

## The British Declassified Files on British Guiana - 1958-1964

### THE DOCUMENTS

#### 1. COLONIAL OFFICE NOTE ON THE SITUATION IN BRITISH GUIANA IN 1958

*(No date on document)\**

SECRET

Note by Colonial Office

#### BRITISH GUIANA: SITUATION IN 1958

In April 1953, the People's Progressive Party were elected to power in British Guiana under a new Constitution with universal adult franchise and a ministerial system. In a country of challenging difficulties their young Communist-inclined leaders had won their big following by unscrupulous demagoguery, impossible promises and abuse of the established order. In October 1953, when it was clear that the Ministers were not attempting to work the Constitution and that economic disaster and civil disorder were imminent, the Constitution was suspended. The story is well known. The Robertson Commission which reported on the suspension (and found good reason for it, advised that there should be a period of marking time: ". . . so long as the P.P.P. retains its present leadership and policies and there is no way in which any real measure of responsible government can be restored without the certainty that the country will again be subjected to constitutional crisis."

2. From the beginning of 1954 until August 1957, the Government was carried on by the Governor with his senior officials and wholly nominated Executive and Legislative Councils. During this period, with advice from the World Bank, technical assistance from the United States, and with generous financial aid from Great Britain, a greatly increased development programme was pushed forward; commercial confidence was largely restored; by able leadership in the Secretariat combined with a great effort in the Colonial Office to recruit experienced officers, the Government Services were strengthened and improved; and vigorous efforts were made to teach the electorate to understand the problems with which the country was faced. This interim Government, nominated instead of elected, could never be popular. It was much maligned by the elected leaders who had been ousted. There were disappointments and delays, mistakes and misadventures. But it probably did more for the country than any other Government under British rule. As the shortages of manpower and material were gradually overcome, heartening programs began to be visible in town and country on nearly every side of governmental endeavour. The progress was not fast enough for the extremist agitators turned out of office who had nothing to do but criticise; but it was fast enough to alter the revolutionary feeling of frustration and desperation which had nurtured the 1953 hotheads and to replace it by nothing more

than the normal grumbling of a friendly and reasonably administered people in a very difficult country. There were new and encouraging signs of a spirit of co-operation and self-help and of less dependence on the Central Government. On the industrial and agricultural side there were record sugar crops, a record rice crop and other signs of expansion. The sugar industry continued to plough back vast sums to rehabilitate their factories and to improve wages and housing and welfare. The trade union movement was strengthened and consolidated and industrial relations were good. The Demerara Bauxite Company after detailed negotiations with the Government decided to invest about £13 millions in establishing an alumina plant and an impressive start was made on the construction work. They also carried out costly surveys of hydro-electric possibilities. A company was formed with English, Canadian and American capital to exploit deposits of manganese in the north-west district. Several new small factories were built and brought into production. Arrangements were made for an [entire\*\*] survey in the marine areas. In spite of the constitutional setback, revenue was buoyant and the economy was expanding.

3. But the problem of British Guiana remained. Good government, or comparatively good government, is in the colonies to-day no substitute for popular government. A split developed in the People's Progressive Party. Dr. Jagan found himself left with the East Indian followers, mostly in the country districts, while Mr. Burnham took with him the African and urban following. But the overwhelming political support for these two leaders remained, even if they were in opposition instead of together. They were the only leaders who had any chance of forming a popular Government in any future elections and they were learning nothing of the art of government. They were in their long-favoured role of being critics only, without responsibility, with plenty of time to plan and organise their forces. As the frustrations of "marking time" were prolonged, their support from the bulk of the electorate was growing instead of diminishing. While other colonial territories, and notably the nearby West Indian territories, were advancing, British Guiana was getting no nearer to self-government. The Commission's recommendation of marking time was inevitable when it was pronounced. But whatever the discipline, it is not possible to mark time indefinitely.

4. The problem was how to devise a possible way back to the path of constitutional progress without endangering such stability as had been regained; how to test those who were clearly the favourite leaders by giving them real responsibility without damaging too much the returning confidence of the people, commercial investors and those Western Governments on which British Guiana depends. A solution was sought by a modification of the Constitution which produced a half-way stage. It reintroduced elected members with the full franchise as before, together with the ministerial system. It enabled the Governor to put the responsibility clearly on those elected, while retaining sufficient power through additional nominations and other means to counterbalance irresponsibility if necessary.

5. The proposals were resisted by all local politicians, but the elections were held in August 1957. The moderate leaders failed to combine. Dr. Jagan, who was always sure to win the most seats, won an overall majority. On being assured of an original working majority both in Executive Council and Legislative Council, he agreed to take office. An effort to too persuade Mr. Burnham to join him in a National Government failed. He and four other members of his party, including his American-born wife, Janet, were appointed to Ministries and the responsibility for the country's progress is thus clearly on the shoulders of an elected leader. Mr. Burnham is also in the public eye with a measure of responsibility as Leader of the Opposition. Both erstwhile critics are facing realities under mutual criticism. Since taking office, whatever their long-term aims and whatever their feelings of frustration and confinement, the Ministers have pursued a moderate policy; in spite of their Communist

leanings and their administrative inexperience, in the face of considerable financial difficulties and of growing political criticism they are trying very hard to govern the country sensibly and to avoid crises. Commerce and industry have shown patience and goodwill and there has been no noticeable recession of trade or investment.

6. When this result was achieved there were many who asked what had been gained by again subjecting British Guiana to a Government of inexperienced people, led by small Communist-trained core. The answer is that there is again the chance of finding a responsible elected Government. The suspension of the Constitution administered a shock which will not quickly be forgotten. The P.P.P. know that Great Britain takes her colonial responsibilities seriously, and that another constitutional crisis which was clearly their fault would kill them politically. They can only remain in the vanguard of the "national liberation movement" if they succeed as a Government. In the meantime the country has learnt that it has no hope of higher living standards without increased investment and that any behaviour which drives away capital is suicidal. Dr. Jagan can now lead a country which, for all its mass electorate voting on emotional and racial grounds, has freedom of the Press and freedom of speech and a large number of vociferous people who are beginning to understand the political and economic facts of life in the Western hemisphere. He is remarkably sensitive to public criticism and in his first six months has discontinued several cherished plans because of it.

7. At present in British Guiana there is no alternative elected Government to Jagan. If, for political or constitutional advantage, or because he is desperate at the opposition or the difficulties of administration, Dr. Jagan throws in his hand, British Guiana will be almost back to 1954. Such a resignation is an ever present danger. The official Opposition is at present incapable of forming an effective Government. It is far too much occupied with clever vote-catching pinpricks and insincerities even to realise that it has the task of showing itself a possible alternative Government. There would be no alternative but to mark time again with a largely-nominated Government. Dr. Jagan is a devoted Marxist whose whole adult thinking and study, both economic and political, have been anti-colonial, anti-British and pro-Russian. He is not likely to change his beliefs. Yet, Dr. Jagan now has responsibility firmly on his shoulders. If there has to be a return to a nominated Government, he will have failed. It is part of his party policy to pretend that he is only "participating" in the Government and that without the restrictions of Colonial Office control he could fulfil all the dreams of the people. But few believe it. He knows he is on trial and he is very much conscious of the following worries: -

*(1) he dare not cause another constitutional crisis unless he can find an issue in which the whole people will be behind him;*

*(2) he dare not openly pursue radical policies which will discourage investment and development capital;*

*(3) he knows that, outside the hard-core, his followers are nationalists and not Communists and that if he is caught out in blatantly Communist action or intention it will not only damage his chances of constitutional advance and ruin his hopes of investment and development capital but will also lose him political support;*

*(4) his party is devoid of second-line leaders. The small Communist core or inner party dominates the Executive. There is nobody with any pretensions to leadership at the Central Government level in the lower half of the Executive or in the rank and file. Indeed he knows that the present Ministers are hardly up to their job. He himself is a theorist and a dialectician. He has not yet got around to producing practical policies. Too much depends on him and he is not equipped to translate thought into actions;*

*(5) if he does produce practical policies, for all his dreams of an all-powerful party machine, he must eventually have the worry, even if it is not yet realised, that to carry out his policies successfully he must depend on Executive Council officials and the Government services. The Government services are largely Burnhamite. They are nationalistic and progressive but they hold Dr. Jagan under grave suspicion and he has done little in the last six months to lessen that suspicion.*

*(6) his natural leaning to agriculture and the rural areas where his Indian supporters are strong is being exploited by the unscrupulous Opposition in such a way as to bring increasing danger of open racial conflict. Dr. Jagan fully realises the disaster which this would bring to the country but has not yet found a way to counter it effectively;*

*(7) his original idea, prompted from Ghana, was probably to win early constitutional advance by good behaviour and then try to establish the Marxist paradise of his dreams. But he is being brought to realise that the struggle will not have ended if and when he turns out the British and wins "independence"; if he then reverted to being an acknowledged Communist pursuing Communist policies he would undoubtedly be suppressed by the American States and his country would probably lose its identity with him;*

*(8) he is in a difficult position about Federation. He is realising more and more how difficult it is to see any future sovereignty or independent economic stability for British Guiana, except as a unit of the West Indies Federation. The Opposition and most African Guianese are clamorously in favour of joining immediately. But Federation is emotionally unpopular with the East Indian supporters on whom he and his party must rely for election. If any Government or politician tries to force a decision too early it may add fuel to the dangerous flickerings of racialism. He can only play for time, and hope not to be overtaken by events.*

*(8) The policy of Her Majesty's Government is comparatively clear. So long as there is no stable alternative elected Government, in order to avoid the sterile reversion to marking time, we must support the Jagan Government wholeheartedly and give our best advice and help. We must in doing so explain the dangers of his Communism and of any actions which will discourage or hold back economic advance or otherwise destroy the confidence of those on whom we depend. At the same time throughout the country we must build up faith in parliamentary democracy and the rule of law and our western way of life. We must strengthen and ensure the growth and continuance of an informed and effective Press and Opposition. We must encourage sound trade unionism which is not dominated by the political party in power. With the help of the British information services and the British Council and the United States information services, we must continue to help people to be more politically discriminating and in particular to recognise the threat of Communism and efforts to suppress the Opposition. We must go on maintaining and, if possible, increasing the quality and morale of the Government services both in the secretariats,*

the departments and the Ministries. We must go on spreading throughout the country, however ill-informed the electorate, the better knowledge of economic facts and of the future alternatives with which British Guiana is faced. To spread real understanding of the advantages and possible disadvantages of joining the Federation of the West Indies must be among our leading endeavours.

