

Antonio Salas is

THE PALESTINIAN

الفلستيني

**He learned Arabic,
he converted to Islam,
and he infiltrated international terrorist networks...**

By the author of
Diary of a skin

Introduction

بيضة اليوم خير من دجاجة الغد.

An egg today is better than a chicken tomorrow

Arabic proverb

Like every Friday over the last few years, I left the mosque on 17th April, 2009, serene of spirit, strong of faith... and unarmed. I wasn't comfortable with the idea of visiting the mosque with my gun. And not only because it might be revealed by the different positions and knee-bending required in the *salat*, Islamic prayer, in which case I would immediately be arrested again, as all European mosques have been full of police snitches since 11th March, 2004. But because, deep down in the Muslim identity that had cost me so much to take on in the last few years, I believed that it showed a lack of respect for such a sacred place and for my brothers. Whatever my armed combat instructors said. So every Friday, before noon prayers, I would leave it in the car, the hotel or my locker and pick it up again when I left the temple. During my paramilitary training in Venezuela, my guerrilla comrades had insisted on the routine of carrying weapons, which according to them was essential for all revolutionaries or martyrs of Islam. And even more so in special circumstances, such as then when I was supposed to be back escorting a Libanese comrade, who used to be in charge of Hizbullah intelligence, during his visit to Spain...

That Friday I was in Madrid, waiting for the Hizbullah official, and I had chosen the Abu Bakr mosque, number 7 Anastasio Herrero street, which was more discreet than the famous M-30 mosque, although some of the most sinister and emblematic characters in the history of international terrorism had prayed with its walls, disguised among the hundreds of true Muslims who visit it on a daily basis. After leaving and picking up my gun, I went to the post office on

nearby Mariano Fernández street. I had a mission to fulfil before meeting my Libanese brother.

Another brother, Bolivian commander Eduardo Rózsa Flores, a veteran Balkan war combatant and leader of the Islamic Community in Hungary, had given me precise orders to send a package to his sister Silvia, in Bolivia, and I always followed orders, especially when they were given by guys like Rózsa. After the *salat*, I sent the package to the address that commander Rózsa had sent me that same week by e-mail.

When I left the post office, I only had to cross the road and walk a few yards to reach an internet café that I was familiar with. As a Palestinian-Venezuelan, my presence on the premises frequented by immigrants had always gone unnoticed whenever I spent eight or ten hours at a time in front of a computer. And I had plenty to do that afternoon. My “godfather”, Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, better known as *Carlos the Jackal*, had sent me several texts and photographs to be uploaded to his official website, www.lichramirez.blogspot.com. The Jackal had been ringing me for months from his Paris prison to give me instructions, at least once or twice a week. Teodoro Darnott, a leader of Hizbullah-Venezuela, sentenced to ten years imprisonment for setting a bomb in the US embassy in Caracas, whose website I also controlled,¹ still had internet access from his cell in the Venezuelan espionage centre, the DISIP spiral², but Carlos cannot access the internet from the French jail where he is imprisoned for life, accused of more than eighty murders, so he sent me all the texts and pictures he wanted me to load on his website. And I followed his instructions to the letter.

Commander Ilich Ramírez was particularly pleased with my work, and he had told me so on several occasions. Especially since, five months earlier, I attended a meeting in Sweden on his behalf, so that he could participate via my

¹ www.teocraciavenezuela.blogspot.com

² DISIP: *Dirección General Sectorial de los Servicios de Inteligencia y Prevención*, now SEBIN, *Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia*. Its headquarters are in the sinister spiral-shaped building in Caracas... that I had “slipped into” on two occasions.

mobile phone, permanently bugged by the French secret service. I had previously told him that, thanks to my contacts in Al Jazeera and radical Islamic groups, I had finally obtained a copy of the only interview given by sheikh Osama Ben Laden after 9/11, which had never been aired. We were considering the possibility of loading the video on his website.

Through the site, I was contacted by members of the most important “revolutionary” groups in the world: ETA, Hizbullah, FARC, Hamas, ELN... and also by members of the neo-Nazi, revisionist and anti-Zionist groups involved in the Palestinian cause. In just two months time, I would have to testify, as a protected witness, in the case against Hammerskin Spain, one of the neo-Nazi organisations I had infiltrated for my previous book, *Diary of a skin*. Now I again had to infiltrate the nazi movement and frequent the same places and people as during my skinhead investigation. But this time in the guise of a Palestinian activist...

