

# INVASION OF HAITI THWARTED

## Group of Exiles Nabbed in Florida By Customs Agents

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) — A Cuban exile said today that a vest pocket invasion of Haiti, designed to eventually lead to a war against Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, was squelched by the arrest of a heavily armed band of Latin exiles and American adventurers.

However, the chief of operations, Rolando Masferrer, controversial former aide of ousted Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, said 50 commandos got away in a boat before customs agents made the arrests in a raid at a beachfront home in the middle of the Florida Keys Monday night.

**BUT ONE OF** the company commanders said he escaped the roundup by crawling away in the darkness and hitching a ride to Miami.

The commander, Aton Constanzo Palay, later detailed the battle plans, which he said in-

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involved about 75 Cuban exiles, 30 Haitian exiles and 28 Americans.

He said 20 exiles had already been sneaked into Haiti and were supposed to attack and seize the airport at Cape Haitian this week.

A fledgling air force of five planes — a B25, a B26, a DC3 and two P51s — would then use the airport as a base to bomb the garrison adjacent to the presidential palace at Port au Prince, Constanzo said.

**THE REMAINDER** of the little army was to land at Port au Prince, rally the rebels already in Haiti and replace dictator Francois Duvalier with Father Jean Baptiste Georges, Constanzo said.

Within 30 days the invaders hoped to build an army strong enough to strike across the narrow Windward Passage and overthrow Castro, Constanzo said.

Masferrer, one of the 70 arrested in the raid, was bitter at the United States for stopping his foray against Haiti, which also ended his plans for fighting Castro.

Many of his followers obviously considered Haiti only a stepping stone to Cuba.

"We want to fight commu-

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nism, but not in Vietnam, only in Cuba," said one. "So why stop us?"

The war party—dressed in a motley collection of U.S. Army fatigues, camouflage uniforms and hunting gear—had been in the Keys five days getting ready for the invasion. A truck loaded with 1,000 pounds of dynamite was found on the highway Sunday, and two members of the group were arrested.

**MASFERRER SAID** the army was to embark in three ships. He indicated the first ship slipped away from shore possibly only hours before the raid.

Fifteen men were about to board a 55-foot shrimp boat when the agents broke in. The remainder of the group was to take off later, he said, although he did not indicate when.

There was much shouting in Spanish when the war party was forced to leave the concrete-block house.