

ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN FACTORS SUPPORTING NICOLAS MADURO IN THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS FROM ALEXANDER WENDT'S CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstrak: Krisis yang terjadi di Venezuela merupakan krisis kemanusiaan yang berdampak pada ketidakstabilan politik dan ekonomi lokal. Krisis ekonomi ini disebabkan oleh berkurangnya pasokan minyak. Selain itu, krisis politik yang diawali dengan masalah internal antara pemerintah dan pihak oposisi semakin memperparah keadaan. Hal ini menarik perhatian negara-negara berkembang untuk masuk ke dalam dinamika krisis ini, seperti Rusia. Dalam krisis Venezuela, Rusia menawarkan dukungan material dan moralitas kepada pemerintahan Nicolas Maduro. Dengan demikian, Rusia berupaya untuk mendukung Maduro dari klaim internasional. Penelitian ini bermaksud untuk menganalisis alasan dibalik dukungan Rusia terhadap Nicolas Maduro dalam Krisis Venezuela dengan menggunakan teori konstruktivisme Alexander Wendt. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan 3 variabel yang menjelaskan keterlibatan Rusia dalam krisis Venezuela. Pertama, interdependensi, berkaitan dengan ketergantungan korporasi antara Rusia dan Venezuela. Kedua, homogenitas, didasarkan pada latar belakang yang sama. Terakhir, kesamaan nasib didasarkan pada nasib dan musuh yang sama antara Rusia dan Venezuela.

Kata Kunci: Krisis Venezuela, Rusia, Teori Konstruktivisme, Saling Ketergantungan, Homogenitas

Abstract: The crisis happening in Venezuela is a humanitarian crisis that affects political instability and local economics. This economic crisis is caused by reducing the cost of oil supply. Besides, the political crisis began with internal problems between the government and the opponent, exacerbating the situation. It brings attention to developing countries to get into this crisis dynamic, such as Russia. In Venezuela's crisis, Russia offered material support and morality to Nicolas Maduro's government. Thus, Russia attempts to support Maduro from international claims. This research intends to analyze the reasons behind Russia's supporting Nicolas Maduro in the Venezuela Crisis by using the constructivism theory of Alexander Wendt. Based on research results, showed 3 variables that explain Russia's involvement in the Venezuela crisis. Firstly, interdependence is related to corporation dependence between Russia and Venezuela. Second,

homogeneity, is based on both the same background. Lastly, common fate is based on the same destiny and adversary between Russia and Venezuela.

Keywords: Venezuela Crisis, Rusia, Theory of Constructivism, Interdependence, Homogeneity.

Article History: *Received 18 March 2023, Revised: 30 April 2023, Accepted: 05 May 2023, Available online 01 Januari 2024*

INTRODUCTION

The crisis that occurred in Venezuela during the leadership of Nicolas Maduro began with a drop in world oil prices which had a negative impact on Venezuela's economic growth. This caused quite high inflation and a decline in the value of the Bolivar as Venezuela's state currency. Apart from that, there are other problems such as the problem of food scarcity which arises due to economic instability in Venezuela. High food prices ultimately mean that Venezuelans can only consume vegetables and cassava to survive amidst the economic crisis that has hit Venezuela. As a result, this problem triggers acts of violence, such as looting or robbery to meet the needs of life amidst the scarcity of basic necessities that occurs in the country.¹

The crisis facing Venezuela also has negative political consequences. This can be seen from the internal political problems between Maduro's cabinet and the Venezuelan National Assembly led by Juan Guaido, resulting in heated political turmoil in Venezuelan domestic politics. Apart from that, the massive demonstrations carried out by the Venezuelan people in questioning the voting mechanism and demanding that Nicolas Maduro resign as president of Venezuela also worsened the political conditions in the country.²

¹ Visual Journalism team, 'Venezuela: All You Need to Know about the Crisis in Nine Charts - BBC News', 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-46999668>, accessed 12 December 2023.