It was precisely through Carlos the Jackal’s official website that I had come into contact with people like Eduardo Rózsa, one of the Jackal’s colleagues during the legendary European operations conducted by Ilich Ramírez in the seventies and eighties. Since then, and following his orders, I had become an intermediary between the Jackal and his old comrade in arms in Hungary.

I settled in front of a computer, ready to spend the next few hours answering the e-mails sent from the all over the world to Carlos the Jackal, and updating his website. But I checked my own e-mail first. And that is when the sky fell in...

Since I had started this infiltration, and partly thanks to Eduardo Rózsa, I had learned to use the Facebook, MySpace or Messenger social networks to create an international community of members of different armed groups. I also used the Google alert service to trace the best known of my brothers and comrades, with whom I had been sharing my life since 11th March 2004. Any news item published anywhere in the world about the leader of the Al Aqsa brigades, Aiman Abu Aita, the founder of Hizbullah-Venezuela, Teodoro Darnott, “Al Zarquai’s man in Spain”, Abu Sufian, the Jackal himself, *tupamaro*

Chino Carías, ETA member Arturo Cubillas or commander Eduardo Rózsa, among many others, was automatically sent to my e-mail account. The others, the clandestine revolutionaries who were neither famous terrorists nor known by the police, never appeared on Google. But on that Friday, 17th April, hundreds of news items had been published in the international press about Eduardo Rózsa, and my e-mail inbox was full of Google alerts.

I couldn't believe it. But the pictures of my Muslim brother, riddled with bullets the previous night in a hotel in Santa Cruz (Bolivia), spoke for themselves. According to the headlines, Rózsa and several of his comrades had fallen under fire from the Bolivian police, during a violent antiterrorist operation designed to abort his magnicide plans. The cell led by Eduardo Rózsa was supposedly planning to assassinate president Evo Morales, and convert the state of Santa Cruz into a new Euskadi, a new Kosovo, free and independent from Bolivia, using the guerrilla techniques that Rózsa had first learned in the Balkan war and later during visits to Iraq.

He was not the first of the comrades I had met during my infiltration of international terrorist networks who had been shot to death during my investigation, and he would certainly not be the last. Half a dozen of my comrades in this violent, bloody world had fallen before Rózsa. And others would eventually follow. According to the press cuttings, my comrade was in charge of a terrorist cell that intended to assassinate a nation's president, so it was obvious that the Bolivian secret services, followed by other countries, would immediately start to track Rózsa down. They had evidently done so, and what they had discovered would eventually lead them to the Jackal, and hence to me.

In any case, the package that I had just sent to the commander's sister in Santa Cruz would soon reach Bolivia. On precisely 25th April, as Silvia would later confirm. And that would also point the police and journalists in my direction. Indeed, my Arabic name started to appear in much of the Bolivian media on the same day that Rózsa died. My journalist colleagues, when trying to find information about the leader of the terrorist group that had been planning to assassinate Evo Morales, had discovered the last interview that Eduardo Rózsa

had given before his death... and the interviewer was me. In less than forty-eight hours I would become a target for my Latin American colleagues, and would even be interviewed, in hiding, by several of them. Of course, I defended commander Rózsa's memory and claimed the innocence of Ilich Ramírez in the plans to kill Evo Morales... this was what was expected of me. This, of course, strengthened my Arabic identity in terrorist circles even further.

But the death of the leader of the Islamic Community of Hungary, for whom Carlos the Jackal had plans for the future, marked a turning point in my infiltration process. My relations with members of ETA, Hizbullah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the FARC, the *Tupamaros*, the ELN, the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, and so on, were excellent from then on. But I not only ran the risk of being discovered as a journalist infiltrated in those organisations, but could easily end up riddled with bullets like my comrades, if the police were to mistake me for a real terrorist. And that is no exaggeration.

