

U.S. Blamed In Killing of Cuba Envoy

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From Herald Staff and Wire Reports

Cuba blamed the U.S. government Friday for the shooting death of one of its U.N. diplomatic attaches in New York. The United States apologized but said it was unable to provide complete security because "this is not a police state."

Felix Garcia Rodriguez, 41, identified as an attache to the Cuban mission at the U.N. with "administrative responsibilities," was killed Thursday as he drove a station wagon with diplomatic tags in Queens. His death marked the first slaying of a diplomat assigned to the 153-nation world body.

Omega 7, a Cuban exile militant group which has been under FBI investigation, has claimed responsibility for his death.

In a broadcast monitored in Miami Friday, Havana Radio said the U.S. government was "truly responsible" for the death.

"The CIA organized, prepared and trained these small groups of unscrupulous assassins," said Radio Havana. It added that it was Washington's responsibility to "guarantee the protection" of U.N. representatives.

But U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Donald McHenry said Omega 7 is "so small and tightly knit" that the FBI has been unable to infiltrate it. He said security had been tightened around the Cuban mission, but "this is not a police state, and we don't intend to turn it into one."

The FBI said its offices in Miami and Newark were asked to cooperate in the investigation.

"Anytime you have an Omega 7 activity, there are obvious places where investigations are conducted, and Miami is one of them," an FBI spokesman said.

The FBI has identified persons believed to be members of Omega 7, he said, adding that no arrests had been made because "there hasn't been anything to arrest them on."

Arthur Nehrbass, in charge of the Miami FBI office, confirmed that his agents have been collecting data about the recent activities of suspected Cuban terrorists.

"We are looking at some people we suspect are members of terrorist groups," he said. "We want to know if they have been in Miami recently."

FBI officials see Garcia's death as a change in Omega 7 tactics.

"This was a serious departure and we're concerned that the Omega 7 activities may accelerate," said Kenneth Walton, regional FBI deputy assistant director in New York. "An assassination of a diplomat is considerably more important than setting off some pipe bomb."