

The South American and Venezuelan Uncertain Horizon

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This article aims to be a synthetic analytical report of the events of the Venezuelan crisis, which has escalated in diplomatic and geopolitical terms.

Venezuela took the entity of a global and geopolitical affair of the first level, because of the first-order actors that were openly or subtly involved, and by other minor actors of stage. The subject is very complex, and to cover everything on this report would be very extensive, but we will try to do a review and analysis as broad and integral as possible.

The events in full development since 2019

The chronology of the events went something like this:

On January 4th, 13 of the 14 Latin American states that make up the Lima Group - an ad hoc group of countries created in 2017 within the framework of the OAS to follow the Venezuelan situation - decided not to recognize the new presidency of Nicolás Maduro.

They considered that the presidential elections of May 20, 2018 were illegitimate and "not very credible." Paraguay, the most "anti-Chavez" of the Group - opposed at the time to the incorporation of Venezuela to Mercosur and its Senate never approved UNASUR - directly decided to break diplomatic relations with Venezuela, closing its embassy there and repatriating all its diplomatic personnel. The countries of the European Union did not recognize the Venezuelan elections either. We were at few days before the assumption of the second term of Maduro, scheduled for January 10.

One day after the diplomatic operation, on January 5, Juan Guaidó - a deputy from the State of Vargas who led the opposition- was elected by the National Assembly as its president.

The National Assembly is dominated by the opposition since 2016, after the legislative elections in which the Democratic Unity Table defeated the electoral front that responds to Maduro. And that is in an open institutional conflict with the President, who in an excess of creativity convened a Constituent Assembly, which was self-inaugurated with legislative powers. A kind of parallel Legislative. The Assembly was virtually nullified by this manipulation.

The day of the assumption of Maduro, the 10th, the regional vacuum could be seen. Only the presidents of Cuba, Bolivia and El Salvador were present, while other countries - such as Mexico, Uruguay, Nicaragua and several Caribbean countries - sent second-line officials. Argentina and the rest of the thirteen countries that do not recognize the Maduro government did not send any representatives to the ceremony, and in many cases added in their communiqués - including Washington - that they recognized the National Assembly as the legitimate institution of the state Venezuelan.

On January 11 the National Assembly confirms the not recognition of Maduro, which amounts to declaring an acephalia, and its "*new president*", Guaidó announced that he was going to call new presidential elections. A statement announcing that he was preparing to assume the interim presidency until the election of a new president was launched, from his press office; Maduro

was declared a usurper. Luis Almagro, secretary of the OAS, advances and recognizes Guaidó as the legitimate president of the country.

On January 13, in a confusing episode, Guaidó was illegally detained by intelligence agents. His family released a statement and got another cataract of diplomatic statements of support. He would have been released "minutes later". Maduro's government denied everything. That same day, Guaidó publicly declares that the military chain of command "would have been broken". After several days of tension, on January 21, a group of about 40 soldiers declared themselves in rebellion and called to ignore Maduro. They were arrested shortly after.

On January 23, in an "open council", Guaidó proclaimed himself "President-in-Charge" and assumed office. A certain number of countries in the world, recognized him as president. The United States gave the kicked off; Then, with the passing of the hours, the governments of the Lima Group joined. The vice-president, Mike Pence, quickly broadcasts on YouTube a video - in English and Spanish - of support for Guaidó. One of the first actions of Guaidó was to send a letter to Pence in gratitude, and requesting the delivery of humanitarian aid. So far, there has not been a break in the chain of military command announced by Guaidó; the armed forces continue to respond to Maduro, Diosdado Cabello and Vladimir Padrino López, the defense minister.

The Context

Today the emerging multipolar world is a new "*great game*" between the Atlantist Powers and the Continentalist Powers. The Atlantic Powers are headed by the USA, adding Canada, the European Union (with Great Britain, France and Germany as leaders of the bloc), and Japan as an extrazone member of the triad. The Continentalist Powers, based on "the great world island" that is Asia, and with projections are China and Russia, as well as India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the pleiad of countries of South and Southeast Asia.

As a general context, it is clear that in a Monroe neo-doctrinal turn, the US wants to once again have Ibero-America and the Caribbean fully aligned, as a backyard, for the reaffirmation of its peripheral and hemispheric security zone. The successive "*stands by*" when not hidden defeats suffered by the Atlantist block in other parts of the globe, seem to make him look back to his backyard.

Although undoubtedly this is a Venezuelan issue, what happens is inseparable from the international plot. The United States, Brazil (or, rather, Bolsonaro, because it seems that not all its government agrees with this) and Colombia are promoting and endorsing Guaidó and hope that the situation is defined in their favor.

One way or another. The hypothesis of military breakdown would be disastrous; that of an international intervention, even worse. Maduro is isolated and is the helmsman of a huge socio-economic crisis, but he can still mobilize support and the resources of power on his side. Take it out of the game will not go free.

For countries such as Argentina, which accompanied this entire escalation process, several questions are raised. Is it right to take sides? In principle, a double standard problem arises. To make judgment on the legitimacy of the governments? It will not be easy, because many of the states with which Latin America interacts

in greater economic terms lack ideal democratic regimes, the most important case being China, while naming Russia whose influence in the region has also grown considerably.

Conclusions

The worrying thing about the path followed is the general context. It occurs at a time when there is a retreat from regionalist initiatives, and that conflicting rhetoric is inflaming. Unasur is annulled and Mercosur was questioned by the new Brazilian government. These regional projects, beyond their commercial and development results, have been tools of pacification and resolution of regional conflicts. South America was a fairly peaceful area so far, and is due -to some extent, at least- to the climate of regional trust. Now we are in a climate of conflicting and warmongering rhetoric that seizes in several of the new conservative governments of the region, Brazil and Colombia, to begin with. UNASUR aspired to be a large continental block, of dimensions similar to the European Union. But it became an undesirable and disposable element, within the neoliberal wave that settled in almost all of South America, which sees it as a relic of another era.

Now that the Latin American nations openly take sides exposes them to be part of a potential large-scale global conflict between great powers, of unpredictable derivations. The countries of the region have embarked on an unusual democratic interventionism without the capacities (political, economic, military) to face it.



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