"By chance", a month after Rózsa's death, the car that I used to drive in Caracas just happened to explode. They had left a car bomb under it in January, but it didn't go off. But at the second attempt, my old Seat Ibiza 1500 that I had taken from Spain and which had witnessed so many clandestine meetings with armed Columbian, Basque or Venezuelan groups in different parts of the country, burned to a skeleton... fortunately, no one was harmed. To this day, I don't know whether the attack was the work of a "squalid" neighbour, another armed group or an intelligence service.

Their lists of targets all included one Muhammad Abdallah, who had been seen in Palestine, Lebanon, Venezuela, Egypt, Siria, Cuba, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania and part of Europe, after 11th March, 2004, contacting the leaders of well-known terrorist organisations...

Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ. مَالِكِ
يَوْمِ الدِّينِ. إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ. اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ. صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ.

*In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise
is due to Allah alone, Lord of all the worlds. The Gracious,
the Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee alone to
we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help. Guide us
on the straight path...*

The Sacred Koran 1, 1

لسانك حصانك ان صنته صانك. وان خنته خانك.

Your tongue is like your horse. If you take care of it, it will take care of you

Arabic proverb

Muhammad, the Palestinian

My name is Muhammad Alí Tovar Abdallah, Abu Aiman, *Al Falistini*. I am “gocho”. I was born in Egido, in the state of Mérida, in Carlos Andrés Pérez’s “Saudi Venezuela”. But my mother and grandparents were Palestinians. Like thousands of others, they fled the Israeli occupation from a small village near Yinin, where they left behind a home, land and olive groves watered by the blood spilt by martyrs. But they did not leave behind their memory.

My maternal grandparents discovered the war-faring, communist Venezuela of the sixties, ahead of the enormous number of immigrants who were

attracted by the oil boom of the seventies and the emerging PDVSA. And there they met my father's family. He was a communist and agnostic, but ended up converting to Islam so that he could marry my mother.

Until he heard the words of the prophet Muhammad, my father, a convinced Marxist, fought alongside the Venezuelan guerrilla, combating the "adecos" of the fourth republic of president Betancourt and his Minister of the Interior, future president Carlos Andrés Pérez. Days of lead and jungle. Sharing skirmishes, or at least that is what he told me as a child, with the already legendary Douglas Bravo... As fate would have it, I myself became Bravo's friend and collaborator in the Caracas governed by Chávez in the 21st century. Hence my relationship with Latin America guerilla groups.

When my father met my mother it was love at first sight. And he gave up his weapons when he embraced the Koran, because he believed that a good Muslim has no room for them both. In any case, he finally persuaded my grandfather that he would be a good husband. And then I arrived on the scene.

But I never knew my mother. I killed her when I was born. She died in childbirth, and I don't think my father ever forgave me. So I was always a rebellious and troublesome child.

I only knew my mother through the memories of my Palestinian grandfather, an unconditional admirer of Yasser Arafat, who had survived the resistance in Yinin and Nablus, and always referred to her and our land, Palestine, which had been occupied and pillaged by the Israelis since 1948, with frustration and longing. It was my grandfather, the elegant Wassin, who taught me Islam when I was small and was determined for me to learn the language of the Sacred Koran. Although I forgot everything he had taught me for a long time after he died... including the language of the Koran. Which is why my Arabic is far from perfect.

In the late seventies, Luis Herrera Campins, supported by the Catholic conservatives of COPEI, took over from Carlos Andrés Pérez while he looked for the money that had vanished from the public accounts and impoverished the people of Venezuela. And left-wing dreams disappeared from Venezuela for

thirty years, while my father's comrades continued as clandestine guerrilla groups, until Hugo Chávez appeared on the scene. My family, like other communist families, decided to leave Venezuela before 1979 and set up in Spain, where I studied and lived for nearly twenty years. Which is why there is hardly a trace of a south American accent in my Spanish.

I was a rebel student. With a personality conflict, hovering between my father's communist legacy and my grandparents' Muslim education. Like a good Muslim, and like a good communist, I soon showed a vocation for service. When I was just eighteen years old, I started to work as a volunteer for different humanitarian organisations in Africa and the Middle East, where I made useful contacts for the jihad³ in Arabic countries.

