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SPECIAL REPORT

Cuban Extremists in U.S.

A GROWING TERROR THREAT

Out from Miami spreads a wave of violence. Terrorists' aim is to topple Castro, free Cuba. Nearly all Cuban refugees share this dream. But the acts of a few zealots create trouble for fellow exiles and for the U.S.

Reported from MIAMI and WASHINGTON

Terrorism by radical Cuban refugees has become a thorny problem in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and, in the view of some authorities, a potential threat to the lives of American leaders.

The terrorists' goal is to wrest control of Cuba away from its Communist dictator, Fidel Castro.

In pursuit of that goal, they have blazed a trail of violence from Miami across the Caribbean Sea, not only to Cuba but also to Mexico, Barbados, Jamaica and Panama—even across the South Atlantic to Argentina.

They have engaged in a series of bombings in the U.S. and abroad. They have carried out military-style attacks on ships. They are strongly suspected of several killings.

A federal grand jury in Miami is investigating their activities and their leaders.

Now, as a new Administration prepares to take over in Washington, it is feared that the Cuban terrorists will step up their attacks in an effort to

thwart any turn toward reconciliation with Castro.

Officials familiar with their operations warn that some of the Cuban extremists will stop at nothing, not even at assassinating members of the Carter Administration.

"The Cuban terrorists are the most highly trained assassins around today," says one U.S. official.

Many of the terrorists were trained by the Central Intelligence Agency in the days when this country was trying to overthrow Castro, not kill him.

The Senate Intelligence and Security Subcommittee recently held hearings on the Cuban-terrorist threat. It heard this testimony from a U.S. official, who, because of a special arrangement with the subcommittee, cannot be identified:

Miami, where Cuban refugees are concentrated:

"The overwhelming majority of the Cubans in Miami are strongly anti-Castro. That's why they came to Miami in the first place. They are also law-abiding citizens who, with minor exceptions, manifest their opposition to Castro in legal ways.

"However, there are a small number of individuals whose hatred of Castro and Communist Cuba has led them to engage in extralegal actions and to violate the laws of the country which gives them sanctuary. These individuals use Dade County as a base for international terrorism against governments allied with Cuba, Cuban shipping, Cuban ports, purported Communists, and individuals who take a stand against their terrorist-type activities.

"Some Cubans groups preparing to be involved in

terrorist-type attacks against the Cuban Government are no more or no less than outright criminals, feeding upon the refugee population and diverting the collected funds for their own purposes."

Other investigators charge that the terrorists, to finance their activities, have relied on extortion, prostitution, and extortion from wealthy fellow refugees.

The number of hard-core terrorists is small, officially estimated at fewer than 300. But their reach is wide. In the last year alone they were either brought about or been accused of such acts as:

- Machine-gun attacks on ships and passenger vessels from Cuba and other Communist countries.
- Bombing a wide variety of targets in the United States, Latin America and Europe.
- Hijacking an American plane and directing it to Cuba.
- Blowing up a Barbados-bound Cuban airliner, killing 73 persons, on October 6, with the loss of all aboard.
- Possible involvement in the assassination of two U.S.