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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 12/14/2006

OTTO RENE RODRIGUEZ LLERENA, date of birth 04/24/1958, was interviewed at a residential Government of Cuba facility in Havana, Cuba. Also present at the interview were DOJ Attorney David Deitch, SSA Agustine Rodriguez, and Ramon Negrón of the Department of State. After being appraised of the identities of the interviewing agents and the purpose of the interview, LLERENA provided the following information:

LLERENA was born in and resided for most of his life in San Salvador, El Salvador. His education included high school and five years of architectural school, which he did not complete due to the absence of the required thesis. In approximately 1982, LLERENA enlisted in the Salvadoran army and subsequently attended officer candidate school at Fort Benning, Georgia. While enlisted, LLERENA received demolitions training which included an explosives course. Among the explosive materials and devices he learned to use and handle were C-4, claymore mines, grenades, and rocket launchers. He did not receive any type of electronics or circuit assembly training since the items employed were of an industrial and ready-to-use nature. ALBERTO BARRAZA FISHNALER, who was also enlisted as a cadet at the institution, took the same courses. LLERENA also took flight courses for rotor and fixed wing aircraft.

In 1997, LLERENA was employed as a security manager for a motor car distributor which specialized in Toyotas. While employed in this position, LLERENA met an individual who went by the name of IGNACIO MEDINA. He met MEDINA through BARRAZA (ph), a mutual friend. These meetings took place over the course of several months, some of which occurred at a restaurant known as EL RINCON ITALIANO. LLERENA thought that MEDINA may have been presented as a Cuban-American and received the impression he was in the real estate business. MEDINA spoke in a peculiar manner and appeared to swallow excess saliva quite often during conversations.

BARRAZA introduced LLERENA to MEDINA in the hopes that he could assist MEDINA in the purchase of a used automobile. LLERENA agreed to assist and arranged for MEDINA to meet with a salesman. Whenever MEDINA visited the aforementioned salesman, he would also stop by the offices of LLERENA in order to greet him. These visits were cordial and MEDINA eventually purchased a vehicle.

Investigation on 12/05/2006 at Havana, Cuba

File # [REDACTED] Date dictated 12/14/2006
 by Det. Jorge L. Gonzalez (MPD/JTTF)
SA Omar Vega

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As they conversed in the course of their visits, LLERENA mentioned to MEDINA that he would like to visit Cuba at some point. The discussions also centered on why LLERENA had joined the army in their struggle against the FMLN. MEDINA identified himself as one of the persons struggling against the tyranny of the Cuba. MEDINA asked if LLERENA would like to help in the struggle for Cuban democracy. LLERENA agreed to become involved due to his anti-communist feelings and the potential economic incentive offered by MEDINA. MEDINA offered to pay for a travel package to Cuba and \$1,000, which was approximately 10,000 Colones, if LLERENA would place a small bomb. Although LLERENA earned approximately \$8,000 colones per month and had no specific economic needs beyond his children's education, he felt it was a good business proposition and thus agreed to accept it.

At approximately the end of July, LLERENA met with MEDINA in his office. MEDINA demonstrated a small electronic circuit board, which included a battery and lightbulb. After setting a timer, and it subsequently counting down to zero, the lightbulb would be illuminated. This demonstration, and LLERENA's own experimentation, reassured him that the device would be safe to handle and operate in a predictable manner.

Prior to his departure from El Salvador, MEDINA purchased a ticket at COLINAL ESCALON. He also took LLERENA's passport prior to his intended travel. Among the items provided to LLERENA by MEDINA were C-4, a detonator and a calculator. LLERENA smuggled the C-4 inside the soles of his shoes, which were a larger size than the shoes he normally wore, and the detonator in the small pocket of his jeans.

After his arrival in Havana on August 1, 1997, LLERENA set out to conduct surveillance of sites for the placement of the bomb. LLERENA proceeded to case the GRANMA yacht, EL CASTILLO DEL MORRO, and several hotels. His objective was to place an improvised explosive device (IED) where it would scare tourists and avoid casualties, although he understood there were inherent risks. He also had stated to MEDINA that he would set the timer of the IED for the early morning hours in order to minimize the odds of any casualties. MEDINA agreed that their goal was to frighten tourists.

