

Vesco's Race to Become A Citizen of Costa Rica

San Jose,
Costa Rica

Fugitive American financier Robert Vesco is trying to get Costa Rican citizenship before President-elect Rodrigo Carazo is inaugurated and throws him out of the country.

Vesco, who renounced his American citizenship in 1973 and has lived in Costa Rica for six years, applied for citizenship Thursday. Carazo told the financier on Wednesday that if he had not left the country by his inauguration on May 8 he would expel him.

The law is vague on how long action on a citizenship application can be delayed. If he becomes a citizen, he cannot be forced to leave the country.

Vesco has met the requirements of five years' residence in the country, a

promise to remain and proof of an income. His list of character witnesses was headed by former President Jose Figueres, whose financial dealings with him while he was still president became a major political issue. Those dealings are responsible for the pressure for him to leave the country.

His application was sent to the Civil Registry to determine whether he has left the country during the past five years and whether he has been convicted of a crime or felony. The Civil Registry's ruling can be appealed.

Vesco is charged in the United States with looting \$224 million from a mutual fund he controlled. He denies the charge. He also is charged with an illegal contribution to former President Nixon's re-election campaign fund.

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