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January 26, 2010

The Honorable Hillary R. Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

Over the past few days, the world has been stunned by the images and stories being broadcast from Venezuela about the closing of Radio Caracas Television International (RCTV) by the Venezuelan government, and the subsequent and ongoing crackdown ordered by Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez against students and other demonstrators desperately seeking to preserve their freedom of speech and a free press.

As you are aware, last Saturday, Mr. Chavez shuttered RCTV and several other radio and television outlets and effectively silenced the remaining voices for free speech in Venezuela.

Since he became leader of Venezuela, Mr. Chavez has used tactics and instruments of intimidation against the Venezuelan people. However, with his ongoing censorship and the shuttering of many of the free forms of media, it is clear that Mr. Chavez is seeking to squash any dissent or any dissemination of information from those who are opposed to his tyrannical ways. As Mr. Chavez continues to tighten his grip on power and export his dangerous ideology throughout the region, I urge you to speak against this tyranny and stand for the values of freedom and free speech.

The situation in Venezuela is dire and growing more so with each passing day. Mr. Chavez, a self-avowed communist, has put Venezuela on a collision course with those who cherish freedom, and the Venezuelan people are today just a heartbeat away from living under a complete and total dictatorship. The time has come to openly, vocally, and consistently denounce the Chavez regime for its affront to free speech and democracy.

Madam Secretary, I am writing to insist that you condemn the recent crackdown on free speech by Hugo Chavez and his government, specifically the closure of RCTV and the attacks on those who dared demonstrate against Mr. Chavez and his iron-fisted power grab.

The Honorable Hillary R. Clinton
RCTV
January 26, 2010

As the beacon of freedom in the world, the United States can ill-afford to continue to sit idly by while Mr. Chavez crushes the hopes and dreams of the Venezuelan people. I urge you to act without delay for all those who cherish freedom. I look forward to your immediate action.

Sincerely,



CONNIE MACK
Member of Congress