

United States Senate

February 18, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Blinken,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me last month about your priorities for the State Department and the Biden Administration's views on American foreign policy, particularly on Communist China, Iran, Cuba, and other adversaries.

As former Governor and now U.S. Senator for the great State of Florida, ensuring freedom and democracy in Latin America is incredibly important to me. Cuba continues to be the root of our national security problems in our region and its influence grows by the day in oppressive regimes and dictators like Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua. Through Cuba, other adversaries including Russia and Iran have direct access to the Western Hemisphere, presenting an incredible threat to the security of the United States.

The United States must continue to enforce strict sanctions on the Cuban regime. Easing economic sanctions and restoring the Obama-Biden policy of appeasing Havana does nothing to help the Cuban people. Any policy shift on Cuba, whether the easing of sanctions or the unwise removal from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List, only serves to benefit the regime and line the pockets of Cuba's communist cronies. We know that Cuba continues to harbor terrorists and that these extremists plan and carry out attacks against our allies. Cuba must remain on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List until its sympathies toward terrorists end.

The same is true for U.S. policy toward the oppressive and genocidal Maduro regime in Venezuela. I travelled to the city of Cucuta on the border of Venezuela. I saw children who walk hours through treacherous terrain just to receive an education, and

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mothers who carry their infant children the same journey for a single meal. Until the people of Venezuela and other Latin American nations can enjoy the freedom and democracy they so rightfully deserve, we cannot relent in our efforts to hold these regimes accountable for their oppression and human rights abuses.

The United States' greatest security threat is Communist China. Under the rule of General Secretary Xi, Communist China continues its quest for world domination. As Communist China builds its military, members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continue to steal American technology and intellectual property and show blatant disregard for the security of American families and businesses. General Secretary Xi is also taking away the basic human rights of the people of Hong Kong and leading a brutal genocide of his own people, murdering countless Uyghurs and imprisoning thousands in concentration camps. The State Department cannot back down from designating this mass murder as the genocide that it is.

I am also incredibly concerned with Communist China's ongoing aggression toward Taiwan. I have introduced a bill, the Taiwan Invasion Prevention Act, to end the United States' policy of "strategic ambiguity" related to Taiwan's sovereignty. It is essential that we stand with the Taiwanese people and it is my expectation that the Biden Administration will set firm expectations to hold Communist China accountable.

Another area of critical importance is the United States' policy toward Iran. The Obama-Biden Iran Nuclear Deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was a disaster from the start. As the Ayatollah continues his hateful anti-American rhetoric and demands to lift U.S. sanctions, he proves just how disconnected from reality he and the Iranian government have become. Iran cannot be trusted. The sanctions the Trump Administration levied on Iran are working, and must remain in place until Iran fully cooperates. Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons and produce ballistic missiles must be permanently removed. For the sake of the security of the United States, our great ally Israel, and our friends across the world, President Biden must commit to work with Congress on this and hold strong on sanctions against Iran.

Today, the United States faces threats from nearly every corner of the globe, but we also have an important opportunity before us in the fight to protect and expand freedom and democracy in every nation. In your new role, it will be essential that you build consensus to support American ideals and ensure that those under your

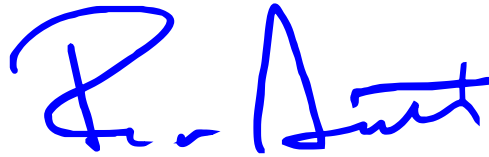
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command follow the law in every aspect of their work. I wish you success in demonstrating the tremendous value of democracy and look forward to working with you to advance freedom around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott

United States Senator