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Big Media Reporters Cover Up Evidence of Letelier as Cuban Agent

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Just four years ago, in September 1976, Orlando Letelier was assassinated in Washington, D.C. Letelier had been the Chilean ambassador to the United States and later a cabinet officer in the Marxist Allende government of Chile. He had been imprisoned by the military government that overthrew Allende in 1973, but he was later released and allowed to go into exile. Coming to Washington, he was gone to work for the Institute for Policy Studies, a radical think tank. One of his main activities was to work for the overthrow of the military government in Chile. He said that he was working for the restoration of human rights in his native land.

The Letelier assassination shocked the nation, and it brought forth numerous articles in the press and stories on television, first at the time of the murder, and later when three men were arrested and convicted for the crime. It continued to attract widespread attention when the U.S. government sought the extradition of the Chilean intelligence chief, charging that he had ordered the murder of Letelier. The affair has come in for additional publicity this year with the publication of a new book about the case, and most recently when a federal court ordered new trials for three anti-Castro Cubans who had been convicted of participation in Letelier's assassination.

Despite all the thousands of words that have been written and spoken about the Letelier case, almost nothing has been said about the papers found in Letelier's briefcase at the time of his death. These documents showed that Letelier was regularly receiving \$1,000 a month from Cuba and that he hoped to eventually do for Chile what Castro had done for Cuba. The real Letelier was hardly the fighter for human rights and democracy that the public Letelier pretended to be.

Many of these revealing documents were leaked to some members of the press late in 1976. They were discussed by some syndicated columnists, but they were virtually ignored by news reporters. There seemed to be a feeling by many in the media that it was inappropriate to expose to public view the evidence that Orlando Letelier was a Cuban agent. It

was even suggested that those who sought to reveal this information were trying to condone his assassination.

That is ridiculous. The media did not refrain from saying unsavory things about Anastasio Somoza for fear of being accused of condoning his assassination. They have an obligation to the public to tell the truth about Letelier.

FBI Files Released

Accuracy in Media has obtained the Letelier briefcase papers from the FBI, using a freedom of information request. This complete file shows that Letelier was working closely with Cuban intelligence and that he had ties to both the East Germans and the Soviets. He was being paid regularly from Havana, and he was very anxious to keep the Cuban connection secret, knowing that its exposure would impair his effectiveness. In one letter to his paymaster, the Chilean wife of a high ranking Cuban intelligence officer, Letelier boasted of his "apparatus" in the United States. He had persuaded a number of prestigious Americans to serve as a facade. Letelier warned that care should be taken to keep the Cuban connection secret. He feared any hint of that would cause some of his liberal sponsors to resign. "You know how these 'liberals' are," he wrote.

The evidence in the files indicates that Julian Rizo, Castro's top spy in the U.S., was Letelier's "control." Rizo was stationed at the UN in 1975. He is now ambassador to Castro's client state, Grenada. He and Letelier were in frequent contact. Letelier was also in touch with another top Cuban intelligence agent, Teofilo Acosta. His address book contained home and office phone numbers for the Cuban foreign minister and the head of the Cuban Communist Party, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. The address book also shows that Letelier had excellent journalist contacts in the U.S., especially at the *Washington Post*.

The briefcase papers provide a glimpse of the secret activities of an important agent of influence for the Soviet bloc. The failure of the media to tell the story is one more indication of how vulnerable this country has become to manipulation by the agents of influence and disinformation of our enemies.