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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

June 16, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to express our grave concern about your administration's flawed and incoherent policy on Venezuela. We urge you to protect U.S. national security interests and reinforce the democratic forces in Venezuela by immediately increasing U.S. and international pressure on the Maduro regime.

The March 2022 meeting between senior Biden Administration officials and Nicolas Maduro sidelined Interim President Juan Guaido and put the United States at the center of Venezuelan political disputes. Rationalizing this diplomatic fiasco in the name of energy security trivialized Nicolas Maduro's taking of American hostages and signals interest in deepening American dependence on a foreign adversary's energy resources to the detriment of American energy security.

During the 2020 presidential campaign, you proposed the use of multilateral pressure and smart sanctions to stop the Maduro regime and transition to free and fair elections. Nearly two years in, your administration has not sanctioned a single person tied to the Maduro regime and the European Union has failed to match existing U.S. and Canadian sanctions. Your decision to reward the Maduro regime for simply returning to talks it had unilaterally abandoned months ago ignores reality and has the potential to make matters worse.

You must change course in Venezuela and increase pressure on the Maduro regime until all political prisoners are released and conditions are right to conduct free and fair elections. We urge you to prioritize American energy production and North American energy infrastructure, persuade our European allies to promptly match U.S. and Canadian sanctions on the Maduro regime, conduct robust freedom-of-navigation and counternarcotic operations targeting the Maduro regime's transnational criminal activities, and enhance the capacity of democratic countries in the region to confront the humanitarian and security crises his regime is generating.

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Without a meaningful and urgent course correction, your administration is jeopardizing American lives, weakening the democratic forces in Venezuela, strengthening the Maduro regime, exacerbating twin regional security and humanitarian crises, and deepening the negative influence of Russia, China, Iran, and transnational criminal organizations.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
Ranking Member



RICK SCOTT
United States Senator



JOHN BARRASSO, M.D.
United States Senator



MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



TED CRUZ
United States Senator



JAMES LANKFORD
United States Senator



BILL HAGERTY
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator