

2 HURT IN EXPLOSION AT CUBAN MISSION

Anti-Castro Terrorist Group Says It Set Off Bomb That Injured Police Guarding Building

By DAVID A. ANDELMAN

Two police officers standing guard in front of the Cuban Mission to the United Nations restrained and searched a Spanish-speaking member of the mission's staff when he attempted to warn them of a bomb shortly before it exploded late Friday night at the mission building at Lexington Avenue and 38th Street in Manhattan.

"They have a closed-circuit TV scanner in the mission building," Assistant Chief Milton Schwartz said yesterday. "Someone from the mission ran out to the police booth, started shouting in Spanish something like, 'Bomba bomba.' The officers didn't know who he was."

Shortly after the bomb exploded, blowing out windows in a two-block area, the anti-Castro terrorist group Omega 7 phoned news agencies and took responsibility for setting off the blast, the sixth it has assumed responsibility for in the last eight months.

Both police officers in Friday night's bombing, Louis Donofino and Gerald McLernon, were treated for possible ear damage and released from Bellevue Hospital Center, and Chief Schwartz said both "reported sick" yesterday. There were no other injuries from the explosion.

Bomb Carried in Shopping Bag

The chief, who is commander of the Manhattan South division, added that an investigation would be made to "try to find out what they saw or didn't see, and why."

"There are a lot of questions to be asked, and often it's too easy to place blame," the chief added.

Chief Schwartz said there were no immediate plans to place a Spanish-speaking officer at the building. "We don't have that many Spanish-speaking officers," he said.

Other police sources said that the man who placed the bomb had carried it in a shopping bag and had approached the mission building shortly before 11:30 P.M. The bomb was smoking, the police source continued, and the person carrying it warned a woman walking down the street to "get away, a bomb will go off." As he moved away from the building, he noticed an elderly couple and told them the same thing.

Oct. 27 Bombing Recalled

Later, a caller identifying himself as a member of Omega 7 told The Associated Press that his organization was demanding "from the authorities that the Cuban delegation be removed from New York City," an opinion that has come to be shared — for different reasons — by a number of the neighbors of the Cuban mission since bomb attacks began there. The worst, on Oct. 27, shattered hundreds

of windows, and during President Fidel Castro's visit here earlier in the fall, nearby residents faced security measures that disrupted their movements.

Chief Schwartz said that the "post contours" for police patrols around the mission would be changed, effective today. Two foot patrolmen will be stationed near the mission — one patrolling the front, facing Lexington Avenue, the second on 38th Street, near the service entrance where the bomb had been placed. A third man will be stationed in the police booth.

Until today there was one foot patrolman on Lexington Avenue and one in the booth, but no one on 38th Street.

No progress was reported in the hunt for members of Omega 7. Members of the Police Department's intelligence unit have been assigned to work with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the inquiry.

Koch Denounces Violence

F.B.I. officials described Omega 7 as an "anti-Castro organization based in the New York-New Jersey area, which has claimed responsibility for 12 bombings in New York and New Jersey since February 1975." Omega 7 is actually a pseudonym used by members of the Cuban Nationalist Movement. Three members of this movement were recently convicted of the bombing death of a former Chilean Ambassador, Orlando Letelier, in Washington in September 1976. Its membership is believed to number no more than a few hundred.

Mayor Koch said, "Those who seek to unseat Castro by committing crimes of violence are doing their own cause a great disservice."

Police Commissioner Robert J. McGuire in a statement said:

"This type of violent activity is intolerable regardless of its underlying political motivation. Indiscriminate violence, which could result in the senseless taking of life, is not the way to achieve political ends. We intend to utilize our resources to investigate this incident fully. We intend to insure the safety not only of the Cuban Mission — as we would provide any foreign consulate in our city — but also the safety of the residents and merchants of the Murray Hill community."

Residents Begin Cleanup

The neighborhood, meanwhile, began cleaning up — a task that residents said that was becoming a depressingly regular job.

Damage was less than in previous incidents, including the tremendous explosion on Oct. 27, in which hundreds of windows were shattered. Part of the reason was the replacement of many of these windows with one-quarter-inch glass instead of the customary one-eighth-inch glass.

At 310 Lexington Avenue, an apartment building across the street from the mission, the superintendent, Angel Ramon, surveyed the damage as city workmen swept shards of glass from the street. Fifteen windows were shattered by the latest explosion, compared with 160 during the October explosion, he said.

"We always take the worst damage because we are the closest and because of the angle of the mission," Mr. Ramon said. "I was home and I rushed to the window when I heard the blast. Everything was all shook up. I said to my wife, 'Here it goes again.' And I went to get ready to fix the windows. We still have plaster board and 2 by 4's cut to fit the windows from last time."