



TORONTO FORUM ON CUBA

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Honourable Members of Parliament,
Federal Parties of Canada,
Media Journalists and Intellectuals,
and All Honourable People Living in Canada

THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

SUBJECT: THE CUBAN FIVE versus U.S.-SPONSORED TERRORISM (the case of Luis Posada Carriles)

Justice and peace, or violence and terrorism?

We would like to bring to your attention the injustice inflicted upon five young Cuban men -- Antonio Guerrero, Ramon Labañino, Gerardo Hernández, René González and Fernando González -- incarcerated in U.S. prisons since Sept. 12, 1998. Their "crime": monitoring and infiltrating U.S.-based terrorist organizations that have caused the deaths of 3,478 people and permanent injuries to thousands more on the island of Cuba (see attached resolutions passed by National Lawyers' Guild in the U.S. and the Law Union of Ontario).

One such self-confessed and convicted terrorist is Luis Posada Carriles who masterminded the blowing up of a Cubana airliner in mid-flight in 1976 which killed all 73 people aboard. This is just one of the many crimes that Posada Carriles and his partner, Orlando Bosch, have confessed to in interviews; and are documented in recently declassified Central Intelligence Agency documents (see attached testimonies and link to National Security Archives).

In an interview with **New York Times** in September 1998, Luis Posada Carriles admitted to having paid mercenaries to plant bombs in Havana hotels which caused the death of Fabio Di Celmo, an Italian resident of Montreal, in August 1997 (see attached testimony of Fabio Di Celmo's brother). The targeted hotels and restaurants are frequented by tourists from Canada.

How is it that the government of Canada sends the sons and daughters of this land to faraway places to supposedly fight terrorism but supports Luis Posada Carriles? The representative of Canada at the Organization of American States (OAS) summit in May 2007 helped to quash a resolution demanding the extradition of Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela to face justice and/or his being put on trial in the United States (see attached document for news coverage of OAS).

These two acknowledged terrorists, Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, are free in Miami; the same city where the Cuban Five were tried and given sentences ranging from 15 years to two life terms plus 17 years for reporting about impending violent attacks against Cuba and other nations (see attached statements by

former U.S. Attorney General and by the former associate U.S. Attorney General).

That is why we call on all members of parliament, intellectuals, journalists and all who live in Canada to raise their voices and to right this wrong by demanding:

1) **Immediate freedom** for the Cuban Five, two of whom do not have visitation rights with their wives, and no exception is made, not even during the Christmas season (see attached links to statements issued by Mr. Kenneth V. Georgetti, President of CLC, by Mr. Lawrence Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to US General Colin Powell and documents signed by Nobel prize winners from all continents and other internationally recognized personalities).

2) **Immediate extradition** of Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela to face justice, and/or **his immediate arrest and trial** in the United States for his crimes (see attached statement by National Security Archives Senior Analyst, Peter Kornbluh).

We trust that you and all fair-minded people, like tens upon tens of thousands of people around the world, will join us in this declaration in the spirit of justice and peace for humanity. We will be holding press conferences to disseminate this declaration and related information to inform everyone of the truth in order to expose this double standard at work in this case.

Now we have a choice and **THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING: DEMAND FREEDOM FOR THE CUBAN FIVE and the EXTRADITION OF LUIS POSADA CARRILES TO VENEZUELA TO FACE JUSTICE**

or

SUPPORT INJUSTICE AND THE HARBOURING OF TERRORISTS.

For more information please check: www.freethefivecc.org or www.antiterroristas.cu

Sincerely yours,

Morteza Gorgzadeh for Toronto Forum on Cuba torontoforumoncuba@rogers.com

December 10th, 2007

The Toronto Forum on Cuba is a member of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca The CNC endorses this letter.

[Please, note that the list of endorsers on the last page is being updated daily.]

[ENDORSE ONLINE](#)

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE UNITED STATES TO RELEASE THE FIVE
CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS WRONGLY CONVICTED IN FLORIDA OF
ESPIONAGE-RELATED CRIMES**

