

The bigger game in the coup plot against Nicaragua

by Gretchen Small

At a televised press conference on Jan. 9, Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomás Borge and the Ministry's head of security, Lenin Serna, announced that a far-ranging plot for economic sabotage and general uprising against the Sandinista government had been cracked. Borge accused officials of the governments of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Argentina, and the United States of direct involvement in the planned coup. Once triggered by the blowing up of Nicaragua's only oil refinery and major cement factory, a more general uprising and invasion of armed exiles was to have followed.

At the press conference, one William Baltodano, the head of the Somocista Nicaraguan Democratic Union, and Julio González Cerrón, a Venezuelan businessman reputedly working for Venezuelan military intelligence (DIM) at the time, were presented as the principals in the plot. Before the cameras, Baltodano reported his trips from Miami to Buenos Aires, Caracas, and San José to

arrange financing (citing \$50,000 from the Argentine military) and weapons for the operation. Other members of the group handled contacts with government officials in Colombia, Chile, and the United States.

Despite denials by principals outside Nicaragua, intelligence sources in Washington, Caracas, and Miami all readily acknowledged privately that the operation certainly had all the earmarks of a "Haig job." Georgetown University sources specified the importance of the "Miami connection," where Venezuelan government and intelligence officials are very active.

The damaging details of the exposed plot, probably one among many under way, have led some observers to wonder if the operation was not *deliberately* "blown"—thus bolstering Borge's repeated warnings that such plots were under way.

Venezuelan government officials, including the Foreign Minister and the head of military intelligence quickly conferred with U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States William Middendorf and then issued a formal statement categorically denying any government involvement in the plot. The Venezuelans charged Borge with fabricating the plot at Cuba's behest as a factional move, and virtually called on the Nicaraguan government to purge Borge. Borge has since received renewed Nicaraguan government backing, but relations between the two countries are now at the breaking point.

State Department sends a warning to Duvalier

by Carlos Wesley

An attempt by Haitian exiles to invade the island and topple the corrupt Duvalier regime collapsed this week after the exiles' backers in the U.S. State Department decided to pull the plug on the operation, and the would-be invaders were unable to establish a beachhead on Haiti.

As of mid-week army units loyal to Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier were reported to be mopping up a small suicide squad of rebels on the island of Tortuga, about eight kilometers off the Haitian coast. The main body of insurgents, led by Miami resident Bernard Sansaricq and said to number about 30 men, were meanwhile being towed back to Florida by a U.S. Coast Guard cutter after their boat suffered engine trouble on the high seas.

"The invasion was a warning from Vernon Walters," said a source close to U.S. intelligence circles. According to this source, Walters, the former Deputy Director of

the CIA who now works as a special adviser to Secretary of State Haig, is letting the Duvaliers know that the State Department will not put up for much longer with the regime's inability to bring to a complete halt the outflow of Haitian "boat-people" refugees headed for the U.S. This was confirmed for *EIR* by persons within Sansaricq's inner circle, who said: "Bernard Sansaricq got the green light from the United States. He would never had tried the invasion without it. And it was the United States who also pulled the plug on the operation—as a kind of last-chance warning to Duvalier."

Since Haiti has been singled out as a "basket case" slated for triage by the authors of the *Global 2000 Report* on mass population reduction, it has come in for especially harsh treatment from the Haig State Department. Haitian "boat people" are being interdicted on the high seas by U.S. naval vessels, in violation of international law. Those refugees who do manage to reach U.S. shores are being denied asylum and are either confined in concentration camps set up in Florida, Montana, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere, or summarily deported back to Haiti and starvation.

In the view of the Haig State Department, the bloody-handed Duvalier has proven inept and inadequate at imposing the new level of efficient brutality needed to stop Haitians from emigrating to the United States.