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In June 1970, three senior colonels of the Panamanian National Guard, who had been jailed by Torrijos for their participation in the abortive December 1969 coup, escaped from jail and fled into the Canal Zone, where they sought political asylum. The Panamanian government loudly demanded their immediate return and threatened reprisals. After extensive inter-departmental coordination, the US rejected Panamanian demands for the return of the colonels on the basis that they qualified as political refugees under the terms of the UN Protocol on Refugees. Moreover, the PJG did not formally charge the colonels with an extraditable crime. The colonels were thereafter permitted to leave the Zone and enter the US.

In the spring of 1971, ex-National Guard Colonel Abraham Crocama, an Arias agent, entered the Canal Zone surreptitiously for the purpose of organizing a coup against Torrijos. The Panamanian authorities learned of his presence there, officially protested and demanded his return. A harsh anti-US propaganda attack was initiated. The US refused to hand over Crocama to the National Guard, considering that he legitimately qualified as a political refugee under the terms of the UN Protocol. Moreover, Crocama, whose entry into the Canal Zone violated the terms of his parole from an earlier offense committed in the Zone, was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment. At the end of this period of confinement, Crocama was allowed to leave the Canal Zone and return to Venezuela.

3. US Soldiers from Canal Zone Seek Asylum in Panama

In May 1971, two black GI's escaped from a military stockade in the Zone and entered the Republic of Panama. They were arrested by the GN, and later were apparently persuaded to request and were granted political asylum by the Panamanian authorities. A third GI of Chilean-American parentage who was on leave in Panama, similarly requested and was granted political asylum. Panamanian press reports claimed that the GI's charged US military authorities with racial and ethnic discrimination. In the midst of this incident, Panamanian Foreign Minister announced that an attempt was made by "two intelligence agents" of the Canal Zone to "kidnap" the two black GI's who had been granted asylum in Panama. The two alleged "intelligence agents" were arrested by the GN and charged with the kidnap attempt. They turned out to be two GI guards at a military stockade on leave in Panama who, spotting the escapees, had sought to alert the GN to their presence. They were subsequently released by the GN after strong diplomatic representation by the Ambassador, and the

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