WHEREAS

1. The United States government accused the CUBAN FIVE of conspiracy to commit espionage against the U.S. military and threatening national security among other charges. The Cuban Five maintain their defense that they did not engage in any espionage activities against the U. S. military, rather they only monitored the activities of Miami-based right-wing groups, mainly Cuban-American organizations, which have plotted terrorist activities against the Cuban government; and
2. On June 8, 2001, five Cubans living in Florida were convicted in federal court in Miami. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramon Labañino, and Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez were convicted of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent"; Fernando Gonzalez Llort and Rene Gonzalez Sehwerert were convicted of "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent" and Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo was also convicted of "conspiracy to commit murder" in the deaths of 4 pilots belonging to the right-wing Cuban American group, Brothers to the Rescue; and
3. The Cuban government has consistently maintained its sovereign right and obligation to defend itself from terrorist and criminal actions arranged, announced, and launched against Cuba by U.S. funded and supported right-wing Cuban-American organizations; and
4. Cuban-American right-wing organizations in Miami have plotted and engaged in terrorist activities against the Cuban government and against those in the United States who advocate for normal relations between Cuba and the U.S. for over forty years, and as recently as this year. These activities have led to countless deaths and injuries of people, those living in Cuba and in other countries, including the U.S. Cuba is entitled to information about attempts to overthrow the Cuban government so that Cuba can protect its people and land; and
5. The Cuban Five did not receive a fair trial. Defense attorneys unsuccessfully sought a change of venue from right-wing Cuban-American controlled Miami, and they were prevented from using key evidence of terrorist activities directed against Cuba by Cuban-American organizations in Miami.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Lawyers Guild and its members support the efforts of the defense committees for the "Cuban Five" to educate the public on the injustices of these convictions, and to aid in efforts that these convictions be overturned, these charges be dropped and the Cuban Five be released;

The National Lawyers Guild further calls on the United States government to immediately cease harboring and politically and financially supporting organizations which plot and encourage terrorist activities against the people and government of Cuba: and to vigorously investigate and prosecute individuals who plan and implement such activities against the Cuban government and people.

Law Union of Ontario Passes Resolution in Support of Cuban Five

The Law Union of Ontario held its annual conference from February 28 to March 1, 2003. A workshop on the Cuban Five held on March 1 featured Leonard Weinglass, lawyer from the Five's defense team; Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, Cuba's Ambassador to Canada; Livio Di Celmo, a Canadian citizen whose brother, Fabio, was killed in Havana by a terrorist bomb; Jeffry House, lawyer involved with Latin American issues and chaired by Kathleen Howes of the Lawyers' Committee for the Anti-terrorist Cuban Five. The following Resolution was passed by the Law Union of Ontario after the conference.

* * *

Resolution Calling for the Canadian Government to Demand that the United States Government Comply with the "Inter- American Convention Against Terrorism" and to Release the Five Cuban Political Prisoners Wrongly Convicted in Florida of Espionage-Related Crimes

WHEREAS:

1. The Canadian government has diplomatic and trading relationships with both the government of Cuba and the government of the United States of America;
2. Canada, the United States and Cuba are all members of the Organization of American States (OAS), although Cuba has been excluded as a voting member since 1962;
3. The OAS has signed the "Inter-American Convention against Terrorism" in 2002, which calls on OAS member states "to take effective measures to deny terrorist groups the ability to operate within their territories";
4. The OAS adopted "The Declaration of Lima to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate Terrorism", in which terrorism is called a "serious form of organized and systematic violence, which is intended to generate chaos and fear among the population, results in death and destruction and is a reprehensible criminal activity";
5. The Cuban government has consistently maintained its sovereign right and obligation to defend itself from terrorist and criminal actions arranged, announced, and launched against Cuba by U.S. funded and supported right-wing Cuban-American organizations;
6. Cuban-American right-wing organizations in Miami have plotted and engaged in terrorist activities against the Cuban people and their government and against those in the United States who advocate for normal relations between Cuba and the U.S. These activities have led to deaths and injuries of people, those living in Cuba and in other countries;
7. Canada is the main source of tourism for Cuba, and Canada has the obligation to ensure the safety of its citizens who vacation there. One Canadian resident has been killed in Cuba by a terrorist bomb;
8. Cuba is entitled to information about attempts to overthrow the Cuban government so that Cuba can protect its people, land and economy;
9. Due to the long history of terrorist activity carried out against Cuba from U.S. territory, aided and abetted at the very least by the acquiescence and tolerance of U.S. authorities, five Cuban men infiltrated the extremist right-wing Cuban-American groups known to carry out these activities. The Cuban government then shared the information which was gathered with FBI agents in order that the terrorist plans for activities originating on U.S. soil might be prevented;

10. Instead of taking steps to curtail the Cuban-American terrorists, in 1998 the United States government charged the five Cubans of conspiracy to commit espionage against the U.S. military and threatening national security, among other charges. The "Cuban Five" maintain their defense that they did not engage in any espionage activities against the U.S. military, rather they only monitored the activities of Miami-based right-wing groups, mainly Cuban-American organizations, which have plotted terrorist activities against the Cuban government and people. This was further confirmed by witnesses from the U.S. military who declared that the information gathered was in the public domain;

11. On June 8, 2001, the five Cubans living in Florida were convicted in federal court in Miami of charges of conspiracy to commit espionage, conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent, and, in one case, conspiracy to commit murder;

12. The "Cuban Five" did not receive a fair trial. Defense lawyers unsuccessfully sought a change of venue from right-wing Cuban-American controlled Miami, and they were prevented from using key evidence of terrorist activities directed against Cuba by Cuban-American organizations in Miami. Their convictions are all under appeal.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Law Union of Ontario and its members support the efforts of the defense committees of the "Cuban Five" to educate the public on the injustices of these convictions, and to aid in efforts that these convictions be overturned, these charges be dropped and the "Cuban Five" released;

The Law Union of Ontario further calls on Canada, as a member of the Organization of American States, to demand that the United States government comply with the "Inter-American Convention against Terrorism" and immediately cease harbouring and politically and financially aiding and abetting organizations which plot and encourage terrorist activities against the people and government of Cuba; and to vigorously investigate and prosecute individuals who plan and implement such activities against the Cuban government and people.

