

Vesco's Dealings With High Officials



Jack Anderson

GOVERNMENT investigators have uncovered sinister bonds between fugitive financier Robert Vesco and the leaders of the two nations that give him shelter, Costa Rica and the Bahamas.

In the Bahamas, where Vesco is now fighting extradition to the United States, they said, Prime Minister Lynden Pindling has profited handsomely from his association with Vesco.

According to U.S. intelligence sources, Vesco bought a \$450,000 house for Pindling near Nassau. Vesco's Bahamas commonwealth bank is said to hold the mortgage on an office building owned by Pindling's family and also made loans on the Paradise Bakery, a Pindling investment.

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IN COSTA RICA, President Jose Figueres is not only personally indebted to Vesco, but the financial security of his nation depends in part on Vesco's continued good will, the sources said.

They said they have determined that Vesco has more than \$10 million in Costa Rican bonds. A demand by Vesco for return of his money would seriously affect the Central American nation's finances.

Vesco is believed to have followed similar patterns in the Bahamas and Panama. In Panama, his deposits amount to several million dollars, the sources said. His investments in the Bahamas Central Bank are believed to be in excess of \$10 million. Again, the sources said, sudden

withdrawal would shake the nation's economy.

There have been reports that Vesco has invested as much as \$25 million each in Costa Rica and the Bahamas.

"Most of the money that he has put out is in deposits or loans that are payable on demand," the source said. "He takes care of the top people and a few others, and leaves the rest of the officials waiting for a chance to get some, too. It makes them very friendly."

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THE SOURCES believe, therefore, that Vesco's carefully structured financial deals could enable him to escape extradition. They point out that when Vesco was arrested recently in the Bahamas on a U.S. warrant, the authorities did not seize the Costa Rican diplomatic passport he carries.

Vesco has made a habit of reaching the leaders of countries where he does business. He hired President Nixon's nephew, Donald A. Nixon, to work in the Vesco financial operations both in Europe and in the Bahamas.

Footnote: We reported last May 21 that a recent CIA report showed Figueres' personal fortunes were at low ebb. The CIA noted that Figueres' nephew, Fernando, said "all members of the President's family are deeply concerned with family financial matters." It was at this point, we reported then, that the clever Vesco began to buy his way into the good graces of Figueres.