9. These things must be done while maintaining the confidence and the assistance of commerce and industry and investors. Above all, the necessary aid and development capital must be secured from the United Kingdom and the United States and, if possible, Canada, to enable British Guiana's development programme to be continued and completed and to be extended to the next stage beyond 1960 when the time comes. A slowing down or cessation of the development programme would win an inflammable sympathy for Dr. Jagan wider than his own party, which he might well exploit successfully. The whole position locally depends on our being able to convince everybody that he is being given a fair chance.

10. If Dr. Jagan can keep going without economic or constitutional crises, whether or not he has any real achievements to his credit, the pressure will grow for constitutional advance. Particularly if we succeed in avoiding the reversion to a nominated Government, popular opinion in the territory will not be satisfied for long that British Guiana should be behind Jamaica and Trinidad and Barbados. Whatever the pressure, we must maintain ultimate control through the continuance of checks and balances and the Governor's reserve powers at least until one of the following three things occurs: -

*(a) Dr. Jagan gives up Communism and becomes a capable, practical nationalist in the context of the Western hemisphere, which is unlikely.*

*(b) Dr. Jagan, while retaining his personal ideologies and his political leadership, realises that Communism is impossible in a country the size of British Guiana on the American continent even if the country is independent rather than colonial. If he realises this he may possibly be led as a nationalist into practical policies which provide the chance of an honourable future for British Guiana. He may even acquire the habit.*

*(c) Dr. Jagan and his party, or what is left of his party, are discredited and there is a non-racial Opposition strong enough and sensible enough to take over the government of the country and lead it safely to self-government.*

11. To summarise: Dr. Jagan is at present the only possible elected leader; he and his party must show their followers what they can do instead of merely criticising all the attempts of others. While they are making this effort it is better to keep them in power than to revert to a nominated Government. Everything possible is being done, not without some success, to produce a lasting atmosphere and understanding in British Guiana of all that goes to make up parliamentary democracy and Western way of life. Dr. Jagan is unlikely to alter his Communist beliefs, but his efforts to bring his country to self-government and in his knowledge that the followers on whom he depends for electoral support are nationalist rather than Communist, he may grow to appreciate that neither before nor after independence is Communism a practicable form of government in British Guiana's geographical and economic circumstances. Alternatively in his efforts to walk his tight-rope and in his lack of governmental

experience and competent lieutenants he may lose popularity while his opponents get stronger and form a non-racial party capable of running the country.

12. We are no longer marking time. There will be many difficulties ahead. But the difficulties are no longer all on our side.

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**2. LETTER FROM SIR PATRICK RENISON, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES**

(14 April 1959)

SECRET

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BRITISH GUIANA IN 1959  
Governor of British Guiana to Secretary of State for the Colonies

(No. 15 Personal)

Government House, Georgetown  
10th March, 1959

Sir,

In February 1958, I sent to you a despatch\* in which I tried to summarise the whole political scene in British Guiana. In this present despatch I have the honour to try to bring the picture to date, and to give preliminary comments on the constitutional questions which must be solved this year.

2. Dr. Jagan and the People's Progressive Party have continued in power. They have faced difficult financial circumstances mainly owing to the fall in the world price of sugar and the recession in the aluminium industry. They have met mounting and often unfair opposition with which they have made little attempt to compromise. The Ministers maintain their own views and prejudices but have been able to work with the officials in Executive Council and in their Ministries and departments. They are not always experienced or practical or objective in their ideas. They would be in many more difficulties without the frank and impartial comments, the help and advice of the officials. In Executive Council there have been a number of exhausting differences of opinion; but no malice remains afterwards; both sides have been eager to avoid major crises. In the Ministers' favour it must be recorded that they work very long hours both in their offices and public duties and in explaining Government and party policy and actions throughout the length of the coastlands. That this working partnership is being maintained in the face of all the criticism and suspicions is a considerable achievement. I very much admire my senior officials. It has been shown that it is not impossible to carry on the administration in association with Jaganism under a Constitution of this type. It has yet to be proved whether it would be equally possible if a far greater measure of self-government were given.

3. Dr. Jagan himself with his insistent wife at his elbow dominates his party. Major decisions are made to his dictation in an inner council usually consisting of himself, his wife, Mr. Benn and Mr. Ram Karran. The party executive is then required to endorse these decisions. Those who are brave enough to resist or question are discredited among the rest of the party. Mr. Beharry alone gained some position as a dissident but has not the strength to lead a major break-away. The leaders' preoccupation with Ministerial duties has led to a marking time in party organisation and the spread of Communist teaching. But the party organisation, particularly in the rural areas, is a very long way ahead of its rivals.

4. There is no change in Dr. Jagan's Marxism. He fills his head with Marxist politico-economic theories. They seem to mean more to him than present realities. Perhaps he has faith that world Communism will triumph even in this hemisphere early enough for him to try out his theories. But with all his theories and arguments, and with all his obsessions and conceits, he has not insisted on any action which seems calculated purposefully to disrupt the present economy and way of life. The minor pinpricks have been all in keeping with much publicised past party manifestos. It has been noticeable that although the local economy is still buoyant, and all existing projects have been continued, since he came to power there has been no new major investment in the country. It is still difficult to say however whether this return to a previous rate in commercial and industrial development after the sudden flowering of alumina and manganese and oil exploration is due to the uncertainties of investors about Dr. Jagan's policies and abilities and long-term intentions, or merely to the general North American recession or the non-discovery of sufficiently favourable opportunities. He has learnt something about development finance; his visit to the United Kingdom and the United States and the subsequent visit here of a World Bank official have taught him that neither threats nor charm will bring money without sound plans, and that the scale of his dreams has little relation to the amount of development capital likely to be available and supportable in this country. He was a bit thrown off balance by his complete failure to frighten Her Majesty's Government into disproportionate financial help. And he was further shaken by the outright rejection of his subsequent call for coalition to "demand" more financial help and constitutional advance to internal self-government. He has not been so easy to work with since. But his economic theories and the economic vicissitudes of the country take a second place in his thinking. Self-government and the end of colonialism will always come first. It is for that reason that however difficult the finances and economics, however unfair and disconcerting the political opposition, however seemingly

unaccommodating the Colonial Office and local officials, he does not want to give up office. He cannot let anybody else lead the national struggle for independence.

5. Dr. Jagan is feeling the strain of his position. He has aged ten years since the 1957 election. He will not accept without suspicion unwelcome advice, even professional advice of those outside his own way of thinking, however distinguished; he has almost nobody inside his party with the ability to help him to resolve his suspicions. He follows his star. He is forced to carry almost the whole intellectual burden himself. Instead of getting ahead with practical action he causes delays and frustration by his opinions and antagonisms by his dialectics and theorising. Examples of such delays concern the future of rice milling and the marketing of rice, the generation of electricity by nuclear reactors or conventional plant, taxation and development policy, the encouragement of trade unionism and the choice of economic advisers. He is losing popularity and he knows it but puts it behind him. The opposition to him in the urban and African areas is open and abusive. He must be worried that the latest split in his party executive is no longer led by African Left-wing intellectuals who find it impossible to work with him, but by Mr. Beharry, an East Indian and a popular member of the Government who has gained a slightly spurious reputation for getting things done. In his own East Indian rural areas Dr. Jagan is perhaps no longer a Messiah. His followers will now discuss and criticise his Government actions. But he has only to speak to them to win them back. They have certainly not yet reached the stage when they would vote for anybody else. Under our present franchise he would in my opinion undoubtedly still carry the P.P.P. to election victory. His Government does not know how to win friends. It does not seem to want to win friends. It will take on anybody. Let them all come! It has the courage of its convictions. But its convictions are too often irrational obsessions. I am sure that there is not yet an alternative elected Government. Dr. Jagan's resignation at present would be a disaster.

6. Mr. Burnham is the only alternative leader of national size. He is not an attractive character like Dr. Jagan. The West Indies do not respect him so much and he will never attract the world Press in the same way. He is cynical, superficial, unreliable, prejudiced and irrational. But he is the man who appeals to the African masses, and with his wit and cleverness he shows no signs of losing his leadership. In Legislative Council he sneeringly and unscrupulously attacks the Government without regard to the running of the country. He dominates the scene like a favourite pupil more than the Speaker should allow and frequently behaves more like a cross-examining counsel than a Parliamentary debater. Only Dr. Jagan of the elected Ministers has the authority to stand up to him and Dr. Jagan, with his stubborn confidence in his own opinions, has only minor interest in Parliamentary matters and seldom bestirs himself. But for all his unpleasantness Mr. Burnham seems to be growing and if his turn comes he is perhaps no longer unthinkable as a chief Minister or Premier however difficult and untrustworthy a colleague he might be. During the year, he has brought off on his terms rather than theirs the essential merger of his party with the more moderate African and commercial opinion represented by the United Democratic Party. The City Council by majority vote have elected him Mayor of Georgetown. He has established a considerable liaison between his party, the People's National Congress and Dr. Williams' party in Trinidad, the People's National Movement. He has still to succeed in attracting the non-Jaganite East Indians to his party and making it the Guianese Nationalist Party which might be able to challenge the P.P.P. in straight fight. Some people doubt whether he sincerely wishes to have East Indians with him. But he has come out openly against Communism and declared himself clearly for democratic Socialism within the Commonwealth and the Western world. He has never budged from his determination to bring British Guiana into the West Indies Federation. He is taking more advice and of better quality and may even as Mayor learn that wit and cleverness are not a substitute for thoroughness and hard work. He



has no love for Great Britain. He is as rabid an anti-colonialist as Dr. Jagan and will never allow himself to be outdistanced by the P.P.P. in demands for independence. He believes that Dr. Jagan's power in the land will be almost impossible to break while he can put the responsibility for shortcomings and failures on to the Governor and the Colonial Office. Mr. Burnham would wish to see complete self-government given to British Guiana with some checks and balances but without effective reserve powers because he is sure that Dr. Jagan would smash himself when he could no longer shift the responsibility on to somebody else. He is not so realistic about the economic disaster which might afflict the country in the process.

7. There has been no advance (indeed none was expected) in converting Dr. Jagan from his Marxist and Communist theorising. There continues to be the greatest doubt whether Dr. Jagan while retaining his beliefs may ever become consciously willing to compromise with realities and to try produce policies and procedures which will work in our economic and geographical situation. He is devoted to his own vision of the new world. On the other hand his intentions though very Left wing do not appear to be revolutionary. His continuance in power may lead to stagnation through incapacity and failure to attract investment, or damage to the economy through his personal obsessions rather than disruption through subversive Communist methods. The success of the year has been in building up a real opposition to Jaganism, Marxism and Communism. The dark edge to this success has been that it has largely been accomplished through racialism. I think the opposition is real and permanent. If we can widen it from the educated, thinking European-Portuguese-African section of the community to include more of the East Indian shopkeepers and landowners and professional men, whether or not they will join political parties, I think we shall have something with sufficient force and following to stand against any of Dr. Jagan's theories or longer-term intentions. Once we have got such a Guianese body of opinion, convinced in their own minds and not just toady to officialdom, then I think that, even if his rural vote keeps Dr. Jagan in power, so far as major Communist disruption is concerned "he couldn't do it here." But I do think that by less than Communist action against his lifelong antagonists, he will, if unchecked, be likely to cause a set-back to the standard of living and major loss of some sections of the community. If we wish to bring his rule to an end, there may be ways of convincing Dr. Jagan's rural followers that he is not the leader they want without smashing the whole economy of the country. Failure to solve the problems of the rice industry could hasten his downfall if the whole responsibility was put on him.

