

St. L. Post Dispatch 1/67
The Florida Filibusterers

The Cuban government has publicly displayed six captured invaders from Florida, all of whom said they were CIA agents, and some of whom said they had orders to assassinate Fidel Castro. Their contentions could easily be dismissed as preposterous except for two things.

One is that the leader of the Cuban refugee military group, sitting safely in Miami, said four of the men were members of his force and did have orders to kill Castro. Maj. Armando Fleites made no reference to the Central Intelligence Agency, but his announcement confirms a good part of the stories of the prisoners in Havana.

The second puzzling factor is that such filibustering expeditions can still be operated out of Florida despite proclaimed Government policy against them. The prisoners in Havana told long stories of CIA recruitment and training in "security houses" in Miami. Even allowing a generous discount for the fact that many Castro prisoners claim to have been CIA agents, the questions remain:

Is it possible for these dangerous adventures to be planned in Florida without the CIA knowing about them? If the CIA does not know about them, what is wrong with its basic intelligence function? If it does know about them, why does it not attempt to stop them in accordance with the stated Government policy? And if it does not attempt to stop them, does it then encourage acts of terrorism and sabotage against Cuba?

Castro Cuba obviously intends to dramatize the arrests and statements to try to combat Venezuelan charges that Cuba landed guerrillas near Caracas. The Castroite Organization of Latin American Solidarity now meeting in Havana can be expected to condemn the United States, in advance of new condemnation of Cuba by the Organization of American States.

This political maneuvering may mean little, but the actions of the refugee militarists based in Miami continue to give Castro choice propaganda for appealing for sympathy in the hemisphere. It is a cheaper source of such propaganda than the CIA's Bay of Pigs disaster, which it recalls. The Florida filibusterers are doing United States foreign policy no service and the CIA ought to be using its influence to stop them, whatever it is that the CIA is doing now.