

ESPACIO PUBLICITARIO

MY ACCOUNT | REGISTER

SUBSCRIPTIONS

ADVERTISERS

Buscar

BUSCAR

CARACAS, Saturday May 11, 2013 | Update 33'

Secciones [Daily News](#) Edición Impresa Servicios Multimedia EUTV Clasificados Estampas

Daily News > [News](#)

Follow us from:

Like  | 14 |  | share |

ALLIANCE

# Cubans in Venezuela

General Antonio Rivero, recently detained, has reported on the alleged meddling of Cuban military officers in security and defense in Venezuela

## Dossier



### The dialogue experience

José Vicente Rangel clearly said: "We are not conducting negotiations threatened with a gun in the head." He warned behind closed doors in the midst of the social upheaval occurred during the oil strike in 2002 and 2003. Dissenting Timoteo Zambrano answered back that no other option was available: "The thing is that otherwise, you do not negotiate."

- Cubans in Venezuela
- The reasonable doubts about April 14 presidential election

## Ranking

Read

1. Maduro thinks that Obama makes "a serious mistake"
2. Swiss bank accounts were used for bribery
3. "I suspect that the fraud will hardly allow Mad..."
4. Chinese Communist Party to train chavista leaders
5. Nicolás Maduro to meet with owners of major pri...
6. Excerpts of column "Runrunes" (Rumors) of Tuesd...
7. Dutch Antilles Express rejects suspension of op...
8. Venezuela implements 20% increase in prices of ...
9. Polar group rebuts charges on deliberate shrinkage
10. Peruvian FM resigns after clashes with Venezuel...



EL UNIVERSAL

---

Nicolás Maduro ratified the political alliance with Cuba in his first foreign trip shortly after his inauguration (File photo)

## FRANCISCO OLIVARES | EL UNIVERSAL

Saturday May 11, 2013 12:00 AM

About 210,000 Cubans have been to Venezuela until 2012, as part of an alliance established by Hugo Chávez. A number of agreements have enabled Cubans to take part in a wide range of government plans and social welfare, from health to national intelligence to security.

During his practice, retired Major General Antonio Rivero, recently detained on charges of fueling riots after the presidential election of April 14, collected in depth the extent of Cuba-Venezuela agreements. He particularly disclosed the alleged meddling of Cuban advisors in security and defense matters.

In an interview with daily newspaper El Universal, shortly before his detention, Rivero explained that he retrieved the whole information about Cuban meddling in Venezuela from all the garrisons throughout the country until 2010, when he was discharged from the army.

General Rivero reckons that out of 200,000 Cubans who have been to Venezuela, about 8,200 have defected to neighboring countries.

Spokespersons of Vanguardia Popular (People's Vanguard), a political party headed by Rivero, have contended that he was detained in retaliation for his complaints, brought initially at the army and thereafter at some organizations and media outlets.

Rivero was very close to Hugo Chávez. He took part in the second coup attempt led by the late president from Yare prison on November 27, 1992. He was very close indeed, to the extent that Chávez entrusted Rivero with the rescue of the coupsters of February 4. After the failed coup, Rivero sought refuge in Peru. Later on, he returned to the army and went to Spain to pursue a graduate course in telecommunications.

As soon as Chávez took office, Rivero was asked to work at Miraflores presidential palace in the field of telecommunications.

During the events of 2002, he formed part of the military taskforce which, along with General Raúl Baduel, rescued Hugo Chávez.

### Cubans since 1997

Rivero explained that first data about Cuban meddling in Venezuela was retrieved from several Cubans he met in Miraflores and worked at the Situation Room. "Three of them defected," he reasserts. They gave full testimony from the very moment they arrived in Venezuela. As related by them, the main liaison officer and mastermind in security matters was Ramiro Valdez, one of the forerunners of the Cuban Revolution and former Cuba's Minister of Communications and Information Technology. According to General Rivero, Valdez was the main developer of the bilateral alliance.

Based on the reports gathered by Rivero from Cubans, the link materialized when Chávez resolved to run for president in 1999. One year earlier, the first group of Cubans arrived in Venezuela to back his election campaign. There were 19 of them, who settled down in Margarita. By 1998, the group would amount to 138 advisors.

A report managed by El Universal and partly released in 2003, matches with Rivero version. It gives an account of three front firms run by the Cuban G2. A couple of them were recorded in Nueva Esparta state in 1999 as importers of pharmaceutical products; the third one was recorded in Caracas, as a software importer.

According to Rivero, the second group came after the landslides in Vargas state in 1999, under Chávez's brand-new government. At that time, Cuban envoys increased to 1,600, mainly to help cope with the heavy rains. Note that the number of Cubans varies every year: 83% of that contingent can spend one year

or more in Venezuela.

In 2000, the Cuba-Venezuela pact was signed. That year, 7,200 Cubans arrived. A report released by El Universal found that the programs contained in the deal would cost the Venezuelan nation one billion US dollars.

In 2004-2007, following the introduction of the social welfare program known as "missions," Cubans' involvement in Venezuela significantly increased by 14,000-18,000 Cubans on a yearly basis. Chávez himself reported that 20,000 Cubans were working on health care. That same year, the Ministry of Health conceded defection of 4,000 Cubans.

### Chávez and Cubans

To Rivero's mind, Chávez's idea of forming a strong alliance with Cuba became true right after his release from jail, when he headed for Cuba. At Miraflores presidential palace, General Rivero would voice his reservation as to Chávez-Cuba's rapprochement and the arrival of advisors in security matters. Because of his criticism, he was kept under observation. In this way, two years later, he was taken out from Miraflores and appointed as the head of Civil Protection. He worked there from 2003 through 2008. "I will take you out, because you are not in line with our policy," Chávez told him. In 2008, Rivero was appointed second commander at the Fourth Jungle Infantry Division.

The most radical political changes inside the armed forces and the military alliance with Cuba started in 2007.

That year, the motto "Homeland, socialism or death" took root in the army. During the inauguration of the reelected president, Rivero refused to repeat the mandatory motto. In July 2009, when Chávez attended a ceremony in Bolívar state, he was given a report on General Rivero, labeling him as non-revolutionary. Rivero spent nine months only in his commission. Thereafter, he was sent home.

Rivero is afraid that General Raúl Baduel was the last Defense Minister who rebutted the Cuban meddling in the internal affairs of the Venezuelan armed forces.

In August 2007, upon the reform of the Army Organic Law, elements similar to those at the Cuban armed forces were added, namely: Comprehensive Defense Regions (REDI) and the new rank of major general and commander-in-chief.

Rivero maintains that the "Strategic Cooperation Team" was established in 2008. It is led by a general of Cuban armed forces, responsible for advice of the new organization and review of the new operational plans under the new military doctrine. Rivero affirms that the Defense Minister counts on a 24/7-service Cuban general as advisor. This includes the setup of a Cuban military unit of 200-300 troops headquartered at Tiuna Fort, who operate in the above-mentioned areas.

Twitter: folivares10

### Translated by Conchita Delgado

Like 22 | 14 | 0 | share |

### Alianzas

## EL UNIVERSAL

Cómo anunciar | Suscripciones | Contáctenos | Política de privacidad  
 Términos legales | Condiciones de uso | Condiciones generales de publicación | Mapa del Sitio | Ayuda  
 El Universal - Todos los derechos reservados 2013