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## Runaway Terrorism

**T**HE CIA APPARENTLY ended its sponsorship of anti-Castro terror in the 1960s. But the apparatus created for that purpose subsequently took on a life of its own and now constitutes a formidable problem of public safety and diplomacy for the United States as well as Cuba. The stages of this grotesque transformation were detailed in this newspaper Sunday by journalist George Crile III. His report was a painfully somber reminder of how difficult it is to exercise genuine control over secret organizations.

Trained in terror by the CIA and assured that their method as well as their cause was honorable, the anti-Castro exiles recruited in the early 1960s were understandably reluctant to go along when the United States began moving toward coexistence with Havana. For many, the 1973 anti-hijacking pact under which the United States assumed a formal obligation to limit exile attacks, was the last straw. At least 100 bombings have since taken place around Miami, many targeted against American officials investigating exile terrorism. Long a holdout, the exile group representing Bay of Pigs participants came over to terror last year; it asked only that the violence be conducted outside the United States. The repeated attacks on Cuban officials and property outside Cuba are the result. These culminated in the death of 73 people when a Cubana Airlines plane was blown out of the sky in October. Mr. Castro responded by renouncing the hijack treaty—a step serving the exiles' purpose of undermining American-Cuban relations. The exiles are also suspected of killing, at Chilean bidding, the former Chilean ambassador in Washington, Orlando Letelier.

It is no surprise that Fidel Castro, for one, doubts that the terrorists run their own affairs. Says journalist Crile: "There is no reason to believe Castro's

charge that the CIA is sponsoring today's terrorists, but there is also no way of denying the past intimate CIA connections with many of these men." If those connections are past, however, they suggest an appropriate American response. The CIA surely has good files on the terrorists, most of whom are American citizens; the FBI, which is responsible for investigating their many activities in Miami, also must have information. The terrorists are evidently careful to conspire abroad so as to stay beyond the reach of American law. But the United States should cooperate fully with the intelligence and police services of the Latin and Caribbean countries where the terrorist groups plan and work. The fear of being embarrassed by former agents is hardly justification for failing to pursue, by all legal means, persons bent on taking lives by terror—and bent on undercutting American diplomacy, too.

One can appreciate the feeling of betrayal which must grip exiles who find their former sponsors turning against them. But the United States must distinguish between the respect that it owes these men for their past service, and the obligation of any government to be the master of its own policy. Americans must also ponder the disquieting conclusion that covert action is not a machine that can be switched on and off at the operator's convenience. The United States may well have turned the switch; but like an overheated engine, the terrorist operations apparently kept right on running, eventually developing a capacity to operate on their own. This is an argument for confining covert action to the most desperate and urgent situations and for conducting it in a way that takes into account the possibility of later loss of control.