² Riva Dessthania Suastha, 'Mencalang Penyebab Kritisnya Ekonomi Venezuela', 2018. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20180313043920-134-282482/mencalang-penyebab-kritisnya-ekonomi-venezuela>. accessed 6 December 2023

The Venezuelan crisis is now starting to attract the attention of several large countries to get involved in the dynamics of this problem, as is the case with Russia, Turkey, and China. Russia is one of the countries active in observing and responding to the dynamics of the crisis in Venezuela. Basically, Russia had good relations with Venezuela during the era of Hugo Chavez's leadership in the 2000s. This relationship became closer when Russia began to consider the Latin American region, especially Venezuela, as an important partner in the form of cooperation efforts between countries. Russia also realizes that Venezuela is worthy of becoming a new market for Russia, especially in the field of energy supplies. This can be seen from various cooperation efforts in the economic sector between Russia and Venezuela, such as large-scale investment in the Rosneft oil company in Venezuela.³

Harmonious relations between Moscow and Caracas were also still well established during the leadership era of Nicolas Maduro who replaced Venezuela's previous president, Hugo Chavez. This is proven by the full support given by the Russian government to Nicolas Maduro amidst the demands of some people who want Maduro to resign as President of Venezuela and international criticism such as the United States and its partners not recognizing Nicolas Maduro as the legitimate President of Venezuela and supporting the opposition. Venezuela, namely Juan Guaido as the legitimate head of the Venezuelan government, has not reduced Russia's support for Maduro.⁴

Russia also supports the principle of anti-intervention from foreign parties regarding the problems occurring in Venezuela. The Russian government also warned that any form of interference from various foreign

³ Christian Lowe and Rinat Sagdiev, 'How Russia Sank Billions of Dollars into Venezuelan Quicksand', 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/venezuela-russia-rosneft>. [accessed 10 December 2023].

⁴ Matt Spetalnick, 'Venezuela Opposition Calls on U.S. to Step up Pressure on Maduro Ally Russia | Reuters, 2020 <<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN129231/>> [accessed 8 December 2023]

pressures on what is happening in Venezuela is a form of attempt to coup the legitimate government and violates basic norms of international law.⁵

Basically, Russian foreign policy during Vladimir Putin's leadership tended to be focused on restoring Russia's crucial role in the international arena through cooperation between countries that were considered potential partners or allies for Russia. For Russia, Venezuela is an important partner in the Latin American region. This can be proven by the loan assistance provided by Russia to Venezuela on a relatively large scale. In fact, the crisis occurring in Venezuela is of particular concern to Russia. Various kinds of assistance such as joint military training between the two countries. Apart from that, amid the scarcity of necessities that hit Venezuela, Russia is present to provide humanitarian assistance as a form of support for the government of Nicolas Maduro.⁶

Russia also helped Venezuela to get out of the social crisis which had an impact on scarce food sources. Russia provided 300 tons of humanitarian aid as well as basic food sources and medical equipment along with medicines to support the needs of the Venezuelan people. Meanwhile, the Venezuelan government has rejected and blocked humanitarian aid from parties supporting the opposition such as the United States, Brazil, and Colombia because they consider this aid to be only part of foreign intervention against Venezuela.⁷

METHOD

This paper uses the constructivism theory put forward by Alexander Wendt. Basically, constructivism theory emerged as a new theory in contemporary international relations issues. In international relations, there are several experts in this theory, namely Alexander Wendt,

⁵ CT Staff, 'US vs Russia : Cold War Era Brinkmanship As Venezuela Crisis Deepens - Citizen Truth', 2019 <<https://citizentruth.org/us-vs-russia-cold-war-era-brinkmanship-as-venezuela-crisis-deepens/>> [accessed 10 December 2023]

⁶ Sam Meredith, 'Venezuela Crisis: The Battle for Influence between the US and Russia', 2019 <<https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/26/venezuela-crisis-the-battle-for-influence-between-the-us-and-russia.html>> [accessed 15 December 2023]

⁷ Jack Goodman, 'Venezuela Crisis: How Much Aid Is Getting in? - BBC News', 2019 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-47369768>> [accessed 7 December 2023]

