

# Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets

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**Author: GAIL EPSTEIN NIEVES, [gepstein@herald.com](mailto:gepstein@herald.com)**

Jurors in the Cuban spy trial got their first look Tuesday at the heart of the government's case: some 1,400 pages of secret reports outlining everything from the line-item budget that Havana allegedly allotted its operatives, to communications that could reflect prior planning by Cuba of the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shoot-down.

The recently declassified documents - rarely made public in such volume and scope - represent a treasure trove of Cuba's apparent military intelligence goals and methodology.

They paint a picture of a highly secretive and organized network tasked with multiple "active measures," or intelligence-gathering jobs; key among them are infiltrating Miami's Southern Command and other federal agencies, and discrediting Miami's Cuban exile community, especially the Cuban American National Foundation.

The communications were contained on nearly 1,000 encrypted computer disks confiscated during FBI searches of the defendants' South Florida apartments. FBI agents broke the codes, ferreting out thousands of pages of reports that they translated from Spanish to English.

Jurors saw only four short excerpts after three heavy notebooks of printouts were introduced into evidence by prosecutors Tuesday. Further testimony is expected. However, The Herald obtained and examined all three volumes.

Replete with references to "the Revolution," and using terms like "comrade" for colleague and "our main enemy" for the United States, the communications mirror the prevailing terminology and philosophies of Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba.

The reports also give a name to the spy ring: La Red Avispa, the Wasp Network.

The five men on trial in federal court - accused members of the Wasp Network - are all charged with spying for Cuba. They were arrested Sept. 12, 1998, in the culmination of a major counterespionage investigation.

Lead defendant Gerardo Hernandez faces the most serious charge: conspiracy to murder, for the Feb. 24, 1996, Cuban MiG rocketing of two Brothers to the Rescue planes over the Florida Straits that killed four men.

Though all of the accused spies acknowledge working on orders from Havana, they deny ever obtaining classified information or intending to harm U.S. interests.

Rather, they say they worked from a defensive posture, trying to identify the exiles presumably responsible for a series of bombings at tourist sites in Cuba and to find out if the United States had plans to invade the island nation.

Jurors will not hear the defense side of the case for at least another month.

Among the prosecution evidence released Tuesday:

- A Feb. 13, 1996, communication that appears to warn co-defendant and pilot Rene Gonzalez not to fly with Brothers to the Rescue 11 days before the shutdown - and gives him code words to speak if he does go up.

It states: `` If they ask you to fly at the last minute without being scheduled, find an excuse and do not do it. If you cannot avoid it, transmit over the airplane's radio the slogan for the July 13 martyrs and Viva Cuba. If you are not able to call, say over the radio, `Long live Brothers to the Rescue and Democracia.' That is all."

The message was addressed to `` Brother Iselin," one of several ``cover" names the government alleges belonged to Gonzalez. It was signed by ``Miguel and Giro."

Giro was a cover name for defendant Hernandez, prosecutors contend.

\* A ``task objective" to target the Cuban American National Foundation for discord. It states: ``After the death of Jorge Mas Canosa, Department M-IX [Active Measure] has been developing the FINADO active measures operation aimed at increasing the existing contradictions among the directors of this organization and at discrediting it."

Finado means deceased.

The author and date of the message were not available.

\* Voluminous reports on fighter plane activity, building renovations and other activities at Key West's Boca Chica Naval Air Station, the U.S. military base ``closest to our Cuban territory," said a Nov. 14, 1996, report.

It was signed ``Lorient," the alleged cover name for co-defendant Antonio Guerrero, who got a maintenance job at the base.

\* A host of secret communication procedures, including predetermined signature codes for cables and phone messages. For instance, the message ``I need money" was to be signed ``N. Dinar." ``I'm being watched" was to be signed ``K. Jover."

In directions for a clandestine meeting in New York, intelligence bosses scripted conversations for the ``verbal sign and countersign," or passwords.

One man was to say, ``Do you know the route that goes by Central Park and the mayor's office?" The contact was to respond: ``It would be better to take a Yellow Cab to the park, and don't see the mayor, it would be better to go to the movies."

\* Detailed ``escape" instructions telling the operatives to avoid airports in Miami, New York and Los Angeles while they flee with their counterfeit identification documents. ``Leave by an overland route to a neighboring city where, having verified that you have broken all enemy controls on your person, you shall proceed to change your identity."

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