



Clinton's Terrorist Jailbreak

President Clinton's clemency for FALN thugs opens the door to new acts of violence and exposes the hypocrisy of his supposed tough stance against terrorism.

The September 10th release from prison of 11 of this nation's most notorious terrorists was Clintonian audacity at its deadly, stunning worst. The granting of presidential clemency to the unrepentant terrorists of the Puerto Rican FALN stirred a storm of outrage in law enforcement circles and elicited fiery polemics from congressional critics. This White House-sponsored, massive, terrorist jailbreak was a flagrant and visceral broadside against America's national security. But the full significance of this move in its broadest ramifications, particularly in light of the transfer of the Panama Canal and other Caribbean and Latin American developments, has not even begun to register.

The American public and Congress have yet to come to grips with the incredible treachery of President Clinton's terrorism policies and the lethal threat they pose to our nation. In September 1996, Mr. Clinton warned terrorists: "You have no place to run, you have no place to hide." He declared that his administration would show "zero tolerance for aggression, terrorism, and lawless behavior." *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1998*, published by the Clinton State Department in April 1999, says on its first page, under the heading, "US Policy": "First, make no concessions to terrorists and strike no deals"; and, "Second, bring terrorists to justice for their crimes."

The release of the FALN terrorists not only makes a total mockery of these claims and signals a complete lack of resolve on the part of the U.S. to oppose terrorism, but virtually guarantees a resumption of the FALN's murderous bombing campaign, and an escalation of the Cuban-directed operations by the FALN's adjuncts and allies to evict U.S. military facilities in Puerto Rico. Even as the pardoned terrorists walked out of prison, Fidel Castro was stepping up his decades-old propaganda campaign to drive the U.S. Navy out of its critically important Vieques Island bombing range and amphibious training base off the coast of Puerto Rico. Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and the usual radical suspects in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus are all on board this subversive train.

In an interview with the *Washington Times* on September 14th, Dr. Miriam Ramirez, a conservative candidate for the Senate in Puerto Rico, said Clinton's action has emboldened the underground Boricua Popular Army, better known as "Los Macheteros" (The Machete Wielders), in its unrelenting war against the U.S. Navy. "They have made it into an issue of getting the Navy out of Puerto Rico," Dr. Ramirez told the *Times*. "They all feel like they're on a roll."

Among the most infamous actions of Los Macheteros, one of several terrorist groups working with the FALN, was the murder of police officer Julio Rodriguez Rivera in August 1978, and its ambush of a bus carrying unarmed U.S. Navy communications personnel near Sabana Seca, Puerto Rico, in 1979. John R. Ball and Emil E. White were killed in that murderous attack and ten other American sailors on the bus were wounded.

On September 13th, *The San Juan Star* published a statement by Filiberto Ojeda Rios, leader of the FALN and Los Macheteros, proclaiming that Puerto Rico should take advantage of this historic moment and battle against the "reactionary offenses" of the U.S. government. But you won't find much mention of Comrade Ojeda in the Establishment press; it might throw sand into the greased skids Mr. Clinton and his media allies have been preparing for normalizing relations with Castro.



Communist Origins

Filiberto Ojeda Rios is a Puerto Rican agent of Fidel Castro's intelligence service, the General Intelligence Directorate (DGI), which has always been subservient to the Soviet KGB. In 1967, under DGI direction, Ojeda organized the terrorist group MIRA (Independent Armed Revolutionary Movement). Arrested in 1970 by Puerto Rican police for bombing five San Juan hotels, Ojeda fled to the United States, after gaining his freedom on reduced bail. In New York, he was given diplomatic cover at the United Nations, from which safe position he organized the FALN (Armed Forces of National Liberation).

The FALN inaugurated its "armed struggle" with a bombing at Damrosch Park outside Lincoln Center in New York City on August 31, 1974. This was followed on September 28th with bombings at Police Headquarters and City Hall in Newark, New Jersey. It did not publicly take credit for these explosions, however, until October 26th, when it detonated a series of early morning explosions in New York City's financial district. On December 11th, New York City Police Officer Angel Poggi, age 22, was maimed and blinded by a booby-trap explosive device after being lured to an abandoned tenement building by a false report of a dead body on the premises.

