

**JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL**

VENEZUELA: AN EFFECTS-BASED STRATEGY FOR THE 21st-CENTURY

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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ABSTRACT

In the post-9/11 global security environment, it is evident that the United States is confronting numerous political, military and economic threats dispersed throughout the international community. Within the western hemisphere, it is clear that the current situation in Venezuela has transformed a once strong democratic country and U.S. ally into a nation on the brink of political and social instability.

Under the current U.S. policy, the already fragile relationship between Venezuela and the United States will continue to deteriorate and further destabilize Venezuela, cultivate anti-U.S. sentiments among the Venezuelan populace, and adversely effect U.S. national interests, primarily within the realm of international trade and oil exports. Most importantly, if left neglected and/or ignored by the United States, the Venezuelan situation may be elevated to the point that would compel a U.S. military response that neither the United States nor Venezuela desires.

The U.S. government must realize that a safe, secure, stable and U.S. friendly Venezuela is in the best interest of the United States, and that the issues currently contained within Venezuela must be dealt with in a synergistic manner; an aspect the current U.S. strategy does not do. By incorporating an Effects-Based Approach to Operations at the national-strategic level, and implementing an effects-based strategy, the United States may effectively and efficiently employ the instruments of national power to coerce, convince and/or compel President Hugo Chávez, and the Venezuelan government, to observe U.S. policies within the region.

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ACRONYMS

9/11	September 11, 2001
AD	Democratic Action Party (Venezuela)
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ASPA	American Service–Members’ Protection Act
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
CC	Critical Capability
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CINC	Commander–in–Chief
COG	Center of Gravity
COPEI	Social Christian Party (Venezuela)
CR	Critical Requirement
CV	Critical Vulnerability
DIME	Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DoS	U.S. Department of State
EBAO	Effects–Based Approach to Operations
EBO	Effects–Based Operations
EBP	Effects–Based Planning
ELN	National Liberation Army
FAN	National Armed Forces (Venezuela)
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FTAA	Free Trade Association of the Americas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
IA	Interagency
ICC	International Criminal Court
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IO	Information Operations
IOs	International Organization
MAS	Movement Toward Socialism Party (Venezuela)
MCO	Major Combat Operations
MIL–MIL	Military–to–Military Cooperation
MOE	Measure of Effectiveness
MVR	Fifth Republic Movement Party (Venezuela)
NGO	Non–Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSPD	National Security Presidential Directive
NSS	U.S. National Security Strategy
OAS	Organization of American States
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
ONA	Operational Net Assessment
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCC	Policy Coordination Committee

ACRONYMS

PMESII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational and Infrastructural
POTUS	President of the United States
PPT	Homeland For All Party (Venezuela)
SOI	Sphere of Influence
SoSA	System-of-Systems Analysis
SSI	Strategic Studies Institute
Twin Towers	The World Trade Center Towers
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USAWC	U.S. Army War College
USNWC	United States Naval War College
USJFCOM	U.S. Joint Forces Command
USSOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

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INTRODUCTION

“We must defeat the terrorists on the battlefield, and we must also defeat them in the battle of ideas. We must change the conditions that allow terrorists to flourish and recruit, by spreading the hope of freedom to millions who’ve never known it. We must help raise up the failing states and stagnant societies that provide fertile ground for the terrorists. We must defend and extend a vision of human dignity, and opportunity, and prosperity – a vision far stronger than the appeal of dark resentment and murder...Across the world, hearts and minds are opening to the message of human liberty as never before.”

- **President George W. Bush**

On September 11, 2001, the nation witnessed the most violent assault against the United States since the Japanese surprise attack against U.S. forces on December 7, 1941. In contrast to the military distinctiveness of Pearl Harbor, the targets selected for the terrorists attacks on 9/11, the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and United Flight #93 destined for the White House, were primarily civilian structures chosen predominantly for their emblematic importance to the United States. Each target epitomized one facet of U.S. economic, military and political strength and influence, and recognized as such throughout the international community.

Although two of the four attacks on 9/11 were extremely successful, those destroying both towers of the World Trade Center, damages to the Pentagon were repaired within a year, and the White House was never struck. Ultimately, however, the attacks accomplished a dynamic far more important to the terrorists than the billions of dollars in stock market losses for the United States, or the millions of dollars destroyed and the thousands of innocents killed. It achieved the challenging feat of striking a symbolic blow against the foundation of American invincibility. Moreover, because comprehensive media coverage tracked the entire situation as it developed and re-broadcast sensationalized images of it on a daily basis, the psychological effects

surrounding these horrific events surmounted the devastation caused by the attack against Pearl Harbor. Furthermore, discovering that the terrorists planned, coordinated, funded and trained for these attacks from within the continental United States not only brought the terror of unconventional warfare crashing home to the American public, but also cultivated the uneasy feeling that the homeland was no longer safe from aggression.

Although U.S. history has chronicled December 7, 1941, as a date forever remembered “in Infamy,”ⁱ the events of September 11, 2001 prompted significant changes both at home and abroad. To some, it denotes a day that propelled the world’s sole super–power into a Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). To others, as stated by President George W. Bush, it represents a day that forced the American people, and the international community, to realize that “freedom itself is under attack.”ⁱⁱ

In the formative years of the new millennium, 9/11 still serves as the extreme example of unconventional warfare in the 21st century, and arguably, seen by most Americans as a core indicator of today’s global security environment. Furthermore, with the highly publicized and ongoing strategic missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan, both components of the long–term GWOT, it is easy for U.S. citizens, politicians, and military to lose sight of other global contingency areas affecting U.S. national interests within its sphere of influence (SOI). This is reasonable, especially with the number of vivid events that the United States must contend with on a daily basis within these, and several other Areas of Responsibility (AOR). For example, on October 25, 2005, the United States witnessed the emerging possibilities of a democracy in Iraq, when 78% of the 9.8 million registered Iraqi voters approved the long awaited Iraqi constitution,ⁱⁱⁱ a document drafted under the purview and guidance of the United States. On the other hand, just one day

after this approval, senior political and military leaders battled a media frenzy initiated by the release of a Department of Defense (DoD) report confirming the number of U.S. military fatalities, from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), surpassing 2,000 personnel.^{iv} Although these events merely demonstrate and highlight America's involvement in Iraq, primarily against non-state actors operating within that country, this commitment only represents a minute portion of U.S. participation in international affairs. It is clear that due to its over-whelming military strength and great economic and political influence, coupled with the global reach of its instruments of national power: *Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic* (DIME), the United States' SOI encompasses the entire world, including a myriad of traditional nation-state powers.

From this assessment, one deduction is apparent. In today's global security environment, the adversaries opposing the United States, whether non-state actors or traditional nation-states, are well funded, technologically connected, dispersed worldwide, and extremely intelligent in the employment of 21st-century warfare against elements of U.S. national power.^v Furthermore, whether opposing an "individual Islamic extremist or a conventionally armed nation-state, warfare is planned, coordinated and executed within one or multiple instruments of national power, and...these instruments will be constrained and/or restrained by individual or state means (financial assets, political capital, militarily armed forces, etc)."^{vi} Print, cyberspace, televised media, commercial and public goods and services have all become the means by which terrorists, narco-traffickers, eco-activists, and/or nation-states wage war.^{vii} These factors force the realization that the United States, as a nation and military, requires a new way of thinking about conflict resolution and our application of the instruments of national power in the

21st century.^{viii} It is clear, as “...the United States faces 21st-century adversaries and national security challenges, it must acknowledge these threats as being...different from the 20th-century, nation-state, and military-power constructs it has historically organized against. Acting against such threats in traditional ways will be too costly, slow, and destructive.”^{ix}

The emerging situation in the country of Venezuela, a 21st-century nation-state, is the foremost example of this scenario in Central and South America and the focus of this paper. Funding anti-democratic groups and activities in Bolivia and Ecuador, promoting the return of a socialistic regional dictatorship and attempting to manipulate the U.S. economy through oil exports, President Hugo Chávez demonstrates an autocratic approach in governing his nation and relating to his democratic neighbors. Although the United States has customarily held close ties with Venezuela, the semi-belligerent actions of the current Venezuelan government have caused significant political friction and tension in U.S.-Venezuelan relations, and raised serious concerns over the implications to U.S. national interests and securities within the region and hemisphere.^x

This study addresses the question of whether the United States should target or treat this nation-state, which has targeted U.S. national interests through DIME means, any differently than those aggressors who attacked the United States on 9/11. A simple yes or no response is insufficient to answer this question. Instead, analysis must focus on what *effect*, namely a physical and/or behavioral change, the United States wishes to achieve within the country and surrounding region. Unique within this process is an internal dilemma compounding the original question. This complication involves the consideration of unintended consequences that may change the overall desired effect on

the adversary's will and capability. The key to this dilemma, and the U.S. requirement for a new way of addressing conflict resolution, lies within an effects-based methodology executed at the national-strategic level. Particularly, it is the ability of this methodology to assess operational environments holistically and facilitate the development of a U.S. regional strategy that shapes the operational environment rather than reacts to it.

According to the United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) Concepts Department J-9, Effects-Based Operations (EBO) is "a process for obtaining a desired strategic outcome or effect on the enemy through the synergistic and cumulative application of the full range of military and non-military capabilities at all levels of conflict."^{xi} With these effects being physical, functional or psychological, and capabilities being kinetic or non-kinetic, recent history demonstrates that the United States fails to achieve the benefits of EBO, and instead continues to embrace the application of 20th-century warfare, primarily kinetic capabilities, against 21st-century adversaries. This failure to transform, allowing the formation of a strategic imbalance between ends, ways and means, has the potential to create devastating and unintended consequences for the United States. Furthermore, if this approach continues, specifically within the context of a regional strategy for Venezuela, the destruction and cost, to both the U.S. military and economy will be insurmountable in the short-term as well as the long-term future.

As the United States continues to face numerous global political, military and economic threats, it is clear that Venezuela is a country historically connected to the United States in all of these areas. More importantly, Venezuela is clearly vital to the future prosperity and security of the United States within the global security environment.

Ironically, the problems currently contained within Venezuela, and/or fostered by them, are therefore unavoidably linked to the United States and should be dealt with in a synergistic manner, an aspect the current U.S. strategy for Venezuela does not do.

This thesis attempts to address the question of why the United States should change its current regional strategy towards Venezuela and incorporate an *Effects-Based Approach to Operations* (EBAO) framework to facilitate a holistic understanding of this nation-state and the surrounding region. Furthermore, by detailing how EBAO relates to the function of DIME, this paper will redefine the instruments of national power within the context of *coercion*, *convincing* and *compelling*, and devise a new Venezuelan regional strategy. Enabled by the EBAO process and its products, it will be shown that the strategy outlined here must engage the Venezuelan government through an aggressive DIME approach, utilizing joint, interagency, and appropriate multi-national partners. The strategy will also outline the means to effectively and efficiently employ the instruments of national power in order to support and achieve U.S. national interests and objectives within the country. Finally, this paper will identify and explain the national-strategic forum by which this proposed strategy must be introduced, and approved by senior U.S. officials in order to achieve strategic *unity of effort* and *synergy*. This aspect will correlate directly to the overall efficiency, effectiveness and success of the strategy itself. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that it is in the national interests of the United States to promote a democratic and prosperous Venezuela, which will in turn facilitate “major economic, political, and security benefits to the United States.”^{xii}

CHAPTER – 1

A MODERN HISTORY OF EFFECTS–BASED OPERATIONS (EBO)

“...there is another way. It is possible to increase the likelihood of success without defeating the enemy’s forces. I refer to operations that have direct political repercussions that are designed in the first place to disrupt the opposing alliance, or to paralyze it, that gains us new allies, favorably affect the political scene, etc. If such operations are possible it is obvious that they can greatly improve our prospects and that they can from a much shorter route to the goal than destruction of the opposing armies.”

- Carl Von Clausewitz

Although the “term Effect–Based Operations became the buzzword of the military jargon in the last decade of the 20th century and synonymous with Western, especially American technological superiority,”^{xiii} it is evident that kings, conquerors, national leaders and military commanders have focused on and utilized effects–based thinking to plan and execute strategic campaigns and operations throughout the ages. The Chinese theorist Sun Tzu, who believed military conflict an action of last resort, wrote, “Those skilled in war subdue the enemy’s army without battle. They capture his cities without assaulting them and overthrow his state without protracted operations.”^{xiv} In essence, today’s Effects–Based Planning (EBP) merely formalizes the theories articulated by the classical theorists, Clausewitz, Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, and others, into a planning methodology that facilitates the application of full spectrum warfare against a nation–states’ national power.^{xv} Because of this historical re–emergence, to understand the application of EBP in today’s operational environment, one must first comprehend its modern evolution into 21st–century warfighting.

