

Spotlight Is Back On Rap Icons Godmother

Written by Nikki ID1394

Tuesday, 17 May 2005 23:10 -

Last week Cuban President Fidel Castro appeared to defend Assata Shakur, saying the woman who fled to Cuba is innocent and a victim of persecution.

Recently Assata Shakur has had the bounty raised on her by the United States Government. A reward of 1 Million dollars is now offered for the godmother of the slain hip-hop rap icon Tupac Shakur.

Castro suggested that the action being taken against Assata Shakur was meant to divert attention from Cuba's demand that U.S. officials arrest Luis Posada Carriles, who is wanted in Venezuela on charges of involvement in blowing up a civilian Cuban jetliner in 1976, killing 73 people.

Castro has held about 20 televised appearances over the past two months, many of them to accuse U.S. President George Bush and his administration of coddling terrorists and of claiming not to know where Posada, a former CIA employee, is hiding in the United States.

The Cuban leader called for a massive rally on May 17 in front of the U.S. Interests Section, or diplomatic mission, to demand the arrest of Posada.

It seems now, in this report from the Associated Press, that Luis Posada Carriles has been detained here in the US.

This 'move' by the government may be the 'tool' used to ensure the return of Assata Shakur to the US.

Facing growing international pressure, federal immigration authorities Tuesday detained a Cuban militant linked to a deadly 1976 airliner bombing and other acts of anti-Fidel Castro violence who has been seeking asylum in the United States.

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Luis Posada Carriles, a former CIA operative and Venezuelan security official, was detained by the Department of Homeland Security on Tuesday afternoon, said Dean Boyd, spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The move came shortly after Posada emerged from about two months in hiding in the Miami area.

Cuban President Fidel Castro's calls for Posada's arrest by U.S. authorities was echoed by thousands in protests in Havana on Tuesday. Castro claims Posada was brought to Miami from Mexico on a shrimp boat, but Posada says he entered the United States through Mexico and came to Miami on a bus.

The Homeland Security Department did not say what it planned to do with Posada, who is wanted by Venezuela and Cuba. But the statement said that generally, the U.S. government does not return people to Cuba or to countries acting on Cuba's behalf. The department said it has 48 hours to decide Posada's status.

Earlier Tuesday, Posada, 77, told reporters he was willing to leave the United States and his asylum request and go to another country.

"If my petition for political asylum created any problem to the government of the United States, I am ready to reconsider my petition," he said. "My only objective is to fight for the freedom of my country,"

But Posada's friend and benefactor, Santiago Alvarez, said he was arrested by federal agents before he could leave for an unspecified Central American country. He was arrested at a home in the Miami area after he had stopped to pick up some items.

"There's no reason for them to detain him, but that's the part of the process in this country," Alvarez said.

Pepe Hernandez, president of the Cuban American National Foundation, said Posada still deserves a chance to seek asylum in the United States. Posada is seen as a hero by many in the Cuban-American community.

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"He's been fighting one of the worst tyrannies this continent has experienced," Hernandez said.

Posada is wanted by Venezuela for escaping from prison in 1985 while awaiting a prosecutor's appeal of his second acquittal in the Cubana Airlines bombing, which killed 73 people when it crashed near Barbados. Recently declassified CIA and FBI documents quoted informants as linking Posada with planning meetings for the bombing.

Posada again Tuesday denied any connection with the airplane bombing, blaming Castro instead.

Venezuela recently approved a formal extradition request and Castro has made numerous televised speeches calling Posada a terrorist and accusing the United States of a double standard in the war on terror. The United States and Venezuela have an extradition treaty.

"The majority of Americans would never be in favor of harboring a terrorist," said Wayne Smith, a former U.S. envoy to Cuba who now heads the Cuba program at the Washington-based Center for International Policy.

If the United States were to grant asylum, Smith added, "we will be seen as hypocrites and as being against terrorism only when it suits our purposes."

Posada and three others were pardoned last August by Panama's then-president for their role in an alleged assassination plot in 2000 against Castro during a conference in Panama. Posada's whereabouts had been unknown until he surfaced in Miami in March.

Posada was also connected to a series of 1997 bombings of tourists sites in Cuba, one of which killed an Italian tourist. Posada refused to confirm or deny involvement in those attacks, telling The Miami Herald in an interview published Tuesday, "Let's leave it to history."

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"I feel that I've committed many errors, more than most people," he said. "But I've always believed in rebellion, in the armed struggle. I believe more and more every day that we will triumph against Castro. Victory will be ours."

Associated Press writers Curt Anderson in Miami and Lara Jakes Jordan in Washington contributed to this story.