

# The crisis of Venezuela: *the role of the military*



WILLIAM J. PERRY CENTER FOR  
HEMISPHERIC DEFENSE STUDIES

20 Years Empowering Defense and  
Security Professionals  
in the Americas

## **Dr. Boris Saavedra**

*Profesor de Asuntos de Seguridad Nacional*

Centro William J. Perry de  
Estudios Hemisféricos de Defensa  
Universidad Nacional de Defensa  
Washington, DC 20593-0001

[saavedrab@ndu.edu](mailto:saavedrab@ndu.edu)

202-685-2213

FAX 202-685-4675



*Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, left, speaks with his Defense Minister Gen. Vladimir Padrino, during the new military chief's swearing-in ceremony at the Fort Tiuna military base in Caracas, Venezuela*

*AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos*

# Principal of Academic Freedom



The statements and opinions presented do not represent the views of the Department of Defense (DoD), the National Defense University (NDU) or the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. Any release, quotation or extraction for publication must be coordinated with the author of the document. Any use of these materials outside of the context of this lecture is not authorized.



# Agenda

- **The current role of the military in Venezuela**
- **The operational context of the Venezuelan military**
- **Components of military institutions**
- **Potential scenarios for the coming weeks**



# Venezuela versus Maduro: the role of the military

## Hypothesis

The possibility of a military coup in Venezuela is very remote, but the armed forces aren't an impartial witness to the Venezuelan crisis. They are part of the problem, not the potential solution.

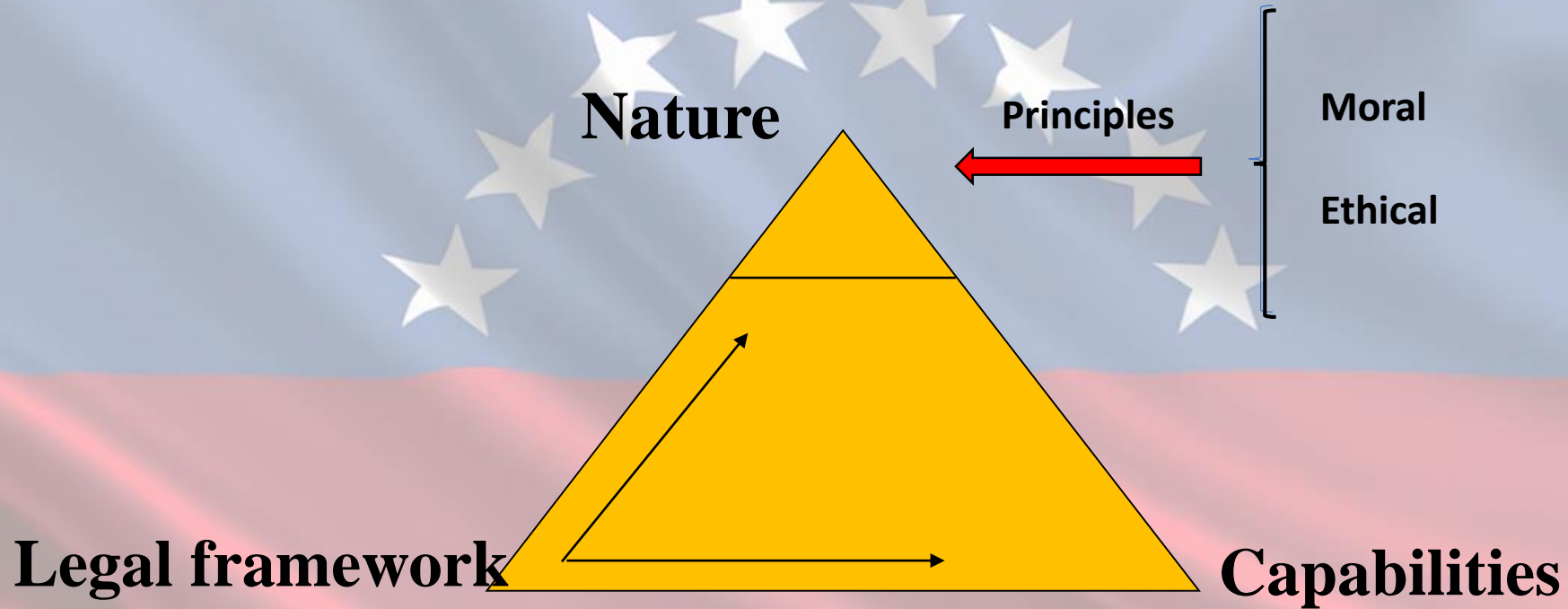


# The context of the military institution in Venezuela

- **Historical factor**
  - Civil War in Venezuela 1864-69
  - Pretorian conception of the military institution
- **Political role of the military (1958-98)**
  - Democratic governments
    - Modernization (academic curriculum and technology)
    - Professionalization (Exclusive dedication to the military mission)
- **Political role of the military (1999 to present)**
  - Political ideology of the military (Cuban influence)
    - Nature
    - Legal framework
    - Capabilities



# The components of the military organization



# Potential scenarios for coming weeks

- **Scenario # 1** (with Constituent Assembly suspended)
  - The opposition continues to raise protest in the streets
  - A military wing rises against the narco general
  - The US government will apply sanction to top regime officials
  - Honorable departure of Maduro and some top leader not wanted by US
- **Scenario # 2** (after July 30 with Constituent Assembly held)
  - Protest with violence with dead and wounded by regime forces
  - PDVSA is embargoed by US
  - A military wing rises against the narco general
  - Honorable departure of Maduro and some top leader not wanted by US

*The main actors in both scenarios are: the military and the United States*