Nicholas Onuf, Friedrich Kratochwill, and John Ruggie. Constructivism theory itself is a theory that explains that phenomena that occur in the international world cannot only be explained materially but can be explained through ideas, thoughts, and norms in social life. Constructivism theory also views that reality phenomena in the international world are influenced and constructed by ideas based on actor behavior.⁸

This paper will use the theory of systemic constructivism, a constructivism model initiated by Alexander Wendt. In this case, systemic constructivism tends to prioritize ideational and normative structures in international reality. It can be understood that the process of interaction between actors (states) cannot be separated from the emergence of identities, norms, and shared values which are realized through cooperation and bilateral relations.⁹

Alexander Wendt also explains his views in his book entitled "Social Theory of International Politics" that there are three basic assumptions in constructivism theory, namely:

1. In international politics, the state is the main actor that can be the unit of analysis.
2. Intersubjective factors have more dominant power than material power.
3. Social structure can shape identity and interests. In this case, an actor must consider identity factors first so that mutual interests are formed. This means that all shared interests that are taken must go through a process of interaction between actors based on the identity that is formed.

Alexander Wendt also explained the existence of a "master variable" that can explain collective identity in international structures. In the master variable, there are 3 elements of efficient variables including interdependence, homogeneity, and common fate. The first is

⁸ Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Pengantar Hubungan Internasional: Teori Dan Pendekatan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014)

⁹ Scott Burchill and others, *Theories of International Relations*, Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations, 2016 .

<<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107286207.002>>

interdependence, believed to be intersubjectivity which is built through a process of interaction between actors (states) which can trigger interdependence which is formed through cooperation to achieve common goals. In this case, Wendt sees that the interdependence built between actors must be objective. Even in terms of collective identity, interdependence tends to create the conditions that actors will influence each other regarding their advantages and disadvantages. Meanwhile, homogeneity means a condition where actors (states) trust each other in other countries, thereby making that country a partner because it is based on the same background, the same understanding, and the same ideology, thus forming a common identity for the actors. Lastly, common fate, means that the actors (states) have the same feeling of fate regarding something that is being experienced. Often the same fate creates the same threat. This then allows countries to accept other countries based on similarities in their fate and perceived threats.¹⁰

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

DYNAMICS OF THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS

Venezuela, which has abundant oil reserves, is currently experiencing a very worrying economic and political crisis. Basically, Venezuela is a country that depends on oil energy sources as one of the driving wheels that dominates the country's economy. This is proven by oil as a source of exports amounting to more than 90% which supports the Venezuelan economy. Based on this, Venezuela is known as one of the countries in the Latin American region that has good economic conditions so it should be taken into account by the international community.¹¹

The current situation is inversely proportional, Venezuela is currently in a state of severe collapse which began with the fall in world oil

¹⁰ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics, Perspectives on World Politics: Third Edition*, 2005
<<https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511612183.002>>

¹¹ Ricardo Hausmann, 'Venezuela's Unprecedented Collapse by Ricardo Hausmann - Project Syndicate', 2017 <<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/venezuela-unprecedented-economic-collapse-by-ricardo-hausmann-2017-07>> [accessed 6 December 2023]

prices in 2014, which has implications for the country's economic instability. This then had an impact on the Venezuelan crisis which peaked in 2016. In that year, the Venezuelan government under Nicolas Maduro made a decision to the public that the country was experiencing an "economic emergency" for 60 days, so this decision required full control of the market, industry, and control on currency transactions. This is the impact of increasing inflation rates amidst scarce food sources and available medicines. Meanwhile, the foreign debt bill that is due at the end of 2016 amounting to 10% billion is making it increasingly difficult for Venezuela to improve its economy.¹²

Apart from that, conditions in Venezuela also have other problems, such as massive inflation which also causes a domino effect, namely the scarcity of basic food sources such as milk and eggs and the minimal supply of available medicines, making many Venezuelans unable to survive due to malnutrition. It is even recorded that millions of Venezuelans are starting to leave the country in search of a better life as refugees amidst an increasingly unresolved humanitarian crisis.¹³

