
Obama Failed his Coup in Venezuela

26/02/2015



President Obama had given a warning. In his new doctrine of Defence (*National Security Strategy*), he wrote: "We stand with citizens whose full exercise of democracy is in danger, as the Venezuelans." Yet, Venezuela is, since the adoption of the 1999 constitution, one of the most democratic countries in the world. This sentence presaged the worst to prevent it from continuing its path to independence and wealth redistribution.

It was on February 6, 2015. Washington was finishing developing the plan for the overthrow of the democratic institutions of Venezuela. The coup was planned for February 12.

"Operation Jericho" was supervised by the National Security Council (NSC), under the authority of Ricardo Zuñiga. This "diplomat" is the grandson of the homonymous president of the Honduran National Party who organized the coups of 1963 and 1972 in favor of General López Arellano. He directed the CIA station in Havana (2009-11), where he recruited and financed agents to form the opposition to Fidel Castro while negotiating the resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba (finally concluded in 2014).

As always in this type of operation, Washington is careful to not appear involved in the events it leads. The CIA works through supposedly non-governmental organizations to organize coup leaders: the National Endowment for Democracy and its two pseudopods of the right (the International Republican Institute) and left (the National Democratic Institute) Freedom House and the International Center for Non-Profit Law. In addition, the United States always seeks allies to outsource parts of the coup, in this case at least Germany (responsible for the protection of NATO nationals during the coup), Canada (responsible for controlling the civilian international airport in Caracas), Israel (responsible for the assassination of Chavez personalities) and the UK (in charge of the propaganda coup). Finally, they mobilize their political networks that are ready to recognize the coup: Washington Senator Marco Rubio, former Chile president, Sebastián Piñera, in Colombia former Presidents Alvaro Uribe and Andres Pastrana, in Mexico the former presidents Felipe Calderón and Vicente Fox, in Spain the former President of the Government José María Aznar.

To justify the coup, the White House had encouraged large Venezuelan companies to warehouse rather than distribute essential commodities. The idea was to cause queues at the shops, and to infiltrate agents into the crowd to cause riots. In reality, though there had been supply problems in January-February and queues in front of stores, never did Venezuelans attack shops.

To strengthen its economic action, on December 18, 2014, President Obama signed a law imposing new sanctions against Venezuela and several of its leaders. Officially, this was to punish individuals who had suppressed student protests. In fact, since the beginning of the year, Washington was paying four times the medium salary income - to gangs so that they would attack the police. The pseudo-students had thus killed 43 people in a few months and spread terror in the streets of the capital.

Military action was overseen by General Thomas W. Geary, from SOUTHCOM in Miami, and Rebecca Chavez, from the Pentagon, and outsourced to a private army, Academi (formerly Blackwater); a company now administered by Admiral Bobby R. Inman (former head of the NSA) and John Ashcroft (the former Attorney General of the Bush administration). A Super Tucano, registered N314TG, purchased by the Virginia firm in 2008 to assassinate Raul Reyes, the No. 2 man in the Colombian FARC, was to be disguised as an airplane of the Venezuelan army. It was supposed to bomb the Miraflores presidential palace and other targets from a pre-determined dozen, including the Ministry of Defence, the management of Intelligence at the ALBA, Telesur television channel. The plane, being parked in Colombia, the operational headquarters of "Jericho" had been installed at the US Embassy in Bogota with the participation of the Ambassador, Kevin Whitaker and his deputy, Benjamin Ziff.

Some senior officers, active or retired, had registered in advance a message to the nation in which they announced the takeover of power in order to restore order. They were scheduled to subscribe to the transition plan, published on February 12 in the morning by El Nacional and drafted by the US State Department. A new government would have been formed, led by former MP María Corina Machado.

María Corina Machado was the president of Súmate, the association that organized and lost the recall referendum against Hugo Chávez Frias, in 2004, already with money from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the French advertising services of Jacques Seguela. Despite her defeat, she was received with honor by President George W. Bush in the Oval Office, May 31, 2005. Elected representative of Miranda state in 2011, she suddenly appeared on 21 March 2014 as Chief of the Panamanian delegation to the Organization of American States (OAS). She was immediately dismissed from her duties as a member for violation of sections 149 and 191 of the Constitution.

To facilitate the coordination of the coup, María Corina Machado organized a symposium in Caracas on January 26, "Citizen Power and Democracy today", which was attended by most of the Venezuelan and foreign personalities involved.

No luck, Venezuelan Military Intelligence watched personalities suspected of hatching a previous plot to assassinate President Maduro. Last May, the Caracas prosecutor had accused María Corina Machado, Henrique Salas Römer, governor, former diplomat Diego Arria, lawyer Gustavo Tarre Birceño, Eligio Cedeño, banker and businessman Pedro M. Burelli, but they challenged emails, claiming they had been falsified by Military Intelligence. Of course, they were all in cahoots.

By tracking these conspirators, Military Intelligence discovered "Operation Jericho". On the night of February 11, the main leaders of the plot and a Mossad agent were arrested and aviation security was enhanced. Others were rounded up on the 12th. On the 20th, confessions obtained permitted the arrest of an accomplice, the mayor of Caracas, Antonio Ledezma.

President Nicolas Maduro immediately intervened on television to denounce the conspirators. Meanwhile in Washington, the spokesman for the State Department was joking with journalists who remembered the coup in Honduras organized by Obama in 2009 - for Latin America - or, more recently, the attempted coup in Macedonia in January, 2015 - for the rest of the world -, stating: "These charges, like all previous ones, are ridiculous. It is a matter of long-standing policy: the United States does not support political transitions through unconstitutional means. Political transitions must be democratic, constitutional, peaceful and legal. We have seen repeatedly that the Venezuelan government is trying to divert attention from its own actions by accusing the United States or other members of the international community of responsibility for the events in Venezuela. These efforts reflect a lack of seriousness on the part of the Government of Venezuela to cope with the serious situation it faces. »

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Published on Cuba Si (<http://cubasi.cu>)

For Venezuelans the failed coup poses a serious question: how do we keep democracy alive, if the main opposition leaders are in jail for the crimes they were about to commit against democracy?

For those who think, wrongly, that the United States has changed, that it is no longer an imperialist power and that now it defends democracy in the world, "Operation Jericho" provides endless food for thought.
