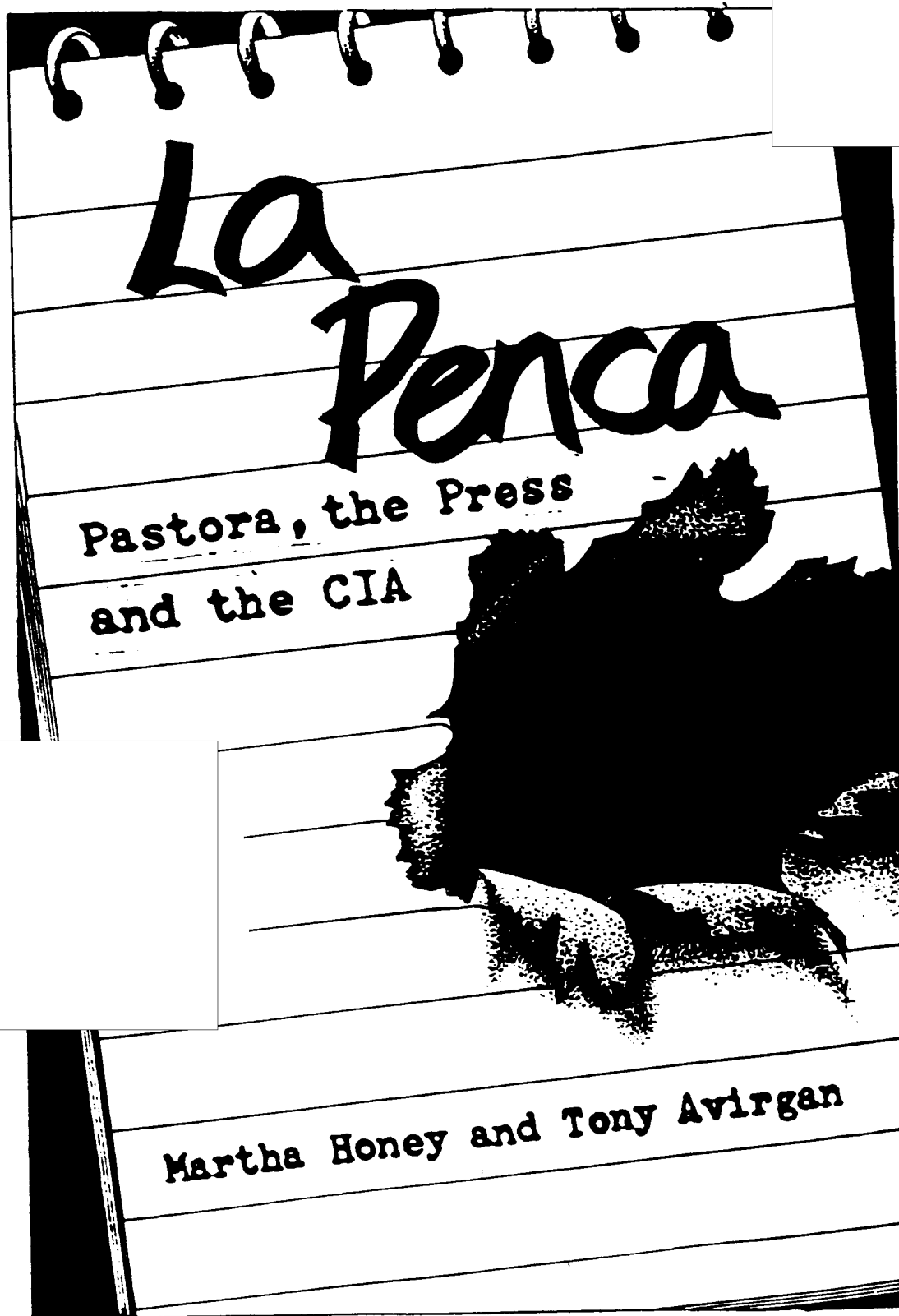


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To the victims of La Penca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Numerous people assisted in the investigation, some at considerable personal risk. Because of continuing risk, it is not possible to name many of them here.

Those who have helped and consented to have their names used are Carmen Araya Ortiz, Richard Dyer, Roberto Cruz, and Edgar Ulate.

Very special thanks goes to Carlos who risked his life and to David who gave his life to get the story of La Penca out. Without their extraordinary courage and sacrifices, the truth might never have been known.

The editing and support of Tico Times editor Dery Dyer has been invaluable.

The content of the book, opinions expressed and conclusions drawn are solely the responsibility of the authors.

JOURNALISTS INJURED & KILLED AT LA PENCA
(Listed in alphabetical order)

Tony Avirgan - U.S. - ABC NEWS - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Mangled hand. Evacuated to the U.S. Incapacitated two months.

William Cespedes - Costa Rica - Radio Relos/United Press International - Shrapnel wounds. Permanent hearing impairment. Permanent limitation in use of hand. Ongoing emotional trauma. Incapacitated five months.

Roberto Cruz - Costa Rica - Xing Xua News Agency - Shrapnel wounds. Severe burns. Lost eye. Leg amputated. Permanently disabled.

Joaquin Da Silva - Portugal - Portuguese TV - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Incapacitated one month.

Edgar Fonseca Monge - Costa Rica - La Nacion - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Incapacitated two months.

Linda Frazier - U.S. - Tico Times - Died at site of blast.

Jose Rodolfo Ibarra Bogarin - Costa Rica - Channel 7 - shrapnel wounds. Severe burns. Permanent hearing impairment. Incapacitated two months.

Gilberto Lopez - Brazil - French News Agency - Severe burns. permanent limitation in use of hands. Returned to work after one week in hospital.

Arturo Masis - Costa Rica - Channel 7 - Not seriously injured

Reid Miller - U.S. - Associated Press - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Permanent hearing damage. Returned to work after one week.

Susan Morgan - Britain - Newsweek - Shrapnel wounds. Severe burns. Fractured hip. Fractured arm. Fractured elbow. evacuated to the U.S. Incapacitated six months. Permanent limitation in use of arm.

Nelson Murillo - Costa Rica - Channel 6 - Shrapnel wounds. Fractured leg. Permanent hearing damage. Incapacitated two months.

Fernando Prado - Bolivia - Swedish TV - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Incapacitated two months.

Jorge Quiros Piedra - Costa Rica - Channel 6 - Died at site of blast.

Miguel A. Sanchez Castro - Costa Rica - La Nacion - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Permanent hearing damage. Incapacitated two months.

Evelio Sequeira - Costa Rica - Channel 6 - Died in hospital one week after the blast.

Peter Torbjornsson - Sweden - Swedish TV - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Incapacitated one month.

Juan Carlos Ulate Mora - Costa Rica - La Republica - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Incapacitated two months.

Edgar Romano Ulate Cruz - Costa Rica - ABC News - Shrapnel wounds. Burns. Permanent hearing damage. Incapacitated three months.

Carlos Vargas Genet - Costa Rica - La Republica - Shrapnel wounds. Severe burns. Multiple fractures. Mangled leg. mangled elbow. Fingers amputated. Permanently disabled.

Jose Antonio Venegas - Costa Rica - La Nacion - Permanent hearing impairment. Incapacitated one month.

SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION

This report represents more than a year's work by ourselves and a number of colleagues. From the day after a terrorist bomb exploded during guerrilla leader Eden Pastora's press conference at La Penca, Nicaragua on May 30, 1984, we have worked to get to the bottom of this crime which killed and crippled our colleagues, friends and family members.

The La Penca bombing would have been a mere footnote in the sordid chronicle of the contras' war against the Nicaraguan government, except for the fact that it involved, from almost every angle, the press. This made it a chillingly unique event.

In our investigation, we tried to find out:

- 1-The identity of the bomber.
- 2-Who hired him.

We have conducted personal or telephone interviews with over 100 people in Costa Rica, the United States, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, Spain, France and Sweden and Norway. Our sources have included antiSandinista rebel leaders (contras) both pro- and anti-Pastora; Costa Rican government officials, security officers and journalists; former and present CIA agents, Cuban-Americans, and businessmen with ties to Miami; United States diplomats, journalists and political investigators; Panamanian journalists and politicians; Uruguayan leftists, politicians, journalists and police officials; Nicaraguan diplomats, journalists and government officials; and foreign journalists and western diplomats based in the region.

The investigation has been extremely difficult; hampered by false leads, phony documents, diametrically opposing theories, and informants who did not want to talk, or -- in the case of some police and security officials -- wanted to be paid for their information.

Despite this, we have reached the following conclusions:

1. Even though the bomber failed in his mission to kill Pastora, the operation itself was highly professional, carefully planned over a long period, carried out by a skilled, well-trained terrorist, and involved numerous accomplices, including at least one woman.
2. The way the assassination attempt was planned, the journalists present were: victims of the attack, the cover for the assassin, and the prime suspects afterwards.
3. Certain Costa Rican officials knew beforehand about the plot and afterwards worked to block the investigation. In addition, certain security officials or ex-officials were

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involved in manufacturing false documents designed to blame the bombing on the Sandinistas.

4. The U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica acted in a negligent manner, even though American journalists or journalists working for the U.S. media were killed or maimed in the bombing.

5. Press reports in the days following the bombing carried false and at times malicious stories implicating innocent people and throwing off course any serious press investigation into the attack. There is evidence that the press in both Costa Rica and the U.S. was used as an instrument in a well-organized coverup of the bombing.

6. The assassin was a right-wing Libyan whose comrades knew him as Amac Galil. He was recruited in Chile for the La Penca operation in early 1984.

7. Those who hired the assassin include the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), members of the MDN and FDN contra organizations, and Cuban Americans in Miami.

Substantial evidence is presented here showing that right-wing forces, including the CIA, were plotting to kill Pastora. While recognizing that the Sandinistas had reasons for wanting to kill him and the capacity to do so, we have not found any concrete evidence that they were responsible for La Penca. Neither have other journalists, Costa Rican investigators, or Pastora's wing of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE).

8. The bombing was a right-wing plot which was intended to be blamed on the Sandinistas. Its aim was first to kill Pastora who was considered by many of his opponents to be a sort of closet communist, as well as the main obstacle to contra unity and increased U.S. assistance. Second, it is likely the bombing was intended to increase tensions between Costa Rica and Nicaragua and thereby prepare the ground for the build-up of an FDN army along Nicaragua's southern front and the creation of a coordinated two-front war against the Sandinistas. Third, by killing and maiming journalists, the bombing would help turn the press and public opinion against the Nicaraguan government.

9. The group which carried out the La Penca bombing is still at large and intact. The group plans to carry out new terrorist attacks in Honduras and Costa Rica. These attacks, like La Penca, are planned so that blame will fall on the Sandinistas and leftist organizations friendly to them.

10. Nearly a year and a half after the La Penca bombing, the U.S. Embassy in San Jose was still actively blocking Costa Rican Government efforts to investigate the crime.

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We hope that publication of this report will stimulate further investigation and uncover more clues leading to the capture and punishment of the La Penca killer and his accomplices.

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BACKGROUND TO THE BOMBING

On the eve of Eden Pastora's May 30th press conference, the anti-Sandinista Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) was suffering its most serious internal crisis.

The CIA had given the group a 30-day ultimatum to unite with the Honduran-based Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). In addition, Pastora, as ARDE's Commander-in-chief and leader of the Revolutionary Forces of Sandino (FRS) faction, was being pressured by the CIA to create a proper military chain of command (estado mayor) and to adhere to closer CIA supervision of his military actions. The CIA threatened to cut off Pastora's funds permanently if ARDE and the FDN did not merge.

According to ARDE sources, as of April 1984, the CIA had suspended its monthly financial allowance to ARDE, given a green light to Costa Rican authorities to raid Pastora's command headquarters and other clandestine ARDE installations inside Costa Rica. The guerrilla leader was being told in no uncertain terms that he had no choice but to accept an alliance with the FDN.

Pastora, however, defied the CIA orders because, as he stated publicly, the FDN high command contained "Somocistas" (ex-officers from ousted Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza's notorious National Guard). He said he would agree to unity only if notorious Somocistas were removed from the FDN. In addition, he knew that the CIA conditions would mean that he would lose his single-handed control over ARDE military operations.

In contrast, Alfonso Robelo, ARDE's chief political spokesman and leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) faction, favored unity with the FDN. Robelo was ARDE's most effective fund raiser and a key contact with the CIA. He is also a first cousin of FDN political chief, Alfonso Callejas.

According to ARDE sources, under the CIA unity plan, political power was to be shared by Robelo and Callejas, while overall military command would go to one of the commanders of the FDN.

The FDN supported unity. It came to view Pastora as the main obstacle to a single, more effective organization which would receive expanded CIA assistance. As the crisis deepened, other ARDE leaders and members began to choose sides between Robelo's and Pastora's factions. All six organizations composing the ARDE alliance became seriously divided over the unity question.

ARDE has never recovered from this crisis, which was followed by the La Penca bombing, a Sandinista military offensive against Pastora's positions, and a mandate by the U.S. Congress to cut off covert U.S. aid to the contras. When Congress decided, in April 1985, to give \$27,000,000 in humanitarian aid

to the contras, Pastora was excluded from receiving any of the windfall.

ARDE had received money, supplies and training from the CIA since before it launched its armed struggle in April, 1983. But this assistance always came with strings attached. According to ARDE sources, CIA employees coordinated the group's logistics and military training, and maintained its small fleet of planes which operated out of El Salvador. At several points the CIA had clashed with Pastora, and had suspended assistance for short periods.

In addition, these sources say, one of the conditions of covert U.S. aid was that ARDE always deny it received such aid, in part because the stated purpose of the U.S. assistance to the contras had been to interdict the flow of arms from Nicaragua to the Salvadoran guerrillas. Because ARDE fights in the south, far from El Salvador, it could in no way claim to be interdicting arms to the Salvadoran leftists.

Additionally, Pastora, who portrays himself as a "democrat" and "true Sandinista" and solicits support from liberals in Latin America and Europe, did not want to be publicly identified with the CIA. It was only in the days just before the bombing, when CIA pressure was at its peak, that Pastora and his aides indirectly admitted that they had been receiving covert U.S. assistance.

On May 22, for instance, Pastora, Jose Davila (leader of the Christian Democratic wing of ARDE) and Donald Castillo (head of ARDE's workers' organization) placed a half-page ad in Costa Rica's leading daily paper La Nacion stating that "by means of pressure, manipulation and false expectation", FDN-ARDE unity was being forced on them by "dark forces". The ad continued, "We categorically condemn the manipulation of Pastora by interested sectors who try to make him look like an obstacle to unity."

The next day, in an interview with Costa Rica's Radio Monumental, Pastora was more explicit. He said, "There are strong pressures by the CIA. And they have blocked all help to us. For the last two months, we have not received a bullet or a pair of boots, we have not received anything." In an interview with Channel 6 TV, which ironically was being re-aired just minutes before the bomb exploded, the ARDE Commander said that the CIA was putting great pressure on his organization to join with the FDN. "But," added, "The CIA will have to kill me first."

Pastora's aides have since said in interviews that they felt the commander's life was in danger and that that was one of the reasons he had left his guerrilla camps along the San Juan River the week before. He traveled first to Panama to seek guarantees of continued assistance from Panama's military chief Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. He then secretly went to San Jose (he was officially banned from entering Costa Rica) for

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meetings with ARDE's 27-member "Democratic Assembly", the organization's top decision-making body.

In a series of heated meetings, a majority of the Assembly voted for unity with the FDN. On two occasions, May 27 and 29, Pastora and his followers walked out. After the second walkout, his people decided to hold a press conference.

Pastora's aides say this was not the first time a conflict with the CIA had precipitated an internal crisis and fears for Pastora's life. According to one political adviser, "From the moment we started our armed struggle, there were contradictions. When the bomb went off, it was simply the highest moment of contradictions within ARDE."

In September-October 1983, for instance, Pastora temporarily quit ARDE, announcing that Alfonso Robelo was "a traitor" and had "deceived" him. The denunciation came after Pastora discovered that Robelo was secretly training his own military commanders in Argentina and Honduras as part of the CIA's plan to create a proper military chain of command in ARDE. The aim was to circumscribe Pastora's authority and professionalize the guerrilla forces on the southern front.

In addition, the CIA suspended funding to Pastora at this time, because the Commander was resisting unity with the FDN. ARDE informants say that during this period there was a growing feeling that Pastora was an stubborn obstacle both to unity and to increased CIA assistance. One informant who supported unity explained, "The feeling is that we'd be better off having Pastora as a dead hero than a live troublemaker." He said Pastora might well be killed by his contra opponents who would place the blame on the Sandinistas.

The crisis was resolved this time after Pastora publicly quit ARDE and then held talks with Robelo. Pastora later went on a highly successful trip to the U.S. where he received a great deal of media coverage and, ARDE sources say, managed to patch things up with the CIA by agreeing to resume unity talks with the FDN. But because of his continuing obduracy, these talks never resulted in a unity plan being implemented.

What all this indicates is that, at the time of the bombing, there was reason to believe that the FDN and the MDN, as well as the CIA, might have wanted to eliminate Pastora.

It is also important to note that rightist plots against Pastora existed as far back as 1982. According to testimony given in Managua in December, 1982 by an Argentinean, Hector Frances, who had worked for the CIA in Costa Rica, Pastora, although he was on the CIA payroll, was already proving troublesome because he would not align with the FDN. Frances is reported as saying, "The idea came up in several meetings we had (an idea not entirely without the inspiration

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of the Department of State) of the possible physical elimination of Pastora" in the same manner as was used to murder ex-Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. Somoza was assassinated in Paraguay by leftist Argentinean guerrillas supported by the Sandinistas and apparently the plot against Pastora was intended to appear to be the work of Sandinistas as well.

At the same time, it is widely known that the Sandinistas have long regarded Pastora as a formidable opponent. Although militarily his forces have presented little challenge to the Sandinistas, Pastora himself is one of the few contra leaders with any popular following inside Nicaragua. Furthermore, he has managed to gain some support in Latin America and Europe, thus undercutting assistance to the Nicaraguan Government and dividing the Socialist International on the issue of Nicaragua.

There is evidence that prior to La Penca, the Sandinistas had attempted to assassinate contra leaders operating out of Costa Rica. One incident, in February 1982, was an attempt on the life of contra leader Fernando ("El Negro") Chamorro, head of the tiny FARN group which operated out of Costa Rica. Gunmen entered Chamorro's house outside San Jose, fired shots and wounded his son, whom they apparently mistook for the rebel leader. The gunmen escaped and the son survived the attack.

The second incident occurred when a bomb accidentally exploded in a downtown San Jose parking lot in June, 1983. The person carrying the bomb - Rodrigo Cuadra Clachar - was killed, and a second man who was accompanying him was seriously wounded. The injured man eventually was released by Costa Rican authorities without any charges being brought against him.

Both men were Nicaraguan, and Cuadra was found to have worked for the Sandinistas and to have shortly before come to Costa Rica with the supposed intention of joining ARDE. ARDE officials say that even before Cuadra was killed, they suspected that he was a Sandinista infiltrator. When the bomb went off, the two were getting into their car to go to a meeting with top ARDE officials.

Although no public statement was released on the parking lot bombing, the local press, Costa Rican officials, U.S. Embassy officials and the various contra factions all believe that it was perpetrated by the Sandinistas. A top Costa Rican security official warned Nicaraguan officials never to do such a thing again in Costa Rican territory. Costa Rican authorities say they decided to quietly drop the incident rather than both expose the presence of contras in the country and increase tensions between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. But many found it strange that the injured man was released without explanation and no report was ever issued on the incident.

A third so-called plot is even less clear. It involved the arrest in September 1983 of a member of the Basque separatist organization ETA, Gregorio Jimenez, who was wanted in Spain for several murders. He had apparently fled first to Nicaragua and then to Costa Rica where he was working as a carpenter. Costa Rican authorities accused Jimenez of being part of a Sandinista-backed plot to gun down Pastora on a curve in a road while he was driving north towards the border. Jimenez has never been brought to trial, and remains in jail.

Costa Rican and U.S. officials frequently cite the case of Jimenez as evidence of Sandinista and ETA subversion against Costa Rica. From interviews, it is clear that Jimenez was part of a Sandinista spy ring, composed of people from a number of Spanish-speaking countries, which was collecting information about ARDE. According to someone very familiar with its operations, the ring was only engaged in intelligence gathering and had no plans to kill Pastora or other ARDE leaders.

