

U.S. Seeks to Stem Caribbean Spread Of Exiles' Made-in-Miami Terrorism

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MIAMI—In a move that seems to have been partly provoked by complaints from Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, a federal grand jury here is trying to prevent made-in-Miami terrorism from spreading throughout the Caribbean.

Since last month the grand jurors have been asking Cuban exiles about Miami links to several international incidents: the February shelling of a Soviet freighter near Cuba, the April attack on two fishing boats in the same area and the murder of a chauffeur-bodyguard in an attempted kidnaping of the Cuban consul in Merida, Mexico, in July.

Authorities here are apparently convinced that these episodes and many more were hatched in Miami. And they fear exported violence will continue unless some illustrative indictments are issued soon.

"We get the word that the Cubans in Little Havana are very disturbed," one Justice Department lawyer said. "They say the Anglos just don't understand them. I think the Cubans still feel they're patriots and what they're doing is right."

The grand jury probe began Oct. 29 with eight witnesses from the most prominent names in Miami's Latin precincts. They were asked about the



ORLANDO BOSCH
...anti-Castro revolutionary

recently formed United Revolutionary Organizations Command (CORU), its ubiquitous spokesman, Orlando Bosch, who awaits trial in Venezuela for the Oct. 6 bombing of a Cuban airliner in which 73 persons died; and dozens of other reputed anti-Castro terrorists in the Western Hemisphere.

One of those questioned was Roberto Caballo, president of Brigada 2506,

the veterans of the Bay of Pigs. "They wanted to connect me with the other persons to determine if I had participated in any conspiracy, in any violation of the Neutrality Act," he told reporters after testifying.

Authoritative sources say Cuban exile terrorism—plotted here and executed elsewhere—is the grand jury's exclusive assignment at present. It began just two weeks after Castro angrily denounced the in-flight Cubana Airlines explosion, accused the Central Intelligence Agency of complicity in it and other recent attacks on Cuban government installations, and announced unilateral cancellation of the 3-year-old anti-hijacking and piracy agreement with the United States.

Members of the U.S. attorney's office here had long ago requested a meeting with Justice Department and FBI officials in Washington on the grounds that "something had to be done, regardless of our relations with Castro." But it took the Cubana crash and Castro's speech to produce the meeting. "They finally became concerned," said one government lawyer here.

The pattern is not unusual. The government seems to have a habit of blowing hot and cold on illicit Cuban activities that the CIA once promoted so assiduously. The crackdowns have been sporadic.

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EMIGRE, From A1

Intelligence community sources here confirmed that there is ambivalence in Washington on Cuba and the Cuban terrorists. "It's part of our general lack of policy toward Latin America," one said. As an example, he cited an incident in which a Cuban came out of Havana with believable word from a high government official there that elements existed within Cuba who were willing and able to oust Castro.

The contact said the United States would be allowed to replace the Soviet Union as the bulwark of the Cuban economy in exchange for allowing the rebels to form the kind of government they wanted. He wanted to know the U.S. position, the source continued. "He hung around for months . . . but he never got an answer. Not yes, not no, not maybe. No answer at all."

A Cabinet-level committee was organized in 1972 by President Nixon in the wake of the terrorist outbreak at the Olympic Games in Munich, but its staff has never made a specific study of the Miami situation. The Rockefeller Commission, which investigated CIA misdeeds in 1975, agreed at the agency's behest not to include the activities of the once-ominous Miami station in its inquiry.

Results of intensive FBI and police work here have been spotty, leading more than one attorney to criticize the agency for appearing to pull its punches in local probes.

The terrorism in Miami reached new heights over the last two years. The FBI counted 95 bombings and attempted bombings since January, 1974, most of them with a Latin accent.

There were also five assassinations of prominent Cubans, several of them claimed by an anonymous hit squad called the "Zero Group." It warned that still more "empty, nothing" countrymen were marked for elimination.

FBI special agent in charge Julius Mattson said he had 168 agents assigned to the Miami office.

"Three Cubans will get together on a corner, form a group and issue a communique," said Miami Herald court reporter Joe Crankshaw. "As soon as it gets published, the fourth person to join is an FBI man." The fifth, he might have added, could be a pro-Castro Cuban spy. Castro agents, authorities acknowledged, have probably penetrated the anti-Castro groups, although there is no public proof of this.

"The FBI is really hard on these guys here," the intelligence community source said. "The Cubans say they never really know if Castro or the FBI is after them, but if there's a

choice, they say to swim for Key West because the jails are better there."

Still, the success of the grand jury investigation is not at all sure. "Penetrating the Cuban community is awfully difficult," said one government investigator. Informers, contemptuously called "chivatos" in the Cuban community, are usually needed to break the code of silence.

Al Tarabochia, former Dade County detective assigned to Cuban exile activities and now the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee's chief investigator, put it more vividly. The situation reminded him of his post-World-War II days as an Italian policeman trying to keep order in Sicily.

"If there was a robbery, you'd run

down the street and ask a bystander, 'Which way did he go?' If he pointed right, we went left. Miami, to a degree, is that way today. Violence of the kind we're seeing has been a way of life with the Cubans for 100 years."

Mattson attributes the sharp decrease in bombings in southern Florida in the past six months to two factors: the growing anti-violence attitude of the Cuban exiles and the steady pressure of law enforcement units. Even so, only one indictment has been handed down in the murder cases, and that only about a month ago: in the death of Luciano Nieves in February, 1975. He was an outspoken but apparently ineffective advocate of peaceful coexistence with the Castro regime.