The crisis in Venezuela not only has an impact on the economic and social sectors but also results in the fragile domestic political condition of Venezuela. This crisis has become an important momentum for the Venezuelan opposition in its efforts to overthrow the Nicolas Maduro regime. The opposition feels that the current government has failed in carrying out the role of the state and believes that the current crisis must be held accountable by the Maduro regime. The government then responded to this as a form of bad treatment for the image of the legitimate government and accused it of being an attempt by the opposition to overthrow Maduro's power. This then had implications for massive demonstrations, triggering arrests of those who wanted to coup Maduro's regime. Messy domestic political dynamics have also worsened Venezuela's crisis. This can be seen

¹² Aljazeera, 'Venezuela Government Declares, "Economic Emergency" | News | Al Jazeera', 2016. <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/1/16/venezuela-government-declares-economic-emergency>>[accessed 8 December 2023]

¹³ Stephania Taladrid, "Venezuela's Food Crisis Reaches a Breaking Point | The New Yorker", 2019 <<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/venezuelas-food-crisis-reaches-a-breaking-point>> [accessed 7 December 2023]

by the recognition of the opposition leader, Juan Guaido, as interim president of Venezuela, causing the turmoil between the opposition and Maduro's government to heat up. As a result, these disputes often lead to acts of violence carried out by anti-Maduro protesters against Maduro's military. However, until now Nicolas Maduro still maintains hope in maintaining his legitimacy and power amidst the political turmoil that demands him to step down as president of Venezuela.¹⁴

FACTORS INFLUENCING RUSSIA'S INTERESTS IN THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS

The first is related to interdependence. Basically, the bilateral relations carried out by Russia and Venezuela cannot be separated from the interdependence between the two through various interaction processes carried out by these countries. One example of the interconnectedness between Russia and Venezuela is related to cooperative cooperation. The cooperation carried out by Moscow – Caracas began with the relationship built by the leaders of the two countries, namely Vladimir Putin – Hugo Chavez. Since the 2000s, Venezuela has become an alliance country for Russia in the Latin American region. This is reinforced by various collaborations carried out by Moscow – Caracas, as well as in the economic and military fields. In terms of economics, the two countries are collaborating in the field of oil energy resources involving the Russian-owned oil company, namely Rosneft, and the Venezuelan-owned company, namely PDVSA. This then gives Russia an advantage over the oil market price set by Venezuela based on this cooperation. On the other hand, Venezuela was given a loan of \$ 2.5 billion by Russia to strengthen oil and gas projects. The loan is also thought to be in return for future energy deliveries to Russia. Meanwhile, from a military perspective, cooperation between Russia and Venezuela includes arms sales and joint military training for the troops of Moscow and Caracas. For Venezuela, Russia is one of the biggest supporters of Caracas' military resources. This is proven

¹⁴ Ray Sanchez, "Venezuela Crisis: How a Country in Political and Economic Collapse Reached a New Low | CNN", 2019
<<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/24/americas/venezuela-crisis-maduro-guaido-explained/index.html>> [accessed 12 December 2023)

by the sale of Russian military equipment to Venezuela, such as the sale of assault rifles, missiles, fighter planes, and tanks with total sales funds of more than \$ 10 billion. Apart from that, joint military exercises are often carried out by the two countries through military visits as a military agenda to strengthen cooperation in the military field.¹⁵

The mutual dependence experienced by Russia – Venezuela continues to show increasingly close relations between the two countries. For Venezuela, Russia is an important military partner for Caracas as a supplier of weapons equipment and other military transportation with a value of \$ 4 billion from 2005 to 2008. Meanwhile, Russia understands that Venezuela's natural resources, namely oil, can become a distinct advantage for Russia in achieving its interests in the energy sector. This is proven by the start of investments made by the Russian oil company, namely Rosneft.¹⁶

