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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Brian A. Nichols
Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Nichols:

I appreciate the Department's intense focus put into ensuring a robust diplomatic response to the crisis in Ukraine. The multilateral, coordinated response in terms of sanctions and security assistance, particularly in Europe, is unprecedented and a testament to the Department's tireless efforts.

However, a truly comprehensive and ultimately effective effort to counter the Kremlin cannot be limited to Europe. The world needs to be united against an emboldened Kremlin, not only with rhetoric, but with action. If the world does not counter this rising threat, Russian aggression will be the scourge of future generations to come in every region. We must act now.

To that end, I urge the United States to reorient its diplomatic approach and redouble its efforts throughout the world to counter Kremlin aggression. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Russia's decades-long support for autocratic regimes in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua has fueled the deterioration of democratic institutions, the silencing of political opponents, crimes against humanity, and has pushed millions of civilians to flee their countries in search of safety. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine proceeds, the Kremlin has kept this hemisphere in its sights, deploying a series of high-level visitors to the region to secure continued cooperation and spreading disinformation across the region through RT en Español broadcasts.

I respectfully request that you provide me details to the questions below in writing.

First, how are you personally working to ensure that countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are imposing and enforcing sanctions on the Putin regime and the Russian economy? Please specifically describe your efforts to encourage the governments of Brazil and Mexico to impose and enforce sanctions, including sanctions similar or equal to those imposed by the United States.

Second, how are you personally encouraging countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean to provide financial support to Ukraine and security assistance to the Ukrainian armed forces? Please provide specific details on these efforts and quantify these efforts by country in the region.

Third, what specific efforts are you making to encourage the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Peru to end purchases of Russian military equipment or cut off other economic ties with Russia?

Fourth, what are you doing to counter the Kremlin's persistent disinformation in the region and ensure that the public has access to unbiased information about Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The United States needs a comprehensive, global and durable diplomatic approach to counter rapidly increasing Kremlin aggression. Thank you for your attention to these issues. I expect your prompt reply in open or classified form as appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez." The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
Chairman