

X. MOVIMIENTO INSURRECCIONAL DE RECUPERACION REVOLUCIONARIA (MIRR) AND ORLANDO BOSCH AVILA

(324) When four of Castro's army officers and 100 men deserted and left for the Las Villas Mountains in August 1960, they formed the nucleus of the Movimiento Insurreccional de Recuperacion Revolucionaria (MIRR). (1) Helping lay the groundwork for this organization was the former chief of the 26th of July Movement in Las Villas Province, Dr. Orlando Bosch Avila. (2) Bosch had left Cuba 1 month previously and, from Miami, issued a call for rebel army men to desert. (3) Promoting the defection of army personnel and carrying out sabotage operations throughout Cuba were the early primary activities of the MIRR. (4) In both, it was extremely effective.

(325) Former rebel army officer Victor Paneque assumed military leadership of the group (5) and, within a few months of his escape from Cuba, organized a team of infiltrators to reenter the country to continue MIRR operations. (6)

(326) Orlando Bosch became general coordinator of MIRR, working with individuals and other groups involved in operations against Cuba and securing necessary financial backing. (7)

(327) A pediatrician by profession, (8) Bosch became immersed in his political movement and for 18 years carried out a crusade to overthrow Castro. His efforts at times have been characterized as "bumbling," but he has also been termed "single-mindedly" and "morally committed." (9) Widely viewed in the U.S. press as a Cuban patriot when he first began his anti-Castro activities, Bosch's increased acts of violence gradually changed his image to that of a terrorist. (10) The intensity and violence of his activities, which have always been widely publicized, were a major factor in the committee's decision to examine Bosch and the MIRR among those Cuban exile organizations considered capable of involvement in an assassination conspiracy.

(328) Bosch was interviewed by the committee in Cuartel San Carlos prison in Venezuela. He is charged with complicity in the October 6, 1975, bombing of a Cubana Airlines plane which resulted in the deaths of 73 people. (11) Although denying involvement in the airplane bombing, Bosch said he approved of it. (12) Claiming terrorism a necessary evil in fighting Castro, Bosch stated, "You have to fight violence with violence. At times you cannot avoid hurting innocent people." (13)

(329) The activities of the MIRR in the early 1960's were carried out by a small group of individuals. There were reportedly never a great deal of members in Miami. (14) In 1966, Bosch claimed to have only 20 men outside Miami, located in various seaport cities in the United States (15) One of the major interests of the MIRR was to blow up vessels trading with Cuba. (16) In this, it was effective, but

the MIRR successes in the early 1960's was a result of its association with a number of other anti-Castro organizations and individuals.

(330) Bosch said that in late 1961 he was contacted by Evelio Duque, leader of Ejercito Cubano Anticomunista (ECA), who indicated he might be getting CIA support for his group and wanted Bosch to join him. (17) Together they submitted a plan to the Agency outlining their conditions for CIA support and were informed about a month later the plan had been approved. (18) Acting as the political leader in this alliance, Bosch joined Duque, the military leader, at a camp in Homestead, Fla., and was in touch with a CIA liaison officer. (19)

(331) Bosch soon came to the conclusion that the camp was an exercise in futility. He believed that the CIA had no intention of mounting another invasion or initiating attacks against Cuba. He felt the U.S.-sponsored camps were merely a means of keeping the exiles busy and, privately and unofficially, his CIA contact confirmed his suspicions, Bosch said. (20) After 9 months of frustrating inactivity, he published a pamphlet, "The Tragedy of Cuba," in which he accused the United States of misleading the Cuban exiles. He sent a copy to President Kennedy and then closed down the camp. (21) After this, Bosch said he had no more dealings with the CIA. (22)

(332) Bosch maintained an ongoing relationship, beginning in late 1960, with Frank Sturgis, well-known anti-Castro soldier of fortune; (23) Alexander Rorke, former clerk at the FBI; (24) and William Johnson, an American pilot who, along with Sturgis, provided information to the CIA on Cuban exile activities. (25) Johnson had full control over all MIRR operations. (26) Bosch was concerned with financing raids against Cuba and did not know the nature of the missions until their completion. (27)

(333) According to Johnson, American pilots were placed under contract to fly three airstrikes over Cuba for the MIRR. (28) They were to receive \$2,000 per mission. (29) Johnson admitted his own motive was purely mercenary. (30)