However, Costa Rican security officials insist that Jimenez was part of an assassination team.

Jimenez' arrest came at an awkward moment for Managua since Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge was in Spain seeking support from President Felipe Gonzalez' government and from the Socialist International of which Gonzalez is a leading member. Borge denied Nicaragua had given ETA guerrillas military training or that the organization had a presence in Nicaragua, although he admitted individual ETA members had been in his country.

But the damage was done. Gonzalez has since become a quiet but important supporter of Pastora's faction of ARDE.

In summary, prior to the La Penca bombing, there is evidence that both the right and the left - the CIA and their contra allies as well as the Sandinistas and their allies - had plotted to kill Pastora.

THE BOMBING

In the days prior to the May 30 press conference, Pastora had been clandestinely in San Jose attending ARDE meetings about unity with the FDN. His FRS faction, as well as the leadership from several other factions in the Alliance, rejected unity and the ARDE commander had taken his people out of the meetings.

Costa Rican security officials say Pastora approached them for permission to hold a press conference in San Jose to announce his plans to leave the armed struggle and form a new political alliance with Nicaraguan opposition leaders Arturo Cruz and Alfredo Cesar.

The officials say they rejected Pastora's request, since the commander had been banned from the country under the government's neutrality policy.

Already, word had leaked out that Pastora was in town, and a member of the Legislative Assembly had publicly denounced his presence. This was proving embarrassing for President Luis Alberto Monge who was touring western Europe to promote Costa Rican neutrality and solicit economic aid. Costa Rican officials therefore told Pastora that any press conference would have to be held at one of his camps inside Nicaragua, and ordered him to get out of the country immediately.

Pastora's aides tell the story slightly differently, insisting that the idea to hold the press conference originated with Costa Rican officials. They say that at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 29, Pastora received a call telling him to hold a press conference the following day on the Nicaraguan side of the San Juan River. Pastora and some of his associates now believe that some of these officials were aware of the bomb plot.

That same night, first Col. Rodrigo Paniagua of the Ministry of Public Security and then Vice Minister Johnny Campos, went to Pastora's headquarters in Escazu to order him to leave the country and hold his press conference in Nicaraguan territory.

Soon afterwards, Orion Pastora, the Commander's cousin and ARDE's chief press spokesman, began calling a select group of local and foreign journalists in San Jose to invite them to a press conference the following day at one of Pastora's riverside base camps.

At 3 a.m. Pastora left for the river in order to reach his camp ahead of the journalists. Because of the haste with which the press conference was called, ARDE's Security Chief, Julio Bigote, was not informed nor was the military commander at La Penca Jorge Geraro. Orion was put in charge of all the arrangements.

Earlier that day Orion had met with Swedish television journalist Peter Torbiornsson on the porch of the Gran Hotel Costa Rica. As the two men discussed Torbiornsson's request to interview Eden Pastora, they were joined by "Per Anker Hansen", who identified himself to Orion as a freelance Danish photographer. Under the same pretext, "Hansen" had attached himself to Torbiornsson several weeks earlier. Orion recalls that "Hansen" said little but seemed to speak Spanish "like a Latin."

The next morning, May 30, about two dozen journalists, including "Hansen", showed up in the parking lot of the Irazu Hotel on the outskirts of San Jose, where they had been told that ARDE vehicles would be waiting to take them on the four hour drive to Boca Tapada, the last hamlet reachable by road on the Costa Rican side of the border.

There was a lot of confusion, first because there were not enough vehicles for all the journalists who showed up, and then, because Orion tried to prevent Tony Avirgan, who was

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working for ABC-TV and had not been invited to the press conference, from going on the trip.

Orion and other top ARDE officials had been angered by several recent ABC reports exposing ARDE's operations in Costa Rica and CIA assistance to Pastora. These reports, along with several in the New York Times, had precipitated a Costa Rican raid on ARDE's San Jose command post, on the grounds that it constituted a violation of Costa Rican neutrality. (Ironically, ARDE officials have since said that they are convinced that the raid was approved by the CIA as a way to further weaken Pastora's position and force him to accept unity with the FDN.)

As the argument persisted, Susan Morgan of Newsweek and several other journalists intervened and finally convinced Orion not to exclude Avirgan and his Costa Rican sound-recordist, Edgar Ulate.

Late in the morning Linda Frazier, Tico Times reporter and wife of AP correspondent Joe Frazier, called her office to say that "everything got screwed up as usual, but we are just about to get on our way." AP correspondent Reid Miller said later that the trip was like a "Sunday picnic".

Even though ARDE officials had been hinting in interviews and paid advertisements that Pastora's life was in danger, no one inspected the journalists' equipment or examined their credentials.

Orion Pastora loaded twelve journalists into jeeps furnished by ARDE, and the others piled into their own vehicles.

Avirgan drove his own jeep with passengers Ulate, Morgan, AFP correspondent Gilberto Lopes and Xing-Xua Agency correspondent Roberto Cruz. (Costa Rican press reports later referred to this as the "carload of leftist journalists" and, in the first days after the bombing, they were to become the prime suspects.)

Frazier, Torbiornsson, Fernando Prado (Torbiornsson's Bolivian cameraman), Portuguese journalist Joaquin da Silva, and "Per Anker Hansen" rode in one of the ARDE vehicles. "Hansen" said little, smoked the entire way, and appeared calm and relaxed.

Although "Hansen" had offered to help Torbiornsson and Prado move their camera equipment, he was of little use because he was completely occupied with carrying and guarding the large aluminum case in which he kept his cameras and, concealed on a shelf below, the bomb.

Torbiornsson later recalled, "It seemed like an awfully bulky thing just for a few cameras and lenses."

At Boca Tapada, "Hansen" carefully wrapped the case in a large plastic bag bought from the local store.

The sun was fading and clouds were covering the sky as the

journalists boarded the large, outboard-powered canoes for the two-hour ride to the guerrilla camp known as La Penca.

They arrived after sundown and began to scramble up the muddy bank towards the elevated wooden shack where Eden Pastora was waiting to greet them. Again, there was no security check.

Because of the darkness, Pastora had decided to hold the formal press conference the next day, but the journalists quickly gathered around him and began asking questions about ARDE's internal problems and the possibility of unity with the FDN.

"Hansen" placed the metal box containing the bomb on the floor by a counter where Pastora, surrounded by journalists, was standing. Then he snapped a few pictures and, muttering loudly that his camera was malfunctioning, backed away from the crowd.

The last videotape taken by Jorge Quiros, Costa Rican cameraman for Channel 6 who would die from the explosion, caught "Hansen" edging towards the door leading to the outer stairway as the rest of the journalists moved closer to Pastora.

As the impromptu press conference gathered momentum, Rosa Alvarez, a guerrilla radio operator known as Rosita, moved through the crowd with a cup of coffee for Commander Pastora. In the process, she may have kicked over the bomb case.

At 7:20 p.m., the bomb exploded, killing Rosita instantly and ripping huge holes in the ceiling and floor. Most of the journalists and guerrillas in the room were wounded, some fatally.

Quiros and Frazier died during the night. Evelio Sequeira, also of Channel 6, died a week later. In addition, ARDE officials who were there say that five guerrillas, including Rosita, died.

Alfonso Robelo later cited Rosita's presence at the press conference as proof that the MDN, his wing of ARDE, could not have been involved in the attack, since Rosita was a member of MDN. This had been true at one time, but during the bitter in-fighting which had preceded the press conference, Rosita had switched and joined Pastora's FRS faction.

Following the explosion, which most witnesses recall as "a huge bolt of blue light," there was a stunned silence, then cries and moans of pain, and finally chaos as the victims struggled in the darkness to determine their injuries, find their colleagues and escape from the darkness and confusion.

In the chaos, an ARDE guerrilla began firing his sub machinegun into the surrounding jungle.

Eden Pastora, his lieutenant Tito Chamorro and another wounded guerrilla were quickly located and rushed from the house, into the only available speedboat. ARDE officials

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ignored journalists' pleas that the most seriously wounded - Frazier and Quiros - be evacuated in the same boat.

Orion Pastora, who had been in the back room of the house when the blast occurred and was uninjured, later justified their actions saying, "We thought it was a Sandinista ambush and we had to make the object of the attack - Pastora - disappear from the scene. We didn't know then who was behind it."

Pastora and the other wounded guerrilla, accompanied by the only doctor present, were taken to a nearby ARDE camp from where aides hoped to evacuate them by air. However, ARDE's helicopter malfunctioned and their light plane could not land at night on the unlit jungle air strip.

So, after obtaining permission from the Costa Rican government for Pastora to enter Costa Rica for "humanitarian reasons", he and Tito Chamorro were brought by river to Puerto Viejo and then by road to a San Jose hospital. They arrived early the following morning, several hours after the last journalists had reached the San Carlos hospital.

Just after the wounded ARDE leaders were evacuated, and only 5 to 10 minutes after the explosion, Orion Pastora said he noticed "Hansen" "bumping around among some oil drums" at the foot of the stairs. "Hansen" asked about his "friends" Torbjornsson and Prado, but Orion replied he didn't know their whereabouts.

A photo taken minutes later by La Nacion's Jose Venegas of "Hansen" sprawled near the oil drums, with a pained, stunned expression on his face was subsequently used around the world to portray the horror of the event. It wasn't until days later that anyone realized it was this "victim" who had planted the bomb.

About 50 meters behind the house, ARDE investigators later found a walkie-talkie which did not belong to ARDE, and which was subsequently identified as the remote-control device used to trigger the bomb. Orion Pastora said "Hansen" would have had time to activate the device, then run and position himself among the barrels.

One ARDE sentry said afterwards that, just before the explosion, he had surprised "Hansen" in the bushes outside the house. When challenged, "Hansen" said he was a journalist and had come out to "take a leak."

When this guerrilla reached Boca Tapada several hours later, he told a local reporter about the incident and gave a description of "Hansen". The reporter says he immediately gave this information to agents of the Organization of Judicial Investigation (OIJ, the Costa Rican equivalent of the FBI), but "they did not pay attention. If they had, they could have detained him."

At approximately 8 p.m., ARDE radio reported the explosion, saying that three had been killed and approximately 21

wounded. The Costa Rican Red Cross and the San Carlos Hospital in Ciudad Quesada went on alert, with the Red Cross mobilizing 12 units and 70 workers. The U.S. Embassy in San Jose and Costa Rican government officials also were alerted.

Back at La Penca, the victims waited an hour before ARDE personnel began to give them rudimentary first aid. Though wounded himself, Jose Ibarra, Channel 7 reporter and a licensed Red Cross volunteer, tried to help evacuate the others.

He later noted that the Red Cross had previously trained some 21 ARDE fighters in first aid, but none seemed to be present that night, and the only doctor had gone with Pastora.

Ibarra was hustled into the first canoe, which set off up the river an hour after the blast. It carried other less critically wounded people, including "Hansen", who had managed to slip aboard in the chaos. The only seriously wounded person evacuated in the first boat was Susan Morgan. Linda Frazier, Carlos Vargas, Jorge Quiros, Evelio Sequeira, and Roberto Cruz, the other most seriously injured journalists, were among the last to be evacuated.

Eventually, another ARDE doctor arrived and gave some assistance. The last to leave waited four to five hours for the boats to make the 4-hour round-trip to Boca Tapada, where ambulances were waiting to carry them on the bumpy two and a half hour ride to the San Carlos hospital.

One ambulance was at the riverbank when the first boat arrived with four victims and "Hansen". Forty-five minutes later, other ambulances arrived.

Rain and fog hampered the rescue effort, and a washed-out bridge obliged the rescuers to carry the victims across a small river to other waiting ambulances. The first victims and "Hansen" arrived at the hospital around midnight.

Shortly after the blast, La Nacion reporter Edgar Fonseca contacted his newspaper with his two-way radio, begging for speedboats and helicopters to evacuate the wounded from La Penca. La Nacion called Minister of Public Security Angel Edmundo Solano, who had been alerted to the incident at 9 p.m.. The Tico Times called U.S. Consul Lynn Curtain at 8:40 p.m., but neither Costa Rican officials nor the U.S. Embassy seriously attempted to arrange for helicopters.

The U.S. Embassy did not call Solano to offer help, nor did Solano request help. U.S. Embassy officials had been pressuring for months to have Solano removed from his job, and there was considerable hostility between the Minister and the American Ambassador. The U.S. Embassy's response to the bombing was, essentially, to do nothing.

During the night, Minister Solano and Vice President Alberto Fajardo, who was in charge while President Monge was away, each contacted top Nicaraguan government officials, since they initially assumed that the Sandinistas were responsible.

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Nicaraguan officials categorically denied they were involved, pointing out that, had they wanted to, they would have assassinated Pastora in a different manner, without killing and injuring innocent journalists.

In the San Carlos hospital, "Hansen" was attended by doctors who later said they could find no wounds other than two superficial straight cuts on his right arm. Apparently the cuts were self-inflicted, because they do not appear in photos of "Hansen" taken at La Penca.

"Hansen" sat calmly in a wheelchair just inside the emergency entrance, where he could see all the wounded being admitted. Between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., he lay on a stretcher and slept.

Nurses described him as very rude. He kept demanding to know who was arriving at the hospital and to see the Red Cross list of injured and dead. He repeatedly asked about Pastora.

He also demanded periodically to know if a woman had arrived to collect him. Twice during the night he was seen making calls from a pay phone. He had a soft knapsack with him and guarded it carefully, later leading to speculation that it contained a weapon, documents, or other incriminating evidence.

"Hansen" refused to talk with La Republica Director Joaquin Vargas, saying he didn't speak Spanish, but later that night he gave a 10 minute interview in Spanish to a reporter from a San Carlos station, Radio Cima. In the interview, he did not describe any of the horror of the bombing aftermath, but simply claimed that the blast had knocked him down the stairs. He said he heard shots, and later took a boat. This recording has become a prime piece of evidence in the attempt to determine the bomber's true identity.

At 8:30 the next morning, "Hansen" and Peter Torbiornsson, who was not seriously injured, checked out of the hospital and took a taxi back to San Jose. During the drive, Torbiornsson recalls that "Hansen" was silent, smoked constantly, and appeared nervous for the first time.

They were dropped off at their downtown hotel, La Gran Via. When Torbiornsson came down from his room some 20 minutes later, he found "Hansen" checking out. "Hansen" told him that he was "leaving for Miami." Hotel employees say "Hansen" did not call a taxi, but simply walked outside, waited a few minutes, and then disappeared. He was wearing blue jeans, a dark shirt, light jacket and dark glasses, and carried a medium-sized suitcase in his hand and a leather or canvas bag over his shoulder. He has not been seen since.

Eden Pastora was admitted to San Jose's private Clinica Biblica at about 8 a.m. and taken to the second floor, which was cordoned off to the public.

While he was being treated for burns, shrapnel wounds and broken ribs, officials from ARDE, the Costa Rican government

and the Venezuelan government made preparations for Pastora to be transferred to Caracas.

Meanwhile, President Monge, informed of the bombing some three hours after it happened, immediately blamed it on Sandinista infiltrators within ARDE. Pastora blamed the CIA. In Washington, intelligence sources "leaked" to the press that the bomb had been planted by the Basque separatist organization ETA, which reportedly has close ties to the Sandinistas.

While accusations began to fly, Costa Rica's Office of Intelligence and Security (DIS) started investigating and the Costa Rican Security Council met in a special session.

The OIJ waited two days to begin working on the case. The borders were not closed for 48 hours.

PROFESSIONAL NATURE OF THE BOMBING

The La Penca bombing was a highly professional action, carried out by a well-trained terrorist, supported by a widespread network of strategically placed accomplices. Following is what is known about the bomber and his bomb:

A. "Hansen"'s Movements and Character

The bomber was traveling on a Danish passport stolen in December 1980 from the Copenhagen apartment of a 28-year-old student. He also had a Danish driver's license, credit cards and press credentials from a fictitious photo agency "Europe 7," all in the name of "Per Anker Hansen".

He lived in Panama under that name during much of 1982. After the bombing, a Panamanian accountant told Panama's opposition newspaper, La Prensa, that he recognized "Hansen"'s photograph and name, because he had been involved in a minor traffic accident with him in 1982.

Panamanian and Costa Rican journalists determined that "Hansen", during his stay in Panama, had claimed to be a Danish photographer preparing a book on Panama. Journalists and well-placed Panamanians said he was also rumored to have been "a protege" of a top official in the Panamanian National Guard (the army).

"Hansen" lived in the luxury, high-rise Las Vegas apartments located near the university. The apartments were described by one Panamanian journalist as "very mysterious" and not open to everyone.

The receptionist at the apartments told us they rent to diplomats, representatives of international organizations, businessmen, and occasionally university professors. But, she added, they are too expensive for most professors. It is unlikely that a young photographer preparing a book could afford such a rent unless he was wealthy or was being subsidized.

The receptionist recalled that "Hansen" always paid his rent promptly and in cash. She said he did not appear to have any fixed routine, lived alone, had no friends, and was amiable but a person of "very few words." She was initially very helpful on the telephone. But later, in person, she said that the authorities had told the apartment staff not to speak to the press about "Hansen".

A Panamanian journalist said that if "Hansen" had not been there with the knowledge and protection of some high official of the National Guard, "the truth of what he was doing in Panama would have risen to the surface by now." Instead, he said, "The sources are closed and no one dares to speak. It was a stream which could not be followed further."

One influential Panamanian journalist who is extremely close to National Guard chief Gen. Noriega assured us that he would try immediately to find out "Hansen"'s true identity. After asking us to wait in his outer office while he made some calls, he told us brusquely to contact the press spokesman for the military for an official statement. We had the impression that he had been told by his superiors to stay out of the case.

There is evidence that "Hansen" was in a number of countries in the months just prior to La Penca. Swedish journalist Peter Torbjoernsson and his assistant Fernando Prado, who were with "Hansen" for three weeks before the bombing, recall that he said he lived in Paris with his wife and small daughter. He told them he had left there two months earlier and had gone to New York City, Miami, Mexico, and Honduras before coming to Costa Rica. He also mentioned that he had been in Panama and had an open, return ticket to Miami.

Torbjoernsson says he had the impression that "Hansen" had been in Nicaragua before, "because he was familiar with things there." But Prado's recollection is that "Hansen" said he had never been in Nicaragua and that he might be going there after completing his work in Costa Rica. A Costa Rican investigator says there is no evidence that "Hansen" was ever in Nicaragua, although it was widely reported in the local press that he had been there.

Costa Rican investigators say they have evidence that he entered the country on October 1, 1983; that on November 4, 1983, he left Peru for Costa Rica; on February 29, 1984, he entered Costa Rica from Panama by land; on March 2, he left Costa Rica for Mexico; on March 3 he was in Honduras; and on March 26, he entered Costa Rica from Honduras. On all of these trips he was accompanied by a woman using a French passport stolen in 1979 from a journalist named Patricia Anne Boone Mariscot.

Not released to the press, however, are immigration records contained in the OIJ file showing that "Hansen" was also in Costa Rica in February and September, 1983 and "Boone" was in the country in August 1979 and October 1980, in all these instances using the stolen passports.

In addition, a photocopy of "Boone"'s passport in these files show that she was in Panama in 1982 at the same time as "Hansen" and that she was in Nicaragua in 1983 where she obtained a multiple entry visa. Although the pair traveled frequently on the same flights beginning in October 1983, Costa Rican investigators say "Hansen" and "Boone" never appeared together at airports and did not sit together on planes.

OIJ files also show that a Canadian named Patricia Boone also traveled from Los Angeles to Costa Rica in March, 1984 and left in mid-April. However her passport number and nation-

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ality is different than that of the false "Boone" and she did not travel with "Hansen". It therefore seems clear this was a different person.

Of particular interest is the couple's lengthy trip to Honduras, where the FDN is based.

"Hansen" hired cars in Tegucigalpa between March 9 and 26 from the Molinari Car Rental Agency. In an interview, the agency's owner said he never saw "Hansen" with a woman.

"Hansen" showed credit cards for security, but paid the bill in cash, using local currency. The agency owner said he found it strange that "Hansen" asked to change cars three times, and speculated that "it seemed he had something to hide."

In Tegucigalpa, "Hansen" and "Boone" were seen together several times. A receptionist at the Hotel La Ronda, a favorite meeting place for FDN and CIA officials, confirmed that "Hansen" and a woman stayed there from March 3 to 5. According to the OIJ files they then checked into the Plaza Apartments where they paid in advance through March 26.

However, they evidently traveled during much of that time because, according to OIJ, they were registered at several other hotels, including Hotel Terraza in San Pedro del Sur, Hotel Paris in La Ceiba and another hotel in Trujillo. The OIJ report does not say what the couple was doing in these places which are all in northeastern Honduras.

The car agency owner recalled that "Hansen" said he was going to San Pedro del Sur, Honduras' second largest city, but that, curiously, he did not put sufficient mileage on the cars to have reached there. It is possible the couple flew there, but there is no indication of this in the OIJ files. Torbjornsson and Prado recall "Hansen" saying he had been to an American military base and some of the FDN camps in Honduras.

After the bombing, the Honduran government sent Costa Rica's OIJ a photograph of "Boone" taken when she had entered that country. OIJ described her on a wanted poster as tall, 34 years old, with an olive complexion, straight chestnut hair and big dark eyes. A Costa Rican investigator says she is thought to be younger, about 28 or 29. The OIJ poster may simply have quoted the age which appeared on her stolen passport.

The couple is known to have stayed together in Costa Rica at the Talamanca Hotel in downtown San Jose on February 23, just after arriving from Panama, and on March 26, just after arriving from Honduras. A receptionist recalls that they posed as man and wife and did not speak to each other in Spanish. In the hotel registry they both identified themselves as photographers and gave the same false home address in Paris.

In early May, "Hansen" checked in alone at the Gran Via Hotel, a moderately-priced hotel in the center of San Jose, where he teamed up with Torbjornsson and Prado. Prado

says that when he arrived from Managua on May 9, "Hansen" had already been at the hotel two days. Torbiornsson, who had come to Costa Rica ahead of his young assistant, had been there a week.

At this point "Boone" appears to vanish. There is no record of her having been registered in any other hotel, and it seems likely that she had a "safe house" somewhere in Costa Rica, probably close to San Jose. Torbiornsson and Prado say they never saw "Hansen" with any woman.

Pastora's aides say they have information from two different people that "Hansen" was with a woman "who spoke Spanish like a Latin" at the Gran Via Hotel on two separate occasions. This, however, could have been someone other than "Boone", since OIJ found evidence of a second female who was seen with "Hansen".

OIJ distributed a composite drawing of this second woman based on descriptions given by several people. She is heavier than "Boone", about 25 years old, with green or blue eyes, and straight blond hair parted down the middle in what OIJ describes as "hippy" fashion. She may simply have been a casual acquaintance and not another female accomplice.

The night of the bombing, after the assassin was brought to the San Carlos hospital, he began asking nurses and other attendants if his woman friend had come for him. Twice during the night, he made calls from a public telephone outside the hospital.

Costa Rican investigators say they have evidence that "Boone", like "Hansen", disappeared the day after the bombing. But they have no record of her having left the country.

From early May until the bombing, Torbiornsson and Prado provided the perfect cover for "Hansen". They were making a long documentary on the conflict in Central America and needed some more video of Pastora and ARDE operations along the San Juan River to complete it.

"Hansen" pretended that he had just arrived in San Jose, and that he had no contacts or friends in the country. He said he had only recently become a photographer and needed help in contacting the contras. Torbiornsson agreed to take him under his wing, because he seemed "quite helpless."

"Hansen" told the Swedish television crew that he had just come from Mexico, where he had lost all his luggage and had to purchase new things. Everything he had, including his backpack, seemed to be from Mexico. If the dates of his travels are complete, this indicates that he was outfitted in Mexico during his brief visit there on March 2 and 3, en route between Costa Rica and Honduras.

Torbiornsson says he engaged "Hansen" to help carry some of his camera equipment, but that the arrangement was not very satisfactory. He explains, "I wanted someone to help with carrying things but then he had this big metal camera case. We

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talked about the box. We said it was not a good thing to carry on the river, that it was much better to have something with soft sides. He said he had to have his stuff in it. But that seemed stupid to us."

Torbjornsson and Prado recall that the box contained Nikon, Olympus and Polaroid cameras -- "normal things" -- and they did not suspect it had a false bottom.

Both journalists found "Hansen" to be unprofessional as a photographer. He did not take a camera with him, as photographers almost always do, when walking around or going to interviews in the city. He also took his film to a local photo studio for developing, unlike professional photographers, who either develop their pictures themselves or send off the unprocessed rolls to their agencies in order to assure good quality. "He did not seem to be an aggressive photographer," Torbjornsson concluded.

"Hansen" told them he had had a number of jobs, including working for more than a year in the archives of a photo or news agency in London. He did not mention having a military background, but he asked ARDE officials numerous questions about military matters and seemed knowledgeable about weapons.

He claimed his father was a Danish doctor in Venezuela and that he himself had grown up in both Venezuela and Europe. This explained, he said, why he knew very little Danish and could not, in conversation with Torbjornsson, recall the name of the famous Danish beer "Carlsberg".

"Hansen" appeared to be very familiar with literature and music from Argentina and Uruguay, and mused at one point that the place he would most like to be was in Montevideo on the beach at sunrise. The owner of a magazine shop in San Jose recalls that "Hansen" sent postcards on three different occasions to Uruguay and Chile.

When he first teamed up with the Swedish crew he did not have a beard, but he began to grow one, and by the time they went to the press conference, it was quite full.

Prado recalls that "Hansen"'s hair was a strange orange-blond color but his beard seemed to grow in that color as well, which made him conclude that it was natural. Orion Pastora also said it occurred to him when he met "Hansen" that his hair might be dyed.

Torbjornsson and Prado, as well as others, agree that "Hansen" was approximately 1.85 meters tall.

Prado, who is 24, originally put "Hansen"'s age at about 40, but later said he could be younger. Torbjornsson, who at 42 seems more conscious of age, says he is certain "Hansen" was in his late 20's or early to mid 30's. His stolen passport showed him to be 28.

Neither Torbiornsson nor Prado ever saw "Hansen" with a woman. He did not use drugs or, except for an occasional martini, drink. He did not like video games or night life. He chain-smoked Marlboros, liked smoking a pipe, and enjoyed good food. Most days he had breakfast at one of the the outdoor tables of the Gran Hotel on San Jose's most popular plaza. He kept to himself and, Prado recalls, seemed to be in his room at the hotel every night when he himself returned.

Prado says "Hansen" had a lot of money and many times offered to pay for meals and other things. "Once I saw in his wallet and he had thousands of U.S. dollars in it," he states. Yet "Hansen" insisted on making his phone calls from outside the hotel, noting that it was cheaper. Once he claimed to have called his wife, and another time his photo agency.

Both journalists say "Hansen" was not interested in politics or the in the ins-and-outs of the contra movement, although he did know the main actors. He never expressed strong political preferences or opinions. Prado and Torbiornsson often discussed the divisions within ARDE and what the FDN/CIA might be up to, but "Hansen" appeared to have little interest in their talk. "He said he did not understand what was going on and was only concerned with taking photos," Prado recalls.

The one time he seemed very interested in political events, they say, was when he questioned them about the assassination of ex-Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

Both men described him as cold, distant, not sociable and difficult to talk with on a personal level. Prado says he was smart, and made lots of jokes. Torbiornsson calls him "a quiet, introspective man."

But he also had a short temper and became angry on several occasions: when he thought he was being overcharged for the rented car or when he felt he had to wait too long in a restaurant.

He was very neat in dressing, and his hotel room was so tidy that the Swedish film crew often worked from there. He wore a wooden cross and two or three other chains around his neck.

With the Swedish crew, "Hansen" traveled throughout May in search of Pastora. On May 11 and 12, he and Torbiornsson rented a Toyota station wagon in San Jose and drove to the northern border village of Los Chiles, where there had been rumors that the Sandinistas were planning to attack.

Nicaraguan officials claimed that Costa Rican Guardsmen and contras were planning to stage an attack against the town and then blame it on the Sandinistas in order to worsen relations between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. No attack from any quarter ever materialized.

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Police officials in Ciudad Quesada are said to have information that "Hansen" was there on three different occasions before the bombing, once posing as an investor. A well-informed journalist in the area said he was told by local authorities that "Hansen" had gone to the "house of a man known to have been a Somocista" where he "prepared the bomb." In this area of northern Costa Rica there are farms and houses owned by Nicaraguan ex-National Guardsmen. When we tried to confirm this story with these same police sources, they denied having such information.

From May 14 to 22, "Hansen", the Swedish film crew, and several other journalists made a trip to a string of Pastora camps along the San Juan River, including La Penca. The group did not, however, succeed in finding Pastora. He had already gone to Panama where he was giving interviews denouncing CIA pressure on ARDE and hinting that his life was in danger.

A day or so after they returned to San Jose, Costa Rica's Radio Monumental carried an interview with Pastora recorded in Panama.

Torbjornsson and "Hansen" went immediately to the radio station to get a copy of the interview and to inquire how they could reach the commander. They also made a number of calls from "Hansen"'s hotel room to ARDE officials in an effort to line up an interview with Pastora.

Prado recalls that late one night several days later, he returned to the hotel and found "Hansen" there. "He had just seen an interview that Channel 6 did with Pastora in Panama and was very concerned, very preoccupied that he would not be able to meet Pastora. This was one of the few times I saw him very worried."

Then, on the afternoon of May 29, Torbjornsson and "Hansen" met Orion Pastora to request an interview with the ARDE commander. Late that night they received a call from Orion telling them a press conference was scheduled for the next day.

Torbjornsson and Prado say they had no suspicions about "Hansen" and were shocked when he was identified as the prime suspect in the bombing. Torbjornsson says he was more annoyed than suspicious when "Hansen" obliged him to leave the San Carlos hospital and return to San Jose. Torbjornsson explained, "I did not want to leave Fernando [Prado]. But 'Hansen' wanted to get away. We didn't talk in the car. His main interest was himself. It did not occur to me that he was the bomber. I was just irritated with him."

The Tico Times, shortly after the bombing, commented: "Only a professional could have patiently plotted and pulled off such a complex mission. Experts agree: this killer was no hastily-hired thug, no lower-echelon hit man. Cold-blooded enough to chat and joke with the people he

would soon be mutilating, cool headed enough to give a radio interview and gaze brazenly into a camera a few hours later, 'Hansen' is clearly no newcomer to terrorism."

B. "Hansen"'s Voice

The 10-minute radio interview "Hansen" gave at the hospital after the bombing, coupled with close-up photos also taken at the hospital and video tape taken of the terrorist on two separate occasions, are the most concrete clues to "Hansen"'s identity. Much effort has gone into analyzing his voice in the interview in order to determine his true nationality. The linguists agree he is not a native Spanish speaker. But Torbjornsson and Prado say, that while the voice on the recording was definitely "Hansen"'s, it was NOT the way he usually spoke Spanish.

Torbjornsson says, "I think he was Uruguayan or Argentina from his way of speaking, especially when he was enthusiastic." He says the terrorist had the capacity to change his accent the way a chameleon changes colors. "When I heard 'Hansen' talk with Mexicans, he imitated their accent, and when he was with Nicaraguans or other Hispanics, he imitated their accents as well."

Prado also believed "Hansen" was faking an accent during the hospital interview. "On the tape, he sounds like a European, but I think he was faking it. He always tried to fake an accent. I usually talked with him in English, but my guess is he is Latin American, either Uruguayan or Argentine."

Prado explains that the trio usually spoke English because Torbjornsson wanted his young assistant to improve his facility. It may also be that "Hansen" tried to avoid speaking Spanish at length because he feared he would give away his true identity.

Prado also says "Hansen" spoke very little Danish, no Swedish (which he and Torbjornsson frequently spoke to each other), no German, a bit of Italian and some Greek. "Hansen" said he spoke French as well, but Prado never heard him do so.

Several people who had informal interaction with "Hansen" said they were surprised by how well the "Dane" spoke Spanish. The car rental agent in Honduras, the owner of a photo shop in San Jose, and an employee in an electrical shop in Ciudad Quesada all said that in their brief conversations with "Hansen" they were impressed by the "perfect" and "flawless" Spanish he spoke.

Copies of the Radio Cima interview were submitted to linguists in North America, Latin America and Europe for analysis.

Linguist Jim Harris of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology believes that "Hansen" is not a native Spanish speaker, and that he learned the language when he was an adult. According to Harris, he speaks "well, but not

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perfectly," although it is possible that he could be purposely speaking in a flawed manner. He said "Hansen" is probably not Basque, and that he might well be from the Middle East.

Phonetics specialists from the University of Costa Rica concluded that "Hansen" could be of Germanic origin, perhaps Danish, Swedish or Norwegian. They rule out the possibility that he is native English, Dutch, German or Spanish speaking.

An Argentine linguistics expert contacted by the Committee to Protect Journalists also concluded that "Hansen" was not a native Spanish speaker, but that he had spent a lot of time in Spanish speaking countries. His use of the word "automobiles" for car indicates that he may have learned Spanish in Argentina, Spain or Mexico. Also, he uses the word "barquito", which is used only in Spain, for "little boat." He has no vocabulary from Central America.

The linguist says that he talks precisely and simply, but his language is that of an intellectual. His pace is more European than American.

His "rr" is too soft for a Spanish speaking German, but he could be Scandinavian or Israeli. His "s" is not natural to a native and he might have had a Havana teacher because he has a lot of inflection that he could have picked up there.

"Hansen", this linguist says, speaks with a rhythmical mode that is not Spanish, but he has perfect cadence. Language for him is not a problem. He never pauses to search for a word using literal translation from his own language without any hesitation.

When responding to the radio interviewer's question about whether it was a bomb or grenade, "Hansen" becomes defensive and says, "Really, I couldn't know" (La verdad no podria saber). No native speaker would use the conditional to state his innocence.

This linguist concluded that what the terrorist has tried to conceal is not accent, but attitude. He has affected humility. He is not nervous at all, but very restrained.

The OIJ sent a copy of the voice recording to Dr. Antonio Quilis, Director of the Phonetic Laboratory in Madrid, who concluded "Hansen" does not come from Spain, including the Basque region. He says "Hansen" speaks Spanish very well and must have learned it in a Spanish speaking area.

C. "Hansen"'s Bomb

As with the voice recording, much effort has gone into trying to analyze the type of bomb used at La Penca. Unfortunately, "Hansen"'s bomb sheds even less light on who he is than does his voice.

It was originally reported that the bomb was a Claymore M-18 mine, typical of the kind used by ETA and similar to the one which exploded in a San Jose parking lot, killing the carrier. It is believed the Sandinistas were responsible for the parking lot bomb.

However, further analysis showed the La Penca bomb to be a different type.

According to an ARDE investigator, the parking lot bomb was a massproduced Claymore mine which contains uniform pellets.

The La Penca bomb was made of a variety of metal pieces, including nails and screws as well as pellets, which were covered with a layer of penlight batteries. It was clearly homemade or made to appear to be homemade.

Gustavo Castillo, head of the OIJ criminal lab, said it was a directional bomb designed to be activated electronically by a walkie-talkie. It contained two to four pounds of C-4, a highly explosive plastic.

Clearly the bomb did not go off as intended, since Pastora survived the explosion. It remains uncertain whether the case was accidentally knocked over by the guerrilla woman Rosita. Some argue that it was not tipped over or misplaced and that Pastora was saved by the human wall of journalists who had crowded around him just as "Hansen" withdrew from the room.

In an interview in Miami, the former head of the Dade County, Florida bomb detection unit, Tom Brodie, said the La Penca bomb did not bear the marks of any particular terrorist group. "From the description I cannot say who did it. A radio-controlled bomb is very common," he said.

Some of those interviewed say they believe the bomb may have been homemade with the intention of concealing the professional nature of the assassination plot which was well-financed, planned over a long period, and carefully covered up afterwards.

As one of Pastora's aides mused, "The bomb itself and the way it was set off were not very professional. But this could have been done purposely to conceal the professional nature of the operation. We feel it was not professionally done precisely to conceal the professional nature of the operation. A professional doing an unprofessional job. It's not normal."

PRESS COVERAGE AND DISINFORMATION

In the days following the bombing, the Costa Rican and international press carried a host of conflicting, confusing and at times inaccurate stories. The bomber was variously identified as Basque, French, German, Scandinavian, Libyan, Iranian, Palestinian, Israeli, or Uruguayan. The bombing was blamed on the CIA, Sandinistas, Cuban communists, FDN, Baader Meinhof, the Italian Red Army Faction or ETA -- and all these groups promptly denied involvement.

The lack of concrete evidence, the flood of false leads, and the constant stream of speculation and rumors caused headaches for Costa Rican investigators and the press. As Costa Rica's Public Security Minister Solano said two weeks after the bombing, "Six different stories as to the identity of the killer have crossed my desk, all depending on the ideology of the person making the report."

The Costa Rican press suffered a tremendous loss with the bombing, and this may partly explain the belligerent and often sloppy reporting that followed the tragedy. Due to early suspicions that the bomb had been carried by a journalist, it is understandable that local reporters would attempt to finger some of the foreign journalists, particularly those they did not know well.

In addition, the major Costa Rican media are all privately owned, highly conservative, anti-communist and anti-Sandinista. They perceive Nicaragua as a real threat to Costa Rica, and therefore automatically assumed that the Sandinistas or their agents were responsible for the bombing.

The search for the terrorist was further complicated by several false stories which appear to have been planted in the press to divert the search in the crucial days immediately after the bombing.

Reliable western intelligence sources, as well as Costa Rican journalists, say that the U.S. Embassy in San Jose has strong influence over the local media and that news stories are frequently planted, as happens in many Third World countries. U.S. Embassy officials, for their part, claim the Soviets and Sandinistas plant stories in the local press, which is also likely. However, the type of false or misleading stories which appeared in the Costa Rican and U.S. press after the bombing point to the CIA.

On May 31, just hours after the bombing, the Associated Press in Miami quoted Radio Havana as saying unconfirmed reports indicated the bomb was planted by "a couple posing as journalists." The AP story appeared at least five days before it was known that "Hansen" was the bomber, and eight days before it was known that he had a female accomplice.

Although Radio Havana is monitored around-the-clock by news agencies in Miami and elsewhere, no other agency appears to have reported this broadcast.

The AP employee in Miami who put out the story later said he remembered making a transcript of the broadcast just hours after the bombing, but he was unable to locate it in the agency's files when we asked for a copy.

We asked Radio Havana for a transcript of the broadcast. They said they could not find any reference to this report in their logs, and concluded that they never had broadcast it.

We suspect the story was planted with AP in order to indicate that the Cuban government had some inside knowledge of the bombing. During our investigations in Miami, U.S. intelligence sources repeatedly told us that Cuba was behind the bombing.

However, we have not found any other evidence linking Havana to the assassination plot. Instead, we do have evidence that Miami-based Cubans and contras were involved.

In the days prior to La Penca, a false report was circulated to the press in Miami that Pastora was enroute to Cuba to sign an accord with the Sandinistas. Anti-Pastora members of ARDE spread the same story in San Jose.

Pastora denied the reports in a May 23 interview with Costa Rica's Radio Monumental. His former top political adviser, Carlos Coronel, who had in the past visited Havana on Pastora's behalf, denied that any such contacts had been made or contemplated in May.

This story, circulated at a time when Pastora was facing a CIA ultimatum for unity and ARDE was plagued by deep internal divisions, served to discredit Pastora among his followers and supporters.

Another story that may have been planted said that "Hansen" fled to Miami on an Air Florida flight one day after the bombing. "Hansen" announced to Torbjornsson and hotel employees as he was checking out that he was leaving for Miami, but this was a deception. Air Florida employees, immigration officials and others at the airport said repeatedly they had no record of "Per Anker Hansen" or anyone fitting his description leaving on the flight to Miami the afternoon after the bombing.

The story began to die, but was quickly revived in the press when U.S. officials said the FBI had proof that "Hansen" had passed through the Miami airport on May 31 and was about to be apprehended. On June 6, for instance, a La Republica headline read "Suspect Arrived in Miami on Air Florida Flight."

