

Tom Casey, Acting Spokesman

Washington, DC May 9, 2005

QUESTION: Luis Posada?

MR. CASEY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Is -- does the U.S. know where he is? Is he in the United States? How did he get here? Would the U.S. look favorably upon an asylum request? Sorry for all the questions.

MR. CASEY: I've got to think which ones are no's and which ones are yeses, Tammy.

Look, I think -- let me tell you what I can say on this subject. First of all, I just want to reiterate something I think most of you heard from Assistant Secretary Noriega when the Council of the Americas was meeting here the other week, and that's certainly the United States has no interest in allowing anyone with a criminal background to enter the United States. Certainly, to date, I can tell you we haven't gotten any request for the extradition of Luis Posada Carriles from Venezuela or from any other government.

In terms of how extradition requests would be handled or what existing arrangements there are with Venezuela or with other countries, again, I'd have to leave it to the Justice Department.

In terms of where he presently is, I think it's fair to say we don't know. But in terms of what information might be available or, you know, what people would do at border points, that's something, again, I'd have to refer you to the Department of Homeland Security for.

QUESTION: You said that the U.S. has no interest in allowing anyone with a criminal background in. Does that mean, should there be an asylum request, it would not be granted?

MR. CASEY: Should there be an asylum request, as you know, I wouldn't really be able to speak to it because that's something that's handled by other departments and, general policy, we don't discuss them. So again, if you want to have a other "no comment" you can probably talk with the Department of Homeland Security on it, but I'm afraid I'm not in a position to talk about asylum requests.

QUESTION: Tom?

MR. CASEY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Do you consider him to be a terrorist?

MR. CASEY: I don't actually have any particular assessment of him to share with you. Whether he has -- whether he would be wanted or be criminally liable for any activities here is a question you'll just have to take up with the Department of Justice.

QUESTION: Well, there's a retired FBI agent who said that Posada was up to his eyeballs -- his quote -- in planning the 1976 attack that killed 73 people aboard a Cuban airline. I mean, you're not saying very much at all when you say the U.S. is not interested in allowing anyone in the country with a criminal background. That says nothing about Posada. Are you prepared to say anything at all about Posada's past?

MR. CASEY: I'm really not prepared to say anything about his specific case. Again, you know, the U.S. position on terrorism and how to deal with terrorists, I think is pretty well known at this point. I'm just not in a position, George, to be

able to offer you up anything about his specific case at this time.

Yeah.

QUESTION: I'm sorry, I'll just try one more on -- well, what level of concern is there here that he could have slipped into the country?

MR. CASEY: Well, again, I think I'd have to just ask you to go talk with the folks at Department of Homeland Security about this. I have no information indicating one way or the other whether he is, was -- is, was or has been here. But they may have something else to tell you, I just don't.

Yeah.