While I was working as a TRC volunteer in Yanin, Palestine, which was controlled from Ramallah by my greatly admired friend Doctor Mahmud Shwail, I met my first wife: Dalal Majahad S., the most beautiful woman in the Arabic or infidel worlds. And we emulated my parents and fell in love immediately. But her father, an active member of Hamas, disapproved not only of our relationship but also of my communist background and family links to Al Fatah. So we met in secret. For too short a time.

On 9th March 2004, my beloved wife, pregnant with what was to be our first child, was in Yanin when an Israeli patrol entered Palestinian soil. During the ensuing fight by the resistance, a Jewish bullet entered the house through an open window and killed my wife, my son Aiman and my dreams for the future; hence my desire to become a mujahideen and fight Zionists and their North American and European allies the world over, until I attain martyrdom...

I ceased to perform humanitarian work, radicalised my Islamic training and received paramilitary training in Venezuela. And I decided that solidarity was not enough to protect innocents from imperialist bullets. That can only be

³ The Arabic word جهاد (yihad) literally means "hard work" and it is masculine, although it is often used in feminine in the west, being incorrectly translated as "holy war". I prefer to remain faithful to its original meaning in Arabic.

done by larger, faster bullets... Since then, my only goal has been to live and die for the jihad, taking as many infidels with me as possible...

Obviously, nearly everything that you have just read is false. This however, has been my identity for the last six years, while I have been infiltrating a series of international terrorist organisations since 12th March, 2004.

PART ONE

2004 d. C., year 1425 of the Hegira calendar⁴

⁴ The Muslim new year 1425 was on 22th February, 2004.

Chapter 1

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيْ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ
ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَىٰ لِلذَّاكِرِينَ

The righteous works wipe out the evil works

The Sacred Koran 11, 114

الإنسان عدو ما يجْهَل

Man is the enemy of what he does not know

Arabic proverb

Asalamu Alaykum

‘Salas, don’t be stupid! What do you mean, that you want to infiltrate Islamic terrorism? Are you out of your mind or have you got a Superman complex? Or both?’

Inspector Delgado was always very eloquent when I described my projects, and his reaction was always the same. He was good enough to present *Diary of a skin*, together with Esteban Ibarra,⁵ and he has always helped me whenever I needed advice. And, although I had not seen or heard from him in over a year, for reasons that are not pertinent here, he welcomed me when I knocked on his door again. I knew nothing about terrorism, particularly Islamic terrorism, so I asked him for help in starting the investigation. Although, on that

⁵ President of the Movement against Intolerance.

day in March 2005, just after the Islamic connection appeared in the media after the March 11 attacks, his reaction was not as I had expected.

‘You must be mad. Or drunk. Or both. Have you seen yourself in a mirror? How on earth are you going to pass yourself off as an Arabic terrorist?’

‘Well... I... Well, if I was accepted as a skinhead and a member of the mafia, I don’t see why this should be so different’, I tried to answer. And failed.

‘You haven’t the faintest idea what you are talking about. Look at you, smart aleck. How are you going to pass yourself off as a radical Muslim? Do you want to get yourself killed? Is that it?’

‘Well, I can grow a beard, wear different clothes... I don’t know.’

‘You don’t know. Of course you don’t know. But you’re as white as a snowflake. How are you going to look Arabic?’

‘I can go to a solarium... There are treatments to darken the skin, bronzers... I don’t know.’

‘Yeah. We already know that you don’t know. You haven’t the faintest idea. Do you even know anything about Islam? And Al Qaida?’

‘I can learn.’

‘Are you going to learn Arabic too? You’re too clever by half, you are.’

‘I swear that I’ll do whatever it takes. And if I have to learn Arabic, so be it. I’ll learn Arabic.’

‘The hell you will! With what? And what about your dick?’

‘Come on, I’ll study. That’s what language academies are for. There are courses...’

‘No, you idiot! I mean what I say. What about your dick? Are you going to have it cut?’

He’d got me there. I stood there with my mouth open for a moment.’

‘Cut?’

‘Yes, you fool. Cut! Like Jews, Muslims are circumcised! Are you Jewish?’

‘No, I’m not.’

‘Have you been circumcised?’

‘No.’

I admit that the inspector was right in some things, but circumcision seemed to take it a bit far. I had no intention of showing off my penis around the mosque, so I took Delgado’s words more as a harsh remark than as a real problem.

