



Hon. Pedro R. Pierluisi
Statement and Questions as Prepared for Delivery
Oversight Hearing on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
House Committee on the Judiciary
July 19, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madame Secretary, welcome. As I am sure you expected, I want to raise the same issue with you this morning that we discussed the last time you appeared before the Committee, namely the drug-fueled public safety crisis in Puerto Rico.

First, I want to express my profound gratitude to you and your team for traveling to Puerto Rico last week in order to investigate the situation firsthand and to meet with Governor Fortuño and myself. I think our meetings were positive and productive, and I hope you agree.

On Tuesday, I wrote you a letter. In addition to thanking you for your visit, I noted that your presence in Puerto Rico underscored the federal government's commitment to working with local law enforcement to enhance and expand our efforts to combat drug trafficking and related violence on the Island. I said that I was heartened to hear you declare that Puerto Rico's public safety crisis has your full attention and that our motto moving forward will be "Let's fix this." I also expressed agreement with your statement that the definition of success should be a

significant and sustained reduction in the number of homicides committed on the Island. I think we all recognize the need to act with a sense of urgency in light of the severity of the situation.

In my letter, I strongly endorsed your plan to promptly develop a law enforcement strategy specifically tailored for Puerto Rico and the neighboring U.S. Virgin Islands, I believe this strategy will ensure that our efforts are as well-coordinated and effective as possible and will help to identify gaps in the current approach that can be filled. I respectfully asked that this strategy be coordinated with the Department of Justice, since DOJ personnel are working side-by-side with your men and women on the front lines of this fight.

Finally, I note that any meaningful strategy will require a reasonable allocation of personnel and resources, whether on a temporary or enduring basis. In the five-year period between 2007 and 2011, the number of homicides nationwide fell by over 20 percent. In that same time period, the number of murders in Puerto Rico rose by over 55 percent. Nevertheless, the federal law enforcement footprint on the Island has not evolved in the face of these profoundly changed circumstances. It is my fervent hope that the forthcoming law enforcement strategy will be action-oriented and will recognize that an enhanced federal response is required if we are to be successful in this shared endeavor.

So, Madame Secretary, I just want to give you the opportunity to tell me and the members of this Committee, in broad terms, how you envision moving forward on this issue. And thank you again.