

Statement of Doug Manchester
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Bahamas
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
August 2, 2017

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, distinguished members of the committee:

Thank you for considering my nomination to serve as this great nation's Ambassador to The Bahamas. I am honored by this immense privilege entrusted to me by President Trump. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting this appointment. If confirmed, I am confident that my qualifications will allow me to represent our government to promote stronger bilateral relations with The Bahamas.

Let me tell you about myself. Most people do not remember much of anything at age 3, but in 1945 in Los Angeles, I held on to the back seat of a coupe my mother was driving. Suddenly, the car stopped and horns began honking. I didn't know what was happening, but I started to cry when I noticed my mother was crying. Hers were tears of joy commemorating the end of WWII. Beginning at this young age, I came to understand the importance of U.S. foreign policy, our position in the world, and the great responsibility we as Americans share.

After World War II, my father got a job in a San Diego factory, which gave me the blessing of growing up in one of America's finest cities in the greatest country in the world. I worked my way through San Diego State University, and the long hours combined with academic rigor instilled in me a work ethic that has remained vital throughout my life. Today I am blessed with a beautiful wife, 8 children, and 13 grandchildren – a family which constitutes my greatest accomplishment. I have had the wonderful fortune of success in insurance, real estate, medical instruments, broadcasting, publishing, construction, hotel ownership and management, and oil drilling. I have operated 27 companies, surrounded myself with outstanding employees and advisors.

Working in concert with the U.S. Embassy, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has tremendous opportunity to attract more U.S. business interests, increase economic stability, and to address regional challenges associated with drugs, human trafficking, and illegal immigration. If confirmed, I would dedicate all my passion, experience, and ability to ensuring that the United States of America maintains a mutually beneficial presence in The Bahamas that creates more safety for Americans and Bahamian citizens.

Having employed thousands of people over the years, I have seen the impact that a job and a paycheck can have on a community. I herein pledge that if I am confirmed, I will do all in my power to advocate for U.S. companies and entrepreneurs to invest in The Bahamas. As our closest neighbor after Canada and Mexico, we must ensure that we maintain a strong presence there. ***We must demonstrate our own capabilities in The Bahamas to help the country create jobs and improve economic performance.*** When the world is working and families have incomes, it is a safer place.

But in addition to our historically close economic and commercial ties, we have used our diplomatic relationship to help The Bahamas address a multitude of concerns from crime to environmental protection. We must continue to work together on increasing overall economic stability, reducing crime, and tackling human and drug trafficking issues.

The stability of The Bahamas' is especially important to the United States as the country is commonly used as a gateway for drugs and illegal immigration into our country. Notably, The Bahamas was the first in the Caribbean to receive a Tier 1 ranking from the State Department's Trafficking in Persons report. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will ensure that our governments continue to build cohesive strategies to fight both drug and human trafficking. That includes continuing our support of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, which has played a vital role in the reduction of human and drug trafficking in the past few years.

I fully recognize and dedicate myself to ensuring the safety of American citizens as the priority of our mission in The Bahamas. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) currently indicates that the country's crime rating is at a critical level and the UN has noted that The Bahamas has the highest rate of rape in the entire Caribbean. It is essential that our mission in The Bahamas defend all human rights, and in doing so, we must continue to curtail major crimes, including rape, human and drug trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, in closing I would like to say I have had a blessed life growing up in the greatest country in the world, and being nominated to represent it is both a remarkable honor and deeply humbling experience.

I pledge to you and the American people that if confirmed, I will work tirelessly, personally, spiritually, and professionally, and alongside Congress, to faithfully represent American interests. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today, and God bless you for your service to our great country.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.