Several of the nine alleged co-conspirators, known as the Pragmatistas, have apparently just fled to Mexico after jumping bond. Three others are still at large.

The Nieves murder also served as a bizarre example of the quality of much of the terrorism here. According to recent accounts of the shooting, one suspect's gun jammed during what began as a kidnap attempt, and the second gunman shot off the first's left index finger by mistake.

The two most publicized cases have also raised questions. Defense lawyers

charged that the arrest of three men in May for the attempted bombing of a pornographic bookstore in Little Havana was "a public relations crime," manufactured by the FBI to assuage public pressure for a solution to the bomb wave. The jury, however, chose to believe confidential FBI informer Angel Peraza, a Bay of Pigs veteran, whose tip led authorities to the arrest.

The judge threw the book at the bookstore trio, sentencing leader Antonio de la Cova, 25, a historian studying for his Ph.D., to 65 years in prison. Gary Latham got 35 years and Blas Jesus Corbo a combined federal-state total of six years.

The other case, the really strange one that seems to bristle like a porcupine with hints that reach from Washington to Chile, involves a small-time racketeer and Bay of Pigs veteran, Rolando Otero, 33. This slight, intense young man is to be retried in state court, probably in January, on charges linked to nine bombings for which he was acquitted in federal court last August.

His acquittal, testimony that was not admitted, and the performance of key government witnesses who never showed up have led many in Miami, Cubans and otherwise, to wonder whether FBI and CIA involvement with the refugees has really been sufficiently investigated.

From the start, terrorism here has been intertwined with ordinary extortion and criminal gangs and racketeers like Otero, fighting over Little Havana's drug and gambling trade.

Experts in those fields had arrived in Miami along with the more conventionally educated and highly motivated businessmen and professionals, and both kinds rapidly prospered in their respective fields.

"Cubans, if they are good, are the best of Latins," boasted Max Lesnik, embattled moderate editor of Little Havana's largest newspaper, Replica,

'Cubans in Little Havana . . . feel they're patriots and what they're doing is right.'

"but if they are bad, they are the worst of all for the same reasons."

Lesnik in his newspaper, denounced the violence and its offices were bombed twice shortly afterward.

"Some of the bombings are related to extortion pure and simple," said Sgt. Paul Janosky of the Dade County Organized Crime Bureau's terrorism unit. "A guy asks someone for money and says it's for fighting Castro, and if he doesn't pay up, boom."

Ripoffs in the name of a free Cuba are apparently legion. At a rally to raise a defense fund for Luis Crespo and Humberto Lopez, two members of a recently formed anti-Castro terrorist group, the plain folk of Little Havana reportedly put up more than \$12,000, most in \$1 and \$2 donations. "I never saw a dime of it," said their lawyer, Melvyn Greenspahn. "I understood they had [collection] boxes in the drugstores, too. Hell's bells, I don't know where that money went."

The upcoming Otero retrial, removed to Pensacola because of all the earlier publicity, will be closely watched here, especially for clues to the case's wider implications.

Otero testified in the federal case that he had fled Miami last January after hearing from Ricardo Morales Navarette, the FBI informer, that he was a suspect in the bombings. He

went to Santo Domingo, to Caracas and then to Chile.

Asked by defense attorney Thomas Almon why he went to Chile, Otero said, "In Venezuela there's a large community of anti-Castro Cubans with which I had immediate contact. The Chilean government had approached the anti-Castro Cubans in Venezuela and other cities with the intentions of . . ."

Government prosecutor Patrick Sullivan then interrupted, objecting that the testimony was hearsay. "We felt we had to keep the issues for the jury as few and as limited as possible," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Jerome Sanford. He said the cutoff was purely courtroom strategy "and not to cover anything up . . . our case was essentially circumstantial. We wanted to prove the identity of Otero and we didn't want the jury's attention diverted to some international conspiracy or foreign intrigue."

Attorneys for both sides of the upcoming state case say they do not plan to interrupt Otero if the issue surfaces again there.

Morales Navarette had been expected to be the star witness against Otero. He had told the FBI in January that Otero confessed the bombings to him, according to confidential FBI memos made available to The Washington Post. He also told the FBI Otero had said the Chilean government "would provide assistance to Otero in exchange for a favor . . . the assassination of two [Chilean] refugees."

The targets were to be Andres Pascal Allende, nephew of deposed Chilean President Salvador Allende, and his companion, Anne Marie Brussier. The Chileans assured Otero, he allegedly told Morales, that, if Otero failed, Orlando Bosch would serve as a backup.

Bosch was subsequently arrested in February in Costa Rica on charges

of plotting to kill the two Chileans, who are now in Cuba, and U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

Morales Navarette, now a government security agent in Venezuela, was going to testify at Otero's August trial. But in June, according to a deposition by Sanford in the state case, Morales Navarette told two detectives at a Miami party that he had not told the truth before. He now said that it had been an FBI agent, Joe Ball, who instructed him to tell Otero to leave the country.

"That hit us like a thunderbolt," Sanford said in an interview. Other attorneys close to the case said it went a long way toward explaining why Morales Navarette did not show up to testify, and why the FBI did little more than leave the trial subpoena at his girlfriend's Miami house. Ball denied the accusation in a written affidavit.

In a luncheon speech here last Friday, Latin broadcaster Emilio Millan, his legs shattered by a terrorist bomb in April, complained that apathy and fear encourage terrorism by letting it go unpunished.

"How many of us are willing to risk our lives and be ready to get involved?" he asked. "Many of us will say that this is what the authorities are for . . . until we or one of our loved ones become the victim. Then we realize we should have done something."