

Crime Figure Tied To Munition Plot

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — One of the nine men charged in an alleged plot aimed at overthrowing a foreign country, apparently Communist Cuba, was linked Monday by federal authorities to a member of a New York organized crime family.

The nine men, charged with conspiring to smuggle explosives from the United States to Mexico for future shipment to a third country, were arrested in various cities over the weekend after confiscation of more than \$400,000 in munitions at Shreveport, La.

MURRAY KESSLER of Brooklyn, N.Y., one of the nine, had business ties with Mannie Gambino, a member of the New York Carlo Gambino family, Michael Pollack of a Justice Department organized crime strike force, said here. The Gambinos have been identified as organized crime figures by federal authorities.

Pollack, who works in the Brooklyn office of the task force, was in New Orleans in connection with the munitions case.

He said Kessler was a partner with Gambino in Neptune Nuggets, a Long Island, N.Y., frozen food packaging firm.

Kessler, he said, also is

awaiting trial on income tax evasion charges in New York.

MEANWHILE, TRANS World Airlines in New York confirmed that another of the nine men, Adler H. Seal of Baton Rouge, La., is a TWA pilot.

Seal posted a \$50,000 personal recognizance bond in New Orleans and told newsmen: "I haven't done a thing. That's what you're going to find out."

U.S. Attorney Gerald Gallinghouse of New Orleans, who made the announcement of the arrests and confiscation, said that Kessler "knew and believed that this material would be used in an attempted overthrow of a foreign nation."

GALLINGHOUSE said the federal government officials "have no reason to believe that the munitions were destined for any country other than Cuba."

The federal complaint charges that Kessler agreed to sell to Carlos Diaz, identified only as claiming to be a Mexican citizen, plastic explosives, prima-cord, electrical blasting caps and detonators for \$430,000.

In addition, it alleges that an additional \$35,000 was to be paid for flying the explosives to a secret airfield near Vera Cruz, Mexico.

THE PLANELOAD of munitions was seized in Shreveport, and the arrests followed.

Among the others arrested were Richmond Harper, a well-known south Texas rancher-banker, and Marion Hegler, a former inspector with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. They were taken into custody at Eagle Pass, Texas.

Arrested in Shreveport were James M. Miller Jr. and Joseph Mazzuka, both of Baton Rouge, La.; Arthur Henry Lussier of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Antonio Mealdonado and Juan Martinez, both of Veracruz.

In addition, authorities were looking for Francisco Flores of Piedras Negras, Mexico.