

JJ&B

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The attached document was distributed on May 29, 2021, to the following persons by JJ&B on behalf of the APNU+AFC Coalition:

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Office</u>
Wyndee Parker and Bob Edmonson	Off. of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Disha Banik	Off. of U.S. Rep. Hakim Jeffries
Tasia Jackson and LaVerne Alexander	Off. of U.S. Rep. Donald Payne
Gregory Berry	Off. of U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee
Charlie Gayle	Off. of U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson
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Jason Tuber	Off. of Sen. Bob Menendez
Meghan Taira and Mike Lynch	Off. of U.S. Sen. Maj. Leader Charles Schumer
Rebecca Schatz	Off. of U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio
Alexander Brockwehl	Western Hemisphere Subcmtee U.S. House Foreign Affairs Cmtee
Corinne Paul	Off. of U.S. Senator Ben Cardin
Julie Chung	Asst. Secy. of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

Meeting with Leader of the Opposition and the International Republican Institute.

Background

The United States Embassy in Guyana on May 5, 2021 announced that the U.S. Department of State is supporting an 18-month project to strengthen the capacity of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and the Attorney General's Chambers regarding electoral processes, and to encourage civil society organizations (CSOs) to advocate for electoral reform in accordance with regional and international standards. The project, according to the US embassy in Georgetown will be implemented by the International Republican Institute (IRI).

Meeting with IRI

Subsequent to the announcement, the Leader of the Opposition requested a meeting with the IRI. That meeting took place on Tuesday May 11, 2021. The representatives of the IRI were Ms. Dorota Rzyz, resident Programme Director and Ms. Sarah Barrat.

The delegation from the Office of the Leader of the Opposition comprised Joseph Harmon, Leader of the Opposition, Khemraj Ramjattan, Leader of the AFC and Members of Parliament, Amanza Walton Desir and Roysdale Forde, SC and Mr. Aubrey Norton, Executive Director, Office of the Leader of the Opposition.

Key concerns of the APNU/AFC

1. The APNU/AFC is of the view that the PPP/C intends to use the IRI as an instrument to destroy the democratic processes and fortify themselves in office. The APNU/AFC pointed out to IRI statements by the Attorney General Anil Nandalall where he said in the public that this project will be used to penalize any officials from GECOM that were guilty of wrong doing.
2. The APNU/AFC raised the question of the reform of GECOM and enquired from IRI what was their concept of an independent GECOM given the peculiarities of Guyana. The IRI reps indicated that they had no idea, but would consult with Civil Society and Guyanese on the determination of the reforms, if any to be made to GECOM.
3. The APNU/AFC also enquired about the assumptions that underpinned the Project. We were not satisfied with the response. Of particular concern was the fact that defining CSOs in an ethnically polarized society such as Guyana has not received the required attention it warrants particularly, given that a key stakeholder in the process is intended to be CSOs.
4. The APNU/AFC requested to be furnished with the Terms of Reference for the Project.
5. The APNU/AFC reinforced the concern of its constituents (over 50% of the Guyanese population) that given the composition of the IRI Board of Directors, and given the active involvement of some of those persons in voter suppression in the USA, Guyanese by and large are suspicious of the IRI and their activity in the electoral reform process. Most Guyanese are of the view that the US Embassy in Georgetown, is continuing the Trump/Pompeo foreign policy directives as it relates to Guyana.
6. Based on the statements from Attorney General Anil Nandalall, the Government of India will be having an input into the IRI project.
7. The IRI indicated that the project is fully funded by the Department of Stat, specifically the Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor. It remains unclear when the project funding was approved.