(334) Although relatively inactive in 1962, (31) the MIRR engaged in a series of bombing raids over Cuba in 1963 primarily aimed at destroying the production of sugar (32) in an effort to disrupt the economy. It also reportedly conducted airstrikes against a MIG base in Cuba (33) and various other strikes aimed at strategic targets. (34) The raids were effective but not without risk. In several instances, the raiders' planes were shot down and pilots killed. (35)

(335) Concurrent with an association with American adventurers, the MIRR also had associations with other exile organizations. It planned raids against Cuba in cooperation with Commandos L (36) and discussed unity raids with members of RECE. (37) Bosch, at this time, was interested in establishing a base of operations in the Dominican Republic to facilitate long-range planning. (38)

(336) The documentation the committee examined failed to explain how the MIRR was able to finance its extensive operations; further, Bosch did not specify any source. Bosch told the committee that his association with Frank Sturgis alone culminated in 11 airstrikes over Cuba. (39) At that time, he said, they usually rented a plane for \$400 plus \$60 an hour. (40) Bill Johnson charged \$4,000 for pilot

fees for each mission.(41) Bosch said he knew the pilots only got \$2,000 and Johnson pocketed the rest, but his purpose was to fight Castro whatever it cost.(42) Bosch's commitment to fight Castro extends to the present.(43)

(337) The funds were initially furnished MIRR from a Chicago-based Cuban exile, Paulino A. Sierra, who allegedly collected moneys from gambling interests.(44) Some money came from anti-Castro supporters in Puerto Rico.(45) It is known that the FBI was long interested in the source of finances of the MIRR and in March 1964 authorized a 30-day mail check on it and Bosch in an effort to identify possible sources.(46) During this time, several wealthy Cuban exiles received threatening letters demanding large contributions for the fight against Castro.(47) Bosch was implicated in these extortion attempts,(48) brought to trial, and acquitted.(49) He told the committee that in 1967 he once used the funds he had collected in settlement for a personal injury automobile accident to buy explosives and weapons.(50) Whatever Bosch's methods of raising money, there is no indication he ever used it to enrich himself.(51)

(338) Well financed and totally dedicated, Bosch managed to run afoul of the U.S. Government authorities at least seven times in slightly over a 4-year period. Several of these encounters resulted in his arrest,(52) but he was always acquitted.(53)

(339) In July 1967, Bosch and the MIRR became assimilated into a new movement, known as Cuban Power(54) and the tempo of violent activities increased. On September 16, 1968, Bosch was arrested for firing a bazooka into the hull of a Polish ship anchored in Miami harbor.(55) He was subsequently tried and sentenced to 10 years in a Federal prison.(56) From his prison cell in Atlanta, Ga., Bosch allegedly was making plans to resume bombing Japanese and Spanish ships trading with Cuba as soon as he was released.(57) He was granted parole on November 1, 1972 and immediately began traveling through Latin America, in violation of that parole.(58) He said his aim in Latin America was to forge alliances with countries which had powerful Cuban exile communities.(59) So effective was he in making solid political alliances, that in the ensuing years he was able to travel freely, with forged passports, throughout Latin America.(60)

(340) Whether or not Bosch was the principal conspirator in the bombing of the Cuban airliner, it is known that his Cuban Power movement, which merged with other Cuban activists in 1976 (61) to form a Cuban Secret Government (62) engaged in acts of terrorism. (63) This latter group was linked with numerous recent bombing incidents,(64) an assassination attempt against Henry Kissinger.(65) the assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C.(66) and the bombing of the Cuban Airlines plane.

