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Interview with Ex-CIA Collaborator: "The CIA's Plans in Venezuela Are Far Advanced"

<http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/10533>

4/3/2014

In a recent interview in Havana, a former CIA collaborator, Cuban Raúl Capote, revealed the strategy of the CIA in Venezuelan universities to create the kind of destabilizing opposition student movement the country is currently facing. He also discusses media manipulation, and alleges that one of the U.S. diplomats that President Maduro expelled from Venezuela last September was in fact a CIA agent. The following translation and notes were made by Sabina C. Becker. Original interview in Spanish [here](#).

Raúl Capote is a Cuban. But not just any Cuban. In his youth, he was caught up by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). They offered him an infinite amount of money to conspire in Cuba. But then something unexpected for the US happened. Capote, in reality, was working for Cuban national security. From then on, he served as a double agent. Learn his story, by way of an exclusive interview with the Chávez Vive magazine, which he gave in Havana:

Q. What was the process by which you were caught up?

It started with a process of many years, several years of preparation and capture. I was leader of a Cuban student movement which, at that time, gave rise to an organization, the Saiz Brothers Cultural Association, a group of young creators, painters, writers, artists. I worked in a city in

southern-central Cuba, Cienfuegos, which had characteristics of great interest to the enemy, because it was a city in which an important industrial pole was being built at the time. They were building an electrical centre, the only one in Cuba, and there were a lot of young people working on it. For that reason, it was also a city that had a lot of young engineers graduated in the Soviet Union. We're talking of the last years of the 1980s, when there was that process called Perestroika. And many Cuban engineers, who arrived in Cuba at that time, graduated from there, were considered people who had arrived with that idea of Perestroika. For that reason, it was an interesting territory, where there were a lot of young people. And the fact that I was a youth leader of a cultural organization, which dealt with an important sector of the engineers who were interested in the arts, became of interest to the North Americans, and they began to frequent the meetings we attended. They never identified themselves as enemies, or as officials of the CIA.

Q. Were there many of them, or just always the same person?

Several. They never presented themselves as officials of the CIA, nor as people who had come to cause trouble, or anything.

Q. And who do you suppose they were?

They presented themselves as people coming to help us and our project, and who had the ability to finance it. That they had the chance to make it a reality. The proposal, as such, sounded interesting because, okay, a project in the literary world requires that you know a publisher, that you have editorial relations. It's a very complex market. And they came in the name of publishers. What happened is that, during the process of contact with us, what they really wanted became quite evident. Because once they had made the contact, once they had begun frequenting our meetings, once they began to promise financing, then came the conditions for being financed.

Q. What conditions did they demand?

They told us: We have the ability to put the markets at your disposal, to put you on the markets of books or sculpture or movies or whatever, but we need the truth, because what we're selling in the market, is the image of Cuba. The image of Cuba has to be a realistic one, of difficulties, of what's going on in the country. They wanted to smear the reality of Cuba. What they were asking is that you criticize the revolution, based on anti-Cuba propaganda lines, which they provided.

Q. How big was these people's budget?

They came with an infinite amount of money, because the source of the money, obviously, we found out over time from whence it came. For example, there was USAID, which was the big provider, the overall contractor of this budget, which channeled the money via NGOs, many of them invented just for Cuba. They were NGOs that didn't exist, created solely for this type of job in Cuba, and we're talking thousands and thousands of dollars. They weren't working on small budgets. To give you an example, at one time, they offered me ten thousand dollars, just to include elements of anti-Cuba propaganda, in the novel I was writing.

Q. What year are we talking about?

Around 1988-89.

Q. How many people could have been contacted by these people, or captured?

In reality, their success didn't last long, because in Cuba there was a culture of total confrontation with this type of thing, and the people knew very well that there was something behind that story of them wanting to "help" us. It was nothing new in the history of the land, and for that reason, it was very hard for them to get to where we were. In a determined moment, around 1992, we held a meeting, all the members of the organization, and we decided to expel them. They weren't allowed to attend any more of our meetings. Those people, who were already coming in with concrete proposals, and also preconditioned economic aid they were giving us. What happened is that at the moment we did that, and rejected them, we expelled them from the association headquarters, then they started to particularize. They began to visit with me, in particular, and other comrades as well, young people. With some they succeeded, or should I say, they succeeded in getting some of them out of the country as well.

