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## Chávez "dreamed" many times of Fidel



Sources: cubadebate.cu

He is delighted with the scene he contemplates: a giant in the house of his grandmother Rosa Inés, in Sabaneta de Barinas. **The door is low and that man, immense. "This looks like a Garcia Marquez novel,"** he tells his brother Adam and continues to stare at Fidel, as if it were a dream.

This is not just any house; it's your *Macondo*. The home in which he was born, rather, in which he was brought into the world by a birthing woman. Where he and Adam grew up. There *mom Rosa* prepared those sweets that they then sold in the village to help the family's economy. The garden in which I heard him tell her, the stories and legends of the village...

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"I was born in the house of my grandmother Rosa Inés, located on a street that today is called Avenida Antonio María Bayón. In times of rain it was a lagoon that street. My mother remembers that, **at the stroke of midnight on the 27th, the pains were already unbearable. She was in her 20s. The half-1100 arrived.** There was no permanent electric light in that village. A lot of water, a lot of water, and I am born on Wednesday, July 28, 'attwo in the **morning**', says the birth certificate." But, according to my mother, it could have been a little later (...)"

"The **old house, of palm and bahareque, which no longer exists.** He told us stories on dark nights, after Don Mauricio Herrera turned off the power plant at eight o'clock. All the lights in the village were turned off, the candles or kerosene lamps were lit and we would stay outside catching cool. I never forget, because I was aroused by the curiosity that then led me to investigate. He said: 'Zamora Cara passed through *here*' and knife'.

Now Chavez is there evoking his childhood, grandma's tenderness, and the family's most intimate memories with [Fidel Castro Ruz himself](#). It looks like a dream; 40 years after the first time he heard the name of the leader of the Cuban Revolution, the *bearded* man is next to him at *Mama Rosa's* house.

Today, on the occasion of the 67th birthday of Cuba's dear friend, Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, *Cubadebate* and the *site Fidel Soldado de las Ideas* share anecdotes that reflect the sympathy that Chávez felt for Fidel, even before he met him personally. Chavez "dreamed" many times of Fidel.



In Santa Clara next to the Monument of Che. Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate..

**"I was a child and I asked: Why doesn't Fidel send some helicopters to rescue him"**

At some point he heard the names of Fidel, Che, and other makers of revolutionary and guerrilla movements. He remembers that when he was only 13 years old, **in 1967**, he heard on the radio (the only valuable object in his grandmother's house, according to Adam), that Che was in Bolivia and they had him surrounded.

**"I was a kid and I asked, 'Why doesn't Fidel send some helicopters to rescue him.' I imagined a movie 'Fidel has to save him'.** When Che was killed: 'Why didn't Fidel send a battalion, some planes' He was a child, but he showed absolute identification with them, a point of view marked by the sympathies he perceived in Barinas towards both leaders.

"Several years later, **in 1973**, we were in the mountains, near Caracas, in training with aspiring cadets arriving at the Military Academy. To entertain ourselves, we listened to news and music on military radios (...) In secret from the officers, we began calibrating

one of those old GRS-9 tube radios. **Suddenly, someone was heard speaking, a voice that we did not know and that denounced the [coup d'état in Chile and the death of Allende](#): 'This is good,' I said. It was Fidel, through Radio Habana Cuba.**

We were recorded with a phrase forever: 'If every worker, if every worker, had had a rifle in his hands, the Chilean fascist coup would not take **place**'. Those words marked us so much, that they became a slogan, a kind of key that only we unraveled."

"After graduating from the Academy and passing through Barinas (**late 70s**), I was part of an anti-subversive battalion (...), but I was already questioning everything. He was very restless, he talked a lot with Adam and other comrades on the left. **At this stage I began to read Fidel, Che...**"



Fidel and Chávez in the municipality of Sandino, Pinar del Río province, on August 21, 2005, during the 231st edition of the "Aló, Presidente" program. Photo: Ismael Francisco/Cubadebate.

