

Ana Belen Montes: buried alive

by Karen Lee Wald (2012)

An article in Miami's virulently anti-Castro*El Nuevo Herald* Mar. 19, 2002* (only in Spanish) declared that Ana Belen Montes pled guilty in order to save her life.* It went on to say that the 45 year old principal analyst for Cuban affairs at the Pentagon (Defense Intelligence Agency –DIA -- Dept Senior Analyst) admitted she had been passing information to the Cuban government since 1985. She could have been given the death penalty, but the lawyer made a deal with the federal attorney for her to get 25 years in prison without parole plus 5 years probation [she'd be 75 years old at the end of that time] . The article added that in exchange she must help authorities in their investigations of Cuban espionage in the US and against US interests abroad. **"She has to tell us everything she knows and she'd better not forget anything"** was the threat the Nuevo Herald reporter passed on from "a source in the intelligence community." One has to wonder what the "or else" was if she didn't fully comply with that demand, especially given what has happened to her since. What's not included in that article is that her attorney was hired and agreed to represent her **only** to work out the "plea deal" –the sentence and conditions after she admitted guilt. His sole role was to see that she wasn't given the death penalty –which in 2001-02 seemed likely. In exchange, however, he **also** agreed to the conditions that she be allowed **NO VISITS, PHONE CALLS OR LETTERS** from anyone other than her immediate family. As has been widely reported, her father was a conservative lifetime military officer and her brother a member of the FBI. (Nothing has been reported about her mother. The family is Puerto Rican but has lived on military bases around the world. Don't know if both her parents are still alive or where they live or whether they visit her. If deceased, her only permitted visitor would be her FBI brother. Don't know if he visits her or not).

She is not allowed books, newspapers or any other reading material.

She is not even allowed to mingle with the general prison population. If she is taken out of her cell in the isolation unit for any reason, all other prisoners are locked in their cells so they cannot speak to her. **Basically, she has been buried alive.** She has been locked away **at FMC Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas.**

FMC Carswell is listed by the [Federal Bureau of Prisons](#) as a facility located in the northeast corner of the Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth, which provides *specialized medical and mental health services to female offenders*.

Montes had no physical or mental problems at the time of her sentencing. What has happened to her since to put her in Carswell?

Montes is listed as FMC Register #25037-016. Her tentative release date is listed as July 1, 2023. There is at present no [parole](#) in the US federal prison system. The Federal Bureau of Prisons has a website where you can search for information about prisoners by name/number. A journalist, clergyman or human rights professional should be able to ask why she is being held in a health facility (what's wrong with her? What treatment is she receiving?) and why has she been given

such incredibly restrictive punishment as the denial of all forms of outside communication, even via phone or letter, not to mention visits. It really is as though she's been buried alive. A UN HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST TOLD ME THAT THESE RESTRICTIONS VIOLATE BASIC INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED NORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THAT THEY ARE VIOLATIONS EVEN IF A DEFENDANT OR HER ATTORNEY AGREED TO THEM, SINCE 1) IT WAS UNDER DURESS (THREAT OF EXECUTION) AND 2) YOU CAN'T "AGREE" TO VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. This person also said the International Committee of the Red Cross would have the right to visit her and ask questions about her physical and mental health status, but initial inquiries with the IRC representative in Geneva indicated otherwise. The former UN human rights worker also said that members of various UN human rights and arbitrary detention commissions could also look into her case. Although her detention itself wasn't arbitrary (she did in fact commit espionage), the conditions under which she is being held clearly are, according to international law.

Things that human rights activists, clergy, journalists and others should be asking: Why is she prevented from having any visitors, mail or phone calls?(unlike all other prisoners) Why is she kept in isolation? Why is she in a medical facility?

What's wrong with her? How is she being treated for it?

Who is attending to her? Has she had the right to have an outside doctor confirm the diagnosis? (prisoners with defense committees or good lawyers get this. She has had no lawyer since her sentencing and never had a defense committee until now, when committees have formed in 29 countries seeking to obtain the most elemental human rights for her.)

Why isn't she allowed to be in the general prison population. What is the pretext used for keeping her in isolation (something allowable in Federal prisons in cases of espionage for up to one year, not for 14 years)?

Has she ever had any visitors? Has her family ever visited her/ How often?

What about a spiritual adviser?

These and more are the questions that should be asked, in letters to prison authorities, President Obama and the world.

Again, in summary: why isn't she being allowed to have the same rights other prisoners have who are serving their sentences for crimes they committed?

Note:

I thought that at the very least, the International Committee of the Red Cross has the right to visit her and learn what her medical condition is, and if she actually has some physical or mental condition, what caused it and what treatment she is receiving, but that may not be the case, according to the response from the representative in Geneva. A friend wrote his response was that the international red cross only visits prisoners who were captured in relation to an armed conflict; and he said that in the case of the US, that means the

international red cross only visits detention camps outside the US. He then says that international law is not very logical but complicated and often the regional chapters find ways around these restrictions and suggests that you contact ICRC regional delegation, 1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20036, Phone: 1202 – 5874600.

Karen Lee Wald, author of "Children of Che: Child Care and Education in Cuba" (Ramparts Press), has written about Cuba for over four decades, including two from inside Cuba, and continues to regularly visit and report from the island. She circulates a private list, Cuba-Inside-Out.