

24Sep88 CUBA: DIPLOMAT SAYS HE IS PROUD HE SHOT AT "TRAITOR".

By Lionel Martin

HAVANA, Sept 24, *Reuter* - A Cuban diplomat, expelled from Britain after he shot at a former Cuban intelligence agent, said in a published interview he was proud he tried to kill "the miserable traitor."

The official government newspaper *Granma* on Saturday ran a two-page interview with Carlos Medina, a 30-year-old former commercial attache expelled by London after the September 12 incident in which he fired on Florentino Azpillaga.

"When I saw the miserable traitor in front of me I realised that there was only one possible reply ... to liquidate him," *Granma* quoted Medina as saying.

According to Cuban government sources, Azpillaga went to work for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) after he defected to the West while in Czechoslovakia in June 1987.

Medina said he shot at Azpillaga, who had studied with him at Cuba's Interior Ministry, after he was approached by him in a threatening manner in the garage of a London apartment building.

Azpillaga was accompanied by "his Cuban-born concubine" and three men belonging to the CIA and the British intelligence service, Medina said. He did not explain how he knew the other men were American and British agents.

He said that when he saw Azpillaga he felt "a blind hatred ... and the need to defend my revolutionary honour."

Medina said he "knew that the CIA had plans to utilise this miserable traitor to induce or force me to defect."

"For that reason I decided to carry a gun as an elementary precautionary measure," he said.

"The CIA cannot understand that somebody is ready to sacrifice his life for the revolution," Medina was quoted as saying. "They think that to react like I did you have to be a Rambo."

Medina did not say how he learned of the alleged CIA plot to get him to defect. He said the Cuban ambassador to Britain did not know of the alleged plot but that two other members of the Cuban mission did know and "they agreed that I should adopt some security measures."

Medina said he fired at Azpillaga several times and saw the defector grab the upper left side of his chest and fall to the ground. He said he then fired at the men accompanying Azpillaga before running to the apartment house lobby and asking for someone to call the police.

Cuba's ambassador in London, Oscar Fernandez Mell, was also expelled as a result of the shooting.

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