

# Torch of Friendship bombing linked to 'bragging' Cuban

---

By LOUIS SALOME  
and HILDA INCLAN  
Miami News Reporters

A man charged in a May 6 bombing incident here claims he bombed the Torch of Friendship last year to prove to a friend "... he was a man who meant business," according to intelligence reports.

Antonio Rafael de la Cova, charged with the attempted bombing of a Little Havana adult bookstore, says he later planted two other bombs, which did not go off, at the homes of two Latin magazine staff members, according to reports on the bookstore case.

In another development, an FBI agent testified last week that de la Cova, a reported Arab sympathizer, had discussed bombing either a Broward County synagogue or the bookstore in Little Havana, before the decision was finally made to try the bookstore.

Several friends of de la Cova said he boasted about his terrorist activities in order to infiltrate militant anti-Castro groups.

The Torch of Friendship blast last July 26, which shook windows in Biscayne Boulevard hotels and exploded the gas that keeps the flame going without damaging the monument itself, was reported to have been de la Cova's first excursion into active terrorism.

Miami police said the explosion is still under investigation.

A police report written the night of the explosion said, "It is believed that this being July 26, this was the work of (a) Cuban revolutionary group." The Castro revolution started July 26, 1953, with an attack against the Moncada Army barracks.

De la Cova also said, according

Continued on 4A, col. 1

# Bombing suspect linked to Torch of Friendship blast

Continued from 1A

to the intelligence reports, he took part in the attempted bombing Nov. 27 of the University of Miami dormitory apartment of Eliseo Perez-Stable. Perez-Stable was a staff member of Areito, a Spanish-language magazine which favored peaceful coexistence with Fidel Castro.

The 25-year-old former history teacher also claimed responsibility for the attempted fire-bombing April 17 of a home at 450 NW 43rd Pl., according to the intelligence reports. The owner of the home was Vicente Dopico, a member of Areito's editorial board.

A federal indictment handed down May 28 charges that de la Cova and Blas Jesus Corbo conspired to firebomb the Dopico home.

Corbo and Gary Latham of Boca Raton are charged, along with de la Cova, in the bookstore case.

In his deposition taken Wednesday, Joseph Dawson, head of the FBI's bomb squad, said evidence in the Dopico case was supplied by Miguel Angel Peraza, an FBI informer in the bookstore case.

Dawson also testified that Peraza had been an informer for the FBI since November, and that for his cooperation, he had been paid expenses since then of about \$3,500.

It was Dawson who also testified that a synagogue in Broward County was discussed as a possible bombing target before the May 6 bookstore incident.

But the exact location of the synagogue could not be learned, and it was not known how the decision to attempt to bomb the bookstore at 3458 SW 8th St. instead was reached. Up until the last hours before the attempt, sources said, the group had not decided which target to hit.

Described by associates as a braggart, de la Cova had flaunted his pro-Arab feelings, and at least once was seen wearing a Palestine Liberation Organization armband.

When the FBI searched de la Cova's apartment after his May 6 arrest, they found among his many books several about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Among them: a book on anti-Semitism, titled "The End of the Jewish People" and another titled, "The Coming Destruction of Israel."

At least two friends of de la Cova said he had boasted that he had planted the bomb that blew up at the Torch of Friendship last July. Police — searching his apartment after his arrest — found pictures of the site allegedly taken by de la Cova immediately after the blast.

To win the confidence of anti-Castro contacts he was trying to befriend, friends said, de la Cova tried to convince some of them that he had planted the bombs against the two Areito staffers. The magazine has been accused of being pro-Castro by some Cuban exiles because it has defended the Castro revolution in some of its editorials. De la Cova, however, had befriended members of the Areito staff for several months in early 1975.

In 1972, de la Cova, who didn't have good contacts with Miami's Cuban community then because he was living in Fort Lauderdale, sought out a friend of his parents, Dr. Eduardo Suárez Rivas.

A former president of the Cuban Senate under Cuban president Carlos Prío, Suárez Rivas is the number-two man — after Prío — in the Auténtico Party here and is considered an informed and active figure among exile anti-Castro circles.

"When I first met him, he was a hippie and his parents were worried about him," Suárez Rivas said.

He said de la Cova came to see him — Suárez Rivas has written several books on Cuba covering the period that he was president of the Senate — like many other Cuban youths interested in their country's history.

"De la Cova started getting closer to the anti-Castro line then,"

Suárez Rivas said. He added that de la Cova told him he had joined Areito to infiltrate the group and collect information about it.

De la Cova also did not tell Suárez Rivas he collected intelligence about anti-Castro Cubans as well. In de la Cova's apartment, police found part of an alphabetical list (A-F) of people, places, events and agencies relevant to anti-Castro terroristic activities. The remaining files (G-Z) were missing. Police also found pictures of the members of these groups, many of them taken by de la Cova.

De la Cova used his contact with Suárez Rivas as an entree with anti-Castro activists and militant exile groups here.

He participated with Suárez Rivas, Prío and other exile leaders in a meeting at the Miami office of Santiago de Cuba Municipality in Exile, where the May 10, 1975, march to Washington to protest coexistence was planned.

Using Suárez Rivas for a recommendation, de la Cova got a job in September, 1975, as a teacher at the Inter-American Military School directed by Pedro Roig. Roig finally fired de la Cova last Feb. 19, claiming he couldn't maintain discipline in class.

De la Cova also tried to befriend Rafael Villaverde, director of the Little Havana Activities Center and a Bay of Pigs Veteran. Villaverde said de la Cova asked to be introduced to anti-Castro activists, but added that he never introduced him to the people he wanted to meet.