



Caracas, October 7th, 2022

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

Dear Mr. Secretary Blinken,

I am writing to you to express my concern over recent statements made by North American diplomats that, in our opinion, compromise the historical position of your country and that of ours in the ongoing territorial dispute between Venezuela and Guyana over the Esequibo Area.

Yesterday, Ambassador Brian Nichols, the Undersecretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs published a tweet in which he argued that “the 1899 Arbitral Award determined the land border between Venezuela and Guyana and must be respected unless or until a competent legal body determines otherwise. The United States supports a peaceful resolution to this issue” which was seconded by the Special Advisor to the White House for Latin America, Juan González, who stated that “this is the policy of the United States”.

We see these positions with surprise as it is known that the instrument still in force is the Geneva Agreement signed in 1966 by Venezuela and Guyana in which Venezuela's contention on the nullity of the 1899 Arbitral Award is accepted and both parties in dispute commit to finding a satisfactory solution for the practical settlement of this dispute. By the way, as you know and it was made public by the secretary of that legal delegation, the North American lawyer Severo Malet Prevost, part of the reasons that support the annulment of the 1899 Arbitral Award have to do with the arguments made by North American officials back then, including the two Justices from the US Supreme Court who were arbitrators and former President Benjamin Harrison, as head of the delegation of lawyers participating in said arbitration.

In any case, the aforementioned 1899 Arbitral Award did not delimit the disputed marine and submarine areas. Despite this, Guyana by interposing its own energy interests, continues to violate international law by occupying, exploring and exploiting marine and underwater areas indisputably under Venezuela's jurisdiction, which even extends as a coastal projection of our Delta Amacuro State's continental territory to its maritime boundary, illegally taking resources from us and pretending to block our direct maritime access to the Atlantic Ocean.

This is not the first time this has happened. Already on March 9th, 2015, we sent a private letter to the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States in Venezuela back then, Ambassador Lee McLenny, in which we expressed our concern and rejection of the statements made by the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States in Guyana back then, who expressed his government's support to the Guyanese government in this dispute, in defense of ExxonMobil Corporation which was illegally developing a crude oil concession in this disputed territory.

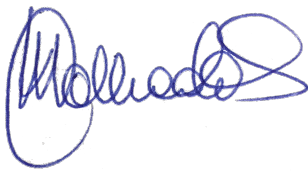
As we stated in that letter, Mr. Secretary Blinken, we are respectful of the economic interests of your country as well as those of third parties such as China in Guyana, provided that these do not violate Venezuela's legitimate rights in the marine and underwater areas under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of our nation. Anything that contravenes this is an unjustified

provocation to which we are going to react by reaffirming our historical position on this matter, ratifying the ongoing validity of the Geneva Agreement signed in 1966 in unequivocal and complete disregard of the 1899 Arbitral Award.

In this sense, we hope that your country reconsiders its position and continues to remain neutral and respectful in this matter which is of exclusive concern to Venezuela and Guyana, as agreed to by both parties in this dispute.

Awaiting your reconsideration regarding this incident which disturbs and concerns us Venezuelans and our legitimate rights to this territory which belongs to us; I remain,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Machado', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

María Corina Machado
National Coordinator of Vente Venezuela