Some historians may argue, “effects–based warfighting approaches have been applied only sporadically throughout history and, for a variety of reasons, have met with inconsistent success.”^{xvi} This supported by the contention that the erratic success and

outright failures of EBO are attributed to the lack of a clear understanding, by national and military leaders, of the effects-based methodology and the relationship between actions, desired effects, and national policy goals.^{xvii} Additionally, some of the earlier inconsistencies could be accredited to the non-availability of advanced military technologies. However, with the technological advances of precision guided munitions, stealth, command and control systems and many other improvements in the late 20th century, military technology is no longer a limitation for EBO, but a fundamental component and strength. It was U.S. Air Force Colonel John Warden III, during the air campaign planning for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, who, with the advantage of these technological advances, revolutionized the EBP process and changed the expectations of modern warfare forever.

The Enemy as a System

At the time of the Gulf War, Col. Warden headed CHECKMATE, an office serving under the Air Force Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations tasked to assist in the planning for the upcoming air

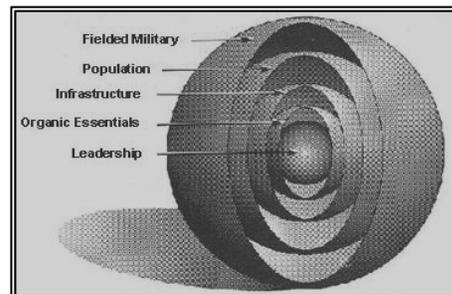


FIGURE 1: The Basic Five-Ring Model

campaign in Iraq.^{xviii} Although Col. Warden's core planning concepts spotlighted the importance of air superiority and its strategic versatility, it was his development of the *Enemy as a System*^{xix} theory that truly became the foundation for modern day EBO. He theorized that a good approximation of the real world could be articulated in a five-ring model consisting of, from largest to smallest, a *Fighting Mechanism*, the *Population*, the *Infrastructure*, the *Organic Essentials* and the *Leadership*, represented by FIGURE 1:

The Basic–Five Ring Model. Col. Warden further theorized that within each ringed system existed vital interdependent sub–systems, or Centers of Gravity (COGs), with the number of COGs directly proportional to the size of the system ring itself, represented by FIGURE 2: Centers of Gravity. He explained that COGs have wide–ranging levels of significance, and if acted upon, will have some type of effect

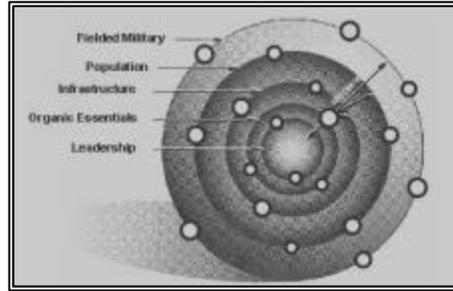


FIGURE 2: Centers of Gravity

on the other COGs and the overall *whole system* (organization). He also stated that COGs “describes that point where an attack will have the best chance of being decisive.”^{xx}

It is within this context that national and military planners must recognize the decisive implications of Strategic and Operational COGs. Combined with superior U.S. military technology, which results in the ability to strike nearly simultaneously all strategic and operational COGs, the Enemy as a System theory achieved dramatic success during the Gulf War and broke the traditional concepts of annihilation or attrition being necessary for victory. As stated by LTC Allen W. Batschelet of the United States Army War College (USAWC), “Rather than relying on old approaches...this new way of conducting operations will focus on generating desired effects, rather than on objectives or the physical destruction of targets.”^{xxi} Subsequently, influenced by the dramatic success in the Gulf War, members of the defense community demanded changes in the way the United States applied its instruments of national power to ensure future “*Full Spectrum Dominance*.”^{xxii} What transpired was the emergence of the EBAO.

U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and the Effects-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO)

Advanced by the USJFCOM and built upon Col. Warden's Enemy as a System theory, the EBAO is an enhancement that has expanded the COGs concept, through a COGs analysis that incorporates a *critical factors* methodology, and altered the approach in how the United States views the enemy, the operational environment, and

ourselves.^{xxiii} Unlike Col. Warden's initial

COGs premise, "an effects-based

approach extends beyond the enemy to the entire operational environment and its

political, economic, social, ideological and other enabling systems that support the

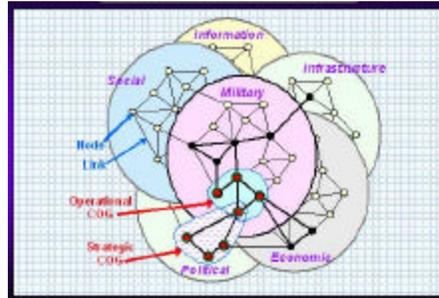


FIGURE 3: The Interconnected Operational Environment

global, regional, or national grouping to be influenced. These systems may be trans-

regional, transnational, or connected in functional and behavioral ways that are based on

political, familial, commercial or cultural relationships.^{xxiv} In short, "an adversary is

viewed holistically as a complex system of interdependent *Political, Military, Economic,*

Social, Informational, and Infrastructural (PMESII) systems, and friendly national or coalition resources are similarly viewed as a complimentary set of *Diplomatic,*

Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) actors,^{xxv} represented by FIGURE 3:

The Interconnected Operational Environment. Understanding these systems, their

interaction, and their ever-changing interconnected relationship becomes the first step

towards attaining the desired effects and accomplishing the strategic objective(s). When

employed, the EBAO enables the synergistic planning and synchronization of DIME

actions to apply deliberate desired effects against the interrelated PMESII system-of-systems within the operational environment.^{xxvi}

As stated by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, what is required is “a new way of thinking and a new way of fighting [because] new, unexpected and dangerous adversaries, must be dissuaded, deterred, and defeated without undue cost to American interests abroad or attacks on the U.S. homeland.”^{xxvii} The ability to focus the tools of national power such as, diplomatic pressure, legal action, economic sanctions, and law enforcement, in order to affect the adversary’s thinking, is vital to the future security and success of the United States.^{xxviii}

Venezuela: An EBAO Prologue

Faced with similar types of current and future challenges to U.S. national interests and securities within Venezuela, the EBAO provides the capability to analyze Venezuela’s operational environment as a complex system-of-systems. Furthermore, because of the in-depth analysis associated to the EBAO construct, it facilitates the understanding of patterns, or likely patterns, of behavior of any Venezuelan ally, adversary or neutral to plan and synchronize a broad range of appropriate DIME actions. These actions may include an assortment of assets from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Department of State (DoS), Interagency (IA), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and International Organizations (IOs). Through an EBAO regional strategy that employs these assets through a unity of effort toward the Venezuelan challenges, the United States may protect itself against threats to its security, prosperity and populace.

CHAPTER – 2

EFFECTS–BASED APPROACH TO OPERATIONS (EBAO), AND THE ROLE OF THE INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER (DIME)

“Rather than limit operations to attacking and destroying enemy forces, military operations, in conjunction with political, economic, and diplomatic actions, can produce effects on the entire enemy system. Effects–based operations should incorporate all elements of national power and should address all elements of enemy national power.”

- **Joint Advanced Warfighting Program^{xxix}**

Before proceeding, a few clarifications should be addressed pertaining directly to the overall comprehension of this concept, effects–based strategy, and its analysis. Specifically, this section will address issues encompassing precisely how the EBAO prescribes the employment of one or multiple instruments of national power while “associating primary, secondary, tertiary, and unintended effects with these actions;”^{xxx} the instruments of national power are defined for this study; the military instrument of national power is utilized; and the instruments of national power are interchangeable.

EBAO: Employing the Instruments of National Power (DIME)

The EBAO are “operations that are planned, executed, assessed, and adapted based on a systems perspective of the operational environment. Rather than focusing campaign planning and execution on task accomplishment, an effects–based approach seeks to influence or change behavior through the integrated application of select instruments of national power to achieve directed policy aims.”^{xxxi}

In a *grand strategy* sense, the United States could utilize the same EBAO framework to interact, analyze and apply various ranges of diplomatic, informational, military and economic means, within the confines of the conflict continuum at the national–strategic level. Hereafter, this political interaction, analysis, and application of

national power will be referred to as *polities' engagement*. It is important to understand that this level encompasses the responsibility of command and control of the country's instruments of national power, and their employment based on legitimate decisions made by the country's highest political leaders.^{xxxii} These national–strategic polities' engagements, as described above, would be in concert with U.S. allies, adversaries, coalition partners or neutral countries to establish and secure U.S. vital national interests outlined within the NSS. This approach would allow the United States to shape the operational environment and global security environment, as opposed to reacting to it.^{xxxiii} Additionally, because of the in–depth analysis, an overarching characteristic of the EBAO, the ability could be achieved to assess the entire conflict continuum, maintaining visibility on possible 2nd and 3rd order effects. For example, advantageous 2nd and 3rd order effects to the United States could be, “the ability to send clear messages of U.S. flexibility and capability to potential adversaries and thus positively influences their decisions”^{xxxiv} or “the ability to restore order and to create a more favorable environment.”^{xxxv} Unfortunately, not all secondary and tertiary effects are positive in nature. It is, however, the awareness and understanding of these unintended effects that is critical in the development of U.S. strategy and policy.

Whatever the desired effect, it is essential to recollect that the conflict continuum, especially at the national–strategic level, encompasses a full spectrum of operations, ranging from peace to conflict/war to post–conflict, in which all or some of the instruments of national power may be employed. Additionally, although the United States' interaction with all polities is continuous and complex, it is seldom hostile. The

spectrum of polities' engagements could range from diplomatic negotiations to economic sanctions to all out Major Combat Operations (MCO).

In short, an EBAO seeks to analyze a polities' relevant systems and inter-relationships within the related operational environment and global security environment, and integrate and synchronize the appropriate instruments of national power to coerce, convince or compel the overall desired effect on the polities' will and capability.^{xxxvi} Furthermore, when faced "...with challenges to our national interests, the United States...can respond to these challenges by using the capabilities resident in one or more of the instruments of national power. These national instruments are normally applied within a joint, interagency, and multinational framework,"^{xxxvii} utilizing a strategic top-down approach to align these DIME ways and means with a set of desired strategic ends.

This interrelated association between the EBAO and the instruments of national power leads directly to the next point of clarification regarding the definitions of the instruments of national power. In order to understand its application to U.S. strategy, national goals and objectives, and desired strategic effects and outcomes, it is imperative that a clear and defensible definition of DIME be established. The definitions listed below provide a greater understanding while minimizing confusion and ambiguity toward the overall concept of EBAO, and their application toward either an ally or an adversary actor within the global security environment.

DIME: The Instruments of National Power Defined

Diplomatic: The diplomatic instrument of national power "is the principal instrument for accomplishing engagement with other states and foreign groups in order to advance U.S. values, interests, and objectives."^{xxxviii} It encompasses "the use of

negotiations, dialogue, and other means, often times nonpublic (i.e., not conducted openly, but rather privately; behind-the-scenes) to convey a government's will to another political entity with the intent of coercing...that target to achieve the desired result (compliance with the government's will)."^{xxxix} Coercion is defined as,

getting a target to willingly agree to do something they may or may not want to do. In other words, taking overt steps to ensure a target complies with a government's will. Does not have to be a forced situation—i.e., in many cases, the target will comply with a government's will willingly.^{xl}

Informational: The informational instrument of national power “has a diffuse and complex set of components with no single center of control...Information itself is a strategic resource vital to national security.”^{xli} Success or failure “depends on acquiring and integrating essential information and denying it to the adversary.”^{xlii} It encompasses “the use or denial of use of facts, data, opinions, policies, and/or the means to ascertain that knowledge by a government in order to convince...a target audience to comply with the government's will. Information can be public (utilizing open sources, allowing the information to be widely known) or nonpublic.”^{xliii} Convincing is defined as,

directly or indirectly getting a target to know/believe something. In other words, a target will decide on it's own to comply with a government's will, often unaware of the government's attempts to manipulate that target's compliance.^{xliv}

Military: The military instrument of national power is “the employment of the Armed Forces...In wielding the military instrument of national power, the Armed Forces must ensure their adherence to the values and constitutional principles of...society. They must also meet the standards for the profession of arms demanded by...society.”^{xlv} It encompasses “the application of force [kinetic and non-kinetic] to compel...an adversary to do a government's will.”^{xlvi} Compelling is defined as,

getting a target to unwillingly do something. In other words, a government does not attempt to get a target to comply with the governments will—instead, the government forces compliance upon them regardless of willingness.^{xlvii}

Economic: The economic instrument of national power “is only partially controlled by governmental agencies...The responsibility of the U.S. Government lies with facilitating economic and trade relationships worldwide that promote U.S. fundamental objectives, such as promoting general welfare and supporting security interests and objectives.”^{xlviii} It encompasses “the use of monetary, financial, commodity, or other means to coerce...a target to comply with a government’s will.”^{xlix}

In the above definitions, the

...term government used above refers to any authoritative body of an entity. In other words, all countries have governments, as do non – state actors (the decision – makers of a nation [e.g., the de facto government of Iraqi Kurdistan] or of groups/organizations [e.g., inner circle of terrorist organizations like Jemaah Islamiyah]). Further, the term target refers to any audience, which is the object of the government’s action directed toward it. Thus, a target may be a state’s government (in part or as a whole), an individual (e.g., Slobodan Milosevic during Operation ALLIED FORCE), a segment of a populace (the Arab Street), the manifestation of a foreign instrument of power (e.g., the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps), or a number of other systems, groups, and/or institutions.¹

The Military Instrument of National Power: Clarifying Its Application within DIME

Although the international media typically portrays the application of U.S. national power rarely existing without the use of the military, in truth, the EBAO is not “exclusively or primarily a military enterprise. In fact, while the military instrument of national power may be the most visible, it may be the least active or decisive in determining the long–term solution to a crisis.”^{li} Most of the time, there will be greater emphasis on or preference for the use of diplomatic, informational or economic means. Furthermore, military operations “...are never conducted to achieve strictly military objectives. They are always subordinate to and in support of national policy aims,

objectives and endstates, and for now, and in the foreseeable future, conducted within a joint, multinational, and interagency context.”^{lii}

Furthermore, successful “effects–based operations will require cooperation and coordination across all the instruments of national power. Military actions never exist separately from the realm of politics: even in armed conflict, political and diplomatic actions can still have a profound effect on the enemy.”^{liii} As with all instruments of national power exercised within EBAO framework, the military will be employed, supported by or supporting the other instruments of national power, to achieve a desired effect, strategic end/policy aim.