On June 8, La Republica reported that U.S. authorities had "weakened" in their conviction that "Hansen" had gone to Miami, and it was believed he was still in Costa Rica. Costa

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Rican officials were quoted as saying they, also, believed "Hansen" was still in the country.

According to the OIJ records, the FBI in Miami did detain and interview a Swedish economist Per Arvid Hansen who arrived there from Managua on June 10. He was working for the Nicaraguan government and was married to a Nicaraguan woman. However, he was let go after questioning because he did not fit the physical description of the bomber.

This is the only suspect the OIJ files state was interviewed by the FBI in Miami. And, curiously, he entered Miami after the press had begun quoting U.S. officials as saying "Hansen" had probably not gone to Miami.

In an interview several weeks later, the FBI's press spokesman in Miami Joe Delcompo said, "We never verified if he did come on Air Florida. There's no evidence that he came to Miami." But earlier assurances by U.S. officials that "Hansen" was definitely in Miami effectively stopped the search in Costa Rica and apparently helped facilitate his escape from the country by another route.

Yet another apparently false but widely circulated story was that Costa Rican officials had evidence that "Hansen" was in Nicaragua prior to the bombing. The local press cited this to show that the bomber must have been working for the Sandinistas. La Republica went so far as to say in a June 7 article that it was "completely sure" "Hansen" was in Managua a month before the bombing, adding that "he has contacts in Nicaragua who could be Cubans or ETA agents." Again this was undoubtedly the Swedish Hansen who, according to the OIJ records, drove from Managua to San Jose in April. However, he traveled with his family, not with "Patricia Boone." A simple check of the passport numbers and nationalities, as well as the middle names, of the two "Hansen"'s would have shown they were different people.

The OIJ and Immigration records clearly distinguish between the two people and do not list Nicaragua as among the places the false journalist is known to have been. These files do show, however, that "Boone" was in Nicaragua in 1983. Curiously, this was never reported in the press.

In an interview several months after the bombing an OIJ investigator said, "We have no information that he was in Nicaragua." However in the days after the bombing the press reports quoting unnamed "government sources" as revealing that "Hansen" had been in Nicaragua helped fuel the theory that the Sandinistas were responsible for the bombing.

The story which most clearly appears to have been planted was the report that the Basque separatist organization ETA was behind the bombing. It first broke in the U.S. and was then picked up and elaborated upon by the Costa Rican press.

Less than 24 hours after the bombing, a number of news organizations in Washington D.C. received calls from

U.S. intelligence sources, including the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy, the Defense Department, and the CIA "tipping" them that the bombing had been carried out by ETA for the Sandinistas. Several U.S. journalists later said they suspected the story was not true and chose not to use it.

However, a number of major U.S. media including The Washington Times, Cable Network News (CNN), ABC-TV "Nightly News," "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour," and Interpress News Service (IPS) did carry the story.

John McWethy, then ABC's Pentagon correspondent, says he was given the story by reliable CIA and Pentagon sources, while Robert Leiken of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace and Arturo Cruz, Jr., son of Nicaraguan opposition leader Arturo Cruz, say they got it from "sources close to Pastora." In a May 31 interview on the "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour", Leiken said, "What I've heard from Pastora's followers is...that they feel it may have been the work of Basque terrorists of ETA...associated with Tomas Borge [Nicaragua's Minister of Interior]."

Neither Leiken nor Cruz, Jr., whom IPS interviewed, mentioned in their statements to the press that Pastora and other ARDE officials were accusing the CIA. An ARDE guerrilla commander who was with Pastora in the hours after the bombing said Pastora never mentioned ETA.

Both Leiken and Cruz, Jr. said that they and their ARDE sources did not suspect the CIA or the FDN. When asked if another faction of the contras might have a reason for killing Pastora, Leiken said, "Pastora's people seem to feel that they [other contras] wouldn't have any motive at this particular point." This statement completely ignores the serious divisions wracking ARDE at that time, as well as the May 30 expiration of the CIA's 30-day ultimatum for unity with the FDN.

In a front page story on May 31, the New York Times detailed the CIA's ultimatum to ARDE. Yet in a June 1 article, Times' correspondent Steven Kinzer wrote, "In an interview after the bombing, before being moved to San Jose, Mr. Pastora said Nicaragua's Sandinista government was to blame for the attack on him. 'They cannot get rid of me,' he said." Kinzer admitted to a colleague later that he had not talked directly with Pastora. Pastora's initial statements to the press blamed only the CIA, not the Sandinistas.

On the first anniversary of the La Penca bombing, Pastora said, "I never said it was the government of Nicaragua. I would feel ashamed if I had said that."

Arturo Cruz, Jr., in statements carried May 31 by IPS in English and Spanish, went so far as to say, "The perpetrator of the bombing may have been a newswoman [Linda Frazier] who herself was blown up by the explosion." He said ARDE sources

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told him that Frazier "was very close to ETA and other leftist groups."

This was both inaccurate and malicious. Frazier was a hard-working, wellrespected journalist who was politically conservative, and sympathetic to ARDE. While, for example, most journalists were referring to ARDE guerrillas as "contras", Frazier had begun to call them "revolutionaries" in her articles in the Tico Times. She had also written several stories very critical of the Nicaraguan government. Since top leaders of ARDE were aware of Frazier's sympathies, it is difficult to imagine who Cruz's "sources" were.

In a telephone interview, Cruz, Jr. claimed that IPS had "messed up" in translating what he had said into Spanish. But the only difference was that the Spanish version, carried by the Costa Rican paper El Debate, inserted Frazier's name while the English version simply referred to "the dead news-woman". Cruz went on to admit, "I have no idea about the bombing. [Tomas] Borge always had close ties to ETA. I dislike Borge deeply myself, so I have a personal bias."

McWethy's June 1 report on ABC was far more detailed in its implication of ETA, but also contained some serious inaccuracies. He said in part:

"There is growing evidence that the Sandinistas have hired international hit-men from a Basque terrorist group known as ETA to have Pastora killed. September 8, 1983, Costa Rican authorities arrest Gregorio Jimenez, a Basque terrorist He is charged with intent to kill Pastora, and involvement in a terrorist group

....January 10, 1984: France kicks out a half dozen known Basque terrorists.

They end up in Panama under what amounts to house arrest, later moving to Cuba, then to Nicaragua....

"Yesterday, well after the attempt to kill Pastora, U.S. intelligence sources say six Basques boarded a commercial flight in Nicaragua and flew to Cuba. Analysts admit the evidence is circumstantial, but say the type of explosive used -- Plastik -- and the way it was used are strikingly similar to many other assassination attempts in Central America, all linked to Basque hit-men."

There have, in fact, been no confirmed Basque assassination attempts or bombings in Central America. Several journalists who have covered Spain and know ETA operations well immediately doubted this story precisely because ETA is not known to operate outside Europe. The one instance cited in the ABC report -- the arrest in Costa Rica of the Basque named Jimenez -- has never been proved because Costa Rica has not brought him to trial.

There is considerable evidence that Jimenez was a member of a spy ring, not an assassination team.

It is true that six ETA men were moved from France, where many Basque leftists have taken refuge, to Panama in January, 1984 as part of a French government program to resettle ex-ETA members in other countries. While in Panama, they were kept under close guard at a luxurious beachside hotel. Since it is known that "Hansen" was in Costa Rica in October, 1983 and was traveling in several countries after that, he could not have been a member of this group.

Later these men were quietly moved from Panama to Cuba after the Venezuelan and Mexican governments reneged on their earlier pledges to accept them. The official Cuban news agency Prensa Latina ridiculed the ABC report and denied the Basques had ever left Cuba after arriving there.

ABC followed up with a June 6 story stating that "Costa Rican authorities" had identified the bomber as ETA member Jose Miguel Lujua Gorostiola. Just the day before, the Costa Rican paper La Prensa Libre ran a story saying that Costa Rican authorities had discarded the possibility that ETA was responsible for the attack.

Later the Lujua story was attributed to OIJ director Minor Calvo, who was in Washington at the time. However, on June 29, Calvo denied having been the source of the story, and said it was "irresponsible to accuse ETA".

Contrary to a June 8 La Nacion story, Lujua was not one of the six being held in Panama and his supposed connection with those six was never explained.

Several days later, the Costa Rican press reported that Lujua had been under house arrest in southern France since January and was required to report to the police every day. On June 9 La Republica said Costa Rican authorities had "discarded yesterday" the theory that "Hansen" was Lujua, but that they continued to believe "the extreme left" was responsible for the bombing. ABC never corrected its June 1 and 6 stories.

One curious reference to Lujua appeared in the Costa Rican press before the bombing. On March 14, 1984, both La Nacion and La Republica carried stories saying that the local intelligence agency DIS had warned of the possible presence in Costa Rica of nine ETA members, including the six who had been held in Panama. DIS cited information from the FBI, Interpol and Spanish police.

Both papers listed the names of the nine, which were identical except for one. La Republica included Lujua, while La Nacion had someone else. None of them ever turned up in Costa Rica, and the story was dropped.

The story of Lujua's possible presence in the country may have been planted before the bombing in order to prepare the ground for subsequently blaming ETA and Lujua. According to a senior DIS official at the time, "we had a special relationship

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with La Republica because they were helping us uncover parts of the government infiltrated by communists." He said that a DIS official had probably written the article for La Republica.

An indication that the CIA had a long range plan to use ETA ~~as a cover~~ for its own terrorist acts in Central America was provided by Edgar Chamorro, former communications chief for the FDN. Chamorro told us that in mid-1983, a CIA agent working with the FDN in Honduras brought him a stack of posters showing a hand holding a gun superimposed on a map of Central America. The text said that ETA was planning terrorist activities in the region.

Chamorro says the CIA man asked him to distribute the posters as widely as possible. Chamorro claims he refused and instead threw them away because he didn't believe that ETA posed a threat in Central America. He said when he first heard that ETA was being blamed for La Penca, he recalled this incident and suspected that the story was a false version planted by the CIA.

In interviews, Costa Rican investigators said they had no evidence to link ETA to the bombing. A top OIJ official said, "The story of ETA, the U.S. invented it. We did not receive any official communication from U.S. authorities about ETA. It came only through ABC, and the local press reproduced it." An official with DIS said simply, "ETA was launched in the street to cover the truth." A U.S. embassy official confided that the ETA story was "put out as a diversion."

Breaking just hours after the bombing, the ETA story had a decided impact on the course of the local investigation. As Pastora's former aide, Carlos Coronel, said, "ETA was a very good organization to mislead you in the investigation of such a cold, calculated act as the bombing." All the major local press carried the ETA and Lujua stories, mainly citing the ABC piece as the source. This halted any serious investigation by the press into Pastora's accusations that it was the CIA, or the suspicions of his aides that other contra factions may have been involved.

Of the local press, only the Tico Times and the university weekly Universidad treated the ETA story with either balance or skepticism. In an excellent piece on June 15, Universidad listed ten points why the ETA story appeared to be false, noting that it "continues to be sustained despite a chain of evidence to the contrary."

Besides diverting the investigation, the ETA story also smeared the reputations of several of the foreign journalists who had been at La Penca. On June 1, El Debate ran the IPS story stating that Linda Frazier had carried the bomb and was

connected with ETA. Tico Times publisher Richard Dyer immediately protested and the story was not carried elsewhere.

On June 2, La Nacion ran both the ETA story quoting ABC and another story on the same page stating that a journalist was suspected of having brought the bomb to the press conference. Next to this story was a photo of Tony Avirgan standing over the bomb blast hole. The visual implication of this layout was that Avirgan was the bomber.

The next day, La Republica named Avirgan, Susan Morgan and the Swedish TV crew (including "Hansen") as the main suspects. The story was full of inaccuracies attributed to unidentified "high authorized sources" and incorrectly stated that "Hansen" was not invited to the press conference, but had managed to go "thanks to Susan Morgan". The article also stated that "Hansen", the Swedish crew, Avirgan and Morgan had known each other "for some time" and went together to the border in a rented jeep. (In fact, Morgan and Avirgan had never seen "Hansen" until that day and traveled with several other journalists -- not "Hansen" or the Swedish crew -- in Avirgan's jeep because ARDE was short of transport.)

The inaccurate press reports had a detrimental effect on Avirgan, who, Costa Rican investigators say, was considered the prime suspect in the first days after the bombing, and therefore was prevented from leaving the country for medical treatment. A medical-equipped Lear jet which ABC brought in from the U.S. had to wait three days in San Jose before Avirgan was permitted to board it and depart, once it was finally determined that "Hansen", who had long since disappeared, was the bomber.

In addition, DIS received anonymous telephone calls saying that Avirgan was going to be killed. As a result, an armed DIS guard was posted in his hospital room.

U.S. Ambassador Curtin Winsor, Jr. apparently fueled the press accusations against Avirgan. At one point he commented that "other diplomats, not myself of course, are saying that Tony has ties to ETA." He also reportedly told local journalists and ARDE officials that Avirgan was a communist - which was taken seriously by at least some of those who heard it.

Both the Tico Times and Universidad gave factual accounts which avoided naming people until there was considerable evidence. A June 8 article in Universidad by Gilberto Lopes, who had been at La Penca, states that the unfounded accusations against Avirgan and Morgan worked to intimidate journalists. He said, "I believe that the press has to investigate and has to work with hypotheses, but it cannot accuse anyone without any basis."

Even after the ETA story was discarded and Morgan and Avirgan were cleared of suspicion, the local press continued

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to look for a Sandinista connection. On June 10, the morning newspapers carried a Washington Times story quoting "high U.S. officials" as implicating the Sandinistas. No details followed.

On June 16, La Nacion quoted Costa Rican authorities as saying that a Sandinista infiltrator into ARDE named "Rodriguez" had been seen with "Hansen". A highly reliable ARDE source said the Rodriguez story was an old one which had been pulled out from the files in an attempt to establish some link between Managua and the bombing, and that there was no evidence connecting Rodriguez with "Hansen".

After this, the local press began quoting ARDE officials as saying that "either the extreme right or the extreme left" could have been behind the bombing. This has remained as the organization's official position, although in interviews Pastora and his top aides say the balance of evidence points to the CIA and elements among the contras.

In mid-June, a rightwing suspect emerged. The Costa Rican dailies began to pick-up stories which were being widely circulated in Europe, Nicaragua, Mexico and South America stating that the bomber was an Uruguayan named Hector Amodio Perez. Uruguayan exiles in Sweden claimed to have recognized him when they saw the photographs of "Hansen". The Costa Rican press gave little credence to these reports because they were first carried by the leftist Uruguayan exile news agency Cono Sur Press and the Nicaraguan news agency ANN.

Alfonso Robelo told several journalists shortly after this that he had learned from "intelligence sources" in July that Hector Amodio was the bomber but that he was killed by Libyan hitmen in Brussels shortly after the bombing. Robelo argued Libya was behind the bombing and Amodio Perez was simply a mercenary for hire. A Latin American journalist was told a similar story by G-2 Panamanian intelligence agents.

However the Tico Times and AP checked with Belgium police who said they had no information of this. Since the Amodio Perez theory received considerable publicity in western Europe, it seems certain the press there would have heard Robelo's information had it been true. Rather it seems that this "tip" from "intelligence sources" was part of the cover-up.

From July 1984 until March 1985, there were virtually no press reports about the La Penca investigation. Then, in mid-March, Peter Torbjoernsson, his daughter Helena and his assistant, a Spanish photographer named Alfonso Aparicio, were detained in Honduras on suspicion of involvement both in La Penca and a March 9 bomb explosion at a Tegucigalpa nightclub frequented by U.S. servicemen and Nicaraguan contras.

Immediately after the nightclub explosion in which two Nicaraguans were injured, FDN's "September 15 Radio" announced that "a Swedish journalist named 'Bert Ankier Hansen'" had

placed the bomb. This unsubstantiated report was picked up by various international media including UPI and the Spanish news agency, ACAN-EFE.

Following the FDN's broadcast, Torbjoernsson was arrested in El Salvador on orders of the Honduran military. He was held naked and blindfolded in a cell for two days before being taken to Honduras where his daughter and assistant were then detained.

The FDN radio then reported that "Per Anker Hansen" had been arrested as well. Rumors and reports that the La Penca bomber and his accomplices were responsible for the Tegucigalpa blast persisted even after a left wing Honduran group, "Morazanista Liberation Front" claimed responsibility for it.

In a barrage of confusing and conflicting reports reminiscent of those appearing after the Pastora bombing, the Costa Rican and Honduran press accused Helena of being "Patricia Boone," said the Honduran authorities had captured and then released "Hansen", and charged that Torbjoernsson had connections to ETA and other international terrorist movements.

President Luis Alberto Monge pledged to bring those responsible for La Penca from Honduras to Costa Rica for trial. Costa Rican authorities sent investigators to Tegucigalpa to interview Torbjoernsson and the others. They later reported that "Hansen" had not been arrested and that there was no evidence to accuse Torbjoernsson of involvement in the La Penca bombing.

Through the intervention of the Honduran Human Rights Commission, various international press organizations, and the Swedish and Spanish Embassies, the trio was freed March 17. Honduran authorities indicated only that the three had been held for "security reasons" until after U.S. Vice President George Bush completed a brief visit to the country on March 13. Sweden's Ambassador to Central America, Kristeer Goranson said, "At no moment did I receive an explanation of what occurred from the authorities of Honduras, although I asked for it, because I wanted to know what had really happened to my compatriot."

Following his release, Torbjoernsson said, "I'm a journalist, not a terrorist, but I'm in the middle of some kind of Central American police conspiracy against me." He said that the Salvadoran, Honduran and Costa Rican police agents all interrogated him with the same questions, and that he is considering pressing charges against them "so that they repair the moral, physical and professional damage they have caused me."

COSTA RICAN OFFICIALS AND THE COVER-UP

The investigation into the bombing was seriously hampered because the attack took place in a remote no-man's land, controlled by neither the Costa Rican nor Nicaraguan governments.

Costa Rican authorities say they could not visit the scene of the crime, so they were dependent upon the evidence ARDE cadres brought out. But, after the bombing, Pastora's movement was in disarray and evidence was collected haphazardly and unprofessionally by the guerrillas.

In addition, Costa Rican authorities, unfamiliar with handling such complex cases, committed a series of errors. The borders were not immediately closed, fingerprints were not taken from "Hansen"'s hotel room, and many eyewitnesses and top ARDE officials were interviewed only days later, or not at all.

Most Costa Rican investigators, while genuinely concerned with solving the crime, were strongly anti-communist and automatically assumed that the attack was organized out of Managua. Their ideological convictions made difficult a serious, open-minded investigation of the possibility that it was a right-wing plot. They eagerly accepted, at least at first, the false leads pointing to the Sandinistas and ETA.

In addition, in the weeks after the bombing, the two main investigative organizations, DIS and OIJ, competed with each other for control of the case. At times they concealed important information from one another or released conflicting data to the press.

DIS itself was seriously divided between those agents loyal to its director, Carlos Monge, and those with close ties to the U.S. Embassy, including a special CIA-trained and managed team known as "The Babies". According to a top official in DIS during this period, the organization "was not functioning and was incapable of professionally investigating La Penca or anything else."

In the wake of La Penca, the Ministry of Public Security, of which DIS is a part, was reorganized, with the removal of Minister Angel Edmundo Solano, DIS Director Carlos Monge, his Deputy Rodolfo Jimenez, and Chief of Operations Rodolfo Bolanos, plus a dozen or so DIS agents. The result has been a shift to greater U.S. influence over Costa Rica's security and intelligence apparatus.

Several weeks after the bombing, OIJ assumed major responsibility for the case. Unlike DIS, OIJ had a criminal laboratory in which it analyzed the evidence ARDE brought from La Penca. It compiled extensive documents, which were not made public but which we managed to obtain. The documents include interviews with ARDE officials and journalists who were at La Penca, solicitations of information from numerous countries and responses from several of these, records of "Hansen"'s

movements in Honduras, Panama and Costa Rica and extensive lists of all the evidence removed from La Penca.

However, a year after the bombing, OIJ Director Minor Calvo admitted that these voluminous files had not produced any concrete leads. He did say that OIJ is investigating 120 people who were directly or indirectly connected with La Penca and "Hansen". He added that the bomber "undoubtedly had local contacts helping him before the incident."

