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## The Cuban Connection

# Puerto Rican Terrorists Also Threaten Reagan Assassination

By DANIEL JAMES

San Juan, Puerto Rico:—Now it is Puerto Rican terrorists who may pose a threat to President Reagan's life, according to intelligence officers here and judging by public evidence. Unlike Muammar Qaddafi's hitmen, as U.S. citizens the Puerto Ricans need not risk crossing borders since they are already here. Also, they are indistinguishable from millions of other Puerto Ricans and Hispanics living stateside and thus can move about freely.

Furthermore, the Puerto Rican terrorists are as well-trained and as fanatical and reckless as their Libyan or other foreign counterparts.

They have announced publicly their intention to "get" the President and top aides in a recent speech by their reputed "godfather," 72-year-old Juan Antonio Corretjer (the last syllable is pronounced like the German guttural "ch"). A revolutionary firebrand for half a century, Corretjer, lauding 11 members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) found guilty of seditious conspiracy by a federal jury in Chicago, charged President Reagan personally with "bribing" and "torturing" one of them, Alfredo Mendez, into betraying his comrades. He then thundered:

"Who deserves contempt? Who deserves punishment? Poor Alfredo Mendez? No! The President of the United States, the CIA chiefs, the FBI chiefs, the warden of Pontiac [Ill.] prison, the public prosecutors Margolis and Sullivan in the federal office of the Chicago district attorney, and the detectives and police of Chicago!"

The President is "humanity's worst enemy," Corretjer pronounced.

Intelligence officers here regard the Corretjer speech as a call to Puerto Rican terrorists to literally "punish" the President and the law enforcement officials involved in prosecuting the FALN "Chicago 11," a case still on the books. There is more than ample evidence of acts of vengeance committed by them over the years.

In December 1979, three terrorist groups ambushed a U.S. Navy bus en route to Sabana Seca Communications Center, near this capital city, shooting two petty officers to death and wounding 10 other naval personnel. In a com-



In January 1975, the Puerto Rican terrorist group FALN committed perhaps their most notorious and criminal act, the bombing of the historic Fraunces Tavern, killing four people and injuring more than 60.

muniqué they issued taking responsibility for the attack, the terrorists said they were avenging the alleged murder of a comrade, Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, who was found hanging in a Tallahassee, Fla., prison cell and listed a "suicide." Corretjer exulted, after the sailors were killed, "his [Rodriguez Cristobal's] death is avenged."

Only last January, the same three terrorist groups—the Macheteros, Armed Forces of Popular Resistance (FARP), and Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution (OVRP)—joined in firebombing nine Air National Guard jets worth \$45 million at Isla Verde Air Base, also near San Juan. This was a deliberately selected military target in their ongoing "people's war of national liberation" against "Yankee imperialism."

The writer has seen a Macheteros-produced videotape of preparations for

the firebombing, which was carried out in only seven minutes, 40 seconds—ample testimony to the terrorists' high level of precision and efficiency.

Since 1975, Puerto Rican terrorist groups have perpetrated 260 acts of violence on the island, according to official count. These range from bombings of banks, post offices and U.S. business enterprises to blowing up electric power plants and assaulting military installations and personnel. An estimated 70 or more violent attacks were committed on the mainland during the same period, mostly by the FALN. Federal authorities have revived their investigation into 31 unsolved bombings in New York City alone, based on new information supplied by Alfredo Mendez.

The FALN is the only Puerto Rican group operating in "enemy territory"—

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## President Lends Prestige To Beatty's 'Reds' Film

President Reagan, the strongest anti-Communist ever to occupy the Oval Office, has come under fire for holding a White House reception to show a film that portrays a founder of the American Communist party in a highly favorable light. The showing of the film was arranged by presidential aide Michael Deaver.



President Reagan received actor Warren Beatty and showed his film, *Reds*, at the White House, even though the movie casts an American Communist in a favorable light. Beatty has long been associated with liberal causes and the Democratic party.

The film, *Reds*, was described by Judith Martin of the *Washington Post* as an "extraordinary" movie with an "idealistic American Communist, sympathetically depicted, as its hero." It concerns John Reed, an American journalist who became a Communist and propagandist for the Russian revolution, and his wife, Louise Bryant.

Howard Phillips, the chairman of the Conservative Caucus, said he was discouraged, disappointed and surprised that the President lent the prestige of his office to showing a film that glorified a young man and woman "who were involved in advancing a cause which is inimical to the high principles of the American tradition."

Reed Irvine, chairman of Accuracy in Media (AIM), said it was inappropriate for the White House to show a film that glorified the proponent of a totalitarian ideology such as communism. He noted that there would be a national furor if the White House showed such a film about supporters of fascism or Nazism.