On January 24, 1975, the FALN struck its most deadly blow, bombing the historic Fraunces Tavern in New York City's financial district, site of George Washington's farewell to his troops. The attack on the civilian lunch-hour crowd killed four and wounded 60. Bombings continued throughout 1975 in New York, Chicago, and Puerto Rico, culminating in a coordinated multiple-bombing attack on October 27th, on ten sites — mostly banks and government buildings — in New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Over the next several years, dozens more bombings targeted department stores, police stations, military recruitment offices, government buildings, monuments, commercial office buildings, financial institutions, train stations, and post offices.

In all, the FALN has been connected to around 150 bombings, attempted bombings, bomb threats, shootings, kidnappings, bank robberies, and other criminal acts. It is not a "nationalist" or "independence" group, as the pro-Clinton media are wont to describe the killers. The FALN is a violent, *Communist terrorist* organization.

The October 21st *Los Angeles Times*, for example, refers to the FALN merely as "radical Puerto Rican separatists," and a "Puerto Rican independence group ... which was blamed for 130 bombings in the late 1970s and early 1980," as if the FALN might be totally innocent of the charges. Similarly, the *New York Times*, on the same day, calls the brutal FALN thugs "Puerto Rican nationalists" and a "Puerto Rican independence group."

The ideologically blindered media mavens who are quick to see a terrorist in every pro-life activist, gun-rights advocate, or UN opponent refuse to see the obvious terrorist record of the FALN prisoners freed by Mr. Clinton. Associated Press reporter Shannon McCaffrey, for instance, like the rest of the Clintonite Washington press corps, dutifully regurgitated the White House line in a November 10th story which claimed that "none of those offered clemency participated in attacks that killed or wounded anyone."

Such stories shamelessly retail the lie enunciated by President Clinton when he said of the FALN: "They had served very long sentences for offenses that did not involve bodily harm to other people." By the same logic, the Clinton Justice Department would have to remove Osama bin Laden from its "top most wanted" terrorist list, since no one is suggesting that bin Laden *personally* planted the bombs in our



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Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies. Likewise, Terry Nichols would be released from prison because he was not with Tim McVeigh in Oklahoma City on the day of the bombing, and was not shown to have been directly involved in manufacturing the Ryder truck bomb that prosecutors say caused the death and destruction at the Murrah Building. Similarly, Mafia don John Gotti would be pardoned because it was never proved that he actually pulled the trigger in any of the multiple murders to which he has been tied. And narco-dictator General Manuel Noriega would be released because he was not caught selling drugs on the streets of Panama.

The Victims' Unheard Pleas

"Every day of the week all across the country, we arrest, prosecute, convict and incarcerate criminals on conspiracy charges," New York Police Department Detective Anthony Senft points out. "I think everyone knows that under the law, if you are driving the getaway car you are considered just as culpable as the guys who actually do the holdup. If you pay to have someone killed, you are just as culpable as the hit-man who pulls the trigger." "These FALN terrorists Clinton has released were not caught detonating a bomb — that almost never happens — but they were caught red-handed, with bombs and with bomb-making components and paraphernalia, and some of them actually were caught on videotape making bombs," Senft reminded *The New American*. "They were not convicted of many of the bombings that we think they perpetrated, but it is wrong for the media to state as fact that they are innocent of these crimes. The fact is that these people were a major core of the FALN bombing apparatus and when we locked them up the bombings largely stopped. I hate to say this, but I think we will see them start their bombing campaign again."

This is a very personal matter, as well as a professional one, for Detective Senft. On New Year's Eve, 1982 Detective Senft and his partner, Detective Richard Pastorella, responded to a bomb call. They were junior members of the bomb squad at the time. Three bombs had already gone off successively with devastating impact in various locations when they were called to the Federal Building in St. Andrews Square to disarm two bombs. They had just left the Manhattan Police Station, the site of a devastating blast where a gravely wounded Officer Rocco Pascarella had heroically struggled to describe to them the type of bomb that had detonated. "Here was this incredibly, incredibly courageous man, his leg blown off and his body all torn apart, and he was dragging himself on his elbows, trying to warn us that the bomb had been 4 sticks of dynamite planted in a Kentucky Fried Chicken box."

