

Plan to Deport Castro Foe Angers Cubans in Miami

Los Angeles Times 6-29-89-1

By BARRY BEARAK, Times Staff Writer

MIAMI—Will there be no refuge here for the old Cuban terrorist—his gray hair rumpled across a weary face, his 62-year-old body fighting its own battles with angina and ulcers and a bad prostate?

What he wants now, Dr. Orlando Bosch says, is to remain with his wife and six children in Miami and continue *la lucha*—the struggle against Fidel Castro—this time in a legal and certainly more peaceful way.

But last Friday the U.S. Justice Department ruled that Bosch, imprisoned here and in Venezuela for 16 of the past 21 years, should be denied political asylum and deported, exiled from the capital of *el exilio* itself.

Since he fled to America in 1960, he has been "resolute and unwa-

vering in his advocacy of terrorist violence . . ." said Joe D. Whitley, acting associate attorney general. "We must look at terrorism as a universal evil, even if it is directed toward those with whom we have no political sympathy."

In the Miami area, where about 577,000 people are of Cuban birth or descent, the decision has been met with surprise and, in some quarters, outrage. It is as if a Don Quixote was being plucked from their midst—one of the great icons in the courageous, if so far futile, effort to tilt the windmill Castro.

"This man symbolizes our resistance, the ideal that each of us must fight to free Cuba with whatever means are available," said prominent Miami attorney Rafael Penal-

Please see BOSCH, Page 16

popular cause. City commissioners read his revered name into the minutes. Mass was said in his honor. When he went on a hunger strike, 20 here joined him.

When will Bosch be freed, people demanded to know. Then, finally, in late 1987, the prison doors opened. And a few months later, the old doctor arrived at Miami International Airport, a long-gone parole violator with no visa.

Since then, he has been held in a prison near Miami while U.S. immigration and Justice Department officials shooed his case from desk to desk.

Finally, Whitley ruled. He cited previously secret FBI and CIA files that implicate the pediatrician in a number of assassinations and bombings.

"The conclusion is inescapable that it would be prejudicial to the public interest of the United States to provide a safe haven for Bosch," he said.

Tuesday, Bosch's lawyers obtained a pledge from federal authorities to not deport him until July 14 at the earliest. Even if Bosch is ordered to leave, the government must find a country willing to accept him. That may not be so easy.

In the meantime, the latest news skips through the streets. Bosch represents *la lucha*, not terrorism, to shopkeeper Felix Baez, who will be among those closing up today. "A lot of people are like me," he said. "We haven't done anything for many years . . . Now we will get involved."

Conjecture on Airwaves

Cuban radio, purveyor of rumor and opinion as much as facts, is alive with conjecture about plots and deals. To commentators and others, sinister hands must be behind the Justice Department's ruling.

Is the White House wooing Castro toward diplomatic relations? Or is this just further evidence of Fidel's long tentacles reaching even into the Washington bureaucracy?

"I think Fidel Castro's agents are really responsible for loading up the Bosch file with information . . .," said Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, an early favorite in a special congressional election to succeed the late Claude Pepper.

Yet, despite all this hubbub, it would be wrong to assume that every Cuban here would welcome back Bosch. So much has changed in 30 years. There are fewer all the time who dream of Havana nights or the royal palms of Miramar.

To an ever-larger minority, the commandos seem like relics, obsolete armor in a war fought and lost. Besides, America is no place for counterrevolution. "If they let one terrorist go, they have to let 50 go," said disco owner Jose Teran.

Some Not Responsive

To this younger generation, the voice of Bosch is like the scratchy music of an old rumba record, his latest message from prison sounding formal and dated.

"I have directed and participated—inside Cuba and out—in numerous heroic actions against Castroism, in desperate efforts to contribute to the freedom of my country . . ."

"Our actions have always had as a goal to bring a just end to our noble purposes. We have never acted indiscriminately like the Eastern fanatics and American Marxists . . ."

"We Cubans have always denounced violence . . . But we have a right to belligerence . . . We knew we did not kill the beast, but neither did we let it sleep in peace."

Researcher Anna M. Virtue assisted with the reporting of this story.

16 Part I/Thursday, June 29, 1989★

BOSCH: Ire Over

Los Angeles Times

Deportation Plan

Continued from Page 1

ver. "Castro wants Bosch dead at any price, and now the United States seems to be offering him up."

With that harrowing prospect in mind, local Republican leaders—stuck with a back yard mess of the Bush Administration's making—have pledged to send a delegation to see the President. And to remind him: Wealthy Cubans have always been an easy tap for his campaigns.

Hundreds of protesters have marched downtown. Bosch's diabetic son, Willie, 32, has gone on a hunger strike—and was rushed to a hospital Tuesday morning just after he met with Jeb Bush, the President's son. A nationwide three-hour shutdown of Cuban businesses has been called for this afternoon.

"Dr. Bosch is not a threat to the U.S.; all that he has done, he has done to defend democracy!" insisted taxi driver Blanco Avelino, in a comment typical among Cubans here, especially the older ones.

To understand the importance of Bosch in Miami is to recall 30 regretful years of anti-Castroism—and to examine the great unhealed wound of exile.

Former CIA Support

In the beginning, many Cuban refugees—whether doctor, salesman or busboy—saw themselves as part-time commandos. With CIA support, they carried out hit-and-run attacks against the island, tossing grenades and smuggling guns.

But there were embarrassing failures, and the White House lost interest in its Cuban militia, stopped paying the bills and confiscated the boats.

Freedom-loving commandos

suddenly became law-breaking terrorists—and most of them resignedly gave up their second identities as saboteurs to root their lives in America. Most of them—but not all.

Among the staunch holdouts was Bosch, an unlikely looking warrior, a baby doctor with thick glasses and a bad stomach. He was all at once heroic and hapless, the macho schemer and the bungling fool.

The one and only Bosch: fired from a hospital for storing explosives on the premises, stopped by police as he drove around with a trunk full of dynamite, arrested for towing a homemade torpedo through downtown at rush hour.

Fired Bazooka at Freighter

In 1968, he shot off a jerry-built bazooka from an expressway median strip, aiming at a Polish freighter in the Miami harbor. The shell harmlessly nicked the ship's thick metal hull, but the deed was enough to get Bosch a 10-year term in federal prison.

After four years, he was paroled. He might then have returned to home and career, becoming, like so many others here, an elder statesman of the commando days. Venerated. Looked out for. A welcome guest on Cuban talk radio.

But that was not for Bosch. In 1974, he fled America rather than face a subpoena in a murder case. He wandered in Latin America, a conspirator in who knows what, his handiwork showing up in half a dozen countries.

In 1976, he was arrested in Venezuela and charged with masterminding the bombing of a Cuban jetliner, in which 73 people died. He was acquitted of the crime three times, but never released.

In Miami, the jailed Bosch was a