We have evidence that some of these local contacts included members of Costa Rica's security system. While much of the bungling of the La Penca investigation can be explained by interagency rivalries, a lack of professional competence, and an ideological bias towards blaming the left, there is also, as with the press coverage, evidence of a cover-up. We have learned that some Costa Rican security officials had prior knowledge of the assassination plot and that they and others helped to circulate false leads afterwards. Further, we have been told by top security officials that the investigation was quietly halted because investigators found their access to information blocked and received death threats against themselves and their families.

Since the start of it's war against Nicaragua, ARDE's operations have depended on the cooperation of strategically placed individuals in the Costa Rican government, security forces and private sector. Although many Costa Rican officials try to uphold the country's official neutrality, some others, for ideological or financial reasons, have facilitated the use of the country as a rear base for the contra war against the Sandinistas.

One DIS official, widely respected by others in the organization as hardworking and honest, probably reflected the approach of many others. He explained, "When the contras started up in Costa Rica I told my superiors that even though I'm anticommunist, I won't play the contras' game because it violates neutrality. But when the Sandinistas became entrenched and were clearly Marxist-Leninist, I decided to close my eyes to the contras' activities because I did not want to see communism planted in the north."

Steven Carr, a North American soldier of fortune arrested by Costa Rican authorities during a raid on contra camp in April 1985, commented in a jailhouse interview that until the day of his arrest, he and his fellow contras had received "100% cooperation" from Costa Rican authorities at every level. Carr said "neutrality exists only in San Jose, if there."

In the months before La Penca as the divisions within ARDE deepened, Costa Rican officials who collaborated with the contras chose sides. Some aligned with Pastora, others with Robelo, and still others with the FDN, the Miskito Indians, or in some cases, the highest bidder. And some took their orders

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from the CIA, shifting their positions as Washington's line towards Pastora turned from active support to active opposition.

One of these was Col. Rodrigo Paniagua a former official of the Ministry of Public Security who, according both to contra sources and his superiors, is ideologically right-wing and works closely with the CIA. He had been a key supporter of Pastora's operations, but later became firmly aligned with Robelo's faction. In addition, he was the main liaison between some top Costa Rican officials and a group of anti-Castro Cuban fighters helping the contras.

ARDE officials say they suspect that Paniagua may have had prior knowledge of the bomb plot because he personally told Pastora to leave Costa Rica on the night of May 29 and hold a press conference on the river the next day. In doing so Paniagua was not speaking on behalf of Minister Solano who had fired him the month before for warning ARDE of a Costa Rican raid on the contras' illegal command post outside San Jose.

Even after his dismissal, the Colonel did, however, continue to work closely with the Public Security Ministry, particularly with Francisco Tacsan.

Another indication that some Costa Rican officials knew "Hansen" and may have had knowledge of the plot is an anonymous memo, written on DIS letterhead, which was circulated in July, 1984, to a handful of journalists. It says that months before the bombing "Hansen" had been arrested and released in San Jose under questionable circumstances. According to a security official who talked with the author of the memo, it was written by someone in DIS who said he was disturbed by what he viewed as a cover-up.

The memo states that in December, 1983, an unnamed Nicaraguan and another man were detained in the city center by Costa Rican authorities of the Crime Prevention Unit (UPD) because they were overheard talking about "terrorism and bombs." When asked to identify themselves, the memo says, the second man claimed that he was a Cuban with an American passport. He was carrying a 45-caliber pistol.

The memo says the two were taken in for questioning and the one who claimed to be Cuban-American was found to be carrying a tourist card and press identification in the name of "Per Anker Hansen". "Hansen" also said he was living in the San Jose suburb of Tibas, the memo says.

According to the memo, "Hansen" and the Nicaraguan were released 15 minutes later, after their interrogators received a mysterious phone call.

The memo is interesting because it links the Cuban team to "Hansen". Journalists who looked into its authenticity vary in their evaluations. Some concluded it is not genuine, while others interviewed officials who said the incident did happen.

We talked with a Cuban, Felipe Vidal (alias Morgan) who works with the contras and claims he and another Miami-based

Cuban were actually the two people arrested. He said he was carrying a pistol for which he had a valid license and that the other man was living at the time in Tibas. Vidal says that after being taken to UPD, he showed press identification in his name, not that of "Per Anker Hansen". He denied he had any identification in "Hansen"'s name. He said he and his companion were released after a call came from Col. Luis Fernando Lamicq of the Ministry of Public Security.

Considering our evidence, presented later, that Vidal was involved in La Penca, we believe his companion may have been "Hansen" or may have had identity papers in "Hansen"'s name.

Pastora himself believes that some Costa Rican officials were involved in the bombing. On the first anniversary of La Penca, he told a Costa Rican interviewer, "I believe the bomber and his group used this government."

The most elaborate evidence pointing to an official cover-up comes from an ex-DIS agent named Carlos Valverde. He gave us lengthy testimony and written documents purporting to prove that top Costa Rican security officials knew beforehand about the bombing and did nothing to stop it.

He initially asked for payment, even before we had had a chance to examine the documents. We refused, and finally managed to obtain the documents after promising that we would solicit a reward for him should his information lead to "Hansen"'s arrest.

Many of the documents in the packet are on DIS letterhead and are signed by Valverde himself, using his code name "Ronald Ruiz". One is signed by "Casper" which an ex-DIS official says was the name put on a number of documents he handled at DIS and which he had always suspected were written by Valverde.

The documents Valverde gave us concerning La Penca state that the bombing was organized out of Managua, that the bomber was the ETA member named Jose Miguel Lujua, and that the two top DIS officials, Carlos Monge and Rodolfo Jimenez, blocked the investigation because they are leftist sympathizers of the Sandinistas. He elaborated upon this hypothesis in several long interviews.

Valverde says he first learned of the plot when, in early May, 1984, he stumbled by chance upon two Nicaraguans and a non-Latin buying parts for the bomb in an electrical store in David, Panama. He says his interest in the trio was sparked when he overheard them saying that it should be easy to get these things into Costa Rica and heard them discussing "getting rid of the big fish of ARDE before the end of the month."

Valverde says his memos to Carlos Monge concerning his findings were ignored, so he and a few other "dedicated" DIS officials continued the investigation secretly on their own. They discovered that the non-Latin entered Costa Rica from Panama a few days afterwards using the name "Per Anker Hansen" and that he checked into the Gran Via Hotel.

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On May 23, Valverde went to Nicaragua where, he says, he contacted a Costa Rican spy in the town of Granada who had at one time worked for Sandinista intelligence. This man identified "Hansen" as the ETA terrorist Jose Miguel Lujua (alias Luis Fernando Gonzalez), and gave the names of three male accomplices who also lived in Nicaragua. Thus, Valverde claims, before the bombing, he knew of the assassination plot and the bomber's true identity.

Valverde says that he became increasingly nervous because nothing was being done to stop "Hansen", so he decided to try to reach ARDE officials by his own means. With the help of his father and brother and a Costa Rican friend who knew the ARDE leaders, he tried repeatedly to contact Orion Pastora, ARDE's chief press officer. He says they left messages at four different locations, but Orion never returned the calls.

Valverde told us that on the night of May 30, he was drinking in a local bar when, over the radio, he heard of the bomb explosion at La Penca. "My hair stood on end," he recalled. "I put my head in my arms. Then I went running to my house to call the office to see what was happening. From that moment on, I did not sleep for many months. I was very nervous. I felt I was responsible, although I knew I wasn't because I have my superiors."

He said that after the bombing he began to work full time to solve the La Penca crime, despite orders from top DIS officials that the investigation be stopped. He says he learned that the assassination plot was organized within Tomas Borge's Ministry of Interior in Managua.

Valverde has since left DIS and is working in a private detective firm.

Another person, a Nicaraguan ex-National Guardsman named Carlos Bravo, who also works as a private detective in San Jose, gave us and ARDE virtually the same story Valverde was trying to sell. He did not mention Valverde and claimed that he and his "group" had gathered all its "evidence" in Costa Rica.

Bravo said some members of his group "are tied to the Costa Rican government," and added, "What we have is extremely confidential because the government is going to remain in silence about La Penca. Nothing will come out from either DIS or OIJ." Bravo said he had, however, been authorized to pass on this information to Pastora.

After much investigation, including interviews with Valverde's colleagues and superiors, we are convinced that his story and documents, as well as the information from the ex-Somocista, are false. Other DIS officials noted, for instance, that the memos are not written with the correct format and do not have official stamps or signatures of people receiving them. One contains a crudely altered date.

Most important, the content of the memos is false. Even a security official whom Valverde claimed knew of his investigation and could testify to the authenticity of these

documents denied ever having seen them or having heard the information.

One of the major problems with Valverde's story is that his culprit, Lujua, was, according to French police, under house arrest during nearly all of 1984, including May. Valverde's response was that the French police were really holding someone else and that INTERPOL had given Costa Rican authorities a memo stating this. He and the Nicaraguan detective both promised to get us this document, but never did.

We have double-checked with Costa Rican officials, Spanish and French diplomats and journalists in France, all of whom insist that Lujua was in France at the time of the bombing. OIJ Director Calvo reiterated in a press conference a year after La Penca that the Lujua story was totally without foundation, both because the Spaniard was under arrest and because he did not physically resemble the suspect.

But Valverde cannot be simply dismissed as another in a series of people seeking to profit from La Penca by selling false information. Rather, when his tale is examined, it helps shed light on the connection between certain members the Costa Rican security services, the bombing and the cover-up afterwards.

Basically, there is evidence that Valverde knew, at least in general terms, of the bombing plot beforehand, that he was connected with parts of the Security Ministry which work closely with the CIA, and that his story is part of false information circulated about La Penca aimed at pinning the crime on the Sandinistas and misleading serious investigators.

In analyzing the significance of Valverde's information we had to evaluate the credibility of Valverde himself. Although he portrays himself as a highly competent, professional secret agent, most other security officials and his acquaintances have a very different view. They describe him as an habitual liar, "full of fantasies", an egotist, and perpetually in need of money.

His nickname within DIS was "Fresh Lies" because he repeatedly told new, highly imaginative, but false stories aimed at inflating his importance or concealing his lack of competence.

The "information" Valverde claims to have stumbled upon while in David, Panama several weeks before the bombing also appeared on the surface highly convincing. He gave us, both detailed verbal descriptions of what he said he had learned and three memos about the plot dated before the La Penca bombing. He says he showed these memos to four of his superiors.

However, the four superiors, including one to whom he was personally close and "Juan Rodriguez"*, who appears to have been his real boss, all say they never saw the memos or heard Valverde's information of the assassination plot before La Penca. It seems certain the memos were written after, not before, the bombing and were never submitted through the usual channels within DIS.

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In addition, the one person who could verify the information from Panama is not capable of doing so. Valverde claimed that he collaborated on the border with Major Brown of the Rural Guard. We tried to contact Major Brown, only to find that he had died in a motorcycle accident.

What is certain is that Valverde did know something about the assassination plot several weeks before the bombing. Valverde's father and brother say that, in mid-May, Valverde came to them extremely distressed and told them that there was going to be an assassination attempt against Pastora before the end of the month, that it would take place at a meeting, that "innocent people would be killed", and that he must warn ARDE.

He, his father, and his brother all contacted a Costa Rican friend who knew ARDE's leadership and asked that he urgently assist Valverde in reaching Orion Pastora. However the ARDE press chief did not answer their repeated calls and the bomb went off before the warning message could be delivered. According to his family members and friends, Valverde was extremely upset after the bombing and tended to blame himself for it.

Although prior to the bombing there were rumors of plots against Pastora, Valverde's information as conveyed to his family and friend was more detailed and coincides with the actual plot. We confronted Valverde with our belief that his memos and information are false and asked him how he had learned of the assassination plot. He refused to say and simply stuck by his original story.

It seems likely that Valverde learned of the assassination plot beforehand either from G-2 officials in Panama, with whom he had good contact, or from within the Costa Rican Security Ministry itself.

Since it is known that "Hansen" lived in Panama in 1982, probably undergoing some kind of terrorist training, it is very likely some G-2 officials knew his true identity, may have known something beforehand about his mission to kill Pastora, and helped in the cover-up. As explained later, the bomber seems to have fled to Panama the day after the La Penca attack.

After the bombing, for instance, Panamanian security officials told a Latin journalist that the bomber was the Uruguayan terrorist Hector Amodio Perez, but that he had been killed by Libyan agents in Belgium in June or July. This information was false but Pastora opponent Alfonso Robelo also told it to several journalists.

In analyzing the second possibility, that Valverde may have learned of the assassination plot from someone within the Costa Rican Security Ministry, it is important to understand with whom he worked most closely. His career as a DIS agent was shortlived. He returned from New Orleans, Louisiana in late 1983 and entered the DIS training program in early 1984.

Almost as soon as he entered DIS he injured his neck and went on indefinite sick leave. He continued to draw sick pay month after month but never really worked as a full-time DIS operative. He finally resigned from DIS around September 1984.

According to a number of DIS officials, Valverde was originally loyal to Carlos Monge, but he soon had a serious falling out with his boss. Monge found Valverde to be an unreliable agent. Valverde says he "discovered" Monge was a Communist and a Sandinista agent.

DIS officials say Valverde was hired on the recommendation of "Juan Rodriguez", who then continued to act as his patron. In interviews, "Rodriguez" acknowledged that he was close to Valverde and that he considered him a competent, knowledgeable agent. He said he had seen a number of Valverde's documents although, like others, he denied having seen, before the bombing, any memos about an assassination plot.

"Rodriguez" said in an interview in early May 1985 that there was reason to believe that "Hansen" was really the ETA man Lujua. He cited information he said was gathered by Valverde in Managua and elsewhere and said he had a copy of one of the lengthy memos Valverde had also given to us. He relayed this information as if it was a new lead and, astonishingly, seemed unaware that the Lujua story had been discredited and discarded by other investigators, including OIJ officials, months before.

In a second interview in late May, 1985 "Rodriguez" backed off from what he had said earlier and distanced himself from both Valverde and the Lujua story.

In addition, he said he no longer believed that Lujua was "Hansen"'s true identity because of physical differences between the two men. Rather, he said, he had new information that one of the other foreigners at the press conference was also a phony journalist, had ties to the Sandinistas, and had been an accomplice to "Hansen" in the bombing. He would not reveal the name of this journalist other than to say he is no longer in San Jose and that he is not the Portuguese journalist Jaquin Da Silva.

This leaves only three possibilities: Susan Morgan, Peter Torbionnsson and his assistant Fernando Prado.

Torbionnsson and Prado, both of whom are politically sympathetic to the Sandinistas were, right after the bombing, under suspicion because of their close relationship with "Hansen". They were both cleared by Costa Rican investigators and allowed to leave the country soon after they were well enough to travel. Torbionnsson was again cleared of suspicion after he was arrested and interrogated in Honduras in March 1985.

Morgan was suspected in the days immediately following La Penca, largely because she was medically evacuated to the U.S. before Costa Rican authorities had a chance to interrogate her. However, she was dropped as a suspect soon afterwards.

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If Costa Rican Security is again investigating one of them it appears to be, as with Lujua, a case of an old recycled story put out once again with the intention of proving the Sandinistas were behind the bombing.

Curiously, in an interview earlier that same day we spoke to "Rodriguez", Valverde gave us virtually the same "new information". He said, "I just got a communication from very respected people of the national press saying that among the foreign journalists there was a communist" who had ties to Managua and was thought to have assisted "Hansen". He also would not reveal the name of this latest suspect, other than to say it was not Tony Avirgan.

What all this adds up to is that "Rodriguez", Valverde and the Nicaraguan detective, Bravo all appear to be getting their "leads" about La Penca from the same source. ARDE officials say they now suspect the Nicaraguan is really with the FDN and was sent to feed false information about La Penca to Pastora.

About this same time, another top Security Ministry official told us and several journalists that he also had a new lead. His information was that the bomber is a Swede who is living and working in Managua. He provided a photocopy of a Nicaraguan government document identifying the person as "Per Arvid Hansen," the same person whom the FBI and OIJ had investigated right after the bombing and discarded as a suspect.

A simple check of the passport number, nationality and photograph of the two Hansen's reveals that they are different people. The only similarities are the names. The fact that the Swedish Hansen is living in Nicaragua makes him valuable for those intent on demonstrating that the Sandinistas were responsible for La Penca.

It is curious that DIS continues to circulate these "leads" long after they have been dismissed by OIJ and other investigators. We believe the persistence with which security officials have come up with these false stories goes beyond bureaucratic inefficiency and sloppiness. To us, it seems they are being purposely put out, not with the intention of presenting watertight cases, but rather to serve as diversions, to confuse and mislead.

In trying to understand the origin of these false stories, it is important to understand Valverde's role within the Security Ministry. Our best guess is that Valverde was tied, through "Rodriguez", his mentor in Security, to the CIA. Several government officials say "Rodriguez" is a key link between Costa Rican and U.S. Embassy intelligence officials. In addition, he was, according to others in the Ministry, connected with the CIA-run unit called "The Babies".

This team could, a number of security sources say, have had a hand in fabricating Valverde's false documents and in helping to circulate some of the false leads about La Penca. While some security officials who know Valverde say he is capable on his own of falsifying and circulating the documents implicating the Sandinsitas, ETA and Carlos Monge, others doubt his capacity.

One official described him as "a low level mercenary who shines the shoes of others. He had to be part of a team, because he does not have the ability to do all this on his own." Since these phony documents were being circulated and referred to by at least two other La Penca investigators, it seems unlikely Valverde was solely responsible for their creation.

DIS and Security officials say The Babies was a special team of about 15 agents trained and advised by a U.S. Embassy official known, naturally, as "Papi" ("Father") and was headed by a Costa Rican DIS agent, Douglas Coblentz, who had lived for many years in the U.S.

It was started in late 1982 with the aim of creating a highly trained group to work on special projects. It operated out of clandestine houses rather than from DIS headquarters.

While it is described by "Rodriguez" as a "pure intelligence gathering unit", those close to The Babies say the team also became involved in "dirty tricks", including intimidating people, clandestine searches of houses and offices, circulating false rumors, and manufacturing phony documents and reports. According to one of his superiors, Coblentz once offered to manufacture false documents to be used to accuse a North American journalist of being a Sandinista spy.

According to knowledgeable security sources, from the outset, The Babies were involved in the power struggle within the Security Ministry. At first they reported directly to DIS Director Carlos Monge, but later began reporting to Francisco Tacsan and Johnny Campos, Monge's superiors in the Ministry.

The U.S. Embassy did not trust Monge and, along with sections of the private sector and Costa Rican Libre, mounted a campaign to discredit him.

Rumors spread that Monge was corrupt, involved in immoral practices, unprofessional, and a Soviet or Sandinista agent. Ministry officials say that during this period the U.S. made it clear that the Security services and DIS in particular, would not receive significant American assistance until Monge and Minister Solano were removed. Solano supported his DIS Director, but once the Minister himself was removed, Monge was isolated. He resigned in late 1984.

Why the U.S. wanted him out is not clear. ARDE officials say Monge was one of their most important supporters in the government.

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Perhaps as the U.S. cooled to Pastora, it determined that Monge could not be trusted to support the Robelo faction and the entry of FDN into Costa Rica. In addition, Monge apparently angered the U.S. because he would not fully cooperate with certain U.S.-backed projects. Finally, it is possible that U.S. Embassy hardliners believed their own propaganda - that Carlos Monge was a communist.

The result of the change in leadership at DIS and the Ministry of Public Security has been the expansion of U.S. aid to DIS, including new cars, radios and other equipment. The Babies no longer exist as a separate unit, but operate within the DIS structure. As one DIS agent said, "now all DIS agents are Babies."

After the bombing, the investigation by both DIS and OIJ was virtually halted. This happened, not as Carlos Valverde says, because there were communist agents within Security, but because officials received death threats and found channels to necessary information blocked.

Intelligence agents say they received a number of anonymous phone threats in the days after the bombing warning that if they did not call off the investigation, they and their families would be killed. One official told us, "I could end up like a dog in the street if I talk. I'm afraid for my children. I don't want to take the risk of solving this case."