8. The Opposition is spear-headed by Mr. Burnham with the other non-P.P.P. elected and nominated members in the Legislative Council. Mr. Burnham and his followers of course back it up with considerable ability in his weekly newspaper, *The New Nation*. But that is only the beginning. Three of the four daily newspapers are virulently anti-Jagan and the other criticises him fearlessly. Like Mr. Burnham, to European eyes, they are disgustingly unfair and indiscriminating in their methods. Perhaps they have better understanding of what can sell a newspaper in this country. Their combined onslaught is reinforced by a wholly anti-Jagan T.U.C. supported by a weekly newspaper of their own. The trade unions are consolidating and becoming stronger and better led. Then there are the government services with their own associations and trade unions. They too are no lovers of the P.P.P. and they are prepared to fight Jaganism wherever it touches them adversely. Local business as represented by the Chamber of Commerce and overseas business as represented by Bookers, &c., struggle to remain neutral but are occasionally stung into protest and opposition by the gaucheness of the Jagan Government, its tactlessness and misunderstanding of business men and its unreadiness to be grateful for all the patience and assistance it is given. The hold over the local newspapers of reactionary local interests is diminishing now that the *Argosy* and the *Chronicle* have lost the

valuable Government printing contracts through their own gross inefficiency. One of these papers may be taken over by East Indian interests. I do not believe that the East Indians with property and investments, who are planning to put up the money for the purchase, whatever their sympathy with Dr. Jagan as an East Indian, will be prepared to make their newspaper wholly subservient to the P.P.P. Party line (particularly if the party line became more Communist) when most of the papers must be sold in an anti-P.P.P. Georgetown. I think therefore that the emergence of an East Indians owned daily newspaper may be a good development which may teach East Indians that they have other interests if Dr. Jagan ever attempts to go too far. If at the same time the other newspapers can be reorganised and better run so that they are more discriminating in their criticism, the country will benefit. There are moves afoot in the commercial world which may lead to this.

9. The problem which will shortly face Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and on which I must give you advice later in the year, is how much constitutional advance to allow in British Guiana's present circumstances. The Constitutional Committee now sitting here, pushed by both Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham, will almost certainly ask for more than any Government in England will feel ready to give. The question which Her Majesty's Government will have to answer is whether there is enough solid opposition to Communism and to the prejudices of the party which may cause economic damage to warrant the grant of a constitution very near to internal self government when it is known that Dr. Jagan will almost certainly win the next election. The conundrum is beginning to be "How far will this better-informed British Guiana allow Dr. Jagan to go? One of the most interesting possibilities of reducing this question to more manageable proportions is the idea of altering our present "first past the post" system of franchise to a proportional representation transferable vote system. Mr. Burnham is campaigning vigorously for this change. I do not think it would be honourable nor to our long-term advantage to devise new systems merely to put the P.P.P. at an artificial disadvantage. But in this country with its racial composition I must support strongly any system of franchise which may reduce the dangers of racialism; they are at least as grave as the danger of Communism. The more I study the possibilities of proportional representation the more I believe that it may do this, although I have no misunderstanding of its disadvantages. The figures of the last two elections in 1953 and 1957 show clearly the disproportionate number of seats which the P.P.P. has won for their total number of votes. The East Indian preponderance is increasing. Proportional representation usually leads to a weak Government. But Dr. Jagan's Government will always be weak in the sense that like all Communist leaders, he seems unable to keep with him intelligent lieutenants of independent mind. It will be moreover always be suspected as racially East Indian and ideologically Communist. If he was forced to form a coalition in order to retain power it might bring more difficult for him to pursue an openly prejudiced or Communist course. A coalition Government of his opponents brought about through proportional representation, even if its majority over the P.P.P. was slim, could hardly engender less confidence than the present P.P.P. team. The coalition might prevent any extremism in Mr. Burnham's make up. As a broadly-based and anti-Communist Government it should give real encouragement to new investment and commercial development. It would probably bring us into the West Indies Federation, without which I see little economic or constitutional future for British Guiana. Above all it might help to solve racialism which, as I have said, now ranks with or above Communism as our chief security danger, since an anti-Jagan coalition would almost certainly represent all races.

10. It seems to me therefore that whether Mr. Burnham or Dr. Jagan is to lead the next Government (and many people think that Dr. Jagan for all the uncertainties may be preferable if, as I begin to believe, the Opposition will by then be permanently strong enough to hold him back from unwise prejudices and outright Communism) there may be more danger in not going far

enough in constitutional advance than in going too far. We cannot yet throw away all reserve powers and checks and balances. Neither of the possible governments is yet ready to do without the advice in Executive Council of trained officials. They need not have votes. But it would be disastrous if we damaged the strength of the Opposition which we have been building to keep Dr. Jagan within reasonable bounds, by encouraging Mr. Burnham and perhaps the West Indies to unite with him against "colonialism" in demanding greater advance. To drive the two leaders into reunion against Great Britain would be to throw away all the work of the last six years. There may be wisdom in allowing very nearly all that Mr. Burnham asks for (including proportional representation) in order to keep him on the side of Western democracy and transfer to him and his Allies (who for that purpose will, no doubt, include the Governments of the west Indies) our present responsibilities for seeing that Dr. Jagan can never smash institutions vital to the present economy and never turn British Guiana into a Communist State.

### **Summary**

11. We have found ways of working with Dr. Jagan. We have not changed his Marxist views or local prejudices, but in a difficult financial year of much political opposition he has not made serious attempt to cause major disruption of rises. Unfortunately since he came to power there has been little investment. Dr. Jagan has his worries as leader of the majority party while Mr. Burnham, the less attractive character, is growing as his political rival. A real opposition to Jaganism, Marxism and Communism has been built up - political, newspaper, trade union, government services and business men. It is beginning to look strong enough to prevent Dr. Jagan from open Communism even if he continues in power without changing his views. Racialism is at least as dangerous as Communism. Both dangers might be reduced by a system of proportional representation. We may be able to give a large measure of constitutional advance, very near to self-government, if we can rely on the local opposition to Jaganism being of sufficient strength and permanency to take over Great Britain's responsibility for making major economic damage to British Guiana impossible whether through party prejudice or through outright Communism.

I have,

(Signed) P.M. RENISON

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**3. MINUTE FROM IAN McLEOD, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, TO PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN**

(7 March 1960)

P.M.(60) 12

PRIME MINISTER

The British Guiana Conference starts this morning and, although it is not a major conference it has explosive possibilities. You might like to know the state of play. In 1953 a new and advanced constitution had to be suspended after less than six months to prevent the subversion of Government by the majority party (the People's Progressive Party under Dr. Jagan). Later an interim constitution took its place, but there has been for some time a feeling that British Guiana has largely purged its offence and so Alan Lennox-Boyd agreed some time ago that this conference should be held.

2. At present out of a Legislature of 25 there are 14 elected members, of whom 9 belong to the P.P.P. The remainder belong to the People's National Congress, which is really a break-away from the P.P.P. and is led by Mr. Burnham. Both Jagan and Burnham are members of the small delegation of eight who are over here with the Governor and his principal advisers for the conference. The situation is complicated by the existence, as in Tanganyika and Uganda, of a constitutional committee report, and as this consisted of the members of the Legislative Council and was therefore dominated by Dr. Jagan its report is extreme. The majority of the delegation will be asking, following the committee's recommendations, for independence within the Commonwealth, for a wholly elected unicameral Legislature, for a Prime Minister and for powers for British Guiana to amend her own constitution. This would leave virtually no powers to the Governor.

3. All of this is, of course, quite unacceptable and in this lies the possibility of difficulty. We propose to offer a Premier, a bicameral system with a wholly nominated upper house, and that the Governor should retain the usual reserve powers in relation to defence, external affairs and the police, in particular, in full. Her Majesty would retain power to amend the constitution and the U.K. Parliament could legislate for British Guiana. All this is very much in the tradition of development in this part of the world and if I can get them to accept something like this it would put them in the same sort of position as, for example, Trinidad and Barbados will be. The difficulties, if they do not become apparent today at the formal meeting, will probably become clear early next week or perhaps towards the end of this week. I will, of course, keep you closely in touch with any major developments.

I am sending copies of this minute to the members of the Colonial Policy Committee.

(Signed) Ian McLeod

7th March, 1960

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**4. MINUTE FROM IAN McLEOD, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, TO PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN**  
(14 March 1960)

P.M.(60) 15

PRIME MINISTER

The British Guiana Conference is going more or less according to form. All the delegates have been demanding independence and I have indicated my willingness to offer something rather short of internal self-government particularly with reservations about the police. However, Jagan is being so insistent on the necessity of an immediate declaration of independence by us that I suspect he is more or less under instructions from his party to break rather than to agree to anything less. If this is so, the next day or so will make this clear and we would no doubt have to have an imposed constitution. However, this would be, and be seen to be, a great step forward for British Guiana and however much he might fulminate about it I think he would find it very difficult in practice not to operate it.

I will report orally on progress in this matter either to the Cabinet or to the C.P.C. meeting on Friday.

(Signed) Ian McLeod

14th March 1960

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**5. MINUTE TO PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN**

(25 March 1960)

P.M. (60) 20

PRIME MINISTER

BRITISH GUIANA

Since the Secretary of State's minute of March 14th he held various conference meetings and I have continued them. Discussions have again and again come back to questions about the Police. We have said that we will take no decision now on whether the Police should come under ministerial control when the new constitution comes into force (around August 1961); but that after a six months period, during which the Governor would be able to see how public opinion and the Police themselves reacted to such a prospect, a decision would be taken. All the British Guianian Delegation insist that during this trial period a single Minister should be charged with the responsibility for the Police, the Governor retaining overriding powers. We have refused to accept this; but we have said that if the decision at the end of the six months were in favour of handing over the Police in August 1961, then during the last few months before then the Governor would naturally do his best to train one Minister on Police matters.

