

Jose Cardenas

From: Jose Cardenas
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 1:22 PM
To: Viviana_Bovo@rubio.senate.gov
Subject: Possible QFRs

Hi Viviana, for your consideration. Thank you!

CUBA

1. The 2020 State Department Trafficking in Persons Report cites the Cuban regime for using force or coercion against Cubans participating and remaining in its labor export programs, particularly the foreign medical missions program. It reports “the government has not taken action to address its exploitative and coercive policies in these missions, which are clear indicators of human trafficking.”

Extensive testimony exists indicating that the Cuban regime disregards elemental International Labor Organization standards for the fair treatment of its citizens that violates their human rights even when serving outside Cuba.

What will the Department under your direction do to demand transparency, and legal, fair, and humane treatment for Cuban medical personnel serving abroad?

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/cuba/>

2. A group of Cuban doctors have filed a federal lawsuit against the Pan American Health Organization alleging that PAHO organized and unduly profited from Cuba’s “medical mission” to Brazil between 2013 and 2018, which they charge violated the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

I am a supporter of PAHO, but do not believe that an organization that receives tens of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars every year should participate in and profit from forced labor, much less ignore the U.S. embargo of Cuba with impunity.

Do you believe PAHO should be immune from civil liability if it collected unauthorized funds in violating a federal law against forced labor? What steps would you take to hold PAHO accountable for its actions?

3. Under pressure from the State Department, PAHO retained an outside law firm to conduct an “administrative review” of its actions in Brazil. However, we have subsequently been informed that the Department has no oversight role, and Members of Congress have been denied any information from State, PAHO, or the law firm, about the process.

Do you believe such a review offers any possibility of accountability by PAHO, either to the victims or to U.S. taxpayers whose money was used to facilitate human trafficking to enrich the Cuban government?

4. Thousands of Cuban medical professionals were able to escape their servitude in Cuba's overseas missions under the DHS Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, which was in effect from 2006 until January 2017. In addition to the humanitarian dimension, much of our government's knowledge of Cuba's violation of international labor standards comes from these parolees. Would you support reinstatement of the program under President Biden?

VENEZUELA

In recent days, Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro has been making threatening remarks towards neighboring Guyana* over a territorial dispute dating back to the 19th century. He has vowed to "reconquer" the disputed Essequibo province, which makes up the western two-thirds of Guyana. Guyana, of course, is in the process of developing a giant offshore oil field, part of which involves disputed waters.

The Trump administration has stood by Guyana in the face of Maduro's threats and believes the territorial dispute should be resolved at the International Court of Justice, which Maduro has rejected.

Will the Biden administration continue to support Guyana in this matter — including its right to develop its energy resources without intimidation— and warn Maduro his pressuring of Guyana will have regional consequences if it continues?

<https://www2.argusmedia.com/en/news/2175764-venezuela-saberrattles-over-guyana-us-wades-in?backToResults=true&selectedMarket=Crude%20oil>

[*DISSEMINATED BY THE CORMAC GROUP, A REGISTERED FOREIGN AGENT, ON BEHALF OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA. MORE INFORMATION ON FILE WITH THE DEPT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON DC.]

Best Regards,

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