A former government minister recalled, "One afternoon I received a call about the La Penca investigation from an intelligence officer. He said he was being threatened gravely by someone who said he was from the CIA. The caller had told him to remember that he is a father and has a wife and children."

One investigator admitted, "There was pressure that the whole investigation be closed. Suddenly it was not possible to get documents. Everything was paralyzed."

He and others said that information they solicited from other countries, particularly Honduras and Panama, was never fully provided. The U.S., despite early promises to send FBI agents to assist Costa Rican authorities, did not do so, and in various other ways dragged its feet.

Journalists had similar experiences. La Republica director Joaquin Vargas asked through INTERPOL that officials in Caracas provide information about a Uruguayan suspect known to be in Venezuela. No answer came. Finally, Vargas contacted a Venezuelan security officer who agreed to look into the matter.

Several weeks later, the officer called to say that Venezuelan authorities had begun to investigate, but called it off because "they feared they would run into the boys with the blue eyes."

Tico Times publisher Richard Dyer found U.S. law enforcement officials equally reluctant to help. He requested a

meeting with a special FBI antiterrorist unit based in New York to pass on some information and solicit assistance in the investigation. After waiting months for an answer, he was finally told by a secretary in the FBI office that he should "contact the CIA office in San Jose." The Embassy refused to facilitate this.

A high ranking security official said that several months after La Penca, DIS wrote a report concluding that the CIA was responsible for the bombing. He said he and other officials saw the report, but it has never been made public. However, other DIS memos implicating the Sandinistas have been either officially released or leaked to the press.

Both DIS and OIJ officials say they have never closed their files on La Penca. In interviews a year after the bombing, both Security Minister Piza and the Ministry's third in command Francisco Tacsan said the investigation is continuing. Tacsan commented, "Before we were doing almost nothing but now we've decided we want to do more because of some of the recent press publicity."

The government's chief prosecutor Fernando Cruz said OIJ's investigation has not stopped although "we have no more information." He added, "I would not be surprised if the Sandinistas were responsible but we have no concrete evidence linking them to La Penca." OIJ Director Calvo told a press conference that the investigation had run into a number of blind alleys.

Despite the obvious good intentions and efforts of a number of Costa Rican investigators, the prospects for their solving the case do not look good. Rather it seems that parts of the Security Ministry, in particular, continue to be used to disseminate false and confusing information as part of the La Penca cover-up.

* Juan Rodriguez is a pseudonym for a high ranking functionary in the Ministry of Public Security. Because of Costa Rican laws, we are unable to use his real name here. However, his correct identity and other data has been supplied to proper law enforcement authorities.

U.S. EMBASSY RESPONSE

The behavior of U.S. Embassy officials was curiously callous, although not as incriminating as that of certain Costa Rican officials. Basically, the response of the Embassy was "hands off".

Tico Times Editor Dery Dyer, who was in close touch with Embassy officials right after the bombing, concluded, "Never, never, never has the U.S. Embassy been so incompetent. Everyone agrees the Embassy fell on its face."

AP correspondent Reid Miller, who was injured at La Penca, said, "I'm a professional newsman. I know the risks involved and I don't expect the Embassy to lay out red carpets wherever I go. But I just hope this is not indicative of how they treat the average American."

Dery Dyer says that at 8:40 p.m., right after learning of the attack, she alerted U.S. Consular officer Lynn Curtain who asked for the names of the U.S. citizens known to have attended the press conference and said he would "check through channels." His said his first information was that four were dead, but that he had not yet obtained their identities.

Later, he called Dyer to say, "You can breathe a sigh of relief because there are no Americans dead. That we know." At that point, Tico Times correspondent Linda Frazier was dying and the local radio stations were already reporting that one woman journalist was critically injured.

Dyer also asked Curtain about sending U.S. helicopters to rescue the victims. Curtain assured her, "We're on top of it. We're doing everything we can." It is now clear the Embassy did virtually nothing. He said later, he had passed on the information to "my superiors, and then I followed orders."

His orders were, he said afterwards, "to monitor the situation, because we could not do anything else. It was in the Costa Rican government's hands. This is a sovereign country, and we can't just go barging in." He also noted that the bombing occurred in a "volatile area". Another Embassy official later told Dyer, "(Charge D'Affairs George) Jones said that when he went to bed at 11 p.m., there was no indication of any serious situation."

Given these glib, inaccurate assurances, it is hard to imagine that any Embassy official even listened to local radio reports. Soon after the blast, all the Costa Rican news stations were reporting grizzly details. At about 11 p.m., they announced that a foreign woman journalist was apparently among the dead. Since Linda Frazier (a US citizen) and Susan Morgan (a British citizen working for a U.S. publication) were the only women journalists known to be there, this should have been of concern to the Embassy.

However, Embassy officials did not check with Costa Rican officials or the Red Cross, to find out the condition of the Americans or to offer help, such as the use of U.S. heli-

copters, boats, vehicles, or the services of the Embassy doctor.

Afterwards, Ambassador Winsor said it would have taken a minimum of 24 hours to mobilize a helicopter from Panama. However, the Embassy did not even look into this possibility, or the possibility of getting a helicopter from Honduras, which is closer.

ARDE had a landing strip inside Nicaragua just five minutes from La Penca, and there are several clandestine rebel landing strips on the Costa Rican side of the border. These were undoubtedly well-known to the CIA agents working with ARDE.

The Embassy in San Jose did not call the U.S. Embassy in Managua to discuss the possibility of requesting special permission from Nicaragua to fly a humanitarian mission to the blast scene.

No Embassy representative was sent to either the border or to the San Carlos hospital to check on the condition of the three U.S. journalists and two others - Morgan and Edgar Ulate - working for U.S. news organizations.

The Embassy did not even carefully keep track of developments in order to provide accurate information to relatives, friends and the press calling the Embassy from overseas.

In the days after the bombing, Embassy personnel showed indifference to the problems of the wounded Americans (although Joe Frazier says they were helpful in getting Linda's body out of Costa Rica). They only began to help Avirgan get permission to leave for the U.S. for medical treatment after Congressmen, ABC executives, relatives and friends in the U.S. began to pressure the State Department, the Costa Rican Embassy in Washington, and the U.S. Embassy in San Jose.

The Embassy did nothing to correct early false reports in the local press claiming that Frazier was the bomber and that Avirgan and Morgan were the prime suspects. Since the Embassy routinely objects to press reports it feels are incorrect, it could have requested the local press to refrain from making accusations until there was firm evidence.

In contrast, the British Embassy immediately began acting as a clearinghouse for messages between Morgan's family and the hospital and arranged for an ambulance and a diplomat to go to the San Carlos hospital to transport Morgan to San Jose.

The U.S. Embassy's response was particularly astonishing because it was uncharacteristic. A routine function of any embassy is to assist its citizens in trouble. According to Dery Dyer, "Whenever there's a slight earthquake, auto crash, or drug bust, the Embassy sends someone and offers its services."

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Embassy officials later claimed one reason they could not have helped with La Penca, was because the bombing involved contras, with whom they were not supposed to have any direct contact.

But in November 1984, when Alfonso Robelo and his girlfriend were wounded in a grenade attack in San Jose, two U.S. Embassy security officers came to the scene immediately.

Both the attack on Robelo and La Penca were attempts to kill contra leaders. Yet when U.S. citizens and employees of U.S. news organizations were killed or wounded, the Embassy was nowhere to be found.

During the investigation following the bombing, U.S. officials were decidedly unhelpful. Early on, Ambassador Winsor said that FBI agents were being flown in to help Costa Rica with the investigation. But, according to both Embassy and Costa Rican officials, no FBI agents ever came. Costa Rican officials say they had almost no direct contact with the FBI or other U.S. law enforcement or investigative agencies.

Costa Rican agents learned of the ETA story from the local press. They received no direct communication on the matter from U.S. officials, although it was intelligence officials in Washington who had originated the story. This is a further indication that the ETA story was intended solely to sidetrack public opinion and the investigation.

A year after La Penca U.S. Embassy officials scoffed at the idea that the CIA could have been involved or that U.S. authorities were negligent in not assisting more vigorously in the investigation. "We're every bit as anxious to find him as you are," an Embassy spokesman told the Tico Times. "I can assure you that the investigation is still going on, and very actively," he added.

THE BOMBER: SUSPECTS

Since the bombing a parade of possible suspects has been investigated. "Hansen" has proved to be incredibly elusive. Even the many clues left behind - photographs, video pictures and a voice recording - have yielded little hard evidence and many conflicting theories.

During the weeks immediately after the bombing, as Eden Pastora lay in his hospital bed in Caracas, he studied news photos of "Per Anker Hansen" with a lingering feeling that he had seen him somewhere before. Finally he told his aides, "I think I know that man. He may be from the Somoza hit team."

Pastora was referring to a group of Argentinian leftists who assassinated Anastasio Somoza, ex-dictator of Nicaragua while he was living in exile in Paraguay.

The team, consisting of six men and three women, had reportedly made its plans in Managua with the support of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Defense.

From 1979 to 1980, Pastora was Nicaragua's Vice-Minister of Defense and, according to ARDE officials, he knew the members of the hit team.

There are certain similarities in style between the successful attack against Somoza and the unsuccessful attack against Pastora. Both were carried out by assassins posing as couples. "Boone" and "Hansen" are reported to have been in Panama and Peru, two of the countries where some of Somoza's killers are known to have gone into hiding.

Both Torbjoernsson and Prado report that one of the few times "Hansen" became interested in political discussions was when the Somoza assassination was mentioned. He asked them to describe in detail everything they knew about it.

The possibility that "Hansen" had been a member of the Somoza hit team cannot be totally discarded. Yet, the fact that Somoza was killed by leftist terrorists does not fit with the weight of the evidence that the Pastora bombing was organized by rightists. It could be that "Hansen" was simply a mercenary, willing to be hired for any terrorist act.

However, as explained below, we now believe the bomber was not from Argentina or elsewhere in South America, but was from Libya.

Another possibility is that La Penca was purposely designed to resemble the Somoza assassination.

According to the testimony of Hector Frances, an Argentinian who had worked for the CIA in Costa Rica, there was talk as early as 1982 of killing Pastora in a style similar to the Somoza assassination so that it would appear that the Sandinistas were responsible.

Soon after La Penca, the large leftist Uruguayan exile community became convinced that the bombing was carried out by one of their compatriots.

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On June 9, 10 days after La Penca, the Costa Rican newspaper El Debate carried a short article on the front page, datelined Stockholm, in which a Uruguayan exile identified only as Bruno "X" claimed to recognize the photos of "Per Anker Hansen" as a Uruguayan he had known in the late 1960's.

Through contacts in Sweden, we were able to get telephone numbers for Bruno Menghetti and his brother Ruben. In a series of phone conversations, they identified "Hansen" as Arturo Nestor Figari, whom they described as an ex-leftist who had become a police informant and right-wing mercenary. They gave us a telephone number for Figari's parents in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela, where, they said, his father is a doctor. When we called, a person identifying himself as Arturo Figari answered and we spoke with him in both English and Spanish.

During June and July we had three phone conversations with Figari (or someone who claimed to be him), in which he told us that he had just arrived in Venezuela from Holland to visit his parents after many years.

He claimed to have been in Caracas the day of the bombing and to have been en route from Amsterdam before that. He also said he had not been in Central America in over 10 years.

He was extremely worried about how we had gotten his telephone number. His brother Ricardo called us from the U.S., where he is in a seminary, to vow that his brother was not involved. It was clear, however, that Ricardo had not seen his brother in a number of years.

Figari seemed in many ways to fit "Hansen" - similar height, age, profession, and a father who is a doctor in Venezuela. Several things he told us were puzzling. He said he was a freelance photographer and had worked with a photo agency in Paris called "Paris 7". This, according to Menghetti, is a front for recruiting mercenaries for South Africa. The name is curiously similar to that of "Hansen"'s phony agency "Europe 7".

Figari gave us an Amsterdam address for his flat and photo studio. But when Associated Press reporters went there, they found it was an empty lot. He also gave us and a Swedish journalist somewhat different travel routes when describing how he flew from Holland to Latin America.

However, he managed to convince both the Dutch Embassy in Caracas (he has a Dutch passport) and New York Times correspondent Alan Riding, who talked with Figari's mother, that he had been in Caracas the day of the bombing. An ARDE official who accompanied Pastora to Caracas said he asked the Venezuelan police about Figari and was told he had been in the country.

We played a recording of Figari's voice to Fernando Prado and he said it did not sound like "Hansen". We also sent "Hansen's" radio interview and the Channel 6 video of him to Menghetti. He and other Uruguayans in Sweden concluded that "Hansen" and Figari sounded and looked somewhat different.

An ARDE supporter who was in Caracas with Pastora and also investigated Figari thinks his name may have been purposely planted to throw off the search. "Why did all this attention go to a Uruguayan citizen who had nothing to do with the bombing but had a lot of similarities to the bomber? We may have been the victims of disinformation", he stated.

Four days after Figari's name began circulating, the name of another Uruguayan appeared in the press: Hector Amodio Perez. Incredibly, this name came from a second group of Uruguayans living in the port city of Malmo, Sweden, who claimed to have no connection with Menghetti and his brother in Stockholm.

The information was said to have originated with "Cono Sur Press" in Montevideo, and it quoted a senior Uruguayan Army officer as the source.

Based in Sweden, Cono Sur Press is operated by Uruguayan political exiles associated with the Tupamaro guerrilla movement. It has had correspondents scattered around Central and South America as well as some clandestine contacts in Uruguay during the period of the military dictatorship.

The Cono Sur article carried a Panama dateline. Apparently, the Cono Sur Press reporter in Panama, who was also the correspondent for the Nicaraguan news agency ANN, had received the story from Sweden and circulated it. The Costa Rican newspapers did not print the original story, but did make reference to it.

The story said in part:

"An ex-Tupamaro and member of the intelligence service of the Uruguayan Army may be the false journalist who exploded a bomb during a press conference given by Eden Pastora.

"The charge was made by a high official of the Uruguayan Army, who identified the bomber as Hector Amodio Perez, ex-Tupamaro and current member of the intelligence service of the Uruguayan Armed Forces.

"The Uruguayan official, who did not want to be identified, had several photos of Amodio Perez, taken in recent years, that show an astonishing likeness to the suspect, the agency Cono Sur Press reported from Montevideo."

This story was circulated widely in Europe, Mexico, Nicaragua, and South America, including Uruguay. On July 4, the Spanish magazine Interviú carried a three-page article naming Amodio Perez as the principal suspect. An article in the Danish newspaper Berlingsre on June 20 said:

"Amodio Perez was in the mid-60s a member of Uruguay's urban guerrilla movement (Tupamaros) and had to go underground in 1966. Since then his name has been mentioned in connection with many of the urban guerrillas' most sensational actions...

"In June 1970 the police managed to capture him, but he escaped. After he was arrested for a third time in June 1972, he changed sides and worked closely with Uruguay's Armed Forces.

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"Many are of the opinion that Amodio already worked for the police in Uruguay, while he maintained contact with urban guerrillas..."

"Amodio Perez managed to become entirely integrated into the Uruguayan intelligence services, and in the course of a short time, he became a kind of key person in the Army's fight against the Tupamaros..."

"Amodio took part in various actions against his previous 'brothers in arms', and traveled several times to Buenos Aires in order both to identify and seize Uruguayan political prisoners. According to the high-ranking officer who recognized Amodio from the photograph of the suspect, Per Anker Hansen, Amodio was recruited by the CIA shortly after he had worked in Buenos Aires."

Dr. Federico Fasano Mertens, a prominent Uruguayan journalist exiled in Mexico, who knew Amodio personally and spent hours interviewing him in prison in the early 1970s, said in a June 27 interview in the Nicaraguan newspaper El Nuevo Diario:

"He undoubtedly is alive. Exiled Uruguayans personally saw him in Madrid five years ago... There is an enormous similarity between the photos of "Per Anker Hansen" and Amodio. The protruding eyes, the thick eyebrows, the left eyebrow a little smaller, the expression, the way he holds his cigarette..."

"If besides the physical likeness, we look at the style of the bombing, "Hansen" personally takes the bomb, he's present at the press conference.... This coincides with the style of the operations of the man I knew so well. Although I repeat that I don't have the least bit of conclusive proof."

Alfonso Robelo and G-2 intelligence agents in Panama also fingered Amodio Perez, but said that they had information he had been killed in Brussels by Libyan hit men shortly after La Penca. Brussels police deny having any information about this.

We tried to determine whether or not Amodio Perez was the bomber through interviews with Costa Rican investigators and Uruguayan exiles in Costa Rica, telephone conversations with Uruguayans in Nicaragua, Panama and Sweden, and visits to Uruguay, Panama and Mexico.

Most of the Uruguayans we talked with insisted that there is a strong resemblance between Amodio Perez and "Hansen". Clearly, Uruguayans, particularly leftists, want "Hansen" to be Amodio, the man who almost singlehandedly destroyed the Tupamaro movement, sent many of his comrades to prison or death, and then mysteriously escaped.

Costa Rican investigators told us that Amodio was their prime suspect, but that they were awaiting more information from Uruguay.

But as we investigated further, we found a number of difficulties with the Amodio Perez theory. None of the

Uruguayans who had known him has seen him in over a decade. None could say with certainty that he was the man in the voice recording and video of "Hansen." Several felt there were some physical differences.

One Uruguayan exile noted that "Hansen's" speech was more sophisticated and intellectual than that of Amodio who was a typesetter with a working-class accent and vocabulary. In addition, at the time of his disappearance, Amodio spoke no English.

Another important discrepancy was in the age of the two men. Amodio is now over 40 while "Hansen" appeared to be about 30 and was using the passport of a 28 year-old.

In Montevideo, we tracked down the journalist Cono Sur Press cited as the source of the initial report. We asked him to put us in touch with the army officer he had quoted and to arrange interviews with leftists who had known Amodio well. Although we spent hours waiting for meetings he said he had arranged with his contacts, not one materialized. We came to suspect that he, or perhaps journalists with Cono Sur in Sweden, had fabricated the army officer in order to give more credibility to their story.

But in the course of our investigation, we learned of a high-ranking Uruguayan police officer and one-time CIA collaborator named Alejandro Otero who had been responsible for the arrest and interrogation of Amodio Perez and other Tupamaros in the early 1970's. Otero had later criticized the excesses of CIA operations in Uruguay and as a result, he had been sent to relatively unimportant postings. He is considered by many Uruguayans to be a fairly honest officer and was given a position as head of the police academy under the civilian government which replaced the dictatorship.

After listening very carefully to the recording and studying the photos, and evidence, he noted remarkable similarities between "Hansen" and Amodio both in facial appearance and in their style of operating. He said he could not be sure the voice was the same, but that "Hansen" definitely seemed to speak like someone from Uruguay or the Buenos Aires area of Argentina. He also said he thought he recognized one of the women pictured in the OIJ wanted poster.

When we asked what had become of Amodio following his escape from the Uruguayan prison, he said, "I cannot say. I must keep some professional secrets." He hinted, however, that the CIA had helped get Amodio out of the country. We heard from other sources that Otero himself was involved in helping Amodio escape.

Otero said he could neither confirm nor deny whether "Hansen" is Amodio. However, when we asked about Amodio's height, he stood up and indicated that he would have come only to his eyebrows. Otero is 1.66 meters, tall which would put Amodio at 1.64 or 1.65

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meters. "Hansen", however, is about 1.85 meters. This physical difference which is so difficult to modify, is, we believe, the most important information indicating that "Hansen" is NOT Amodio.

Otero said that, if "Hansen" was a terrorist, either of the right or the left, who had lived in Uruguay or Argentina, he was confident he could determine his identity. We therefore gave him copies of all our material on "Hansen" and agreed to call him a week after we returned to Costa Rica.

Before leaving Montevideo we met another person who had known Amodio well, and who confirmed that Amodio was fairly short. We also found in the archives of one of the major newspapers, old full length photos of Amodio which revealed important physical differences between him and "Hansen".

We located a lawyer in Montevideo who had known Amodio Perez and claimed to have seen him in recent years. He said that he has reliable information that Amodio had been in Panama and has recently been living at a particular address in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The OIJ files also state that Amodio was seen in Panama on May 29, 1984. Panamanian officials were asked to verify this, but did not do so in the documents they sent to OIJ.