The relationship of interdependence that exists between Moscow and Caracas is not only limited to cooperation in certain fields such as economics, energy, or military but is formed by interactions built through the two leading actors in these countries, making the relationship more harmonious and closely interdependent. For Russia, cooperation in the energy sector does not always benefit the country. This is because, in recent years, investment in oil energy resources in Venezuela has decreased, resulting in insignificant prospects. This was also experienced by the Russian-owned oil company, Rosneft, which experienced large losses while operating in Venezuela. As a result, many other foreign-owned companies have left investing in Venezuela because they are not making a profit. Russia continues to invest massively in Venezuela even though it understands that it will not experience profits. Russia did this because it

¹⁵ Rocio Cara Labrador, 'Maduro's Allies: How Russia, China, and Cuba Keep Venezuela's Regime Afloat', 2019 <<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/maduros-allies-who-backs-venezuelan-regime>> [accessed 13 December 2023]

¹⁶ John Herbst and Jason Marczak, 'Russia's Intervention in Venezuela: What's at Stake?', September, 2019 <<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/russias-intervention-in-venezuela-whats-at-stake/>>

wanted to support its partners in the Latin American region and maintain its relationship with Venezuela.

Since the beginning, cooperation in the energy sector carried out by the two countries has been inseparable from the interactions built between Putin and Maduro. Russia, through Putin's confidant, Igor Sechin, often builds communications with the message "Viva la Revolucion!" to Nicolas Maduro. This greatly influences the dependence of the strategic cooperative relationship between Rosneft-PDVSA. This closeness is what makes Rosneft expected to be able to help Venezuela as Moscow's partner in the Latin American region. Furthermore, for Venezuela, dependence on Russia in cooperation in the energy sector through Rosneft projects and investments is very helpful for the Venezuelan economy. Rosneft, which operates in Venezuela, has spent more than \$9 billion in Venezuela in the form of loans, acquisitions, and project expenditures since 2010. Despite not getting profitable results due to the large amount of debt given by Venezuela, Russia believes in cooperation between the Russian-owned company Rosneft and the company. Venezuela's PDVSA in the energy sector will continue through long-term projects with Russia receiving compensation for future energy deliveries.¹⁷

The second is related to the Homogeneity factor. In this case, Homogeneity is understood as the similarities in background between Russia and Venezuela. Basically, Russia considers Venezuela as a country that can be an opportunity for Russia's interests in the Latin American region. This is because the two countries have the same background based on similar ideologies. Russia itself has an ideology of making the international world system multipolar. This is also recognized and supported by Venezuela which wants a multipolar system for the international world order. This is also proven by the relationship built by Moscow – Caracas which is based on a relationship based on multipolarity. This means that both countries believe that there is no single entity that controls the international world order. In fact, on several occasions on

¹⁷ Lowe and Sagdiev.

diplomatic visits between the two countries, the same desire was seen regarding a multipolar world, not a unipolar one.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the two leaders of the country have political philosophies from similar backgrounds. Hugo Chavez has a political philosophy based on anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism which tends to prioritize social welfare and the strong role of the state in the economy. Chavez's philosophy is known as Chavismo. On the other hand, Vladimir Putin has a philosophy of Putinism which is based on state capitalism, and anti-Americanism, and has a strong and dominant government role. In fact, in several speeches, the two leaders of the country shared the same belief in fighting imperialism. Chavez firmly said in his speech that "Venezuela will defend itself and fight against imperialism. Venezuela must be ready for aggression against the United States." Meanwhile, the same tone is often conveyed in Putin's speeches, namely "The battle for Russia will continue, we are ready to die to defend Moscow". This was triggered by Putin's anger at the United States' interference in Russia's internal affairs.¹⁹

Russia views its closeness to Venezuela and other Latin American countries that are anti-American can be an important foundation for Russia in creating a symbolically multipolar world order. Russia believes that anti-American rhetoric in the Latin American region can attract leftist leaders of countries in the region to join Russia as a new supporter in fighting for a multipolar world order. Even after Putin's speech in Munich in 2007 which said that a unipolar world order would no longer be relevant in the future. This further strengthens the appeal of left-thinking leaders to realize a multipolar world order. On this basis, Venezuela believes that there is a common understanding with Russia that there is a need for resistance to

