

the precise demarcation of maritime borders. The relationship with Colombia is very important and sensitive, given not only boundary questions but also the large number of Colombians in Venezuela, the growing bilateral trade, the close cooperation in fighting narco-traffic and common foreign policy efforts within the region. Venezuela's largest embassy is in Bogota.

Also with Peru, Venezuela has been in the forefront of those demanding a return to constitutional democracy following President Fujimori's "self-coup" of last April and as of year-end diplomatic relations remained suspended as a result.

Venezuela sees itself, historically, geographically and in terms of current economic interests, as being as much a Caribbean country as a South American one. It has pursued special relationships with this area and with Central America. These include the San Jose Accord whereby Mexico and Venezuela provide oil at concessional prices to the area, unilateral free trade by Venezuela to the Caribbean countries and a pending Venezuelan application to join Caricom. Venezuela has also been centrally involved, as had Canada, in dealing with the current Haiti crisis. President Aristide spent several months in exile in Caracas. The relationship with Cuba also has long historical roots and continuing importance.

Venezuela is among the most progressive members of the Organization of American States, often arguing, as does Canada for a more active OAS role and a multilateral approach to problems.

In international oil policy, Venezuela has consistently been one of the "moderate" influences within OPEC. Also CAP has played a leadership role in promoting formalized consumer-producer dialogue in energy matters.

The bilateral relationship with Canada is dealt with separately.