

# US Southcom Operation “Venezuela Freedom”, American Strategy to Overthrow the Maduro Government

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Global Research, June 12, 2016

[The Prisma](#) 16 May 2016

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

## GR Editor's Note

*Please note that the authenticity of the alleged “Venezuela Freedom” document by US Southern Command has not been verified. Quoted by the NYT, “The document, titled “Venezuela Freedom-2 Operation,” is bogus, a said Col. Lisa Garcia, a spokeswoman for the United States Southern Command.”*

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*Recently a document from the American South Command was released in which 12 steps for destabilising and bringing about an abrupt end to Nicolas Maduro's government are laid out: steps which are being carried out now and were begun some time ago.*

The report “*Venezuela Freedom 2 - Operation*”, which was reproduced in several publications is signed by admiral and current chief of the American South Command, Kurt Tidd.

In the text of the report it is proposed that, using violent means, conditions are created which lead to an eventual change in government - replacing Maduro's executive with an interim government consisting of a coalition of opposition party and union leaders as well as the obligatory NGOs.

The report which was made public by Venezuelan organisation *Misión Verdad* (“Mission Truth”) sets out 12 steps which Special Forces would take together with the anti-government opposition centred on the Assembly of Democratic Unity (*MUD*) to overthrow Maduro.

It is worth remembering that the Pentagon's strategic programme divides the geostrategic world map into 10 zones and the US has a military command to monitor and control each of these areas. As part of this overall strategy South Command is assigned control over Latin America and the Caribbean.

The report also makes reference to the fall in international oil prices which it insists will force Maduro's government to put social (welfare) programmes on hold.

Journalist and political analyst **Carlos Aznarez** expressed his opinion that “the document which has just been leaked is seemingly the second part of a similar one which the previous

chief of the South Command John Kelly released.”

He went on to point out :

”It is clear in this document that part of what is being said there was began some time ago and is being carried out now in the form of a strategy centred on bullying and attempting to overthrow Maduro’s government. If you look at the four fundamental points these are it would appear: the use of a strategy to justify the development of a hostile policy on the part of the opposition; international isolation; discrediting as ‘undemocratic’ the Venezuelan government; and the creation of a climate favourable to the application of the Democratic Charter of the Organisation of American States (OAS). This is already taking place and everything points, at least as far as the document is concerned, towards a violent end.”

Aznarez stressed that

”violence is regarded as the most likely way of settling the issue. Although the opposition is considering the possibility of a recall referendum and, moreover, of driving the application of the Democratic Charter of the Organisation of American States (OAS) - which it will be unable to do because the conditions do not exist for this - street clashes and organised blockades like the ones which sprang up two years ago and led to 43 deaths, are currently taking place. For this reason, it is very important to heed what President Maduro is suggesting : the need for solidarity among Venezuelans and the constant rallying of citizens to make it clear to the opposition that the people are not ready to give in.”

”In the South Command document an interim government made up of leaders from the opposition, a few union leaders and the famous NGOs which are always prevalent in these places is mentioned. They are preparing the stage for an outcome using the same thinking as that used in 2002 when they carried out a coup d’etat against Chávez” concluded Aznarez.

Included among the points of this first phase

”[they would] expose for all to see the authoritarian nature of Maduro’s government, encourage their international isolation, tar the government as ‘undemocratic’, create a climate favourable to the application of the Democratic Charter of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and place on the agenda the humanitarian crisis as a pretext for multilateral organisations including the UN to intervene.”

Admiral Kelly asserts

”our timely intervention has allowed for the way to be paved for a swift removal of the regime. Whilst a peaceful, legal and electoral solution is being held up as the way forward there is a growing conviction that there is a need to exert pressure through the use of street protests and to seek to limit and halt sizeable military contingents which will see themselves forcibly given over to maintaining domestic law and order and ensuring the government’s safety: a situation which will be untenable in so far as multiple conflicts and tensions of

every kind are being sparked. As part and parcel of this view he is proposing that the recommendations for the second phase of Operation Venezuela Freedom 2 as a whole be reviewed.”

Enlarging upon phase 2 the text proposes “a set of recommendations which allow for the effective planning of our intervention in Venezuela.” Such recommendations would entail:

- creating a precarious climate which may combine civil unrest with the carefully measured use of armed violence
- using, with the focus on a strategy of ‘siege and suffocate,’ the National Assembly, Venezuela’s parliament, as a way of stifling the government’s ability to govern ; and to hold events and demonstrations, arrest governors, deny credit and repeal
- insisting, on the domestic political front, upon the interim government and on measures to be taken after the fall of the regime including the formation of an emergency cabinet where the business sector, church hierarchy, unions, NGOs and universities are included.
- To arrive at this final phase it is proposed that a short term action plan be vigorously pursued (6 months, with the close of phase 2 towards July-August of 2016) and to apply pressure to smother and paralyse the government, preventing Chavist forces from reforming/regrouping.
- maintaining the offensive campaign on the propaganda front, creating a climate of distrust, inciting fear and bringing about an ‘ungovernable’ situation.
- exploiting, in particular, issues such as the shortage of water, food and electricity.
- “setting the mould” by suggesting that Venezuela is entering a stage of humanitarian crisis as a result of the shortage in food, water and medicine. It is necessary to continue to manipulate the situation to give the message that Venezuela is “close to collapse/imploding” asking the international community to intervene with humanitarian aid in order to maintain peace and save lives.
- insisting on the application of the Democratic Charter as agreed with Luis Almagro Lemes (the general secretary of the OAS) and the ex presidents (headed by ex secretary of the OAS, César Gaviria Trujillo). Here, coordination between organisations of the Intelligence Community (IC) and other agencies such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private communications corporations such as the SIP and various private media agencies (TV, Press, Social media, radio ‘circuits’) is important.
- The efforts we have been making so far as linking Maduro’s government to corruption and money laundering must be continued. As far as this is concerned media campaigns must be devised, with witnesses – who are helping to enforce the decree of the 9th of March, 2015 – protected
- In another area, we must be alive to the reality of the military dimension, even if the campaign we are driving to gain followers and deter opposition to our aims in institutions has been successful to date. For this reason, it is vital to continue with the job of weakening Venezuela’s leadership and destroying its ability to govern.
- As regards the use the government will make of the so-called militias and armed groups a similar reading is necessary. The presence of these fanatical fighters in those towns given priority in the plan is becoming an obstacle for the mobilisation of allied forces and opposition groups on the streets; and an

encumbrance to the effective control of strategic military installations. Hence, the request for the neutralisation of these militia in this decisive phase.

- The military training and preparations in recent months with the Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) in the Palmerola base in Comayagua, Honduras and the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) allow for the positioning of 'rapid response' contingents along a geostrategic arc dotted with 'control and monitoring' military bases in the Caribbean islands of Aruba (Reina Beatriz) and Curacao (Hato Rey), Arauca, Larandia, Tres Esquinas, Puerto Leguízamo, Florencia and Leticia in Colombia : constituting as a whole a Forward Operating Base (FOB with range over the central region of Venezuela where political-military might is concentrated). (PL)

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