When Senft and his partner arrived at the Federal Building they found two similar packages next to two columns of the building canopy. This was a fairly busy pedestrian thoroughfare for the largely Chinese community, many of whom did not speak English. "We had to physically carry some of the Chinese people away because they didn't understand what we were trying to tell them," recalls Detective Senft. Finally a Chinese man who understood English arrived and shooed the other pedestrians away. Senft put on his bomb suit and looked inside the box. "You can imagine how that Superman sign on my chest shrunk to nothing as I saw the four sticks of dynamite, blasting cap and watch inside." As Senft and Pastorella prepared to disarm the first bomb, it detonated. "Witnesses say Rich was blown about 25 feet back, while I was blown about 15-18 feet into the air," Senft recalled. "I lost my right eye and a finger, broke my hip, had to have my whole face reconstructed, they cut my ears down, laid them down, gave me new ear drums. I lost sixty percent of the hearing on my right side and forty percent on my left, I have severe vertigo, and, of course, post-traumatic stress disorder, which comes with those kinds of injuries. Richard lost both his eyes, most of his hearing, and the fingers on his right hand."

What does Detective Senft think of President Clinton's subsequent posing with uniformed officers on



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October 21st to promote his federal COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) program? "It's a terrible insult," he says. "Clinton's actions tell would-be terrorists around the world that terrorism against the United States, its people, and its police officers is an acceptable form of demonstrating their political ideology. Richard, Rocco, and I, and our families, don't get any clemency from the pain and suffering these guys inflicted on us. There's no clemency for Joe and Tom Connor, whose dad was killed at Fraunces Tavern, or for any of the others who lost loved ones."

His partner, Richard Pastorella, is also harshly critical of Clinton's clemency ploy. "President Clinton has sent terrorists a message that the law enforcement community is expendable, and terrorists will not be pursued to the ends of the earth," Pastorella told the Senate Judiciary Committee in September.

His is a view shared by many in law enforcement. Jim Ingram, Commissioner of Public Safety for the State of Mississippi, commanded the FBI/NYPD task force in charge of investigating the FALN bombings in New York in the mid 1970s. "Those of us who serve in law enforcement in this country, and especially those who were involved in trying to bring these terrorists to justice are sickened and very concerned when we see the release of these individuals. From what I have seen, they are still committed to the overthrow of this country and have shown no remorse or reform *whatsoever*," Ingram told *The New American*. "There is no excuse for that. I am convinced they will kill again, and [Clinton] can offer no credible assurance that they will not do so."

Joseph Occhipinti, a highly decorated law enforcement veteran and executive director of the 100,000-member National Police Defense Foundation, told this magazine: "The law enforcement community is both saddened and outraged that President Clinton saw fit to grant clemency to terrorists who have attempted to kill police officers, while there are presently dedicated police officers imprisoned in federal jails for doing their sworn duty." His organization is currently working on 36 cases across the country, he says, where police officers, many with sterling records, have been unfairly prosecuted and imprisoned. "Don't our police officers deserve at least the same consideration as terrorists?" he asks.

Gilbert Gallegos, president of the Fraternal Order of Police, representing more than 283,000 members, is not about to pardon Clinton's clemency gambit. In an August 18th letter to President Clinton, Gallegos said he was writing "to express our *vehement opposition* to your offer of clemency to sixteen convicted felons involved with a wave of terrorist bomb attacks on U.S. soil from 1974-83." "I would also like to express my own personal confusion and anger at your decision," Gallegos wrote. "As an Hispanic-American myself, I can assure you that releasing violent convicted felons before they have served their full sentences and to waive tens of thousands of dollars in criminal fines, is no way to appeal to racial pride."

When President Clinton carried through with the FALN prisoner release, Gallegos, who had previously supported Clinton's COPS program, joined FALN victims and other law enforcement officials at a press conference condemning the action. "We should make no mistake," said Gallegos. "The president has used his constitutional power to release convicted terrorists, despite the opposition of federal law enforcement officials, despite objections from the law enforcement community and despite the pleas of the victims and families of the dead — killed in their wave of bomb attacks."

