
Maduro Says Venezuela Open to Respectful Relations with US

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The U.S. government was forced to adopt a more conciliatory position after OAS member-states backed efforts at dialogue.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro welcomed the prospect of normalized relations with the United States after Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced there would be high-level meetings to improve the relationship between the two countries.

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"We are ready ... to have respectful relations with the United States, with the government of President Obama and the governments to come," said Maduro.

"We can coexist. If (the United States) can coexist with China, Vietnam, and Cuba, why not Venezuela?" asked Maduro.

Relations between Venezuela and the United States have been icy for over a decade but took a turn for the worse after the United States declared Venezuela to be a threat to its national security.

President Maduro accuses the United States government of conspiring with the Venezuelan opposition to oust him from office.

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The United States, however, suffered an embarrassment at the recent General Assembly of the Organization of American States when member-states rejected Secretary-General Luis Almagro's efforts to have Venezuela suspended from the regional bloc.

Instead member-states accepted a request from Venezuela to review the behavior of Almagro to determine if he stepped out of line with his polemic and undiplomatic statements aimed at the Venezuelan government.

In light of the dynamics that played out at the OAS, Kerry took a decidedly different line, saying they too did oppose suspending Venezuela from the bloc.

Almagro has held meetings with the leadership of the opposition controlled National Assembly and championed their cause at the OAS.

The leadership of the National Assembly, however, was chastised by the Venezuelan Supreme Court for encroaching on the constitutional duties of the executive.

The 1999 Venezuelan Constitution specifies that the President is in charge of foreign relations. Right-wing lawmakers and politicians have traveled to meet with figures like Almagro to help gather support for the ouster of the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro.

The right-wing leadership of the National Assembly specifically requested Almagro apply the Democratic Charter against Venezuela but the Supreme Court issued an injunction invalidating that request.
