

F-Pack D/23/76

Jack Anderson's Washington Merry-go-round

BY JACK ANDERSON
With Les Whitten

WASHINGTON — A reported plot to assassinate Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Costa Rica six months ago was blocked by U.S. and Costa Rican authorities four days before it was supposed to be carried out.

We first reported the story from secret testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and from interviews with Cuban exiles and U.S. intelligence sources.

A Cuban terrorist named Orlando Bosch Avila, was reported to be gunning for Kissinger. The attempt on the Secretary's life was expected, according to underground reports, during his visit to Costa Rica last February.

Shortly before Kissinger's arrival, Bosch slipped into Costa Rica on a false passport. But the FBI and Secret Service had been alerted. They traced Bosch's movements and notified the Costa Rican authorities. The suspected assassin was arrested and clapped into a tiny jail cell four days before Kissinger got to town.

The plot to kill Kissinger apparently grew out of his overtures to improve relations with Cuba's Fidel Castro back in 1972. This reportedly upset an anti-Castro terrorist band, known as Cuban Action, which Bosch headed.

We reported part of the story two years later after a lengthy investigation in Miami. In columns on Sept. 1 and Nov. 12, 1974, we warned that anti-Castro terrorists planned an "assassination... against American congressmen and businessmen who supported a... thaw." We noted that Kissinger had been in touch with Castro.

The first hint that Kissinger, himself, was one of the targets came later from Carlos Rivero Collado, son of the man elected to the presidency of Cuba in 1958. Rivero was active in the anti-Castro underground in Miami's little Havana. But he later re-defected to Cuba where he gave a fascinating interview.

"I have known privately since 1972," he said, "(about) the plan to assassinate the U.S. Secretary of State." He said the plot had taken "certain form" by 1973 and had been "actualized" by 1974.

Then in a reference to our 1974 columns, he added: "This fact which, I repeat, I've known privately, has been corroborated by the U.S. journalist Jack Anderson."

Rivero named Bosch as one of the 18 anti-Castro leaders who had conspired to kill U.S. and other leaders promoting a Cuban-American detente. Bosch already had been convicted in 1968 of shelling a Polish freighter with a bazooka while it was moored in Miami. He jumped federal parole and fled to Venezuela in 1974.

Months later, he was reported to be in Curacao, protected by Chilean gunmen. He bragged, according to the reports, of his "money, friends and protection."

Florida's Dade County Public Safety Department, because of the huge Cuban population in Miami, has excellent ties throughout Latin America. In early 1976, the county's terrorist expert, Lt. Thomas Lynch, picked up some electrifying news.

He told the Senate Subcommittee about it in secret testimony. "We received information from confidential sources," he swore, "that there was going to be an attempt on the life of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. We passed the information on to the FBI, and they had also received the information, and we notified the Secret Service, as they have the protective duty for the Secretary of State."

The plot was linked to Kissinger's

two-day stay in Costa Rica, and Bosch was picked up and questioned. He was held on a false passport charge until Kissinger was safely out of the country.

Bosch later insisted: "My only crime was entering the country with a false passport." Certainly, it was never proved in court that he hoped to knock off Kissinger. He is now at large somewhere in Latin America.

JOHNSON'S JUNKETS: Democratic presidential nominee Jimmy Carter must have Don Johnson in mind when he charges that the Republicans find cushy jobs in the bureaucracy for defeated GOP legislators.

Johnson, a former Iowa Congressman, was appointed by President Richard Nixon to head the Veterans Administration. But he was forced out of office when he proved to be a lackluster leader. So he shuffled over to the Commerce Department, where he has been enconced as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Domestic and International Business.

Johnson has used both his VA and Commerce posts to travel, mostly back to Iowa, where he has kept his political fences mended in the hope of once again running for office.

At the Commerce Department alone, Johnson has spent at least \$7,000 on travel, \$5,204 in the last year. He always goes first class, despite the fact that government regulations require coach travel for federal employees. The enterprising Johnson, however, has a ready excuse for his luxury accommodations.

"I'm a hell of a big man," he told our reporter Barbara Takei. "I'm six foot five and weigh 270 pounds." Johnson also said his bad back forced him to fly in the forward compartment. Despite his many excursions to his home state, he denied having any plans for a comeback in politics.