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# And then 2026 arrived

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Nicolás Maduro (left), President of Venezuela, and Miguel Díaz-Canel (right), President of Cuba, during a session of the Sao Paulo Forum held in Havana in 2018. Photo: Rosa Miriam Elizalde

Nicolás Maduro remains in Miraflores Palace, and Cuba celebrates the 67th anniversary of the Revolution today. January 1, 2026, dawns with this uncomfortable truth for the opinion machine that has spent months predicting the imminent fall of both governments, while Trump's gunboats prowl the Caribbean.

There is no honest way to deny the crises both countries are experiencing — they are visible and socially painful — but the point is to understand why the narrative of the “inevitable fall” returns time and again and, time and again, fails. What collapsed in 2025 was not power in Caracas nor the institutions in Havana.

What collapsed was a type of interpretation, convenient for certain elites, that reduces politics to a mechanical equation of pressure and collapse, confuses desire with prediction, and, above all, presents Latin America as a chessboard where Washington moves pieces and the peoples of the South simply fall by inertia.

“Maduro won't make it to Christmas,” shouted Rep. Carlos Giménez, of Cuban

origin, when Trump declared his “peace through strength.” Giménez’s allies in Miami echoed this sentiment, but with the added twist of a “Castro-communist end.” This determinism, repeated ad nauseam by Florida politicians led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, has served to normalize collective punishment and transform social suffering into a tool of “political engineering.”

In 2025, headlines and columns treated the collapse as an imminent, almost inevitable event: all it took was “one more push,” “a definitive closure,” “one final turn of the screw.” In Venezuela, opposition media even narrated the fall as if it were happening in real time. Nobel Peace Prize laureate and enthusiast of a U.S. invasion, María Corina Machado, promised Trump massive privatizations of her country’s oil fields and free rein for U.S. companies.

In the Cuban case, think tanks and commentators insisted that the combination of energy crisis, inflation, and social unrest opened a window for “regime change” in 2025. In the U.S. political arena — and especially in the media ecosystem based in Florida — the escalation of hardline rhetoric, with explicit references to “regime change” as the desired outcome, was presented as the prelude to a total victory against communism: first Caracas, then Havana; all by association, as if societies were dominoes.

But reality is stubborn. There are structures, interests, memories, and state capacities that do not evaporate with the first blow. When punishment becomes the norm, societies learn — sometimes creatively, sometimes painfully — to survive within the anomaly. Peoples are not a footnote in geopolitical calculations: they are political subjects with the capacity to interpret what is happening, to organize collective knowledge, and to accumulate experiences. They have support networks, forms of cohesion, and a practical intelligence forged by memory and the harsh realities of daily life.

In Cuba, blackouts, the erosion of purchasing power, shortages, migration, and

deprivations of all kinds were interpreted as an automatic threshold for collapse. The idea that the economic crisis “can only end” in political downfall was repeated. But Cuban history — with all its contradictions — is also the story of a state that has already survived extreme shocks, including the Special Period, through a combination of partial economic reorganization, institutional leadership, and community and family networks that cushion the blow. This doesn’t make the crisis any less real. It simply explains why the crisis doesn’t automatically translate into collapse.

Both Venezuelans and Cubans identify Washington as the main factor in the economic suffocation they are suffering, and this awareness, far from sparking a rebellion against their governments, tends to activate reflexes of national dignity. If what the U.S. power sought was to turn hunger, blackouts, and uncertainty into leverage for insurrection, the purpose has failed. They have created societies willing to resist, not to rise up.

Perhaps it would be wise to change the question to alter the policy. It’s not “when will they fall,” as if the fall were a spectacle. It’s “how much life are we willing to destroy to try to bring them down?” That is the ethical question that the prophets of collapse avoid, because it forces them to consider the human cost of their recipe, and for anyone with a memory in Latin America — with coups, blockades, invasions, and tutelage — that question should be a red line: no “democracy” imposed by gunboats is worth the price of punishing millions of innocent people.

Source: [La Jornada](#), translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)

