

NOTED TERRORIST INDICTED

The terrorist in question is Luis Posada Carriles, who at one time admitted to involvement in a 1997 Cuban bombing, and is widely associated with a 1976 airline bombing.

That would be Luis Posada Carriles, a Cuban exile, suspected, arrested and once convicted (though later pardoned) in various countries for crimes that included the 1976 bombing of a Cuban jetliner that killed 73 people; the 1997 bombings of two Havana hotels that killed an Italian tourist; and a 2000 plot to assassinate Fidel Castro.

[snip]

Wednesday night, federal prosecutors filed a superseding 11-count indictment against the aging militant in which, for the first time, the U.S. links him to at least the 1997 bombings. It doesn't directly charge Posada with the crime; but it accuses him of lying about his role in it, claiming he perjured himself and obstructed justice in 2005 when, while answering questions from immigration authorities, he denied involvement in the Havana attacks even though he told the *New York Times* in 1998 that he'd taken part in them.

While it would be nice to see this country's hypocrisy regarding right wing terrorists end (particularly from an Attorney General who has himself practiced that hypocrisy on behalf of Chiquita, Jeff Stein notes some caution is merited.

Normally, throwing Posada into a dark pit would be cause for joy – if the government's conduct didn't stink up the joint.

Posada may be as guilty as former Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, once was. But a guilty verdict can't wipe the stain off the foundation of the government's case, no matter how it ends.

To wit, the 2005 naturalization hearing where the government maintains Posada committed perjury.

U.S. District Judge Kathleen Cardone was outraged by the government's conduct in the hearing.

"This Court finds that the Government engaged in fraud, deceit, and trickery," Cardone wrote in a blistering decision dismissing the indictment in May 2007.

Indeed, the transcripts of the government's interviews with Posada, conducted by a team of Justice Department and Homeland Security Department officials, shows that Cardone was on target.

For starters, the Spanish language interpreter the government used at the hearing was incompetent, she found after appointing a court-certified interpreter to review the taped hearing.

[snip]

What a weirdly ironic twist, considering that Justice departments going back to the Reagan administration were soft on Posada, looking the other way while he waged his violent vendetta against Castro, oblivious to collateral damage, protected by Florida's powerful Cuban Americans and their White House friends.

"In addition to engaging in fraud, deceit, and trickery, this Court finds the Government's tactics in this case are so grossly shocking and so outrageous as to violate the universal sense of justice," Judge Cardone wrote.

I'll go Stein's irony one better. Because, after all, Cardona's treatment at the hands of the Homeland Security is not that unusual, neither for undocumented Latin Americans, and especially not for suspected (Islamic) terrorists. That doesn't make it right. But it does mean that Posada's trial might serve as an object lesson in the way Homeland Security abuses its power.

Or, perhaps we could extradite Posada to Cuba, which stands ready to try him for the terrorist act itself, rather than lying about it through a bad translator.