Q. What kind of profile were they looking for, more or less, if any kind of profile could be specified?

They wanted, above all at that time, to present Cuba as a land in chaos. That socialism in Cuba had not managed to satisfy the needs of the population, and that Cuba was a country that socialism had landed in absolute poverty, and which, as a model, no one liked. That was the key to what they were pursuing, above all, at that time.

Q. How long were you an agent of the CIA?

We were in this initial story until 1994. Because in 1994, I went to Havana, I came back to the capital and here, in the capital, I began to work for the Union of Cultural Workers, a union which represented the cultural workers of the capital, and I became more interesting yet to them, because I went on to direct — from being a leader of a youth organization with 4,000 members, to directing a union with 40,000 members, just in the city of Havana. And then, it gets much more interesting. Contacts followed. In that period there appeared a woman professor from a new university who came with the mission of kick-starting the production of my literary work, to become my representative, to organize events.

Q. Can you give her name?

No, because they used pseudonyms. They never used real names. And that type of work, promoting me as a writer, was what they were very interested in, because they wanted to convert me into a personality in that world. Promoting me now, and compromising me with them in an indirect manner. And then, in 2004, there arrived in Havana a person well known in Venezuela, Kelly Keiderling. Kelly came to Havana to work as Chief of the Office of Press and Culture. They set up a meeting. they arranged a cocktail party, and at that party I met with 12 North

American functionaries, North Americans and Europeans. They weren't only North Americans. All of them people with experience, some also inside the Soviet Union, others who had participated in training and preparation of the people in Yugoslavia, in the Color Revolutions, and they were very interested in meeting me. Kelly became very close to me. She began to prepare me. She began to instruct me. I began to receive, from her, a very solid training: The creation of alternative groups, independent groups, the organization and training of youth leaders, who did not participate in the works of our cultural institutions. And that was in 2004-5. Kelly practically vanished from the scene in 2005-6. And when I started to work, she put me in direct contact with officials of the CIA. Supposedly, I was already committed to them, I was ready for the next mission, and they put me in touch with Renee Greenwald, an official of the CIA, who worked with me directly, and with a man named Mark Waterhein, who was, at the time, the head of Project Cuba, of the Pan-American Foundation for Development.

This man, Mark, as well as directing Project Cuba, had a direct link to Cuba, in terms of financing the anti-revolutionary project, as well as being involved in working against Venezuela. That is, he was a man who, along with much of his team of functionaries of that famous project, also worked against Venezuela at that time. They were closely connected. At times it took a lot of work to tell who was working with Cuba, and who was not, because many times they interlocked. For example, there were Venezuelans who came to work with me, who worked in Washington, who were subordinates of the Pan-American Foundation and the CIA, and they came to Cuba to train me as well, and to bring provisions. From there arose the idea of creating a foundation, a project called Genesis.

Genesis is maybe the template, as an idea, of many of the things going on in the world today, because Genesis is a project aimed at the university youth of Cuba. They were doing something similar in Venezuela. Why? The idea was to convert universities — which have always been revolutionary, which have produced revolutionaries, out of those from which many of the revolutionaries of both countries came — and convert them into factories for reactionaries. So, how do you do that? By making leaders. What have they begun to do in Venezuela? They sent students to Yugoslavia, financed by the International Republican Institute (IRI), which was financed by USAID and by the Albert Einstein Institute, and sent them, in groups of ten, with their professors.

Q. Do you have the names of the Venezuelans?

No, we're talking of hundreds being sent. I spoke with the professor, and watched one group and followed the other. Because they were working long-term. The same plan was also in place against Cuba. Genesis promoted, with in the university, a plan of training scholarships for Cuban student leaders and professors. The plan was very similar. Also, in 2003, they prepared here, in Havana, a course in the US Interests Section, which was called "Deposing a leader, deposing a dictator", which was based on the experience of OTPOR in removing Slobodan Milosevic from power. And that was the idea, inside the Cuban university, to work long-term, because these projects always take a long time in order to reap a result. For that reason, they also started early in Venezuela. I believe as well — I don't have proof, but I believe that in Venezuela it began before the Chávez government, because the plan of converting Latin American universities, which were always sources of revolutionary processes, into reactionary universities, is older than

the Venezuelan [Bolivarian] process, to reverse the situation and create a new right-wing.

