

**Statement of Edwin Nolan**  
**Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Suriname**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**August 4, 2015**

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname. I thank the President for the confidence he has placed in me by putting me forward to the Senate for consideration, and I thank Secretary Kerry for his trust and support.

I have had the honor to serve our country for 35 years as a Foreign Service Officer. Every day of those 35 years I have had the love and support of my wife, Tricia, who I'd like to introduce to the Committee along with my children Ryan and Katie of whom I am immensely proud. I would not be where I am today without my wonderful family.

During those 35 years I have had the opportunity to contribute to some historic successes in U.S. foreign policy. Among them: the first conventional arms control agreements with the then-Soviet Union in the 1980's; the successful integration of the former Warsaw Pact members into NATO in the 1990's; and indispensable U.S. efforts to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland through the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. I have also had the opportunity to

lead large, multiagency missions, as Deputy Chief of Mission in both Cyprus and the Netherlands, and then later, as Charge d'Affaires at Mission Netherlands from 2011 to 2013. I also gained experience on many Caribbean regional issues in that time as a result of the Netherlands' continued engagement with its Caribbean territories and its historic relationship with Suriname. If confirmed, I believe my leadership and policy experience will serve our Mission and our team in Suriname well.

If confirmed, I will proudly represent the United States in Suriname – a country whose people are among the most ethnically and religiously diverse in the world. Its citizens of African, Asian, European and indigenous descent, practicing Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and indigenous religions, live peacefully and productively together. As someone who has worked to build understanding between diverse religious and ethnic communities, from Protestants and Catholics in Ireland to Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus, I look forward to engaging with Suriname's communities and learning how Suriname might be able to share its experiences with others in the region and around the world.

If confirmed, I will also work with the Surinamese government to promote the adoption of policies to increase American trade and investment between our two countries. Increased trade has the potential to drive progress and growth in Suriname, and it is in both of our interests to increase economic ties.

We will work with Suriname to find solutions that tap into, as well as conserve, the country's extensive natural resources. The people of Suriname also are heirs to a vast rainforest and other natural areas that are contributing great economic and environmental benefits to Suriname and to the world. The Obama Administration's efforts to combat the dangers posed by pollution and the risks of climate change are tied to the conservation and health of such ecosystems. If confirmed, I will work hard with the Surinamese to help protect these critical natural resources and environment – a goal that I firmly believe is in the interest of both the United States and of the people of Suriname.

It is also in our interest to strengthen the rule of law in Suriname. In parliamentary elections this past May, President Desiré Bouterse's party won a slim majority, and he has been reelected to a second five-year term. International observers found this election to be generally free and fair. We remain concerned, however, about some aspects of democratic governance, corruption, and judicial independence. If I am granted the opportunity to serve, I will continue the efforts of my predecessor to press the Government of Suriname for an independent judiciary capable of protecting and advancing democracy and the rule of law in Suriname.

Citizen security is another key goal of this administration in the region. The people of Suriname are benefiting greatly from bilateral and regional assistance

under U.S.-sponsored programs such as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) – through providing technical training to law enforcement officers, combatting money-laundering and financial crimes, and preparing at-risk youth to live successful and crime-free lives. If confirmed, I will seek to gain an increased commitment from the government of Suriname to this partnership.

Of course, my first priority would be protecting the safety and welfare of Americans in Suriname – both private citizens and the Embassy community. To ensure the safety and security of our staff working in Suriname, we are building a New Embassy Compound in Paramaribo and plan to move in next summer. I will work with the government of Suriname, along with local police and other security services, to reinforce cooperation that will keep Americans secure.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States in Suriname, working with you and your colleagues in Congress on behalf of the Administration, while also engaging Suriname in a regular and respectful dialogue on broad international issues to exchange views and, where possible, identify areas of mutual interest and agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I stand ready to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you.