

# *Caribbean Leaders Move Away From U.S. Toward Venezuela*

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Nassau, February 28 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) expressed its support for Venezuela and the continuing energy alliance in the region during its biannual meeting of heads of state held on Thursday and Friday in Nassau, The Bahamas. Regional leaders also condemned the most recent coup attempt in Venezuela by the ultra right wing opposition in the country.

In an interview with teleSUR, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said: “You can’t try to overthrow a democratically-elected government. This is fundamental; you change a government through democratic means. This is a high constitutional principle and we are supporting Venezuela.”

Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who is also the outgoing pro tempore CARICOM president, also weighed in on the importance of Venezuela’s foreign policy with regard to Caribbean states. He stressed that democracy should be respected and thanked Venezuela’s President Maduro for the financial help the country has given Caribbean nations, especially given the international financial crisis.

Browne also called on the U.S. congress to end its “senseless” blockade on Cuba.

Energy was a big theme of this, the 26th biannual meeting of the 15 island nations. Browne explained: “We continue to stand with Venezuela, and, in as much as we accept that there must be some

diversification into alternative energy, the reality is fossil fuel will be around for decades to come, so the importance of Venezuela will remain.”

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