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Identical letters dated 6 February 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you of the latest developments in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela resulting from the campaign of aggression being waged against our country by the governments of two permanent members of the Security Council, the United States of America and the United Kingdom and, more specifically, since 26 January 2019, when the Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza Montserrat, made a statement to the Council, setting forth the extreme concern of our nation and our people regarding the continued threats made by two aggressive powers. In flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and all the rules of international law, these two permanent members are doing everything in their power to destroy the constitutional foundations of our political system and our economic life, which constitutes a gross violation of the human rights of the Venezuelan people.

Venezuela is currently very peaceful and calm, a situation that is guaranteed by the constitutional Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros, who has always maintained effective control of the country, in full exercise of his powers as Head of State, ensuring the protection of the national territory and the well-being of the Venezuelan people, with the support of State institutions, in accordance with the provisions of our Constitution.

This contrasts with the narrative being imposed from the outside with the aim of justifying foreign military intervention in Venezuela, which uses a "humanitarian" pretext and invokes the pernicious notion of the "responsibility to protect". The reckless actions of these two permanent members of the Security Council could result in a regional conflict whose scale cannot be predicted.

The aim of this criminal campaign of aggression is none other than to impose a puppet government on our country so that the United States of America and the United Kingdom can gain control of our nation's natural resources. This is evidenced by comments made on 21 January by the National Security Adviser to the White House, John Bolton, in which he acknowledged that the interest of the United States in

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Venezuela stemmed from our status as an oil producing country and from the interest of United States firms.¹

Indeed, the governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom planned for a legislator from the Venezuelan opposition to declare himself “President” of the Republic,² in flagrant violation of our Constitution and without regard for the legitimate elections of 20 May 2018, in which President Nicolás Maduro Moro was re-elected with a total of 6,248,864 votes. It should be emphasized that more than 200 observers were invited by the National Electoral Council of Venezuela (the same body that granted Juan Guaidó his seat in the National Assembly following the parliamentary elections of 2015) to participate as international observers of these elections.

Historically, Venezuelan matters have been resolved by Venezuelans and there has been no foreign military intervention in our country since our independence more than 200 years ago. A military attack on Venezuela would be catastrophic for the social and political fabric of our nation, and would have an impact on regional peace and stability that would last for generations. We cannot allow powers within the Security Council to destroy peace in our region purely for the sake of economic gain and geopolitical control of what they illegally perceive to be their “backyard”.

The mission of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security; it is inconceivable that the main threat to the peace, security and stability of our region should come from two permanent members of that body.

We have noted with concern how, after Uruguay and Mexico and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) proposed an initiative based on political dialogue, senior United States officials are now making statements expressly aimed at preventing the international community from accepting national dialogue as a means of peacefully resolving the situation in Venezuela. One example is the statement made by the Vice-President of the United States, Mike Pence, on 1 February 2019, in which he said: “This is no time for dialogue; this is time for action. And the time has come to end the Maduro dictatorship once and for all.”³ This makes it clear that the government of the United States of America is promoting a violent rupture of our political structure.

On 3 February 2019, the President of the United States, Donald Trump, acknowledged in a television interview that he was considering using the United States army in Venezuela to resolve the situation and reiterated that all options were on the table.⁴

Another cause for concern is that senior officials of the United States government have publicly called on military personnel and officials of the Venezuelan State to rebel against the constitutional order, not to recognize President Nicolás Maduro Moros and to provoke a wave of violence in Venezuela. For example, the National Security Adviser to the White House, John Bolton, has made the following comments, among others:

¹ See <https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/303698-asesor-trump-admitir-empresas-estadounidenses-petroleo-venezuela>.

² See <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2019/01/288542.htm>.

³ See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-venezuela-solidarity-event-doral-florida/>.

⁴ See <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-president-trump-on-face-the-nation-february-3-2019/>.

- 24 January 2019: “We hope all the legitimate institutions of the Venezuelan government, particularly the military, rally to their new commander-in-chief.”⁵
- 2 February 2019: “To the Venezuelan military high command, now is the time to stand on the side of the Venezuelan people. It is your right and responsibility to defend the constitution and democracy for Venezuela!”⁶
- 6 February 2019: “The U.S. will consider sanctions off-ramps for any Venezuelan senior military officer that stands for democracy and recognizes the constitutional government of President Juan Guaido”.⁷

In addition to political and diplomatic acts of aggression against Venezuela, updated information must also be provided regarding the financial, trade and economic attacks on our country. On 28 January 2019, the government of the United States of America, through an update of Executive Order 13850, imposed new unilateral coercive measures on the Venezuelan State-owned oil company, *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)*, prohibiting United States firms and citizens from trading in Venezuelan oil from 29 April 2019. It also requires United States firms and citizens to wind down any obligations undertaken with the Venezuelan company by 29 March 2019.