2. I think we may break this afternoon.

3. In due course we would then no doubt impose a constitution which might differ, but not substantially, from what has so far been worked out and which would be a great step forward for British Guiana towards independence. Probably, but not certainly, Jagan and company would operate it.

4. The alternative would be to try to follow the Kenya Conference pattern and have all the Delegation record their objection regarding the Police and possibly some other minor matters, but get them to agree that despite this area of difference they will cooperate in the new constitution which has been hammered out. Broadly this would amount to internal self-government around August 1961, subject to a decision on the Police in six months. I think all in all advantage lies in trying for this.

*(Initialed)* P

25th March, 1960

P.S. Since dictating the above I have talked things over with the Lord Chancellor and the Commonwealth Secretary who both agree to my trying for the second course.

P.

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## **6. MEMORANDUM ON BRITISH GUIANA BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR COLONIAL AFFAIRS**

(28 March 1960)

SECRET

28th March, 1960

CABINET

BRITISH GUIANA

**Memorandum by the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs**

In constitutional talks over the past three weeks agreement has been reached on recommendations to the Cabinet which would, subject to two provisos, result in the grant of full internal self- government to the Colony at the end of the normal life of the present Legislature (August, 1961). The provisos are: suitable arrangements to safeguard the rights of public servants, and agreement within the next twelve months by the Colonial Secretary that responsibilities in regard to police and internal security should be transferred to elected Ministers in the new Constitution. There would then be reserved to Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, acting through the Governor, powers only in regard to defence and external affairs (excluding external trade) and the making or amending of the Constitution or its suspension in grave emergency.

2. At the very end of the talks the Minister of Commerce and Industry in British Guiana, Dr. Jagan, demanded that new constitutional instruments should forthwith be made which would provide for the Premier now to preside in Executive Council instead of the Governor. His reasons are that the Premier should gain experience; that Her Majesty's Government should show trust in the political leaders of British Guiana; and that the territory should at once be given a status equal to Trinidad.

3. Mr. Burnham, leader of the Opposition, who was associated with Dr. Jagan in the misdemeanours of the Government that led to the suspension of the Constitution in 1953, supported Dr. Jagan's demands. He probably did so believing that Dr. Jagan's administration would get in a mess (he is right!) and that he would reap the fruits at the next elections.

4. I undertook to ask the Cabinet whether, despite the original insistence of the Colonial Secretary that the Governor should continue to preside over Executive Council at the constitutional stage following the elections of August, 1961, and his reluctant concession that at that stage the Premier should preside, an amending Order should be submitted to Her Majesty in Council now, providing for the Premier to summon and preside over Executive Council while still reserving to the Governor discretionary right to summon and preside over meetings if he saw fit.

5. The Colonial Secretary had previously undertaken to report the views of the British Guiana delegation that the leader of the Government under the new Constitution should be "Prime Minister" and not "Premier" and the strong protest of the delegation at the Colonial Secretary's decision that it should be "Premier".

6. I had also undertaken to seek the views of Ministers on the request by the British Guiana delegation that a Bill should be passed to amend the British Guiana Act, 1928, by removing the power to legislate by Order in Council. This request was made although the Colonial Secretary had announced his willingness to affirm by Despatch that it would not be his intention, after the introduction of the new Constitution, to advise that the power to legislate for British Guiana by Order in Council under the British Guiana Act, 1928, should be used other than for the purpose of constitution-making or in grave emergency. The claim of the delegation was that the continuance of this general power was derogatory to the status of British Guiana and implied a lack of sincerity on the part of Her Majesty's Government in the expressed intention of leading the territory to independence, and that the Colony should be put in the same position in this respect as a number of other West Indian territories in which, for historical reasons, Her Majesty no longer has a general power to legislate by Order in Council.

#### Immediate Removal of the Governor from Executive Council

7. The Governor and his official advisers judge that the immediate removal of the Governor from Executive Council, despite his retention until August, of general reserved powers, would be a grave blow to public opinion in British Guiana and the United States and would shock overseas investors. British Guiana depends almost entirely on overseas investment in sugar and the mining of bauxite and manganese. Dr. Jagan and his colleagues (with the possible exception of his communist wife, who is also a Minister) are inept administrators, The Governor would, upon the most liberal interpretation of his responsibilities, be compelled frequently to intervene to get decisions of Council altered, and this at best would mean much friction. Clearly it is undesirable that "reserved powers" should be used save on the most infrequent and important of occasions. There has been no discussion either in the Legislature or in public in British Guiana of substantial constitutional changes to take place earlier than the end of the normal life of the present Legislature, and not only has Dr. Jagan no public mandate to seek such changes but his majority is shaky.

8. I have offered instead that the title of "Premier" be brought into use at once by convention and that the Governor would liberally construe the present constitutional requirement that he preside in Council "so far as is practicable" and would from time to time absent himself so that the Premier would have experience in presiding. This was unacceptable to the delegation and if we, as I think we should for reasons given above, stand firm it may mean the breakdown of this conference.

#### Title of "Prime Minister"

9. I have done all that is required in reporting this demand.

#### Amendment of British Guiana Act, 1928

10. This is a request made in part because the Guianese, having through their own misconduct had one Constitution suspended, are nervous of having any future Constitution suspended and in part for prestige reasons at home. The assurance offered by the Colonial Secretary that he would not advise the exercise of the power save for constitution-making or in grave emergency seems sufficient. This is not a sticking point for the delegation.

11. I have consulted the Colonial Secretary by telegram and he has replied agreeing with my views.

*(Initialed)* P

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

28th March, 1960



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**7. BRIEF PREPARED BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE FOR PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN FOR HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY IN WASHINGTON**

(29 March 1961)

SECRET AND GUARD

P.M.(W)(61) No. 39            COPY No. 54

29th March, 1961

WASHINGTON TALKS: APRIL 1961

BRITISH GUIANA

Brief by the Colonial Office

Talking Points

(This is a defensive brief for use if the Americans raise the question of British Guiana instead of waiting, as expected, for the official talks already planned).

(i) We are very ready to listen to whatever the Americans wish to say to us about British Guiana. The ground will be covered thoroughly by the Working Party of officials in London after Easter and by the Governor of British Guiana (Sir Ralph Grey) when he visits the State Department on 24th April.

(ii) We, too, are anxious to do what we reasonably can to keep British Guiana resistant to communist influences, after it attains independence (probably in 1963).

(iii) The only communists, or near-communists, in the Colony are the leaders of the People's Progressive Party, the party now in power under Dr. Jagan. The Opposition parties, and the people of British Guiana, are quite unsympathetic to communism. As long as the West does not let them down (by neglecting them, or pushing them in other ways into the arms of communist "friends") there is no reason to fear any abrupt change.

(iv) With the General Elections in August this year there is no scope at this stage for covert intervention to secure the defeat of Dr. Jagan's party. In any case, the increase in the number of constituencies from 14 to 35 is likely to loosen the P.P.P.'s hold on the electorate. Some observers predict that the result will be a close run thing and that if Dr. Jagan were to win he would have a considerable and stubborn Opposition to contend with.

(v) The British Guiana Constitutional Conference held in London in the Spring of 1960 determined the constitutional pattern - internal self-government in August, 1961, with future independence agreed in principle, - the date of independence to be determined by another Conference, if asked for by the Legislature, to be held at least a year, or possibly two years later. With public faith long pledged on this, only the most critical situation in British Guiana would warrant attempting to put the clock back.

(vi) There are certain safeguards during the period of internal self-government - see paragraph 9 of the Brief.

(vii) Provided it is free, and seen to be free, of political entanglements, we consider that the proposed trade transactions between Cuba and British Guiana should be carefully examined on their merits. It is important that British Guiana should be able to dispose of its surpluses, e.g. of timber and rice.

(viii) We believe that the best chance of maintaining political stability in the Colony and keeping the communist wolf from the door is to ensure a steady supply, in reasonably generous measure, of technical, economic and financial aid, provided as rapidly as possible after going through the fewest procedural loops.

(A Background Note is at Annex\*)

COLONIAL OFFICE  
29th March, 1961.

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**8. ANNEX: BACKGROUND NOTE ON BRITISH GUIANA FOR THE KENNEDY-MACMILLAN MEETING PLANNED FOR WASHINGTON IN APRIL 1961-PREPARED BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE**

(29 March 1961)

SECRET AND GUARD

ANNEX

## BRITISH GUIANA: BACKGROUND NOTE

The Americans are very concerned about what they consider to be likely developments in British Guiana after internal self-government has been conferred in August, 1961 and if independence is granted a year or two later. Their concern appears to be twofold: -

(a) they do not want to see a communist or Castro-like government established on any part of the American continent;

(b) they do not want to see Castro given any sort of diplomatic triumph as might for instance result if Dr. Jagan came to some agreement with him.

2. It was at one time understood that President Kennedy might wish to discuss British Guiana with the Prime Minister. Subsequently, however, the Americans proposed that talks should first take place between United States and United Kingdom officials and they were intending to send a team over to London, probably before the time of the Prime Minister's departure. The latest information is, however, that they do not after all intend to send a team over but will rely on informal talks between the U.S. Embassy in London and U.K. officials. These are unlikely to be possible before the week commencing 10th April. In addition it has been arranged that the Governor of British Guiana (Sir Ralph Grey) will visit Washington for discussions with the State Department on the 24th April on his way home on leave. Mr. MacKintosh, Head of Colonial Office Department concerned, who is visiting the Caribbean, will be with him.

3. It is perhaps improbable in the circumstances that the President will raise the question. If he does, a possible "short answer" would be that talks between officials are to take place; but the Prime Minister will no doubt wish to have the background in case the President nevertheless wishes to have some discussion. Only the Prime Minister himself can judge, in the light of the general atmosphere of the talks, how far it will be prudent to "rib" the President over the paradox of the United States, of all countries, attempting to bring pressure on the U.K. to deny or delay self-government to a British colony on the American continent!

4. The brief on British Guiana prepared for the Prime Minister's visit to The West Indies (W.I.T(61)21) gives general information about the Colony and in Part "B" traces the political developments which have taken place since 1953 when constitution had to be suspended. Under the agreement reached at Lancaster House in March, 1960, full internal self-government will be introduced in August, 1961, subject to the qualification that the Secretary of State will decide in the light of reports received in about May whether or not control of the Police and Internal Security is to be included in the subjects to be devolved. Furthermore the principle of independence within the Commonwealth for British Guiana was accepted and it was agreed that a further conference would be called "to consider when it would be practicable to implement" the request for independence if such a request were made by both Houses of the British Guiana Legislature. It would be necessary for the August, 1961 Constitution to have been in force for at least two years before such a request could be entertained unless it should have been decided to

give independence to the West Indies Federation; in which case the minimum period of two years, after the entry into force of the August, 1961 Constitution, would be reduced to one year.

