

Operation Destabilize Venezuela and the Secret US Embassy Cables: Infiltrate, “Divide Chavismo”, “Isolate Chavez Internationally”

Would you believe that the United States tried to do something that was not nice against Hugo Chávez?

By [William Blum](#)

Global Research, April 09, 2013

[The Anti-Empire Report](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean, USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

Wikileaks has done it again. I guess the US will really have to get tough now with Julian Assange and Bradley Manning.

In a secret US cable to the State Department, dated November 9, 2006, and recently published online by WikiLeaks, former US ambassador to Venezuela, William Brownfield, outlines a comprehensive plan to destabilize the government of the late President Hugo Chávez. The cable begins with a Summary:

During his 8 years in power, President Chavez has systematically dismantled the institutions of democracy and governance. The USAID/OTI program objectives in Venezuela focus on strengthening democratic institutions and spaces through non-partisan cooperation with many sectors of Venezuelan society.

USAID/OTI = United States Agency for International Development/Office of Transition Initiatives. The latter is one of the many euphemisms that American diplomats use with each other and the world - They say it means a transition to “democracy”. What it actually means is a transition from the target country adamantly refusing to cooperate with American imperialist grand designs to a country gladly willing (or acceding under pressure) to cooperate with American imperialist grand designs.

OTI supports the Freedom House (FH) “Right to Defend Human Rights” program with \$1.1 million. Simultaneously through Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI), OTI has also provided 22 grants to human rights organizations.

Freedom House is one of the oldest US government conduits for transitioning to “democracy”; to a significant extent it equates “democracy” and “human rights” with free enterprise. Development Alternatives Inc. is the organization that sent Alan Gross to Cuba on a mission to help implement the US government’s operation of regime change.

OTI speaks of working to improve “the deteriorating human rights situation in” Venezuela. Does anyone know of a foreign government with several millions of dollars to throw around who would like to improve the seriously deteriorating human rights situation in the United

States? They can start with the round-the-clock surveillance and the unconscionable entrapment of numerous young “terrorists” guilty of thought crimes.

“OTI partners are training NGOs [non-governmental organizations] to be activists and become more involved in advocacy.”

Now how’s that for a self-given license to fund and get involved in any social, economic or political activity that can sabotage any program of the Chávez government and/or make it look bad? The US ambassador’s cable points out that:

OTI has directly reached approximately 238,000 adults through over 3000 forums, workshops and training sessions delivering alternative values and providing opportunities for opposition activists to interact with hard-core Chavistas, with the desired effect of pulling them slowly away from Chavismo. We have supported this initiative with 50 grants totaling over \$1.1 million.

“Another key Chavez strategy,” the cable continues, “is his attempt to divide and polarize Venezuelan society using rhetoric of hate and violence. OTI supports local NGOs who work in Chavista strongholds and with Chavista leaders, using those spaces to counter this rhetoric and promote alliances through working together on issues of importance to the entire community.”

This is the classical neo-liberal argument against any attempt to transform a capitalist society – The revolutionaries are creating class conflict. But of course, the class conflict was already there, and nowhere more embedded and distasteful than in Latin America.

OTI funded 54 social projects all over the country, at over \$1.2 million, allowing [the] Ambassador to visit poor areas of Venezuela and demonstrate US concern for the Venezuelan people. This program fosters confusion within the Bolivarian ranks, and pushes back at the attempt of Chavez to use the United States as a ‘unifying enemy.’

One has to wonder if the good ambassador (now an Assistant Secretary of State) placed any weight or value at all on the election and re-election by decisive margins of Chávez and the huge masses of people who repeatedly filled the large open squares to passionately cheer him. When did such things last happen in the ambassador’s own country? Where was his country’s “concern for the Venezuelan people” during the decades of highly corrupt and dictatorial regimes? His country’s embassy in Venezuela in that period was not plotting anything remotely like what is outlined in this cable.

The cable summarizes the focus of the embassy’s strategy’s as: “1) Strengthening Democratic Institutions, 2) Penetrating Chavez’ Political Base, 3) Dividing Chavismo, 4) Protecting Vital US business, and 5) Isolating Chavez internationally.” [1](#)

The stated mission for the Office of Transition Initiatives is: “To support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis.” [2](#)

Notice the key word – “crisis”. For whom was Hugo Chávez’s Venezuela a “crisis”? For the people of Venezuela or the people who own and operate United States, Inc.?

Imagine a foreign country's embassy, agencies and NGOs in the United States behaving as the American embassy, OTI, and NGOs did in Venezuela. President Putin of Russia recently tightened government controls over foreign NGOs out of such concern. As a result, he of course has been branded by the American government and media as a throwback to the Soviet Union.

Under pressure from the Venezuelan government, the OTI's office in Venezuela was closed in 2010.

For our concluding words of wisdom, class, here's Charles Shapiro, US ambassador to Venezuela from 2002 to 2004, speaking recently of the Venezuelan leaders: "I think they really believe it, that we are out there at some level to do them ill." [3](#)

The latest threats to life as we know it

Last month numerous foreign-policy commentators marked the tenth anniversary of the fateful American bombing and invasion of Iraq. Those who condemned the appalling devastation of the Iraqi people and their society emphasized that it had all been a terrible mistake, since Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein didn't actually possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This is the same argument we've heard repeatedly during the past ten years from most opponents of the war.

But of the many lies - explicit or implicit - surrounding the war in Iraq, the biggest one of all is that if, in fact, Saddam Hussein had had those WMD the invasion would have been justified; that in such case Iraq would indeed have been a threat to the United States or to Israel or to some other country equally decent, innocent and holy. However, I must ask as I've asked before: What possible reason would Saddam Hussein have had for attacking the United States or Israel other than an irresistible desire for mass national suicide? He had no reason, no more than the Iranians do today. No more than the Soviets had during the decades of the Cold War. No more than North Korea has ever had since the United States bombed them in the early 1950s.

Yet last month the new Defense Secretary, Chuck Hagel, announced that he would strengthen United States defenses against a possible attack by [supposedly] nuclear-equipped North Korea, positioning 14 additional missile interceptors in Alaska and California at an estimated cost of \$1 billion. So much for the newest Great White Hope. Does it ever matter who the individuals are who are occupying the highest offices of the US foreign-policy establishment? Or their gender or their color?

"Oh," many people argued, "Saddam Hussein was so crazy who knew what he might do?" But when it became obvious in late 2002 that the US was intent upon invading Iraq, Saddam opened up the country to the UN weapons inspectors much more than ever before, offering virtually full cooperation. This was not the behavior of a crazy person; this was the behavior of a survivalist. He didn't even use any WMD when he was invaded by the United States in 1991 ("the first Gulf War"), when he certainly had such weapons. Moreover, the country's vice president, Tariq Aziz, went on major American television news programs to assure the American people and the world that Iraq no longer had any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons; and we now know that Iraq had put out peace feelers in early 2003 hoping to prevent the war. The Iraqi leaders were not crazy at all. Unless one believes that to oppose US foreign policy you have to be crazy. Or suicidal.

It can as well be argued that American leaders were crazy to carry out the Iraqi invasion in the face of *tens of millions* of people at home and around the world protesting against it, pleading with the Bush gang not to unleash the horrors. (How many demonstrations were there in support of the invasion?)

In any event, the United States did not invade Iraq because of any threat of an attack using WMD. Washington leaders did not themselves believe that Iraq possessed such weapons of any significant quantity or potency. Amongst the sizable evidence supporting this claim we have the fact that they would not have exposed hundreds of thousands of soldiers on the ground.

Nor can it be argued that mere possession of such weapons - or the belief of same - was reason enough to take action, for then the United States would have to invade Russia, France, Israel, et al.

I have written much of the above in previous editions of this report, going back to 2003. But I'm afraid that I and other commentators will have to be repeating these observations for years to come. Myths that reinforce official government propaganda die hard. The mainstream media act like they don't see through them, while national security officials thrive on them to give themselves a mission, to enhance their budgets, and further their personal advancement. The Washington Post recently reported: "A year into his tenure, the country's young leader, Kim Jong Un, has proved even more bellicose than his father, North Korea's longtime ruler, disappointing U.S. officials who had hoped for a fresh start with the regime." [4](#)

Yeah, right, can't you just see those American officials shaking their heads and exclaiming: "Damn, what do we have to do to get those North Korean fellows to trust us?" Well, they could start by ending the many international sanctions they impose on North Korea. They could discontinue arming and training South Korean military forces. And they could stop engaging in provocative fly-overs, ships cruising the waters, and military exercises along with South Korea, Australia, and other countries dangerously close to the North. The *Wall Street Journal* reported:

The first show of force came on March 8, during the U.S.-South Korean exercise, known as Foal Eagle, when long-range B-52 bombers conducted low-altitude maneuvers. A few weeks later, in broad daylight, two B-2 bombers sent from a Missouri air base dropped dummy payloads on a South Korean missile range.

