

[The Giant with Seven League Boots \(Part Two\)](#)

On March 12, 2004 we learned through INTERPOL that a citizen of Argentinean origin and naturalized in Mexico was being claimed in a case of operations of an illegal nature.

Relevant investigations corroborated that he had entered the country on February 27 that same year onboard a private plane, along another person, and that he was accommodated in a rented home legally registered.

He was arrested on March 30.

On the 31st the Mexican Foreign Ministry presented, to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs an extradition request against Carlos Ahumada Kurtz, since there was a warrant for his apprehension for his probable participation in a generic fraud crime.

Five days later he was taken into preventive detention as a result of the investigations.

During the interrogations he declared that, since November 2003, he had reached agreement with the political leaders of the Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) and Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) parties, with Senator Diego Fernandez de Cevallos and former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari to denounce fraudulent schemes by officials with the Government of the Federal District, collaborators close to the governor for the PRD party, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Videos shot by him or by his collaborators showed the personal aide of the Governor, Rene Bejarano receiving thousands of dollars from Ahumada, as well as other videos featuring the Secretary of Finance of the Federal District, Gustavo Ponce Melendez spending large sums of cash in a casino, in Las Vegas, the United States—those materials were published on Mexican TV.

Bejarano was set up in a trap with an interview in a television show where he severely criticized acts of corruption by government officials and on concluding his statement he was invited into an adjoining studio, where he was shown a video in which he appeared receiving money, which led to a huge scandal with destructive consequences for his prestige.

Salinas de Gortari and Fernandez de Cevallos watched the videos previously and they organized, along with the Secretary of Government and the Attorney General of the Republic of President Fox, Santiago Creel and Rafael Macedo de la Concha respectively, the presentation of the accusation and its later publication, offering him in return economic support for his business and juridical protection for him and his family.

Ahumada met with Fernandez de Cevallos on several occasions, to analyze the quality of the videos, improve them and even, manage to hide his face in the videos, so that the accusation was ratified by him in a room of the Hotel Presidente in Mexico City, in the presence of representatives of the Attorney General of the Republic.

Once the videos were published, Salinas, through his lawyer Juan Collado Mcelo and his personal aide Adan Ruiz told him to leave Mexico and find shelter in Cuba; he did so through visits by the employees aforementioned and on the telephone.

The main objective, according to Ahumada's declaration, was to harm Lopez Obrador and the PRD by weakening him as a candidate for the 2006 presidential elections.

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On April 28, 2004 Carlos Ahumada Kurtz was deported to Mexico and he was handed over to police authorities; he remained arrested under the jurisdiction of the Federal District judge who had issued the apprehension warrant. That same day, the Cuban Foreign Ministry released the confirmation about the process carried out against Carlos Ahumada and about his deportation.

During his arrest in Cuba he received a visit from his wife, he had consular access and, exceptionally, he was allowed to meet with Salinas' lawyer Juan Collado.

A strong media campaign was launched about this case.

As to the deportation, some favorable criteria on Cuba were issued by leaders of different political parties, particularly the PRD, while a report from the Cuban Interior Ministry, just received yesterday, dated August 11, 2010, reads that Lopez Obrador was satisfied with the measure.

On the other hand, an "evaluation dispatch on the information about the deportation of Carlos Ahumada" reports in one of its paragraphs: " The PRD president Godoy phoned our Embassy to say he was satisfied with the 'Cuban' statement and with the 'deportation'. He said that Lopez Obrador 'is very satisfied'." This was what most interested us.

The Attorney General of the Federal District "phoned our embassy to express his appreciation for the deportation and to request information on the flight."

Similarly, numerous personalities, representatives of organizations and political parties, Representatives and Senators, conveyed their satisfaction and gratitude to us.

Blanche Petrich and Gerardo Arreola, special reporter and correspondent of La Jornada newspaper respectively published a report saying: "The detainee directly involves top government officials, said the Cuban foreign minister."

"Havana, 5 May. Sitting on the edge of a brocade couch, out of fashion, wrapped, looking good, entrepreneur Carlos Ahumada tells his interlocutors who stand by the camera that records him: 'Because I did not want to release the videos, because that was, somehow, the only chance I had to negotiate what I wanted to negotiate; that is, that they helped me. Well, unfortunately I ended up releasing all and they have not given me anything yet, because they have not provided me with juridical protection, on the contrary, I gained their accusation against me on money laundering, while they have not given me any economic assistance either, and practically for me what they have given is nothing and I am here now, arrested'.

"With this mini clip, no more than four minutes of the announced and feared videos in the hands of the Cuban Government, foreign minister Felipe Perez Roque presented 'the proofs' that the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Luis Ernesto Derbez, had requested.

"'Unfortunately---concluded Perez Roque---the events have considerable political connotation because the planning, making and publication of the videos with political aims directly involve senior government officials.'"

"In these segments presented to the press this afternoon, Ahumada does not mention any name of the Vicente Fox team, or any details of the complot aimed against the political figure of the Head of Government of the Federal District, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, nor any clue about the identity of those behind the entrepreneur. All this despite the fact that the foreign minister himself assured that the Cuban judicial authorities have the records of 'hours and hours' of declarations by the detainee. 'Ahumada said much more to our officials.'

