

Mexicans and CIA Team Up To Halt Castro Propaganda

By Gerry Robichaud
Chicago Daily News Service

MEXICO CITY — International espionage often takes curious twists and turns, as is illustrated by a local intelligence drama played between Cuban and U.S. agents.

The hitherto untold story began recently when a Cuban Airlines plane from Havana delivered about 100 diplomatic pouches at the International Airport here. The pouches, canvas sacks that stand about 3½ feet high, were destined for the Cuban Embassy.

The size of the shipment aroused the suspicions of customs officials and Mexican Federal Police. A customs officer managed "accidentally" to slit the side of one of the bulging pouches and out tumbled several reams of Red Cuban propaganda material.

Despite the protests of Cuban diplomats at the scene, the customs men proceeded to open the rest of the pouches, all of which contained propaganda. The pouches were confiscated.

Though Mexico still maintains diplomatic relations with Cuba, it has been strict about permitting the entry by air of anything it considers Cu-

ban propaganda, including Cuban newspapers carried by passengers arriving here from Havana.

In due course, Mexican government officials dispatched the confiscated propaganda to be auctioned off as waste-paper.

Up to that point, the score was Mexico 1, Cuba 0.

But as it turned out, the Cuban Embassy's intelligence agents had kept a lookout on the location of the propaganda from the moment it had been confiscated until its arrival at the auction warehouse.

Posing as Mexicans, the Cuban agents outbid other potential buyers and made arrangements with a trucking firm to cart the loot to the Cuban Embassy—the original destination of the sidetracked shipment.

The score then stood at Mexico 1, Cuba 1.

But, of course, where Cuban agents lurk, there lurk agents of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency as well.

Like their Cuban counterparts, the CIA men had been shadowing the confiscated propaganda almost from the start. They had faithfully tailed it to the site of the auction and were chagrined to discover the Cuban ruse and how easily it had succeeded.

CIA gumshoes, however,

are not easily discouraged. Moreover, they were aware that their Cuban adversaries, having bought and arranged for the delivery of the propaganda, probably would pop off to the nearest cantina to celebrate their victory. Which is what they did, or at least they disappeared somewhere.

Now it was the CIA's turn. The CIA agents waited until the propaganda had been loaded aboard the truck hired by the Cubans and as the truck pulled away the CIA men followed in a car.

After a decent interval, they pulled beside the truck and persuaded the driver to pull up to the curb.

A long confab between the international sleuths and the truck driver then took place. The principal subject had to do with the Mexican peso. The truck driver proved to be a hard bargainer, but CIA resources are almost limitless.

At a price that would be considered most reasonable in the states, but high in Mexico, the driver agreed to deliver his cargo to an isolated area designated by the CIA agents.

There it was unloaded and put to the torch.

The final score: Cuba 1, Mexico 2, with an assist from the CIA.