

Statement of Perry L. Holloway
Nominee for Ambassador to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 15, 2015

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this Committee and all members of Congress to advance our nation's interests in Guyana and the broader Caribbean region.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the tremendous support throughout my career from my wife, Rosaura Holloway, who is here with me today, and my daughter Paula, who is also here, and my son Nicholas, who could not be here. They have all benefited and suffered as a result of my career choice, and I want to thank them for their support. I would also like to single out my mom, Peggy Franklin, who is in South Carolina and who laid the basic foundation for me to have the opportunity to appear before you today.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the honor to serve our country as a Foreign Service Officer for the past 26 years in nine countries. I have served primarily in countries in the Western Hemisphere, so I am familiar with the types of challenges and opportunities that exist in Guyana. I have worked on programs dealing with

security, drug trafficking, democratic values and human rights, energy and the environment, trafficking in persons, corruption, and the exchange of people and ideas. I have extensive experience with interagency partners like USAID, DoD, Peace Corps, DEA, and DHS. If confirmed, I believe that my experience in the region and my work with other agencies has prepared me well to lead the U.S. mission in Guyana.

Guyana is a country with tremendous potential. It has vast pristine rainforests, fertile agricultural lands, proven mineral resources, potentially large oil reserves, and a close affinity with the United States. It is also a country facing challenges from crime, poverty, corruption, HIV/AIDS, natural resource management, and drug trafficking. If confirmed, I will work with the government and people of Guyana to confront these challenges and to continue to bolster economic growth, strengthen democracy and governance, improve the respect for human rights and rule of law, and promote opportunity for all. These are clearly areas of mutual interest.

Guyana is also a key partner in bolstering regional security. Through the President's Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, we are cooperating to counter the threats of transnational crime and terrorism. Improved security for all citizens of the Caribbean is essential to the region's future stability and prosperity, as well as

to our interests. I will work closely with the appropriate agencies of the U.S. Government to strengthen our security cooperation with Guyana.

Guyana is one of the poorest countries in the Hemisphere. That is why we have historically worked with the government and private sector to support efforts to diversify the economy and create new opportunities in agribusiness, aquaculture, wood products, and ecotourism. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the government and private sector to strengthen Guyana's market competitiveness, build its trade capacity, improve the investment climate, and promote greater two-way trade with the United States.

Guyana is also a leader in efforts to address global climate change through its low carbon development strategy that is helping preserve its vast rain forest. We have worked with the government of Guyana to develop sustainable forestry and ecotourism and to enhance its capacity to implement the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, or REDD initiative, while also encouraging sustainable economic development. I hope to have the opportunity to continue these efforts.

HIV/AIDS is a problem in Guyana and the United States has made a significant contribution to combating this disease with over \$165 million invested since 2004. Our funding has made a difference. Guyana's prevention and care programs, central laboratory, and state-of-the-art logistics system are models for

others in the region. The program has also benefited Guyana's health systems by enhancing the country's laboratory capacity, improving the ability to store and distribute medicines, and strengthening the management of broader health services. As a result of these U.S. government investments, Guyana now is able to respond to the threats from infectious diseases. If confirmed, I will work with the government and other health partners to sustain the gains we have made and transition ownership of the programs to the Government of Guyana.

Mr. Chairman, Guyana recently held national elections and the party that had been in power since the country's first democratic elections nearly 23 years ago was replaced. The elections were deemed free and fair by the international community. This is an important indicator that Guyana is continuing to build on progress it has made since emerging as an independent nation in 1966 and instituting multi-party democracy in 1992. The new president and his multi-ethnic coalition government have embarked on an ambitious transformative agenda for the county that centers on eliminating racial and ethnic exclusion, countering organized crime, combatting corruption, developing infrastructure, broadening economic growth, and establishing sustainable management of the country's natural resources. The government's agenda largely coincides with our own interests, providing us new opportunities to confront long-standing challenges. I look forward to working with all relevant actors to ensure that the bilateral

relationship continues to be one based on shared interests and mutual respect. If confirmed, I will continue the work we have been doing with the government and civil society on programs to strengthen governance structures, promote constructive political dialogue, and encourage greater citizen participation in the political process – all necessary for a strong democracy.

The United States has a special link to Guyana through the many Guyanese who live in our country. It is estimated that there are more than 300,000 Guyanese in the United States and maybe another million people here of Guyanese descent. In Guyana itself, estimates are that over 70 percent of Guyana's citizens have family living in the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with the hard-working diasporas in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and other states to find ways that they can contribute to a more stable and prosperous Guyana.

Guyana is a Caribbean country located in South America. The Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, headquarters is in Guyana. If confirmed, I would also serve as the U.S. representative to CARICOM, whose 15 member states work together to promote regional integration and cooperation. CARICOM has a vital role in building a secure and prosperous Caribbean, and I look forward to working with the Secretary General and CARICOM states to strengthen the Organization

and our relationship with it, while also advancing our common interests throughout the Caribbean with respect to trade, investment, energy, development, and security.

Mr. Chairman, these are just some of the opportunities and challenges that the United States is addressing in Guyana and within the Caribbean. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to improve the already close and productive partnership between the United States, Guyana, and CARICOM. You can count on me to work hard to protect American citizens, promote U.S. business in the region, manage U.S. programs efficiently, and vigorously advance the goals of the United States of America.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.