After returning to Costa Rica we called Otero at a prearranged time to find out the results of his investigation. He said, "I think this is a very good report that I have done, with a team. The report includes some information that for you is very important. But this information will come signed by a whole team, and they ask for a quantity of dollars. The information is exact, and positive for you all."

"So what do we do?" we asked.

"You should discuss it," Otero said. "They mentioned a figure of twenty thousand dollars. I think the information will be very, very valuable to you, so you should discuss it and call me back."

We were totally unprepared for his request for money. In Montevideo, Otero had offered to assist us without mentioning any fee. Since, on principle, we never pay for any information we receive, we were extremely leery of this request. We also realized that it would be very easy to buy false information.

In the next conversation a week later, we asked Otero if he could give us concrete proof of the bomber's identity. He answered, somewhat mysteriously, "You gave us the material, and we have clear statements to make based on the material.... We work on the basis of our own experience and knowledge." He said his "team" had positively identified both the bomber and his woman accomplice.

In subsequent conversations, Otero said we could evaluate his information and would have to pay only after we were satisfied it was correct.

We made another trip to Uruguay, but although we talked with Otero for hours, he refused to reveal the identities of the bomber and his accomplice without being paid beforehand. He reneged on his earlier promise to let us examine and verify the information before considering payment. In addition, he did not have us meet with any one else from his supposed group, leading us to doubt if it really exists. Our relationship ended at this impasse.

Before we parted, however, Otero did strongly imply that he had discovered that the CIA was behind the bombing and warned that it was extremely dangerous for us and him to continue the investigation.

We continue to believe that Otero has important information about the bomber and his accomplices and are appalled that he should try to profit from it.

In addition to the named suspects, there have been various supposed sightings of "Hansen" in Nicaragua, Mexico and Costa Rica.

In February, for instance, two Costa Rican businessmen traveling by car through Nicaragua reported seeing someone resembling "Hansen" at a hotel in San Juan del Sur on the Pacific coast. However, a check of the hotel registry showed no signature resembling "Hansen's". Hotel personnel could not recall anyone fitting his description and the businessmen themselves, when shown the video of the bomber, decided he was not the man they had seen.

At about the same time, several local residents reported seeing a person fitting "Hansen's" description at a party in Grenada, Nicaragua. However, when they were shown the photos and listened to the voice recordings, they also said that despite certain physical similarities, the man they saw was not "Hansen."

Several months after the bombing, La Republica Director Jaoquin Vargas received information from a Mexican private detective that "Hansen" was living at a well-guarded resort allegedly set aside by the Mexican government for international terrorists. Vargas and others began investigating the possibility of flying into the resort, kidnapping "Hansen" and returning him to Costa Rica to stand trial. However the Mexican detective never confirmed his information and it eventually became apparent that the story had no basis.

In addition, there were several unconfirmed reports that "Hansen" had been seen in Costa Rica well after the bombing. One, for example, is that in September, 1984 a man fitting "Hansen's" description presented himself at the general delivery window of the central post office. He asked if he had any mail and showed a Danish passport in the last name of

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"Hansen". He was accompanied by a short, stocky woman carrying a blue passport.

The post office employee at the window said there was no mail for "Hansen", and when she began to look at him closely, he quickly took back his passport and left. She called DIS, but by the time agents arrived, the couple had disappeared.

THE INTELLECTUAL AUTHORS

While both the right and the left had motives for wanting to kill Pastora, our investigation has turned up solid evidence that the La Penca bombing was carried out by a terrorist group made up of right-wing Cuban exiles, North Americans, and FDN members, some of whom have ties to the CIA.

By March 1985, we had begun to assemble various bits of evidence pointing to this group.

We have evidence, for instance, that a group from the FDN and Alfonso Robelo's MDN knew in advance of plans to eliminate Pastora. In the months before La Penca, MDN/FDN members met in Miami. A spy from Pastora's faction of ARDE made a secret tape recording of the meeting. Our assessment is that the recording is genuine, even though background noise and several people talking at once make it difficult to distinguish between voices.

An introduction by the ARDE infiltrator says, "What you are going to hear is a conversation with Jose Wenceslao Mayorga, Carlos Lacayo of MDN, Captain Hook, Rommel Castaneda, and myself so that you have an idea of what's happening in this organization and with respect to Robelo."

The most interesting part of their lengthy conversation is the following:

Voice: "I'm the military adviser of MDN."

Voice: "But what about ARDE?"

Voice: "How is ARDE going to turn out? And Eden?"

Voice: "Eden? [laughter] We'll see what's going to happen."

Voice: "Forget about Eden."

Voice: "But there's going to come a time when everyone unites."

Voice: "We're already in unity. We are inside the convergence. We're the organizations which have fundamental principles...."

Voice: "I'm going to make something clear. If Eden Pastora leaves this movement one day, immediately I tell you, if Pastora disappears from there, then there will be order and discipline in the movement."

Voice: "And what about the people with Pastora?"

Voice: "The MDN will absorb them."

And then the discipline begins. There are a lot of people. They are all waiting to be killed in this stupid war Pastora is making."

Voice: "OK, but it looks like eventually there's going to be a healthy movement. [unintelligible] But Pastora is acting crazy and we're going to wait for the day Pastora disappears or is retired from the movement...."

Voice: "This is what the gringos said to the FDN: 'What do you want?' They gave them arms, money, all the shit. 'Eden, what do you want?' 'This and that and greens [dollars]. 'The

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gringos said: 'Go and fight.' And they stuck him in Costa Rica. They're ;ARDE; screwed. The FDN is inside ;Nicaragua.;"

Voice: "Yes, they ;the gringos; are going to eliminate Pastora now. They are going to put in just the military people." (Throughout the conversation "military men" refers to the FDN.)

Another indication of such plotting comes from a top Pastora aide. He says that the day before the La Penca bombing, a Nicaraguan woman called him from Houston, Texas to tell him that she had learned from an FDN member who works there with Nicaraguan refugees that there was an FDN plot to kill Pastora.

In addition, Peter Glibbery, a British anti-communist adventurer who was among those arrested in April 1985 when Costa Rican Rural Guardsmen raided an FDN camp on property managed by John Hull, said that while in La Reforma jail, near San Jose, he met a fellow prisoner who claimed to have been part of a team sent from Honduras by the FDN to assassinate Pastora.

The prisoner confided to Glibbery after hearing the former British Army officer make some remarks about Pastora being a closet socialist.

Glibbery said the prisoner's real name was Roger Lee Pallais although Costa Rican authorities, who were holding him on charges of shooting and wounding a police officer, thought his name was Roger Lino Hernandez. He was a Nicaraguan of Chinese decent and his father, Won Lee Wong had been Chief of Investigations for Somoza's National Guard and is currently working for the FDN in Miami.

Pallais said that he had been part of a five member FDN team, including one woman, sent to Costa Rica from Honduras to kill Pastora. He was vague about the date, but said it was "about a year ago", which could have meant the team was in Costa Rica before the La Penca bombing.

Pallais said he got into trouble when he had a falling out with the female member of the group and she went to OIJ, not to tell about the plot against Pastora, but to tip the authorities that Pallais was armed and dangerous.

When police officers arrived to investigate, Pallais shot one four times and was subsequently sentenced to eight years in prison.

Although he was considered dangerous and was being held on a serious charge, shortly after confiding in Glibbery, Pallais managed to escape by running away when officers escorting him back to prison after a court appearance left him in their car unattended.

He subsequently called his fellow inmates through the prison's pay telephone to boast of his escape and to ask them to collect and send out to him the things he left

behind. Glibbery says he learned that Pallais was, after his escape, in contact with John Hull and his Cuban sidekick Felipe Vidal.

It is not known if Pallais was connected with the La Penca bombing or if he was involved in a parallel but independent action intended to kill Pastora. Both plots were, however, backed by elements within the FDN.

There are indications that certain ARDE advisers or commanders may also have been involved in La Penca. However our evidence is more circumstantial than concrete.

In the months prior to the bombing, several of Pastora's colleagues and sympathizers began quietly to organize against him. ARDE sources say that these people, who became aligned with the FDN soon after the bombing, began, for instance, talking to field commanders about preparation "for the day when Pastora will not be around." They advocated that certain ARDE commanders should break with Pastora and unite with the FDN. As a result of this wooing, several of Pastora's commanders did leave and join the FDN around the time of La Penca.

Some of these provocateurs had been previously considered "ultraleftists" by their ARDE peers. They had been, for instance, among those Pastora advisers advocating a strong public stand against the CIA. Their behavior right after the bombing and their subsequent switch to the FDN befuddled their former comrades.

One of them was a key person in promoting the story that ETA had carried out the bombing on behalf of the Sandinistas. However, according to close associates and family members, he and another aide to Pastora who helped woo away the FRS commanders, were, in reality, on the CIA's payroll.

Besides these indications that anti-Pastora contras were involved in the La Penca plot, we also accumulated substantial evidence that ultrarightist Cubans had a hand in the terrorist attack.

A tie to the Cuban exile community surfaced shortly after La Penca, when a Cuban-American businessman in Miami told an associate that his "group" was responsible for the bombing. This Cuban, named Richard or Ricardo Martinez, has a seafood import business that operates in Central and South America, including Honduras and Costa Rica. But his associate says his business is really a cover for his "mercenary" activities.

Martinez told our contact that he has worked on contract for the CIA, is willing to be hired to do anything including kill people, and is involved with the contras, but dislikes Pastora. He is extremely right-wing and supports militant anti-Castro groups. He is very familiar with Costa Rica, where, he boasted, he has "influence" with important people.

Our contact explained that this businessman has "a big group of Cubans and others - its my understanding that they have non-Cubans in the group - and they do anything you

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want. He said he and his group have done work for the CIA. He claimed this group did La Penca and he seemed to know a great deal about it. He did not say whether or not they had been hired by the CIA for this action. I don't think he'd do anything for strictly political reasons. I don't think he'd do it except for money."

Unfortunately our contact had lost the address of the Cuban businessman. We tried through numerous channels in San Jose and Miami to locate him, but without success. We found only one person who admits to knowing him. This man is also a Cuban businessman. He resides in Costa Rica, claims to others he works for the CIA, and has been very active in helping the group of Cuban fighters operating in the southern front. He confirmed to us that Ricardo Martinez has been helping the contras, but he refused to give us Martinez's address, saying he was sure Martinez would not talk with journalists.

In addition, a Miami Cuban law enforcement officer who is also involved with the contras, said that it was "common knowledge" that Miami Cubans had organized the La Penca bombing. He said the attack was justified because "Pastora is a communist."

Another source, a Costa Rican businessman-cum-private detective who does business in Miami, sells arms to the contras, and is involved with Cubans, said he was told in Miami that those behind the bombing were from the right-wing Cuban terrorist organization "Alpha 66", the FDN and its allies in Costa Rica, and the CIA.

He says his information came from three different people who told him the story separately. He described all three as "reliable", especially one who has been providing him with accurate information for over ten years. We, in turn, have used this businessman as a source in the past and have found him to be highly knowledgeable.

The businessman said that he knew several months before the bombing that there were plans under way to eliminate Pastora, who was viewed by extreme elements in these groups as erratic, a leftist - several referred to him as either a "Communist" or a "Maoist" - and politically unreliable since he had vowed to side with the Sandinistas should U.S. troops invade Nicaragua. They also looked upon the ARDE commander as the main obstacle to a united contra movement and expanded U.S. assistance.

This informant said that the bombing was planned "at the highest levels" of Alpha 66, in conjunction with CIA agents. He said, "Alpha sustains itself with CIA funds and drug trafficking" and has been acting as a funnel for aid to the contras, particularly the FDN.

He said that the right-wing Cuban group maintained a "safe house" in the San Jose working class suburb of Tibas, a fact we confirmed through Cuban contra sources. He named several Cubans in San Jose and Miami whom he claimed are part of the

La Penca group. All, he says, work for the CIA. We have independent confirmation that one is currently with the Agency and another formerly worked with the CIA.

The businessman explained he knew in advance there were plans to kill Pastora but he did not know exactly how it would happen. "Two months beforehand ;about March¿, these people [his contacts in Miami¿ had begun to refer to Pastora as only a benchwarmer, saying it was time to replace him" he said. "Now they talk openly about the La Penca operation as being their action."

The informant explained that the plotters planned to make Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro, leader of the small FARN organization which has had close ties to the FDN, commander of the southern front. That is what happened. Soon after La Penca, Alfonso Robelo's faction of ARDE announced it was forming an alliance with the FDN and El Negro was named military commander in the south.

Regarding the anti-Castro Cubans who work with the contras out of Costa Rica, ARDE officials recall that a leader of this group, Felipe Vidal, also known as "Morgan", had spoken in both Miami and Costa Rica about the need to "liquidate" Pastora. A Pastora lieutenant says he has information that Vidal, who claimed to be proPastora, "originally came to Costa Rica with the intention of killing Eden. What he wanted to do was to be in the camp and wait for him. One of the Cubans with him fled because he became afraid he would be implicated, and he came and told me about this, months before La Penca."

Another person, someone involved in ARDE's internal investigation of the bombing, said Vidal "is the only person I know of who mentioned the possibility of eliminating Pastora with a bomb." This ARDE investigator, who has proved to be a highly valuable source, said he believes the attack was carried out by "some FDN and ARDE elements in alliance with Cubans" connected with another terrorist organization "Omega 7."

From interviews in Costa Rica and Miami, it is clear there is considerable overlap between Omega 7 and Alpha 66. Both include a number of ex-Bay of Pigs fighters and ex-CIA hirelings. Alpha 66 is the older organization over which the CIA has always had more control. It has ties with right-wing paramilitary groups throughout Latin America including, in Costa Rica, Movimiento Costa Rica Libre.

Omega 7 was started in the 1970s by some ex-Alpha members. It is described as having a more adventurist concept and as being more independent from the CIA.

Vidal and other Cuban exile volunteers working with the contras in Costa Rica, claim they are independent and have no connections with any of the Miami-based anti-Castro organ-

izations. They first came to Costa Rica in mid-1983, and were introduced to ARDE by Col. Rodrigo Paniagua of the Ministry of Public Security. ARDE officials say Paniagua personally requested that the Cubans be integrated into ARDE guerrilla ranks, but they were turned away by Pastora.

Then, in early 1984, Pastora relented and accepted the Cubans as combat instructors on the condition that they identify themselves as Puerto Ricans.

According to several sources, the American farmers John Hull and Bruce Jones helped convince Pastora to accept the Cuban contingent. The number of Cubans working with the contras has always remained small and there has been, with the exception of Vidal, Rene Corbo and a few others, a constant turnover. They have established an independent base of support and lines of supply utilizing Cuban exile sympathizers in Miami and San Jose.

Col. Paniagua continued to work closely with the Cuban team, even after he left the Security Ministry. It was Col. Paniagua who, ARDE officials say, visited Pastora outside San Jose on the night of May 29 and insisted that he hold a press conference the next day in Nicaraguan territory.

"If Paniagua was the one who asked for the press conference, then the Cubans were involved in the bombing" commented former member of the Cuban team, who returned to Miami nine months before La Penca.

At the time of the bombing, the Cubans were at an ARDE camp along the San Juan River, just a few minutes downstream by boat from La Penca. After the bombing they, along with John Hull, broke officially with Pastora's FRS faction of ARDE and began working to organize an FDN front in the south.

An indication that the actions of the Cuban team and John Hull are linked to those of the CIA is that as CIA pressure for unity mounted in the weeks before La Penca, Hull and Jones stopped supporting Pastora. According to ARDE sources, they refused to let Pastora's planes land on Hull's airstrip and withheld supplies from the FRS.

After the bombing and during the Sandinista offensive against ARDE in June 1984, Hull and Jones are said to have been involved in buying up rifles from fleeing ARDE guerrillas. According to several Costa Rican and contra sources, the weapons were stockpiled on Hull's farm for future use by Robelo supporters and the FDN.

"The attitude of the CIA is to allow the Sandinistas to wipe out the FRS from their midst. Precisely what the bombing did not achieve." commented an ARDE official at the time. He continued, "John Hull is a chess piece that breaks with Pastora and gives support to Robelo's people. Everything indicates that Hull plays the same role as the CIA." This ARDE investigator said "the Cuban advisers in ARDE all have a curriculum clearly tied to the CIA."

There is considerable evidence to support this ARDE official's claim. In July 1985, when Pastora had suspicions that Vidal was involved in the La Penca bombing, he had the Cuban detained during a visit to the Rio San Juan. According to Pastora and several others present, when Vidal was disarmed and had ARDE weapons pointed at him, he began shouting "Don't shoot - I'm with the CIA."

Several former members of Vidal's group say they quit in part because they discovered it was a CIA operation.

From interviews with some of the Cubans, other contras and well-informed Costa Ricans, it is clear the Cubans receive substantial cooperation both from right-wing organizations like Movimiento Costa Rica Libre and from certain government officials. A Pastora aide said, "We believe it's a CIA team. Costa Ricans don't do anything to stop them. They get their supplies and have their training camps here in Costa Rica and no one says anything."

The Cubans did, however, run into some trouble in April 1985 when a Rural Guard unit raided a contra camp located on a farm reportedly managed by John Hull. The raid was carried out by Col. Rigoberto Badilla, a steadfast defender of Costa Rican neutrality. To ensure its success, Badilla kept plans for the raid secret from other Costa Rican security officials. He later told journalists that he acted on orders from Home Affairs Minister Enrique Obregon.

The raid hit a small, satellite camp used by the Cubans and others they had recruited. None of the Cuban leaders were there at the time, but Badilla did catch nine Nicaraguans, two North Americans, two British citizens and one Frenchman.

In prison interviews, those arrested admitted that they were part of a group of internationalists lead by the Cubans and they said they were assisted locally by John Hull, Col. Paniagua, Los Chiles Civil Guard Commander Col. Guillermo Aponte and others. They said they were shocked by their arrest because until then they believed they had the full cooperation of Costa Rican guardsmen.

Two of the soldiers of fortune, Steven Carr and Peter Glibbery, described their contra operation as CIA funded and directed. They said that Hull introduced himself to them as "the chief liaison for the FDN and the CIA." According to them, Hull said that money for the operation was routed monthly from a contact on the National Security Council in Washington through his personal bank account in Florida.

Carr and Glibbery also said that arms and military supplies for the contras were shipped via charter cargo planes from the U.S. to the Ilipango military airport outside San Salvador. There they were stored in a special contra warehouse and then loaded onto small planes and airdropped or delivered to contra camps located on farms belonging to John Hull and others in northern Costa Rica.

John Hull's ties to both the contras and the CIA have been widely reported. A number of people we interviewed, including Costa Rican security and government officials, ex-CIA agents, and top contra leaders who have worked directly with Hull, said that John Hull is with the CIA.

Based on the above, we concluded that it was probable the intellectual authors behind La Penca were anti-Pastora contras, Cuban Americans in Miami and in Costa Rica, and a few North Americans. We were not alone in reaching this conclusion.

A number of Pastora's top aides say that while they continue to believe that the Sandinistas had a motive and the capacity to do the bombing, the evidence turned up in their investigation points to a conspiracy involving FDN, MDN and Cuban exiles, all of whom are tied to the CIA. An official involved in ARDE's investigation told us, "For the Sandinistas it was politically more convenient to have Pastora alive and causing divisions. Four months before La Penca, the Sandinistas decided that the death of Pastora was not an objective, that he generated important conflicts."

A top Costa Rican security official said he has evidence that Robelo's MDN, the FDN, elements of ARDE and some Cuban-Americans were responsible for La Penca. He said Costa Rican security officials have information about a series of meetings in Miami prior to the bombing at which killing Pastora was discussed. Another senior Costa Rican government official, formerly involved in security matters, told us that a confidential memorandum in the files of DIS concludes that the CIA was responsible for La Penca.

Those Costa Rican journalists who have most carefully tried to investigate La Penca say they began believing firmly that the Sandinistas were responsible, but they have found the weight of their evidence now points in the opposite direction.

Pastora himself said that he has been told by a western European intelligence agency that the CIA was behind the bombing.

