

3 Cubans Caught Planting a Bomb At Site of NYC Pro-Castro Concert

NEW YORK — (UPI) — Three Cubans believed to be members of a militant anti-Castro group were caught early Saturday planting a powerful pipe bomb outside a Manhattan theater where a pro-Castro musical festival was scheduled.

Authorities said the three suspects, all aliens living in New Jersey, were believed to be members of Omega 7, a right-wing group opposed to the Castro regime.

The organization previously claimed responsibility for bombing the Cuban mission to the United Nations last month, and the Venezuelan U.N. mission on Feb. 1, 1975, authorities said.

POLICE SAID officers arrested the trio shortly before 4 a.m., just as they were attempting to light the fuse of a pipe bomb near the box office of the Academy of Music on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

The Academy was scheduled to host a Saturday night musical and dance program, "In Concert with Cuba: Break the Blockade," sponsored by the July 26 Committee, a pro-Castro group.

Police described the bomb as an eight-inch long,

galvanized pipe containing one pound and five ounces of C4, a high-order explosive. "It would have blown out the whole front of the theater," the police spokesman said.

Police said the suspects were spotted by officers of the department's Intelligence Division and the Arson and Explosion Squad who were staking out the theater in anticipation of trouble on July 26, the commemorative date of the Cuban revolution.

THE DEPARTMENT spokesman added police had "established surveillance on several locations as possible targets of pro-Castro or anti-Castro groups."

A spokeswoman for the July 26 Committee said, "Tonight's show will go on in spite of any form of terrorism." Police would not say they had any plans to beef up security but only that "adequate protection would be provided."

The bombing suspects were identified as George Gomez, 28, Union City, N.J.; Armand Santana, 25, West New York, N.J., and Alfredo Chumanceiro, 22, Union City.