Phillips charged that Warren Beatty, who plays Reed, has been a supporter of George McGovern and the left wing of the Democratic party, adding: "I can't understand why people at the White House would even think of doing anything which would put more money into his pockets."

The *Post* reported that "Beatty was first drawn to the Reed story during a private trip to Russia in the late 1960s, and wrote a first draft nearly 10 years ago." Produced and directed by Beatty, the film cost \$33.5 million to make.

"Only in America," commented Scott Cain of the *Atlanta Journal*, "would a multi-millionaire actor, who has lived in the lap of luxury all his adult life, conceive a movie in homage to a Marxist."

"Only in America," he continued, "would a studio [Paramount Pictures], built and operated at a vast profit for 70 years under the capitalist system, finance a picture that admires socialism."

President Reagan received Beatty and his co-star, Diane Keaton, who plays Louise Bryant, along with other guests at the White House on December 5. According to the *New York Times*, one guest couldn't understand why the anti-Communist President would show the film. "I don't quite make the connection, you showing *Reds* at the White House," this guest reportedly said to the President. Reagan reportedly replied, "I look at it as showing up the Reds."

Although the *New York Times* reviewer claimed that "only the very narrow-minded will see the film as Communist propaganda," the reviews of the film indicate that John Reed is not portrayed as someone who becomes disillusioned and makes a break

with communism. In fact, one scene reportedly shows Reed defending the brutalities of the Communist regime that came to power.

The Soviet leaders certainly don't think that Reed ever gave up on communism, for they honored him after his death by burying him in the Kremlin.

Michael Deaver, the presidential aide who arranged and attended the screening, could not be reached for comment. But his assistant, Joseph Canzeri, who also saw the film, told HUMAN EVENTS that it was shown for entertainment value only. There was no intention to promote anything, he said. He described criticism of the White House role in showing the film as a "bad rap," but he said he could understand why some people might be concerned about it.

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as Corretjer characterizes the continental United States—and would probably be the logical one entrusted with forming a hit squad to "get" the President and other important U.S. officials. Formed in 1974 to open a "second front of armed struggle for Puerto Rican national liberation"—the first "front" being of course the island itself—the FALN has demonstrated its fanaticism and daring numerous times.

Thus it opened the "second front" with five bombings of prominent Manhattan locations, including Rockefeller Center, on the very same day, Oct. 26, 1974.

Mere weeks later, it killed a policeman in reprisal for the alleged murder of a Puerto Rican activist poet "by the racist New York Police Department."

Poet the FALN's most notorious act was the bombing of historic Fraunces Tavern in lower Manhattan, in January 1975, killing four and injuring more than 60 persons.

In March 1980, armed FALN members seized President Carter's campaign headquarters in Chicago and GOP presidential candidate George Bush's in New York City, on the same day. Eleven of the band were caught in Evanston, Ill., three weeks later, and all have been sentenced to long prison terms. Only one, Alfredo Mendez, admitted FALN membership, apparently hoping to get his 75-year sentence reduced.

Another suspect in the Chicago case, and perhaps the most dangerous of the lot since he is the FALN's bomb-making expert, William Morales, is currently a fugitive.

U.S. intelligence officers believe the FALN was "connected" with the robbery in October of a Brink's armored truck near Nyack, N.Y., by Weather Underground and black terrorists in which two policemen and a guard were killed. The FBI's No. 2 man in New York, Kenneth P. Walton, has stated that the joint Federal-New York City Terrorism Task Force he heads is looking into possible links with the FALN and "possibly some foreign organizations" as well.

The "foreign organizations" are regarded by intelligence sources to mean Cuba's General Intelligence Directorate, or DGI, Fidel Castro's worldwide espionage service

whose principal aim is to destabilize the United States. Puerto Rico is high on the DGI's destabilization target list.

The "father of the FALN," and in a sense of Puerto Rico's modern terrorist movement, is a 42-year-old Puerto Rican agent of Cuban intelligence who is wanted in Puerto Rico for jumping \$2,000 bail, Filiber to Inocencio Ojeda Rios. He founded and led the very first of Puerto Rico's new terrorist groups, the Independent Armed Revolutionary Movement (MIRA), in 1967. MIRA members received training and arms in Cuba and became operational in early 1969, when they bombed a police station, destroying two police cars, a bank and other enterprises.

After many bombings—35 alone in New York City during 1970—MIRA was finally broken up by the police and Ojeda arrested. After jumping bail, he headed for New York, got assigned to the DGI contingent attached to Cuba's United Nations Mission, and formed the FALN with old MIRA members as the nucleus.

