

CIA terrorist Posada Carriles dead at 90

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Luis Posada Carriles, a CIA-trained killer responsible for the worst terrorist act carried out in Latin America in the twentieth century, died in a veterans' home outside of Miami Wednesday morning. He was protected by Washington until the end, living freely in the US despite extradition demands from several countries to face charges of mass murder.

Previously classified CIA files released in November of last year in connection with the declassification of documents related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy confirmed the long-standing charges that Posada was responsible for organizing the murder of 73 civilians in the 1976 bombing of a Cubana de Aviacion airliner.

The CIA had recruited Posada Carriles in 1965 after he had served two years in the US Army.

He had previously been trained by the CIA at its secret paramilitary camps in Guatemala in preparation for the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. The agency classified him as a demolitions expert.

From 1964 to 1968, he was involved in a series of bombings, assassination attempts and other covert activities against the Cuban government.

In 1973, according to one of the recently declassified CIA files, the agency suspected him of working with known drug traffickers to smuggle cocaine into the US. "Despite above info indicating WKSCARLET-3 [the agency's code name for Posada Carriles] involved [in] this case, agent worth salvaging and we should make effort to do so," the file concluded.

Posada obtained Venezuelan citizenship and, with the CIA's backing, became a senior officer in the country's secret police, the DISIP, in the early 1970s, carrying out the torture and extra-judicial murder of suspected leftists. It was from his office in Caracas that he plotted the airline bombing.

Previously declassified CIA documents indicate that the agency was well informed about the plan to carry

out a major terrorist attack against Cuba. They cite a meeting in the Dominican Republic between Posada's long-time anti-Castro collaborator and fellow terrorist Orlando Bosch where the plot was hatched, as well as a confidential source who reported that just days before the bombing, Posada had declared, "We are going to hit a Cuban airliner."

The two men arrested for planting the explosives on the plane were both employees of a private detective agency that Posada ran in Venezuela. Posada was himself subsequently arrested and spent eight years in Venezuelan prisons before escaping in 1985 with the aid of US Cuban exile groups with close ties to the American government.

From Venezuela, he was sent to El Salvador, where he worked out of the US-run air base at Ilopongo, organizing the shipment of arms and money to the contra army attacking Nicaragua as part of a secret and illegal operation run out of the White House by Col. Oliver North. There is substantial evidence that the same planes used to run the guns down ran drugs back to the US to raise funds for the CIA-backed terrorists. He also found work as a security officer in the Guatemalan military dictatorship, which at the time was waging a genocidal US-backed counter-insurgency campaign.

In 1997, Posada organized a terrorist bombing campaign in Havana, Cuba, that claimed the life of an Italian tourist and wounded a dozen others. And in 2000, he was arrested in Panama after being discovered there with 200 pounds of explosives during a visit to the country by Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The Venezuelan government repeatedly demanded that Washington comply with international treaties and extradite Posada Carriles to face trial before a Venezuelan court for the 1973 airline bombing. Cuba also called for his extradition for the same offense.

The US government refused to send him to either

country on the pretext that he could face torture. Aside from the fact that Posada was himself implicated in torture under a previous Venezuelan regime, at the time the CIA, including its new director Gina Haspel, was carrying a torture program at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba, as well as at secret “black sites” around the world.

Nicaragua had also requested his extradition to face charges there related to his activities in support of the CIA-backed contra mercenaries. Washington also rejected this request.

Posada Carriles was tried on immigration charges after illegally reentering the US in 2005. A federal judge dismissed an indictment in 2007, freeing him, and in 2011 he was acquitted on all charges after being accused of perjury, obstruction of justice and immigration fraud for lying to US authorities about how he got into the country and denying that he was involved in the 1997 Havana bombing campaign. He was not accused of the bombing itself or any of the other murderous acts he committed over his long career as a CIA agent and “asset,” only with failing to tell the truth to immigration officials.

In the course of the trial, the government filed a motion to gag Posada and his attorneys on the question of the terrorist’s long relationship with the CIA, claiming that it was irrelevant.

Posada’s lawyers had insisted that his CIA ties had continued for at least 25 years, meaning that he had remained either an agent or asset of the US spy agency for at least another decade after the bombing of the Cuban passenger jet.

The 13-week trial, marked by repeated motions for delays and ultimately won by Posada and his attorneys, stood in stark contrast to the usual drumhead hearings for other undocumented immigrants, in which defendants are marched in *en masse*, summarily disposed of and sent back across the border.

Similarly protected by the US government was Posada’s fellow terrorist and organizer of the airline bombing, Orlando Bosch. He was pardoned in 1990 by then-US President George H.W. Bush while serving a sentence for a bazooka attack on a Polish freighter in the Miami harbor. The blowing up of the Cuban jet took place while Bush senior was director of the CIA.

The careers of both Posada Carriles and Bosch—and their protection by the US intelligence apparatus—stand

as a damning indictment of the criminal methods employed by US imperialism in its protracted campaign to suppress social struggles and revolutionary challenges throughout Latin America.

They likewise expose the fraud of the so-called war on terrorism, the banner under which Washington has justified repeated wars of aggression abroad as well as the assault on democratic rights at home. The US government has regularly employed state terrorism to pursue its global imperialist interests, while zealously protecting those responsible for these bloody crimes.



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