



## More Iran in Venezuela

**OE Watch Commentary:** Reportage indicates that tanker ships carrying gasoline from Iran recently arrived in Venezuelan ports. As the accompanying references note, the fuel might do little to alleviate the severe shortage of gasoline inside Venezuela, and much of it might even be destined for Cuba. In any case, as the opinion in the second accompanying reference highlights, the significance of the news is not so much the arrival of some gasoline, but the continuing embrace by the Bolivarian regime of the Iranian regime as a strategic ally. The article lists a number of intentions by the two regimes to build stronger economic bonds, but highlights two observed collaborations likely to raise international security concerns – that the Iranians seem to be using flights from Venezuela as a way to get things in and out of Syria, and that Iranians seem to have been welcomed into the Bolivarian military and intelligence schema. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Iranian President Rouhani meeting with Nicolás Maduro, 2015.

Source: Tasnim News Agency via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:President\\_Rouhani\\_in\\_meeting\\_with\\_Venezuelan\\_President\\_Nicol%C3%A1s\\_Maduro\\_02.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:President_Rouhani_in_meeting_with_Venezuelan_President_Nicol%C3%A1s_Maduro_02.jpg), CC BY 4.0

***“Of the myriad of joint activities, two fields are particularly noteworthy... flights apparently commercial between Caracas and Tehran that frequently include stopovers in Syria, flights whose cargo of equipment, materiel and even Iranian operators or of Hezbollah is unclear. The other issue is of the existence of active Shia militia cells on Venezuelan soil to train, jointly with Cuba, soldiers of the military forces in matters of security and intelligence.”***

**Source:** Daiana Orellana, “Venezuela: La gasolina iraní podría terminar en Cuba (Venezuela: The Iranian gasoline is likely to end up in Cuba),” *Venepress*, 25 May 2020. <https://venepress.com/article/Gasolina-irani-podria-terminar-en-Cuba1590427757465>

*“In a satellite image that was disseminated on social media one can identify the tanker “Petion” together with the “Fortune,” which arrived this Saturday, 23 May in Venezuelan waters from Iran and carried to the port of the refinery El Palito, located in the county of Puerto Cabello, on the coast of Carabobo state...Tareck El Aissami [Bolivarian Petroleum Minister] tweeted: ‘Now the ships of the sister Islamic Republic of Iran are in our Exclusive Economic Zone, as our beloved comandante Chávez would say, blue Venezuela.’...”*

**Source:** Beatriz de Majo, “¿Es la de Irán una alianza perniciosa? (Is the Iran alliance a pernicious one?),” *El Nacional and Analítica.com*, 2 June 2020. <https://www.analitica.com/opinion/es-la-de-iran-una-alianza-perniciosa/>

*“How much the man on the street will be aided by the arrival of gasoline that the Iranian ships are transporting is a matter which has no spectacular side. At the national scale of fuel consumption, those shipments are like a band aid for an open wound....*

*What is worth highlighting is the decision of Nicolas Maduro to recur to Iran to resolve the supply difficulties...*

*These rapprochements between Iran and Venezuela have taken difference forms of industrial cooperation, in joint investment firms and in ‘strategic’ activities that in almost all cases have not succeeded in materializing: gold, tractors, weapons, cement, petrochemicals... Of the myriad of joint activities, two fields are particularly noteworthy... flights apparently commercial between Caracas and Tehrán that frequently include stopovers in Syria, flights whose cargo of equipment, materiel and even Iranian operators or of Hezbollah is unclear. The other issue is of the existence of active Shia militia cells on Venezuelan soil to train, jointly with Cuba, soldiers of the military forces in matters of security and intelligence.”*