

## **OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA**

We, the People of Venezuela, wish to address the People of the United States of America. You must know that on August 11, 2017, President Donald Trump threatened the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with direct military intervention. This dangerous threat was rejected by all nations and by the People of the United States. Nevertheless, two weeks later, President Trump imposed severe and unfair sanctions on us, publicly admitting his intention was to economically isolate Venezuela. It is the same strategy – recognized by the U.S. Government– that was implemented to overthrow the democratic government of Chile in 1973, paving the way for the ruthless dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet to take power.

These threats and unilateral decisions will affect our economy and our means to obtain resources for food, healthcare and production, seriously impairing our citizens' everyday life. President Trump seeks to manufacture a political crisis in our country by forcing President Nicolas Maduro out of office, even though he was democratically elected in 2013.

Furthermore, these actions also affect ordinary U.S. citizens who would face the possibility of a hike in gasoline prices, while thousands of workers risk losing their hard-earned savings as retirement funds are affected by the ban on Venezuelan bonds.

This behavior is inconsistent with Donald Trump's campaign slogan: "Make America great again". Rather, it creates new problems, both inside and outside the United States, making life harder both for Venezuelans and millions of U.S. citizens, while at the same time, it generates global rejection and resentment towards the U.S. government, and indirectly, towards its people, who have nothing to do with these warmongering actions.

As was the case in Iraq, we might be on the verge of an unfair and baseless military intervention, where oil is paramount. Yet nothing can justify that young Americans are driven into another military conflict, much less if it entails confronting a friendly and peaceful country such as Venezuela.

Venezuela is neither an enemy of the United States, nor does it represent a threat to its security. We admire its history, culture and scientific achievements. It is, therefore, imperative to cease this irrational policy of aggression and instead promote political understanding, so this long tradition of friendship between both countries can be made to flourish.

President Nicolas Maduro has tried to reach out to President Donald Trump several times, so as to facilitate communication and generate solutions based upon International Law and mutual respect. Regrettably, thus far, the U.S. Government has ignored and disregarded all dialogue initiatives proposed by the Venezuelan Government.

The People of the United States are a people of peace, and we believe you should lead efforts seeking to neutralize the jingoistic intentions of your government. That is why we reach out to you, in fraternity and sincerity, to urge all Americans of goodwill, to join us in working together for the defense of our peoples' freedoms, our children's well-being, towards cooperation and peace for our region. It is a time for dialogue and understanding. Let us not miss this opportunity and in the words of John Lennon: Let's give peace a chance.

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