

The U K Defence Forum has just published a study by Adam Dempsey on the geopolitical situation in Venezuela. (www.ukdf.org.uk - in members' area password protected)

Here's the introduction.

A corrupt and discredited political system provided ample opportunities for Hugo Chavez's spectacular rise to power in Venezuela. With a populist message promoting popular democratic participation Chavez intends to redistribute Venezuela's oil wealth to poorer sections of society. In doing so, Chavez envisions the development of communal power in determining public policy.

Chavez's foreign policy shares a similar outlook to his domestic vision. In response to what he sees as instruments of US imperialism Chavez seeks to create a distinct geopolitical identity for Latin America. Integral to such objectives are the replication of Chavez's populist domestic policies on the international stage. To assist Chavez has also cultivated sound relationships with international actors who share his views of a US-dominated international system.

As of 2009 Chavez is currently enjoying favourable political conditions within Venezuela. Yet his domestic and foreign policy outlooks are not shared by all sections of Venezuelan society. As a result Chavez continues to rely on the numerous changes his government has made to the Constitution and Venezuela's oil wealth to cement his power.