‘So you’re willing to stop drinking, stop smoking and... even worse, are you going to give up ham, sausage and bacon as well?’

After spending a year living alongside Russian, Rumanian, Latino or African traffickers, I admit that I had got used to having a glass of vodka and a cigarette in my hand all day long. “Once cigarette after another and a mid-morning vodka witnessed his confession”, wrote M. Pampón and S. Barriocanal, in the *Qué* newspaper after they interviewed me. This probably sounds terrible, but alcohol and cigarettes helped to take the edges of my memory after what I experienced in the woman trafficking mafia. So stopping smoking and drinking sounded like utopia. And unnecessary. As unnecessary as not eating pork or being circumcised. I would just have to make sure that no Muslim saw me smoking, drinking, eating... or peeing. It was clear that, back then, I knew as much about Islam as about terrorism. Nothing. But I was willing to learn.

That 11th March I happened to be in Madrid, not far from the flat, owned by her brother-in-law, where Shakira, the Colombian-Libanese singer, witnessed the brutal scenes of the attack that shocked Spain. My book *The year that I trafficked with women* had been presented three days earlier, on 8th March, surrounded by a harsh and unfair controversy. Although it was a summary of my infiltration in international networks that trafficked with and sexually exploited woman and girls, the media had focused on the prostitution of celebrities. For the few days before and after the book was presented, it was the talk of all the programmes on all the different TV channels.

From 8th to 11th March, I must have been the most sought after individual among my media colleagues and the same question was asked time and time again: “What will Antonio Salas investigate next?” But I didn’t have the answer. After infiltrating the women trafficking mafias, I was emotionally and

psychologically exhausted. I still am. So I let them speculate about my next investigation, in which they were as successful as at discovering my real identity. Drug smuggling? Weapons? Political corruption? Child prostitution? This went on for three days. And then it was noise and silence, fear and solidarity, rage and the determination to go on. The bombs brought chaos and tears, but there were also some miracles...

There were many miracles in Madrid on the morning of the 11th of March. Some trains were late, two bombs exploded later than planned, people overslept and missed their connections... Some of these miracles are as surprising as the case of Sebastian Alburquerque, who was rushed to the emergency room after his carriage exploded. I spent nearly a week in a coma, but the tests they performed revealed that he had cancer of the kidney, which could have been fatal if it had remained undetected. Sebastian says that he is alive today thanks to the bombings. Maybe I can say the same thing. Things would never again be the same for all those who were affected in one way or another by what happened on the 11th of March; our lives changed, as did the lives of hundreds of families. And I realised that I could help by doing the only thing I am good at.

I left Madrid immediately. I was still in shock because of what had happened and my own particular “miracle”. But it was obvious that there would not be time for me to switch off my “candid camera”, as I had planned. My idea of resting in a psychiatric hospital, and that is no exaggeration, had to be postponed indefinitely after 11th March. Instead, with the sirens and weeping still in my ears, *The Palestinian* started to take form... although it would be several days before I started to think about Islamic terrorism. In the immediate aftermath, the conservative government claimed that ETA was responsible for the attack, and I saw no reason to question the official version. So I would have to learn Euskera, move to a flat in Bilbao or San Sebastian, and recover all my old left-wing anti-establishment contacts in an attempt to come close to the ETA organisation.

It so happens that, after my previous book had been published, I was contacted from prison by Juan Manuel Crespo, an extreme right leader from

Valencia who used to work for Levantina de Seguridad⁶. Crespo would not only eventually write *Memoires of an ultra* for the *Serie Confidencial* collection⁷ while he was in prison, but had also become a good friend of historic ETA members such as Urrusolo Sistiaga or Idoia López Riaño, *the Tigress*. I didn't know how yet, but Crespo could probably introduce me to the organisation. I also contacted by old "master" in the woman trafficking business, agent Juan, who had been "promoted" as a spy. As it turned out, I didn't even have time to register for Euskera lessons in the language school in Bilbao.

