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for this incident was carried on by a special Panama task force composed of IG principals working out of the Operations Center. In Panama, the Panama Review Committee (PRC), under the chairmanship of Ambassador Adair and including Governor Leber and the CINC, General Porter, effected coordination at that end. After 12 days of intensive efforts, US officials in the Zone finally persuaded Arias to leave, and on October 23, he was flown to Washington aboard a military transport. During this period, the US representative to the OAS Council briefed the delegates on several occasions on US efforts to deal with the crisis. Following Arias' arrival in the US, there was prepared and cleared at an inter-agency level a contingency paper outlining alternative procedures for dealing with Arias if he should attempt to return to the Zone.

## 2. Panamanian Political Refugees Seeking Asylum in the Canal Zone

Since the October 1968 coup, there has been a recurring flow of political refugees entering the Canal Zone and requesting political asylum. The majority of these cases involved low-level Arias supporters or others who felt threatened by the National Guard. In each of these cases, the refugees were temporarily placed in detention centers and, after clearance with Washington, were allowed to depart from the Canal Zone to the US or other places of exile. Several of these cases, involving major opponents of the Torrijos regime, developed into full-fledged crises in US-Panamanian relations.

In February 1970, Hildebrando Nicosia, an Arias intimate, surreptitiously entered the Canal Zone from whence he engaged in plotting against the PJG, involving occasional clandestine visits into the Republic. When the PJG learned of his activities, they demanded that Nicosia be immediately turned over to Panamanian authorities. The PJG hastily produced an indictment against Nicosia, charging fraud on an earlier loan request Nicosia had made to the Social Security Fund. On the basis of extensive inter-agency coordination, we agreed to instruct the Governor to issue an extradition order, which was not carried out since Nicosia's lawyer filed a Writ of Habeas Corpus which had the effect of staying extradition. Thereafter, Nicosia appealed the extradition warrant through the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. During the February crisis, US-Panamanian relations were severely strained, with harsh anti-US criticism appearing in the Panamanian press. While Nicosia was appealing, he was allowed to enter the US on parole. In mid-1971, the Panamanian authorities dropped their charges against Nicosia and, as a result, the Governor cancelled the outstanding extradition warrant.

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