

INTERNATIONAL

Unsolved Guyana air terror attack recalled

By Bert Wilkinson

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (IPS) Twenty-five years to the day that a commercial airliner was blown out of the Caribbean sky, Guyana's people are none the wiser about the identities and motives of the people behind a terrorist act that claimed 11 of their compatriots' lives. One former official wants answers from the United States.

The 11- mostly medical students on their way to Cu-

ban universities- were among 73 passengers and crew who perished on board Cubana Airlines flight CU455 on Oct. 6, 1976, in the sky off the west coast of Barbados.

Other passengers on the DC-8 plane included a Cuban national fencing team and five North Koreans.

Several governments, including those of Guyana, Cuba and Trinidad, where the plane transited after leaving Guyana at mid morning, called the downing of the air-

craft a terrorist attack. Guyana and Cuba went even further to blame the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for being behind what authorities then called the worst terrorist incident in the Caribbean.

U.S. authorities later denied any involvement. No sentences have ever been handed down.

Ordinary and well-known Guyanese alike have said they want the episode revisited. The most prominent of them

is the former Foreign Minister, who is calling for the establishment of an alliance, similar to the one being built by the U.S. administration of President George W. Bush, among the countries that were affected by the bombing.

Within about a week of the 1976 crash, Venezuelan and Trinidad police picked up and detained three men who claimed to belong to El Condor, a little-known group based in Miami and linked to the powerful anti-Fidel

Castro Cuban exile community in the U.S.

El Condor representatives had said a magnetic bomb was used to bring down the Cubana aircraft in protest of support for the Castro regime by Caribbean nations.

Two of the suspects later escaped from jail in Venezuela, prompting allegations from Guyana and Cuba that the CIA had a hand in allowing them to escape and to hide among exiles in Miami.

Guyana's previous

People's National Congress (PNC) administrations made much of the annual commemorations of the bombing but the People's Progressive Party (PPP) largely has ignored the anniversary since coming to power in 1999.

But renewed calls for justice-in the form of Jackson's public statements as well as others' letters in local newspapers-this year has prompted the foreign ministry to organize a belated commemora-

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Kofi Annan presents terrorism to mission

UNITED NATIONS (AP)- At the dawn of a new millennium, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented the nations of the world with a vision of a more peaceful planet, where all children went to school, millions of families escaped poverty and the AIDS epidemic was halted.

Then came Sept. 11.

Suddenly, the world's agenda changed dramatically, and the soft-spoken U.N. chief had to shift gears. He quickly denounced the deadly terrorist hijackings in the United States as an attack, "not against one city or one country, but against all of us." He began to build an international coalition for the long-term campaign to defeat terrorism, and to speak out against violence, hatred and intolerance.

But he said the Sept. 11 attacks cannot be allowed to set back the pledges made by more than 150 world leaders at the Millennium Summit a year ago to cut in half the number of people living on less than a dollar a day, to ensure primary education for every child, and to start reversing the AIDS epidemic - all by 2015.

It's a daunting task for the new Nobel Peace Prize winner as he embarks on his second five-year term, starting Jan. 1.

But as he recently told the General Assembly, the gathering place of the world's 189 nations, there is no choice.

For the first U.N. secretary-general to climb through the ranks of its staff, there was no question of who should be leading both campaigns - the United Nations.

"It alone can give global legitimacy to the long-term struggle against terrorism," he said, and it must continue to address "the social and economic evils in our world."

The Nobel committee awarded the peace prize to Annan and the United Nations for "their work for a better organized and more peaceful world." Annan himself was lauded for "bringing new life to the organization."

He has won high marks for focusing the global spotlight on poverty, human rights abuses, Africa's conflicts and the AIDS epidemic. He's also been praised for tackling U.N. reform, spearheading an overhaul of U.N. peacekeeping operations, and settling a long dispute with the United States over payment of U.N. dues. The world body has been hailed, too, for its administration of East Timor and Kosovo.

But Annan has also faced criticism for trying to negotiate with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, for standing by as U.N. peacekeepers were kidnapped in Sierra Leone, and for proposing a policy of "humanitarian intervention" to end human rights abuses. Many countries argued it would infringe on their sovereignty, and the policy has been quietly shelved.

Nonetheless, he received an unprecedented vote of confidence from the 189 nations in the General Assembly who re-elected him unanimously in June, six months (See Annan, Page 13)

Zimbabwe opposition leader hurt by mob

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) - A mob of about 70 people hurled stones at a car carrying the leader of Zimbabwe's main opposition party as he traveled to a party meeting, leaving him with bruises, his supporters said Saturday.

The attack on Morgan Tsvangirai, head of the Movement for Democratic Change, took place Friday near the town of Kadoma, 90 miles southwest of Harare, said party spokesman Learnmore Jongwe.

Jongwe accused agents of President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front of orchestrating the violence as part of a strategy to stop Tsvangirai from campaigning for elections early next year.

"The strategy ... involves the use of agents disguised as village vigilantes," he said.

Ruling party officials could not be reached for comment.

Tsvangirai's car was also attacked July 27 by stone-

throwing youths as he campaigned for an election north of Harare.

In both attacks, vehicles in the opposition politician's convoy had windows smashed.

Friday's incident was reported to local police who were "not cooperative at all," Jongwe said. None of the attackers was arrested.

The presidential election could be the biggest challenge to Mugabe's 21-year rule since he led the nation to independence in 1980.

Zimbabwe has been wracked by unrest over the government's plan to seize farms owned by whites and give the land to blacks.

Ruling party militants have occupied 1,700 white-owned farms since March 2000, and nine white farmers have died in violence since June.

The ruling party won 62 of the 120 elected seats in parliamentary elections last year. In the previous parliament, Mugabe controlled all but three seats.

Congo port desperate for renaissance

KISANGANI, Congo (AP)- Since war broke out in Congo three years ago, Africa's third-largest country has been divided between government and rebels, and not one commercial vessel has traveled up the river to this once-thriving port. Roads leading north and east peter out into nothing, and tribal fighters and renegades lie in wait for the foolhardy.

That's why the people of Kisangani- known as Stanleyville during the days of Belgian colonial rule- are waiting anxiously on a conference starting Monday in Ethiopia that is intended to lay the groundwork for democracy in Congo and bring all factions into the government.

People say the already shrunken city will wither

away unless river traffic resumes to ship out produce and bring in gasoline and other necessities.

The land around Kisangani is rich, but there is no way for small farmers to get their plantains, cassava roots and cassava leaves to markets downriver where people have money.

These days, the only gasoline to reach here is flown in from neighboring Uganda and Rwanda. The fuel is sold in old bottles for the equivalent of \$1 a quart at roadside stands dubbed "Gadhafis" - after the leader of oil-rich Libya.

But other than a few private cars, pickups and rickety taxis, the only motorized vehicles on the wide, sleepy streets belong to the Rwandan-backed rebels who

control Kisangani and the 2,500 peacekeepers and unarmed observers of the United Nations Mission to Congo.

The commercial traffic that once made the river throb with life will not resume until President Joseph Kabila's government, 1,000 miles downriver at Kinshasa, and the rebels make good on their 1999 peace accord.

Starting Monday in Addis

Ababa, Ethiopia, representatives from the government, Adolphe Onusumba's Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy and Jean-Pierre Bemba's Ugandan-backed Congolese Liberation Front and some leading citizens will consider the next steps.

Despite hopes for the conference, the effort is viewed with skepticism.

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