

Three possible Venezuelas after Barbados

Antonio De La Cruz

Executive Director

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It has been 70 days since the meetings between the delegations of Nicolás Maduro and Juan Guaidó in Oslo, Norway, and six months of the oath of Guaidó as interim president of Venezuela.

Last Friday Maduro announced, at the close of the meeting with the militancy of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), at the Municipal Theater of Caracas: "We are going to elections, and we are going [to the interim government] to give a sovereign beating with votes!" And he concluded: "We are ready for the electoral battle, wherever and whenever they want".

The "peaceful, political and democratic solution" promoted by the international community to legitimize the president of Venezuela begins to take shape from Maduro's point of view, accepting to go to new elections.

In the case of Guaidó, "the cessation of usurpation and the transitional government" is being discussed at the Barbados meetings, forming part of how and when the elections will be held (peaceful solution).

Therefore, the outcome of the negotiations in Barbados leads to several scenarios of what can happen in Venezuela.

A scenario could be the "failed Venezuela". It arises from the failure of the negotiations in Barbados. The crisis of legitimacy of the Maduro regime deepens, and there is a more significant rupture of the social order. The exodus of Venezuelans reaches an alarming level, affecting the stability of governments in recipient countries. The Executive reinforces the repressive State, using the security forces and the intelligence apparatus. Violence outbreaks that reach an essential part of the territory multiply. Various territories are openly controlled by organized crime, especially in border areas. The economic contraction is maintained. The hunger drama grows. Activities outside the State of irregular groups and organized crime thrive. International criminal organizations increase their presence in Venezuela, and there is more significant interference from Cuba, Russia, and China in internal affairs. The sanctions of the United States and Europe isolate Venezuela from the West. The countries are receiving the exodus place controls/visas on the Venezuelan population. The holders of the external debt, public and corporate, sue the Republic and PDVSA.

It is the scenario with the greatest impact on the social welfare of Venezuelans and the restriction and suspension of human rights. It generates conditions for humanitarian intervention.

Another scenario that could arise from the Barbados agreements is “transient Venezuela”. It comes from the victory of the interim government in the presidential election. The leaders of the triumphant political parties work for the re-institutionalization of the State, generating a virtuous circle where citizenship begins to trust and yield for the benefit of the common welfare. Political and institutional weights and balances are restored. The independent media are back. There is an effective impact on structural decision-making as a result of pressure from organized citizens. Transnational organized crime is prosecuted by international agencies. There is a consistent effort to prevent violence, and the State is gaining control of the entire territory. There are higher efficiency and transparency in public spending, strengthening public finances, and responsible economic strategies. The external debt is restructured.

It is the scenario of the transition to democracy and the reconstruction of the country. It depends on the political consensus between the political parties and the citizens (civil society). It requires maximum coordination and flexibility of political leaders, democratic governments, and multilateral organizations.

A third scenario is “truncated Venezuela”. It results from the electoral victory of the party that currently usurps power. It is characterized by its inertial condition, in which group of power act actively to protect and maintain their power, their privileges and wealth, and the distribution of territory. Illegality, insecurity, and inequity are maintained. The significant problems of the country do not seem likely to be dealt with effectively so that state enterprises are privatized among internal and international friends of the government. The US sanctions on state companies are dismantled. There is a plural National Assembly with a simple majority of the Executive, which forces political actors to make an effort to reconcile with society. Organized crime diversifies their business. The inequalities persist. Social control is reinforced through social programs. The exodus of Venezuelans is accelerated initially and then reduced. Regional differences persist. Some regions are more benefited by the privatization of state enterprises. External debt is renegotiated.

It is the scene of pseudo-democracy and economic “oligarchies”. It depends on the rupture with the Plan de la Patria, on the pacification of the country and the commitment to the road map indicated by the Bachelet Report.

The “failed Venezuela”, the “transient Venezuela” and the “truncated Venezuela” are stories or scenarios that seek to illustrate what could result from the Oslo initiative in Barbados. They are not a forecast because the future of Venezuela is made “by walking/blow-by-blow, verse-by-verse”.