joined by former White House communications director Patrick J. Buchanan and other conservative commentators, have opposed such action and argue instead for changes in American law that would permit criminal trials of suspected Nazis in this country.

In a February memorandum to Meese, Buchanan said President Reagan also favored holding criminal trials in the United States for suspected Nazi collaborators, but was leaving the disposition of the Linnas case to the Justice Department.

Linnas—who faces the prospect of becoming the first American emigre deported to the Soviet Union to face a death sentence—has been waging a federal court campaign from week to week to delay his deportation while his attorney, former Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark, searches for an alternative country.

Meese initially gave Linnas until March 15 to find another country,



United Press International

Karl Linnas

but a series of court actions has extended the deadline. The Supreme Court is due on Friday to hear Linnas' third appeal since last December for a full review of his case, which has been in the federal courts since 1979.

Earlier Wednesday, Linnas' daughter Anu issued a statement praising Panama for accepting her father. She said: "We are very happy that there is one country courageous and independent enough to accept a man who has been cheated out of justice in his adopted homeland."

On Wednesday afternoon, however, the World Jewish Congress in New York asserted that the attorney general had decided to deport

Linnas to Panama, and condemned the reported decision as a "subversion of justice of monumental proportions." The group accused Panama of offering itself as a "haven for Nazi murderers."

In a statement to the Associated Press, Eli M. Rosenbaum, the organization's general counsel and a former attorney in the Justice Department's war crimes unit, said Linnas "has been ordered deported to the only country in the world [the Soviet Union] that has asserted criminal jurisdiction in this case and is willing to take it."

'A Comfortable Retirement'

"Instead, Mr. Meese is going to send him to a comfortable retirement under the Panamanian palm trees," Rosenbaum said. He was scheduled to meet Wednesday afternoon with Panamanian officials in Washington.

All of the evidence linking Linnas to wartime atrocities, and describing him as the commandant of a concentration camp in his native Estonia, has been supplied by the Soviet Union, where Linnas was tried in absentia in 1962 and condemned to death.

In a federal District Court decision in 1981 revoking Linnas' citizenship, Judge Jacob Mishler in New York ruled that the evidence "overwhelmingly supported" the Soviet charges. His attorneys, however, in arguing that the Soviet evidence is inherently untrustworthy, have noted that the Soviets inadvertently published the verdict of his 1962 trial three weeks before the trial was held.