(341) Orlando Bosch, a zealot, turned out to be the most aggressive and volatile of the anti-Castro leaders. That alone could validly raise the question of possible association with the assassination of President Kennedy. In addition, the committee was presented with an allegation that specifically connected him to a conspiracy.(67) but investigation failed to support the claim that Bosch had been in

Dallas in November 1963 in the company of Lee Harvey Oswald. When asked, Bosch told the committee he was at his home in Miami when he heard President Kennedy had been shot. (68)

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- (5) Id. at p. 1.
- (6) CIA cable to Director from MASH, Nov. 2, 1960.
- (7) CIA updated report.
- (8) Memorandum to staff director, June 15, 1978, re interview with Dr. Orlando Bosch Avila, p. 1 (J. F. K. Document 009362).
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- (10) Ibid.
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- (25) Ibid., item 14, p. 6.
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- (27) Ibid.
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- (30) See ref. 4, FBI cable, item 2, p. 12.
- (31) Ibid., item 9, p. 5.
- (32) Ibid., items 10, 11, 12, p. 5.
- (33) Ibid., item 14, p. 6.
- (34) Ibid., items 1, 2, 3, p. 8, and items 4, 5, p. 9.
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- (40) Ibid.
- (41) Ibid.
- (42) Ibid.
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- (44) See ref. 4, item 16, p. 6.
- (45) Ibid., item 7, p. 11.

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 (48) Ibid.
 (49) See ref. 9.
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 (51) See ref. 9.
 (52) See ref. 4, FBI cables, item 6, pp. 15, 16, 17.
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 (56) Ibid.
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 (58) See ref. 55, pp. 46-47.
 (59) Id. at p. 47.
 (60) Ibid.
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 (62) See ref. 4, FBI cable, item 3, p. 2.
 (63) See ref. 47, FBI cable, item 1, pp. 1-2, FBI No. 45-10801.
 (64) Ibid.
 (65) See ref. 4, FBI cable, item 14, p. 5.
 (66) See ref. 55, p. 51.
 (67) Immunized executive session testimony of Marita Lorenz, May 31, 1978.

Hearings before the House Select Committee on Assassinations. Lorenz, who had publicly claimed she was once Castro's mistress (Miami News, June 15, 1976), told the committee she was present at a September 1963 meeting in Orlando Bosch's Miami home during which Lee Harvey Oswald, Frank Sturgis, Pedro Diaz Lanz, and Bosch made plans to go to Dallas (pp. 31-34). She further testified that around November 15, 1963, she, Jerry Patrick Hemming, the Novo brothers, Pedro Diaz Lanz, Sturgis, Bosch, and Oswald traveled in a two-car caravan to Dallas and stayed in a motel where they were contacted by Jack Ruby. There were several rifles and scopes in the motel room (pp. 43-54). Lorenz said she returned to Miami around November 19 or 20.

All possible individuals involved in this allegation were questioned by the committee with the following results:

- Interviewed on June 16, 1978, Orlando Bosch told the committee he had met Lorenz once in 1962 at which time he was planning an air raid over Cuba with Alexander Rorke. Lorenz later called him and said she wanted to get involved in anti-Castro activities, but Bosch turned her down and never saw her again. He further stated he had never traveled west of New Orleans in his life (JFK Document No. 009363, p. 2).
- In a March 21, 1978, deposition in Miami, Fla., Jerry Patrick Hemming responded negatively to the questions: "Did you ever drive from Miami to Dallas with Marita Lorenz? Or Frank Sturgis? Or a man identifying himself as 'Ozzie'?" (pp. 170-71).
- Immunized testimony was received in Washington, D.C., on April 28, 1978, from Pedro Diaz Lanz, who denied Lorenz' allegation (p. 64), and explained his whereabouts on November 22, 1963 (p. 65).
- In a March 20, 1978, deposition in Miami, Frank A. Sturgis was asked if he did, ". . . in the company of Marita Lorenz, Leon Oswald and others drive from Miami to Dallas a day or two before the assassination?" Sturgis responded:

Sir, that is an absolute lie. I have never been with Marita Lorenz and Ozzie, as she calls him, or with Pedro Diaz Lanz, or Marcus Diaz Lanz, or Dr. Orlando Bosch, or Jerry Patrick, which she claimed all of us besides some other Cubans, were in two automobiles and left Miami, Fla., 2 days before the assassination of the President of the United States. She is a liar. I took a polygraph examination to that effect that I have never been involved in any conspiracy to kill the President of the United States, nor was I with her at any time conspiring to kill the President of the United States, nor was I with her in any automobile with these people or any other people going to Dallas to plot to kill the President of the United States. She is an absolute liar [p. 157].

Sturgis said that on November 22, 1963, he was in his home in Miami, Fla. (p. 155).

The committee found no evidence to support Lorenz' allegation.

- (68) See ref. 8, p. 1.