The Interchangeability of DIME

Although the application of the instruments of national power has already been extensively described in the preceding chapters, it is also imperative to understand that each instrument is interchangeable as a main effort to contribute to a desired effect or outcome at the national–strategic level. Although somewhat difficult to grasp, the

...best analogy to understand this concept is the supported/supporting relationship commanders and/or component forces employ in U.S. military operations. A supported force, or in this case, a supported instrument of national power, is the primary force that is being utilized in a given situation: all supporting forces are to focus their efforts to aid the supported force in accomplishing its task. Implied in this relationship is the understanding that the supported force will set the tone of the operation, and that the supporting forces will be required to perform certain specific functions or at least take their cues from the main effort of the supported force. This ensures a unity of effort and an integration of operations in order to effectively and efficiently achieve the common goal. Similarly, instruments of national power can be thought of as having a supported/supporting role.^{liv}

For example, a policy or operation more humanitarian or diplomatic in nature will most likely be lead by the DoS, with all other departments and agencies supporting this effort.

Conversely, if the characteristics of the situation are more hostile in nature, i.e. armed

conflict, the DoD will most likely take the lead with all other departments and agencies in a supporting effort. However, this "...is not a zero sum game...Although one instrument may be considered the main effort [lead agency], other instruments may have nearly as much or more weight of effort (activity or manifestations) as the supported instrument."^{lv}

CHAPTER – 3

U.S.–VENEZUELAN RELATIONS: WHY THE UNITED STATES NEEDS TO BE PROACTIVE

“The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity. People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.”

- **President George W. Bush**

The United States, in conjunction with the international community, has witnessed remarkable changes in the global security environment. However, in spite of early conjecture that humanity was embarking down a conduit to global peace and prosperity, these predictions have been proven premature and unrealistic.^{lvi} The genocide in the Balkans and Central Africa, the attacks on 9/11, the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and “other dangers to international peace and stability suggest that, while the old order has changed, a new one has yet to emerge.”^{lvii}

Within this context of the current global security environment, a question, with a range of U.S. strategic implications, presents itself. With all that is going on around the world, typically highly publicized by the international media, why does the United States need to be extremely concerned with the current situation in Venezuela to the point of re-directing national focus into the region? This question addresses Latin America’s, and specifically Venezuela’s, significance to the United States. There is no better way to

highlight this importance than to categorize the answer within the complexities of U.S. national interests and securities.

To understand this position, it is imperative to thoroughly analyze and comprehend two primary documents that substantiate this viewpoint: the National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSS), dated September 2001, and the Monroe Doctrine, specifically the historical application of this doctrine within Latin America, delivered by President James Monroe in 1823. Analysis of these two important documents will clarify why the United States must not marginalize the semi-confrontational behavior of Venezuela towards the United States but commence some form of proactive engagement with the Venezuelan government. Furthermore, only by understanding what these two documents represent, what they envision, what they direct and how they correlate to the current political, economic and social situation in Venezuela, may a comprehensive strategy to address these issues be devised. As stated in a special Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere Report, led by former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and former U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills, “After all, there is no other region in the world where the United States can better highlight its commitment to democracy, economic progress, and social opportunity.”^{lviii}

The National Security Strategy

To clearly comprehend and appreciate the NSS, the analysis must begin by examining the foundation from which it is derived--the national values of the United States. As expressed by Richard Yager and COL George F. Barber of the USAWC, “U.S. national values represent the legal, philosophical and moral basis for continuation

of our system. These values provide our sense of national purpose. They can be found in the nation's founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Values are expressed in Presidential Proclamations as illustrated by the...Emancipation Proclamation.”^{lix} The current NSS identifies core American values, which in turn are the basis for the development of national interests. It is here where American action, whether proactive or reactive, is determined. Further stated by Yager and Barber, the United States, like any other country, has “interests—derived from their innate values and perceived purposes—which motivate their actions. National interests are a nation's perceived needs and aspirations in relation to its international environment.”^{lx}

In a grand strategy sense, the NSS delineates three broad goals and states that they are “based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests.”^{lxi} Moreover, these goals are relevant in the influence of international affairs, such that they strengthen or bring about the amendment to previously established U.S. foreign policy. Most importantly, as stated by the NSS, these goals aspire to “help make the world not just safer but better.”^{lxii}

The three goals listed in the NSS, and characterized above, are:

- political and economic freedom;
- peaceful relations with other states; and
- respect for human dignity.^{lxiii}

In a direct relationship with these goals, the NSS identifies eight specific U.S. objectives that illustrate a global roadmap to achieving these national goals. These are:

- champion aspirations for human dignity;
- strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends;
- work with others to defuse regional conflicts;
- prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction;

- ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade;
- expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
- develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power; and
- transform America’s national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.^{lxiv}

This roadmap, and the principles embodied in the national objectives as expressed by the NSS, guides the U.S. government’s decisions concerning “international cooperation, the character of our foreign assistance, and the allocation of resources.”^{lxv}

It is within this context that the relevance of the situation in Venezuela is revealed. By accepting or rejecting the core beliefs listed within the NSS, the Venezuelan government will determine through their own declarations and proceedings what type of affinity they will have with the United States: a relationship that travels the path to peace, or a path to conflict. Unfortunately, recent dialogues with the Venezuelan government indicate a preponderance of evidence for the later. To Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, this factor has compelled her to inform “U.S. lawmakers that the Venezuelan government posed ‘one of the biggest problems’ in the region and...to democracy in Latin America.”^{lxvi} This dangerous aspect affecting U.S. national interests and securities within the region, when aligned and compared to the objectives delineated in the NSS, as demonstrated below, demands some form of U.S. intervention in Venezuela. More than a few government officials in Washington, D.C. hold this belief.^{lxvii}

Champion Human Dignity

As declared in the NSS, “No people on earth yearn to be oppressed, aspire to

servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret police. America must stand firmly for the non–negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech...and respect for private property.”^{lxviii} Since the election of Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Hugo Chávez to President of Venezuela in 1998, the United States and international human rights organizations have become increasingly disturbed with seemingly countless violations of the demands expressed above.^{lxix} Although elected on a platform of political reform, specifically promising to draft a new constitution to crack down on political corruption, economic mismanagement and to reduce the growing standard–of–living gap between the poor and the working class,^{lxx} what emerged from the election was far from reformist in nature.

Under the theme of constitutional reform, President Chávez convened a Constituent Assembly, which delivered a draft constitution overhauling political institutions, abolished the Senate, established a unicameral National Assembly, and expanded the presidential term to six years, with the possibility of immediate re–election to a second term.^{lxxi} At the same time, he concentrated power in the executive branch, militarized public administration, manipulated the judicial system by loading the Supreme Court with cronies, enacted new media laws permitting government censorship, and intimidated both human rights and opposing political organizations to create a “political system that revolves around himself.”^{lxxii} For the United States, these actions raised serious trepidation that President Chávez was deliberately progressing in the direction of authoritarian rule in Venezuela. President Chávez’s “penchant to rule by decree, ...his frequent talk of revolutionary change and the growth of the Bolivarian Circles have strengthened this perception.”^{lxxiii} Furthermore, opponents of President

Chávez fear that these Bolivarian Circles, self-regulating groups of diehard Chávez supporters, are based on “Cuba’s Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and form a paramilitary vanguard”^{lxxiv} of a militant socialist state. A state they believe President Chávez is planning “gradually and through deception to create...in which he controls all branches of government as well as other key institutions and pressure groups.”^{lxxv}

As stated by the Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere, for the United States, “Venezuela is a cause for grave concern for those who worry about democracy in Latin America. International observers confirm...Venezuela remains bitterly polarized, and its representative institutions are barely functioning. The country’s unsettled politics could produce instability throughout the Andean region.”^{lxxvi} Furthermore, as stated by Dr. Donald E. Schulz, Chairman of the Political Science Department at Cleveland State University and former Research Professor of National Security Policy at the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) of the USAWC, unless “...people believe that a political system provides tangible benefits—e.g., improved living conditions, law and order, respect for human rights—they may withhold their support or cast it to demagogues or guerrilla groups.”^{lxxvii} All of these threats jeopardize the credibility of the United States within the entire Southern Cone region, endanger the security of U.S. national interests within Venezuela, and clearly oppose the core values expressed in the NSS.

Defeat Global Terrorism

If nothing else, September 11, 2001 demonstrated to the world that lesser states, and even individuals, could pose a clear and present danger to the United States and its national interests worldwide. It is because of this that President Bush affirms in the NSS,

“Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government...To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal...The war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise...And America will hold to account nations that are compromised by terror, including those who harbor terrorists—because the allies of terror are the enemies of civilization.”^{lxxviii}

It is evident that the United States has drawn a clear delineation between peaceful states that believe in liberty, free enterprise and democracy, and those states that believe in and sponsor and/or harbor terrorists. Venezuela’s public declarations and proceedings, within this framework, will establish what type of relationship it will have with the United States. Unfortunately, President Chávez’s diplomatic behavior, in both domestic and international affairs, can easily be construed as radical. His attempts to create strategic alliances with state sponsors of terrorism, such as Cuba, Iran, Libya and Iraq (pre-regime change), and his direct and indirect support of known terrorist organizations within the region, particularly along the Venezuelan–Colombian border contribute to this perception.^{lxxix}

With reference to the GWOT, the United States alleges that the “Venezuelan government has not effectively secured the zone along its border with Colombia, a haven for Colombian–based insurgent movements the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)...and has openly declared an ideological affinity with them.”^{lxxx} Moreover, the government has openly harbored key FARC and ELN members with state sponsorship; was connected to the overthrow of Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada in 2003, a pro–U.S. supporter; permitted Hamas and Hezbollah, known terrorist organizations, to operate on Isla Margarita, a

Venezuelan island in the Caribbean; and abetted regional narco-terrorists.^{lxxxii} As a result, the United States has “accused the Chávez administration of undermining international efforts to combat transnational terrorism,”^{lxxxiii} actions precisely counter to NSS objectives and goals, and the advancement of a global environment that promotes peace, prosperity and freedom.

Defuse Regional Conflicts and Ignite Global Economic Growth

The challenge of maintaining regional and international stability has changed drastically since the end of the Cold War and the world’s emergence into the 21st century. As acknowledged in the NSS, “...concerned nations must remain actively engaged in critical regional disputes to avoid explosive escalation and minimize human suffering. In an increasingly interconnected world, regional crises can strain our alliances, rekindle rivalries...and create horrifying affronts to human dignity.”^{lxxxiii}

Despite the valuable coalitions already established with Brazil, Chile and Colombia,^{lxxxiv} spillover from FARC and ELN insurgencies along the Venezuelan-Colombian-Brazilian border and the Venezuelan government’s flagrant support of these elements has ignited instability within the region. As stated in the NSS, although the United States is “...realistic about its ability to help those who are unwilling,”^{lxxxv} when “...violence erupts and states falter, the United States will work with friends and partners to alleviate suffering and restore stability.”^{lxxxvi} For these friends and partners, their future diplomatic and economic aspirations depend on an environment free from social, political and economic upheaval.^{lxxxvii} As stated by Dr. J. Michael Waller of the Center for Security Policy, stability in emerging markets is the key to global economic growth.^{lxxxviii}

For the United States, stability promotes the preservation of allies and partners, as well as the continued growth and security of vital U.S. national interests within the region.

