

## Venezuela boosts ties with Syria and Iran

By [Global Research](#)

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Damascus, 6 March (AKI) – Venezuela’s foreign minister Nicolas Maduro is this week visiting Syria and Iran with the aim of firming up several bilateral projects, as Venezuela’s leftwing president Hugo Chavez continues to strengthen ties with the likeminded anti-American states. In meetings with Syria’s president Bashar al-Assad, Maduro will discuss a planned 1.5 billion dollar oil refinery to be built with Syrian, Venezuelan and Iranian capital, as well as other projects.

In cooperation with Syria, the Venezuelan government is also planning to build an olive oil and a textiles factory. A joint Syrian-Venezuelan commission will in May review progress on bilateral projects.

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Maduro will on Wednesday and Thursday attend a meeting of an Venezuelan-Iranian bilateral commission taking place in the Iranian capital, Tehran to assess progress on cooperation between the two countries.

In an agreement between Venezuelan state-controlled airline Conviasa and Iran’s national carrier Iran Air, a weekly flight from the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, to Tehran, which includes a stop in the Syrian capital, Damascus, began last Friday.

Iran is already Venezuela’s closest ally outside Latin America, with ventures to produce oil and build cars and tractors together. Under one joint automobile project, commercial output

of Peugeot-inspired Semand sedans is expected to start at a plant outside Caracas later this month.

Chavez has expressed explicit support for Iran's controversial uranium enrichment programme, which the US and other powers fear is aimed at building nuclear weapons, but which Tehran avers is solely for civilian use.

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