



David Rothkopf, CEO and Editor, FP Group
Ben Pauker, Executive Editor, *Foreign Policy*
11 Dupont Circle, NW Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036

August 20, 2015

Dear Mr. Rothkopf and Mr. Pauker,

The undersigned represent the National Lawyers Guild, American Association of Jurists and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers. We have recently been apprised of [a letter](#) you received from Jared Genser of Perseus Strategies in response to an article published by *Foreign Policy* on July 27, 2015, "[The Making of Leopoldo López](#)" by Roberto Lovato. The National Lawyers Guild has sent dozens of lawyers, legal workers and law students over the past decade to Venezuela to serve as international election accompaniers for presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections. We have also sent several delegations, including as recently as last month, to meet with representatives from the government, the legal profession, community-based organizations and the organized opposition. We have written several reports regarding our findings that can be found at www.nlginternational.org.

As you are likely aware, Genser represents Venezuela's right-wing leader Leopoldo López, who is currently in custody for arson and incitement to violence during the events of February 2014. His 16-page letter constitutes a wide-ranging and highly rhetorical attack on the article, yet with little evidence to back up his critique.

Genser requests that *Foreign Policy* publish a rebuttal to Lovato's article or withdraw it altogether, yet provides no journalistic or legal basis for doing so other than disagreement about the characterization of his client. Lovato's article raises significant and noteworthy issues relating to López's involvement with the 2002 coup in Venezuela, as well as leading or being intricately involved in other anti-democratic efforts. Although it is clear the article doesn't comport with Genser's portrayal of his client, it provides critical perspective and analysis necessary to furthering an extremely timely and relevant conversation about the role that Lopez and his supporters have played in destabilizing Venezuela and the implications this has had throughout the region. As you are undoubtedly aware, Genser provides no substantial rebuttals to the facts of Lovato's article. His demand that *Foreign Policy* withdraw Lovato's article or publish Lopez's rebuttal clearly violates principles of free speech and a free press. We support the journalistic integrity that you have shown in providing your readership with an alternative perspective on an important opposition leader in Venezuela and appreciate that *Foreign Policy* was willing to print information that is familiar to many of our organizations' members, but perhaps not to your readers.

We hope that *Foreign Policy's* editorial standards will not be compromised by Genser's veiled threats.

Sincerely,



Azadeh N. Shahshahani
President
National Lawyers Guild

Vanessa Ramos
President
American Association of Jurists

Jeanne Mirer
President
International Association of Democratic Lawyers