4\*. While the question whether control over Police and Internal Security should be devolved in August, 1961 is an open one, the Secretary of State will be bound to take into account reports rendered by the Governor and British Guiana Ministers in about May, 1961 on the extent to which certain interim arrangements for associating British Guiana Ministers with the subject over the past year have operated. At the Lancaster House Conference this was a stoutly fought issue. U.K. Ministers were initially reluctant to entertain the idea of responsibility for this subject devolving upon Ministers. In the face of very strong pressure from the British Guiana Delegations they agreed to a compromise under which a police council would be established with British Guiana Ministers gradually assuming responsibilities previously exercised by the Chief Secretary. Those arrangements have been going reasonably satisfactorily and if the reports in May are favourable it will be difficult to maintain that this responsibility should not be transferred.

5. It is agreed that there is no ground for complacency in respect of the future. It is likely that if, as seems probable, Dr. Jagan's Party wins the August 1961 elections, the new Government will fall short in administrative competence and wise judgment. Dr. Jagan is a woolly idealist, and has not distinguished himself for his administrative ability. Nor are his present colleagues impressive. This will undoubtedly afford a favourable field for the promotion of communist influence. Whether or not Dr. and Mrs. (Janet) Jagan can hardly be described as communists (which is hardly proven) they undoubtedly have communist and fellow travelling contacts in the outside world.

6. It is however much easier to state the problem than to see a solution. What were or are the alternatives to allow the normal pattern of constitutional development to take its course?

a) It would in theory have been possible to have continued indefinitely under the arrangements which resulted from the suspension of the constitution in 1953. But this amounted to a colonial regime and to do so would have been totally unacceptable both in British Guiana and the outside world, including the United States. The policy actually adopted was to re-introduce Dr. Jagan and his colleagues by degrees into polite society and for three years up to 1960 the Jaganite Ministers have on the whole conducted themselves with reasonable responsibility. By the spring of 1960 there was tremendous pressure from nearly all parties in British Guiana for great and immediate advances. The more extreme demands were resisted but the grant of anything short of what finally emerged from the Lancaster House Conference would almost certainly have broken up the Conference and sent both Dr. Jagan and his colleagues and the leaders of the largest minority party back to Georgetown in a state of revolt which would have led to a constitutional crisis, the resignation of Ministers, friction and ill-feeling on all sides, and quite possibly violence. As it was, the agreement was accepted and during the year which has since elapsed there has been little friction and no violence and the Jagan Ministers have continued to show reasonable responsibility, in spite of their occasional sensational excursions, e.g. to Cuba, the United Nations and East Germany;

b) Is it suggested that the changes which were agreed in March, 1960 should not now be implemented, at least in full, because of the re-assessment of the situation today? Any such decision would be difficult to justify in the light of the behaviour of Ministers during the past year; would certainly with some justification call forth the most extreme denunciations in British Guiana of broken faith on the part of the U.K. Government; and would undoubtedly lead to major political friction and, quite possibly, to disturbances.

7. The right course seems to be to go ahead with the constitutional development to which we are already committed and hope that the general principle that power brings a sense of responsibility will operate at least in some degree in the case of British Guiana Ministers. If these developments are to take their course (to which there is no satisfactory alternative) there is much to be said for giving no ground to British Guiana Ministers to claim that their new powers have been grudgingly given, that they are being so hedged about by restrictions that they cannot accept full responsibility for their actions, and that the U.K. Government is demonstrating a lack of confidence in them. If they could claim that these things were true they would be more, rather than less, likely to increase their contacts with "iron curtain" countries.

8. Meanwhile it is to be hoped that the Americans will continue and if possible increase their economic and financial assistance towards development in British Guiana. It would be unfortunate if they were to lessen, or decline to increase, their aid on the ground that they were not justified in assisting a country which might "go bad". The most likely way of stimulating contacts between Dr. Jagan and the West is to show earnest of a desire to give practical assistance in development schemes; just as the most certain way of stimulating him to develop his less respectable contacts would be to give him cause to feel that he was being denied adequate help from the West. The U.K. Government is at present giving substantial financial assistance under the C.D. & W towards British Guiana development.

9. Meanwhile there will be some safeguards. After August, 1961, and until independence (whenever that may be) U.K. Government will retain its responsibility for External Affairs and Defence (subject to a devolution of responsibility in certain trade matters); secondly, the U.K. Government will in the same period retain constitutional powers to legislate in an emergency by Order in Council. They could by this means give the Governor emergency powers and even suspend the Constitution. This power could however only be used in the last resort and it would be more difficult both practically and psychologically to do so in 1962 than it was in 1953. Finally, the U.K. Government is not yet committed to transfer responsibility for Internal Security although, as stated above, it may be difficult to withhold this without running into political difficulties, the effects of which might be on balance more disagreeable than the transfer of this responsibility.

10. The Americans would like to see British Guiana join the West Indies Federation; so should we. There would be mutual practical advantages; and it would make better sense for British Guiana to attain independence as part of the Federation and under its respectable umbrella. We are very ready to discuss further with the Americans (as we have done to some extent already) whether there are any ways in which the process could be encouraged. The matter would require most delicate handling however if it were not to be counter-productive. It would be fatal to give Dr. Jagan and his colleagues an impression that we or the Americans were trying to bring economic pressure to bear on them in order to shape their political future. It

would be equally disastrous if, by making it seem more likely that British Guiana would join, Jamaica became less ready to vote favourably in the referendum (much Jamaica opinion would not welcome the adhesion of British Guiana). So, while we agree in principle, we must "gang warily" and probably take no initiative until (a) the British Guiana elections of August are over, and (b) The West Indies Independence Conference has been successfully concluded and the Jamaican referendum has been held and (one hopes) a more impressive government been established at the federal centre.

11. Publicity was given some time ago to the reported offer of economic aid to British Guiana from Cuba. The terms of the proposition have never been made precise but they relate primarily to the exploitation of British Guiana timber for export to Cuba. Any such arrangement would require the sanction of H.M.G. which would have to balance the difficulty of denying outside aid to British Guiana when the West was not providing as much development money as British Guiana Ministers claim is needed, against the obvious objections. Such information as we have however suggests that the proposition partakes more of trade than aid. Our thinking is that we should probe further to see whether there would be any real advantage for British Guiana. If so we should probably not seek to veto it. At the moment the matter is still being considered by the Departments concerned in Whitehall.

*(Editor's Note: \* Paragraph numbers are reproduced as they are shown in the original document.)*

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## **9. RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN SECRETARIES OF STATE**

(6 April 1961)

SECRET

A1051/17G

*Foreign Office (Secret) and Whitehall (Secret) Distribution.*

RECORD OF A MEETING HELD IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1961, AT 11 a.m.

### **Present:**

UNITED KINGDOM	UNITED STATES
The Secretary of State	Mr. Rusk
Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar	Mr. Bowles
Sir Harold Caccia	Mr. Bruce
Lord Hood	Mr. Kohler

Mr. Samuel	Mr. McGhee
Mr. Ramsbotham	Mr. White
Mr. Wiggin	Mr. Burdett
Mr. Thomson	Mr. Swihart

## British Guiana

*Mr. Rusk* referred to the United States Government's concern that when British Guiana became independent the United States might find themselves faced with another Castro-type situation. He recognised that it was paradoxical for the United States Government to advocate early independence as a general principle while urging Her Majesty's Government to go slow in British Guiana. He repeated the desire of the United States Government to explore with us ways and means of ensuring that an independent British Guiana was not dominated by the Communists.

2. *The Secretary of State* said that he fully understood the United States concern and that Her Majesty's Government were anxious to do everything possible to make sure that British Guiana developed on the right lines. It would, however, be difficult to put the clock back. The only Communists or near Communists in the Colony were the leaders of the People's Progressive Party. The Opposition parties and the people themselves were quite unsympathetic to Communism. We believed that the best chance of maintaining political stability in the Colony was to ensure a steady supply, in reasonably generous measure, of technical, economic and financial aid.

3. In the course of further discussion *Mr. White* referred to the American ideas of channelling trade and aid to British Guiana through the West Indies Federation in the hope that this would encourage the people of British Guiana to believe that their best interests lay in joining the Federation.

4. *The Secretary of State* mentioned the arrangements which had already been made for Anglo-American talks on British Guiana, namely, preliminary talks in London in the week beginning April 10 to be followed by talks in Washington on or about April 24 when the Governor of the Colony and the head of the Colonial Office department concerned visited Washington. It was agreed that further discussions would probably be required after this, and that these would best take place in London.

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## **10. SUMMARY OF DRAFT BRIEF PREPARED BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BERMUDA**

(December 1961)

SECRET

### **SUMMARY**

The American President may wish to discuss the situation in the Caribbean. If he does not it would be in our interests to do so. These events are moving fast and not always to our advantage. Whilst American defensive interest in the area is alarmed and quickening British interest in maintaining stability diminishes. In the 1960s the Colonial Office can no longer look after the American flank in the Caribbean than the British Navy the Monroe doctrine. It must therefore be recognised that in her own interests America must play a larger part in the British area.

During the immediate period of development of our responsibilities which will include independence for Jamaica and British Guiana and probably Trinidad, it is necessary that the Americans and ourselves should work closely together without inhibition.

Immediate problems face both our countries in the British Caribbean territories. Up till now these have been discussed piecemeal with the Americans at a lower level. The time has perhaps come for higher level talks with Presidential backing in Washington at an early date to discuss these immediate problems and the pattern we should seek to evolve in the Caribbean.

*(Undated. Prepared by the British Colonial Office, December 1961).*

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## **11. DRAFT BRIEF PREPARED BY BRITISH COLONIAL OFFICE**

*(Undated, but prepared in December 1961)*

SECRET

### **DRAFT BRIEF FOR PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BERMUDA - ANGLO-U.S. APPROACH TO THE CARIBBEAN AREA**

In his discussions with Sir Grantley Adams on the 4th December the Prime Minister undertook to raise with the President the possibility of devising a joint Anglo-American scheme for the development of British Honduras. A separate note on the problems of this territory is being submitted. (Separate notes are also being submitted on British Guiana and the Federation.) But the Colonial Office believe that it would be fruitless to discuss the problems of British Honduras except in the wider context of the



Caribbean problem as a whole. The increase of general instability in Latin America, the rise of Castro and the imminent independence from British rule of Jamaica and soon thereafter of British Guiana and possibly Trinidad must mean that whilst on the one hand American defensive interest in the area is heightening, on the other British interest, and capacity, in maintaining a *cordon sanitaire* for the West is being lowered. In the 1960s the Colonial Office can no more look after the American flank in the Caribbean than the British Navy the Monroe doctrine. Nevertheless, not only is it important to both. Governments to maintain political stability in the area but probably neither Government could do it at this time without the help of the other. Whilst we can continue to offer our Commonwealth and Colonial connection, some aid, and some minor defence arrangements for internal security purposes, the time has come for the United States to make an economic contribution bigger than anything they have hitherto contemplated and far exceeding - not just matching - our own. If they do not there is a real danger of a spread of instability degenerating into Castroism. Hitherto, the U.S. efforts in this field in British Guiana, in the Federation and in British Honduras have been inadequate.

