

Expuesta: la operación de propaganda gubernamental en Miami!

Más de 2200 páginas de documentos obtenidos por FOIA

Por Gloria La Riva

Coordinadora Nacional

En 1998, cinco hombres cubanos fueron arrestados por el gobierno de EE.UU. y juzgados en Miami acusados de conspirar para cometer espionaje en los Estados Unidos. La misión de estos cinco hombres era detener el terrorismo, manteniendo bajo observación a los extremistas de ultraderecha en Miami, con el fin de prevenir sus violentos ataques contra Cuba, “Los Cinco Cubanos”, como se les conoce actualmente, fueron condenados después de que la jueza les negara repetidamente el cambio de la sede del juicio a un lugar fuera de Miami. Lo que los Cinco Cubanos y sus abogados no supieron durante el juicio, fue que el gobierno de EE.UU., a través de su agencia de propaganda oficial, el Buró de Transmisiones del Gobierno (BBG), les estaba pagando en secreto a prominentes periodistas de Miami, que, al mismo tiempo, que el gobierno hacía su acusación, saturaban los medios de Miami con reportes que eran altamente provocativos y perjudiciales para los Cinco Cubanos. La presencia de periodistas de Miami en las nóminas de pago del gobierno de EE.UU., va a lo más intrínseco en la injusta condena de los Cinco.

Profundizando para llegar a la verdad

El esfuerzo realizado durante varios años por el Comité Nacional para la Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos, la Fundación de la Sociedad para la Justicia Civil y el periódico Libertación (Libertación), ha puesto al descubierto miles de páginas de materiales, que no se habían hecho públicos antes. Más de 2 200 páginas de contratos entre periodistas de Miami y de Radio y TV Martí—hechas públicas por el periódico Libertación, a través de una petición por la Ley de Libertad de Información (FOIA)—muestran la falacia de la existencia de una prensa independiente en Miami. El BBG y su Oficina de Transmisiones hacia Cuba (OCB), han operado Radio Martí desde 1985, y TV Martí desde 1990. Ambas realizan transmisiones dirigidas hacia Cuba con la intención de desestabilizar el gobierno.

La Ley Smith-Mundt de 1948, que regula la “diplomacia pública” de EE.UU., como la Voz de las Américas, Radio Europa Libre, Radio y TV Martí, etc., prohíbe al gobierno de EE.UU. financiar actividades para ejercer influencia y hacer propaganda dirigida a la opinión pública local, ver 22 U.S.C. § 1461. Con un presupuesto anual de cerca de \$35 millones, la OCB y BBG ponen en sus nóminas a periodistas locales para transmitir

Los contratados por el gobierno de EE.UU. sirvieron como presentadores, escritores y comentaristas habituales, de programas como “Actualidad Mundial” (World Update), “Mesa Redonda” (Roundtable) y otros noticiarios diarios. En otras palabras, ellos dirigían y le daban forma al mensaje. Tal es el caso de Pablo Alfonso y Ariel Remos. Los reporteros condenan a los Cinco antes del juicio

Pablo Alfonso fue reportero de El Nuevo Herald. Los contratos

Ariel Remos es un viejo reportero del Diario Las Américas. Remos recibió pagos por \$10 400.00 durante el proceso de acusación de los Cinco—del 1.º de noviembre de 1999 al 9 de febrero de 2001. En total recibió como pago \$24 350.00 hasta el 20 de noviembre de 2006. Ambos Alfonso y Remos escribieron explosivos artículos, que aparecieron publicados en los medios de Miami, acusando al gobierno de Cuba de asesinato.

Hermanos al Rescate habían enviado repetidamente aviones para invadir el espacio aéreo cubano en 1995 y a principios de 1996, haciendo vuelos rasantes sobre los edificios de La Habana. Cuando HAR anunció de que volarían una vez más sobre el territorio cubano el 24 de febrero, Cuba advirtió que se tomarían acciones directas si los aviones los invadían nuevamente. Cuando los aviones atravesaron el espacio aéreo cubano, fueron derribados.



Government-funded propaganda operation in Miami exposed

More than 2,200 pages of documents obtained through FOIA

By Gloria La Riva
National Coordinator

In 1998, five Cuban men were arrested by the U.S. government and tried in Miami on charges of conspiring to commit espionage on the United States.

The five men’s mission was to stop terrorism, keeping watch on Miami’s ultra-right extremists to prevent their violent attacks against Cuba. “The Cuban Five,” as they are now known, were convicted after repeated denials by the judge to move the trial venue out of Miami.

What the Cuban Five and their attorneys did not know during trial was that the U.S. government—through its official propaganda agency, the Broadcasting Board of Governors—was covertly paying prominent Miami journalists who, at the same time as the government conducted its prosecution, saturated the Miami media with reports that were highly inflammatory and prejudicial to the Five.

The presence of Miami journalists on the U.S. government payroll goes to the heart of the unjust conviction of the Five. They were not only victims of a politically-motivated prosecution, but a government-funded propaganda operation as well.

