

## **March 15, 1971**

### **Press Release**

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#### **Summary:**

In this press release, the Mexican Solicitor General describes the criminal activity of the nineteen Revolutionary Action Movement (MAR) members arrested for the assault and robbery of a cashier from the Commerce Bank of Morelia at the Three Stars bus terminal. He swears to continue the investigation with the goal of arresting all MAR members as well as others trained in North Korea or recruited from abroad.

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## PRESS RELEASE

The Solicitor General of the Republic reports:

Nineteen individuals were remanded - among them three women - as members of the so-called "Revolutionary Action Movement,"<sup>[1]</sup> who confessed to assaulting a cashier from the Commerce Bank of Morelia, Michoacán on December 19, 1970, in the "Three Stars" bus terminal of that city, and robbing 84,000 dollars<sup>[2]</sup> in cash (more than a million pesos) and a number of share certificates and financial documents. They also confessed to forming part of this criminal and subversive group, specifically training abroad to act within our country.

All arrested are Mexican, and have meticulously recounted that since 1968 they have been receiving political-military training, in three courses, each lasting between six months and one year. These courses teach sabotage, terrorism, expropriations (or, better said, robbery), and guerrilla techniques, situated on a military base near Pyongyang, North Korea, and sponsored by the government of that nation. The objective for which this group was trained by North Korean soldiers was to impose a Marxist-Leninist regime in Mexico, for which they also received training in theory, alternating with preparation in using all types of weapons, high-powered explosives, urban and rural guerrilla tactics, karate, and self-defense. Upon arrest of these individuals, \$11,867.80 in US dollar bills and coins, 10,991 Mexican pesos, financial share certificates and stolen documents, as well as three automobiles, purchased with part of the loot of the aforementioned robbery, were recovered.

These criminals also had several automatic M-1 rifles in their possession, and pistols of different kinds, more than a thousand cartridges, a few short wave radios, equipment for wireless communication, movie and photographic cameras, trench digging tools, typewriters, a mimeograph, flashlights, recorders, binoculars, first aid kits, Army uniforms and insignia, military boots, gloves, hats, military helmets, men's and women's clothing, wigs, beards, fake eyelashes, soldier's glasses and other things appropriate for disguise and avoiding recognition during their illegal activities. Similarly, several stolen automobile license plates were recovered from them that they had used indistinguishably on their vehicles. Defensive hand grenades that were used for practicing guerrilla techniques were also seized, and dozens of books on Marxism and military tactics in different languages, including Russian and Spanish, and many other objects to develop their criminal labors in secret.

Those arrested also confessed to carrying out surveillance at different banks and trading houses in San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, and Michoacán states, with the goal of robbing them and also stealing private vehicles and taxis, to assaulting the cashier of the Commerce Bank of Michoacán in one of these robberies, and accepting responsibility for the death of Manuel Arreola Téllez, aka "Héctor," their companion also trained in North Korea who died at the Red Cross in the city of Morelia from a bullet in the chest taken during "target practice." The members of the so-called "Revolutionary Action Movement" who used false names in their activities, were arrested in various "guerrilla schools" and hideouts in the cities of Xalapa, Veracruz; Acapulco, Guerrero; Pachuca, Hidalgo; and Mexico City, where one was located in Colonia Roma and another in Colonia Agrícola Oriental.

Those arrested are the following: Fabricio Gómez Souza, also known as "Cristóbal," or "Roberto," Alejandro López Murillo, aka "Arturo," "Antonio," "Ramón Ramírez Gómez," or "José," and Salvador Castañeda Alarez<sup>[3]</sup>, aka "Quiroz" or "Jaime." These three men studied at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, and were later trained in North Korea, along with Angel Bravo Cisneros, aka "Eliezer," "Eduardo," or "Ramiro Martínez," Armando González Carrillo, aka "Cruz," Elia Hernández Hernández de Castañeda, aka "Rita," Dimas Castañeda Alvarez, aka "Simón," Rogelio Raya Morales, aka "Ramiro" or "Romeo," Fernando Pineda Ochoa, aka "René" or "Mario Fernández,"

Ramón Cardona Medel, aka "Antonino," and Felipe Peñaloza García, aka "Efraín" or "Raúl." Also in police custody are Ezequiel Castañeda Alvarez, aka "Africa," Carlos González Navarro, aka "Emilio" or "Héctor,"<sup>[4]</sup> Bertha Vega Fuentes de Ramírez, aka "Victoria," Ana María Parra de Tecla, aka "Elisa González Trejo," Agustín Hernández Rosales, aka "Raúl Cuevas Navarrete," Jesús Gutiérrez Sierra, aka "Abel," and Ramón Ramos Mogrovejo, aka "Miguel." José Francisco Paredes Ruíz, aka "Armando Solís Ramírez" or "Ulises," joins the individuals named above, apprehended in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, by the local police. Paredes also confessed to being part of the "Revolutionary Action Movement" and receiving military training in North Korea.