From 1958 until the election of President Chávez, Venezuela had been the symbol of democracy in Latin America. As documented by numerous strategic study groups and private analytical corporations, with its "...free and open elections...and its prohibition of military involvement in national politics,"^{lxxxix} Venezuela earned "a reputation as one of the more stable democracies in Latin America."^{xc} Despite the anti-U.S. rhetoric and drastic democratic changes that surround the Chávez government, Venezuela has, for the time being, maintained itself as a stable economic partner to the United States. However, allowing the country to spiral away from democracy would create dangerous regional instability that could infect democracies elsewhere in Latin America and once again jeopardize vital U.S. national interests, not only within the region, but also within the hemisphere.^{xc1}

The Monroe Doctrine

For the past 183 years, the Monroe Doctrine has been the "rationalization for U.S. intervention and coercive diplomacy"^{xcii} concerning U.S. national interests and securities within Latin America. Delivered by President James Monroe, the Monroe Doctrine quickly became the guiding policy orchestrating U.S. interaction with foreign governments in the Western Hemisphere after Latin American independence.^{xciii} "At the core of President Monroe's message was the belief that it was important for the United States to become a protector of Latin America's newly acquired freedom. The idea that the United States could enforce a 'hands-off' policy...evolved into a powerful tool for justifying U.S. involvement in Latin American affairs."^{xciv}

Since its inception, several U.S. presidents have utilized the Monroe Doctrine to sanction U.S. involvement in Venezuela. President Cleveland used the Monroe Doctrine to settle the Venezuela–British Guiana Boundary Dispute in 1895–1896, while President Clinton cited it to establish the pan–American free trade zone for the new millennium in 1997.^{xcv} It is essential to realize both the political and economic importance of Venezuela to the United States. Predominantly though, it is Venezuela’s economic significance, as a founding member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and a vital strategic exporter of petroleum to the United States, that has historically influenced U.S.–Venezuelan foreign policy. Unlike other countries in Latin America, Venezuela’s natural resources, specifically its’ large oil reserves, provides the country and its’ president the means to affect the U.S. oil supply, buy neighboring country’s debt, and sustain political allies like Fidel Castro of Cuba. Because of these connections, the United States has and will continue to interpret and implement the Monroe Doctrine to guarantee and further its own vital interests, whether they are political, military or economic in nature. It is within this context of U.S.–Venezuelan connections that the relevance and application of the Monroe Doctrine in today’s global security environment holds true.

The U.S.–Venezuela Situation: An Ambiguous Future

As stated by Dr. Donald E. Schulz, historically,

...the United States was perfectly comfortable with authoritarian regimes in Latin America, so long as they did not threaten higher priority interests like regional security or U.S. economic holdings. But that is no longer the case. U.S. values have changed; democracy has been elevated...In part, this has been because American leaders have gained a greater appreciation of the role of legitimacy as a source of political stability. Governments that are popularly elected and respect human rights and the rule of law are less dangerous to both their citizens and their neighbors. Nations which are substantively democratic tend not to go to war with

one another. They are also less vulnerable to threat of internal war provoked, in part by state violence and illegality and a lack of governmental legitimacy.^{x cvi}

Venezuela is a democratic country situated in a region of the Americas that is confronting a critical period of political instability with potential for serious detriment on its economy, security and the entire Southern Cone region.^{x cvii} Furthermore, because of the political and economic linkages between Latin America and the United States, this volatility has the possibility of negatively influencing vital U.S. national interests and securities.

It must be articulated that, “in a hemisphere that is increasingly integrated and interdependent, the growth and prosperity of the Latin America economies,”^{x cviii} specifically Venezuela, “will profoundly affect the prosperity of the United States.”^{x cxix} Currently, Venezuela is the United States’ third-largest export market in Latin America and one of its top four foreign suppliers of petroleum.^c A number of vital U.S. national interests are apparent: promotion of U.S. exports, protection of U.S. investment, and the continued access to Venezuelan oil.^{ci} However, these interests are not all encompassing when directing U.S. foreign policy. Humanitarian issues must also be addressed, especially in how they contribute to the growth of extremism/terrorism within the region.

With the presence of the FARC and the ELN, both of which have been linked in some form or fashion to narcotics trafficking, it is apparent that extremism/terrorism is flourishing within Venezuela. The combination of Venezuela’s broad social problems, uncontrolled borders and ungoverned areas within the country provides an ideal breeding ground and safe haven for extremist/terrorist groups. This aspect presents a clear and present danger, not only to the region, but also to Western and U.S. national security interests.

The fundamental aims of a policy for Venezuela are indispensable. As expressed by the Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere concerning Venezuela, it is vital to establish a country that is “increasingly prosperous and secure, more socially just, and...more democratically governed”^{cii} a Venezuela that can guarantee the hopes and dreams of its citizens.^{ciii} Furthermore, it is in the national interests of the United States to promote a democratic and a prosperous Venezuela that will in turn bring “major economic, political, and security benefits to the United States.”^{civ} Moreover, a stable Venezuela could “...help advance democratic values throughout the Americas, foster economic and social development in the region, and...bolster ties with the nations in Latin America at a time when the United States needs partners and allies across the world.”^{cv}

With the United States facing increased international competition for national resources and economic markets, known extremist/terrorists groups with global reach operating within the region, and increased narcotics trafficking, the importance of a safe, secure, stable and U.S.-friendly Venezuela is paramount. Therefore, with precedence already established through the Monroe Doctrine allowing proactive U.S. engagement, it is vital that the United States change its current foreign policy towards Venezuela and engage its government through aggressive diplomatic, informational, military and economic means.

CHAPTER – 4VENEZUELA AS A ‘SYSTEM-OF-SYSTEMS’

“But in war more than any other subject we must begin by looking at the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and the whole must be thought of together.”

- Carl Von Clausewitz

The current national policy of the United States concerning Venezuela is to promote and facilitate a safe, secure and stable environment that enhances the expansion of vital U.S. national interests, specifically interests advantageous to the security, and economic and political prosperity of the United States. The U.S. DoS explicitly states evidence of this position. It lists the following major U.S. national interests towards Venezuela, and its commitment

- to the promotion of U.S. exports and protection of U.S. investment,
- to the continuation of the economic reform program,
- to the preservation of Venezuela’s constitutional democracy,
- to closer counter-narcotics cooperation,
- to counter-terrorism, and
- to the continued access to petroleum.^{cvi}

In effects-based terminology, this environmental goal/objective/endstate would be characterized as the *Desired Effect*^{cvi} for the region. Its success or failure is gauged through a specific *Measure* or *Measures of Effectiveness*^{cvi} (MOE) formulated by regional policy makers, strategists or force planners. The difficulty in this endeavor is accurately accessing the Venezuelan operational environment and envisioning exactly how the instruments of national power will be synergistically employed to not only achieve these desired effects, but to maintain them. This implies both an efficient and effective use of DIME; a goal easily stated, but often difficult to achieve.

Most Americans are unaware of the wide range of variables policy makers, strategists and force planners must deal with as they develop national security goals, strategies, and future military requirements that, as a whole, must “strike a balance between answering today’s realities (the current security environment) and planning how to address tomorrow’s alternative possibilities (the future security environment).”^{cxix} They must “consider numerous international and domestic factors, including political, economic, military, technological and informational—and even cultural—influences.”^{cx} Equally important, they must consider “*objectives desired and assumptions made* about threats, challenges, opportunities, technological advances, and future political and economic conditions.”^{cx}

Within this context of an operational environment assessment, the benefits associated with an EBAO are realized. By means of an EBAO, planners, strategists and policy makers may examine the domestic and international environments as they pertain to the forces and trends that affect national interests, threats and opportunities. Usually an enormously difficult task, particularly since abrupt changes in the operational environment may drastically modify national objectives within the region, in this case Venezuela, its bordering countries, and the entire Southern Cone region.^{cxii} This assessment provides the foundation for precise strategic planning and execution. It includes a “wide range of considerations, such as shifting international power centers, dominant trends, critical uncertainties, evolving economic interdependence, changing domestic requirements, cultural, religious, and demographic trends, ethnic warfare, ecological challenges, and advancing technology.”^{cxiii} Furthermore, this type of assessment will:

- analyze and explain which and in what ways U.S. national interests can be affected by Venezuela,
- seek to identify opportunities and threats in regard to national interests within Venezuela, and
- examine current U.S. national policy and assist in recommending possible changes to existing national policies as they pertain to U.S.–Venezuelan relations.^{cxiv}

Within the EBP methodology, this assessment will be accomplished by analyzing Venezuela as a complex, interdependent *System-of-Systems*, a process known as a *System of System Analysis* (SoSA) in effects-based terminology.^{cxv}

The System-of-Systems Analysis (SoSA)

As defined by the USJFCOM, a SoSA is an “analytical process that holistically examines a potential adversary and/or operational environment as a complex, adaptive system, including its structures, behavior, and capabilities in order to identify and assess strengths, vulnerabilities, and interrelationships.”^{cxvi} By presenting the “operational environment in terms of key systems, nodes, and their associated links, [political and military leaders at the national–strategic, theater–strategic and operational levels] ...can concentrate on understanding more thoroughly the aspects of adversary behaviors and capabilities that directly impact attainment of strategic and operational end states, objectives and effects.”^{cxvii} Furthermore, the use of

a SoSA (with its node/link technique to describe the operational environment) also offers an improved method to discover the *critical capabilities* and *vulnerabilities* of any system in the operational assessment, and particularly, a *center of gravity*. By depicting a system’s capabilities as a combination of interconnected nodes and links, analysts can enhance their understanding of which capabilities are most critical to system performance or behavior and, in turn, which of these capabilities are most vulnerable to friendly influence.^{cxviii}

Currently, the USJFCOM is using an Operational Net Assessment (ONA) as a “key enabler of an effects-based approach: both as a process and product that can

accomplish system-of-systems PMESII (political, military, economic, infrastructure, and informational) analysis.”^{cxix} For the purpose of this study, a PMESII ONA will also be undertaken to identify the key nodes, linkages and COGs that may be engaged by means of synchronized instruments of U.S. national power—e.g., kinetic, non-kinetic, lethal, nonlethal—to influence the behavior, capabilities, perceptions, and decision-making,^{cxx} of the Venezuelan government. In essence, this analyzes the means to coerce, convince or compel a behavior in a manner that conforms to U.S. strategic objectives and national interests. Additionally, the ONA will provide “visibility of additional anticipated effects and unintended consequences,”^{cxxi} 2nd and 3rd order effects, that may be “supportive, neutral, or counterproductive in light of the...overall objectives and intent.”^{cxixii}

Terms and Definitions of the Operational Net Assessment (ONA)

Before proceeding directly into the ONA, it is imperative that a clear grasp of specific EBAO terminology be established and understood to have an overall skilled comprehension of the USJFCOM ONA process. The definitions listed below are EBAO associated terms that are used quite frequently within this Venezuelan ONA. These are provided to minimize confusion and ambiguity towards the overall ONA concept, and set the conditions for an analysis that builds a common, joint, and holistic knowledge base of the Venezuelan operational environment. While there are many more terms not listed here, the ones provided are essential to the analysis of Venezuela contained in this paper:

Center of Gravity (COG): A characteristic, capability, or source of power from which a system derives its freedom of action, physical and moral strength, or will to act.^{cxixiii} Furthermore, as refined by Dr. Joe Strange of the United States Marine Corps War College, each COG will be analyzed through his ‘critical factors’ methodology.

This method will identify, for each COG, the following: Critical Capability (CC): “the absolutely essential function the system performs. (The system might have several capabilities, but not all are critical to its central function.)”^{cxxiv} Critical Requirements (CR): “its enabling capabilities expressed as nodes and links.”^{cxxv} Critical Vulnerabilities (CV): “nodes and links that are vulnerable to influence or change: disruption, dissuasion, destruction, co-option, deterrence, etc. These critical vulnerabilities (CVs) become the key nodes and links for friendly action to target and for the enemy to protect and defend.”^{cxxvi}

Decisive Point: A geographic place, specific key event or effect, critical system, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving a desired effect, thus greatly influencing the outcome of an action.^{cxxvii}

Effect: 1. The physical and/or behavioral state of a system that results from an action or set of actions. 2. The proximate result or outcome of an action, normally tactical employment of a weapon system or unit.^{cxxviii}

Key Node: A node that is associated with a Center of Gravity or an operational/strategic effect.^{cxxix}

Link: An element of a system that represents a behavioral, physical or functional relationship between nodes.^{cxx}

Measure of Effectiveness: A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior or capability that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect.^{cxxi}

Node: An element of a system that represents a person, place or physical thing.^{cxxxii}

System: “A functionally, physically, or behaviorally related group of regularly interacting or interdependent elements; that group of elements forming a unified whole. Systems associated with national security include political, economic, military, social, informational, infrastructure, and others.^{cxxxiii}

The ONA of Venezuela

Within the ONA PMESII ontology listed below, this section broadly describes the nodes, key nodes, COG(s), their linkages, and anticipated 2nd and 3rd order effects of Venezuela as a system-of-systems. Furthermore, within the context of these identified effects, linkages, COGs and nodes, are the components for the formulation of a new regional strategy, and the ability to link finite resources toward U.S. national objectives to achieve desired effects within Venezuela.