Digging up the truth

A multi-year effort by the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund and most recently, Liberation newspaper, has uncovered thousands of pages of previously-unreleased materials exposing this government operation.

More than 2,200 pages of contracts between Miami journalists and Radio and TV Martí—have been released thus far to Liberation newspaper through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) petition.

The BBG and its Office of Cuba Broadcasting have operated Radio Martí since 1985 and TV Martí since 1990. They broadcast into Cuba with the intent to destabilize the government.

The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 regulating U.S. “public diplomacy” abroad prohibits the U.S. government from funding activities to influence and propagandize domestic public opinion, see 22 U.S.C. § 1461.

With an annual budget nearing \$35 million, the OCB and BBG put domestic journalists on their payroll to broadcast the same message inside and outside the United States on Cuba-related issues, effectively violating the law against domestic dissemination of U.S. propaganda.

Two of the Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guer-

ero, and soon Ramón Labañino—have filed habeas corpus appeals, in part arguing that their constitutional rights to due process were grossly undermined by the government’s media operation.

The reportage of these journalists and their government contracts demonstrate a close partnership between Washington and right-wing Cuban exile reporters. Radio and TV Martí are the only U.S. propaganda stations that operate outside of the Washington, D.C., area, moving to Miami in 1997.

Those contracted by the U.S. government served as hosts, regular commentators and writers of shows such as “Actualidad Mundial” (“World Update”), “Mesa Redonda” (“Roundtable”) and daily newscasts. They directed and shaped the message. Such is the case with Pablo Alfonso and Ariel Remos.

Reporters condemn the Five before trial

Pablo Alfonso was a longtime reporter for El Nuevo Herald. The contracts in the Liberation newspaper FOIA show that Alfonso received BBG payments of \$58,600 during the Cuban Five’s prosecution between Nov. 1, 1999 and Dec. 31, 2001. His total payments were \$252,325 through Aug. 22, 2007.

Ariel Remos is a longtime reporter and commentator for Diario Las Américas. Remos received payments of \$11,750 during the Five’s trial from Nov. 1, 1999 to Dec. 12, 2001. His total pay was \$24,350 through Nov. 20, 2006.

Both Alfonso and Remos wrote incendiary articles that were placed in the Miami media accusing the Cuba government of murder, and linking the Cuban Five.

False Murder Conspiracy Charge

Brothers to the Rescue had repeatedly sent planes to invade Cuban airspace in 1995 and early 1996, buzzing Havana buildings and dropping thousands of leaflets over the city. With BTTR’s public announcement that they would once again fly into Cuba on Feb. 24, 1996, Cuba warned that it would take direct action if the planes invaded again. When the planes crossed into Cuban airspace, they were shot down.

Hysteria and demand for vengeance became pervasive in the Miami media in the aftermath of the shoot-down.

Despite being in Miami, not Cuba, and playing no role whatsoever in Cuba’s action to defend its territory, Hernández became a scapegoat. Seven months after the Five were arrested, he was charged with conspiracy to commit murder.



Trial judge Joan Lenard claimed that the non-sequestered jury was sufficiently shielded from the media with her instructions that they should not follow the news during trial. But the Miami community was already inundated with inflammatory coverage on the shoot-down for almost five years before the jury was selected.

In 1999, while under contract with the U.S. government, Remos interviewed attorney Ralph Fernández—the legal representative of José Basulto, president of Brothers to the Rescue.

The article by Remos, dated Nov. 28, 1999, states:

“... [I]n the case of U.S. v. Gerardo Hernández, in which Caroline Heck-Miller [sic] has been serving as the prosecutor and where the chain of command and cause for the death of the four members of Brothers to the Rescue—three of them citizens of the U.S. and one resident—supposedly begins with Fidel Castro.”

The “arrangement” between the government and the journalists covering Cuba and the Cuban Five prosecution clearly negated the possibility of a fair trial in Miami.

The U.S. prosecutors knew that the judge’s instructions were insufficient to protect the trial process from undue media influence. U.S. prosecutor Caroline Heck-Miller in December 2000 sought a gag order to ban the press from quoting potential witnesses – out of concern that those witnesses would help the defense.

The government’s motion stated: “...the jury in this trial has been strictly instructed not to read press accounts of the case, and there is no reason to believe that they have disregarded their instruction. Nonetheless, unbridled comment by persons who are designated witnesses in this matter, contrary to the Court’s clear directives, poses risks to the process that none of the parties should have to endure.” (emphasis added)

The government knew and admitted the media could influence the jury. And it continued to pay reporters who were doing just that.

Creating a climate of hysteria

The coverage went far beyond regular news reporting on a breaking story of the arrests, to create the specter of a supposed threat that the defendants and Cuba held for the United States.

On Sept. 16, 1998, four days after the arrest of the Five, Pablo

Alfonso published a highly-inflammatory and unsubstantiated charge of a link of Cuba and its agents with terrorism. It appeared in El Nuevo Herald, titled “Possible Alliance with Terrorism.”

As evidenced by documents released to the National Committee, Alfonso received over \$250,000 between 1999 and 2007.

