



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 9, 2017

Venezuela Coming Undone: Maduro Wants New Constitution

Another crack opened in the wall supporting Marxist dictator Nicolas Maduro's (shown) administration: On Monday Major General Miguel Rodriguez Torres, who ran Maduro's intelligence service until he was fired in 2014, [said](#) his country is moving toward civil war: "We're seeing much larger masses protesting across all major cities, including the working-class neighborhoods. The government is losing control." He added:



Closing political avenues [by Maduro] to elections means opening the door to violence. [The protesters] are heading toward anarchy in the streets.

The country's increasingly desperate economic situation is also eroding support from Maduro's police forces, says Torres: "What's happening outside in society, is also happening inside in the armed forces. The soldiers are suffering because they can't obtain medicines [and] because they don't have enough money for food [for themselves and their families]."

Similar resistance from former Maduro supporters and cabinet members is being publicly pronounced. Maduro's attorney general, Luisa Ortega, expressed outrage in March when he tried to stack the deck at the Supreme Court. She called his move "a rupture of the constitutional thread.... We cannot demand that the citizens behave peacefully and legally in front of a state that is making decisions that do not obey the law."

What could be the final straw is Maduro's call for a special assembly to redraft the country's constitution. This is drawing fire from Maduro's usual supporters as it would mean tossing the constitution drafted during Marxist Hugo Chavez's regime, which Chavez said would last for "centuries." It's also invigorating protesters who see that Maduro's demand for a new constitution will essentially make him a dictator for life. Maduro himself would pick the constituents who would elect the new assembly's representatives.

This, according to opposition leader Henrique Capriles, not only goes against the present constitutional process for amending the existing constitution but is "an absolutely fraudulent process that could go wrong for us."

Such a rewrite would amount to nothing short of a power grab by a Marxist who has ignored existing constitutional restraints ever since he took over following Chavez's death. A new constitution would legitimize those previously illegal actions.

It's also a sign of desperation. Last week Maduro took his country out of the Organization for American States (OAS) to keep them from ousting him first. China, which has bailed out Maduro to the tune of \$60 billion, is now refusing to extend his regime any new financing. Medical care is so poor that pregnant mothers are crossing the border into Colombia and Brazil to give birth there. The average Venezuelan has lost 20 pounds owing to food shortages caused by Maduro's price controls and



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rationing. He ordered the takeover of General Motors' assembly plant last month, and the country's bonds have been "priced for default" for months. He has driven the state-owned oil producer, PDVSA, into the ground by replacing its 16,000 skilled employees and operators with his political cronies who have little if any experience in running the enterprise.

Further evidence of growing violent dissatisfaction is the toppling and defacing of statues of Chavez, Maduro's mentor. In Villa del Rosario in western Venezuela, flammable fluid was thrown onto a statue of Chavez and then was set aflame. As the statue melted (it was made of plastic), crowds from this generally pro-Maduro town, pulled it down and dragged it into the street.

Cellphone pictures and footage of that event triggered other similar attacks. In one town a statue of Chavez simply disappeared overnight, while murals of the country's former dictator were defaced elsewhere.

In the United States, Article V proponents should pay special attention to what is being proposed in Venezuela. Maduro wants the rewrite of the constitution to cement into place his presently unconstitutional actions, while granting himself total political power over the citizenry. A new constitution would not restrain his future behaviors but instead would legitimize them.

Photo of Nicolas Maduro: [Government of Venezuela via Wikipedia](#)

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