On that fatal day in March, I had received a call from my friend **David Madrid**, the police officer who probably saved my life when he let me know that a high ranking officer had given me away to the skinheads when I was infiltrated in the neo-Nazi movement. At the site of the explosions, like all the other police officers in Madrid, he described a terrible scene. He also mentioned an abandoned car that was assumed to be related to the terrorists, and a cassette tape with something in Arabic. But the government continued to insist that ETA was to blame, and I believed them. And I continued to believe them for another couple of days, until 13th March, 2004.

The scandal broke just before the general election. There were growing numbers of signs that the authors of the attack were Arabic terrorists and not Basques. I made two decisions on that day. In view of how all the different political parties were trying to benefit from the attack, that I wouldn't be voting. And that my next journey would be into the depths of international terrorism. I didn't need much luggage. Just a video camera and a copy of the Sacred Koran.

[...]

⁶ See *El año que trafiqué con mujeres*, page 21 and following.

⁷ *Memorias de un ultra: la historia secreta de la extrema derecha española*. Temas de Hoy, 2006. Serie Confidencial de Antonio Salas collection.

Chapter 9

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ، مَلِكِ النَّاسِ، إِلَهِ النَّاسِ، مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ،
الَّذِي يُوسَّوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ. مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ.

*Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the people, the King of the people, the
God of the people, from the evils of sneaky whisperers, who whisper into the
chests of the people, be they of the jinns, or the people*

The Sacred Koran 114, 1-6

الرفيق قبل الطريق والجار قبل الدار

*Choose your companion before you choose your journey, and your
neighbour before you choose your home*

Arabic proverb

“We are entitled to kill Israelis...”

When I went to the M-30 mosque on the 2nd January 2009, the first Friday after bombs started to fall on Gaza in Operation Molten Lead, I found a police car parked by the door. Never before had mosque surveillance been so obvious. Although it was always there, it was usually discreet. That Friday, however, patrol cars were outside all the important mosques in Europe to prevent possible revolts due to the massacre that was taking place in Palestine. As was to be expected, the sermons of Imams all over the world were about what was

happening on the Gaza strip. And we Muslim brothers looked at each other, grinding our teeth and tightening our fists in an attempt to contain our rage. This was a time when it was easy for any terrorist organisation to find support against Israel and its western allies.

On the 5th January I received an e-mail sent by Eduardo Rózsa to nine people, including me. It was an article he had written in Spanish for his website, expressing his rejection of the Gaza bombings.⁸ The e-mail attachment contained a Trojan virus, a spy program that was detected by the antivirus installed by the Internet café where I was working that morning.

The other eight recipients of the e-mail and its hidden spyware included Alejandro Melgar and Alejandro Brown. I had never heard of them before, although I would see them mentioned regularly in the international press after April. I still had no idea of the trouble I would be in because Rózsa had included my address among his nine e-mail recipients.

In the meantime, in Venezuela, which was supposed to be my homeland, thousands of people were taking to the streets, like everywhere else, to protest against the Israeli bombings, as they had done in 2006 when Israel targeted the Lebanon. In the huge march in Caracas, my colleagues from the Committee for the Repatriation of Ilich Ramírez carried a huge placard with the face of Carlos the Jackal, surrounded by Palestinian flags. The same placard had been used in other protests and concentrations for the Jackal's repatriation. It was usually on display at the San Carlos barracks, together with a permanent exhibition about the Jackal's life.

Once again, like during the Israel-Hizbullah war of 2006, Hugo Chávez was the first president in the world, on the 6th January 2009, to recall his ambassador in Tel Aviv, expel the Israeli ambassador from Caracas and harshly criticise the massacre, thus creating a new diplomatic war between Israel and Venezuela, and feeding the rumour about his alliance with terrorists.

⁸ <http://eduardorozsaflores.blogspot.com/2009/01/eduardo-rzsa-flores-por-la-derrota-del.html>

Among other things, an official statement released on the day the bombings started said “The government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela witnesses once again, together with the peoples of the world, the horror of the death of innocent women and children as a result of the invasion of the Gaza strip by Israeli troops and from the bombardment that, from sky and land, the State of Israel systematically executes over Palestinian territory”. With this attitude, Chávez again became a hero for millions of Arabs the world over.