LUIS POSADA CARRILES and the BOMBING OF CUBANA FLIGHT #455

Testimony of Peter Kornbluh, Senior Analyst, National Security Archive Before The House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight

November 15, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Rep. Rohrabacher, and Members of the Committee: I want to thank you for holding this important hearing and I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify on what history records as the first major act of international terrorism involving a civilian airliner in the western hemisphere—an atrocity that more than 30 years later still demands an accounting.

Like you, Mr. Chairman, I am concerned about how the case of Luis Posada Carriles—aka “Comisario Basilio,” “Bambi,” “Ramon Medina,” and “Solo,”—has been handled over the last two and a half years by our government. By any objective standard, Posada is one of the ten most prolific purveyors of political violence in contemporary history. Yet, as the United States finds itself waging a war on international terrorism, a man who our own Justice Department has recently called ‘a terrorist alien’ so far has been charged only with immigration fraud after illegally entering the country. How is this possible? Indeed, how is it possible that a man who our own Customs and Immigration Enforcement Agency has determined to “pose a danger to both the community and the national security of the United States” is today living freely in Miami, Florida?

With the credibility of the U.S. leadership in the war on terror at stake, these are imperative questions for this committee to consider. In legal papers, Customs and Immigration officials have identified what they call

Posada's "long history of criminal activity and violence in which innocent civilians have been killed." At the center of that long, violent history is the midair bombing of a civilian airliner on October 6, 1976. Shortly after takeoff from the Barbados Seawell International Airport at least one bomb exploded on Cubana flight 455, plunging the plane into the ocean and killing all 73 crew and passengers aboard--many of them Cuban and Guyanese teenagers. Mr. Chairman, this was a crime of tremendous consequence. It is a crime that remains relevant today because of our pressing need to understand how terrorists actually plan and commit such acts of mass murder and because the men who our own intelligence community identified as the masterminds of this atrocity are living freely in Florida. For those reasons, Mr. Chairman, my organization, the National Security Archive, has made it a priority to centralize as much of the investigative record as possible on the bombing of flight 455. Because it was an international crime, the documentation derives from a number of countries: the bombing of the plane was planned and organized in Caracas, Venezuela, and the bombers were eventually prosecuted there, so there are Venezuelan records. The men who placed the bomb on the plane were captured and initially interrogated in Trinidad, so there are police records from that nation. The United States was involved because the anti-Castro exiles who planned this crime had previous ties to the Central Intelligence Agency—in Posada's case rather extensive ties—and because Posada and his Venezuelan employee, Hernan Ricardo Lozano, who placed the bomb on the plane, were well known to our FBI Attaché in Caracas. We have obtained some of the key CIA and FBI intelligence cables that were transmitted before and after the bombing.

Mr. Chairman, I want to present just a handful of these documents to the committee. Before I do, let me say that the cumulative weight of the evidence demonstrates the following:

****Luis Posada Carriles, a demolitions expert trained in the 1960s by the CIA, had foreknowledge of the bombing of the Cuban airliner.**

****Posada was found in possession of a terrorist target list—essentially a scouting report on potential sites related to Cuba.**

****The Venezuelan who drafted this report, Hernan Ricardo, was employed by Posada in Caracas. Ricardo, along with a subordinate named Freddy Lugo, placed the bombs on the plane before it took off from Barbados.**

****As soon as the mission was accomplished, Ricardo placed phone calls to both Posada and his coconspirator Orlando Bosch.**

****Within hours after the plane went into the ocean, multiple FBI sources identified Posada and Bosch as engineers of this terrorist attack. Let me share with you some of the documents that contain this information:**

Document 1: in the days before the bombing of the plane, the CIA gathered rather comprehensive intelligence on a fundraising dinner—\$1000 per plate, which was a lot of money in 1976—held in Caracas for Orlando Bosch, like Posada a godfather of anti-Castro Cuban violence. The cable reports that Posada met Bosch at the airport when he arrived in Caracas in mid-September, and was hosted in Venezuela by the government of Carlos Andres Perez.

