

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Richard Grenell
Acting Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, DC 20511

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Attorney General Barr, and Acting Director Grenell,

We write today to express alarm regarding recent reports of an attempted raid on Venezuela allegedly orchestrated by a group of Venezuelan military defectors and two American citizens. These developments raise a number of concerns regarding U.S. policy and questions about potential violations of U.S. law.

Jordan Goudreau, a former U.S. Army Green Beret and founder of the private security firm Silvercorp USA, has claimed responsibility for a failed amphibious assault on May 3rd aimed at capturing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Venezuelan authorities have stated that eight people were killed and two Americans were captured in the operation.

This recent attack is reportedly the product of an effort by former Venezuelan military officers and Goudreau to organize dozens of deserters from Venezuela's security forces in Colombia, in order to stage a cross-border incursion into Venezuela to capture Maduro. News of Goudreau's thwarted amphibious operation follows the seizure by Colombian police in March of a truck transporting a cache of weapons and tactical equipment worth around \$150,000, including scopes, night vision goggles, radios, and 26 American-made assault rifles. Fifteen helmets manufactured by High-End Defense Solutions, a Miami-based military equipment vendor, were also seized by Colombian authorities. Cliver Alcalá, a former Venezuelan officer and associate of Goudreau's, claimed ownership of the confiscated arms. Notably, to demonstrate his ties to the opposition, Goudreau has produced what he alleges is a \$213 million contract for unspecified "general services" signed by members of Juan Guaidó's "Strategy Committee."

Either the U.S. government was unaware of these planned operations, or was aware and allowed them to proceed. Both possibilities are problematic. As you know, the *VERDAD Act*, which President Trump signed into law on December 20, 2019, states that "it is the policy of the United States to support diplomatic engagement in order to advance a negotiated and peaceful solution to Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis." Armed raids, even if they are carried out by independent actors, run counter to that policy. Moreover, such incursions harm the prospects for a peaceful democratic transition in Venezuela by insinuating that an armed intervention is a viable option to resolve the crisis, potentially undermining the willingness of

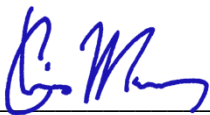
hardline opposition actors to negotiate, while simultaneously allowing Maduro to rally support to his side, strengthening his hand.

To address our concerns, we request answers to the following questions. We understand that some information may need to be provided in classified form.

- Was the administration aware, either directly or through the Venezuelan or Colombian government, of the plans by Jordan Goudreau to instigate an armed attack inside Venezuela, and of his communication with advisors to Juan Guaidó in Miami?
- If the administration was aware of Goudreau's plans, did you take any steps to prevent it from moving forward? Did the U.S. government provide, directly or indirectly, any financial, material, training, intelligence, or other kinds of support to this operation?
- Goudreau has claimed that he is aware of additional forces in and around Venezuela ready to be activated as part of his effort to oust Maduro; what is the intelligence community's assessment of the extent of his operation?
- What steps is the administration taking to secure the release of the two American citizens that have been captured by Maduro's forces during the attack?
- Does the intelligence community assess the contract that Goudreau claims was signed by Juan Guaidó, or members of his "Strategic Committee," is legitimate? If so, were steps taken to ensure that U.S. funds were not implicated in this contract?
- Has the U.S. government ever provided, directly or indirectly, financial, material, training, intelligence, or any other type of assistance to opposition-aligned actors seeking to carry out an armed operation in Venezuelan territory?

Maduro is a dictator, and the Venezuelan people deserve to live in a democracy again, but that will only be achieved through vigorous and effective diplomacy, not martial adventurism. We hope you agree, and look forward to receiving answers to these questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator