

# With Malice Aforethought

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The United States government has formally indicted a number of agents from Castro's dictatorship who were operating in South Florida, with conspiracy to commit murder, in relation to the downing of the Brothers to the Rescue airplanes and their tragic toll of four deaths on February 24, 1996.

The official indictment was presented last Friday in a federal court in Miami and, according to the formulated charges, the act that was described from the beginning by Cuban exiles as a "mid-air execution" was deliberately planned and executed by the Cuban government's Intelligence Directorate.

The details mentioned in the indictment have been widely publicized and, like it or not, they give a moral boost to Brothers to the Rescue and its president, José Basulto. It is clear from the prosecution's arguments that the brutal attack was not a heated response to a provocation, but a coldly calculated aggression; a crime in every sense, aggravated and perfidious.

This ought to make us think a bit about our own conduct and the ease with which we often allow for the weeds to grow among us, all of us victims of the same victimizer. More than once I've heard an unfortunate insinuation about at least part of the responsibility for the tragic end of the mission on that February 24th resting with the president of Brothers to the Rescue.

It's not hard for me to imagine how much this barb to Basulto's heart must have hurt, and yes, it is hard for me to understand how we can allow, often in such a self-destructive way, for trivial things to rob us of our greatness. In large measure, the gradual proof of the crime and its circumstances, which anyone with even partial knowledge of the Castro regime could have foreseen, vindicates the conduct of the leader of the humanitarian organization, something that, for those of us who know him, he never needed.

Presumably, the prosecutors and investigators know what they must do, and it is encouraging to see this formal indictment take shape and that, at last, it seems that as it should, Washington will begin to properly address Castro's long criminal arm here, on U.S. soil itself.

However, justice will not be served until everything is clarified and everyone responsible for the crime is judged. Can anyone seriously imagine that such a highly sensitive operation could be designed and carried out without consent, or even more, without a direct order from Fidel Castro? ... Can anyone believe that the autocrat who micromanages the training of a baseball team could leave something such as this in the hands of others? ... Is it even conceivable that the egomaniac who presumes to "control everything" on the island would not also be in control of something so delicate?

All of this should be proven and it shouldn't be very hard to do it. But, to do so, a certain level of cooperation between the U.S. government and Brothers to the Rescue would be recommended - I'd say essential. Without giving up total clarification of the facts, which would also include an investigation into the responsibility of certain government officials in this country, it's clear that this opportunity should not be lost and that the work must continue with intelligence and fervor until the dictator himself is in the dock where he belongs.

The Cuban exiles have waited forty years for the beginning of a recognition, even an implicit one, that their denunciations about the vile and wicked nature of Fidel Castro and the system of government he has imposed on our people, have not been exaggerations, mistakes, or lies. This vileness and wickedness has already reached U.S. territory and its citizens and it's time for the consequent actions to be taken: that Fidel Castro be indicted as well, along with everyone who participated in this infamous crime.

It's time for justice to be done.