According to a high-level CIA source, at the fundraiser Bosch was heard to say: "now that our organization has come out of the Letelier job looking good, we are going to try something else." (This is a reference to the car bomb assassination of former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier and his colleague Ronni Karpen Moffitt on September 21, 1976—a crime committed not far from here on Massachusetts Avenue by agents of the Chilean secret police working with members of Bosch's violent anti-Castro coalition, CORU.)

A few days after the fundraiser, according to the CIA's source, Luis Posada added a key detail to Bosch's reference to trying "something else." Posada stated: **"we are going to hit a Cuban airplane" and "Orlando has the details."**

Document 2: the target scouting report: Mr. Chairman, this rather extraordinary document is a handwritten surveillance report on businesses, Embassies, and offices "with ties to Cuba" in the Caribbean/Central American region— **among them the Cuban state airlines agency Cubana Aviación.** It was drafted sometime in the spring of 1976 by Posada's employee Hernan Ricardo, and provided detailed descriptions of targets in Barbados, Colombia, Panama, and Trinidad, right down to the make, model, color, and license plate numbers of the cars that the Cuban Ambassadors in those nations used.

It is important to note that several of the targets described in this report were subsequently struck by acts of terrorist violence in the summer of 1976, including the British West Indies airline office in Bridgetown on July 14 and the Guyanese Consulate in Port-o-Spain, which was bombed on September 1, 1976. (Posada's employee later confessed to being involved in those attacks.) **But the most important target described on this list** that was subsequently blown up is the Cubana airlines flight. Let me direct the committee's attention to the right hand side of the first page, which lists targets in Barbados, where the author notes that on Wednesday there is a Cubana flight from Jamaica that arrives at approximately 11 am, and at 12 noon, another plane arrives from Trinidad, en route to Jamaica.

The latter flight was number 455, which came from Caracas carrying the Cuban Olympic fencing team, stopped in Guyana— where it picked up Roseanne Nenninger's brother and five other top Guyanese science students on their way to Havana to study medicine—and proceeded to Trinidad and then to Barbados en route to Jamaica and Havana. The bombs went off approximately five minutes after takeoff and the plane was unable to make it back to the airport before crashing in the ocean. This document, Mr. Chairman, **was found in Luis Posada's possession when Venezuelan authorities raided his home and office after his employee, Hernan Ricardo, was arrested in Trinidad.** Posada himself was arrested in Caracas six days after the bombing, on October 12, 1976.

Document 3: Ricardo's sketch of the detonator: Mr. Chairman, while in custody in Trinidad, Hernan Ricardo and Freddy Lugo both confessed to planting explosives on the plane. On October 19, during an interrogation with Deputy Police Commissioner Dennis Ramdwar, Ricardo stated he and Lugo worked for Luis Posada, and that "Lugo and himself bombed the plane." Ricardo also explained to Ramdwar the steps a terrorist would take to prepare to bomb a plane and how plastic explosives are detonated; he even made a rough diagram of the detonator used for the bomb, which I brought to show the committee. (Show diagram). Mr. Chairman, you will see on the left-hand side of this drawing a series of six steps that Ricardo laid out, including obtaining "false documentation" that explicitly could "not be Cuban," as well as obtaining "explosivo C-4."

The detonation device he described is known as a "pencil detonator." According to Ramdwar's official report on the interrogation, Ricardo described the detonator as a pencil-type with chemicals which could be timed for 8 minutes, 45 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 24 hours. He said that these pencil-type detonators were of various colours depending on the time at which the bomb was to be detonated. ...He said that a certain chemical is filled in a tube of Colgate toothpaste after the toothpaste is extracted. Let me add, Mr. Chairman, that documents in Luis Posada's CIA "201" file show that he had experience with, and possession of pencil detonators and plastic explosives. Early in his career of sabotage, Posada has described having "time-bomb pencils." When he left the United States to go to Caracas in 1967, according to his own CIA file, **he took U.S. government equipment that included ten pencil detonators.** Mr. Chairman, the other Venezuelan, a photographer named Freddy Lugo, who worked part time for Posada, also confessed to Ramdwar. He described seeing Ricardo fill a Colgate toothpaste tube with a white putty. In this handwritten and signed confession, Lugo describes how Ricardo tried to call both Posada and Orlando Bosch, who used the codename "Sr. Panyagua" (Mr. bread and water), immediately after the plane went down. After not reaching Posada, Ricardo

actually called his own mother and told her to “**give the telephone number of the hotel in Barbados to Mr. Luis Posada so that he could call and to tell him that there was a problem.**”

Document 4: First FBI report on plane bombing: Mr. Chairman, the men who committed this terrorist attack were well known to both FBI and CIA personnel in Caracas; only five days before the bombing, the FBI Attaché, Joseph Leo, actually gave Hernan Ricardo a visa to visit Puerto Rico, even though he knew his employer Posada was involved in violent operations against Cuban targets and suspected Ricardo of helping him. The FBI Attaché began gathering intelligence on the bombing almost immediately and this is his first report, dated one day after the attack. Leo reported that a confidential source had “**all but admitted that Posada and Bosch had engineered the bombing of the airline.**” the source also suggested that a [deleted] intelligence service—which is no doubt a reference to the Venezuelan security force known as “DISIP”, where Posada had worked as head of the demolitions directorate— “was arranging for Luis Posada and Orlando Bosch to leave Venezuela as soon as possible.”

