

Venezuela: Operación Libertad Has Failed

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Caracas, Venezuela. April 30, 2019. Photo: teleSUR

At 4 a.m. on April 30, a small group of members of the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB), estimated at 100, identified with a blue flag, led the beginning of a coup attempt. The movement included two main elements: the appearance of

Leopoldo López, leader of the Popular Will party who was detained at the La Carlota military base together with Juan Guaidó, as well as the group of members of the FANB with blue bands moving to Altamira, the main area of right-wing mobilizations in Caracas.

Communication Minister Jorge Rodríguez, FANB Commander Vladimir Padrino López, as well as the President of the National Constituent Assembly Diosdado Cabello, among others, stated in the early hours that the La Carlota base was not taken, and that the country's barracks continued to support President Nicolás Maduro.

Guaidó said it was the final phase of what he called "Operation Freedom". The coup had the international public support of the U.S. government, through Mike Pompeo, the president of Colombia Iván Duque, the government of Argentina through Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie, the secretary of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, the president of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, among others.

The government of Spain, for its part, rejected the violent attempt: "It must be clear that Spain does not support any military coup".

The new assault erupted with a media force that has no parallel in the level of military capacity on the ground. Nor has there been, so far, a supportive response from the opposition population in the streets to back the coup perpetrators.

With the exception of the two epicenters and the social networks, the situation in Caracas is calm but tense. Chavismo, for its part, has begun to mobilize at the Miraflores Palace to support President Nicolás Maduro, democracy, to reject the new phase of the attempted coup d'état.

Chavismo mobilized in Miraflores to defend democracy. The military base of La Carlota has not been taken, the military attempt has no force for its national

objective of achieving the coup d'état. #30Apr

https://twitter.com/Marco_Teruggi/status/1123245758793363456

So is the Miraflores Palace and its surroundings: with Chavismo mobilized against the new coup d'état. They will not pass. #30Apr

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Maduro Assures Military Remains Loyal to Government

The destabilization operation unleashed in the early morning by Juan Guaidó, the liberated Leopoldo López and a group of soldiers of the Bolivarian National Armed Force did not achieve the objective of spreading through the barracks.

Time has once again accelerated in Venezuela. After weeks of a tense calm, the right attempted another coup in its attempt to overthrow Nicolás Maduro. This time it was through a military action that began at 4 a.m. at the La Carlota military base, the main one in Caracas. An action led by a group of approximately one hundred members of the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB) belonging to the body of the Bolivarian National Guard was carried out there.

This was under control in the early hours of the morning. The highlight was the appearance on that site of Juan Guaidó together with Leopoldo López, the leader of the party -Voluntad Popular - to which Guaidó belongs- who escaped from his residential prison. Guaidó said in a video published on his social networks that it was the final phase of what he called "Operation Freedom," launched in April. In his appeal he claimed to have the support of the FANB and called on them to take to the streets.

The coup action had the international public support of the U.S. government, through Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the President of Colombia Ivan Duque, the government of Argentina through Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie, the Secretary of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, among others. For its part, the Spanish government rejected the violent attempt: "It must be clear that Spain does not support any military coup".

With the passage of the morning the focus of concentration of the coup operations moved from the military base - where they managed to knock down a fence but not enter - to the Altamira distributor, where part of the military assembled with stolen tanks, opposition leaders such as Guaidó and María Corina Machado, right-wing street confrontation groups, as well as demonstrators in favour of the coup d'état.

"Most of the people who went to the distributor were deceived. This is a cowardly, terrorist act and an attempted coup d'état of a very small magnitude (...) 80 percent of the troops who attended this call were deceived," Padrino López said in a statement at noon. "We hold the fascist, unpatriotic leadership responsible for all bloodshed," said Padrino López.

President Maduro said: "I have spoken with the commanders of all the REDI - region of integral defense - and ZODI - zone of integral defense - of the country, who have expressed to me their total loyalty to the people, to the constitution and to the homeland". Guaidó's statement that he had the support of FANB was false.

The operation unleashed in the early morning did not achieve one of its objectives which was to spread between barracks to build an escalation towards the center of power. As for the media coverage, the plan was successful, as was the creation of a new scenario of violence, destabilization, and the construction of a critical juncture in Altamira, with a plan to be able to expand it and extend it to various parts of the city and the country. The latter has not happened, and Caracas, as well as the

different states of the country, show a tranquility with high tension. As for Chavismo, it is mobilized in front of the Miraflores Palace.

Violent actions have already been reported, such as the one denounced by Padrino López: "I denounce the violent aggression of which Colonel Yerzon Jimenez Baez, head of operations of the CZGNB-43, was victim, shot at the neck on the Francisco Fajardo highway. At the moment he is entering surgery". At the same time, an unconfirmed event was reported, where a tank ran over some demonstrators.

The right wing from Altamira showed signs of recovering the capacity for belligerence while being disoriented in the face of an accelerated situation but without real force for larger objectives: Guaidó called to mobilize towards the west, meaning towards the political center, and then to retreat and continue with the call for mobilization that was already scheduled for tomorrow, May 1st. Regarding the real support in the streets, it has not been able to massify itself as they had counted on in their escalation plan. It is expected, within this context, that violent actions will take place, as shown by the burning of a bus in the vicinity of Altamira, and the decision not to withdraw from the streets.

This picture of a river scrambled with guns and gunshots is the scenario is sought by the right, as part of the escalation plan of confrontation in order to achieve a rupture of the relationship of forces, or to achieve a greater sense of victory in a moment of difficulty in maintaining the expectations generated by Guaidó. Direct U.S. support puts a seal on action. Several countries have spoken out against the attempted coup d'état and in favour of support for democracy and dialogue, such as the governments of Bolivia, Russia and Iran.

Leopoldo López escaped today and ends up hiding in the Chilean embassy with Lilian Tintori and his daughter. Was that the plan for today's operation? If it wasn't - which it didn't seem - then again they miscalculated their military capacity and popular support. #PoliticaALa1

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