

Guyana, US sign agreement to expand military partnership

GEORGETOWN



President Irfaan Ali, centre, greets US senior adviser to the Secretary of War, Patrick Weaver, and the Acting Assistant Secretary of War for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Joseph Humire on Tuesday. CMC PHOTO

Guyana has signed an agreement with the United States to expand military co-operation between the two countries.

“The two countries also signed a Statement of Intent to expand joint military co-operation with full respect for the sovereignty and laws of both countries,” President Irfaan Ali said, following talks with senior US officials on Tuesday.

Ali said the agreement is part of an evolving process between Washington and its allies in South America and the Caribbean Community (Caricom) to work on defence and security.

“The US government is now launching what they call the ‘Southern Spear’ of security, where they are now coming up with a strategy for the Western Hemisphere. The US government is to invest more and pay attention more to the Caricom and Western Hemisphere, so basically the countries and allies in the region, signalling their intention for more collaboration and co-operation,” he said.

He said the agreement provides for “reinforcement” of long-term training and collaboration under existing regimes like the Shiprider Agreement that allows for US security personnel to chase, intercept and board drug trafficking vessels in Guyanese waters.

Asked whether the Statement of Intent would lead to the signing of a defence treaty between the US and Guyana, President Ali replied, “This is evolving, so in the coming months there will be greater discussions on more levels of co-operation and the integration of our work.”

The signing of the agreement comes less than 24 hours after Ali reiterated Guyana’s commitment to working with its international allies to promote peace, democracy and rid the region of malignant actors involved in transnational crime in Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean. CMC