

■ Ramnarine:

Trump's energy plan could impact T&T exports

■ Anna Ramdass

PRIME MINISTER Dr Keith Rowley focused on representatives from the United States Democratic party who are now 'unplugged from power', says former energy minister Kevin Ramnarine.

The *Express* spoke to Ramnarine yesterday about President Donald Trump's move to declare a national energy emergency aimed at boosting US oil and gas production, and lowering costs for US consumers. At his inauguration address in Washington yesterday, Trump said 'America will be a manufacturing nation once again, and we have something that no other manufacturing nation will ever have-the largest amount of oil and gas of any country on Earth; and we are going to use it,' He added: 'We will drill, baby, drill.' Ramnarine said an increase in American production of oil and natural gas (already the world leader in both) will increase the non-OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) supply of oil and increase American LNG exports.

'More supply means lower prices and that will mean less earnings of USD for our own oil and LNG exports,' he said.

Ramnarine said Trump's priority is clearly to boost the American oil industry, as he noted that the President paid great tribute to the American oil workers.

Ramnarine pointed out that President Trump's administration has Marco Rubio as Secretary of State and Mauricio Claver-Carone as Special Envoy to Latin America.

'The former recently described Venezuela as being run by a narco- trafficking gang, and the latter was in the last Trump administration as a Latin American adviser and is reported to have been behind the policy to support Juan Guaido. Mr Claver-Carone is incidentally a former head of the IDB. Then we have Rubio's comments at his confirmation hearing on the need to relook at Chevron's special licence that allows them to operate in Venezuela. So we can connect the dots,' he said.

As to the impact on energy deals between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, Ramnarine said time will tell.

'This doesn't mean the Dragon and the Manakin-Coucina deals are dead, but it means there are new uncertainties. Unfortunately for this PNM Government, the facts suggest that they were mainly invested in the Democratic party and, in particular, certain members of Congress who have now been unplugged from the power structure in Washington,' he said.

He added: 'We are yet to learn who President Trump will send to the Embassy in Port of Spain. The last Trump-appointed ambassador had some clashes with the leadership of the government that won't be forgotten in Washington.'

In November 2024 Rowley joined regional leaders in Barbados for a meeting with a bipartisan US Congressional delegation.

The delegation was led by US Democratic Leader in the House of Representatives Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, and included representative Maxine Waters, ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services; representative Gregory W Meeks, ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and member of the committee on Financial Services; and Republican Amata Coleman Radewagen, vice-chairman of the committee on Veterans' Affairs, and member of the Natural Resources and Foreign Affairs committees.

That meeting focused on several issues, including security, economic and climate goals for the US, and Caricom.

In 2023, Jeffries led a Congressional delegation visit to Trinidad and Tobago, where he joined US Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the 45th Regular Meeting of the Caricom Heads of Government Conference.