The Political System

Within the political system of Venezuela, most U.S. officials would stipulate that President Chávez is simply the most recent Venezuelan strongman, or *caudillo*, to lead a turbulent country in a period of political and economic instability.^{cxxxiv} However, it is evident through analyzing Venezuela’s political history and current governmental systems, that President Chávez is situated at the center of this political system, and therefore a strategic COG. Maintaining the country’s sovereignty, ensuring its recognition as a prominent member of the international community, and influencing the stability of the entire region are all COG CCs of President Chávez, and therefore his essential functions as the Venezuelan president.

Furthermore, for the United States to negate the power and influence of the current president within this system would be impracticable and naive. Through his political associations alone, President Chávez has significant linkages to the dominant political parties (nodes) of Venezuela. When elected president in December 1998, Chávez was the candidate of the Patriotic Pole (PP) party, an alliance between Chávez's own Fifth Republic Movement (MVR) party, the Homeland For All (PPT) party and Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party.^{cxxxv} Consequently, these organizations are now the most powerful and influential political parties in Venezuela, dominating the country's legislative branch. Additionally, President Chávez's own MVR party currently maintains 76 seats in the 165-seat legislature, and, through a comfortable association with other parties, wields a dependable majority.^{cxxxvi} Furthermore, the 1999 national referendum ratified the 1961 Venezuelan Constitution establishing significant linkages between the executive and both the legislative and judicial branches (systems/nodes) of the government. It could be argued that there is an emerging autocratic regime in Venezuela given that there is no longer a clear separation between the branches of government, caused by Chávez cronyism within the unicameral National Assembly, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice, and regional state governments (nodes).^{cxxxvii} This has transformed the Venezuelan political environment and effectively left President Chávez with near-absolute control of the government, the essential COG CR for President Chávez.^{cxxxviii} Furthermore, this political makeover has left the remnants of the old, traditional political parties (nodes) of Venezuela, the Democratic Action (AD) and Social Christian (COPEI) parties, both COG CVs for President Chávez, vulnerable and incapable of fermenting any true opposition to Chávez and the MVR party.^{cxxxix}

Externally, the “ideological cornerstone of President Chávez’s *Bolivarian* foreign policy is to build a *multipolar* world with regional alliances that would counterbalance U.S. domination of world affairs.”^{cxli} President Chávez envisions a coalition between the neighboring countries of Colombia, Guyana, and Brazil (systems/nodes), all of which have shown little interest in this proposal.^{cxli} However, these countries have maintained a strong political linkage to the Venezuelan president for various reasons. It is President Chávez’s closest political ally, Fidel Castro (node), and his alliance with Cuba (system/node) that has caused significant U.S. anxiety and led to the deterioration of U.S.–Venezuelan relations.^{cxlii}

Because of President Chávez’s position and influence as a strategic COG within the Venezuelan political system, he is the focus for DIME action in accordance with EBAO. By engaging him with one or multiple instruments of national power, the United States could coerce, convince or compel a desired effect (compliance with the U.S. government’s will) within the region. In today’s global security environment encompassing the expensive and well–publicized GWOT, proactive diplomacy between Venezuela and the United States is one of the near–term answers to the U.S.–Venezuelan situation. Through proactive U.S. diplomatic engagement/negotiations with President Chávez, the United States could prevent existing disputes from “escalating into sustained levels of violence and significant armed force”^{cxliii} while possibly reaping 2nd and 3rd order benefits of a politically stable region. These include the advancement of democratic values, economic and social development, fortification of U.S. economic and security interests, and enhancement of U.S. ties with Latin America.^{cxliv} More importantly, it is apparent that if President Chávez “is undemocratically annihilated

[removed from office], Venezuela could drift into decades of severe bloodletting similar to what Colombia has experienced,^{cxlv} clearly an undesirable 2nd order effect and a situation the United States does not want to be involved with.

The Military System

Continuing with the ONA process and the military system of Venezuela, it is apparent that similarities and linkages between the different PMESII systems exist. In effects-based terminology, this is the ‘interrelated systems’ aspect of the ONA SoSA. For example, the COG relationship that President Chávez maintains within the political system is also the prevailing COG relationship inside the military system.

Essentially, because President Chávez is Commander-in-Chief of the National Armed Forces (FAN)(system) of Venezuela, he is not only responsible for the duties associated with that position, COG CCs, but in essence commands the entire military systems’ leadership, a COG CR in a country accustomed to military coups and internal strife. Although his authority is normally implemented through the Minister of National Defense (node), the influence that the president wields within this system cannot be denied.^{cxlvi} Specifically, under power authorized by the constitution, President Chávez has the license to make military promotions without legislative approval.^{cxlvii} Moreover, as stated in a 2005 country profile report, conducted by the Library of Congress–Federal Research Division,

...the military presence within the Chávez government is extensive. Numerous active-duty and retired officers have been appointed to replace civilians in high-ranking positions in central and regional government institutions and stated-owned companies. In 2003, 5 of the 14 presidential cabinet members had previously served in the military, and in January 2005, two ministers, including the Minister of Defense, were active-duty generals.^{cxlviii}

All of these positions (nodes) maintain notable linkages directly back to the president, and are factors deemed both a COG CR and CV for President Chávez.

Externally, because of the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), by means of the Rome Statute, and Venezuela's refusal to exempt U.S. citizens from prosecution under the ICC, see FIGURE 4: 'Article 98' Agreements and the International Criminal Court, the once traditionally close military and security ties

between Venezuela and the United States,

have, for all intents and purposes, been

eliminated.^{cxlix} President Chávez's

withdrawal of his military contingent from

the U.S. Army's Western Hemisphere

Institute for Security Cooperation,

previously known as the School of the

Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, in

March 2004, highlighted this tremendous shift.^{cl} Subsequently, with this dramatic U.S.–

Venezuelan realignment, Venezuela has also opened its borders and financial assets to a

diverse selection of the world's militaries, predominantly Cuba, but also China, Russia

and Ukraine in an effort to acquire advanced military hardware and enhance personnel

training and readiness, another COG CR for President Chávez.^{cli}

Once again, President Chávez proves to be the focal point for some form of

DIME engagement within the military system. With the overall desired effect to

establish stability in U.S.–Venezuelan relations, military–to–military (MIL–MIL)

cooperation between the two nations becomes a critical requirement in achieving this

**'ARTICLE 98' AGREEMENTS AND
THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL
COURT**

"The Rome Statute establishing an International Criminal Court opened the possibility that U.S. military personnel and other citizens could be tried in the new tribunal for human rights crimes. The U.S. Congress rejected this idea in 2002, passing the "American Service-Members Protection Act" (Title II of the 2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act, P.L. 107 – 206). Among other things, this law prohibits U.S. military assistance to countries that have not signed 'Article 98' agreements. An 'Article 98' agreement is a bilateral pact wherein countries pledge not to seek the prosecution of U.S. citizens in the International Criminal Court."

- Center for International Policy

FIGURE 4: 'Article 98' Agreements and the International Criminal Court

effect. Unfortunately, because of the ICC, certain restrictions, specifically the Article 98 Agreement, have been implemented to protect U.S. Armed Forces from international prosecution, if applicable. As a result, bureaucracy has prohibited crucial MIL–MIL engagement and vastly constrained a vital enabler to the regional desired effect. Only through proactive diplomacy, may the United States coerce and/or convince a reestablishment of this imperative military connection. If restored, Venezuela would benefit from the following assistance programs: International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and Nondrug Emergency Drawdown Authority funds. Likewise, the United States would enjoy beneficial 2nd and 3rd order effects such as the reduction of the flow of narcotics into the United States through joint U.S.–Venezuelan counter–drug operations, the decrease in transnational crime, as well as building cooperation in the GWOT while supporting the overall desired effect of regional stability within Venezuela.^{cliii}

The Economic System

By analyzing Venezuela’s current economy and fiscal situation, it is obvious that another COG exists within Venezuela, and resides within the economic system. Specifically, the petroleum industry is both the heart and “Achilles heel” of the country’s economy, and the second strategic COG. Its mainstay since the 1950s, the petroleum industry accounts for between one–quarter to one–third of Venezuela’s gross domestic product (GDP), 80% of export earnings, and at least 50% of the country’s operating revenue, all of which represent COG CCs of the petroleum industry.^{cliii} Ironically, because President Chávez derives a majority of his power, strength, freedom of action,

and will to defy the United States from this COG, it is also a vital COG CR and CV for President Chávez.

Because of escalating world oil prices, a COG CR for the petroleum industry, President Chávez and Venezuela have profited from a massive windfall in petroleum revenue. This “allows the country to run a large surplus on its current–account balance,”^{cliv} while investing heavily within the public sector in areas such as education and healthcare,^{clv} while sustaining President Chávez’s support among the populace (node), a vital COG CR and CV. Notwithstanding the fact that Venezuela is rich in oil and reaping benefits from current world oil prices, the country continues to overspend and is running a substantial central government deficit, principally a result of fiscal wastefulness.^{clvi}

Unfortunately, since Venezuela is extremely dependent on the oil–export revenue market, the country is intensely vulnerable to fluctuations in the global economy, the essential COG CV for the petroleum industry.^{clvii} Furthermore, with “high social spending preventing the government from using the oil windfall to either build up savings or pay down debt,”^{clviii} the economy is even more vulnerable to a downturn in oil prices. Because of this, President Chávez has maintained “a policy of strict adherence to Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) quotas and has played a leading role in shifting OPEC from a volume–oriented strategy to one of controlling prices.”^{clix} In essence, President Chávez has utilized Venezuela’s position as one of the founding members of OPEC to manipulate the world oil market to maintain Venezuela’s economic prosperity, and more importantly, his global influence and power within his country.

Externally, Venezuela remains linked to the United States (system/node) through their mutual economic interests. The United States has been Venezuela's principle market for oil exports, accounting for as much as 60% of Venezuela's crude oil export, and the main supplier for imports, accounting for as much as 41% of its imports.^{clx} Nevertheless, although the petroleum industry is likely to remain of supreme importance to both countries, President Chávez's trade policy is to reduce the U.S. commercial dependence of Venezuela.^{clxi} By increasing trade relations with China and Russia (systems/nodes), and signing bilateral accords with Iran and Cuba (systems/nodes), President Chávez has attempted to reduce this dependency by diversifying Venezuela's trading partners.^{clxii}

Despite President Chávez's "...anti-U.S. government rhetoric and his efforts to reduce his country's trade dependence on the United States, U.S.–Venezuelan commercial ties remain close, and the United States is expected to remain Venezuela's dominant partner for the foreseeable future."^{clxiii} Being linked so predominantly to Venezuela's economic system is an enormous advantage for the United States, and this linkage must be exploited to ensure a long-term dividend, beneficial for both the United States and Venezuela. Through proactive U.S. economic coercion, in this case substantial monetary investment, the United States can facilitate diversifying Venezuela's economy. By doing so, the United States and Venezuela could collect benefits by increasing their international trade, increasing their capital flow, and harmonizing their national and international institutions.^{clxiv}

The Social System

With a population including inhabitants of Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, African, and indigenous descent (nodes), Venezuela is a country of diverse cultures and religions.^{clxv} Although an “estimated 20% of the population is without any formal education,” of Venezuelans 15 years of age and older, more than 93% of them can read and write, resulting in one of the highest literacy rates within the region (node).^{clxvi} Furthermore, “Venezuela has more than 90 institutions of higher education (systems/nodes), with more than 6 million students (node). Higher education remains free under the 1999 constitution and was receiving 35% of the education budget...More than 70% of higher–education students come from the wealthiest quintile of the population.”^{clxvii}

The availability of low to no cost healthcare, provided by the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security, has made Venezuela’s healthcare infrastructure (system/node) one of the more progressive programs in Latin America.^{clxviii} Unfortunately, since the 1980s, the healthcare system has deteriorated significantly due to inefficient, overcrowded, under funded, and poorly maintained state hospitals (nodes).^{clxix} Although private hospitals and clinics (nodes) are comparable to U.S. standards, they are usually extremely expensive and unregulated.^{clxx}

It is important to mention that although two of President Chávez’s “social objectives” are to guarantee social rights in a universal and equitable way and improve the distribution of income and wealth, Venezuela is still afflicted with widespread poverty, income inequality, and criminal violence.^{clxxi} For example, from 2003–2004, 86% of the population (node) lived in poverty, while over 29% lived in extreme poverty (node).^{clxxii} Additionally, while high oil prices have aided funding, Venezuela’s social

security system, designed to provide retirement, survivorship, and disability, continues to allocate benefits that are inadequate to sustain a healthy livelihood, even by Venezuelan standards.^{clxxiii} “Most would attribute this fact to widespread corruption, mismanagement, and the country’s poor economic performance,”^{clxxiv} a significant linkage to the Chávez government that is particularly exploitable to DIME influence.

