

# *Ministers to Review Venezuela's Charges of US Meddling*

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Quito, Feb 7, (RHC-Telesur), – Latin American Foreign Ministers will meet in the coming days to review the Venezuelan President's claims of U.S. interference in his country, multinational news channel TeleSur reports.

Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño said Friday that Quito will host a meeting in the coming days with the foreign ministers from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to discuss the situation in Venezuela, and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's claim that the United States is acting to overthrow his government.

"Ecuador, which holds the pro-tempore presidency of CELAC and is part of the group of foreign ministers of UNASUR, has been promoting talks between the Venezuelan government and the opposition in order strengthen institutions in Venezuela," Patiño said, adding that he wants to avoid destabilization in Venezuela and the region.

Patiño strongly rejected the United States' decision to impose and activate new sanctions against Venezuelan government officials, saying it is an "absolutely illegal action."

On Wednesday, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro met with the UNASUR Secretary-General Ernesto Samper in Caracas and asked for the regional bloc's meditation with the United States. The Venezuelan

president said he had been informed by other regional leaders that U.S. Vice President Joe Biden had been pressing other country's to "isolate" Venezuela. Maduro also said he had proof that the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela was attempting to bribe officials in order to turn against his government.

Samper rejected "destabilization" and "all forms of violence" against the government, and said he would bring the evidence provided by the president before UNASUR's Foreign Ministers Council.

The United States recently imposed new sanctions on the South American country, despite the unanimous declaration rejecting U.S. interference in the region at the CELAC Summit in Costa Rica in January.

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