These activities began when Fabricio Gómez Souza, Alejandro López Murillo, Camilo Estrada Luviano, Salvador Castañeda Alvarez, Leonardo Isidro Rangel and Candelario Pacheco won a grant in 1963 to study at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, awarded to them through the Mexican-Russian Cultural Exchange Institute located in that city. In 1968, according to what they have stated, once reunited with Leonardo Mendoza, Juan Raúl Ching, and other Mexican students at the same university, they formed a "Study Circle" with the goal of practically applying the teachings of Marxism-Leninism within our country. They agreed to change the "Circle" into a clandestine organization, which they baptized with the name "Revolutionary Action Movement," or "M.A.R.," which would have an "urban guerrilla force" called "The 2nd of October" as its base, along with a rural counterpart, which was named the "People's Army of the M.A.R."

With this purpose, they established contact with the Embassy of the People's Republic of North Korea in Moscow. The officials of said embassy agreed to lend them economic aid and intensive training, both political and military, in order to carry out their plans. In the month of October 1968, the Embassy of North Korea in the USSR directed Fabricio Gomez Souza to travel to Pyongyang, capital of North Korea, where he established close contact with high civilian and military officials in that country during the 20 days in which he remained in that city, agreeing that a first group of ten Mexicans would receive training. Upon returning to Moscow, Gomez Souza received the amount of 10,000 dollars from a diplomat in the North Korean embassy to cover the costs of transporting the Mexicans who would receive the guerrilla training. This group was led by Alejandro López Murillo and included Paulino Peña Peña, Salvador Castañeda Alvarez, Octavio Márquez, Candelario Pacheco, Marta Maldonado Sosa y Silva, Camilo Estrada Luviano, Dimas Castañeda Alvarez, and two more people, best known by the nicknames "Juan" and "Alfredo."

The trip [to North Korea] was not made as a group, but rather individually, for which Gómez Souza paid each traveler the amount of 500 dollars. Between December 1968 and the first days of January 1969, the members of this first group arrived in West Berlin, then crossed into East Berlin, the city in which they made contact with the North Korean embassy in the German Democratic Republic. There, their Mexican passports were taken and they were instead given North Korean citizen passports with their photographs, which they used to fly to Moscow on the Russian airline Aeroflot. After a stay of ten days in the Soviet capital, they traveled to Pyongyang using the same carrier at the beginning of February.

Their political and military training took place on a specialized base, found 30 or 40 kilometers from the North Korean capital, and the instructors were generals and officials of the army of that country, including the following, among others: Ling, on demolition, radiotelegraphy, and politics; Mun, on guerrilla tactics; Chang, on judo and karate; Kuog, on use of weapons and shooting practice, including disabling tanks and armored vehicles. They received extensive training in [the use of] Western weapons: M-1 rifles, L-14 and L-15 carbines, .38 and .45 pistols, bazookas, mortars, and grenade launchers. The official known as Sing served as interpreter, as no other instructors spoke Spanish. Also, they were given classes on military and guerrilla strategy as well as Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

The first group returned to Mexico in mid-1969, via the USSR and East Germany, with their airfares paid by the North Korean government. Another 10,000 dollars had been given to another group, this time for 20 people, but Fabricio Gomez Souza and Alejandro López Murillo, the leaders, could only recruit 17. Their names were the following: Ramón Cardona Medel, Armando González Carrillo, Fernando Pineda Ochoa, Guillermo Moreno aka "Cornelio," Pedro Estrada aka "Ariel," Marisol Dega aka "Carolina," Marta Elba Cisneros aka "Cristina," Estanislao Hernández aka "Gerardo," José Luís Chagoya aka "Arturo," Felipe Peñaloza García, Andrés Mancilla González aka "Artemio," Horacio Arroyo Souza aka "Rubén Palafox," Manuel Arreola Téllez aka "Héctor," later killed in "target practice" around Morelia, Salvador N. aka "Javier," Ranulfo Ariza aka "Ricardo," and Angel Bravo Cisneros.