Throughout the entire ONA process, it is apparent that the most significant node contained within the social system is the populace, specifically, the poverty stricken representing roughly 86% of the population, and both the essential COG CR and CV for President Chávez. Traditionally for President Chávez, the “impoverished and previously underrepresented have been his core constituency, but the government has done very little to improve their lot.”^{clxxv} Nonetheless, despite an aversion to him among the wealthy and middle class, Chávez seems to retain the strong support of the destitute, most likely, because he continues to stimulate their hopes.^{clxxvi}

As expounded by Sun Tzu, Mao, Clausewitz, Jomini and other great theorists, the winning of the hearts and support of the people ensures an overall triumph, in this case the achievement of the regional desired effect. Although most would agree that global attitudes indicate a large-scale resentment and mistrust of the United States, one cannot negate the universal fact that the same population also admires the United States for what it stands for, namely freedom and opportunity. Historically, U.S.–Venezuelan relations were firmly grounded in shared values and established on a genuine friendship.^{clxxvii} The United States must take advantage of this internal dilemma through proactive U.S. economic and informational convincing to shift affinity away from anti–U.S. rhetoric and towards pro–U.S. support.

The Infrastructure and Informational Systems

With the exceptions of an underdeveloped railroad and inland waterways system, a failing airline industry, and overloaded telephone network service (systems/nodes), Venezuela's infrastructure and information connectivity, within and outside the country, is considerably established.^{clxxviii} With approximately 81,000 kilometers of roads, consisting of either paved highways, gravel-surfaced roads or unimproved tracks, Venezuela's road network is considered one of the best in Latin America and is the principal means for the transport of goods, services and people.^{clxxix} Furthermore, Venezuela maintains 13 major shipping ports and harbors, and 280 licensed airfields.^{clxxx}

Within the context of information and global connectivity, with approximately 200 AM commercial radio stations, 20 FM radio stations, 4.1 million televisions, 66 television broadcast stations with 5 main television channels, 1,000 cybercafés and more than 1.5 million Internet users (nodes), Venezuela's global connectivity is a distinguishable characteristic of the country. Moreover, because the "government owns a national television station, Venezuelan Television; a metropolitan Caracas television station, TV Venezuela; and a newswire service, VenPres, whose directors are named by the president,"^{clxxxi} there exists a prevalent linkage between President Chávez and these influential systems. Furthermore, abundant

...evidence exists that Chávez-controlled media are using emotional arguments to gain attention, exploit real and imagined fears of the population and create outside enemies as scapegoats for internal failings, and to inculcate the notion that opposition to the regime equates to betrayal of the country...President Chávez's personal involvement in the communications effort is also clear and strong. Reportly, statements, speeches, and interviews of Chávez are being broadcast throughout Venezuela and the Caribbean Basin at least 4 hours a day, every day on Television del Sur.^{clxxxii}

Externally, in participation with Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia (systems/nodes), Venezuela is constructing an international fiber optic network,^{clxxxiii} another example that Venezuela's connectivity within the global network is growing.

Although President Chávez emerges once again as a focal point within these Venezuelan systems, it is his information superiority and uncontested media linkage to Venezuela and its populace that stands out as a premier target for some form of proactive DIME engagement, most likely through the informational instrument of nation power. President Chávez has and still is utilizing effective offensive Information Operations (IO) to influence the political–psychological factors of Venezuela in his favor. As stated by Dr. Max Manwaring, a Professor of Military Strategy at the USAWC with expertise in Latin America, “The intent, in this effort, is to fabricate mass consensus. *Bolivarianismo* will require maximum media (radio, TV, and newspapers/magazines) support to purvey ideas, develop public opinion, and generate electoral successes.”^{clxxxiv} With no means for the United States to counteract this Bolivarianismo IO campaign, resentment and mistrust toward the United States continues to increase, while U.S. influence within the country decreases at an alarming rate.

It is obvious that the United States must introduce some form of counter–IO campaign to “influence the emotions, motives, reasoning and, ultimately, the behavior”^{clxxxv} of the Venezuelan populace. Furthermore, if this IO campaign is designed to stimulate and encourage favorable U.S. attitudes and behavior through a “continuous flow of credible, reliable, timely, and accurate information,”^{clxxxvi} the United States may reestablish the once strong and stable U.S.–Venezuelan affinity between one another, and facilitate a stable regional partnership in the long–term future.

Clearly, Venezuela, as a system-of-systems, has been holistically analyzed through a PMESII construct to broadly identify nodes, both key and negligible, strategic COGs, and the relationship between these nodes and/or COGs to portray the operational environment, and recognize the critical capabilities most vulnerable to U.S. influence. Essentially, this ONA has identified the components necessary to develop a new regional strategy for Venezuela. As seen in FIGURE 6: The Venezuelan PMESII System-of-Systems Analysis, this illustration graphically displays the ONA PMESII node/COG/link

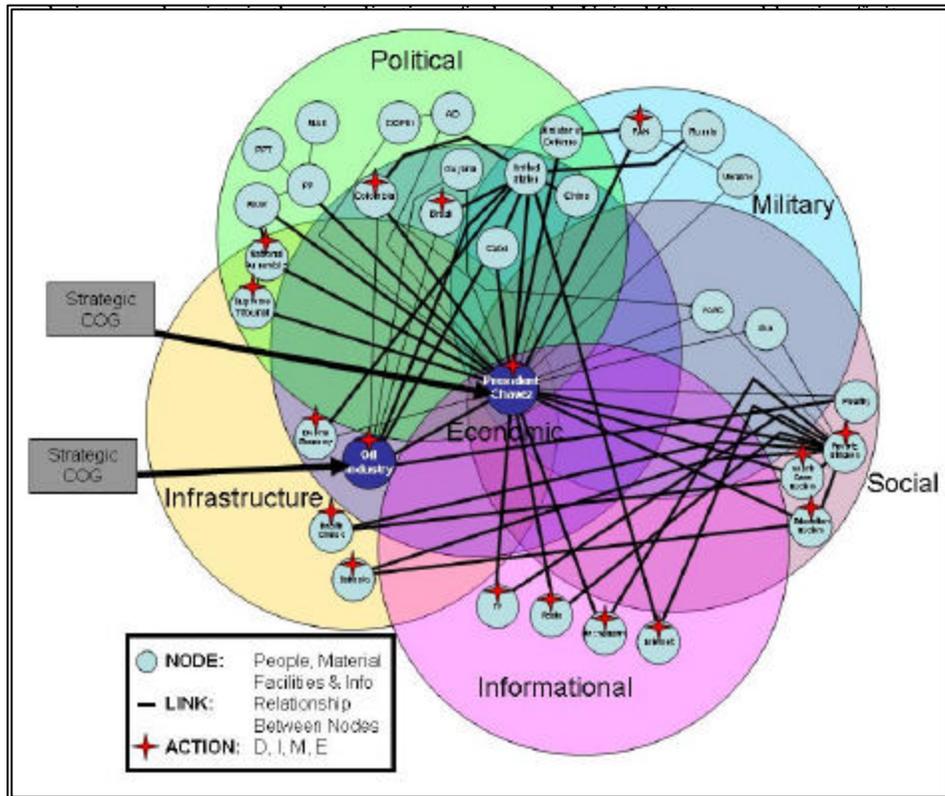


FIGURE 6: The Venezuelan PMESII System-of-System Analysis

CHAPTER – 5

VENEZUELA: THE EBAO STRATEGY DEFINED

“The standard U.S. approach to security relations in the Western Hemisphere is at the end of an era. Deep and wide – spread changes in the hemisphere’s political and economic environment over the last 20 years have introduced anomalies that the existing U.S. paradigm did not anticipate. Transformations in Latin America... since the Cold War have produced a growing sense that Washington’s past experience is no longer adequate to meet problems shaped by an environment that it in part created....The United States is moving in this security milieu without a clear view of the horizon or a plan of action to get there.”

- John A. Cope^{clxxxvii}

Most practitioners express a belief that strategy, in itself, is an art, not a science, specifically when it comes to linking ends and means.^{clxxxviii} As stated by Henry C.

Bartlett, a Professor in the National Decision Making Department at the United States Naval War College (USNWC),

strategies are often conceived as ‘game plans’ for achieving desired goals with limited means. The art of the strategist is not only to select the best plan among alternatives but also to be sure the game itself is worth playing....It reflects the structure of international relations—not merely a country’s sense of who its allies and rivals are but also its strengths, weaknesses, and the capacity of its body politic to accept challenges.^{clxxxix}

Equally important, practitioners must realize that strategy, as stated by P.H. Liotta, Chair of Economic Geography and National Security at the USNWC, “is not politically expedient; it is a long–term focusing instrument that helps shape the future environment.”^{cx} Furthermore, he explains, “In the absence of strategy, there is no clear direction for the future, and any road will take you there as you suffer through one knee–jerk reaction to crisis and change after another.”^{cxci}

Both of these characteristics of strategy should be incorporated when devising an approach toward Venezuela for the reason that both ideas epitomize the importance and

complexity of devising a sound national/regional strategy that is both effective and efficient. Moreover, by understanding the significance of these descriptions, while comprehending the ONA SoSA and its products, strategists can undoubtedly recognize and appreciate the importance of an EBAO at the strategic level. In essence, an EBAO is a key enabler that facilitates the creation of a strategy that provides "...a clear concept of how economic, diplomatic, and military instruments of national power will be used to achieve national goals and policy,"^{cxcii} while striking "...a balance between answering today's realities (the current security environment) and planning how to address tomorrow's alternative possibilities (the future security environment)."^{cxci}

It is within this context, acknowledging the fact that Venezuela is strategically important to the United States, and utilizing the analysis from the aforementioned ONA SoSA, that the following strategy for Venezuela has been formulated.

Political

Expand and Enrich U.S. – Venezuelan Diplomatic Relationships

Since his election to the presidency in 1998, followed by the 2004 referendum victory that confirmed his administration's continuance in office, the United States' relationship with Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez can be described as an "...ongoing series of acrimonious charges and countercharges."^{cxci} Each country has argued that "...the other is engaged in a political-economic-military struggle for Western Hemisphere hegemony," and that each is playing a destabilizing role, compromising the quality of democracy within the region.^{cxci} Although Venezuela's inflammatory anti-U.S. rhetoric may shift, in tandem, with the ever-changing global security environment,

it would be negligent for the United States to ignore the prospect of U.S.–Venezuelan relations escalating from a *Stable (or Cold) Peace*, to an *Unstable Peace*, or worse, *Crisis* or *War*, as illustrated in FIGURE 5: Life History of a Conflict.^{cxvii}

For too long, perhaps due to the chance or hope of an opposition party ejecting Chávez from power, the United States has applied a limited diplomatic approach to Venezuela, squandering numerous diplomatic opportunities to engage/negotiate with President Chávez. Unfortunately, to many Venezuelans, this policy has reaffirmed their belief that the Bush Administration lacks a true interest or commitment to the region, leading to further deterioration of U.S.–Venezuelan relationships.

Because of this and the understanding that “conflicts are easier and cheaper to prevent than they are to manage, contain, or terminate,”^{cxviii} it is clear the United States must change its diplomatic approach towards Venezuela and proactively engage its government and representatives.

For U.S. officials, this translates

into the reestablishment of a positive diplomatic relationship between the two governments, at the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.

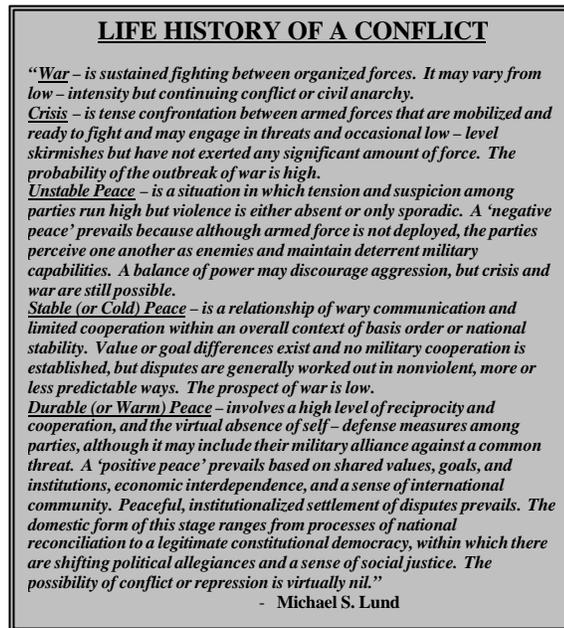


FIGURE 5: Life History of a Conflict

In order for this to materialize, it is apparent that President Bush must first engage President Chávez, one-on-one, in a highly publicized political forum. For example, through coordinated efforts by the U.S. Department of State, President Bush could invite the Venezuelan president to meet in a neutral country, possibly Brazil, to discuss the future of the relationship between the two countries. This gesture, although somewhat insignificant within the sizeable framework of international politics, would pay huge dividends to both parties. Its desired effects would be to nullify some of the animosity previously established between the two leaders and governments and to begin to coerce or convince the Chávez administration that a future cooperation agenda between the United States and Venezuela is necessary. Although this meeting would probably not negate all of the hostility between the two governments, it could be a crucial initial step to reestablish a stable dialogue and partnership. Additionally, it would further the appearance that the United States is committed to democratic politics, respectful of the electoral processes of other nations, and impartial when it comes to political candidates and/or viewpoints, a source of heated resentment for President Chávez and his ego.^{cxviii}

Second, the establishment, through the Organization of American States (OAS), of a regional partnership of democracies fostering a democratic rebirth in Venezuela is vital.^{cxix} As stated by the Special Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere, “The United States should join with other countries of the region to urge President Chávez and his opponents to work toward an agreed-upon agenda for democracy and political reconciliation, consistent with the hemisphere’s Democratic Charter.”^{cc} Key participants in the endeavor should be Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Colombia’s President Alvaro Uribe Velez, both of whom

maintain some form of influence over President Chávez. A steady, collective pressure by the regional coalition could coerce or convince President Chávez to move to a democratic common ground, and specifically to address Venezuela's polarized and barely functioning representative institutions.^{cci} Furthermore, these

responses by the United States and other countries to the internal governance problems of any nation will be most effective if they are developed and implemented multilaterally, fully respect the affected nation's constitutional principles, and engage a wide range of national political actors. Neighboring countries will almost always have a special part to play, and they should be involved in any initiative—from negotiations to political pressures to sanctions.^{ccii}

In essence, the use of this multilateral policy tool could reduce the possibility of continuing opposition and violent reaction from Venezuela, an effect sometimes associated with the United States acting with a unilateral engagement and/or policy.

