

**New York Times**  
**June 2, 2005**

**Leftists Accuse U.S. Of Harboring Cuban Bomber**

By Reuters

HAVANA (Reuters) - Left-wing politicians and intellectuals attending a conference on terrorism in Cuba accused the U.S. government on Thursday of harboring a Cuban exile blamed for the bombing of an airliner in 1976.

They said the Bush administration had a double standard in its post-9/11 war on terror because it refused to extradite former CIA operative Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela to stand trial for the downing of a Cuban plane that killed 73 people.

The meeting, headed by Cuban President Fidel Castro at Havana's convention center, was called to press for Posada's extradition by the United States, where he was arrested last month for illegal entry while seeking asylum.

"Not extraditing him to Venezuela would be an act of great hypocrisy by the U.S. government and President Bush, and evidence that he does not care about other people's pain," said Michael Avery, associate professor at the Suffolk Law School in Boston and a conference participant.

Avery, president of the New York-based National Lawyers Guild, said Posada's May 17 arrest on immigration charges was an "unacceptable subterfuge" to get him off the hook.

The Bush administration last week rejected Venezuela's extradition, saying it lacked supporting evidence.

Posada, who is 77 and has dedicated his life to trying to oust Castro, goes before a U.S. immigration judge on June 13.

The case has given Castro ammunition to rile his arch-enemy and follows four decades of hostility, assassination plots, sabotage campaigns and the botched 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion by exiles trained by the Central Intelligence Agency.

It also has heightened friction between Washington and Venezuela, whose leftist president, Hugo Chavez, has become Castro's closest political and economic ally.

**VENEZUELA SKEPTICAL**

Venezuelan Vice President Jose Vicente Rangel, arriving in Havana for the conference, said he doubted Posada would be extradited. "The United States is doing everything it can to avoid it," he told Cuban news agency Prensa Latina.

Speakers accused the United States of abetting "terrorist methods" used by military dictatorships in South America to eliminate leftists in the 1960-1970s, and of supporting Central American armies responsible for mass murders in the 1980s.

Cuban exiles trained by the CIA to invade Cuba were later involved in the assassination of leftist leaders, they said, including Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean foreign minister killed by a car bomb in Washington in 1976.

"The United States has a long history of backing terrorism in Latin America," said historian Piero Gleijeses, professor of American Foreign Policy at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington.

Gleijeses said the United States bears responsibility for the killing of 200,000 people in Guatemala and the work of death squads in El Salvador, but history is being rewritten today to show the United States as a champion of democracy in the region.

Conference delegates included some of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, mothers of leftists who disappeared in Argentina's "dirty war" in the 1970's, Andean peasant leaders and members of Communist Parties of Portugal and Brazil.

**Copyright 2005 Reuters Ltd.**