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Chile Paid Cuban Exiles \$1 Million to Murder Letelier, Magazine Says

NEW YORK (UPI) — Chilean exile leader Orlando Letelier, slain in a Sept. 21, 1976, car bombing on Washington's embassy row, was murdered by Cuban exiles in exchange for Chilean financial support for the exiles' war against Fidel Castro, Penthouse magazine reported today.

It said Chile paid \$1 million to the group, which included veterans of the unsuccessful "Bay of Pigs" attempt to invade Cuba. Letelier had served as Chile's ambassador to Washington under the late Salvador Allende and was a prominent critic of the military junta which overthrew and replaced the Marxist president.

The plot was hatched at a meeting between Cuban exile leaders and Chilean secret police in Coral Gables, Fla., on June 29, 1976, said the article written by Ernie Volkman and John Cummings.

Release of the article, originally scheduled for July, followed a State Department request to Chile to produce two persons sought for questioning.

"The Cubans agreed to murder Letelier in exchange for financial and other support from Chile for their private war against Fidel Castro," the magazine said.

"Cubans worked up a plan for planting a bomb in Letelier's car. The plan was approved at the highest levels of the Chilean government and DINA (Chilean secret police) officials participated directly in all phases of the murder plot."

The magazine said the Cubans were trained by the CIA as an "elite assassination squad."

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