Third, the United States needs to establish, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and OAS, a round-table forum between Venezuela's National Assembly and members of the U.S. Congress.^{cciii} Created when the constitution was ratified in 1999, the National Assembly is probably the “only functioning forum... where the many parties and factions actually debate national issues.”^{cciv} Unfortunately, the National Assembly “has little legislative experience, rules of parliamentary procedures are still evolving, and legislative–executive relations leave much to be desired.”^{ccv} Through a formal international assistance program, the United States could exert its leadership and coerce or convince key Venezuelan representatives while working together toward common objectives and goals within the region. Furthermore, this same methodology should be applied to Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal of Justice and members, or a representative of the U.S. Supreme Court. As stated by Andrew S. Natsios, Administrator of the USAID under the current Bush Administration,

“The development community accepts the notion that strong human and technical capacities are necessary prerequisites for stability and economic growth. Simply put, a country with weak government institutions staffed by unqualified and inefficient officials will have limited ability to lead and sustain its own economic and social development.”^{ccvi}

Military

Article 98 Restrictions: Reestablishing Military–To–Military Relationships

Throughout Venezuela’s turbulent history, it is important to recognize that the military has played a significant role in politics. For example, Venezuela’s “armed forces governed the country during the 19th–century and through the first half of the 20th–century.”^{ccvii} Furthermore, it is important to realize that the “armed forces of Venezuela have always assumed...an obligation to resolve various internal crises. That is, if a governing regime deviates too significantly from the general armed forces’ doctrinal concept of social harmony and good of the state, the military will step into the political situation and provide corrective action.”^{ccviii} This mandate continues to hold true today. The military retains a substantial position of influence within the country’s political institutions and its key representatives, to include the president.^{ccix}

As a former Lieutenant Colonel in the Venezuelan Army and leader of a failed coup attempt in 1992, President Chávez appears to comprehend this facet of Venezuelan politics better than anyone does within the current political structure. Using this understanding, President Chávez has organized a combined civilian and military cabinet, where the military contingent is largely involved in political decision–making and the implementation of national policies. It is clear the United States must reestablish U.S.–

Venezuelan MIL–MIL relations. By doing so, through association and training alone, members of the U.S. military could instill pro–democratic concepts, civilian authority of the military, military ethics, and military functionality within a democracy, into foreign officers and enable desired effects within the region through a military–political ripple effect within the Venezuelan system.^{ccx}

Fourth, before the former can happen, the President must waive the Article 98 restrictions that were instituted under the creation of the ICC. Under the mandate of the American Service–Members’ Protection Act (ASPA), the president “can waive these restrictions for any country if he certifies that it is in the national security interest”^{ccxi} of the United States. As demonstrated, Venezuela clearly falls within this category, and signing of this waiver would almost certainly guarantee the reestablishment of the once strong military ties between the United States and Venezuela.

Initially, U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) should oversee this MIL–MIL renewal in direct coordination with the U.S. Ambassador in Caracas, Venezuela. As support builds and these programs advance, IMET, FMF, and other military aid programs should be reinstated to ensure this MIL–MIL relationship does not deteriorate back to its former state. With these programs established, senior Venezuelan officers could again attend U.S. military courses such as the USAWC, and the United States Command and General Staff College (CGSC), “where they can learn how the military properly functions to support democratic processes.”^{ccxii} More importantly, the camaraderie established between the two militaries would naturally filter into the political framework and facilitate a more stable U.S.–Venezuelan relationship. Furthermore, as this relationship grows and strengthens, the United States would also benefit by advancing these programs

into the interagency, collaborating on combating drug trafficking and transnational crime through joint exercises, as well as fighting the destabilizing dynamic of the GWOT.

Economic and Infrastructure

Expand U.S. Investment within the Venezuelan Economy

Although Venezuela has enjoyed a fiscal windfall from its petroleum industry, high global demand and subsequent high oil prices, its disproportionate reliance on this resource of GDP is extremely dangerous to its future economic prosperity and to that of the United States. If the petroleum industry should experience a significant decline in oil prices, such as seen in 1986, 1998, and 2001,^{ccxiii} the political, economic and social effects to Venezuela would be catastrophic. Consequently, as a major trade partner of both imports and exports with Venezuela, this overall instability would have devastating effects on U.S. national interests within Venezuela and the entire region.

This is a time when the “international balance of power is shifting, and to remain competitive with other rapidly emerging power centers (in China and East Asia, in particular) the United States will have to use its traditional geopolitical and cultural regions of influence as a motor for economic growth.”^{ccxiv} Within this context, it is obvious that the United States must ensure the long-term prosperity of these markets, raw materials and manufactured goods by expanding U.S. investment, aid and trade within Venezuela, or “our power and influence abroad will wane with increasing rapidity.”^{ccxv}

Fifth, the United States must pledge itself to the successful completion of the Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA). Although the FTAA “would stimulate regional economic activity by opening markets for...producers and enhancing the regions ability to attract foreign investment and inflows of new technology,”^{ccxvi} this trade

agreement is only a portion of the long-term solution for Venezuela's economy.

Sixth, the United States, through USAID Transition Initiatives, must also increase the amount of U.S. investment into Venezuela's agricultural, fishing, manufacturing and mining infrastructures to allow the economy to diversify its sources of GDP. The reason for this investment, according to Mackubin Thomas Owens, Professor of Security, Strategy, and Forces at the USNWC, "...is the infusion of capital that increases labor productivity and raises the standard of living...frequently more sensitive to domestic factors than international ones. These include the quality of the labor force and interest rates."^{ccxvii} However, "the most important domestic factor for a potential investor is the internal stability of the state in which the investment is to be made. If the investor perceives that the risk exceeds the probable rate of return, the investment will not be made."^{ccxviii} Therefore, a substantial increase in U.S.-direct investment would allow the Chávez government to expand investment efforts into all sectors of the economy, diversifying its sources of GDP and increasing its economic stability. Greater economic stability produces larger foreign direct investment, trade and GDP. Moreover, this increase in economic stability would typically also produce greater political stability and facilitate an environment allowing the United States to establish a strong political and economic ally within Latin America.

Social and Infrastructure

Expand U.S. Investment in Venezuelan Social Programs

Historically, U.S.-Venezuelan relations were firmly grounded on mutual principles and values, but in recent years both countries have pursued vastly divergent political, military and economic agendas.^{ccxix} While the majority of senior U.S. officials

in Washington attribute this divergence to President Chávez and his pro-Cuba/anti-U.S. policies, most Venezuelan officials would accredit this departure to a mounting U.S. imperialism within the region. Regardless, as a direct result of this political difference of opinion, President Chávez has chosen to flood the social infrastructure of Venezuela, predominantly poverty-stricken neighborhoods, with 20,000 Cuban doctors, dentists, teachers, and sports trainers,^{ccxx} and has successfully cultivated, through Cuban/Castro style propaganda, a growing resentment towards the United States in a demographic that encompasses 86% of the population. For anti-U.S. factions, this provides an ideal breeding ground for the recruitment for extremists and members of destabilizing elements. For the United States, this environment represents a serious threat to hemispheric security and the possibility of huge reactive costs to combat these threats in the future. It is clear, in order for the United States to negate the antipathy it faces in the region, that it must engage the populace on its terms and territory. More importantly, the United States must help reduce the considerable magnitude of social problems in Venezuela.

Seventh, in order to strengthen U.S. sympathies within Venezuela, the United States must invest, through USAID and pro-U.S. NGOs, money for social programs. These programs should encompass, but not be limited too, school renovations, medical clinics, nurseries, low-income housing, educational outreach programs and food subsidizes.^{ccxxi} In essence, the United States must advance any affordable program that could generate a substantial increase in the standard-of-living for the average Venezuelan while fostering the next generation of Venezuelan doctors, lawyers, engineers, and technocrats.^{ccxxii} Moreover, it is essential that these programs not be anti-

Chávez, but instead pro-U.S. These programs must be proactive solutions to social problems, problems that typically result from chronic instability or failed states, not U.S. propaganda. Furthermore, it is

essential that the country's people view development as belonging to them and not to the donor community; development initiatives must meet the country's needs and its people's problems as they perceive them, not as distant policymakers imagine them... When ownership exists and a community invests itself in a project, the citizens will defend, maintain, and expand the project well after donors have departed. If what is left behind makes no sense to them, does not meet their needs, or does not belong to them, they will abandon it as soon as aid agencies leave.^{ccxxiii}

Informational

Execute a Pro – U.S. Information Operations Campaign in Venezuela

The United States must “take away President Chávez’s ability to use distrust and hate of the United States as a rallying point for his regime. The U.S. government should institute an information campaign aimed at reassuring the people of Venezuela (especially the poor) that the United States supports Venezuela’s constitutional processes and wants a stronger, more stable and economically viable Venezuela.”^{ccxxiv}

Eighth, in coordination with the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an “independent federal agency responsible for all U.S. government and government sponsored, non-military, international broadcasting,”^{ccxxv} the United States must formulate and implement an effective counter-IO campaign directed at the populace of Venezuela. By utilizing the programming format already in use by the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio and TV Martí),^{ccxxvi} the United States may effectively introduce pro-U.S. informational mediums into the current, Chávez-dominated Venezuelan information environment.

Like Radio and TV Martí, this Office of Venezuela Broadcasting should direct broadcasting services that provide Spanish–language news, programs about public affairs, culture, music, sports, and entertainment programs to Venezuela.^{ccxxvii} Moreover, the station should broadcast information and commentary about events in Venezuela and elsewhere within the region and hemisphere to promote the free flow of information and ideas into that country.^{ccxxviii} Furthermore, and in accordance with the BBG Charter, these broadcasts must: “1) be accurate, objective, and comprehensive; 2) represent all segments of American society and present a balanced and comprehensive view of significant American thought and institutions; and 3) clearly present the policies of the United States.”^{ccxxix}

Overall, formulating a U.S. strategy for Venezuela is an almost overwhelming task, especially within a global security environment encompassing the GWOT, OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). This task is further complicated, perhaps most importantly, by the availability of severely limited resources.^{ccxxx} The fact is that in today’s complex global security environment, “...resources shape strategy more than vice versa.”^{ccxxxi} Within this context, it is imperative that any U.S. strategy be effective and efficient, two important characteristics that may be somewhat divergent, but when undertaken concurrently, allow the formulation of an ideal U.S. strategy. The ONA PMESII SoSA executed in the previous chapter, with its ability to identify strategic COGs within Venezuela, their CCs, CRs and CVs, and to identify which of these elements were most crucial to President Chávez and/or vulnerable to U.S. influence,^{ccxxxii} is key to this endeavor. All that remains for this strategy to be effective, efficient and successful is to achieve *synergy* at the national–strategic level.

CHAPTER – 6**VENEZUELA: SYNERGIZING THE EBAO STRATEGY**

“We plan because synergy does not happen by itself. Synchronization does not happen by accident. For synchronization, coordination, and integration to take place, planning is required.”