2. In view of the changing circumstances and of our own special problems the need for a change in American policy is urgent. The Colonial Secretary will visit the West Indies in January to see if he can find a basis for keeping in existence a federation of the Eastern Caribbean including Trinidad. There is already a good deal of evidence to show that, as the price for consenting to join such a federation, the Premier of Trinidad will demand economic assistance on a scale which the British Government, with all its other commitments, could not possibly afford. It is therefore already clear that our chances of success will depend upon how much help the Americans are prepared to give. It will, however, be extremely difficult to consult them about this with any chance of reaching firm decisions when they are in the middle of a conference. There is, therefore, a need for us to have reached some understanding with them on this point before formal negotiations with the West Indians start. If the Americans would agree, therefore, we should be prepared to send a mission to Washington within the next few weeks to have discussions with them on this subject. It is not felt here, however, that these discussions would reveal anything very new about American thinking or secure from them the kind of undertakings we desire, unless there had been a presidential directive to the effect that they would attach far greater importance to assisting this area than heretofore.

3. The need for a change in U.S. policy is as urgent in British Guiana. The colony's 5-year development plan, which is regarded as the minimum that must be done if the economy of the territory is not to regress, is running into financial difficulties, and Dr. Jagan has to raise some \$BWI55 million, if it is to be completed. Moreover, he has ideas for vastly expanded expenditure on development (his favourite figure is \$BWI400 million), and all his efforts are directed towards finding the finance for such a total. Her Majesty's Government cannot assist him further and Dr. Jagan is willing to look anywhere for money, including the Soviet bloc. Dr. Jagan, however got no firm promise of money and only a general undertaking on aid during his recent visit to Washington. He is now distrustful of American intentions, and the general atmosphere of bumbling associated with the American efforts to do something does nothing to change his convictions. In spite of their tactful reception of Dr. Jagan during his recent visit to Washington, their handling of the situation contrasts with what we have taken to be their policy of proving to British Guiana that its future lies in association with the West rather than in following the path taken by Dr. Castro, who is one of Dr. Jagan's heroes.

4. In British Honduras, too, there is a need, for different reasons, for aid. The country has been devastated by hurricane "Hattie", and after reconstruction and rehabilitation there will remain the basic need for development. If development were linked with a policy for controlled immigration, an outlet might be provided for a limited number of the excess populations in the British Caribbean territories.

5. Any mission we might send to Washington could also raise the problems of British Honduras and British Guiana as well as those of the Federation. If the initial American reaction to the mission is favourable, it is suggested that we might propose to them that our two Governments should explore the possibility of promoting the closer co-operation not merely of local groupings to avoid balkanisation, but of all the territories in the Caribbean which are still, in one way or another, democratically inclined or dependent upon the Western powers. If the Americans agreed to play a bigger part in the British territories, this, together with our own efforts and theirs in Puerto Rico and the efforts of the French and the Dutch in their areas, would go a long way towards preventing the whole area degenerating into Castroism.

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## **12. TELEGRAM FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON**

(4 January 1962)

SECRET

AMENDED DISTRIBUTION - January 12, 1962

OUTWARD SAVING TELEGRAM

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO WASHINGTON

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No. 61 Saving  
January 4, 1962

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

BRITISH GUIANA INDEPENDENCE

The British Guiana Constitutional Conference of 1960 agreed on a formula for independence as a result of which an Independence Conference would not have been called before August 1962, with independence itself probably not taking effect much before mid 1963. In September 1961 the United Kingdom/United States Working Party agreed that the United Kingdom should endeavour to adhere to this formula, but that if necessary there would be further United Kingdom/United States consultations on the situation in British Guiana.

2. In October, 1961 both Houses of the British Guiana Legislature passed a Resolution asking Her Majesty's Government to fix a date for independence in 1962. The Resolution was approved by a very substantial majority and unanimously by the two main parties which between them obtained 85% of the votes in the recent General Elections. On December 13 Dr. Jagan asked the Colonial Secretary to give effect to the Resolution. In view of Her Majesty's Government's undertaking to consult further with the United States Government (which could not of course be disclosed) the Colonial Secretary told Dr. Jagan that although the 1960 Constitutional Conference formula represented the agreed position, the Legislature's Resolution was a new development in so far as at the 1960 Conference there had not been near unanimity on the Guianese side on the question of independence. The Colonial Secretary therefore proposed to consult his colleagues at an early date and would inform Dr. Jagan of Her Majesty's Government's decision early in the new year. Dr. Jagan was deeply disappointed and has since taken the question to the United Nations, where his address to the Fourth Committee has led to the draft Resolution inviting Her Majesty's Government to resume negotiations with British Guiana. This Resolution is due to be debated at the resumed session in January.

3. While there are still arguments for adhering to the formula agreed in 1960, the balance of advantage now lies with accelerating the move towards independence. However divided on other subjects, both British Guiana parties are in agreement in their overwhelming desire for early independence and this is probably the one major issue on which Dr. Jagan could enlist mass support for his Government.

4. In so far as readiness for independence is concerned British Guiana's claim is as good, if not better than that of certain other territories that have recently attained independence or are about to do so. Delay would worsen Her Majesty's Government's relations with the present Government of British Guiana. If there are no early indications of progress towards independence and of a greater flow of aid, the present Government of British Guiana will be reinforced in its tendency to suspect the West as a whole. The lack of concrete response so far to Dr. Jagan's request for financial aid which he pressed during his visit to the United States has already aggravated the situation. Anti-British agitation would provide a happy hunting ground for those elements whose aim is to exacerbate racial tension in the Colony. Any outbreak of violence would be extremely difficult to control and Her Majesty's Government would find it difficult to justify the despatch of military reinforcements. Instead of its present policy of seeking aid without strings from all sources, the British Guiana Government might well turn more exclusively to those countries which are committed anti-colonialists. The Governor's existing capacity to exert influence over the P.P.P. Government through personal persuasion would be finally destroyed and the negotiations for independence (which is in any case inevitable) would be jeopardised, with the result of even greater pressure for an early date for our permanent withdrawal.

5. Unless there is an early announcement of the date for an Independence Conference the effects of Jagan's address to the United Nation's Fourth Committee will be serious. To insist on the 1960 formula might well lead the anti-colonial majority to action which could bring about a crisis in the relations between the United Kingdom and the United Nations, The outstanding draft resolution on British Guiana (which we regard as clearly *ultra vires*) would provide a pretext for this. This would be a heavy price to pay for delaying the inevitable Independence Conference for at most a few months.

6. Making use of the foregoing arguments and referring to the Secretary of State's conversation with Mr. Rusk on December 21 you should inform the State Department urgently that Her Majesty's Government propose to hold the British Guiana Independence Conference in May of this year i.e. some three months earlier than provided for in the 1960 formula. Subject to a satisfactory outcome, independence would be attained by about the end of 1962, although a date for independence would not be decided upon or communicated to Dr. Jagan before the Independence Conference. Her Majesty's Government hope that the United States Government can agree to their proposal. You should stress that they are very anxious to be in a position to convey their decision to Dr. Jagan before the United Nations session is resumed, in order to avoid any impression that this decision had been influenced by United Nations proceedings, which would be incorrect. You should accordingly request a reply by January 9.

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### **13. ANNEX I: NOTE FROM BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TO BRITISH MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

(9 January 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX I

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO NEW YORK  
(United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations)

Cypher /OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION  
No. 132  
January 9, 1962.

IMMEDIATE  
January 9, 1962.  
CONFIDENTIAL

D: 1.20 p.m.

Addressed to UKMis New York telegram No. 132 of January 9.  
Repeated for information to Washington.

The Colonial Secretary and I have decided that our policy towards discussion of British colonial territories in the United Nations should be governed by the following principles:

2. We should take every opportunity of explaining in general terms our colonial record and policy, and with this end in view should be reluctant either to withdraw or to play only a passive part in the United Nations Committees concerned.

3. If the affairs of one of our dependent territories are discussed in a United Nations Committee, we should:

(i) make it clear that the United Nations has no right to intervene in our territories nor to hear petitioners from them and that such discussion is therefore *ultra vires*;

(ii) emphasize that any statement which we might make is purely *ex gratia*;

(iii) refuse to play any part in discussion during the formal appearance of any petitioners.

4. We should however be ready insofar as the Colonial Secretary approves:

(i) in our general exposition of policy, to emphasize and enlarge on particular facts about the territory concerned (already contained in the political and other information, submitted to the United Nations), in order to remove any excuse for mis-statements and misrepresentation;

(ii) to correct briefly any glaring mis-statements of facts about our policy as may be necessary.

5. At the same time we should firmly refuse to let ourselves, on such occasions, be submitted to cross-examination on the merits of our policies, or to be drawn into anything more than general statements on our future intentions about particular territories as already made public.

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**14. LETTER FROM BRITISH EMBASSY, BONN**  
(11 January 1962)

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
BONN.

January 11, 1962.

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Patricia,

I wonder if you could obtain and pass on to me any information available from the Colonial Office about the probable date for British Guiana's independence. In the enclosure to American Department's secret letter of November 6 no definite date was given but some time this year (i.e. 1962) was mentioned. However judging from such newspaper reports as I have seen about Mr. Jagan's visit to London shortly before Christmas this is by no means a certainty. Since, however, Dr. Weiz of the Auswärtiges Amt is likely to ask me for information on this point, as well as for information as to when he can expect to hear further from Mr. Benn about possible aid projects to be financed by Germany, I should be glad to have some briefing on both points as soon as possible. I was incidentally very interested to read, in the Print, Ottawa dispatch No. 20 of November 6 which showed that the Canadians were fully as impressed by Mr. Jagan as the Germans had been by Mr. Benn, and that in both instances these governments felt, having met the politicians concerned that British Guiana seemed quite capable of running their own affairs. But no doubt both Mr. Jagan and Mr. Benn presented a very different picture of themselves during their foreign travels from that which they show to the Colonial Office and in Georgetown, when they have no call to be on their best behaviour.