Hamas publicly thanked Hugo Chávez for this gesture of solidarity. From Beirut, sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizbullah, called upon all western governments to follow the Venezuelan president’s example, expelling Israeli ambassadors. His call, however, was heeded by only a few leaders sensitive to the Palestinian drama, such as Evo Morales. My “mentor”, Ilich Ramírez, however, as clever as a fox, interpreted the Israeli ambassador’s expulsion in a very different manner:⁹

‘That was magnificent, but I don’t think it was a good idea from a strategic perspective. Let me tell you... if Venezuela, with stronger diplomatic relations, could... open consular agencies in Haifa and Ramallah, and Gaza... and take it much further....’

As the Jackal said, from a tactical viewpoint it would have been much more useful to have strategic positions in the occupied territories protected by diplomatic immunity. He knows that better than anyone. For decades, he was able to travel the world freely thanks to the protection afforded him by his contacts with African, Asian or European presidents. Chávez, however, preferred to reap the benefits of a populist gesture. Including a new wave of international accusations that he protected terrorists. But this time I for one didn’t believe them.

It was not by chance that, on 9th January, Dima Khatib interviewed foreign minister Nicolás Maduro for Al Jazeera, increasing the Arabic world’s passion for Hugo Chávez even more. On 10th January, Iranian students

⁹ Conversation between Ilich Ramírez and Antonio Salas, 17th January 2009.

concentrated in front of the Venezuelan embassy in Teheran to show Chávez their gratitude. On the following day, thousands of Palestinians carried his portrait in Ramallah, Yinin or Bethlehem, demanding that he become the new president of Palestine. And the same thing happened a day later in Beirut, where a new restaurant opened in the city centre with the name of هوغو تشافيز, “Hugo Chávez” in Arabic. A street in Bire, in north Lebanon, was also named after the Venezuelan president.

Such was the enthusiasm of Muslims and Arabs that, on 13th January 2009, Walid al Tabtabai, the leader of the Islamist block in the Kuwait National Assembly, suggested transferring the Arab League from Cairo to Caracas. ‘President Hugo Chávez’, he said, ‘acted like a true Arab when he expelled the Israeli ambassador.’

As you can imagine, the Gaza conflict was a recurring theme in the Jackal’s calls over those few weeks. And I was able to learn more about the particular psychology and logical, ice-cold and lethal reasoning of Ilich Ramírez. Following is a literal excerpt from one of our conversations.¹⁰ Exactly as I taped it:

‘Is there an Israeli consulate?’ asked the Jackal.

‘Yes, there’s a consulate in Santa Cruz’, I lied.

‘It would be a good idea to organise a protest there, but a peaceful one, with no violence at all.’

‘Yes, but it’s not always easy, because people get roused...’

‘But that can’t be allowed. Because that works in favour of the Zionists. In today’s protest here, for instance, there was (unintelligible) the Muslim Brothers, who have organised serious... to prevent agitators or other idiots from making trouble, you know, throwing stones and all that.’

‘Of course...’

‘There’s no room for mistakes, you know. There is a time and place for everything. Do you see what I mean?’

¹⁰ Conversation between Ilich Ramírez and Antonio Salas, 10th January 2009.

‘Sure.’

‘A peaceful protest by the people, defending the rights of the Palestinian people, protesting against these terrible massacres and the attack against international law, cannot be organised when people are smashing shop windows and burning cars and so on... there is no reason. And most important of all is to avoid... I have been speaking to some people on the phone... avoid all aggressions against synagogues and that type of thing. Religious buildings must be respected. Just because the Zionists massacre people and attack mosques, that doesn’t mean that we can do the same thing. We are entitled to kill Israelis because there are no civilians in Israel. Everyone is in the military in Israel. But we don’t attack synagogues. Unless they are used, like those two synagogues in Istanbul that were used by the MOSSAD, they were cover for the MOSSAD. That’s different. But it was exceptional, no one is entitled to attack religious buildings...’

‘The MOSSAD has used synagogues?’, I asked, amazed.

‘Yes, in Turkey! Why were they attacked a few years ago in Istanbul? Do you remember?’

‘No, I don’t.’

‘It was around 2006, November 2006. Two comrades... they were Turks and... they used car bombs and... they massacred the MOSSAD guys.’