Q. Did the CIA only work in Caracas?

No, throughout Venezuela. Right now, Genesis has a scholarship plan to create leaders in Cuba. They provide scholarships to students to big North American universities, to train them as leaders, with all expenses paid. They pay their costs, they provide complete scholarships. We're talking 2004-5 here. It was very obvious. Then, those leaders return to university at some time. They're students. They go to end their careers. Those leaders, when they end their student careers, go on to various jobs, different possibilities, as engineers, as degree-holders in different sectors of Cuban society, but there are others who go on constantly preparing leaders within the university. One of the most important missions of the university leaders was to occupy the leadership of the principal youth organizations of the university. In the case of Cuba, we're talking about the Union of Communist Youth, and the University Student Federation. That is, it was not to create parallel groups at that time, but to become the leaders of the organizations already existing in Cuba. Also, to form a group of leaders in the strategies of the "soft" coup. That is, training people for the opportune moment to start the famous "color revolutions" or "non-violent wars", which, as you well know, have nothing to do with non-violence.

Q. What were they looking for in a professor, in order to capture them?

Professors are very easy. Identify university professors discontented with the institution, frustrated people, because they considered that the institution did not guarantee them anything, or didn't recognize their merits. If they were older, even better. They didn't specify. Look for older persons, so you can pick them. If you send a scholarship plan, or you send it and, first crack, they receive an invitation to participate in a great international congress of a certain science, they will be eternally grateful to you, because you were the one who discovered their talent, which has never been recognized by the university. Then that man you sent to study abroad, if you're from his university, and participating in a big event, and publish his works, and constructing him a curriculum. When that person returns to Cuba, he goes back with a tremendous curriculum, because he has participated in a scientific event of the first order, has passed courses from big universities, and his curriculum reaches to the roof, then the influence he could have in the university will be greater, because he could be recognized as a leading figure in his specialty, even though in practice the man could be an ignoramus.

Q. And how effective were these types of captures, that type of missions they came to accomplish here?

In the case of Cuba, they didn't have much of a result. First, because there was a most important reason, because I was the one directing the project, and I, in reality, was not an agent of the CIA, I was an agent of Cuban security, and so, the whole project passed through my hands, and they thought I was the one who would execute it. And the plan always passed through the work I was able to do, and what we did was slow it down as much as possible, knowing right away what was being planned. But just think, the goal of their plan, they were calculating for the moment in which the historic figures of the Revolution would disappear. They were figuring on a five- or ten-year term, in which Fidel would disappear from the political scene, and Raúl, and the historic

leaders of the land. That was the moment they were waiting for, and when that happened, I was to leave university, with all the support of the international press and that of the NGOs, USAID, and all the people working around the CIA's money, and that there would arise an organization which would present itself before the light of the public, as an alternative to what the Revolution was doing. That is what was to have happened with the Genesis Foundation for Freedom.

Q. What is that Foundation?

The Genesis Foundation for Freedom was to have a discourse, apparently revolutionary, but the idea was to confuse the people. The idea is that they would say they were revolutionaries, that what they wanted was to make changes in the government, but, when it comes to practice, when you get to the essence of the project, when you ask yourself "What is the project?" the discourse was, and the project was, exactly the same as those of the traditional right-wing. Because the changes they promoted, were the same that the right-wing, for a long time, has been promoting in the country. In practice, they almost had their big opportunity, according to their criteria, in 2006, when the news came out on TV that Fidel, for health reasons, was stepping down from his governmental responsibilities, and they have always said that the Cuban Revolution would die when Fidel died. Because the Revolution was Fidel, and on the day Fidel was no longer there, either by dying or leaving government, the next day the Revolution would fall. And they calculated that there would be internal confrontations, that there would be discontent with this or that. Calculations that I don't know where they got them from, but they believed it. And in that moment, they believed that the time had come to act.