¹⁸ Taylor Valley, 'Why Venezuela Needs Russia | The National Interest, 2019 <<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-venezuela-needs-russia-63472>> [accessed 5 December 2023]

¹⁹ Michael Bohm, "25 Similarities Between Chavez and Putin - The Moscow Times", 2013 <<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/03/21/25-similarities-between-chavez-and-putin-a22573>> [accessed 11 December 2023]

challenge the power and influence of the United States in the international arena.²⁰

The last factor is related to Common Fate. In this case, Common Fate is understood as the common fate experienced by Russia and Venezuela, namely related to common threats such as the presence of the United States in this crisis. Basically, relations between Venezuela and the United States showed a decline when the government of Nicolas Maduro came to power in Venezuela. Relations between the two countries even heated up when Nicolas Maduro was reelected for the second time as Venezuela's head of state. The US, supported by its alliances such as Western countries, the European Union, and its allies in the Latin American region, accused the presidential election won by Maduro of appearing fraudulent. The US accused Maduro's victory as Venezuela's new president of violating the rules of democracy because it was unfair and not transparent. Even the United States and its allies openly do not recognize the Maduro regime as the legitimate president of Venezuela and simultaneously support and recognize Juan Guaido as the legitimate government of Venezuela and recognize the National Assembly as the only legislative body of the Venezuelan state which officially belongs to Venezuela.²¹

The crisis in Venezuela is an opportunity for Russia to directly suppress the United States dominance in the Western world, especially because the region is the United States backyard. Russia has the goal of minimizing the influence of the United States in the international world. Russia considers that the United States is a threat to Russia's interests in the Latin American region as well as a threat to the Nicolas Maduro regime which is supported by Russia. In this case, Russia considers that the efforts made by the United States in the Venezuelan Crisis are a dirty way to bring down its opponents by creating regime change or what is known as a color

²⁰ Vladimir Rouvinski, 'Russian-Venezuelan Relations at a Crossroads', Wilson Center: Kennan Institute, February, 2019, 1–20.

²¹ Alex Ward, 'Venezuelan President Maduro Breaks Diplomatic Ties with the US - Vox', 2019. <https://www.vox.com/world/2019/1/23/18194881/venezuela-maduro-diplomats-trump-guaido>. [accessed 2 December 2023].

revolution, a condition carried out by mass movements through protests to fight authoritarian regimes such as that happened in Venezuela.²²

In its development, Russia has also repeatedly warned the United States not to go too far in its involvement in the Venezuelan crisis. Even at the UN (United Nations) Security Council (DK) session held in 2019 to discuss the situation in Venezuela, Russia stated that the crisis experienced by Venezuela did not pose a threat to international peace and security. On the other hand, it is foreign intervention involved in the Venezuelan crisis which is a direct threat to the peace and security of Venezuela itself. Russia also said that similar suffering experienced by Venezuela has happened before in countries such as Libya, Iraq, and Syria and this suffering has occurred until currently due to Western intervention, including the United States.²³

Furthermore, Russia condemned the United States' actions in imposing sanctions and restrictions on Venezuela. This action is considered to make things even more difficult in Venezuela because it does not help Venezuela resolve the current crisis. Russia believes that what is happening in the crisis in Venezuela must be resolved by internal dialogue between Maduro and Guaidó. However, this is difficult to realize considering that the opposition led by Guaido is reluctant to carry out such dialogue. Meanwhile, Russia also believes that the involvement of the United States in the crisis in Venezuela aims to replace Maduro as a leader it does not like with its pawn, namely Juan Guaido, as has happened in countries that have experienced regime change due to the involvement of the United States.²⁴

Currently, Russia continues to support Venezuela and stands behind Nicolas Maduro even though it is faced with a difficult situation due to international criticism, especially from the United States. Russia proved this at the UN Security Council session by vetoing a United States

²² Nathan, Hodge "Venezuela Crisis: Putin's New Cold War on America's Doorstep? | CNN. 2019 <<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/02/americas/venezuela-russia-putin-maduro-intl/index.html>> [accessed 10 December 2023]