This second group followed the same path as the first to arrive to East Berlin, where they again exchanged their Mexican passports for North Korean ones, then traveled from there by rail to Moscow, without being harassed by immigration authorities, even though their ethnic features and language made it evident that they were not, in fact, North Korean citizens. From Moscow, they flew on Aeroflot to Pyongyang, with stops in Omsk and Irkutsk, Russia, where their passports were again inspected without any objection whatsoever. The second group returned to Mexico at the end of August 1970, after receiving political-military instruction for more than a year. A third group, composed of 23 people and led by Rogelio Raya Morales left for Pyongyang, again with staggered departures, between January and February of 1970, and returned in August of the following year. The outbound and return flights, like the training itself, were done in a similar fashion to that described above.

Upon returning to our country from abroad, the members of the "Revolutionary Action Movement" divided themselves into sections, including "education" or "schools," "recruitment," and "expropriations" or "robberies," which were commanded by Felipe Peñaloza García, Paulino Peña Peña, and Salvador Castañeda Alvarez, respectively. However, the members of the "Movement" have stated that they recognize their main leaders to be Fabricio Gómez Souza and Alejandro López Murillo. Within our nation, they founded "house-schools" that also served as hideouts for the group to operate in secret in Mexico City; Zamora, Michoacán; San Miguel Allende, Guanajuato; Querétaro, Querétaro; Puebla, Puebla; and Chapala, Jalisco. They established the guerrilla training centers at the houses at 249 Oriente Street, No. [illegible]3-3 in Colonia Agrícola Oriental and at 32 Orizaba Street in Colonia Roma, both in Mexico City; at 121 Victoria in Xalapa, Veracruz; at 401-B Sóstenes Rocha in Pachuca, Hidalgo; and at 250 Almirante Nelson in Acapulco, Guerrero. They also created a guerrilla school exclusively for "teachers" in Salamanca, Guanajuato.

In these houses, group members carried out theoretical-practical studies of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, urban and rural guerrilla tactics, sabotage, terrorism, assault and robbery (or what they call "expropriation"), and self-defense. On January 8, 1971, from a house in Morelia, Michoacán, Alejandro López Murillo, Bertha Fuentes de Ramírez, Carlos González Navarro and Manuel Arreola Téllez drove to the outskirts of the city to practice shooting, during which Alejandro López Murillo killed Arreola Téllez by a bullet in his chest. Arreola Téllez was abandoned, moments away from death, at the doors of the Red Cross Hospital in Morelia, where he died a few minutes after the first steps were taken to recover his life. The Public Ministry of Common Order in that city knows all of this.

The "expropriation commandos," led by Salvador Castañeda Alvarez and Alejandro López Murillo, were planning robberies of the La Paz pharmacy in San Luis Potosí, as well as branches of the Commerce Bank and National Bank of Mexico in the city of Querétaro, and the Commerce Bank's truck in Morelia, Michoacán, but ended up deciding to rob Jesús Caballos, an employee of that bank, who usually transported money to Mexico City using the Three Stars bus line. They made that decision because Alejandro López Murillo had previously worked at the bus line, and knew Ceballos and all of his movements. They rented a room at 49 Brazil Street, and paid

450 pesos, deciding that "Oscar" would stay in a room at the York Hotel, located at 5th of May Street, on the night of December 17 last year.

In Morelia, "Hilda" was in charge of telling other members the departure time and number of the bus on which two men would come, one adult (carrying the money from Commerce Bank) accompanied by a younger individual. When the notice had gone out by telephone, they found out that the bus would arrive in Mexico City at 7 a.m. on December 19, so at 2 a.m. they got into a Willis van owned by the group and drove to Cuauhtémoc Avenue, in front of the Social Security Medical Center, where they divided into two smaller groups, one with Juan, Alfredo, and Cornelio, and the other with Oscar, Antonio, and Angel. They agreed to seize some kind of vehicle and meet at the Denny's restaurant on University Avenue. They were unable to rob the automobile, so at 6 a.m., Angel Bravo Cisneros's group arrived by taxi at the rear of the Three Stars bus terminal, where trucks and vans enter, and there they found their comrades in a rented car, whose driver they had bound and gagged in the rear seat.