These measures have led to the confiscation of all the assets of the company *Citgo*, a subsidiary of *PDVSA* located in the United States of America, including more than \$20 billion belonging to the Venezuelan people that is crucial for the normal economic functioning of our country. According to estimates from the United States government, this action will result in a loss of \$11 billion in 2019, a sum equivalent to 94 per cent of Venezuelan expenditure on goods imports in 2018.⁸ The Bank of England in the United Kingdom, meanwhile, has without warning or explanation illegally appropriated more than \$2 billion in gold reserves belonging to the Venezuelan people.

Clearly, both the United States of America and the United Kingdom are active agents in the economic suffering inflicted on our people. Unbelievably, these two permanent members of the Security Council now wish to impose a narrative according to which they are concerned by the alleged “humanitarian crisis” in Venezuela and are calling for the pernicious notion of the “responsibility to protect” to be applied. The United States of America and the United Kingdom are not saviours of Venezuela; rather, they are implementing a colonial policy of contempt for our sovereignty. That policy consists of calculated cruelty towards our people, who are being held hostage in order to destroy our nation’s political independence.

These illegal actions are being led at the international level by senior United States officials, who, in addition to having publicly declared themselves satisfied with the suffering their crimes of aggression have inflicted on the Venezuelan people, have openly threatened countries, companies, financial entities and other international actors, warning them against conducting financial or business transactions of any kind with Venezuela. On 30 January 2019, the National Security Adviser to the White House, John Bolton, said: “My advice to bankers, brokers, traders, facilitators, and other businesses: don’t deal in gold, oil, or other Venezuelan commodities being stolen from the Venezuelan people by the Maduro mafia. We stand ready to continue

⁵ See https://mundo.sputniknews.com/america-latina/201901241084984332-crisis-politica-en-venezuela-eeuu-se-pronuncia/?utm_source=short_direct&utm_medium=short_url&utm_content=k7Z9&utm_campaign=URL_shortening.

⁶ See <https://twitter.com/AmbJohnBolton/status/1091889004159606784>.

⁷ See <https://twitter.com/AmbJohnBolton/status/1093239408520761345>.

⁸ See <https://www.wsj.com/articles/aid-for-venezuela-to-test-militarys-support-for-maduro-11549232493>.

to take action.”⁹ On the same date, he also said: “The United States is continuing to work to make sure that the economic benefits of Venezuela’s resources are not pilfered by Maduro and his cronies. Very productive meeting this afternoon with members of the CITGO executive team.”¹⁰

Venezuela has never experienced such a ruthless attack on its economy, its right to development and the human rights of its people. The aim of those responsible is to trigger an internal conflict that will justify colonialist intervention.

Moreover, public threats of this nature are aimed at the establishment of a national transitional council, as occurred in Libya in 2011, and the creation of a parallel army as the power base of a puppet “President”. It is therefore a cause for concern that other governments in the international community, far from engaging in efforts to find a peaceful solution based on dialogue and consensus, are joining these calls for political and military intervention, without regard for multilateralism, the rules clearly set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and public international law as a whole.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to stress that upholding Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations must be a priority for all States, since it guarantees peaceful coexistence among nations and is the *raison d’être* of the organizations making up the multilateral system. Accordingly, we call for the cessation of all criminal acts of aggression perpetrated by the governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom against the human rights of our people, our economic and territorial integrity and our country’s political independence.

In addition, and in the light of the foregoing, on behalf of the people and Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we request the Security Council to refrain from supporting any initiative that seeks to use that important body as a weapon of aggression against a sovereign State such as Venezuela, which is a full Member of the United Nations and does not pose any threat to international peace and security.

We reaffirm that resolving the current situation in Venezuela will require, first and foremost, respect for fundamental principles clearly established in the Charter of the United Nations, such as respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the right of peoples to self-determination, respect for democratic institutions and support for peaceful means of settling disputes, including political dialogue.

Lastly, I should be very grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council, so that the Member States may be properly informed.

(Signed) Samuel **Moncada**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
to the United Nations

⁹ See <https://twitter.com/AmbJohnBolton/status/1090652929508417537>.

¹⁰ See <https://twitter.com/AmbJohnBolton/status/1090748273034354693>.