

The strategies of Maduro's regime to remain in power

Antonio De La Cruz

Executive Director

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"He who excels at resolving difficulties does so before they arise. He who excels in conquering his enemies triumphs before threats materialize." – Sun Tzu

Nicolás Maduro's regime in Venezuela has implemented several strategies not just indicative of its desperation to cling to power but also reflective of the severe political crisis engulfing the country. These tactics, which starkly contrast with any democratic pretense, are divided into four main fronts to suppress popular will and neutralize political competition.

Firstly, the regime employs what could be described as "state terrorism", manifested through the daily intimidation and repression of both opposition leaders and the general populace. Agencies such as Seniat and intelligence bodies like Sebin and Dgcim coordinate with the Prosecutor's Office to shut down businesses and harass citizens. This approach aims to instill paralyzing fear, discourage electoral participation, and ultimately ensure lower mobilization against the government at the polls.

From a game theory perspective, this tactic is seen as a preemptive move to deter any organized opposition. By instilling fear, the regime discourages democratic actors from taking steps threatening its stability, creating a deterrence game.

The second strategy involves judicial maneuvers akin to a "technical coup d'état". The removal of the Democratic Unity Roundtable's card and the disqualification of opposition candidates like Edmundo González Urrutia through Supreme Court decisions exemplify how the Judiciary, aligned with the Executive, effectively blocks any significant electoral challenge.

Here, Maduro uses the Judiciary, the Supreme Court, as a tool to alter the political game's rules. In game theory, this is described as changing the payoff structure to deter other players (opponents) from participating, ensuring that legal actions are perceived as costly or futile.

Expanding upon the legal obstructions, the regime further manipulates the electoral timeline by postponing elections, a third tactic employed to maintain control. Through Supreme Court rulings that condition the holding of elections on the lifting of international sanctions or by decrees establishing states of emergency based on alleged external incidents, the government seeks to gain time and dismantle the organization and momentum of the opposition.

This move can be interpreted as a "buying time" strategy, typical in game theory, where one of the actors seeks to improve their position or wait for a more favorable juncture to act.

Postponing the election may demoralize the opposition and reduce their effectiveness and organization.

Finally, on election day, the regime would resort to what has been termed “massive fraud”. It involves manipulating results and co-opting sections of the opposition, who, under pressure and promises of recognition, are driven to validate the electoral results, regardless of their legitimacy. It is the culmination of a series of strategies aimed at perpetuating the status quo at the expense of democratic integrity.

In terms of game theory, this is considered a commitment strategy, wherein the regime seeks to ensure that any electoral outcome favors it, regardless of the actual popular vote. This final act concludes the game by guaranteeing the maintenance of power, irrespective of the people’s will.

These four strategies of Maduro’s regime not only undermine fundamental democratic principles but also deepen the humanitarian and economic crisis in Venezuela. Each contributes to scenarios fostering further uncertainty and potentially escalating violence, further destabilizing the nation.

The situation in Venezuela serves as a stark reminder that the struggle for democracy often faces overwhelming obstacles, mainly when a regime like Maduro’s is willing to do anything to stay in power. However, the hope for achieving a peaceful transition of power lies through a negotiated exit that ensures safety and guarantees for those who have been in power for twenty-five years. It is the only viable path to a resolution that avoids bloodshed and restores stability and democracy in Venezuela.

The international community, as well as internal actors committed to democracy, must recognize and respond to these challenges with the seriousness and urgency they deserve, seeking to restore democratic order and respect for human rights in the country.

However, to counter the possible strategies of the Bolivarian regime, a commitment from both national and international actors to a comprehensive action plan that includes activities against state terrorism, judicial maneuvers, election postponement, and massive fraud is essential.

In summary, the strategies of Nicolás Maduro’s regime not only undermine democratic principles in Venezuela but also exacerbate the country’s humanitarian and economic crisis. Judicial manipulation, election postponement, state repression, and electoral fraud are tactics that reflect a desperate attempt to maintain power at any cost. Against this backdrop, internal resistance and international pressure are crucial for countering oppression and promoting the restoration of democracy and respect for human rights.

It is imperative that the international community, along with democratic actors within Venezuela, implement a coordinated and decisive action plan that addresses these challenges strategically. International solidarity, coupled with a strong defense of democratic principles, is vital in supporting Venezuelans in their fight to regain their political autonomy and institutional integrity. This renewed commitment to democracy is necessary for Venezuela and a critical reminder of the importance of vigilance and proactive action in defending human rights and freedom worldwide.