

Perspective in a Crisis

Note: The following reflections are shared by an independent third-party financial advisor, drawing on decades of professional experience and personal observation. The views expressed are the author's own.

Guest Perspective

By an independent financial advisor with 45 years of experience

I woke up on January 3, 2026, in Aruba, just 16 miles from Venezuela, to news I didn't expect to hear on vacation.

The headlines said the U.S. military had taken President Nicolás Maduro into custody. Almost immediately, all flights in and out of Aruba were canceled.

Speculation was rampant as my sons and their families were supposed to fly out Saturday and could not extend their stay at their hotels. People were emotionally engaged at the front desk of the hotel and with their airlines.

After 45 years as a financial advisor, crises are not new to me. So, I said something that, at the time, sounded more like reassurance than certainty: "I do not know how, but by Sunday evening, things will start to be sorted out." As I drove my son to the airport Sunday evening, I heard something I had not heard over the past 36 hours, "Dad, you were right."

I wasn't smug about it. In fact, looking back, I now see more reasons for concern than I did at that moment. Which raises an important question: **Why did I make that assumption in the first place?**

The Long Arc of History

Part of the answer lies in understanding the long arc of history.

Take the Monroe Doctrine, established in 1823. It declared that any European interference in the Americas would be considered a hostile act against the United States. Bold for a nation barely 50 years old, this policy has quietly shaped countless events since from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

Seemingly sudden geopolitical events rarely come out of nowhere. They're often part of a much longer story.

Technology Changes the Timeline

The other part of my thinking was driven by technology, especially artificial intelligence.

I believed technology would help airlines rapidly identify planes, passengers, and logistics, compressing what once might have taken weeks into mere hours. Everything I heard I fact checked via artificial intelligence, and I received answers within seconds giving me context about Maduro going back to the Obama and Biden administrations.

It didn't take long to understand this situation wasn't really about oil production or fentanyl. It was about global power dynamics involving China, Russia, and Iran.

Technology didn't eliminate uncertainty, but it dramatically reduced confusion.

The Value of Emotional Distance

There was another reason I could stay calm: I wasn't flying out. I was staying another week.

That distance mattered. While my family was emotionally invested, I could remain an independent observer. I wasn't reacting to headlines or swept up in media-driven urgency and recency bias.

I could step back, assess the facts, and apply perspective.

You Know What I'm Going to Say Next

The next time you're in a crisis, financial or otherwise, call someone who is independent, trusted, and objective.

A good financial advisor helps provide context: the long arc of history, long-term trends, and reminders that we've seen "this kind of crisis" before.

This isn't about ducking your head in the sand, but just simply getting grounded in the facts.

Once again, technology and history come together to help us better understand ourselves. This is key when it comes to money and financial decisions. Sometimes, perspective is the most valuable asset of all.