During his visit, LLERENA met with two friends who were staying at the MELIA COHIBA. The MELIA COHIBA appeared to be a good target and, after further evaluation, LLERENA decided to place

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the IED in the lobby. At approximately 10 a.m. the day before it detonated, LLERENA entered a bathroom at the hotel and then returned to sit in a corner of the lobby, where he placed the IED. LLERENA set the timer on the device so that it would detonate at approximately 4 a.m. which would be after he had left Cuba. LLERENA returned to El Salvador early on the morning of August 4, 1997 and phoned MEDINA the next day to indicate all had gone well. Approximately the next business day after LLERENA's return from Cuba, MEDINA left an envelope with the payment at LLERENA's office with the secretary.

Approximately six to eight months after his travel to Cuba, MEDINA approached LLERENA concerning a return trip to place another IED. After he declined to do so, MEDINA then proposed that LLERENA smuggle in a package for him. This package would consist of explosive materials which would be turned over to an individual who would then employ them against agricultural targets in Villa Clara province. MEDINA further offered to cover the costs of said travel and pay LLERENA \$250 for his services. LLERENA would contact an individual named Juan [Last Name Unknown (LNU)] via the telephone and advise him he had medicines and other items which had been sent by family members. LLERENA would meet and turn in the smuggled items to Juan LNU who would identify himself by wearing a black hat inscribed with "100% Cubano." MEDINA instructed LLERENA to wear a white shirt and provided him with a photograph of a young girl to present to Juan LNU for identification purposes once they met in person. LLERENA was to contact this individual via telephone and arrange to provide the IED components.

LLERENA had previously met and had a romantic liaison with a woman named YANET MORENO JORRIN while in Cuba and advised MEDINA of this and his desire to return in order to see her again. The owners of the company for which LLERENA worked were traveling in the United States, therefore, he requested leave for vacation from his supervisor. These factors and the smoothness of his previous operations encouraged LLERENA to accept MEDINA's offer.

Prior to LLERENA's departure to Cuba, MEDINA provided him with a bag which employed a false bottom and contained explosives. MEDINA also provided felt tip markers with detonators secreted inside of them. LLERENA was also given additional explosives and instructed to conceal these in the soles of his shoes in a manner identical to that which he had previously employed.

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Upon his arrival at the airport in Havana, LLERENA observed three guard dogs with accompanying immigration officials outside and almost did not disembark from his airplane. While proceeding through customs, LLERENA was asked to empty his bag. He agreed to do so and was told to take his items to a side inspection room. While inside this room, the customs officials opened the bottom of his bag revealing some of the explosives he had smuggled. LLERENA denied ownership to the customs officials and was subsequently asked to strip. During his strip search, some items, specifically the detonators, were not initially discovered. LLERENA understood himself to be in a serious predicament, and thus identified these items to the inspectors.

While he was detained, LLERENA agreed to place a controlled call to Juan LNU. When he initially called, the individual on the other line did not know anyone by the name of Juan. On the second attempt he was able to communicate with Juan LNU. LLERENA believes that Juan LNU may have been an agent for the government of Cuba.

In the course of his interrogation, LLERENA admitted to the placement of the bomb at the MELIA COHIBA. He also indicated he wished to cooperate with the authorities in the hopes that he would receive consideration. During his initial three days of interrogation, psychological pressure was placed on him. LLERENA was told the prosecution would be seeking a sentence of 20 years; however, this was later changed to a death sentence. LLERENA's family paid approximately \$5,000 for a defense attorney.

LLERENA was able to identify the individual he knew as MEDINA through an audio lineup. When he was informed that this individual was LUIS POSADA CARRILES, LLERENA advised that he knew him as IGNACIO MEDINA.

MEDINA: RODRIGUEZ provided the following physical description of

- Complexion: Pale
- Height: 1.73 meters
- Hair: Light grey
- Age: 60 +