

## **Alejandro Andrade exposes the culture of Chavism corruption**

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When Alejandro Andrade, 54, admitted last week he had incurred in money laundering in the United States, pleading guilty before a court in the Southern District of Florida for the charge of money laundering conspiracy to participate in bribery schemes for more than one billion dollars, he revealed the reason d'être of the regime that has governed Venezuela for the past 20 years. Corruption is the common practice of Chavism.

Andrade comes from the ranks of the February 4 movement. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1987, the same promotion of Diosdado Cabello. He was the bodyguard of Hugo Chávez during the presidential campaign of 1998 and private secretary when he was president.

In the shadow of Chávez, Andrade rose to positions of high responsibility as president of the National Treasury Office (2007-2010) and the state-run National Bank of Economic and Social Development, Banes (2008-2010), among others.

From these entities, Andrade wove a network with the complicity of bankers and brokers nationally and internationally that allowed him the financial manipulation of the State papers, structured notes, and bonds of the external debt of Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Belarus acquired by the Bolivarian government.

The fraudulent scheme consisted of obtaining a high spread in the transaction - Banes sold cheap and bought expensive the same papers -, leaving high profits that were shared among those involved (in the case of federal judge Robin L. Rosenberg, Andrade obtain 50% in bribes).

This format has also been used by the currency exchange system, Cadivi, through which goods, products, and medicines were imported with over-invoicing, leaving a high-profit margin to be distributed among those involved. To such an extent that in 2009, the containers loaded with food deteriorated in the fiscal warehouses. Such was the corruption environment that the state oil company Pdvsa entered into the management of food imports.

According to Jorge Giordani and Hector Navarro, 300 billion dollars were left in the hands of corruption during 2003-2013.

Therefore, Chávez's great promise to end the adeco-copeyano corruption during 40 years of governments was untrue. His regime took it to a grander scale, because it was the great looting of the country's currencies, regardless of the consequences: the socioeconomic collapse of Venezuela.

According to the principal of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Enrique Graue, the cost of corruption in Mexico is equivalent to 10% of its gross domestic product, an amount equal to 110 billion dollars in 2017.

Likewise, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2017 places Mexico and Venezuela at the bottom of the list of 180 countries, 135 and 169 respectively. So it can be derived with all the above that the cost of corruption in Venezuela during the administrations of Chavez-Maduro have been between 15% to 20% of GDP, equivalent to 35,000 million dollars in 2017, for a total of 610 billion dollars for 2002-2017.

Therefore, Andrade exposes the culture of corruption of the Bolivarian revolution. Another example is Claudia Díaz, also former-treasurer of the nation during the years 2011-2013 and Chavez personal nurse, who raised a fortune in the scale of Andrade's. As such its possible to continue naming other collaborators of Chavez and Maduro.

Also, Andrade threatens the image of Chavez as the redeemer of the poor and swordsman of justice, ending the corruption of the adecos-copeyanos, because Andrade knows the secrets of Chávez himself. To such an extent that he knew that there was no revolution, nor an ideology of 21st-century socialism since Andrade had been collaborating with one of the United States agencies since he was part of Chavez' government. His mistake was to believe he was more intelligent than the others. It turned out that several of the co-conspirators, tried in the United States, indicated him as the "owner of the money laundering", without Andrade having informed the US authorities on time.

Diosdado Cabello knows the impact of Andrade in demonstrating Chavism's corruption. In the same way that Marcelo Odebrecht did in Brazil with the governments of Lula and Dilma. Therefore, Cabello distance himself from the former treasurer six days ago. He said: "Andrade hurt the revolution". What revolution? What we have in Venezuela is a corrupt mafia state. Moreover, corruption has had a systemic approach with Chavez and Maduro, managing the nation's coffers.

In conclusion, Andrade has been one of the greatest exponents of Chavism's corrupt culture. Therefore, essential to scrutinize the bribes paid for more than 600,000 million dollars, the total cost of corruption in Venezuela up till 2017.