Alfonso writes: “The surprising offensive against an alleged network of Cuban spies in Miami, may be an action aimed at preventing a possible collaboration between the Cuban government and countries involved in terrorist actions against the United States,” according to military and intelligence experts who expressed this to El Nuevo Herald.

In his article, Alfonso quotes Orestes Lorenzo, an ex-major of the Cuban Air Force who deserted to the United States in 1991: “Lorenzo said that he isn’t surprised Fidel Castro’s regime is ‘lending or selling its intelligence services’ to Islamic terrorist groups or powerful nations that are interested in carrying out terrorist acts on U.S. territory.”

Wilfredo Cancio Isla received \$4,725 from Sept. 30, 2000 to Dec. 3, 2001—dates within the period of the Five’s prosecution. His total pay was \$21,800 through Nov. 20, 2006.

On June 4, 2001, the day the jury was to begin deliberations, a Cancio article appeared in El Nuevo Herald titled “Cuba Used Hallucinogens to Train its Spies.”

This inflammatory article—supposedly based on information from an anonymous “Cuban spy defector”—claimed that Cuba gave LSD and other hallucinogens for “behavior modification” for the purposes of “intelligence and counter-intelligence.”

The supposed ex-spy defector given two pseudonyms—Alex and José—conveniently links the drug accusation with the Cuban Five. Cancio quotes Alex/José:

“I can assure you that the Wasp Network (broken up in September 1998) is just a part of the espionage work that was conceived to infiltrate the United States on a long-term basis,” said Alex...” [The Wasp Network is a reference to the Cuban Five.]

It is clear that the Cuban Five political prisoners were victims of vicious anti-Cuba propaganda by reporters on the payroll of their very accusers, the U.S. government.

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Freedom for the Five Cuban Patriots
Unjustly Held in U.S. Prisons
¡Libertad a los Cinco Patriotas Cubanos!

La historia y la demanda de venganza invadieron los medios de Miami en los días que siguieron al derribo de los aviones. A pesar de no haber participado en forma alguna en las acciones de Cuba para defender su territorio, Hernández fue convertido en un chivo expiatorio, siete meses después de que los Cinco fueron arrestados, el fue acusado de conspirar para cometer asesinato. Alfonso y Remos estuvieron replicando constantemente para condenar a Fidel Castro por el derribo de los aviones, y entrevistaron a otros que demandaron su arresto por “asesinato.” Remos entrevistó a Ralph Fernández, abogado y representante legal de José Basulto, presidente de Hermanos al Rescate. El artículo de Remos, fechado el 28 de noviembre de 1999, plantea: “... [E]n el caso de EE.UU. vs. Gerardo Hernández, en el cual Caroline Heck-Miller [sic] ha estado fungiendo como fiscal y en el bro de Hermanos al Rescate ... supuestamente se inicia en Fidel Castro. “Castro, por lo tanto, en el caso de referencia, está acusado de asesinato y bajo investigación por asesinato; y si el pone un pie en el territorio de los Estados Unidos puede ser arrestado y enviado ante la justicia de este país. Esta es la opinión del abogado Fernández, y así lo declaró al DIARIO LAS AMERICAS.” Los fiscales de EE.UU. sabían que las instrucciones de la jueza eran insuficientes para proteger el proceso del juicio de la influencia in- cubana. Cancio escribe: El supuesto desertor “anónimo”, quien usaba dos seudónimos, Alex y José, vincula convenientemente la acusación con los Cinco Cubanos. Este inflamatorio artículo—supuestamente basado en información procedente de un anónimo “espiá cubano desertor”—afirma que Cuba les suministró LSD y otros alucinógenos para “modificar el comportamiento” para objetivos de “inteligencia y contra-inteligencia.” El 4 de junio de 2001, el día que el jurado iba a comenzar las deliberaciones, apareció un artículo de Cancio en El Nuevo Herald: “Cuba usó alucinógenos para entrenar a sus espías.” Este inflamatorio artículo—supuestamente basado en información procedente de un anónimo “espiá cubano desertor”—afirma que Cuba les suministró LSD y otros alucinógenos para “modificar el comportamiento” para objetivos de “inteligencia y contra-inteligencia.” El supuesto desertor “anónimo”, quien usaba dos seudónimos, Alex y José, vincula convenientemente la acusación con los Cinco Cubanos. Cancio escribe: “Cuba experimentó con técnicas de hipnosis y alucinógenos para modificar el comportamiento” de numerosos agentes, que fueron enviados al extranjero ... “Entre estos alucinógenos estaban el psicobin y el LSD. ...” “Yo puedo asegurarte que Wasp Network ... es solo una parte del trabajo de espionaje que fue concebido para infiltrarse en los Estados Unidos a largo plazo,” dijo Alex. (Wasp Network es una referencia a los Cinco Cubanos.) Esta claro que los Cinco Cubanos fueron víctimas de la despiadada propaganda en contra de Cuba generada por sus propios acusadores, el gobierno de EE.UU.

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