Document 5. FBI briefing to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger: this final document is the first page of one of several briefings on the FBI’s intelligence that were sent by FBI Director Clarence Kelly to Secretary of State Kissinger. The information derived from a member of the Venezuelan intelligence service, known as “DISIP,” who reported that “**the bombing of the Cubana airlines dc-8 was planned, in part, in Caracas, Venezuela, at two meetings,**” both attended by Luis Posada. This source was the first to relate the coded message that the bombers had left when they placed calls to Bosch and Posada after the plane went down: “**a bus with 73 dogs went off a cliff and all got killed.**” Mr. Chairman, these are just a few of the examples of the historical record that have been obtained and declassified on Luis Posada and the bombing of flight 455. I dare say that had this crime been committed more recently, and if Posada’s first name was Mohammed rather than Luis, this evidence would have been more than sufficient to get him rendered to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. And it would seem sufficient to have allowed former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to have certified Posada as a terrorist under the clauses of the Patriot Act, rather than engage in a dubious and failed attempt to prosecute him as a simple illegal alien. And sufficient as well to grant Venezuela’s petition that he be extradited back to Caracas, where he remains an international fugitive from justice in this case.

But these documents I have shared are simply the tip of an iceberg of evidence—much of which remains secret and stored in the archives of the U.S. National Security agencies. Even though we have gathered dozens of documents on this case, Mr. Chairman, there are hundreds more that I believe this committee and the American people have a need to know about, indeed a right to know about these documents fall into several categories:

First, there are documents that have been declassified but remain heavily censored, hiding information that is critical for investigating the handling of this case.

Second, there is a comprehensive file compiled by the CIA on Posada throughout his career known as a “201” file. Volume five of this voluminous set of papers covers the period of time of the Cubana Airlines bombing and should contain useful information on Posada’s role. (My office has requested the declassification of this file, but so far the CIA has not been responsive.)

Third: there are specific FBI documents that have not yet been declassified relating to the bombing and its aftermath that would shed more light on how this crime was carried out. And finally, Mr. Chairman, there is a dossier of 700 still-secret FBI and CIA documents that has already been compiled by our government and was part of immigration proceedings against Orlando Bosch, Posada’s co-conspirator in this crime. As you know, Bosch was imprisoned in Venezuela for 11 years for the plane bombing and then returned illegally to Florida in 1988, where he was detained for over a year as an excludable alien.

This dossier was compiled and submitted to the immigration judge, as well as reviewed by the Justice Department. Based on this evidence, acting Associate Attorney General Joe Whitley issued a strongly-worded

decision that characterized Bosch as “resolute and unwavering in his advocacy of terrorist violence...whose actions have been those of a terrorist, unfettered by law or human decency.” Yet on July 17, 1990 the White House of George Herbert Walker Bush overruled its own Justice Department and issued an administrative pardon for Bosch. For what appear to be clear political reasons, Mr. Chairman, the Bush White House simply ignored the eloquent position voiced in the Justice Department report that previewed today’s debate over the Posada case: “the United States cannot tolerate the inherent inhumanity of terrorism as a way of settling disputes. We must look on terrorism as a universal evil, even if it is directed toward those with whom we have no political sympathy.”

With Bosch set free in 1990, and the situation with Posada today, Mr. Chairman, the United States finds itself in the frankly inexplicable position of having not one but both men who our own intelligence agencies identified as responsible for bringing down a civilian airliner living free and unfettered lives in Florida. In the midst of a war on terrorism, this has significant repercussions for the United States. I hope this committee, Mr. Chairman, will investigate how this scandalous situation came to be. I urge the committee to use its powers to seek this documentation, and offer you any assistance that my Cuba documentation project at the National Security Archive can provide.

In closing, let me say that this is a crime that absolutely deserves both a historical and a judicial accounting. The reasons are many and varied:

In this day and age when none of us can board a plane with a bottle of water or a dispenser of deodorant, the American people deserve to know that their government has retrieved and examined every detail of how terrorists brought down an airliner using a tube of toothpaste. The international community needs to know that our President is sincere when he denounces any nation that harbors terrorists, when he states, as he has in the past, that "we've got to say to people who are willing to harbor a terrorist, or feed a terrorist, 'you're just as guilty as the terrorist.'"

And finally, the families of the victims of this attack—families like Roseanne Nenninger’s, and the 72 other Cuban, Guyanese and Korean families that lost loved ones on this plane— deserve an accounting. They deserve to know that as the leader in the campaign against international terrorism, the United States government will do what needs to be done to pursue both the justice and truth that have been so elusive in the bombing of Cuban Airlines flight 455.