- VADM Vern Clark

This proposed strategy for Venezuela includes an assortment of actors encompassing various U.S. governmental agencies and departments, international and non-governmental organizations, and multinational partners. However, a significant hurdle to the envisioned application of this foreign policy is apparent. This challenge encompasses how to effectively and efficiently combine and synchronize all relevant and available joint, interagency and multinational capabilities, focused on the Venezuelan government, to achieve the desired effects within Venezuela.^{ccxxxiii} In short, it becomes a question of the ability of the United States to attain a strategic *synergy* of its instruments of national power in order to influence Venezuela’s critical vulnerabilities and establish a regional stability within the country while presenting no U.S. seams or weaknesses for possible anti-U.S. exploitation.^{ccxxxiv} Fortunately, there is a solution to this challenge, but it is dependent on the implementation of a *unity of effort* at the national-strategic level.

As expressed by Dr. Milan N. Vego, renowned strategists and Professor of Joint Military Operations at the USNWC, “the most important responsibilities at the national-strategic level is to develop and apply national security strategy and national military strategy. These in-turn must be linked with policy; otherwise, the result will be flawed strategy. This level of command is responsible for determining national strategic and military strategic objectives. It establishes the political framework for the employment of military and non-military sources of power in the accomplishment of the national and

military strategic objectives.^{ccxxxv} Furthermore, as featured in joint doctrine, to effectively respond “...to contemporary adversaries requires a unity of effort in planning and execution with those interagency and multinational players that fall outside the direction of military commands,^{ccxxxvi} especially those that depend “...on building and sharing a common understanding of the problem to be solved.”^{ccxxxvii} Moreover, an effective response stresses the importance of “...an understanding of the operational environment in which it exists and harmonization of the actions required to resolve it.”^{ccxxxviii} Within this national–strategic context, it is apparent in order to achieve this required synergy through unity of effort, this Venezuelan strategy must be introduced, examined, scrutinized, and if deemed satisfactory, authorized by the highest national authority. Essentially, the construct for this national security decision–making process is through the current National Security Council/Policy Coordination Committees (NSC/PCCs), with the final authority, in collaboration with the statutory and non–statutory members of the NSC, being the President of the United States.

As directed by National Security Presidential Directive 1 (NSPD 1), published in February 2001 and utilized as an instrument to communicate presidential decisions about the national security policies of the United States, the management, “...development and implementation of national security policies by multiple agencies of the United States Government shall usually be accomplished by the NSC/PCCs. The NSC/PCCs shall be the main day–to–day forum for interagency coordination of national security policy. They shall provide policy analysis for consideration by the more senior committees of the NSC system and ensure timely responses to decisions made by the President.”^{ccxxxix}

Broken down into six regions, each NSC/PCC is an apparatus to coordinate and

synchronize DIME actors, actions, supported/supporting relationships, etc., within each recommended national–strategic policy before it goes to the NSC and the President for decision.^{ccxi}

Although the NSC/PCCs are vital in effectively and efficiently combining and synchronizing all relevant and available joint, interagency and multinational capabilities within national strategy and national military strategy, it is important to realize that this process only represents one facet of the NSC system. Ultimately, the approval of this Venezuelan strategy rests on the beliefs, convictions, and individual influences of the principle members of the NSC. For the NSC is

the President’s principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials...the function of the NSC ‘shall be to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies related to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving the national security’ as well as to perform ‘other functions the President may direct for the purpose of more effectively coordinating the policies and functions of the departments and agencies of the government relating to the national security’ The NSC has the responsibility to ‘assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States’ and to ‘consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security.’^{ccxlii}

The NSC is guided by the fact that other “...than an extremely broad outline of who should participate in the process, [but] there are no laws or regulations directing how policy should be developed and decisions made. Much depends on personalities and the strengths and weaknesses of the people who work for the President, as well as the management style of the President himself.”^{ccxliii} Personalities, department/agency capabilities, and structure all matter. Only with the right emphasis, engaging the key people throughout the entire national security decision–making process, may a unity of

effort toward this Venezuelan strategy be established among the NSC decision-makers. Developing a consensus, or attempting to, between the two main pillars, and polar opposites of the NSC, the Department of Defense and State is a somewhat difficult task to achieve.

As stated by Col. Rickey L. Rife, of the USAWC,

Today the realities of the international environment require the military and foreign service professional to increase the breadth and depth in the scope of their duties—particularly in areas of engaged global leadership, accountability, and political dialogue. This mandates a requirement for coordination, cooperation, and familiarity that capitalizes on the inherent strengths of both Defense and State and recognizes the requirement for a ‘one team—one fight’ approach to foreign policy.^{ccxliii}

Only if a unity of effort is established, a ‘one team—one fight’ mentality, will this Venezuelan strategy receive approval for implementation by the President and achieve strategic synergy.

CHAPTER - 7

THE NAY SAYERS

“Many things which are going on in our military remind me of the Soviet ultimately unsuccessful efforts to make a science out of the art of war. We are definitely going their way and the results will be the same.”

- Dr. Milan N. Vego

The SoSA

As with all theories of warfare, military proposals, political strategies or foreign policies, there will always be differences of opinion over what the correct solution or school-of-thought should be within each specific challenge or circumstance. The strategy contained within this proposal, is no different. For example, Dr. Milan N. Vego states,

System of system approach in analyzing military situation is profoundly anti – Clausewitzian. We can disagree with Clausewitz on many issues but his views on the relationship of policy and strategy and the use of military instrument of power still stands; his ideas on the nature of war are timeless; character of war changes but its nature is unchanging...Complexity of the situation at the operational and strategic level cannot be reduced to a buzzword (SoSA) and nodes and links; the human factor is essentially reduced to a machine; this kind of analysis can be quite useful in targeting electricity grids or transportation systems but definitely not in dealing with political, social, economic, informational, military, and other aspects of the situation.^{ccxlv}

Although Dr. Vego is recognized as a subject matter expert in operational warfare, to disregard the benefits a PMESII SoSA provides would be impractical and unwise. A SoSA provides a framework enhancing the comprehension and overall knowledge of a probable adversary or intended party.^{ccxlv} Moreover, a SoSA “supports effects-based planning and assessment, provides a range of options for application of the elements of national power, and supports risk assessment by associating primary, secondary, tertiary, and unintended effects with these actions.”^{ccxlv}

Furthermore, although Clausewitz's theories may be timeless, he wrote during a time when outcomes were often decided by the engagement of thousands of men, with limited technology, at a restricted point in time and space.^{cexlvii} Within this Clausewitzian context, it should be stated that the SoSA does not intend to make strategy or operational warfare a science. The human dimension alone makes this impossible. However, a SoSA does intend to reduce the fog and friction at the national–strategic, or any level, to allow policymakers, strategists or force planners to make the most appropriate decision.

The U.S.–Venezuelan Strategy

In as much as Dr. Vego has expressed concerns over the aspects of a SoSA, it is also acknowledged that there may be issues, at the national–strategic level, concerning the overall strategy proposed for Venezuela. It could be argued that the strategy detailed here could be seen as a reward or moral victory for President Chávez because of the amount of proposed monetary investment and recommended fiscal programs, especially during a time when he has hurt the U.S. economy by contributing to the rise in the price of petroleum by influencing OPEC. He has also publicly advocated anti–U.S. rhetoric, and allowed U.S.–Venezuelan relations to deteriorate. Furthermore, some would contend that because of President Chávez's affiliation with Cuba's Fidel Castro and other countries with questionable affinity towards terrorism and extremism that the solution for Venezuela lays within the realm of harsh military or economic venue. All of these opinions may be recognized as having merit, but as seen below, would be ill–advised based on regional stability, humanitarian assistance, military involvement, economic/financial considerations, and most importantly U.S. policy objectives.

First, this strategy is not an actual fiscal reward for President Chávez, but instead an assortment of programs designed to assist Venezuela and its populace “in their efforts to develop, restructure, and reinforce democratic institutions,”^{ccxlviii} while enhancing Venezuela’s humanitarian and civic action capacities.^{ccxlix} It is clear that Venezuela’s economic, humanitarian and security problems are inexorably linked and must be addressed in a proactive manner, an aspect that this strategy accomplishes through its recommended DIME means. Furthermore, although this strategy could be seen as a short-term *moral* victory for President Chávez, the United States must avoid becoming fixated on this egocentric aspect. It is the long-term desired effects, a safe, secure, stable and U.S.-friendly Venezuela, on which the United States must focus.

Second, other than reestablishing MIL – MIL relations with Venezuela, the strategy detailed previously contends that any deployment of military forces, with violent intentions, is risky and imprudent. With the already expensive and manpower intensive execution of operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States can ill afford to initiate another combat operation anywhere else in the world, even in the same hemisphere. Furthermore, it has been some time since the U.S. military has trained for a jungle environment operation. Like Afghanistan and Iraq, the Venezuelan environment is very unforgiving and deadly, but compounding this characteristic is the fact that the U.S. military has not operated in this type of environment since the invasion of Panama in 1989.

Third, by initiating economic sanctions against Venezuela, the United States would be shooting itself in the proverbial foot by severing economic ties with one of its largest trade partners and sources of petroleum. Furthermore, the effectiveness of

economic sanctions has been disproved numerous times within recent history. An aspect expressed by Mackubin Thomas Owens, Professor of Security, Strategy, and Forces in the National Security Decision Making Department at the USNWC, who explains,

Sanctions are often popular with policy makers who see them as an alternative to the use of force. But there is considerable argument as to their effectiveness. They take time, perhaps longer than the diplomatic timetable allows. They require widespread commitment, without which they are difficult to enforce and maintain...Finally, there is growing concern about the morality of sanctions. Critics contend that sanctions have little impact on the government whose behavior we are attempting to influence, but a great deal on the target state's population, especially the weakest.^{cc1}

Refuting the Critics

Overall, this U.S. strategy for Venezuela has taken into account the global security environment, the availability of limited resources, and the effects the United States desires to obtain within Venezuela. With the implementation of such strategy that takes all of these components into account, the Nay Sayers' issues are addressed and alleviated. Therefore, as articulated in the preceding chapters, by utilizing an EBAO SoSA, a Venezuelan regional strategy, effectively and efficiently employing the instruments of national power to achieve U.S. regional desired effects has been developed.

CONCLUSION

In the post-9/11 global security environment, it is evident the United States continues to confront numerous political, military and economic threats dispersed throughout the international community. The military activities in Afghanistan and Iraq clearly represent the United States' convictions toward the GWOT, but more importantly, epitomize how the current U.S. administration and the populace as a whole have become solely focused on achieving some form of victory in both of these countries, while ignoring other contingency areas closer to home.

Within the western hemisphere, it is clear that the current situation in Venezuela, and more specifically, the public actions and policies of the Chávez government towards the United States, has transformed a once strong democratic country and U.S. ally into a nation on the brink of political and social instability. Although most senior U.S. officials would stipulate that Hugo Chávez only represents the most recent of Venezuelan strongmen to lead this turbulent country, ever since his election to president he has successfully targeted and influenced U.S. national interests and securities through his country's diplomatic, informational, military and economic means.

In defiance of the United States, he continues to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba's socialistic leader Fidel Castro, has attempted to establish relations to countries with questionable ties to terrorism such as Iran, Libya and Iraq, and allegedly maintains an association with known terrorist groups operating throughout the tri-border region of South America. He has promoted U.S. resentment among his populace by publicly spouting anti-U.S. rhetoric and demonizing the United States, but most importantly, he has attempted to manipulate the United States through his country's oil

resources and exports. Clearly, no other country in South America, or in the western hemisphere, embodies more of a threat to the national interests and securities of the United States than the nation–state of Venezuela.

It is clear, if left uncontested under the current U.S. policy, the already fragile relationship between Venezuela and the United States will continue to deteriorate and further destabilize Venezuela, an already polarized country, by fostering even more internal strife. Moreover, the situation will continue to cultivate anti–U.S. sentiments among the Venezuelan populace. Extremists groups will thrive on this to recruit the disgruntled populace into activities focused on destabilizing the entire tri–border region and U.S. national interests, primarily within the realm of international trade and oil exports. Most importantly, if President Chávez continues to threaten U.S. national interests and securities, the Venezuelan situation may elevate to a point compelling a U.S. military response that neither the United States nor Venezuela desires.

The U.S. government must realize that a safe, secure, stable and U.S. friendly Venezuela is in the best interest of the United States. Furthermore, the problems currently contained within Venezuela are unavoidably linked to the United States, and these issues must be dealt with in a synergistic manner, an aspect that this U.S. strategy for Venezuela does through the coordinated support and efforts of regional partners, U.S. governmental agencies and international organizations, to name a few.

Ultimately, by incorporating an EBAO at the national–strategic level, and implementing the effects–based strategy outlined in this paper, the United States may effectively and efficiently employ the instruments of national power to coerce, convince and/or compel President Hugo Chávez, and the Venezuelan government, to observe U.S.

policies within the region. Moreover, by promoting the fact that, these policies not only advance U.S. values, interests and objectives, but also those of Venezuela, the difficulty of this task would be greatly reduced, along with some of the animosity and distrust between the two governments. Finally, by incorporating this strategy, the United States will promote a democratic and prosperous Venezuela that will in turn bring “major economic, political, and security benefits to the United States.”^{ccli}

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