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Venezuelan President Says West's 'Attacks' on Russia Are Attempt to Stifle BRICS

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Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro speaks during a meeting with members of the United Socialist party in Caracas, Venezuela.

Just days after EU leaders threatened the Kremlin with further sanctions over the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, the president of Venezuela has demanded the West tone down its aggressive policy toward Moscow, accusing it of using the conflict as a pretext to keep emerging BRICS countries down.

"As an independent nation, Venezuela demands that those who accuse Russia stop the attacks against it, stop looking for pretexts for war against it. Let peace prevail," President Nicolas Maduro said, TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

Maduro added that "peace and respect towards Russia is wanting peace and respect for emerging nations, allowing the existence of a world of equals," ABC.com reported.

Western nations have levied several rounds of sanctions against Moscow over its annexation of Crimea in March and its perceived support of separatists in the east of Ukraine. In response, Russia in early August announced a sweeping food ban on products from the EU's 28 member countries, the U.S., Canada, Norway and Australia.

"The Western powers threaten Russia [but] when it defends itself it is accused of displaying an aggressive policy towards the West," Maduro said.

The Venezuelan leader also said the West was using Russia to send out a strong message to other emerging democracies.

"This is an attempt to stop Russia and send a message to China and the other BRICS countries [Brazil, India, and South Africa]," he was quoted as saying.

The South American country has long enjoyed warm relations with Russia, and last year Maduro supported Putin's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, citing the leader's role in preventing war in Syria.

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