Thank you.

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20071115/index.htm>

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, RAYMOND PERSAUD

Testimony of Roseanne Persaud Nenninger Before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight.

November 15, 2007

Mr. Chairman, members of this Honorable Committee: my name is Roseanne Persaud Nenninger and my brother Raymond Persaud was on flight 455. As you already know, a horrific bomb exploded in mid air, killing him and 72 other passengers and crew. I am here today to put a human face to this tragic, untimely end to my brother's life. I want justice to be served for this dreadful act of terrorism. I feel justice has been long over due—not only for my brother, but for all of the victims who were aboard this plane.

I would like to share with you some cherished memories about my brother Raymond. He was an academic scholar. He received the highest marks on his exams among his peers but was particularly gifted at the study of science.

Because of his aptitude in science and overall scholastic achievement, the Guyanese government awarded Raymond a special, full scholarship to study medicine in Cuba. Then, and now, this is a coveted scholarship for any young Guyanese student who has dreams of becoming a doctor. At that time, there were no medical schools in Guyana, and, Mr. Chairman, there still are none. So for my brother, having the opportunity to follow his dream was the closest thing to a miracle. Raymond had big dreams! He had dreams of becoming a doctor, dreams of giving back to his country by coming back after graduating and completing his residency in his homeland, to be of service to Guyana.

From a very young age Raymond displayed traits of strong leadership. He was always involved in helping others. He was a group leader for youth organizations, Class President in high school, and mentor in our community of Georgetown, Guyana. He loved spending time with his family and I have fond memories of playing checkers together, of him helping me with my homework, reading novels and comic books to me. Raymond was a great, wonderful big brother to me.

My parents were so proud of him and so was I. Let me tell you why: Raymond was the first of five siblings in the family to go to college, much less go to medical school! We had a wonderful farewell party for Raymond the night before he left for his journey. My father borrowed eighty chairs from the church to accommodate all the guests at Raymond's farewell party. And only a few days later those were the same chairs used for his wake and memorial service. We never got to have a full funeral because his body could not be recovered in the ocean wreckage.

Let me account for you what happened that fateful day, October 6, 1976. It began with high hopes. My family went to the airport to bid Raymond farewell. He was dressed a brown suit, specially made at the tailor for his travels. My parents were feeling so proud to have their son heading off to medical school. At the airport, we watched Raymond walk on the tarmac heading on to the airplane. He stopped, waved goodbye and we wiped the tears from our eyes and waved back. Raymond turned the corner and headed into the plane. We headed back home sad but excited at the same time. And tired! So tired, we all decided to take a nap.

After a couple of hours, there was a knock on our door. It was our cousin. It was very odd for her to come to our house on a Wednesday. She worked for the Department of Foreign Affairs. She said she had some news to share with us and everyone had to be sitting down. I was in a confused state, still groggy from my nap, sitting

at the dining room table. My mom and dad were there waiting to hear what my cousin would say. She said the plane that Raymond was on went down off the coast of Barbados.

The next thing I remember were shrieks coming from my mother; I'm sure most of the neighbors heard too. Tears flowed down my cheeks. It all seemed unreal. How was this possible? We just saw Raymond a few hours ago. My mom asked if there were any survivors. My cousin couldn't answer that question. More screams came from my mother. I will never be able to get that sound out of my head. I'm sure the committee can understand how October 6, 1976, became the saddest day for us. At that moment my family realized that all of my brother's dreams for his future, and all of our dreams for him, had gone down in the ocean...gone forever.

At the time, there were no televisions in Guyana so we depended on overseas information through the radio to find out more information about the tragedy that had struck our family and so many others. Eventually, my father started to piece all the information together and we realized this plane crash was not an accident, but an act of terrorism carried out by fanatical anti-Castro Cubans—chief among them Luis Posada Carriles.

Mr. Chairman, my brother Raymond was only 19-years old. He was a young man with a wonderful and bright future. And it was all taken away with that terrible act of terrorism.

In 1979, my whole family immigrated to the United States. My parents couldn't bear the thought of another one their children heading overseas for graduate school so we made our new home in New York. We are all now American citizens and my brothers and my sister and I have all succeeded professionally and personally in this great land of opportunity. Yet, as an American citizen, I'm sure you can appreciate how **outraged I am** that a known terrorist, the man who planned the act of international terrorism that killed my brother, five of his fellow Guyanese medical students, and the Cuban Olympic fencing team, **is now living as freely as I am in the United States.**

My President says that he wants all countries who are harboring terrorists to be held accountable and that he is committed to bringing to justice those who are involved in acts of terrorism. But for reasons that I hope this committee will help me understand, this is not the case with Luis Posada. In his case there seems to be some sort of exemption. As an involuntary member of a unique group of families that have suffered an irreplaceable loss at the hands of terrorists, I can say honestly and clearly that the handling of Posada's case has been a travesty of justice and a message of hypocrisy amidst the ongoing U.S. war of terrorism.