Just as all of this was beginning to come together, we had a breakthrough - a dissident member of the group that carried out the La Penca bombing began to pass information to us.

A DEFECTOR'S STORY

Friday, March 29, 1985. Pay day. Carlos, a young Costa Rican carpenter, stopped in the Rendezvous Bar in downtown San Jose before catching the bus home. As he sat alone in the semi-darkness, sipping a beer, three men entered and walked down the narrow passageway towards him.

Two of the men told the third to sit at the bar, order a beer, and wait. They will be back in a few minutes. Carlos noted from their accents, they were all Nicaraguans.

As soon as the other two vanished into the busy city street, the third, a short, dark skinned young man with a smooth round face and straight black hair, turned to Carlos. "You must help me," he whispered. "Hide me. I want to get away. I don't want to be involved anymore in their things. They are going to dynamite the U.S. Embassy and assassinate high functionaries. Many innocent people will die. I want to get out."

Startled, Carlos asked the young man what he was talking about. For the next ten minutes, the Nicaraguan, who said his name was David, rapidly poured out his story, all the time watching the doorway for the return of his companions. He trembled as he spoke, and was near tears. "I'm an anti-Sandinista," he said, "but these people are much more evil than the Sandinistas."

He said he is part of a right-wing terrorist ring operating in Central America. The group is composed of anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans, Cuban exiles and North Americans. They form a sort of dirty tricks unit within the FDN. They have ties with anti-Castro extremist groups such as Alpha 66, Omega 7 and the 2506 Brigade. They also have ties to the CIA.

David said they operate from safe houses and contra camps in Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua and Miami. He mentioned they are based in Costa Rica on a farm owned by John Hull which is near the Nicaraguan border. There are Cubans and a number of foreigners in the camp, he said.

The group has important connections, David says, and moves, "in and out of Costa Rica like a dog from its own house."

David outlined the group's mission as three-fold: to eliminate Eden Pastora and ARDE from the southern front so that FDN can move in; to provoke conflict between Nicaragua and its neighbors, Costa Rica and Honduras; and to provoke direct U.S. military action against Nicaragua.

But they also traffick in cocaine, marijuana and arms, David said bitterly. "They are making money off the blood of my brothers and using our cause (the anti-Sandinista resistance) to get rich."

David said his group was responsible for La Penca and that even though the assassination attempt failed, the group is still in tact and planning a new series of terrorist attacks in both

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Costa Rica and Honduras. "The same people who committed the bombing against Pastora are the ones in charge," he told Carlos. The targets include the U.S. Embassies in both countries, U.S. personnel and several prominent contra leaders. He said his companions had left the bar to case the U.S. Embassy, a block long structure located a hundred meters away.

The Sandinistas were to be blamed for these attacks, David said. Many passers-by would die. Costa Rica would be outraged, and the U.S. would then retaliate against Nicaragua.

Carlos, unfamiliar with the details of contra politics, listened intently and tried to remember as much as possible of David's rapid-fire monologue. Carlos asked why David did not go to the Costa Rican authorities. David replied that he could not because a number were involved and he didn't know who he could trust.

The Nicaraguan again appealed for help. Carlos said he was sorry, but he could not hide him, that he lived in a row house with three small kids. His wife ran a beauty parlor in the front room. The neighbors and clients would quickly detect a stranger in hiding.

The other two Nicaraguans reappeared in the doorway. David and Carlos quickly agreed to try to meet again.

The trio left. Carlos followed them out and watched as they walked around the corner in front of the Embassy. A large grey car without license plates stopped and the three got in.

Several days later he saw one of David's companions standing with an attractive woman in the queue of people waiting for visas outside the U.S. Consulate. He noticed them staring at an electrical box located on the corner of the building and then talking to an Embassy guard.

For several weeks Carlos mulled over what he has seen and heard. It did not fit with the Costa Rica he knew - a country without an army, which has declared itself neutral in external conflicts, and which denies the contras operate from its soil. Carlos believed in Costa Rica's pacific tradition and supported the ruling Liberation Party. But he also felt concerned for David whom he found convincing and likeable.

He talked to his mother. Her advice: "You heard nothing, you saw nothing, you do nothing."

April 25, 1985. Costa Rican Rural Guardsmen raided a FDN camp located on a farm reportedly managed by John Hull. Nine Nicaraguan contras and five foreign mercenaries - two Americans, two Englishmen and a Frenchman - were arrested. Something clicked in Carlos' mind: David had mentioned this camp.

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He contacted his neighbor who was the only North American he knew, believing that she could warn the U.S. Embassy. At the time, he did not know that she was in any way connected with journalists.

In fact, she is our secretary. As soon as we heard the information, we notified the U.S. Embassy. The chief of security noted the information with scant comment.

At our request, Carlos again made contact with David. Over the following weeks a pattern was set: David and Carlos met at a series of prearranged spots - a park near the university, a plaza or street corner in the city, a hotel, on the bus to Alejuela - and Carlos tape recorded when possible, took notes, or simply tried to remember the details he heard.

Each time we sent a list of specific questions with Carlos. Immediately after each session, Carlos came to us to be debriefed and receive more questions.

David was extremely nervous, warning repeatedly that his group already suspected him and had threatened to kill both him and his brother who was with the FDN inside Nicaragua if they were caught passing information. He said he would not risk meeting directly with the "gringo" journalists.

David described himself as "a traitor to a dirty cause" and said he wanted to get his brother and himself out of the group. But, he said, before doing so he wanted to help "destroy" the group by giving us enough information to fully expose its operation.

While parts of David's story sounded incredible, we have been able to confirm much of it. The broad outline we already had assembled of an FDN/Cuban/CIA terrorist ring fit with the information he told us. What was new and most startling was his information that this ring was not simply responsible for the La Penca bombing, but was still in tact and planning new terrorist actions. Because of this, we believe David's story must be taken extremely seriously and be further investigated by journalists and law enforcement officials.

The main points we learned from David are the following. In brackets is a summary of the corroborating evidence we have for each point.

-The bomber who posed as a Danish photojournalist named "Per Anker Hansen" is, in reality, a Libyan who calls himself Amac Galil. He was hired in Chile by two FDN officials and a North American CIA agent who poses as journalist. David said Galil is highly professional and, as a Libyan, was considered ideal for the job. If he were killed, captured or otherwise identified, it was reasoned, it would be assumed he was working for Col. Muamar Gaddafi.

(While no other source has named Galil and we know nothing more about him, he appears plausible. Linguists who analyzed a voice recording of the bomber universally concluded that he is not a native Spanish speaker and several mentioned he could be either Libyan and Israeli. After the bombing several of

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those implicated in the plot by David and other sources, circulated the story that the bomber was a Libyan working for Gaddafi. Those who travelled with "Per Anker Hansen" in the weeks prior to the bombing say he was very familiar with South America. While he was in Costa Rica he is known to have sent postcards to Chile.)

-The plot itself was worked out in both Miami and Honduras in meetings between FDN officials, including its leader Adolfo Calero, two Miami-based Cubans Felipe Vidal and Rene Corbo, American farmer John Hull, and a Robinson Harley, a North American who was identified to the group as being from the CIA.

(We have confirmed from immigration, hotel and car rental agency records that the bomber, posing as "Per Anker Hansen", was in Honduras in March prior to the attack. In addition he told journalists he travelled with that he had been in Miami before coming to Costa Rica.

Further, with the exception of Robinson Harley, we have considerable information about the other alleged conspirators. Adolfo Calero's desire to get rid of Pastora so that the FDN can open a front in southern Nicaragua is well known in contra circles. We have the diary of U.S. mercenary Jack Torrell (alias Flacko) who worked for the FDN and who writes of attending a meeting at Calero's house in Miami where killing Pastora was discussed.

A top Costa Rican investigator said he received information that the assassination of Pastora was discussed beforehand at several contra meetings in Miami. In addition, ARDE officials gave us a tape recording of a contra meeting held in Miami prior to the bombing at which it was said that the FDN had plans to move into Costa Rica and "the gringos" (the implication is the CIA) intended to "eliminate" Pastora. One day before the bombing a top ARDE official received a call from the U.S. warning that the FDN was planning to kill Pastora.

John Hull is, by his own admission, an active supporter of the contras.

Prior to the bombing he was aiding Pastora and since he has quietly supported the FDN. According to top ARDE officials who worked directly with Hull, several Costa Rican security officials, and mercenaries, Hull works for the CIA and coordinates FDN operations in Costa Rica.

Contra and Cuban sources say Hull was also responsible for introducing Felipe Vidal and Rene Corbo into ARDE as military trainers. The two, who had been connected with ultra-rightist Cuban groups in Miami, arrived as "volunteers" in 1983 but several contra and Cuban sources say their real mission was to woo ARDE commanders over to the FDN and perhaps to kill Pastora. An ARDE intelligence official said that Vidal, an explosive expert and reputed assassin, spoke about "the need to eliminate Pastora with a bomb."

-David said \$50,000 was passed from the CIA through the FDN for expenses in the bombing operation.

(Journalists Peter Torbiornsson and Fernando Prado who traveled with the bomber in the weeks beforehand said that he had "a wallet full of \$100 bills" and spent money freely, although he claimed to be working for an obscure Paris-based photo agency.)

-David named several Costa Rican officials who he says assisted in the plot, helped the bomber escape afterwards, planted false stories in the press, and continue to cooperate with the terrorist ring.

(We already had substantial information about these officials, and the Costa Rican authorities with whom we shared our information also had corroborating evidence. One of the people named by David is Col. Rodrigo Paniagua who, government and contra sources say, serves as the chief liaison between Hull and the Cubans and security officials. ARDE officials say they suspect Paniagua knew of the bombing because he personally insisted that Pastora hold the ill-fated press conference.

David also named the Ministry of Security official whom we referred to earlier as "Juan Rodriguez". From interviews with former and present Ministry officials we had learned that "Rodriguez" was instrumental in circulating the false stories and phony documents blaming ETA and the Sandinistas for the bombing. These sources said he also works closely with the CIA. According to David, this official was intimately involved both in La Penca and in the plans for new terrorist actions.

-David said that Amac Galil and others in the terrorist team have been living much of the time at the seaside apartment of a Miami Cuban named Ramon Cecelio Palacio.

(We have been unable to locate Palacio in Miami but, according a a businessman with close ties to the Miami Cuban community, Palacio aids the FDN and works for the CIA.)

-David said that plots against Pastora have continued since La Penca.

(Pastora aides say they have on several occasions received information that the ARDE commander's life is in danger.

The diary of American mercenary who worked with the FDN in Honduras describes, for instance, a December 1984 meeting in the Miami home of FDN chief Adolfo Calero. They discuss a plot which sounds remarkably similar to the unsuccessful La Penca bombing which occurred six months earlier.

A diary entry reads:

"The 'termination' of Zero (Pastora) discussed with Adolpho ;sic.; , Aristias, John Hull, Donald Lacy and a man not identified but told ;he is with; 'Company'. Many people involved. Some look like Cubans, some Nicaraguans, some Argentinean. A.C. ;Adolfo Calero; very upset with statements made by Pastora. Says he too Sandinista. Must die. Big problem.

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"Asks me to put it together and not tell them how it will be done, just do it. Will have complete cooperation of all Costa Rican officials. Have several safe houses in C.R. under control of John Hull and Bruce Jones. Seems Rob Owens in on most of this...Am told he is private consultant and liaison man for U.S. (Company)....

"Must appear that Sandinsistas did it. Discussion on capturing Zero and having men dress in captured uniforms. Am told this must be very visible hit and people must believe the Sandinistas did it. Am told to let Hull know when ready to move...A.C. open to anything. He dewparate. Wants and needs southern front."

-David said the terrorist group planned to carry out a series of new actions, including bombing the U.S. embassies in both San Jose and Tegucigalpa, and killing some Americans, among them the newly arrived U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs.

David said that in San Jose the plans were to place the bomb in an electrical box on a light pole outside the Embassy. In this manner not many Embassy employees would die, but a number of Costa Rican passers-by would be killed or maimed.

David cautioned that while he is certain CIA agents were involved in the Pastora bombing, he is not sure how intimately they have been involved with the FDN in planning these new terrorist schemes. He did, however, name Hull and several other Americans as having a role in the latest plots. (Incredible as this sounds, we do have some evidence indicating there was such a plot. After he first met David, Carlos saw on several occasions David's companions standing near and apparently casing the U.S. Embassy in San Jose. He noted on one occasion they appeared to be staring at an electrical box and was later told by David that the plot involved planting the bomb in this box.

British adventurer Glibbery recalled that on one occasion John Hull ordered him not to take some claymore mines to his contra camp "because we may need them for an embassy job later on." Glibbery said he didn't ask for an explanation. "I didn't want to know. That's not my sort of thing," he told us.

In addition, a Cuban in Miami who works with Vidal, Corbo, Bruce Jones and others linked to this terrorist group, says that he was contacted last February by CMA leader Tom Posey who was by then working closely with John Hull. Posey asked if this Cuban would be willing to take part in a plot to bomb the U.S. Embassy in San Jose and kill American citizens in both Costa Rica and Honduras in order to provoke direct U.S. military strikes against Nicaragua. Several months later another American who claimed to be acting on orders from top White House officials, again contacted this Cuban. The Cuban says he refused to become involved because, although he is a

patriot and a staunch anti-Communist, he did not like the idea of murdering fellow Americans.

In late July David told us that preparations to bomb the Embassies and killed Americans were nearly complete. In early August Honduran police, using bomb sniffing dogs, discovered two bombs in a Tegucigalpa hotel frequented by North Americans. The discovery, which was witnessed by hotel employees and reported in the press, was later covered up by the authorities who denied any bomb had been found. We have no way to prove it but it seems possible these bombs and the cover-up were connected with the plot we were tracking.

David said that his group was waiting to begin its actions until U.S. Ambassador Tambs arrived in Costa Rica and that he had been targeted for assassination. This sounded incredible but if true may, we believe, be tied to the group's involvement in cocaine trafficking. Tambs had just been transferred from Columbia where drug traffickers had pledged to kill him.

According to Costa Rican police officials, many of the people named by David are involved in moving cocaine from Columbia to the U.S. through Costa Rica. Although David did not say so, our speculation is that Tambs was targeted because this terrorist group was acting on behalf of drug smugglers and the Ambassador's assassination could easily be blamed on the Sandinistas.

Finally, for several months certain Costa Rican security officials and the rightist paramilitary group Costa Rican Libre had been saying that they had evidence Costa Rican leftists and Sandinista agents were planning to bomb the U.S. and other embassies in San Jose. A left-wing member of the Legislative Assembly, Sergio Erick Ardon, said that security officials raided his home and seized his files. When they later showed him what they had taken, he says he was surprised to find a drawing of the U.S. Embassy among the papers. He concluded that his political party was being set up to be blamed for some terrorist act.)

In addition to the evidence we had already gathered, the events which occurred after we made contact with David convinced us his story has some credibility.

On July 18 the Reagan administration sent a warning to Nicaragua that it had "intelligence data" indicating that the Sandinistas were planning terrorist attacks against U.S. personnel in Honduras. In a diplomatic note delivered to Managua, the U.S. government warned that if such actions occurred anywhere in Central America, Nicaragua would be held responsible and there would be "serious consequences for the perpetrators and for those who assist them."

The day before Reagan's warning, David had sent word via Carlos that Amac Galil and a hit team were due in Costa Rica within a few days to begin their terrorist attacks. Soon after, other attacks would occur in Honduras.

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Horrified by what we knew and believing that these actions had to be stopped, we contacted a government minister we knew to be a strong supporter of neutrality and opponent of contra activities within Costa Rica. He took our information extremely seriously, said it fit with other information he had, and he went to the President. He was told to work with several other trusted officials in quietly carrying out a thorough investigation and trying to arrest the hit team should they enter the country.

As a result of this we began working closely with a Costa Rican Rural Guard Major who commands an anti-terrorist unit. This man told us he had, for many months, been tracking and infiltrating the FDN and drug trafficking operations centering around John Hull.

Then, several days later, as David and Carlos were parting after a lengthy meeting, they were jumped by three men who stuck guns at their throats. The attackers pushed them into a green jeep, saying, "We caught you, we've caught the informers."

Carlos and David were held at gunpoint on the floor of the jeep and driven four hours until they reached what David recognized as one of the contra camps located near Hull's ranch house.

David whispered to Carlos that they were surely going to be killed and had to try to escape. When the guard was not looking, David kicked him hard in the crotch.

As they ran for cover among the trees outside, shots rang out. All night and the following day and night, they ran and walked over rough isolated terrain. They finally got a lift on a banana truck heading for San Jose.

Late at night they were dropped off at the Sabana, a large park on the edge of the city. David who had only col. 300 in his pocket said he was going to find a cheap hotel near the central market. He said he would try to call Carlos the next day. After they parted, Carlos called us from a pay phone, and around midnight Tony found him, near tears from exhaustion and fright, and took him home.

Afterwards, Carlos and several members of the anti-terrorist squad went to San Carlos and Carlos managed to identify the location on Hull's farm where his kidnappers had taken him and David.

We did not hear from David and so assumed he had carried out his plan to leave Costa Rica and was finally free from the comrades he no longer could stomach.

Then Costa Rican officials told us they had learned from an informant they have on Hull's farm that David had been recaptured, tortured, and killed and that the group was looking for Carlos. ARDE officials, who knew David because he had at one time worked with Pastora, said they also had learned he had been murdered.

In the coming days Carlos received anonymous phone calls warning him not to talk, known contras and Cubans drove past

his home, and, one night, five shots were fired at the house from a passing car. We managed to tape record one of the threatening phone calls and the Rural Guard Major said he thought he recognized the voice as that of an assistant to "Rodriguez" at the Ministry of Security.

We phoned this man and recorded his voice and then submitted both recordings to the Linguistics Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The opinion of experts there was that the two recordings could well be of the same person.

During this period the antiterrorist squad staked out several locations in San Jose where we had information Amac Galil and his hit team would stay. The Major also led an abortive raid on Hull's farm. No one from the terrorist group was arrested and, it was assumed, they probably modified their plans after David was captured.

Then one day the Major who heads the anti-terrorist squad, the man who had been tracking Hull, the Cubans and the FDN, suddenly and without warning, left Costa Rica for the United States. The government ministers to whom he was supposed to be reporting were startled. They investigated and found that the U.S. Embassy had issued the Major a special invitation to attend a course at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. Normal procedures had been by-passed, all the paperwork had been completed in less than 24 hours, and he had been whisked out of the country.

One of his superiors who investigated the case said he has "no doubt" but that the Major was lured to the U.S. in order to cripple the government's investigation of the FDN terrorist unit.

Realizing it was unlikely the terrorist or their accomplices would be arrested, we made arrangements for Carlos and his family to leave Costa Rica temporarily. Friends in a western European country agreed to care for them.

On Sunday, August 18, Carlos and his family boarded a plane, thus becoming Costa Rica's first political exiles.

We tried to keep Carlos' name out of the news. This was done not so much for his safety, for his enemies knew his identity, but rather for the tranquility of his family.

However, on Saturday August 31, La Republica carried a headline at the top of page one declaring "New Leads About La Penca." The story said that the Rural Guard had testimony from someone named Carlos which said that the La Penca bomber was a Libyan who had received help from certain Costa Rican officials to flee to Managua after the bombing. The story was unsourced.

Of course, there was a strand of truth in the La Republica story, but Carlos' testimony never said that the bomber fled to Managua. The story, as it appeared, made Carlos' testimony sound as though it implicated the Libyan and Nicaraguan governments in the La Penca attack.

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Carlos remains, understandably, perplexed by how his chance meeting in the bar and a defector's confessions could have brought him and his family to this point. He has cried privately over the loss of David whom he came to consider a good friend and whom he tried his best - but ultimately unsuccessfully - to help. And there is bitterness that Costa Rica, which he also tried to help, could not either guarantee his family's safety nor move effectively against the terrorist band. He says wryly he has been through an intense political education - and now wants only some tranquility and an opportunity to again be a carpenter.

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Despite the efforts of David, Carlos and certain Costa Rican officials, the La Penca terrorist group is still much in tact. As such it represents a danger not only to Pastora and those around him, but also to many innocent civilians, as well as to efforts to bring peace and stability to Central America.