According to the plans made previously, Oscar, Antonio, and Alfredo entered the courtyard of the terminal, waiting for the arrival of the bus, while Cornelio remained in the doorway of the main entrance to protect his companions' retreat, Juan in the driver's seat of the getaway car, and Angel taking care of the driver. When the bus arrived and passengers got off, Oscar, carrying a submachine M-2 gun, dealt with the older man, taking a bundle from him, as Antonio grabbed the other younger man and took a cardboard box that contained the money, while Alfredo remained waiting. A struggle broke out between Oscar and the older man, who fell to the floor, of which Alfredo took advantage to seize the package and Antonio, who had identified himself as a Secret Service agent, punched the younger man in the abdomen, and he too fell down.

Everyone got into the car with its motor running and began the getaway, dividing up the loot among Angel, Cornelio and Antonio during the journey. At first, they did not know exactly how much had been robbed, and only later through the newspapers did they find out that the amount was 84,000 dollars, or more than a million Mexican pesos. Angel Bravo Cisneros says that 30,100 dollars were his, of which he gave 10,000 to Victor, another 10,000 to Fabricio Gomez Souza, and kept the rest in apartment #3 of house number 83 on 249th Street of Colonia Agrícola Oriental, where Jaime and Rita live. Angel states that Fabricio gave him 30,000 pesos, which he used to buy a Volkswagen car, 1971 model. Fabricio Gomez Sousa confessed to participating in the planning of this robbery and says that after the assault, the money was shared among Angel Bravo Cisneros, Octavio Márquez and Guillermo Moreno, and that same night, Moreno brought Gomez a box containing 13,000 dollars, which Gomez later turned over to Bravo Cisneros. Bravo Cisneros, in turn, gave Gomez a package with 2,500 dollars. Antonio made the trip to the United States border with the goal of changing dollars to Mexican currency to buy clothing, men's and women's wigs, fake beards and other disguises, which they planned to use in future "expropriations" to gain more money to boost the "struggle."

When he returned, [Antonio] gave to Fabricio an unspecified amount of money, which Fabricio then turned over to Angel Bravo, who bought the Volkswagen for the organization's use. Besides the weapons seized, which include two M-1 rifles, ten pistols of various calibers, 17 ammunition magazines, 16 defensive hand grenades, and from the rest of the objects already mentioned, 2,560 dollars were recovered from their hidden location in house number 430 on South 101-B street in Colonia Churubusco. Another 8,540 dollars recovered had been buried in a hillside in the town of San Lorenzo, Mexico state, by Salvador, Dimas, and Ezequiel Castañeda Alvarez. Another 767.80 dollars in coins were also buried; 10,991 Mexican pesos were recovered among Salvador Castañeda Alvarez, Felipe Peñaloza García, Rogelio Raya-Morales, and Alejandro López Murillo. Also recovered were certificate no. 21/70 of the Bancomer branches in La Piedad, Uruapan, Zamora, and Zitácuaro, Michoacán, in the value of \$6,731,467.89 [pesos], 444 shares of an insurance policy #1408, from

Bancomer Insurance of Mexico, S.A., with a value of \$44,400.00, and the following vehicles: 1 Willis van, with license plate NR-725 from Chihuahua state, 1 Datsun pickup truck, 1971, with plate number VR-323, and a Volkswagen car, 1971, without plates.

The investigation continues toward the goal of apprehending the rest of the Revolutionary Action Movement's members, as well as those persons who were part of groups that trained in North Korea, and those recruited within our country from abroad. The Federal Public Ministry, on this date, in front of the First District Judge on Penal Matters, entered the names of the 19 persons mentioned above for remand, according to their degree of participation and suspected responsibility, for the following crimes: conspiracy and incitement to rebellion, criminal association, violent robbery, homicide, stockpiling of weapons, falsification of public documents, and use of the same.

Mexico City, March 15, 1971

[1] Translator's note: All quotation marks appear in the original Spanish text. I have retained them in translation to show how the authors of the press release attempted to use as much of the Marxist group's (often euphemistic) language as possible.

[2] Translator's note: In this document, many amounts of currency - both Mexican pesos and US dollars - are specified. I have generally avoided using the ambiguous \$ sign unless grammatically necessary - as it is used for both currencies - and instead clearly identify whether monetary amounts are denominated in pesos or dollars.

[3] Translator's note: I am fairly sure that Alarez is a typo of the very common surname Alvarez, but do not want to make that correction here in case I am mistaken.

[4] Translator's note: This individual is not the same "Héctor" who died from the errant bullet in target practice.