2. All the same it would be very unfortunate if we let slide this opportunity of getting the Federal Government to help in British Guiana's development. This is true not only for the sake of British Guiana, but also in the wider context of German development aid as a whole. E.R.D. (to whom I am sending a copy of this letter) will be able to comment on this aspect, in which many departments in Whitehall are interested.

Yours

(Signed) R.M.B. Chevallier

[To]  
Miss P.E. Hutchinson,  
American Department,  
Foreign Office

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**15. BRIEF PREPARED BY THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE FOR THE BRITISH DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*(The document has no date, but the text indicates it was prepared in shortly after 9 January 1962, but before 15 January 1962).*

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:  
RESUMED 16TH SESSION

Brief for the British Delegation

BRITISH GUIANA

DOCUMENTS

I.O.C.(61)119                      Brief for 16th Session on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

I.O.C.(61)125                      Brief for 16th Session on Colonial Affairs in the U.N.

BACKGROUND

In the last days of the first part of the 16th Session Dr. Jagan, Premier of British Guiana, was heard as a petitioner in the Fourth Committee, despite strong British objections. After he had made a speech roundly attacking British colonial policy in British Guiana and generally, a resolution was tabled with the following operative paragraphs.

"1. Requests the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of British Guiana to resume negotiations immediately with a view to reaching agreement on the date of Independence for British Guiana, bearing in mind the wishes of the people of British Guiana as expressed by their parliament.

2. Requests the Special Committee appointed by General Assembly Resolution 1654(XVI) of 27th November, 1961 to consider the question of Independence for British Guiana at the earliest possible stage of its operation, and report on the results of these considerations to the General Assembly at its Seventeenth Session."

2. This resolution was not pressed to a vote but the item on non-self-governing territories was kept open so that it could be debated at the Resumed Session.

## BRITISH POLICY ON INTERVENTION

3. Our policy on intervention by the United Nations in the administration of our territories has been considered in the light of these events and the conclusions reached were set out in the Foreign Office telegram No. 132 to New York, a copy of which is at Annex I. The part to be played by the British delegation in any debate on British Guiana in the Resumed Session must be governed by this.

## INSTRUCTIONS

4. Our objective, without entering into argument on the substance of the case in the Committee, is to get the resolution withdrawn or at least not pressed to the vote. We hope the announcement of a date for a conference on the independence of British Guiana, which will probably be made on or very soon after 15th January will help to secure this. When the announcement is made the delegation should therefore have it circulated by the Secretariat as part of our provision of political information in accordance with Lord Home's undertaking last September.

5. If nevertheless the question of British Guiana is raised again, it will presumably be in the form of a debate on the draft resolution. This will probably mean that there will be no suitable opportunity for a general exposition of our colonial policy during which the British representative could refer to the facts about British Guiana (on the lines of paragraph 4(i) of the policy statement at Annex I). The British representative should not therefore make any speech on British Guiana at the start of the proceedings. He should however intervene as early as possible in the debate to say that in our view the debate is *ultra vires* and that we could not recognise any resolution which might be adopted. He should refer to Lord Dundee's speech in Plenary on 27th November, and reaffirm that we are still responsible having regard to the circumstances of each case and do not need to be urged on in this task. We have undertaken to supply the United Nations with information about the progress we are making; and as part of this the delegation has circulated (or will shortly circulate) the text of an announcement concerning British Guiana. If the Fourth Committee persists in debating the matter dealt with in the draft resolution he will not be able to take cognisance of the proceedings since they would not in our view be in accordance with the Charter.

6. If, later in the proceedings, it seems advisable to make a further statement to correct any glaring mis-statements of fact about our policy in British Guiana, the delegation has discretion to make one limited intervention for this purpose only. In doing so, they should make it clear that it is without prejudice to our view that the whole proceedings are improper and they should not be drawn into any debate.

7. Material is being sent to the delegation separately which may be used for answering questions and giving facts in the lobbies. This material will be in a form suitable for transmission to the Secretariat in accordance with our undertaking to supply political information: and the delegation has discretion, if they think it will help for example in securing the withdrawal of the resolution, to ask for it to be circulated in whole or in part.



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**16. LETTER FROM DEAN RUSK, SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES, TO LORD HOME, BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 19 FEBRUARY 1962**

TOP SECRET

QUOTE:

Dear Alex:

You know from our correspondence in August of last year of my acute concern over the prospects of an independent British Guiana under the leadership of Cheddi Jagan. Subsequent to his victory in the August elections we agreed to try your policy of fostering an effective association between British Guiana and the West and an Anglo-American working party developed an appropriate program. At our request safeguards, including consultations about new elections, were included in case matter went awry. In pursuance of this program the President received Jagan on his visit to this country in October. I must tell you now that I have reached the conclusion that it is not possible for us to put up with an independent British Guiana under Jagan. We have had no real success in establishing a basis for understanding with him due in part to his grandiose expectations of economic aid. We have continued to receive disturbing reports of communist connections on the part of Jagan and persons closely associated with him. Partly reflective of ever growing concern over Cuba, public and Congressional opinion here is incensed at the thought of our dealing with Jagan. The Marxist-Leninist policy he professes parallels that of Castro which the OAS at the Punta del Este Conference declared incompatible with the Inter-American system. Current happenings in British Guiana indicate Jagan is not master of the situation at home without your support. There is some resemblance to the events of 1953. Thus, the continuation of Jagan in power is leading us to disaster in terms of the colony itself, strains on Anglo American relations and difficulties for the Inter-American system.

These considerations, I believe, make it mandatory that we concert on remedial steps. I am anxious to have your thoughts on what should be done in the immediate future. In the past your people have held, with considerable conviction, that there was no reasonable alternative to working with Jagan. I am convinced our experience so far, and now the disorders in Georgetown, makes it necessary to reexamine this premise. It seems to me clear that new elections should now be scheduled, and I hope we can agree that Jagan should not accede to power again.

Cordially yours,

Dean Rusk.

UNQUOTE

TOP SECRET

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**17. COLONIAL OFFICE - INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

(21 February 1962)

**BRITISH GUIANA**

At the Cabinet Meeting on February 22 the Colonial Secretary may raise the subject of Mr. Rusk's message to the Secretary of State received through the American Embassy here on February 20.

2. Although Mr. Rusk's language is very strong the Americans have good reason to be appalled by the prospect of an independent Government in British Guiana under Jagan. The reports from the Governor of British Guiana about recent events there have shown that Jagan (quite apart from his extreme left wing views) is a thoroughly incompetent administrator and quite lacking in political wisdom. Mr. Rusk is also right in claiming that it was agreed in the Anglo/American Working Party on British Guiana last September that we should consult with the Americans about "the feasibility of new elections being held prior to British Guiana independence".

3. The position in British Guiana itself is highly confused and the Colonial Secretary will presumably give an up-to-date account of it tomorrow. But it seems from the latest information available to us that the Governor has made clear to Jagan that either he must resign or govern effectively in Georgetown (where his political opponents have majority support). The Colonial Office have two main aims, one short term to reduce tension to the point at which troops can be withdrawn, the other long term at all costs to avoid having to repeat what was done in 1953, suspending the Constitution and assuming direct responsibility for administration for an indefinite time to come. The latter course would now be very much more difficult than it was in 1953. Considerable delay in the granting of independence now would probably result in further violence. On the other hand the Colonial Office realise that it may now be impracticable for the Constitutional Conference fixed for May to decide upon a date for independence as originally proposed.

4. We should clearly wish to meet the Americans as far as we can in preventing the establishment of an incompetent and extreme left wing Castro-like Government in British Guiana. But it may be necessary to point out in reply to Mr. Rusk that the movement towards independence has gone so far that even with the set-back caused by the recent riots cannot be checked indefinitely; that if new elections are held there is no guarantee that Jagan will not once more be victorious, and will be that much more embittered by the course of events; and finally that even if one of the other two political leaders, Burnham or D'Aguiar become Prime Minister neither of them appears to be any more competent than Jagan even if their political views are less objectionable.

(Signed)  
(H.A.A. HANKEY)  
February 21, 1962

[Sent to]  
Sir R. Stevens  
Mr. Samuel

Copied to: Mr. Cheetham  
Mr. Hurd

*[Handwritten comments at the bottom of the memorandum:]*

Nor does Mr. Rusk offer any suggestion as to how his object might be realized.  
[Signed] R. Stevens - 21/2

You do not appear to have seen this submission, or Mr. Rusk's rather extraordinary letter.  
[Signed] R. Stevens - 23/2

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**18. MINUTE FROM PRIME MINISTER MACMILLAN TO FOREIGN SECRETARY LORD HOME**  
(21 February 1962)

PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL MINUTE

SERIAL No. M51/62

TOP SECRET

FOREIGN SECRETARY

I have just received copy of a message to you from Mr. Rusk about British Guiana. I am bound to say I have read it with amazement. One or two phrases are incredible for instance, "I must tell you now that I have reached the conclusion that it is not possible for us to put up with an independent British Guiana under Jagan" or "It seems to me clear that new elections should now be scheduled and I hope that we can agree that Jagan should not accede to power again". I hope Sir Patrick Dean will be given these sentences.

How can the Americans continue to attack us in the United Nations on colonialism and then use expressions like these which are not colonialism but pure Machiavellianism. Of course, it is nice to feel that they are partners with us and have such confidence in you, as to send you a letter of this kind but it does show a degree of cynicism which I would have thought Dean Rusk could hardly put his pen to. He, after all, is not an Irishman, nor a politician, nor a millionaire; he has the reputation of being an honourable and somewhat academic figure.

February 21, 1962

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**19. LETTER FROM JOHN HENNINGS, COLONIAL ATTACHE AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, TO AMBLER THOMAS OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE**

(22 February 1962)

SECRET AND PERSONAL

BRITISH EMBASSY  
WASHINGTON DC  
February 22, 1962

My dear Ambler,

As I have been somewhat intensely involved over the past few days with the Paramount Chief of Basutoland and his retinue who are now in town, I have not had the opportunity before now to give you a picture of the American reactions to the latest events in British Guiana.

In general, there has been a pretty factual coverage in the press of the events, although a general satisfaction is apparent at the embarrassments which Jagan has encountered, and many are openly speculating that it will almost inevitably mean that the British will screw up their courage to postpone independence. Most papers have brought out the racial complexion of the riots, and have brought home to many Americans for the first time the essential features of the racial situation, and many have taken leave to doubt whether, even if the apprehensions about the Jagans did not exist, a territory without these racial tensions is ready for independence. The papers have realistically reported that the despatch of British troops was in response to an appeal by Jagan and has been undertaken not for the purpose of buttressing Jagan in power (though some indicate that this is an almost inevitable consequence of our action) but simply to prevent mob rule.