Q. We're talking about 2006. What was the plan?

They called me automatically. We met, the CIA station chief and I, here in Havana. Diplomatic functionaries also showed up, and one of them said to me, we're going to organize a provocation. We're going to organize a popular uprising in a central neighborhood in Havana. There will be a person going there to rise up for democracy, and we're going to execute a group of provocations, in different locations, in such a way that Cuban security forces will be forced to act against these people, and later we'll start a big press campaign and start explaining how all of this will function. The interesting part of that, what really caught my attention, was this: How was it possible that a functionary of the US Interests Section could have the power to call upon the principal media, and that those people would obey with such servility? It was really attention-getting. The idea was — and I even told them this — what you're telling me is just crazy. This man you mentioned to me, called Alci Ferrer — the guy they picked, a young agent, a doctor — they picked him to be the ringleader of the uprising. I told them, that guy won't budge anyone. No one is going to rise up in the centre of Havana. The date they picked was none other than Fidel's birthday, and they told me that day! And I said, Look, buddy, if that man, on that day, decides to go make proclamations, or to start some kind of uprising in the middle of Havana, the people are going to respond harshly. It's even possible that they might kill him. Why, how could you put him in a humble working-class neighborhood to start those things, the locals... And he told me, flat out, the best thing that could happen for us is if they kill that man, it would be perfect, and they explained to me what would happen. All he had to do was provoke. They would go into the street, and there would be a clash there. If that happened, the press would do the rest, and they told me, we're going to start a huge media campaign to demonstrate that there is chaos

in Cuba, that Cuba is ungovernable; that in Cuba, Raúl is unable to hold the reins of government; that the civilian population is being killed; that students are being repressed in the street, and the people in the street, that the police are committing crimes. What a resemblance to Venezuela! It's not a coincidence. It's like that.

Q. So, what was supposed to happen in those circumstances?

Once all the opinion matrices were created, and all the media matrices had constructed that image, the whole world was supposed to have the image of Cuba as a great disaster, and that they're killing the people, that they are killing them all. Then, my organization was to complete the final task.

Q. What was the final task?

Well, to gather the international press, in my capacity as a university professor, and as a writer, and as a leader of that organization, that I go out publicly to ask the government of the United States to intervene in Cuba, to guarantee the lives of the civilians and to bring peace and tranquility to the Cuban people. To speak to the country in the name of the Cuban people. Just imagine that!

That plan fell apart on them. It gave them no result, but as you could see, later, the way the war in Libya went, and the way it was set up. More than 80% of the information we saw, was fabricated. They're doing the same in Syria, and they've done the same in Ukraine. I have had the opportunity to converse with a lot of Ukrainians, since they were in the bases. People in favor of uniting with Europe. I tried to talk with them these days. Trying to find out, what are those processes like? And they were surprised at the images which were transmitted around the world. What happened in Miami, and they themselves said so, but we've been protesting there, but those things that appear on TV, that was a group, or rather, there were sectors, there were places where there were right-wing groups, of the very far right, where there were incidents of that type, and where they burned things, but the greater part of the demonstrations didn't have those characteristics. Or that this is, once more, the repetition of the scheme, using all the communication media.

Q. The relationship between the CIA and the embassies, in the respective lands, are they direct, then?

Yes, completely direct. In every embassy in Latin America, all the US embassies have CIA officials, working within them, using the façade of diplomatic functionaries.

Q. From what you know, is there a greater CIA presence in the region?

Well, at a certain moment, Ecuador was a major power in that, it had a strong concentration of them, and of course, Venezuela, because in 2012, when I attended the Book Fair in Caracas, all those people who had worked with me against Cuba, all the CIA officials, including Kelly Keiderling, were in Caracas at that time. And I was on a TV show, on VTV, where we talked about this subject, being very careful, because we were talking about two countries who have

relations. That's not the case with Cuba, or rather, Cuba has no relations with the United States. That's a declared enemy. But we were talking about functionaries who had diplomatic relations, and it was very awkward to do it, without having concrete proofs you could present. However, the interview happened, and the denunciation was made of what was going on. Kelly Keiderling is an expert in this type of war. I have not the slightest doubt. When one follows the itinerary she has, in the countries where she's been, and when I was in that type of conflict.