According to his reasoning, as all Israelis are forced to do military service and then go into the reserves, and they can be mobilised at any time, we were “entitled to kill Israelis”. His Turkish comrades evidently agreed. Because that was the first time that I heard Ilich Ramírez mention the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front (IBDA-C).¹¹ I contacted them a few days later, thus opening a new line of research in this infiltration, which would also take up time, money and effort. They thus joined the dozens of terrorist groups that I contacted as my voyage to the centre of international terrorism continued.

¹¹ In Turkish: *İslami Büyük Doğu Akıncıları Cephesi*.

The attacks to which Ilich was referring did take place in November, but three years before 2006. On 15th November 2003, two car bombs exploded simultaneously by two synagogues in Istanbul, killing 30 people and injuring another 277. Five days later, another two bombs went off in the centre of Istanbul, one of them a few yards from the British consulate and the other opposite the offices of HSBC, a British bank. The outcome this time was 32 dead and 450 injured.

As had occurred five days earlier, the Anatolian agency received an anonymous call supposedly on behalf of Al Qaida and the local Great Eastern Islamic Raider's Front group, claiming responsibility for the attacks. 'These attacks are a joint action by IBDA-C and Al Qaida. Our attacks against Masonic targets will continue. Muslims are not alone', said an anonymous voice. And this time, the Turkish authorities took notice.

The IBDA-C was founded in the 1970s by a mystic of Kurdish origin called Salih Izzet Erdiş, better known as commander Salih Mirzabeyoglu. Born in Erzincan on 10th May 1950, Mirzabeyoglu met poet, philosopher and writer Necip Fazil Kısakürek when he was just fifteen years old, and was to be deeply influenced by his ideas for the rest of his life. Kısakürek initiated him in the Sufi order of Naqshbandi, although Mirzabeyoglu founded his own organisation in the seventies, half way between a military order and mysticism. As Carlos the Jackal explained in one of our weekly chats:¹²

'These are good people... they're not sectarians. They're Sunnites... When I heard that for the first time, I said "And what the hell does that mean?". But no. They are the Cavaliers of the Great East... they come from the sun, from the East. Because the Turks came from the sun, from the East, from the Great East. Do you get it? Where did the Turkish people come from? From the Gobi desert, which is the Great East. That's the reference. When you translate it into Spanish or English, then it sounds like Masonic rubbish, but far from it. Sure, they are at

¹² Conversation between Ilich Ramírez and Antonio Salas, 21st March 2009.

war with the Masons. Because the Turkish system was imposed by sabbatist freemasonry...’

In the nineties, the Great Eastern Cavaliers turned from philosophical rhetoric to direct action, and were responsible for nearly a hundred violent acts and terrorist attacks. Mirzabeyoglu had been arrested before, but he was charged with something much more serious in December 1998. He was accused of leading the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front, which aimed to overturn the government and establish Islamic law in the country. He was sentenced to death in 2001, but it was reduced to life imprisonment in 2004.

According to Mirzabeyoglu, he was tortured in prison and survived several attempter murder attacks. This finally consolidated his image as a hero and martyr, seen by his followers as an icon comparable to Che Guevara in the west. The author of over fifty books about poetry, religion, philosophy or mysticism, he continues to be a myth in prison. So much so that many of his followers see him as the Madhi, the messiah of Islamic prophecies. In another of his phone calls, Ilich Ramírez told me that he knew that Mirzabeyoglu had met Ben Laden at a Jihad meeting held in the eighties in Sudan, because he was also present. According to the Jackal, his Turkish lawyers also defend Mirzabeyoglu, so there is a clear link between them. That was why Ilich justified the attack on two Jewish mosques in November, 2003.

Actually, Ilich Ramírez had come into contact with Mirzabeyoglu’s followers again when he was moved to the Paris jail and had access to a telephone. Indeed, he had agreed to the Turks taping a statement about the Gaza situation, the Turkish police, and so on, that would be published in Baran. In January 2009, the entire cover of issue 106 of Baran was dedicated to Ilich Ramírez and his first message. After that, Baran referred to the ideas of commander Ilich Ramírez practically every month. And at least two of his taped statements appeared on the Internet. The director of Baran, Fazil Duygun, soon contacted me following the Jackal’s instructions. He invited me to travel to Istanbul...

[...]