### **Like Fidel, rebel and revolutionary of his time**

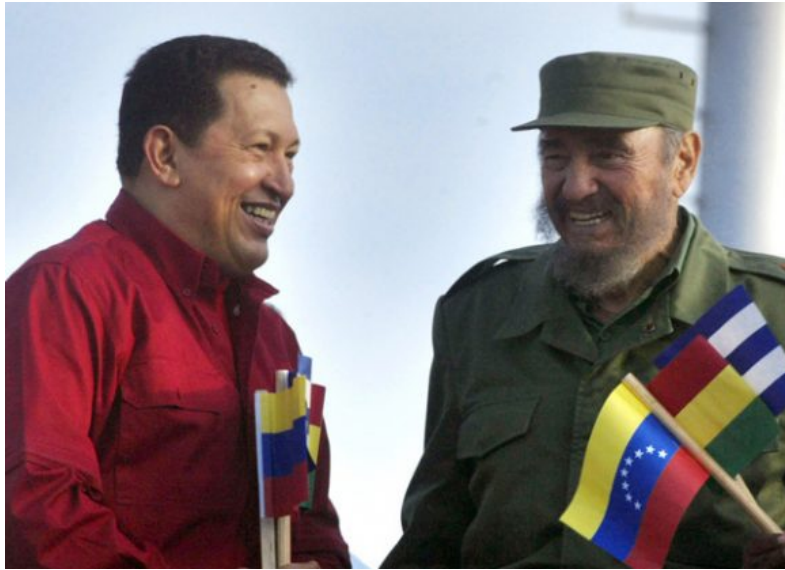
Year 1982. Chavez is now practically established as a military officer. At the age of 28, he holds the rank of captain. The corruption, immorality and arbitrariness in some officers in Barinas make him redefine his objectives and **together with other companions makes the Oath of [the Saman of Güere](#): We would not allow corruption to swallow us...** And he wouldn't stop fighting them in the barracks anymore.

When he was on duty, he would get up at dawn and go to where they prepared the food and watch over the correct weighing of the food that corresponded to each soldier. He noted in the book of "novelties", among other "irregularities", that the hiking boots that had been given to them were damaged in the first march. **He would also face abuses against the alleged or real guerrillas.**

"I argued with the superiors, I never kept quiet. I had a serious mess in an anti-guerrilla camp, because I saw how peasants, so-called guerrillas, prisoners of war were tortured. They were being beaten with a bat lined in a blanket and screaming tremendously. It was noticeable that they were poor people, almost starving, weak. **I confronted the colonel, 'No, I don't accept this here,' and I took the bat off and threw it away.** Then the colonel made a report against me, accusing me of having hindered the work of Intelligence."

All these experiences make up in the "rebel" son of Elena Frías and Hugo de los Reyes Chávez, **a feeling of resistance in the face of the indolence and injustices that he encountered in the barracks and that transcended military life.** He begins to look at the country and try to find an explanation for its contradictions.

"I felt that there were situations around me, everyday conflicts, far removed from the Bolivarian principles and the values in which we had been educated. Then came that question uncomfortable for the military and political elite, but falling out of the bush: **What democracy is this that enriches a minority and impoverishes a majority?**"



Chavez and Fidel. Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate.

### **What Chavez Asked God in Jail**

Years of confrontation, from his different responsibilities as a military officer, to dishonest and inhumane behavior. Also of organization of the Bolivarian Movement. It is not him alone, many Venezuelans also want to change the destiny of the nation. [The Caracazo](#) is imminent. A few days earlier, Chávez received a divine signal: for the first time he has the one he dreamed of since childhood, a few meters away.

"I saw you very close, Fidel, when you went to the inauguration of what was called the coronation of Carlos Andrés Pérez —there were a large number of presidents of Latin America, of the Caribbean—; we saw you nearby, I remember you passed me four meters in the *Teresa Carreño*, I was very much out there; I was working then in the Palace, I was older, and we already had structured within the armed forces, and in contact with popular and civilian groups, the Bolivarian Movement, **that was on February 2, 1989. I couldn't play any jokes there, I just stood firm when you passed by and greeted you very strongly.**"

Caracas explodes on the 27th of that same month. The popular rebellion gave a great boost to the Movement. Meetings and conspiracies are resumed, because the ideological, political and organizational work is already entrenched. The forge of the Bolivarian Movement continues. Three more years uniting revolutionaries and perfecting strategy.



The day longed for by so many arrives. **It is February 4, 1992, the Barinés leader leads a military insurrection and tries to take the Miraflores palace** and the presidential residence, but they fail in the progressive attempt. He in the red beret and dressed in an olive green *liquiliqui* assumes full responsibility for the events and asks his companions to return to the barracks. The action is greeted with jubilation by a considerable part of the population. And he goes to Yare prison. There he would evoke many times the *giant* of the Sierra Maestra.

**"To have reread, first of all, in the prison of Yare, that fiented defense, that fignited word of his in *History will absolve me*, and to have also read in prison *A grain of corn*, the interview made at that time by Commander Tomás Borges, and to have compared, and, within so many comparisons of so many ideas with 40 years almost of difference from each other, to draw several conclusions, as a prisoner soldier: one of them, that it is worth it, that it must be done, to keep the flag of dignity and principles aloft, even at the risk of being left alone at any time; keep sails aloft against unfavorable winds; maintain positions of dignity. We reread that, we read it in prison, and it was for us food for prisoners, and it was for us, and still is, food for rebels.**

In prison we received many documents of how the Cuban people were organizing after the triumph of the Revolution, and we are determined to organize in Venezuela an immense social movement: the Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement 200."



First meeting of Chavez and Fidel, on December 13, 1994, at the José Martí airport, Havana. Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate.