Who is Ahumada referring to when he says 'they'? To whom did he release the videos?

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"That is for the Mexican government to determine. We explained that he had said that senior figures were involved in pre-planning everything. He stated that they had political aims and objectives. It is in Mexico where this has to be investigated. That is not our goal. We are compelled to take these elements because Foreign Minister Derbez called on us to present evidence. That statement requires us to delve deeper into what was done.

"For a month, Cuba had been receiving a barrage of accusations and rumors that we were protecting Ahumada. I reiterate that the obligation to account to the political system and the Mexican people about these facts is borne by the Mexican authorities,' he insisted."

This interesting study of authors continues for many pages, of which I will not even attempt a synthesis, I do not wish to extend this reflection like yesterday.

I do wish to include a necessary instruction I gave to the Deputy Head of the International Relations Department of the Party Central Committee, on April 2, 2004, to Joseph Arbesú, traveling to Mexico in order to make clear our position on the Ahumada case.

"It must be done with all the leaderships of the parties, our people must go there to talk to them, including not only the PRD, PRI, but also PT, Convergencia. We must also talk to Bolaños (Ambassador of Cuba in Mexico). The idea is to explain how it was, how we found out, disrupt all the questions they are asking. "

"Tell Obrador, first, that we are not in any plot against him, nor any conspiracy against him, nor are we allied with anyone to harm him, that we learned that Ahumada was here, that we are not able to that.

"What we learned about the presence of this individual in the country following the request made by Interpol ..."

"That the real truth is that we have many problems and are busy with other things, and the top leadership of the country was not informed nor even about those scandals ..."

"When we knew, and as soon as we knew the investigation was ordered. The fellow was even arrested to learn and to know, that he was not the only victim of that, but we, too, the honor, prestige of the country and the Revolution. There should be no confusion about that. And conversely, we are interested in everything that he has to say about it."

"Ask the opinions of the PRI, the others, everybody; we want to know what they say. And foist or position on everyone and how they have involved us in this, and that we are not going to let them involve us in underhand things and be accused of harboring and supporting..."

The people of Lopez Obrador's party wanted us to send them the copy of the filmed statements by Ahumada, and that we could not satisfy them with it. We send it, as it was appropriate, to the authority who requested the extradition. Any other approach would not have been responsible.

We fully understand the suspicions of Lopez Obrador. He had been betrayed by people he thought were honest and these circumstances were exploited by those who were willing to stick in the dagger.

There was an additional reason. When Ahumada showed him the material, which he termed a "nuclear missile" against Obrador, Salinas was in Cuba. A very clever man, he knew how to move all the pieces like a chess expert, talented well above those around him.

When he was President of Mexico, his rival had been Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, with whom for obvious reasons we maintained excellent relations. All the major, medium and small states had recognized him.

Cuba was the last one. Just days before his inauguration, we did it by accepting his invitation to his assumption of office.

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I was not aware whether there had been any fraud. He was the candidate of the PRI, the party the Mexican electorate always voted for, for decades. Only my heart made me believe that they stole the election from Cuauhtemoc.

He was extremely kind to me, talked a lot and showed me his huge library full of books on all four sides, on two floors. They were not there for decoration.

Something much more important happened. At a time of a serious migration crisis between Cuba and the United States in August 1994, William Clinton, the U.S. president at that time, not liking Carter, who had been proposed as a mediator and who we preferred, appointed Salinas and I had no choice but to accept him.

He behaved well and acted truly as a mediator and not as a U.S. ally. Thus was produced the agreement, which had been a joke in the first crisis during the Reagan years.

When Zedillo, a really mediocre man, replaced him in the presidency, maybe he was jealous of his political influence, forbade him to reside in Mexico; at the time Salinas had a difficult personal situation, and asked to reside in Cuba. Without hesitation we authorized him, and the first child of his second marriage was born here.

He wanted to invest in our country, and we did not allow that. He legally acquired a private residence in the capital of Cuba.

Bill Clinton did not behave well. He upheld the migratory agreements signed, but kept the economic blockade, the Cuban Adjustment Act, and took the opportunity to tighten the economic pressure with the Helms-Burton Law, which the Government of that country has maintained against Cuba.

When Salinas wrote about his role in the migratory negotiations in a book, he told the truth and agreed with the leftist newspaper the New Yorker, which published the story of the activities of Richardson, who was secretary of Energy, during his visit to Cuba and proposed to Clinton banning the provocations of the planes that they used in the Vietnam war for violating our airspace over the City of Havana, which led us to communicate to Richardson that we would not tolerate such violations.

When he returned to the United States he told me that it would not happen again, so I did not concern myself further with the problem. Unfortunately that did not happen and the incident took place.

Salinas continued visiting Cuba with certain frequency, talked with me and never tried to deceive me. I became seriously ill on 26 July 2006, and did not hear again from him.

I have not changed. I will be faithful to the principles and ethics that I have practiced since I became a revolutionary.

Today I am honored to share the views of Manuel López Obrador, and without the slightest doubt, much sooner than he imagines, everything will change in Mexico.

"... The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing! It is the time of mobilization, of marching together, and we must go forward in close ranks, like silver in the veins of the Andes," said José Martí almost 120 years ago, on January 1st, 1891.

Fidel Castro Ruz
August 12, 2010
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