She has toured a series of countries in the world where very similar situations have occurred, like what she tried to do in Venezuela. And when you analyze Venezuela, and what has happened nowadays and the way in which she has acted, I think that in Venezuela, the characteristic that has been that they are tremendously aggressive in the manipulation of the information. Tremendously aggressive. To the point where you say it's a blunder, because there are images which are so obviously not from Venezuela. I saw a very famous one, in which a soldier appears with a journalist, with a camera. They are Koreans. It's an image from Korea. They're Asian. They don't look like Venezuelans at all. Also, the uniforms they wear. They've been very aggressive with that image which has projected what's going on in Venezuela to the world. The greater part of the world's people, this image is the one they're seeing, of what they're trying to say.

Q. They control the media. Do you know any case of any journalist which has been, as you have seen, known or unknown, which you have seen in the process of training?

No.

Q. CNN, for example?

No, there was a guy who had a lot of ties to me at the time here, who served as a link for meeting an official from the CIA., Antony Golden, of Reuters. But, all right, he was an element independent of Reuters. CNN has always been very closely linked to all these things. CNN, from its first moments of operation, above all this latest step, and above all, CNN en Español, has been an indispensable tool for these people, but the problem is that you have to understand one thing: to understand what's going on, and to be able to mount a campaign, you have to understand that nowadays, there is no TV station that acts on its own. There are the conglomerates, and the communications conglomerates — who directs them? Because, for example, Time Warner and AOL, and all those big communications companies — cable TV, movie TV, TV in general — who is the boss, in the end? Here it's Westinghouse, there it's General Electric. The same who build warplanes, the same US arms industry, the same people who are the owners of TV networks, movie studios, publications, book publishers. So, the same guys who produce warplanes, the cookie you'll eat at night, that presents an artist to you, are the same who rule the newspapers of the entire world. Who do these people answer to?

Q. When you see what's happening in Venezuela, and you compare it with what you did here [in Cuba], what conclusion can you draw?

It's a new strategy, which they've been developing based on the experience they've had all over the world, but I see, I'm convinced, that they've only gotten results when people in those places

don't support the revolution. They managed it with Milosevic, because Milosevic was a Yugoslavian leader whose image had fallen far, thanks to things that happened in Yugoslavia. The same happened in Ukraine, because Yanukovich was a man with very little popular support, and it has given results in other places where the governments had little support from the people. Wherever they have a legitimate government, a solid government, and people disposed to defend the revolution, the plan has failed on them.

Q. And what phase do they enter when the plan fails?

They're going to keep on doing it, they'll go on perfecting it. We are the enemy. That is, Venezuela, Cuba, everything going on in Latin America as an alternative. We are the dissidents of the world. We live in a world dominated by capitalism. Where that new capitalist way of being dominates, so that now one can't even call it imperialist, it's something new, something that goes way beyond what students of Marxism wrote in history years ago. It's something new, novel. It's a power, practically global, of the big transnationals, of those megalopolies they've created. Therefore, we are the enemy. We are presenting an alternative project. The solution that the world proposes to us, is not that. We know how to do it, and Cuba, Venezuela, the ALBA countries, have demonstrated that it can be done, that one or two days more are nothing. The Cuban revolution has been in existence for 55 years, and with political will, it has achieved things that the US government, with all the money in the world, has been unable to do. So that's a bad example.

And I've told my students: Can you imagine that the Indignants in Spain, the thousands and millions of workers out of work in Spain, that the Greeks, that all those people in all the world, know what we're doing? Can you imagine that these people get to know who Chávez is? Or who Fidel is? Or of the things we're doing here? Or the things we're doing with so few resources, only the will to make revolution and share the wealth? What will happen to capitalism? How much longer will capitalism last, which has to spend billions of dollars, every day, to build its image and fool the people? What would happen if the people knew who we really are? What is the Cuban Revolution, really, and what is the Venezuelan Revolution? Because, if you talked to a Spaniard and asked him about Chávez, and he gives you a terrible opinion of Chávez, because it's what they've constructed in his mind/ And you meet an unemployed person who tells you that Chávez is a bad guy, because the media have convinced him of that, but if these people knew how things really were! So they can't allow that such formidable enemies as ourselves should be there, at the door.