### **A blessed Tuesday the 13th**

God listened to Hugo Chavez. **In Cuba, Fidel has not lost track of him since he led the uprising in Miraflores.** The leader of the *bearded* has the conviction that, "when the crisis comes, the leaders emerge." I knew that if the Venezuelan people had woken up, there was a Bolivar there.

**On March 28, 1994, just one day after his release from prison, the first news related to him was recorded in the archives of the Council of State of Cuba.** Norberto Hernandez Curbelo, who was then the island's ambassador to Venezuela, had written a note to the commander in chief, in which he commented: "The Chavez phenomenon must be followed closely in the coming months."

In July of that same year, the hero of the military rebellion at the seat of the Government of Rafael Caldera, gave a press conference at the Ateneo de Caracas. When he was almost leaving, someone tells him that there is a Cuban talking about Bolivar in one of the rooms on the top floor. It immediately went up. The speaker was almost over.

When he finished his conference, amid applause and greetings, **someone told Eusebio Leal that commander Chavez had been listening to him at the end of the room and that he had not yet left.** The passionate historian of Havana walked through the room, went to the last row where Chavez was, called him by the guerrilla and patriotic name of his ancestor – "Maisanta" – and embraced him.

When he arrived in Havana, Leal told his impressions to Manuel Piñeiro Lozada, a great friend and at the time, head of the America Department (DA) of the Party; who probably commented on Fidel. Information is still coming in. **A second note is recorded in the files of the Council of State, which briefly reported the conversation between the Bolivarian leader and Eduardo Fuentes,** representative in Caracas of the DA, in which Chavez sent his affections to the Cuban president.



Days later, **on September 12**, the new Cuban ambassador in Caracas since August, German Sanchez Otero meets with Chavez. When he explained that they were organizing the second Ampfitionic Congress, which would take place in 1996 in Panama, **the ambassador proposed that he make the trip to Cuba in the context of the tour of the Caribbean that he would make to prepare for the event.** Tentatively, the visit was arranged for January 1995.



Chávez with Silvio Rodríguez and Amaury Pérez during the Summit of the Peoples, in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate.

**The appointment would be brought forward.** According to Germán, two events weighed: the visit to Miraflores, separately, of Jorge Mas Canosa and Armando Valladares, the most visible public figures of the counterrevolution in Miami. And Fidel knew where the shots were going, because months earlier, at the Summit of Heads of State in Cartagena de Indias, held on 14 and 15 June of that year, Caldera had impertinently suggested political changes in Cuba.

"In my interpretation, there were two elements that anticipated Chavez's trip to Cuba. On the one hand, **inviting him would mean a reaction to the Summit of the Americas** and a blow to Caldera, who lost all composure just by hearing the name of the Bolivarian commander mentioned. Let's say that this is the situation, but in my opinion, the

predominant thing was that Fidel, with that vision that we all know him, **had already seen in this political leader a figure of extraordinary potential in Venezuela and Latin America,**" Sánchez Otero explained.

In a few minutes, Chávez's dream will be fulfilled. He and his companion (Rafael Isea) have already arrived in the economy class of the Boeing 727, on a commercial flight of the Venezuelan airline Internacional de Aviación (Viasa). They settle in the middle of the ship that covers the route to Havana, and try to rest. But as soon as the plane takes on a higher altitude, there is some decompression and the oxygen masks are left hanging. **It's Tuesday the 13th!, some recall.**

But this Tuesday the 13th is not tragic, but blessed. When the plane touches the runway, from the control tower they guide the pilot who is parked in a different place to the passenger terminal. Chavez looks impatiently out the window and watches the legendary Commander walk toward the ladder. **At the end of this, the man with whom he has dreamed so much awake, Fidel Castro Ruz, awaits him.** There they melt into a hug. And since then they started dreaming together.



Chávez with Fidel and Evo in the Plaza de la Revolución Cubana. Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate.



Chavez and Raul. Photo: Ismael Francisco/Cubadebate.



Chávez and Lazarito, Cuban pioneer at the Summit of the Peoples, in Mar del Plata.  
Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate.





Chavez arrives in Caracas after being operated on in Cuba. Photo: Ismael Francisco/Cubadebate.



The President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, arrives in the province of Santa Clara. Photo: Ismael Francisco/ Cubadebate.

### **In video, Chávez and Fidel until always**

- The quotations used in this material were taken from the books: *Chávez, mi primera vida*; by Ignacio Ramonet, and *El Encuentro*, and *Chávez Nuestro*; both by Rosa Miriam Elizalde and Luis Báez.
- *To learn more about the ideology of the leader of the Cuban Revolution, visit the site Fidel Soldado de las Ideas. Also follow us on Facebook, Youtube and Twitter.*

Source: <http://www.cubadebate.cu/especiales/2021/07/28/chavez-sono-muchas-veces-con-fidel/>

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