

Brazil's Lula and Venezuela's Chavez Discuss Amazon Defense

Contributed by Nelson Motta
Friday, 11 February 2005

The Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations informed that, at the work meeting between President Lula and the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, on Monday, February 14, emphasis will be placed on areas dealing with protection and defense of the Amazon as well as electricity, petroleum and natural gas, ethanol and biodiesel production.

The two presidents will also be discussing bilateral interests in coal mining, steel production, technological cooperation, science and technology, infrastructure projects, trade promotion, telecommunications, social communication, fishing, and agrarian development.

Among the specific projects that could become part of this strategic alliance, there is a proposal to intensify the cooperation between Petrobrás - the Brazilian Petroleum Company, S.A.- and PDVSA (the Venezuelan Petroleum Company), in joint drilling, mutual endeavors in third-party markets, oil and oil-derivatives transportation, and activities in the areas of refining and petrochemicals.

Another sector in which Brazil and Venezuela may cooperate, according to the Ministry, is in the area of defense, when it comes to surveillance of the Amazon region.

Brazil is hoping that Embraer (Brazil's Aircraft Company) will win the contract to re-equip the Venezuelan Air Force and sell new Tucano airplanes.

The presence of big Brazilian companies in Venezuela could help launch infrastructure projects involving Brazilian construction firms, which are already participating in the construction of the second and third bridges over the Orinoco River, Caracas's subway lines 3 and 4, the La Vultosa hydroelectric dam, and the El Dilúvio irrigation project.

Translation: David Silberstein
Agência Brasil