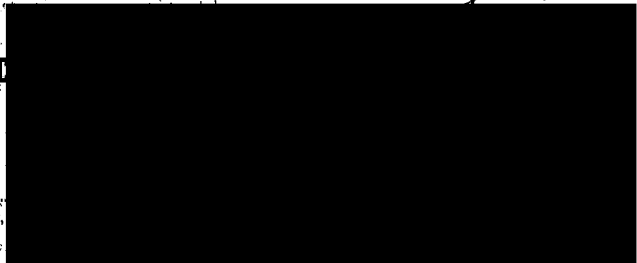


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Exile Group Denies Cuban Commandos Were CIA Agents

By LEE WINFREY
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WASHINGTON — A Cuban exile organization, which lost six men in a doomed raid on Cuba Sunday night, denied Wednesday that the raiders were sent by the CIA in a plot to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro.

"The action was performed with equipment and money belonging to Cubans," said spokesman for Commandos L (L for "liberty"). "Everything was bought with money freely given by Cubans in exile."

Cuba captured two of the raiders, Antonio Cuesta and Eberto Zaldivar. The government called Cuesta "a CIA agent" and said he had made a full confession.

Two other raiders, Herminio Diaz and Roberta Anta, were killed on the beach shortly after landing in Miramar in suburban Havana. Two others, Armando Romero and Guillermo Alvarez, were killed at sea when Cuban patrol boats destroyed their launch.

Cuba charged that the raiders left from Marathon in the Florida Keys. Commandos L denied this, saying they left from a base outside the United States. They declined to identify the base.

Henry Lendier, Washington press spokesman for the group, said he "would neither deny or affirm" that the men were on the way to kill Castro. Sometimes the purpose of the mission is known only to the raiders, he said.

Cuesta is a veteran raider for Commandos L, a small but active exile force. He has made 10 or 12 missions to Cuba, including one last November when a boat under his command fired at the home of President Osvaldo Dorticos.

Commandos L asked the "governments and men of the free world" to intercede with Cuba and ask that Cuesta and Zaldivar be treated as war prisoners under the Geneva Convention. Cuba prefers to handle such prisoners as spies or counterrevolutionary rebels, claiming the right to execute them if it wishes.

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