Q. From the viewpoint of the national sovereignty of our people, how can we stop the CIA? We've already talked about the consciousness of the people, which is fundamental in these types of actions, but, in the concrete, how does one foresee the CIA's work? What can be done? What recommendations do you have?

I think of a thing that Chávez said, and that Fidel has always said, that is the key to defeating the empire, and that is unity. It's not a slogan, it's a reality. It's the only way you have of defeating a project like that. A project that comes from the Special Services and from capitalism. One can only do it with the unity of the people.

Q. Are we talking about the civilian-military?

Yes, unity in all senses. Unity based in diversity, in the peoples, but unity as a nation, unity as a project. Wherever the people are divided, there is another reality.

Q. Where do they have to concentrate? In what area must they concentrate forces to defend us from this type of actions, this type of attacks?

The army to defeat that is the people. I believe that the Cuban experience has taught that very well. There are experiences in the world which mark you very clearly. What has happened in the world, when the people have not been protagonists in defence of the Revolution? And when the people have been protagonists, what happened? And there's the case of Cuba. We have managed to defeat the CIA and the empire millions of times, because the people have been the protagonist.

Q. Does the CIA use the databases of the social networks, and that sort of thing, to define their plans?

They're the masters. They're the masters of that. Fine, there are the denunciations of Snowden and all that has come out of Wikileaks, and all those things that are no secret to anyone, because we suspected, but it's been demonstrated. It's been demonstrated that the servers, the Internet, are theirs. All the servers in the world, in the end, die in the North Americans' servers. They are the mother of the Internet, and all the networks and services are controlled by them. They have access to all the information. And they don't hesitate to record it. Facebook is an extraordinary database. People put everything on Facebook. Who are your friends? What are their tastes, what movies have they seen? What do they consume? And it's a source of firsthand information.

Q. Have you been in contact with Kelly Keiderling, after what happened in Venezuela?

No, I haven't had contact with her. I don't know what was her final destination, after what happened (she was expelled from Venezuela for meeting with and financing terrorists).

Q. With the experience she has, how far was she able to penetrate into Venezuela, and Venezuelan universities?

I am certain that she got quite far. She's a very intelligent agent, very well prepared, very capable, and very convinced of what she's doing. Kelly is a person convinced of the job she is doing. She is convinced of the justness, from her point of view, of what she is doing. Because she is an unconditional representative of capitalism. Because she comes from capitalism's elite. She is organic of the actions she is doing. There is no contradiction of any kind. And, based on the experience of her work, of her capability, I am sure that she managed to get very far, and gave continuity to a job which is not just for now, it's a job she will go on doing for a long time, to reverse the process in Venezuelan universities. What's going on is that up to whatever point they can reach, in the long term, that is what will show the Bolivarian process, in the measure of which the people are aware of what could happen. If that fascist right wing becomes uncontrollable, it could get into power again.

Q. What kind of person who has contacts, who could reach the people, such as by being an activist in a movement, could be captured by the CIA?

They will find them, they will try to do it. If it's a young person and a leader, they will try to capture them for their interests. We have to train our leaders. We can't leave that to spontaneity, we can't leave that to the enemy. So, if we leave them to the enemy, those are spaces which the enemy will occupy. Any alternative project that we leave unattended, any alternative project that we don't realize the necessity of getting close to, that is a project that the enemy will try, by all means, to take advantage of. Using the enormous amount of money they have for that, which has no limits, in terms of resources to be used, because they are playing with the future and, above all, the young are the key.

The good thing is that the young are the present of Latin America. The Latin American revolution which is there, which is everywhere, is of the young. If not, fine, it will never have results, and if you manage to make young people think differently, if you succeed in getting these youngsters to believe that savage capitalism is the solution to all their problems, then there will be no revolution for Latin America. It's that simple.