Although wanted by the Puerto Rican police, Ojeda, a master at disguise, slips in and out of the island undetected. On one of his last known visits in 1979, he joined with Corretjer and another old comrade in unifying Puerto Rico's five principal terrorist groups under a single command—repeating the pattern of Cuban insistence on the unity of armed revolutionary factions followed in Central America. Under the unified command, known as the CRN, come the FALN, the Macheteros—whose formal name is the Boricua Popular Army (after the island's Indian name, Borinquen)—the FARP, OVRP, and People's Revolutionary Commandos (CRP).

Over the Puerto Rican unified command is a Cuban organism, the Coordinating Revolutionary Junta (JCR), based in Havana, whose Eastern Caribbean section is headed by Ojeda. The virtually unknown JCR was set up jointly by the DGI and the Cuban Communist party's national liberation-intelligence unit, the Americas Department, and it provides arms, training and guidance to revolutionary organizations throughout Latin America, including Nicaragua's Sandinistas and El Salvador's guerrillas.

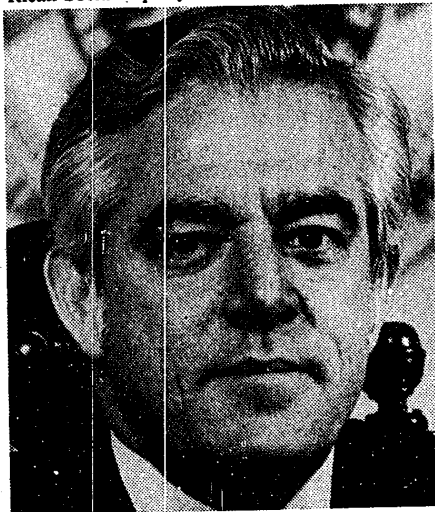
Other "foreign organizations" with which Puerto Rican terrorists may be connected include the PLO and the band around the infamous "Carlos the Jackal"—born Ilich Ramirez

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Venezuela—with which Ojeda made contact during a stint for the JCR in Paris before moving to Havana.

Ties have long existed between the FALN and other Puerto Rican extremist groups and the Weather Underground. Corretjer, for one, acknowledged such ties in an interview, and added that he fully sympathizes with the Brink's attackers. He also revealed that his Puerto Rican Socialist League, an "open" Marxist-Leninist organization, maintains contact with U.S. black extremists and some Chicanos in Colorado.

Still another island Marxist-Leninist group with ties to the Weather Underground is the Puerto Rican Socialist party.



ROMERO-BARCELO

The Puerto Rican Socialist party (PSP) has maintained a quasi-diplomatic "mission" in a house in Havana's luxurious Vedado section for many years, its secretary general, Juan Mari Bras, told this writer. Since the PSP pays no rent, nor presumably staff upkeep, the "mission" is virtually subsidized by Castro.

Mari Bras makes fine distinctions between "terrorism," which he eschews, and "armed struggle," which he frankly embraces, yet local intelligence sources say he organized one of the earliest terrorist groups, the Armed Commandos of Liberation (CAL), in 1965. He did so, they add, using the pseudonym "Alfonso Beal," the surname a compound of two independence heroes, Betances and Albizu. CAL members received guerrilla training and arms in Cuba and committed many acts of violence, including the bombing of a U.S. Governors Conference in San Juan, until its disappearance in 1972 or 1973.

Mari Bras also bears some responsibility for the organization of Filiberto Ojeda's MIRA, the FALN's predecessor, through a pro-independence movement which subsequently became the PSP. The PSP, in turn, supplied 600 Cuba-trained youths to various terrorist groups following its abysmal showing in the 1976 gubernatorial elections, causing them to abandon the electoral route to independence preached by Mari Bras after 1970 and to embrace "urban guerrilla warfare."

No fewer than nine terrorist groups have proliferated in Puerto Rico over the past 15 years—an

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average of about one per every 400,000 inhabitants—and that incredible total may be incomplete. Nor does it include legal, "open" support groups such as the Socialist League, PSP, and above all the Federation of Pro Independence University Students (FUPI), which is celebrating 25 years of existence as the chief spawning ground of Puerto Rico's far-left revolutionaries.

FUPI is, for example, the guiding force behind a Marxist-led University of Puerto Rico student strike which has been going on since the beginning of the school year and has precipitated rioting and other violence on the campus; that, in turn, has compelled Gov. Carlos Romero Barcelo to send police units to occupy the university on two occasions—thus providing the extremists, of course, with another issue: "repression."

Another terrorist breeding ground is the electrical workers union, UTIER, which is also Communist-controlled and recently conducted a protracted strike that strained Puerto Rico's energy facilities. Concurrently, the Macheteros and other outright terrorist groups backed the UTIER strike with a series of bombings of power plants, causing at least half-a-dozen blackouts in San Juan during November alone.

