

14 October, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

On October 16, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly will elect a handful of nations to serve two-year terms on the U.N. Security Council. Among the nations to be considered for such a term is Venezuela, which seeks to represent the Latin America region in that body.

As national security practitioners and activists concerned about hemispheric affairs and human rights, we call on you to oppose Venezuela's bid for membership on the Security Council – a step that can only legitimate its regime and enable its malevolent behavior internationally.

Since the assumption of power in Venezuela by the late Hugo Chavez, the government of Venezuela has undertaken policies hostile both to security and human rights in our hemisphere and beyond – an agenda continued to this day by Chavez's successor, Nicolas Maduro. Such policies include, but are not limited to:

- The provision of safe havens within Venezuela, and other forms of material support, to terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the FARC;
- Support for Russia's acquisition of the Crimea and aggression in Ukraine;
- Support for the nuclear weapons ambitions of North Korea and Iran;
- Heavy governmental involvement in the international drug trade;
- Suppression of free speech and private media;
- Suppression of free assembly and peaceful protest.

Given the Venezuelan government's record on these matters, we are troubled by your administration's announcement on September 15, 2014 that the United States will not oppose Venezuela's bid to seek a temporary seat on the Security Council. American passivity cannot be justified by the regrettable fact that Venezuela's neighbors in the region unanimously endorsed its bid. After all, most nations in the region are dependent upon Venezuela's supply of subsidized oil. A significant number of these nations have, moreover, pursued counterproductive, destabilizing foreign policies and repression at home similar to that of Venezuela.

We respectfully submit that in light of these realities and their implications for our vital interests, America cannot be neutral on the question of Venezuela's securing a seat at the Security Council. We urge you to ensure that the United States exercises all

prerogatives available to it as a permanent member of the Security Council to oppose vigorously Venezuela's bid.

Sincerely,

Amb. Otto Reich, Former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela; Former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

Amb. Roger F. Noriega, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs; Former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS)

Hon. J. Kenneth Blackwell, Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission

Adm. James "Ace" Lyons, USN (Ret.), Former Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Former Senior U.S. Military Representative to the United Nations

Amb. Henry F. Cooper, Former Director of the Strategic Defense Initiative and former U.S. Chief Negotiator at the Geneva Defense and Space Talks

Hon. Tidal McCoy, Former Secretary of the Air Force (Acting)

José Cárdenas, Former Staff Member, National Security Council; Former Acting Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Michael Braun, Former Chief of Operations, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

Dr. Yleem Poblete, Former Chief of Staff, House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy (Acting)

Fred Fleitz, Former Chief of Staff to the Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security; Former Senior Professional Staff Member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Dr. Ray Walser, Retired Foreign Service Officer; Americas Forum for Freedom and Prosperity

Frank Calzón, Executive Director, Center for a Free Cuba

Peter Huessy, President and CEO, Geostrategic Analysis

cc: Members of the 113th Congress