

# Pentagon Bracing for a Snap Offensive Against Venezuela

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The US SOUTHCOM electronic surveillance base has been functioning in Aruba for several years. One day, an individual looking like a typical American, wearing shorts, a Hawaii shirt, and sunglasses, walked into it effortlessly and started roaming around. The US marines must have been too tired of the heat and assumed he actually was one of their countrymen – the base has been hosting numbers of visitors from the US recently amid the preparations for serious operations against Venezuela.

The visitor moved across the site with its standard blocks, glanced at the impressively proportioned radar and froze by the door to a large room with four giant screens in it. The screens were showing the contours of Venezuela's Tachira and Zulia states and the locations of military installations, tank parks, aerodromes, and army bases as well as Venezuela's industrial infrastructure including oil fields, refineries, pipelines, and plants. Even a brief look made it clear that the Caribbean coast and the west of Venezuela were under permanent surveillance from the base.

The Western media say nothing about the buildup of the US surveillance activity at Aruba and Curacao bases and generally filter away any information concerning the US espionage targeting Venezuela. The US intelligence services are spying on the country from Columbia, Puerto-Rica, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Washington wants to know everything about Venezuela's military capabilities and mobilization plans, to assess the level of loyalty to the government in the ranks of the country's officer corps and the combat readiness of its armed forces, and to find out to what extent those are prepared to engage in long-term "asymmetric" guerrilla warfare.

The US was alarmed by H. Chavez's statement that the seizure of Venezuela's oil fields and refineries would be prevented at any cost in the case of US aggression. Did he mean blowing up the infrastructures?

Pentagon planners are no less worried over the potential strengthening of leftist guerrilla fronts in Columbia and their mushrooming in the Latin American countries currently hosting US military bases. The CIA and NSA regarded it as a cause for concern that leftist groups emerged in Mexico, the traditional backyard of the US. Mexican guerrillas have already claimed responsibility for several acts of sabotage at oil pipeline networks. In fact, Mexico's Chiapas state has been de facto controlled for years by the guerrilla groups led by the legendary Subcommandante Marcos who clearly would not opt for neutrality in case the US attacks Venezuela, the country which contributed a lot to the Indian cause in Latin America.

No doubt, any aggressive steps taken by the US would trigger overall radicalization across the continent. It is already obvious that the comeback of the right in several Latin American countries and the reversion to the ruthless liberal economic course that ensued are meeting with widespread opposition and that the rise of new populist regimes in the region is only a matter of time. Mexico and Peru, the countries where F. Calderon and A. Garcia were propelled to power by the US financial and propaganda support regardless of how the poorest strata of the populations felt about the developments, are the prime candidates.

There will be no chance to contain the spread of populism reflecting mass discontent with poverty and with the prosperity being limited to a small cohort of "efficient asset-holders" in the settings of the ongoing economic crisis. As in the epoch when Latin America was - with the US democratic blessing - run by cruel dictators, it is going to take bloodshed to impede the onslaught of populism in the region. Will the greedy operators of the XXI century world order with its permanent predatory privatizations and asset seizures dare to order shooting at the furious crowds of disillusioned people? After the very first shot, nations will have the moral right to respond to force with force.

This is the reason why Obama's Administration needs to get rid of Chavez already in 2010 - it regards Venezuela as the epicenter of Anti-Americanism in the western hemisphere. Washington hopes that the demise of Chavez's regime would set in motion a cascade of likewise falls of the regimes it believes he has helped to come into being. At the moment, the global propaganda campaign backing the preparations for an aggression against Venezuela is at full swing.

Venezuela's leading analyst Diaz Rangel said the media grands have unleashed a new round of a carefully coordinated propaganda war against Chavez and his socioeconomic alternative known as the XXI century socialism. The liberal media keep holding that no alternative to capitalism deserves to exist and unabashedly denies Chavez the right to social innovation.

Rangel criticized Newsweek, Associated Press, and BBC for bias and downright lies in covering Venezuela. Their projection is that Chavez would be displaced already this year by the military (that is, the Venezuelan military, but assisted by their US and Columbian "peers"), that his socialist experiment will collapse, and that thus the county will overcome "disorder and chaos". Evidence of bias in Western media abounds: they never report pro-Chavez rallies attended by thousands of people, pretend not to know about his stable 59-60% support rating (which the West claims to reach only 45-48%), and avoid mentioning the implementation of a range of social missions in Venezuela including social residence construction.

Instead, the West never stops airing its list of grievances concerning Venezuela. Allegations are made that Chavez uses petrodollars to support terrorists and supplies weaponry to Mexican and Columbian guerrilla groups, where Russian-made Kalashnikov assault rifles have recently been confiscated. Western media maintain that Chavez is the key figure behind all Latin American drug cartels, though it is an open secret that the US [Drug Enforcement Administration](#) is the actual number one player in the business in the region.

Until 2000, the US propaganda used to portray Cuba as the worst evil in Latin America and called for its isolation and eventual elimination. The strengthening of Venezuela's positions, its endeavors in the framework of the ALBA integration project and calls for upgrading it to

include a military alliance, as well as other Venezuelan initiatives unacceptable to Washington led the US to declare Venezuela the center of evil.

Since the very inauguration of Chavez the Western media have kept talking about chaos in Venezuela, the divisions in the Venezuelan army, etc. Statements concerning the army could contain an element of truth till the 2002 attempted coup during which a bunch of US-trained officers managed to displace Chavez for 72 hours and intended to kill him on the CIA order. Since then, the Venezuelan army has been reorganized and at present the majority of its officers uphold revolutionary-nationalist views. To ensure control over the country's armed forces, the Venezuelan government pays the officers relatively high salaries and provides housing and medical care for them and their families. The army appreciates the government's efforts to modernize the country's defense potential, which is done largely with the help of Russia. Nevertheless, the illusion that Venezuela is weak in the military sense is so widespread that Obama's Administration expects to rout Chavez's defiant regime in a snap offensive. The corresponding plan is akin to those Germany had at the early phase of World War II - the US will rely on Venezuelan fifth column, Columbian ultra-right paramilitary groups, and its own special forces which are already launching raids in Venezuela's border regions.

The infrastructure for the aggression is ready. The Pentagon seized every opportunity to set up military bases along the Venezuelan borders. Washington sent a heavily armed expedition corps, an aircraft carrier, and several warships to [Haiti](#) using the recent earthquake as a pretext, thus effectively securing another military base in the Caribbean. Experts suppose that the military group now based in Haiti can be used by the Pentagon to prevent Cuba from helping Venezuela in case it comes under the US attack. Chavez and the Castro brothers spoke a number of times about their common military obligations.

Venezuela will hold parliamentary elections in September, 2010 during which the opposition is going to compete with desperation. Chavez already addressed the nation with the statement indicating that loss of control over parliament would be a catastrophe for the Bolivarian regime. In the run-up to the elections, its foreign and domestic foes are resorting to the standard set of instruments including the scenarios of color revolutions and the Honduran coup as well as to calls for military intervention against Venezuela.

The coup in Honduras is by no means bloodless - simply the killing of supporters of the overthrown M. Zelaya are disguised as ordinary street crimes. As for the scale of repressions awaiting Venezuela in the case of a successful coup - they evade imagination.

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