Although contemporary Puerto Rican terrorism was born during the relatively prosperous mid-1960s, the past year has seen a record rise in violent acts which may be attributed in part to widening discontent over a sharp decline in the island's economy. Unemployment is at 21 per cent of the labor force, and a massive 38.2 per cent of youths between the ages of 20 and 24—providing a growing pool of potential troublemakers.

Inflation is around 11 per cent and expected to rise even higher as imports of needed products approach double the island's exports. Such classic exports as sugar are all but disappearing because Puerto Rico can no longer produce them economically; consequently, sugar production has plummeted and so has employment in the industry.

The economic crunch is expected next October, the beginning of fiscal year 1983, when federal food and nutrition assistance may be cut by 25 per cent.

The Commonwealth status they have enjoyed since 1952, and was once hailed as a "showcase" of democracy for other Caribbean countries, is now perceived by many Puerto Ricans to be an economic failure. But the alternative of statehood, advocated by Gov. Romero's New Progressive party, is supported by only 45 per cent of the people and is seen by the rest as worse economically—since island residents would be subject to state taxes and less federal aid—while endangering their Spanish cultural heritage.

Although the pro-independence forces—the non-leftist Puerto Rican Independence party and the Communist PSP—pooled less than 6 per cent of the vote in the 1980 gubernatorial election, independence retains a mystique for Puerto Ricans and is potentially an explosive issue. Cuba, seeing an opportunity to pursue its destabilization plan, has accordingly made itself the champion of Puerto Rican independence in the United Nations. Seeking U.N. recognition of Puerto Rico as a U.S. "colony" which should be "liberated from Yankee imperialism," it has managed to get the island's "colonial" status placed on the General Assembly's 1982 agenda.

The United States is thus truly faced with a two-front war over Puerto Rico: the diplomatic one in the United Nations led by Cuba and backed by the Third World as well as the island's extremists, and the terrorist front, which has lately assumed the character of what the terrorists themselves term

interchangeably a "people's war" or "urban guerrilla warfare." The principal target, too, has changed, and is now military. Thus the attacks on Sabana Seca Communications Center and Isla Verde Air Base.

"We want to get rid of every imperialist military installation on this island," Corretjer told me flatly, adding that he and his supporters will go to every length to attain their objective.

Cuba, of course, is fully in accord with that objective, aware of Puerto Rico's strategic importance in the Caribbean. Some 60 per cent of all our imported oil is shipped through the Caribbean, and such major naval installations as Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico may become decisive if Washington embarks on an all-out effort to interdict the flow of arms and military forces from Cuba and other Soviet-bloc countries to Central American guerrillas.

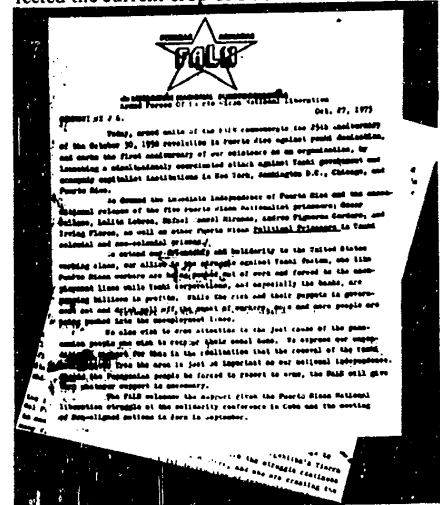
Aiding the Puerto Rican terrorists in the long run is the violence endemic to the island. Our highest leaders have not been immune to that phenomenon. In 1950, the nation was shocked when members of the Nationalist party tried to assassinate President Harry Truman, and again in 1954 when they shot up the House of Representatives, wounding five congressmen. Four of the Nationalists involved in those attempts were released from federal prison only two years ago, and today enjoy their freedom in Puerto Rico entirely unrepentant. Lolita Lebron, perhaps the most famous of them, has unashamedly declared:

"We have done nothing to cause us to repent."

And she adds, ominously:

"I cannot disavow people who use bombs. I hate bombs but we might have to use them."

Lebron's fanaticism, engendered by the Nationalist leader and hero Pedro Albizu Campos, who attempted an insurrection on the island in 1950 coinciding with the attack on Truman, has infected the current crop of Puerto Rican terrorists.



Reproduced above is a letter from the FALN taking credit for bombings in New York, Washington and Chicago in 1975.

They have, moreover, wedded Albizu Campos's wholly indigenous nationalism to Marxism-Leninism and gladly accept the material and political support of the powerful Soviet Union and such client-states as Cuba. That implies an abundance of material resources and sophisticated techniques now available to his successors.

It may also suggest that the Libyan threat to President Reagan could conceivably be executed not by Libyan assassins but, rather, by Puerto Rican counterparts believing in the same ideological objectives.

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