I got so angry, Mr. Chairman, that as the 30th anniversary of this crime approached last year, I wrote a letter to the then Attorney General Alberto Gonzales appealing to him in the name of justice for my brother Raymond and the other passengers on that doomed airplane, to certify Posada as a terrorist under the Patriot Act and incarcerate him indefinitely. Mr. Attorney General, I wrote: "if Luis Posada does not meet the definition of a terrorist, it is truly hard to imagine who does."

Mr. Chairman, more than a year has gone by and I have never received even a courtesy reply to my letter. Indeed, this committee is the first government agency of my adopted homeland to have listened to my concerns about how this administration has turned its back on the victims of a heinous crime of international terrorism. Why, I ask you, are both Luis Posada and Orlando Bosch not behind bars? My hope is that this committee will find the answers that the Attorney General and the Department of Justice have refused to provide for me and my family.

It is now 31 years since our brother Raymond died and no words can describe the pain, grief and loss we have faced. Our family, as I am sure you understand, has never been the same since October 6, 1976. It is still painful for us to sit and have conversations about Raymond's death. We wonder what kind of man Raymond would have been and how he would have contributed to our complex world. My brother was an amazing

individual, full of hopes and dreams, that were stolen forever in an instant of an explosion. What a selfish act of Luis Posada Carriles to kill innocent young lives for no other reason than that they were traveling to Cuba.

Mr. Chairman, I hope my voice, and those of the other families of flight 455 who cannot be here to speak today, will be heard through these words. We want justice now. We have waited far too long.

Thank you.

The FBI should be investigated

Says Livio Di Celmo, brother of the young Italian killed by a bomb placed in a Havana hotel by order of Posada Carriles

by Jean-Guy Allard

Reprinted from [Granma International](#)

Nov. 17, 2006

By failing to act after receiving information from businessman Antonio Álvarez, who exposed Posada Carriles as he was directing the 1997 attacks in Havana, “by not acting on this information, the FBI becomes, then, another entity to add to the list of those directly and indirectly responsible for terrorism-related activities and as such should be investigated, denounced and exposed for the all world to see.”

That was the affirmation of Livio Di Celmo, brother of Fabio Di Celmo, victim of a bomb explosion on Sept. 4, 1997 in the Hotel Copacabana in the Cuban capital.

In an interview with GI, the Italian-born Canadian explained how, after reading the article by Ann Louise Bardach published on Nov. 12 The Washington Post, he became convinced that if the FBI had used Álvarez’ information like it should have, the attack could have been prevented.



Livio Di Celmo

Álvarez shared an office in Guatemala with buddies of Posada and had alerted the FBI regarding anti-Cuba terrorist activities that were going on before his very eyes.

“Reading that intelligence-related detectives in the Miami MDPD force have family ties with anti-Castro right-wing extremists (involved in bombings, etc.); the fact that Ed Pesquera (son of Hector Pesquera FBI director in Florida in 2003) has destroyed key evidence relating to Carriles in the summer of 2003, clearly point out a level of corruption, criminal intent, and obstruction of justice that show the degenerated level of American institutions.”

Fabio Di Celmo’s brother said that “the level of corruption at Miami FBI has played a crucial role in the terrorist acts” that were carried out at that time in Cuba. “...It is evident, even to a child, that had not the FBI in Miami been infiltrated by Cuban-American terrorists (with Pesquera and his friends), and had the FBI acted on the information they had, perhaps Fabio would still be alive.”

According to Livio Di Celmo, the problem does not lie solely with the FBI but also in U.S. policy toward Cuba.

“...If institutions such the FBI, CIA or Justice Department have been so much infiltrated by supporters of terrorism against Cuba, we must look at the role played by the Bush family,” Livio said, commenting that the Bush clan maintains “a tradition of fostering and courting terrorism,” and he noted the relationship between Prescott Bush – grandfather of the current U.S. president – and the Nazis in Germany.

In addition, Livio Di Celmo said he was outraged by the four-year sentence handed down to Santiago Álvarez and Osvaldo Mitat: “I wonder: if they were Arabs caught with all these weapons, what sentence would they get?”

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OAS debates U.S. handling of Posada case

By Pablo Bachelet, McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON _ Venezuela is pushing the Organization of American States to condemn the United States for Washington's alleged reluctance to punish or extradite anti-Castro militant Luis Posada Carriles.

The Venezuelan draft resolution drew a strong rebuke from the United States, which argued the 34-member OAS had no business getting involved in a bilateral problem with Caracas.

