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AM-CUBA-SHOOTING
CUBAN DIPLOMAT SAYS HE IS PROUD TO HAVE FIRED AT +TRAITOR+
BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, SEPT 24, REUTER - A CUBAN DIPLOMAT, EXPELLED FROM GREAT BRITAIN AFTER HE SHOT AT A FORMER CUBAN INTELLIGENCE AGENT, IS PROUD HE TRIED TO KILL +THE MISERABLE TRAITOR,+ THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER GRANMA SAID ON SATURDAY.

THE NEWSPAPER RAN A TWO-PAGE INTERVIEW WITH CARLOS MEDINA, THE 30-YEAR-OLD FORMER COMMERICAL ATTACHE EXPELLED AFTER THE SEPTEMBER 12 INCIDENT IN WHICH HE OPENED FIRE ON FLORENTINO AZPILLAGA.

+WHEN I SAW THE MISERABLE TRAITOR IN FRONT OF ME I REALIZED 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 CIA AFTER HE DEFECTED TO THE WEST FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN JUNE 1987.

MEDINA SAID HE SHOT AT AZPILLAGA, WHO HAD TAKEN COURSES TOGETHER 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 WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE ALLEGED AMERICAN OR BRITISH AGENTS. BUT WHEN HE SAW AZPILLAGA HE SAID HE FELT +A BLIND HATRED ... AND THE NEED TO DEFEND MY REVOLUTIONARY HONOR.+

MEDINA SAID HE +KNEW THAT THE CIA HAD PLANS TO UTILIZE THIS MISERABLE TRAITOR (AZPILLAGA) TO INDUCE OR FORCE ME TO DEFECT.+

+FOR THAT REASON,+ HE ADDED, +I DECIDED TO CARRY A GUN AS AN ELEMENTARY PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE.+

+THE CIA CANNOT UNDERSTAND THAT SOMEBODY IS READY TO SACRIFICE THEIR 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 WIN HIS DEFECTION.

HE SAID HE FIRED AT AZPILLAGA SEVERAL TIMES AND SAW HIM PUT HIS HAND TO THE UPPER LEFT SIDE OF HIS CHEST AND THEN FALL TO THE GROUND. HE THEN FIRED AT THE MEN WHO ACCOMPANIED AZPILLAGA BEFORE RUNNING TO THE APARTMENT HOUSE LOBBY AND ASKING FOR SOMEONE TO CALL THE POLICE.

MEDINA SAID THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN, OSCAR FERNANDEZ MELL, DID NOT KNOW OF THE ALLEGED CIA DEFECTION PLOT. HE SAID TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CUBAN MISSION DID KNOW, HOWEVER, AND +THEY AGREED THAT I SHOULD ADOPT SOME SECURITY MEASURES.+

THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR WAS ALSO EXPELLED AS A RESULT OF THE SHOOTOUT.

REUTER 1619