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Sandinistas wreck foe's travel plan

Nicaragua says Cruz involved in CIA plot

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MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Sandinista government Thursday warned a commercial airline not to fly opposition leader Arturo Cruz to Managua, and accused the Central Intelligence Agency of plotting to use Cruz's planned return to discredit Nicaragua.



Cruz

The alleged plot involved a potential attack on Cruz's life, the government claimed. Cruz, an exiled banker who has recently lobbied the U.S. Congress to fund anti-Sandinista rebels, had been expected to fly to Managua Thursday from Costa Rica on Copa Airlines.

But a Copa spokesman in San Jose said the airline had refused to sell Cruz a ticket after Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge warned the carrier that planes carrying Cruz would not be permitted to land in Nicaragua.

An Interior Ministry statement said state security agents had "uncovered a plan of the Central Intelligence Agency" to use Cruz's visit to discredit Nicaragua's recent peace initiative, to block regional peace negotiations, and to "generate the image that Nicaragua opposes a peaceful solution" to the Central American crisis.

The communique said "Cruz's coming to Nicaragua is based on the CIA's hopes that Cruz would be detained upon arrival," preparing the way for an international campaign against Nicaragua for jailing a "so-called democrat like Mr. Cruz."

"In case Nicaragua were to take no penal action ... the CIA would carry out an attack against Cruz's life ... an attack to be immediately blamed on the Sandinista Revolution," the communique said.

Cruz was chosen as presidential candidate of Nicaragua's major opposition group, but withdrew from the campaign before the November voting. Along with dozens of other exiled opposition figures, including many guerrilla leaders, Cruz signed an ultimatum March 2 warning of new attacks unless the government opened a dialogue with the rebels.