

# Drug link hinted in envoy killing

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The murder of a Cuban diplomat on a busy New York street "could very possibly" lead investigators to Miami, said a New York FBI agent investigating the killing.

A spokesman for the Soviet Embassy in Washington told The Miami News that the killing might be drug-related.

Feliz Garcia-Rodriguez, described by the FBI as a jack-of-all-trades for the Cuban Mission to the United Nations, was shot in the neck and killed as he drove down a busy Queens, N.Y., street last night.

Nobody was known to have witnessed the killing. The anti-Castro terrorist group Omega 7 took responsibility for the killing — the first Cuban diplomat to be murdered in the United States.

Cuban refugees in Miami and Union City, N.J., known to be close to Omega 7 were not answering their phones last night.

"When you find them, let me know," said New York FBI agent Larry Wack, who was looking for Omega 7 associates for questioning. "A lot of them are missing."

U.S. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie and UN Ambassador Donald McHenry spent the evening calming irate Cuban officials while police strengthened se-

curity around the Cuban Mission in Manhattan.

Moments after the 6:20 p.m. shooting, an anonymous caller with a heavy Latin accent told the Associated Press in New York that Omega 7 "executed a member of the Cuban delegation" and warned, "The next will be (Cuban ambassador to the UN) Raul Roa."

The caller said Garcia was killed because "he's a communist."

But Soviet spokesman Boris Zaloskovitch told The Miami News: "If the fellow was involved in some kind of irregular activities, he could expect trouble. If he was working outside his assignment, that's his problem. Some of these people want to make money on the outside. Some of these people get involved in trading in narcotics."

Asked if he meant that Garcia was known to be involved in illegal activities, Zaloskovitch said, "I'll just say what I said before."

When told of the Soviet's comments, FBI agent Wack said: "Really? Are you kidding? That's significant. That's another avenue of investigation."

Wack, an expert on Omega 7 and other Cuban exile terrorist groups, said the FBI is "investigating all the possibilities. Everything from the possibility he was involved with somebody's wife all the way up to Omega 7. It's just like any homicide. If it is narcotics, or even if I was an irate husband, it would work to my benefit to call and say it was Omega 7. That would take the heat

off of me and put it on a lot of other people."

But Wack said the execution style of slaying was typical of the anti-Castro group, which has been linked to the murders of Cuban exiles in Puerto Rico and Union City, and to bombings in Miami and the New York area.

Garcia was the first Cuban diplomat to be murdered in the United States, said State Department spokesman Miles Frechette.

The murder may "very possibly" lead investigators to Miami, Wack said. He said the Miami FBI office already has been called into the case.

"We don't know yet whether there's a Miami link in this case," said Wack. "As far as Omega 7 is concerned, there's no question about it. There are links between Miami and Union City."

The FBI said in March that Omega 7 is the most dangerous terrorist organization in the country and that the government had assigned the "highest priority" to prosecuting its members. The number is thought to be small, probably no more than seven, the FBI said.

Omega 7 has taken responsibility for the bombing of a Miami cigar factory in January, the April 1979 murder of Carlos Munoz, a Cuban exile who lived in Puerto Rico, and the killing of Union City resident Eulalio Negrin, a participant in the recent exile dialog with Fidel Castro.

It also took responsibility for an Oct. 28, 1979,

bombing of the Cuban Mission in which two New York policemen were injured.

Police have kept three officers on duty outside the mission 24 hours a day since the October bombing, said Sgt. Peter Gleason. Three more officers were sent to guard the mission as soon as police learned of the shooting, he said.

Garcia, listed as the 20th-ranking diplomat at the 40-member mission, was alone at the wheel of a burgundy-colored station wagon bearing diplomatic plates. He was pulling out of a gas station when he was shot by a sniper, possibly firing from the high ground of a cemetery across the street, police said.

He was hit at least once, in the neck, and slumped over the wheel of the car. The victim's car slammed into a light blue Volkswagen pulling out of the station, injuring one person, then swerved back across Queens Boulevard and came to rest on the median strip.

Police found Garcia dead in the front seat, blood soaking his yellow shirt. Three .45-caliber cartridge casings were found nearby. The bullet that struck the victim traveled from his neck up into his head, police said.

"There's a very strong possibility" the bullets were intended for another member of the mission staff, Wack said. "There are indications that three or four

Please see CUBAN, 4A

**CUBAN,**

*Mia News (FH) col 1 4A*  
from 1A

*12 Sept 80*

other people were supposed to be in the car, but they weren't."

Garcia was 37 or 38 years old, said Cuban Mission spokesman Esther Perez. He had no family and had been in the United States about two years. Miles Frechette, chief of the State Department's Cuba Desk, said the victim was listed as a mission attache. Frechette said the U.S. government sent the Cuban government its condolences.

Cuban Mission representative Raul Piñero, who was joined at the scene of the killing by McHenry, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, said Garcia might have been on his way from LaGuardia Airport to the mission in Manhattan.

A resident of the area said Piñero

approached him after the killing and identified himself as a member of the Cuban mission.

"He stood over the body and when he recognized it he turned white," said the man, who asked not to be identified. "He was really shook."

So was Wack.

"I don't like this at all," said the FBI agent. "Get the message out to the (Cuban terrorist) community that if they thought the heat was on before, they ain't seen nothing yet. We're not going to tolerate people shooting diplomats on the street."

Also contributing to this story were Miami News reporters Rick Thames and Ana Veciana-Suarez.