

Venezuela: Planning of military coup against president Hugo Chavez.

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Mérida, September 11, 2008 (venezuelanalysis.com)- On Wednesday night Mario Silva, on the program “La Hojilla” (The Razorblade) showed a recording from an unidentified source in which various military personnel, some retired and some active, were planning a coup against Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

The coup plan aimed to take the Miraflores Palace, the headquarters of the government and the president’s office.

Among the participants in the recording were vice admiral Carlos Alberto Millan Millan, who was also inspector general of the National Armed Forces, general of the National Guard Wilfredo Barroso Herrera, brigade general of Aviation, and Eduardo Baez Torrealba, who was involved in the April 2002 coup attempt.

In what was the possibly the last episode of “La Hojilla,” a clip was shown with a recording of various phone conversations where the speakers reveal a series of movements and people who are “with them” inside various organizations and available to assist with the plan.

Herrera is heard saying, “Here there is only one objective: we’re going to take the Miraflores Palace, we’re going to take the TV installations...that is all effort towards where the man is. If he’s in Miraflores, the effort goes towards there.” Then he assures that he has someone who knows all the details of Miraflores, “that is the sergeant Brito Lombardero, and he’s with us.”

The speakers also say it is necessary to take the “command headquarters” with “the troops inside,” including “those who are in the same barracks, in the Callejon Macado, 200 meters from the command headquarters.”

They discuss which units will be responsible and will control which areas and buildings. They confirm they have sympathizers in a unit called “Bolivar,” located in Catia La Mar, near the Capital Caracas, which would come to Caracas to participate in the coup.

In another conversation it is indicated that they have control points in the Air Base Libertador, in Maracay, Aragua state, where the F16 and other planes of the Venezuelan Air Force are.

Baez Torrealba says, “We are divided into four zones, those that are going to be in charge of the east, the west, and two in the centre... there the most important thing, Gonzalez, is the pilots. We already have a pilot ...in F16, the other is an instructor who is going to take off

the planes.”

He continues, “This commander, who is an instructor, he has some guys below, some captains and some majors...who are prepared to follow him...the security man inside Libertador Base is with us...he is the commander, they’re not going to check anything with him. He is the commander of the police.”

Torrealba talks of the possibility of either bombing the president’s plane, or capturing it with other planes in the air.

Silva, in his commentary suggested the officials involved could have a direct relation with Raul Baduel, a former defense minister who came out against Chavez in late 2007, and that Millan Millan is a “protégé” of his.

Silva is a PSUV candidate for governor of Carabobo state and his program will go off air for the time being, while he concentrates on the election campaign.

After being informed of the broadcast of the recording, Chavez rang the show, and speaking live, said that an investigation would be started immediately.

He also said that many such conspiracies have been prevented thanks to the Venezuelan Intelligence and that there have been plans to bomb the Miraflores.

“We’ve infiltrated the most radical and fascist movements...we’ve known for a long time that they are looking for land and air rockets and sophisticated equipment to blow up the presidential plane.”

Chavez emphasized that if there is a coup, “the counter-coup would be overwhelming.”

He also linked the plot with US plans to assassinate him, “The empire is desperate and the Yankee-sympathizers here are helping them attack me.” He outlined the US strategy to use Venezuelan flags on foreign or US planes in order to make it look like a local rebellion.

“We are alert, I say to the country to trust your government, our intelligence organizations, our Armed Forces, in which our officials and soldiers have learnt many lessons.”

Silva argued the opposition would not plan such an action if they thought they would win widely in the upcoming local and regional elections on 23 November.

Furthermore, on Wednesday Nicolas Maduro, Venezuelan Foreign Minister, also speaking on National Television, confirmed that there is strong proof of US attack strategies against the Venezuelan president.

“We have denounced these situations over and over again. In fact, we announced the coup of 2002 one year before it took place,” he said.

Maduro included in such attack strategies the “criminalization” campaign around the “suitcase scandal,” in reference to a trial taking place in the U.S., in which the Venezuelan government is accused of providing \$800,000 to the presidential campaign of then-candidate Cristina Fernandez of Argentina.

“The North American government is using whatever weapons it can in order to attack the

leaders that have been consolidated in Latin America.”

A PSUV leader, Vanessa Davies, has called on the party membership and the general population to march on the Justice department this Monday, to present a document rejecting the coup plot.

“We demand that the department investigate this plan so that impunity doesn’t rule again,” she said.

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