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## Obama's Failing Wars. The Caribbean Front

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The Caribbean is America's underbelly, and is extremely vulnerable in terms of the superpower's security. It will suffice to mention the activities of drug cartels in the region that shift tens of tons of drugs into the US, getting round the deeply layered defence system of the DEA and other intelligence agencies without any particular problems. America's Caribbean border could become equally as vulnerable to penetration by terrorist organisations. The wars waged by the empire in Asia have failed, and America is going to have to spend a long, long time dealing with the negative consequences of these ventures. There are more and more terrorist organisations acting under the slogan of revenge on the Empire at any price.

Obama's administration is carrying out complex and costly measures by way of security services to prevent revenge attacks on American soil. In the countries of the Caribbean alone, hundreds of intelligence agency employees are working under the roof of American embassies, using all kinds of operational capabilities – from agent penetration to means of electronic control. However, there is no confidence in the effectiveness of these measures. Hence the carefully hidden but underlying fear that the preparation of a large-scale terrorist act, mass hostage-taking, or sabotage of chemical facilities or nuclear power stations may be missed. Official briefings on these issues are regularly passed on to the US station: don't overlook, don't allow, stop in time... This is exactly the reason why US intelligence agencies began using provocative methods to draw 'potential criminals' into illegal acts.

The operations personnel of US intelligence agencies who are on the frontline of protecting the country from terrorist threats are under a great deal of stress. Not all employees are able to bear this stress, resulting in dismissal in the best case scenario, and suicide in the worst. The incident with George Gaines, a 50-year old officer in charge of regional security issues at the US Embassy in Barbados, was particularly resonant. He shot himself in the head on Christ Church beach in Dover. Local journalists interpreted the choice of a public place for such an act unequivocally: Gaines wanted to ensure that his suicide got as big a reaction as possible from both the media and the public. Needless to say, the US Embassy did everything it could to make sure that did not happen. The diplomat's body was moved to the embassy building without the consent of the local authorities or the preliminary findings of forensic experts, and then transferred to Miami on the next flight of a US airline. To every question asked by the media in Barbados, the embassy replied that Gaines' death was a "private matter", asking them to "respect the privacy of the family".

The US Embassy in Barbados, the largest of the Lesser Antilles, also 'serves' other island nations – Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and Saint Lucia. Given the numerous service requests, transport problems, financial restrictions on travel, and stringent rules related to maintaining personal safety, Gaines was not always able to cope with the tasks before him and was criticised by an ambassador in front of a colleague, which he took extremely badly. According to Barbadian bloggers, the diplomat was worried that any incident relating to security could put an end to his career. He paid off all his fears with suicide.

In order to limit the influence of Cuba and Venezuela on countries in the Caribbean, US intelligence agencies are widely resorting to cold war methods. Operations are constantly being carried out against the alliance Petrocaribe, which was set up in 2005 at the initiative of Hugo Chavez for the supply of oil and oil products to Central American and Caribbean countries at reduced rates. One of the alliance's ongoing plans is to establish a new Petrocaribe economic zone. According to President Nicolás Maduro: "The purpose of the alliance is investment, trade, and the development of joint production projects, including those related to tourism. We are ready for this alliance both at government level, and at the level of private companies."

The efforts of Caracas to consolidate the countries in the Caribbean are being perceived by Washington as "confrontational behaviour". America's position regarding Petrocaribe's plans was clarified by Alex Sokoloff, the Political and Economic Officer at the US Embassy in the Bahamas. He warned the island's government against developing economic ties with Venezuela, since there is "no such thing as cheaper oil. A more likely scenario (of the Venezuelans) is either a long-term credit burden or other political strings attached to any deal." Without batting an eyelid, Alex Sokoloff suggested that the Bahamas use solar panels, as they are the best source of energy.

Special departments of the US government are not cutting down on the intensity of operations to destabilise Cuba. Washington is in no way able to reconcile itself to the fact that after 50 years of unsuccessful attempts to overthrow Castro's regime, Cuba has maintained its independence and continues to go its own way. Its policy of social and economic reforms is supported by the vast majority of Cubans. Attempts by the CIA and USAID to form 'colour revolution' groups on the

island invariably continue to fail, and the latest such attempt recently gained publicity... Through the US-controlled organisation Creative Associates International, students from Costa Rica, Peru and Venezuela were sent to Cuba to carry out recruitment work. Cuban counterintelligence exposed the attempt by the CIA's 'student' agents to infiltrate Cuba's youth relatively quickly. The revelations were made by the Associated Press, which, believing the involvement of young people in dubious operations to be a criminal act, carried out its own investigation and made it public.

US intelligence agencies do not shy away from the most radical methods, either. By all accounts, they were involved in the attack on the Venezuelan Consulate in Willemstad (Curacao). An active member of the anti-Bolivarian opposition, who was in contact with US representatives on the island, used a vehicle to cause damage to the front door and the inside of the building. Following orders from Caracas, Venezuelan diplomats were temporarily pulled out of Curacao, Aruba and Bonaire due to the threat of further attacks. In Basseterre, the capital of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Venezuelan Embassy building was burnt down. The capital regarded the action as a kind of warning to Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, who admires the reforms in Venezuela and the achievements of Cuba in the social sphere. Not so long ago, Douglas opened embassies of his country in Caracas and Havana, and declared at the ceremony: "We'll continue to be next to Cuba in the struggle for integration in Latin America and the Caribbean."

In May 2013, Helmin Wiels, the leader of the Pueblo Soberano party, which won the elections in October 2012, was killed on the island of Curacao. Wiels sought the post of prime minister and tried to create a left-of-centre coalition. He shared the political views of Hugo Chavez and maintained friendly relations with Nicolás Maduro. Wiels advocated an independent foreign policy for the island and the expulsion of the US military, which, under the pretext of combating drug trafficking, carried out (and is still carrying out) intelligence work against Venezuela. The CIA station operating in Willemstad 'under the roof' of the Consulate General believed Wiels to be an extremely dangerous politician with regard to US interests. He was therefore put under constant surveillance. His trips were carefully documented, especially to Caracas and Havana, his telephone conversations were recorded, and a record of his internet contacts was kept.

The politician was killed after being shot several times in a village on the coast where he usually went to relax. He did not have a bodyguard with him, and the killers took advantage of this. According to media reports, virtually all of those involved in the terrorist act were arrested following a police investigation. One of these later killed himself in his prison cell. Another, the driver of the car that took the killers to the place where the assassination took place, fled to America. There is still no information on exactly who ordered the killing. It is doubtful that any will show up. However, it is impossible to ignore the fact that very little attention was given to any coverage of the 'Wiels case', as though it were trying to be forgotten as soon as possible. Theories on the CIA's involvement in the murder, which originally appeared on the internet, disappeared as if on cue: evidently the work of specialists from the NSA.

In order to protect themselves, Cuba, Venezuela and their allies are launching aggressive measures to expose America's secret operations aimed at undermining integration processes in the Caribbean, and compromise trade and economic, as well as energy and military ties with countries like China, Russia and Brazil. Distrust of the ultimate aims of US policy in the region

has reached its peak, and the outline of the Caribbean's opposition to imperial diktat is becoming ever clearer.