

Cubana Flight 455: Remembering the Victims of US-Supported Terrorism

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October 6th, is the 38th anniversary of the first act of terrorism against civilian aviation in the western hemisphere – the unparalleled Cubana air disaster on the coastline of Barbados on October 6, 1976 – the Barbados crime. Cubana flight 455 was hit by two C-4 explosives bombs just after the aircraft took off from the then Seawell Airport (now the Grantley Adams International Airport) in Barbados at an altitude of 18,000 feet.

Rather than crashing into the white sands of the beach called Paradise and killing the vacationers, the Cubana pilot, Wilfredo Pérez Sr., courageously banked the plane away from the beach and towards the Atlantic Ocean, saving the lives of many tourists. It crashed in a ball of fire one mile north of Deep Water Bay. The crash occurred about eight kilometres short of the airport.

Cubana flight 455 was a routine, scheduled commercial, passenger flight of no military significance. There were no survivors. All 73 passengers and five crew members aboard the plane were assassinated: 57 Cubans, 11 Guyanese, and five North Koreans.

Among the dead were all 24 members of the 1975 Olympic youth fencing team; many were teenagers. The young athletes had just won all the gold medals in the Central American and Caribbean Championship Games, as well as several sport officials of the Cuban Government. They proudly wore their gold medals on board the aircraft.

The trail of blood leads to the US – and Canada.

It is the bitterest irony that the anniversary occurs on the very day that the Harper government demands parliamentary approval to send military forces to another hemisphere to commit aggression under the pretext of opposing terrorism, while it is silent on terrorism committed in the nearby Caribbean.

It is the bitterest irony that the Harper government designates “Islamic terrorists” as the greatest threat facing mankind, when the self-confessed engineer of this great crime, Posada Carilles, known as the Bin Laden of the Americas, languishes comfortably in Miami, Florida under U.S. protection.

In its fraudulent offensive, the government and media, which talks about “blowback” and the “victims of terrorism”, is silent on the fact that the aircraft that was destroyed by Cuban-American terrorists was actually owned by Air Canada, one of three Air Canada DC-8s leased to Cubana. Nor was this a unique incident. Earlier, on July 9, 1976 in Kingston, Jamaica a suitcase had exploded when it was carried to another DC-8 aircraft of Cubana de Aviación leased from Air Canada.

Nor that the meeting just four months earlier on June 11, 1976 that planned the terrorism, as well as the assassination of Orlando Letelier, the former foreign minister of Chile then resident in Washington, the capital of the U.S., took place at an exclusive resort lodge owned by Falconbridge Mines, a multinational US-owned, Canadian registered corporation and the second largest nickel monopoly in the world (after INCO), in Bonao, Dominican Republic. During that meeting, over 20 assembled individuals representing terrorist factions founded CORU, an anagram for the Coordinación de Organizaciones Revolucionarias Unidas, headed by Orlando Bosch, in response to CIA director George H. Bush's demand that the offensive against the Republic of Cuba be centrally co-ordinated under CIA direction and funding as part of Operation Condor. That same month, June, 1976, Bosch is on record that he sent a bomb to the Cuban embassy in Ottawa, aimed at hindering the relations between Canada and Cuba and enforcing the illegal U.S. blockade of Cuba, one of many targets attacked by Cuban-American terrorists inside and outside the territory of Canada during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Protesters outside the Carriles immigration hearing in El Paso, Texas demand his extradition to Venezuela and the release of the Cuban Five.

A report issued by the U.S. Acting General Attorney General Joe D. Whitley in May 1989 declared Bosch a public enemy of the United States and denied asylum to this dangerous character for the 30-odd terrorist acts committed, among them the hideous Barbados bombing. The US Attorney emphasized one particular terrorist act: "In October 1976, Bosch was arrested in Venezuela in relation with the bombing committed against a Cuban civilian airliner on October 6, 1976, which killed 73 men, women and children aboard." Nevertheless, Bosch was admitted to the U.S. at the behest of the Bush administration, where he lived and plotted until his death a couple of years ago.

Canada is a signator of the *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings* and the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation*. Yet successive federal governments have failed to support the credible and legitimate demand of the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, backed by Trinidad, Barbados and Cuba, to the United States to extradite Luis Posada Carriles for terrorist crimes committed in their sovereign countries, specifically bombing the Cuban aircraft in October, 1976 and the Havana hotels in 1997, which included the murder of Fabio di Celmo, a resident of Montreal, Canada, who was visiting Cuba with his father. The collusion of the Chretien Liberals consisted of whitewashing the latter's murder by feigning that the innocent victim was technically an Italian national, and hence of no concern to the Government of Canada. The Trudeau Liberals declared the destruction of the Cubana Flight / Air Canada DC 8 455 in 1976 business as usual, satisfied with collecting the insurance on the loss of property of Air Canada, then a crown corporation. The Harper government is no less an abettor and promoter of international terrorism than U.S. imperialism.

The "war on terror" of the U.S. and Canadian governments is so disingenuous that they shelter and reward the terrorists they prefer, while accusing others of the crimes they commit. Earlier this year, acting as judge and jury, the Obama, Harper and allied regimes launched a hysterical offensive without any evidence to indict the Russian Federation and its president as part of their warmongering, that allegedly it was responsible directly or indirectly for the destruction of the Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 on July 17, 2014 over the war zone in Eastern Ukraine.

The central assumption is that the United States alone is the single state in the world that does not kill innocent civilians, is not at war with anyone, answers to a higher law above international law and the United Nations, and hence has the moral authority to accuse everyone else of criminal activity. Any people such as the Cubans or Ukrainians or Palestinians who resist this authority are “terrorists” and the agents of a foreign power or constitute an “illegitimate” government as with the Syrian Arab Republic to be overthrown. But this disinformation remains silent on the criminal record of the US in destroying civil airliners and even heaping the highest honours on those who pull the trigger, as it did with those who shot the missiles on July 3, 1988 that downed Iran-Air flight 655 inside Iranian territory, killing 290 defenceless passengers and crew. Two years later George Bush, by this time president, awarded both the Commander and the officer in charge of anti-air warfare of the *USS Vincennes* with the Legion of Merit for the “calm and professional atmosphere” under their command during the period of the destruction of the Iranian airliner.

The Bush and Obama administration’s policies at home and abroad have woken a sleeping and silent giant throughout this continent. And, yes: America is one continent and not two as some U.S. textbooks would have us believe.

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