"It is worrisome that U.S. authorities pretend to protect this well-known terrorist Posada Carriles," said Venezuela's envoy before the OAS, Jorge Valero.

Posada Carriles is accused of masterminding a 1976 bombing of a Cuban jetliner that killed 73 persons, and Venezuela is demanding his extradition. A U.S. judge has refused, saying he could be tortured in Caracas. Cuba and Venezuela say the apparent U.S. reluctance to go after Posada Carriles shows the United States has a double standard in its public discourse on terrorism.

Valero said suggestions that Posada Carriles could be harmed in Venezuela were a "fallacy."

Countries were divided over the Venezuelan proposal. Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador _ all governed by left-wing governments that criticize U.S. positions _ backed the Venezuelan draft proposal, which said the U.S. delay in jailing or extraditing Posada could "debilitate" international efforts against terrorism.

Canada and Panama supported the U.S. stance. Robert Manzanares, the acting U.S. ambassador to the OAS, said "a show of hands" could help settle the issue, but diplomats instead decided to set up an informal group to try and reach an agreement on an issue that threatens to spill over into the upcoming General Assembly of the OAS, where foreign ministers are to discuss renewable energy issues.

Manzanares said the judicial process was still underway and Posada was under investigation for past activities. "The United States also notes that this is a bilateral issue between two OAS member states, not a multilateral issue."

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, now an international human rights attorney, pointed out that in addition to Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch—who orchestrated murderous acts against Cubans including the mid-air bombing of a Cuban passenger airliner—the U.S. government has also welcomed Emmanuel Constant, responsible for thousands of deaths and torture in Haiti, as well as agents of the Shah of Iran, who harassed Iranian students in the U.S. until he was deposed. Clark said to see justice in the case of the Cuban Five, the U.S. should dismiss all charges, admit error, pay them for injuries inflicted on them and their families and provide them unlimited visas for reentry to the U.S.

<http://www.freethefivecc.org/updates/USMedia/USMWWAug20.htm>

The Justice Department called Mr. Bosch "a terrorist, unfettered by laws or human decency, threatening and inflicting violence without regard to the identity of his victims," in the words of Joe D. Whitley, then an associate United States attorney general. Mr. Whitley added: "The United States cannot tolerate the inherent

inhumanity of terrorism as a way of settling disputes. Appeasement of those who would use force will only breed more terrorists. We must look on terrorism as a universal evil, even if it is directed toward those with whom we have no political sympathy."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/09/national/09exile.html?ei=5088&en=396b140db7be1a5d&ex=1273291200&adxnml=1&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all&adxnmlx=1195243828-9F8muOi1KH+AE/9DwivbGg>

See letter sent to Alberto González from Mr. Kenneth V. Georgetti, President of CLC, demanding the immediate freedom of the Cuban Five, on March 7, 2006 at:

<http://www.lagauche.ca/CNC/Media%20items/Part%205-Support/Letter%20from%20Georgetti.doc>

See statement issued by Lawrence Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to US General Colin Powell, denouncing injustices against the Cuban Five, on September 19, 2007 at:

<http://www.freethethefivecc.org/updates/USMedia/USMWilkerson91907.htm>

Harold Pinter: Free the Cuban Five

Nov. 9, 2007

Reprinted from [Prensa Latina](#)



Havana, Nov 9 (Prensa Latina) British dramatist and political activist Harold Pinter, recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature in 2005, added his voice to the demand for liberation of the antiterrorist Cuban Five imprisoned in the US for more than nine years.

Seven Nobel Prize winners have joined the call for their release, signing a document issued October 12 by Red de Redes in defense of humanity.

The document demands the freedom of Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, sentenced to harsh prison terms in a political trial held in Miami.

Besides Pinter, the document is signed by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nadine Gordimer and Wole Soyinka (Nobel Prizes in literature), Zhores Alfiyrov (physics), Timor Leste President Jose Antonio Horta Ramos and Adolfo Perez Esquivel (Nobel Peace Prize).

Some 3,500 signers -among them musicians, academics, actors, writers and philosophers- endorse the text with their signature, which has generated an increasing wave of adhesions.

The Five, as they are internationally known, helped to control organized terrorist plans against Cuba from Florida, carried out by extreme right anti-Cuban groups.

A panel of three judges who examined the case for the Atlanta Court of Appeals unanimously decided to declare the trial invalid and ordered the sentences revoked.

Despite that, they have remained isolated in prisons of maximum security.

The Call has also been signed by more than 200 organizations and institutions from various parts of the world, including the United States, Spain, Argentina, France, Brazil and other Latin American nations.

Among notable signers appear the US Alice Walker, Lucius Walker, James Cockcroft, Mumia Abul Jamal and Howard Zinn, Spain's Isaac Rosas and Belen Gopegui, French Jean Marie Binoch, Uruguayan Mario Benedetti and Hispanic-French Manu Chao also signed the document.