

## FERNANDO OCHOA ANTICH

### Foreign Minister

General Fernando Ochoa Antich, who was born in Caracas in September 1938, is a career army officer who has earned his promotions steadily since he became a Second Lieutenant in 1962.

He was appointed Defence Minister in June 1991. (Venezuela Defence Ministers are always drawn from the most senior ranks of the armed forces, on a rotational basis between the services: the current incumbent is an air force general.) In this position, he rose to high national prominence by his wise and steady handling of the 4 February 1992 attempted military coup and its aftermath. His loyalty to President Pérez was confirmed at all times, and he also worked hard to re-establish control and unity within the clearly troubled Armed Forces.

The appointment of Ochoa Antich by CAP as foreign minister in June 1992 was a surprise, but was widely praised. He has been a popular minister, not only with his colleagues on the international stage, but within the ministry, particularly in as much as he has introduced some long-overdue reforms in the structure and personnel practices of the Venezuelan foreign service.

He speaks a little English and fluent French.

He and the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mrs. McDougall, have a good and friendly personal relationship.