U.S. intelligence agencies, as had been planned, reviewed the North's responses. After those flights, the North responded as the Pentagon and intelligence agencies had expected, with angry rhetoric, threatening to attack the South and the U.S.

On Sunday, the U.S. flew a pair of advanced F-22s to South Korea, which prompted another angry response from the North. [5](#)

And the United States could stop having wet dreams about North Korea collapsing, enabling the US to establish an American military base right at the Chinese border.

As to North Korea's frequent threats ... yes, they actually outdo the United States in bellicosity, lies, and stupidity. But their threats are not to be taken any more seriously than

Washington's oft expressed devotion to democracy and freedom. When it comes to doing actual harm to other peoples, the North Koreans are not in the same league as the empire.

"Everyone is concerned about miscalculation and the outbreak of war. But the sense across the U.S. government is that the North Koreans are not going to wage all-out war," a senior Obama administration official said. "They are interested first and foremost in regime survival." [6](#)

American sovereignty hasn't faced a legitimate foreign threat to its existence since the British in 1812.

The marvelous world of Freedom of Speech

So, the United States and its Western partners have banned Iranian TV from North America and in various European countries. Did you hear about that? Probably not if you're not on the mailing list of *PressTV*, the 24-hour English-Language Iranian news channel. According to *PressTV*:

The Iranian film channel, iFilm, as well as Iranian radio stations, have also been banned from sensitive Western eyes and ears, all such media having been removed in February from the Galaxy 19 satellite platform serving the United States and Canada.

In December the Spanish satellite company, Hispasat, terminated the broadcast of the Iranian Spanish-language channel Hispan TV. Hispasat is partly owned by Eutelsat, whose French-Israeli CEO is blamed for the recent wave of attacks on Iranian media in Europe.

The American Jewish Committee has welcomed these developments. AJC Executive Director David Harris has acknowledged that the committee had for months been engaged in discussions with the Spaniards over taking Iranian channels off the air. [7](#)

A careful search of the Lexis-Nexis data base of international media reveals that not one English-language print newspaper, broadcast station, or news agency in the world has reported on the *PressTV* news story since it appeared February 8. One Internet newspaper, *Digital Journal*, ran the story on February 10.

The United States, Canada, Spain, and France are thus amongst those countries proudly celebrating their commitment to the time-honored concept of freedom of speech. Other nations of "The Free World" cannot be far behind as Washington continues to turn the screws of Iranian sanctions still tighter.

In his classic *1984*, George Orwell defined "doublethink" as "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them." In the United States, the preferred label given by the Ministry of Truth to such hypocrisy is "American exceptionalism", which manifests itself in the assertion of a divinely ordained mission as well in the insistence on America's right to apply double standards in its own favor and reject "moral equivalence".

The use of sanctions to prevent foreign media from saying things that Washington has decided *should not be said* is actually a marked improvement over previous American methods. For example, on October 8, 2001, the second day of the US bombing of Afghanistan, the transmitters for the Taliban government's Radio Shari were bombed and

shortly after this the US bombed some 20 regional radio sites. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld defended the targeting of these facilities, saying: "Naturally, they cannot be considered to be free media outlets. They are mouthpieces of the Taliban and those harboring terrorists." [8](#) And in Yugoslavia, in 1999, during the infamous 78-bombing of the Balkan country which posed no threat at all to the United States, state-owned *Radio Television Serbia* (RTS) was targeted because it was broadcasting things *which the United States and NATO did not like* (like how much horror the bombing was causing). The bombs took the lives of many of the station's staff, and both legs of one of the survivors, which had to be amputated to free him from the wreckage. Notes

1. [Read the full memo.](#) ↵
2. [USAID Transition Initiatives Website](#) ↵
3. Washington Post, January 10, 2013 ↵
4. Washington Post, March 16, 2013 ↵
5. Wall Street Journal, April 3, 2013 ↵
6. Ibid. ↵
7. [PressTV news release](#) ↵
8. Index on Censorship online, the UK's leading organization promoting freedom of expression, October 18, 2001 ↵
9. The Independent (London), April 24, 1999, p.1 ↵

The original source of this article is [The Anti-Empire Report](#)
Copyright © [William Blum](#), [The Anti-Empire Report](#), 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [William Blum](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca