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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

April 3, 2020

The Honorable Kelly Craft
Permanent Representative to the United Nations
U.S. Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Ambassador Craft:

I write to urge you to assert strong U.S. leadership at the UN Security Council by collaborating with global leaders to develop a response to end the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to impact the lives of 7.7 billion people and kill hundreds of thousands, and is already disrupting daily life and economies across the world. The United States currently has over 200,000 COVID-19 cases—a figure that has tripled over the past week—and stopping the spread of COVID-19 in the United States and restarting the U.S. economy will require a global campaign against the pandemic.

Historically, American leadership has helped the global community organize, set priorities, and unite disparate and often conflicting national responses to avoid the worst-case scenario. Yet, as Americans and people all over the world continue to face this threat to international health, stability, and security, we have not seen strong U.S. leadership at the UN Security Council or elsewhere on the global stage. The UN Security Council has not even held a meeting or produced a resolution regarding the pandemic. Unfortunately, the public perception is that United States antagonism towards China, which held presidency of the Council in March, stymied efforts of the body to work together. Racializing and stigmatizing the pandemic only serves to exacerbate existing divisions within the UN Security Council and endanger lives, including those of American citizens. Now is not the time for recriminations; the United States must galvanize the world towards decisive action.

In 2014, during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the United States led efforts at the UN Security Council to achieve a groundbreaking resolution calling on Member States to respond to the outbreak by lifting travel restrictions, delivering medical aid and financial assistance, and increasing communication. The resolution helped generate political will to facilitate an unprecedented international response to the epidemic—likely saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

Today, the world faces an even greater challenge, indeed one that is already on our shores attacking our citizens. This threat that can only be defeated with U.S. leadership championing a rational, fact-based, global response. I urge you to move swiftly to lead a determined effort to produce a UN Security Council resolution focused on finding a solution to the crisis. This unprecedented threat calls for unprecedented action. We cannot allow politics to hinder our response. Our citizens demand it. Indeed, the whole world does.

Sincerely,

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

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member