²³ Security Council, "United Nations Security Council 8506 Meeting, International Organization 2.1 (2019), 80-98 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300019251>>

²⁴ Security Council.

resolution regarding the bad situation occurring in Venezuela. The resolution offered by the United States contains efforts to facilitate a transparent and credible re-election process. Apart from that, the resolution also mentions unimpeded access to aid in Venezuela. However, Russia opposed the United States' resolution by providing an alternative resolution which included internal Venezuelan dialogue between the government led by Nicolas Maduro and the opposition led by Juan Guaido and supported the Venezuelan government as the coordinator handling humanitarian aid efforts.²⁵

Furthermore, Russia offered this alternative draft intending to resolve the crisis in Venezuela in a way that follows the constitution, is peaceful, and mutually respects the sovereignty of a country without the need for intervention. Russia also tends to prioritize internal dialogue initiatives such as the Montevideo mechanism implemented by UruguayMexico in resolving problems. Russia also accused the resolution made by the United States of being an attempt to carry out illegal regime change by coupling Maduro as the legitimate President of Venezuela. Russia also criticized the United States' initiative to restart the voting process in Venezuela's general elections. This is considered a form of forcible interference with the people's rights against Venezuela's sovereignty. Russia believes that only the Venezuelan people have the right to determine the decisions of the elections.²⁶

CONCLUSION

Venezuela is a country that has abundant oil resources. However, the fall in world oil prices caused the country to experience a crisis. The crisis that occurred in Venezuela was not only devastating in the economic sector but also caused instability in the political sector which was characterized by disputes between the government of Nicolas Maduro and

²⁵ Michelle Nichols, 'U.S., Russia Fail in Rival Bids for U.N. Action on Venezuela | Reuters', 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-venezuela-politics-un-idUKKCNIQH2SJ>. Accessed 14 December 2023

²⁶ United Nations, "Competing United States, Russian Federation Draft Resolutions on Political, Humanitarian Situation in Venezuela Blocked in Security Council | UN Press, 2019
<<https://press.un.org/en/2019/se13725.doc.htm>> [accessed 4 December 2023]

the opposition led by the chairman of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaido.

Meanwhile, the crisis has made countries such as Russia and the United States involved in the dynamics of the Venezuelan crisis. Russia provides support both morally and materially to the Venezuelan government. From a moral perspective, Russia fully supports Nicolas Maduro as the officially recognized head of Venezuela. In terms of materials, Russia donated various kinds of humanitarian aid such as food and medicine to the Maduro government to be distributed to the Venezuelan people. Apart from that, Russia also emphasized to the opposition which is supported by other foreign parties not to interfere and intervene in what is happening in Venezuela. Furthermore, Russia reminded that any intervention by any party would be considered a coup attempt and an act that would violate international rules. On the other hand, the opposition led by Guaido is recognized by the United States and its allies. Juan Guaido is recognized by the United States and other democracies as the only legitimate entity in Venezuela. Some humanitarian assistance was provided by the United States to Juan Guaido to save the Venezuelan people from the protracted humanitarian crisis.

Russia sees that the crisis occurring in Venezuela can be an important momentum for Russia in fighting for its interests in the international world, especially to spread its influence in the Latin American region, especially in Venezuela. Russia also wants to be recognized and counted again as one of the new great powers in the international arena. The moral support given to Nicolas Maduro in maintaining his power in Venezuela is a normative effort carried out by Putin.

Russia believes that Venezuela, led by Nicolas Maduro, is an important ally in the Latin American region. Therefore, Russia is risking its position in supporting Maduro to fight countries like the United States and its allies who want to overthrow Maduro. Another reason why Russia continues to stand behind Maduro is because of Putin and Maduro's closeness which is based on similar backgrounds and beliefs. Another thing that proves that Russia prioritizes a normative role rather than a material one is regarding conditions in Venezuela because if Russia still wants

material benefits then Russia will still experience large material losses considering that Venezuela is experiencing a prolonged crisis, but Russia does not prioritize this because there are non-material benefits, which is bigger, such as the strong influence obtained by Russia in the crisis occurring in Venezuela.

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