Anti-Castro terrorist group active and quite elusive

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NEW YORK—Over the last five months an anti-Castro group that the Federal Bureau of Investigation regards as the most dangerous terrorist organization in the United States has claimed responsibility for a series of bombings that have taken on global political implications.

The United States government has placed "highest priority" on seizing members of the group, called Omega 7, but so far not one of its members has been arrested as a bomber.

The FBI says the organization probably has no more than seven members and that penetrating it has raised unusually difficult problems.

"I need proof, I need documents. I need phone calls," said Larry W. Wack, an agent who has worked on the case.

In a mimeographed sheet, Omega 7, which is based in Union City, N.J., declared:

"Commercial enterprises and traitors that support our enemies, allowing them to obtain great quantities of dollars through commerce," the handout said. "We shall continue to struggle in foreign lands until we reach the Greek alphabet."

It has been nearly 19 years since the failure of the American-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, but a small group of right-wing Cuban emigres clings tenaciously to the belief that President Fidel Castro and his Communist government can be ousted from Cuba by virtue of violence.

"There is still a little flame here in the United States showing the people of Cuba and the Cuban exile community the way," said Eddie Garcia, the executive editor of El Diario-La Prensa, the Spanish-language newspaper, called Omega 7 members "pipsqueak commandos" in a vitriolic editorial in January and asked the FBI to make them ungrateful.

The FBI has been able to make only a few minor arrests connected to the group in the metropolitan region, agents say it not only is extremely difficult to penetrate, but placing informants on the Witness stand also puts them in grave danger and destroys their future usefulness. They say that hard proof is needed while bomb explosions consume nearly all evidence, and that the victims have been uncooperative.

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"They are hoods who use "Castro out of Cuba" as an excuse for their criminal activities," said Tom Locke, a member of the FBI's New York antiterrorist unit. "They were never in Cuba. They can extort money, go about their daily routine, and be big shots in their community by virtue of violence."

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"To turn our streets into battle-grounds, to endanger the life of innocent citizens, to attempt to shut the voice of the press through threats and bombs is at the very least ungrateful," Garcia said, "and at the most a travesty of their alleged reasons for being here—to secure the benefits of freedom and democracy."

Since Omega 7 first proclaimed itself after a February 1975 bombing, the group has taken responsibility for 19 bombings in the New York area. But the FBI called the TWA bombing last March "a marked departure" from its previous activity because it showed the group willing to injure innocent people.

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