Lieutenant Commander Raul A. Velez, who commands the Naval and Marine reserves in Albuquerque, New Mexico, believes his views reflect those of far more Puerto Ricans than the press reports indicate. "I am outraged," Velez told *The New American*, "by media coverage which presents stories about the FALN prison release, for instance, showing crowds of Puerto Ricans celebrating, as if this represents the consensus of Puerto Ricans. In truth, every time it has been put to a vote, we have rejected



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independence *overwhelmingly*. At most, about 2.5 percent have supported independence, and only a very small portion of that tiny percentage actually support the FALN, Macheteros, etc. in the use of terrorism to achieve it. These criminals are murdering *terrorists*, not heroes, and as a Puerto Rican and a man who wears the uniform of the U.S. military service, I am deeply offended by President Clinton's clemency for these people. That should never have happened."

How and Why?

Just how and why this travesty *did* happen is still the subject of ongoing congressional investigations. But Mr. Clinton has weathered plenty of those already and is, no doubt, supremely confident that his professional cabal of spinmeisters, stonewallers, and obstructionists will pull him through another scrape. Conventional wisdom has it that Mr. Clinton grabbed the clemency straw to boost Hillary's and Al's election chances with New York's large Puerto Rican community.

Although Mr. Clinton has (once again) claimed executive privilege and refused to release records sought by House and Senate committees looking into the matter and blocked the testimony of Justice Department and federal law enforcement personnel, some revealing documents have slipped out. One is a March 6, 1999 e-mail memo from Jeffrey Farrow, chairman of Clinton's interagency group on Puerto Rico. "The VP's Puerto Rican position would be helped" by the clemency, said Farrow, who noted that the issue was important to Representatives Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), José Serrano (D-NY), and Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), three of the staunchest leftists in the Hispanic Caucus.

The next day, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste relayed Farrow's ideas to White House Counsel Charles Ruff, who was handling the clemency question. "Chuck — Jeff's right about this — very hot issue," her e-mail said. A "very hot issue" indeed, it seems. Apparently Chuck, Jeff, Maria, et al, soon had this issue on Bill's front burner.

In fact, Team Clinton was soon breaking all the rules to spring the FALN darlings from jail. There were some minor obstacles to overcome, of course: The Justice Department, the federal Pardon Attorney, the FBI, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons had all advised against pardoning the terrorists. In her September 1999 report on terrorist activities, Attorney General Janet Reno even called the FALN an "ongoing threat to national security." Moreover, said the Reno report: "Factors which increase the present threat from these groups include ... the impending release from prison of members of these groups jailed for prior violence." Apparently it was written for her by one of the few sensible, patriotic souls who still survive (or did at that time, at least) at Clinton/Reno Justice. No one, of course, expected Reno to stand by these words with anything remotely resembling conviction, much less to resign in protest over her boss' despicable course of action, as if her oath of office really meant something to her. Ditto for Louis Freeh at the FBI.

"The Justice department took extraordinary steps to enhance the chances for clemency," the *New York Times* reported on October 21st. Documents show, said the *Times*, that the terrorists "did not apply for clemency personally, as is usually required, but department officials processed an application anyway. Under department regulations, a personal application is usually required to start the process, because such a move is taken as a sign of remorse for the criminal act."

"Department officials acknowledged in internal memorandums," reported the *Times*, "that it was highly unusual even to consider clemency in cases in which the prisoners themselves declined to file their own applications." Running this "highly unusual" operation at Justice, it seems, were Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder and the new Pardon Attorney Roger C. Adams (who replaced Margaret C. Love, the



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Pardon Attorney who had recommended against clemency).

The *Times* reported:

On April 9, 1998, according to Mr. Adams' notes, he contacted a staff aide to Rep. Gutierrez and said the department had not received any statement of remorse. The notes show that Mr. Adams counseled the staff aide as to how the statement should be worded for maximum effect. In the end, the prisoners provided a long ambiguous statement, with no explicit statement of regret.

