



ProCiudadanos
Caracas - Venezuela
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Caracas, 6 de Octubre de 2021
23 August 2022

His Excellency
Joe Biden
President of the United States of America.
THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

Dear Mr. President:

Along with greetings, I want to clarify that I am writing this letter after having spoken with many of the protagonists mentioned in it.

Receive my appreciation for your recent initiative to re-establish oil relations with Venezuela.

I congratulate the attempts to establish in this sense, a route, attempted by the special envoys to Caracas, the appreciated ambassador James Story, Juan Gonzalez, and Roger Dean Carsten.

Surely, President, what the United States was doing was not working. You have had the courage to acknowledge that truth. A policy of isolation designed for the Cold War makes no sense in the 21st century. Sanctions only hurt the Venezuelan people instead of helping.

I understand that your administration's attempts to normalize relations not with the Venezuelan government; the **United States of America wants to normalize relations with the Venezuelan people.**

Our past and present are intertwined, as our future is. I know that on this solid basis of partnership we can approach the challenge of contributing to the pacification of the country, its full democratization, and its perigrinage back into the international community.

After Venezuela seceded from Colombia in 1830, the United States recognized and established diplomatic relations with Venezuela in 1835 by granting an exequatur to Nicholas DC Moller as Venezuela's consul in New York.

That has been a mutually beneficial relationship for both countries, which in 2019 allowed the following:

Venezuela was the 72nd largest U.S. goods export market in 2019. U.S. goods exports to Venezuela in 2019 were \$1.3 billion.

I know firsthand the complications that have arisen in the recent talks between Washington and Caracas. So I take the liberty, after talking with various sectors of the Venezuelan government, as well as various stakeholders in the U.S. interested in improving relations between the two countries, i.e., congressmen, members of the State Department, and thinkers from Washington's top think tanks, to suggest this pragmatic, cool, and reasonable route that would help move things forward:

1.- It is necessary to increase the number of interlocutors in both countries, with spokespersons who enjoy mutual sympathy in both countries, something that is not being accomplished with the current delegation. On the side of the US government, my recommendation is to include Governor Bill Richardson, former US representative to the United Nations, because of his vast experience in negotiations such as those in Burma in February 1994 where he influenced the release of Nobel Peace Prize winner San Suu Kyi. In 1994, he was one of the unofficial emissaries who negotiated the surrender of rebel General Raoul Cendras in Haiti. And in 1995, Richardson participated in a mission to Baghdad where he negotiated with Saddam Hussein the release of two U.S. workers captured after they inadvertently crossed the border from Kuwait. Recently, a couple of months ago, Burmese (Myanmar) authorities released U.S. journalist Danny Fenster, thanks to the efforts of former U.S. Governor Bill Richardson. In addition, Maduro respects him, and Richardson, being the son of an Anglo-Saxon and a Mexican, speaks English and Spanish equally well. He

is a perfect interlocutor, because he knows the Latin culture well. In addition, Roger Dean Carsten. The State Department's envoy for hostage cases, Roger Dean Carsten, has worked with Richardson on past cases, and the two have a mutual respect for each other. On the other hand, on the side of the government should be Rafael Lacava, a personal friend of Maduro, governor of Carabobo state, who helped with the release of the American Joshua Holt, graduated as an economist from the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and a specialist in tax management from the National School of Public Finance. He also lived in Manhattan, and studied at Rutgers University in New Jersey in the United States. He is not a communist.

2.- A hostage swap should be made, releasing at the same time several Americans and Venezuelans. In this sense, the broad negotiation must deal with all the American hostages who are in Venezuela, and the American basketball player Brittney Griner who was sentenced in a Russian court to 9 years in prison, a case that has raised tensions over the so-called "hostage diplomacy" between Washington and Moscow, the main ally of the Maduro government. This is to consider the request for cange that the Venezuelan authorities make on the Colombian citizen Alex Saab, who in a practical way at this point has already said what he could say, to American authorities. The important thing for the authorities is the information about Alex Saab, not him as a person.

A precedent for this negotiation, and one that undermines the premise that the White House cannot intervene in Justice Department matters, is that in October 2021, without notifying Mexico in advance, U.S. officials arrested General Cienfuegos after he disembarked from a plane in Los Angeles. Prosecutors accused Cienfuegos of accepting bribes to work directly for a drug cartel by guarding its narcotics shipments, alerting them about members of his ranks who were informants for the United States, and introducing them to other officials willing to receive payments in exchange for cooperation. The Mexican government fought tooth and nail for Cienfuegos' future and after a political deal between President López

Obrador and Donald Trump, in an unusual capitulation, William Barr, the former US Attorney General, relented and Cienfuegos, who was being held on drug trafficking charges in the US, was quickly shipped back to Mexico.

3-We must move beyond Florida's expectations: There are less than a hundred days until the crucial midterm elections in the United States. Its outcome will mark the second half of his term as president and the future of the country until 2024. As you know, it is very likely that the Democratic Party will lose the election in Florida. Moving forward on the Venezuela's issue will not hurt him. On the contrary, it could lead him to present the political triumph of freeing hostages in Venezuela and Russia, as well as the source of energy supply, in the midst of high fuel prices.

4.-The US should stop its rhetoric around the interim government of Juan Guaidó, accused of as many crimes of corruption as the government of Maduro, and open the embassy in Venezuela, so that the political section can help unify the democratic opposition. The interim presidency is an abstraction without content that will no longer be able to promote any transition to democracy: an entelechy that is only justified to maintain jobs and guarantee the salaries of the staff that occupies it, peppered with accusations of administrative irregularities. But, despite the pessimism, disinterest and emotional distancing that is also experienced in part of the US, it is trapped in the dilemma that there is no strategic approach with which to replace it. And that can only be done by uniting the various sectors of the opposition: Alianza Democrática, Mesa de la Unidad Democrática, Prociudadanos, etc, since the enthusiasm of the citizenry has cooled; the critics within its own ranks are increasing; it lacks the instruments to confront Chavismo and faces accusations of mismanagement of the resources administered by the interim government. He also looks particularly exposed in the face of the pro-government judicial apparatus.

5.-Involve the OAS, I recently sent a message to the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, about

Venezuela's return, although the President sent me back a non-encouraging response, I believe that we must continue to work, especially now that the Secretary General, Luis Almagro, has changed his position and proposes dialogue as the "only hope" that the destiny will be different and "not make the mistakes of the past".According to Almagro, previous dialogue processes reflect an opposition self-absorbed in removing Maduro from power, an objective that, he believes, "was probably not the most feasible, nor achievable, nor realistic". Given this political reality, Almagro seems to be pointing towards a more viable solution in Venezuela by accepting that power is being held by Chavismo and does not appear to be any change in that scenario on the near horizon.

President, I end this letter, thinking of Francisco de Miranda, one of our Precursors, whose presence in the United States marked his dreams for the liberation of Venezuela.

God bless your government and America.

Leocenis Garcia
National Coordinator of Prociudadanos.
Sincerely