

Conspiracies Enliven Miami

F Post 3/7/67

MIAMI, Fla. (AP)—This subtropical metropolis, a favorite refuge of winter sun-worshippers and Cuban exiles, has conspirators the way an old barn has mice.

In 1963-65 alone, U.S. authorities shortstopped no fewer than 23 expeditions bent on mini-invasions of Fidel Castro land. Nobody knows how many others got through the net.

One of the most ambitious plots involved 80 anti-Castroites who planned to take over Haiti

last November and go on from there. A top man split with the leader, and talked. The enterprise had to be postponed and gagsters began calling it the "Bay of Piglets."

Undaunted, the plotters bided their time until Jan. 2, when the helter-skelter invasion force began marshaling in the Florida Keys. At this point U.S. customs agents moved in and arrested everybody in sight.

Earlier, an anti-Castro dreamer assembled a \$25,000

invasion arsenal in a truck and left it in a downtown packing lot. Curses. Truck and cargo were grabbed by the gendarmes.

Inept planning and a shortage of funds are not the only road blocks for the busy conspirators. They also have to deal with five federal agencies including Customs, Coast Guard Immigration, Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency. For a plotter, it's something like a bullfight super-

vised by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Still Castro's Cuba lies there, only 150 miles from Miami and only 90 from Key West, as a constant temptation to the revolutionaries. Exiles claim that in 1966 they staged six serial harassments from "bases somewhere in the Caribbean"—generally translated as "the Florida Keys."

Biggest of these, they claim, were bombings of the Cuban north coast chemical and sugar installations. One of their raiding planes, they say, was shot down over Cuba in mid-November and three of their men were captured after landing on the eastern tip of the island the following month.

The anti-Castro exile factions in Miami are divided into "activist" and "propaganda" groups.

The most noisily busy of the activist factions at the moment is MIRR, for Insurreccional Movement of Revolutionary Recuperation. The others are Comandos L, Brigade 2506, Los Pinos Nuevos and 30th of November, all operating under RECE, or Cuban Representation in Exile; and the 2nd Front of Escambray, Alpha 66, CORE, or Committee of Revolutionary Orientation in Exile, and the Cuban Nationalist Association.

The purely propaganda groups are Revolutionary Unity and FORDC for Cuban Revolutionary Workers Front.

Boss of the MIRR is a short, intense medical doctor, Orlando Bosch, 40, who has been picked up twice while apparently preparing anti-Castro maneuvers.

The plot to strike at Haiti,

topple dictator Francois Papa Doc Duvalier and use the island republic as a base against Cuba had its genesis in Miami more than a year ago. Its architect was Rolando Masferrer, 47, lawyer, honor graduate of Havana University and a terror to Castro's followers in the final years of dictator Fulgencio Batista's rule.

The Rev. Jean Baptiste Georges, an exiled Haitian priest in his early 40s, was a key figure in the operation. He was to be president of the country if the invasion succeeded.

The Haitian invasion force under Masferrer counted about 80 men and, according to its leader, was equipped with some \$100,000 worth of weapons and ammunition.

U.S. customs agents placed its actual value and battle worth at far less. "With that equipment," said one, "they could not successfully have invaded Burdine's." Burdine's is a large Miami department store.

The equipment included 40 rifles, about a dozen machine guns, two rocket launchers and about 72,000 rounds of assorted ammunition. There also were two small vessels.

By mid-November, 1966, the "invasion" was known to practically anyone in Miami who regularly tunes in to refugee chit-chat along Flagler Street or Southwest 8th in "Little Havana."

The scheme began coming apart on Nov. 23 when Napoleon Vilaboa, 29, a former Cuban rebel army officer, abandoned the little army. He told news-men he had agreed to be chief of military operations on the understanding the operation had

CSA support. He and Masferrer had an argument, he said, and he quit.

The invasion finally foundered Jan. 2 when U.S. customs agents moved in and arrested some 75 men. Masferrer told reporters that "paid U.S. informers" scotched his plan. He, Father Georges and others are awaiting trial on charges of conspiring to invade Haiti, and to export arms without license.

The failures of Bosch, Masferrer and other Cuban exiles have aroused little reaction among their compatriots in the Miami area. Indignation with U.S. policy seems matched by criticism of the quality of leadership among the current crop of activists.

Manolo Reyes, 41, a Cuban exile who has become one of the leading television personalities in the city, sums it up:

"There are undesirables and misfits in all societies and certainly among us Cubans here. There are people who prey on our natural anxieties, like the plotters. But the worst of urban exiles, I believe, is better than any Castro Communist."