FALN's Remorseless Plea

The FALN statement said "innocent victims were on all sides." That's as close as the defiant FALN cadres ever came to contrition. In fact, FALN clemency recipients Luis Rosa and Alicia Rodriguez, together with Carlos Torres, who is still in jail, told the *Chicago Tribune* in October 1995 that they "have nothing to be sorry for and have no intention of renouncing armed revolution." Ricardo Jimenez threatened the judge in his case, "We're going to fight; revolutionary justice will take care of you and everybody else." The Senate Judiciary Committee released the transcript of a prison phone conversation in which Adolfo Matos said he reveled in the memory of his 1970s activism because he had the chance "to give my life for something I believe in ... for the justice of my people. In this manner I get involved. And my desire has gotten stronger."

The folks at Clinton/Reno Justice not only accepted the remorseless plea, but have also allowed the released felons to violate the usual conditions of probation and parole that permit no fraternization with other criminals. "We plan to be together, all of us," Ida Luz Rodriguez said outside the courthouse in San Juan. "Being in jail has not broken my spirit."

"According to news and intelligence reports," says Detective Anthony Senft, "the FALN are socializing, meeting, having a good time — they have special privileges." That certainly appears to be the case, even before they got out of prison. "They were allowed to have an unprecedented 16-way phone hookup between all the prisoners at the different prisons, so they could come to agreement on their statement," says Senft. "The terrorists and their lawyers had regular sit-down meetings with the Clinton people, but those of us who are the victims of their crimes had been writing to the White House and Justice for two years on this matter and have never even received the courtesy of a response."

Although we have not confirmed at this point that the released FALN convicts personally have been involved in the illegal demonstrations at Vieques Island, their *independentista* compadres definitely are involved. The Senate has released the July 21st letter Mr. Clinton had received from Ruben Berrios Martinez, the president of the separatist Partido Independentista Puertorriqueña. Martinez made clear that his letter was being sent from the beach of the Vieques live-fire range — where he and others were then engaged in criminal trespass. His letter read:

As you know, we have successfully interrupted the Navy's bombing and I have pledged to remain here until the Navy formally declares its intention to leave Vieques, or until I am arrested. By now I have spent roughly the same amount of time on this beach as I spent in prison in 1971.

[I also want to] bring to your attention once more the plight of Puerto Ricans who have languished in U.S. prisons during almost two decades, for activities related to their struggle for Puerto Rico's independence.... The international community views them as political prisoners, not common criminals, who deserve the exercise of your constitutional powers of executive clemency without delay.



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Incredibly, instead of ordering military police to arrest the criminal violators, and despite the advice of all his top military advisors on the importance of Vieques to U.S. national security, President Clinton sent the following note to his National Security Advisor, Samuel “Sandy” Berger:

Sandy

- 1) I agree with this — this is wrong. I think they don’t want us there. That’s the main point. The Navy can find a way to work around it —
- 2) What about the prisoners Need Reply

No reply from Sandy Berger has been produced yet, but about three weeks after this inquiry, on August 11th, Clinton announced his clemency decision.

Throughout his first six years in the White House, Bill Clinton had been presented with over 3,000 clemency requests. He had granted only three. Why the sudden clemency rush for a bunch of terrorists who hadn’t even applied for the favor? Unfortunately, there is a far more sinister motive at work here than merely buying Puerto Rican votes for Hillary and Al. It concerns the full-scale Clintonista undermining of U.S. national security in general, and its attack on our Caribbean and hemispheric security in particular.

The FALN terrorist release, keep in mind, has taken place concomitantly with the administration’s push to turn over the Panama Canal to Red China, normalize relations with Fidel Castro’s Cuba, and abandon our military bases on Puerto Rico. The current campaign against our base at Vieques is a continuation of a decades-old campaign by the Castro-backed FALN and its allies. Previously, the comrades focused their demonstrations at the Navy gunnery range on Culebra Island. But when Richard Nixon gave them Culebra, they were not appeased; the radicals switched their focus to Vieques. Having already given up our bases in Panama, surrendering Vieques will be another major step toward turning the Caribbean into a Red Sea dominated by Russia, China, and Cuba.



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