Note has also been taken generally of our statement that our decision to send troops was accompanied by a disclaimer about our views on the polices giving rise to the present situation. This disclaimer is called by many papers to be "significant", and the

moral is drawn, hopefully, that independence will surely now be postponed, or at least made conditional upon the holding of a further general election. Many papers draw the moral that it is as well that these disturbances occurred while the British was still in ultimate control, or else Jagan might have sought this assistance from Cuba. The celerity with which we moved has also gained us a few good marks, and some even go so far as to think that we were able to move so quickly because we were in position, and had our plans well laid, to make such an intervention to suspend the constitution. Perhaps the most sober comment, summing up these American views and hopes is that in the Washington *Evening Star* of the 19th February:

*"So it is an irony of sorts that free Britain which has no love for the man, has responded affirmatively to Mr. Jagan's cry for help. Almost needless to say, there are many reasons why the ouster or sudden downfall of this pro-Soviet troublemaker would be good, but the mob cannot be allowed to take charge. Accordingly, with British military intervention, Guiana is quiet at the moment, and London can be counted upon to postpone the grant of full independence until there is a Georgetown government competent enough to insure that the place will not become a red satrapy or sort of Congo in the Western hemisphere."*

The *New York Times* was surprisingly rather more forthright:

*"One result is obvious - British Guiana is in no condition for complete independence for many months and perhaps for several years. Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan's Government has shown its lack of wisdom and what is more its inability to maintain law and order. Dr. Jagan would now be in exile if he had not been able to call on the British for military help. The events provide a classical example of the gap between economic theory and practical politics. A Cambridge, England, expert, Nicholas Kaldor, drew up an austerity budget for Prime Minister Jagan that looked good on paper. But it antagonised workers as well as business interests; there was, also [...**one line missing in copy**...] program without the ability to put it into effect. The result is a setback of major proportions. The destruction of Georgetown was a fearful blow to the already weakened economy. Thanks to the British, the disturbances are over, the constitution and internal self-government remain in force, and a new start can be made."*

Not all the commentators, however, have assumed that a deferment of independence or the contrived upsetting of Jagan will be the inevitable consequence of the past few days. The Baltimore *Sun* of the 17th February commenting that in sending troops to British Guiana to keep the regime of Cheddi Jagan from falling to smithereens, the British "by one of those horrible ironies which govern the actions of the law-abiding, are thus helping a man they would probably be glad to see the last of." The *Sun* concludes that "at worst, British Guiana will descend into turmoil for an indefinite time. At best, the trouble may postpone the constitutional conference scheduled for May, and so delay the establishment of another Marxist state in the Americas," but Mr. Louis Rukeyser, the *Sun's* London correspondent, reported that although "skepticism in official quarters about Jagan's trustworthiness to take over these additional powers (i.e. upon independence) has been strengthened by the week's events . . . some officials think that it may be impossible for Britain long to delay the transfer of full authority to the local government."

It was against this sort of background opinion which was crystallising during the events that preceded the outbreak of violence that Denis Greenhill and I were summoned on February 17th to receive the State Department's expressions of concern. Burdett asked us a number of leading questions, which suggested that he did not believe that the violence was racially inspired, but

was a spontaneous outburst of democratic opinion, à la Hungary, against Jagan. He foresaw a union of the opposition evidence in a report that D'Aguiar had engaged Burnham as his counsel in some legal dispute. He said that he had heard that two PPP members of the legislature were likely to cross the floor, when the opposing forces would be evenly balanced, seventeen aside, and if the PPP lost the Houston bye-election (*sic*) (and the opposition had only to gather eighteen mere votes!) Jagan would lose his majority. He said that in that event, it was a pity that the battle against the PPP had not remained within parliamentary bounds. Burdett pressed us to say that these events would inevitably mean that HMG would take another look at its timetable for Guiana's independence, and urged that there was sufficient evidence of Jagan's loss of popular support for us at least to demand a further general election. When we asked what alternative government there might be, Burdett did not suggest that there might be any desertion from the present PPP ministerial ranks (e.g. Rai), but pointed to his evidence of a compact between D'Aguiar and Burnham. (At a party last night which I gave for the Paramount Chief, however, he had clearly been thinking further about this, and came up to ask me whether a Ministry of All The Talents could not be formed under some reputable non-party man who commanded widespread respect - someone like Archbishop Demaskinos!) Denis and I told Burdett that we would of course report the American wish to be fully informed of our assessment of the causes and consequences of the recent debacle, but that it would be sometime before the Governor, and ourselves, who were busily engaged in putting out fires, could sit down to submit a considered view. Burdett then said winningly that the Americans were an impatient people, and hoped that we would provide them with some off the cuff reflections there and then. In this, we had to disoblige them.

I think it is clear that even when Burdett asked us to call, the Administration were already preparing themselves to send the letter which Dean Rusk wrote to the Foreign Secretary on February 20th, a copy of which you have undoubtedly seen, and which Ralph Grey will no doubt be seeing. This is a somewhat saucy letter, and I have not yet been able to obtain from my more discreet contacts the full inner story as to who took the initiative in drafting it. This I shall do, but it follows a generally predictable line. Clearly as I have reported the delays in assembling the aid mission provided an opportunity for the opponents of an aid program for British Guiana to gain ground, and the events over the past week provided a convenient excuse to enable the Administration to get off the hook of a policy which [... *one line missing from the copy*...] convinced of the rightness of their original judgement and those who somewhat wanly have raved the merits of an enlarged aid policy to feel that new circumstances have come about which justify them in shifting their ground. The latter is singularly maladroit in its phrasing; quite bluntly it set out the policy the Americans require we pursue in BG if Anglo-American relations are not to be strained, and then leaves it to us to suggest ways and means of implementing that policy! I hope however that this essential importance will be tolerantly absorbed!

Perhaps I am being somewhat Macchiavallian (*sic*), but I suspect also that this letter is intended to press us to commit ourselves to insisting on a further general election, and so stiffen our resolution if there were any likelihood that in our own counsels we were going to conclude that there was no point in having one.

It is interesting too that the Americans reached this decision of policy and jettisoned their previously agreed policy, not only without apology, but during the time when communication with Mebly was still interrupted!

I am copying this letter to Ralph Grey.

Yours ever,

(Signed) John

J. D. Hennings

[To:]  
Ambler Thomas, Esq., CMG,  
Colonial Office,  
London, S.W.1.

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**20. TEXT OF REPLY FROM LORD HOME TO DEAN RUSK**

(26 February 1962)

TOP SECRET

February 26, 1962.

*[To the Honourable Dean Rusk]*

Thank you for your letter on British Guiana. From our past discussions we have known your pre-occupations and you have known the efforts which we have made despite setbacks to provide for the orderly development of this territory. We are studying what best to do now to discharge our responsibilities and when we have decided, we shall be glad to see in a more official way what can be done to concert our action and yours.

Meanwhile there are some general thoughts which I should like to put to you privately and with the same frankness with which you wrote. I do so not only because I think this is right between us, but because you have often shown in the conversations which the two of us have had, that you recognise the sustained efforts over long periods that we have made in our dependent territories to try to ensure that they have a reasonable chance of using and not abusing freedom when they get it. This must depend to a large extent on the progress of each different territory and its readiness to run its own affairs. But once this process has gone as far as it now has, there is bound to be an added risk over timing in the remaining dependent territories which are still either backward or have peculiar racial or other difficulties. This was inherent in the problem from the beginning.

Now it was your historic role to have been for long years the first crusader and the prime mover in urging colonial emancipation. The communists are now in the van. Why? Amongst other things because premature independence is a gift for them.

What I do not think possible is to beat them by cancelling the ticket for independence and particularly if this is only to be done in the single instance of British Guiana. You say that it is not possible for you "to put up with an independent British Guiana under Jagan" and that "Jagan should not accede to power again". How would you suggest that this can be done in a democracy? And even if a device can be found, it would almost certainly be transparent and in such circumstances if democratic processes are to be allowed, it will be extremely hard to provide a reasonable prospect that any successor regime will be more stable and more mature.

So I would say to you that we cannot now go back on the course we have set ourselves of bringing these dependent territories to self-government. Nor is it any good deluding ourselves that we can now set aside a single territory such as British Guiana for some sort of special treatment.

This of course does not mean that we should not try to mitigate the dangers in British Guiana as elsewhere in the areas of the Americas and elsewhere. You will know our present concern over Kenya, the Federation and other territories in East Africa. I take comfort from your letter to think that you will be ready to understand and support us in solving these problems. I do not want to go into them further here. But I should like to draw your attention to another territory in the area of the Americas, British Honduras. It will be difficult enough to provide for the future well-being of this territory. We now have in addition the President of Guatemala using language reminiscent of Hitler to press his claim. "The Guatemalans," he said publicly on February 20, "would maintain their unshakeable determination to regain Belize." As the present regime in Guatemala would hardly have come into being without your support in 1954 and since, I shall be asking you to use your good offices at the right time to prevent another possible misadventure on your doorstep.

Let us by all means try and do what is possible to prevent the communists and others from perverting our common aim of doing our best to assure a timely and orderly development of independence in the remaining dependent territories. But we must do this across the board and you will realise that while territories like British Guiana may be of special concern to you in your hemisphere, there are others of at least equal importance to us elsewhere.

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**21. LETTER FROM JOHN HENNINGS, COLONIAL ATTACHE AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, TO AMBLER THOMAS OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE**

(28 February 1962)

Secret, Personal and Guard



British Embassy,  
Washington, D.C.

28th February, 1962

My dear Ambler,

This is to amplify my letter of February 22 on American reactions to the recent events in British Guiana.

I think it is true to say that the hope that we shall decide to find the courage to ally independence has crystallised into a more confident belief that we can be relied upon to do this.

When Dean Rusk spoke in his letter of the strains which the existence of Jagan imposed upon the Anglo-American alliance he was not speaking lightly. That alliance is temporarily going through one of these moments. There are many contributing factors; our failure to cut off trade with Cuba, the new Defence White Paper and the possible effect upon the strength of B.A.O.R., our reluctance to take them into our confidence about our plans for Central Africa and our attitude over certain aspects of the Berlin issue, as well as British Guiana are but a few.

I think, too, the State Department feel strongly that we have not kept them fully consulted about British Guiana on a Government-to-Government basis. I have been asked why we did not tell them that our plans were laid to move troops and ships to Georgetown, as from the speed we moved them they assume they must have been laid. Why did we not tell them that the Governor had asked for the reinforcements to be put at readiness? It is easy to exclaim at this as they must surely know that Calbraith in London and Melby\* in Georgetown have very close relations with our side, in addition to Melby having a pretty sound information in his own right. It is easy too to challenge the presumption of this attitude. The Americans are not notorious for confiding the inner working of their own thoughts to us, and they have surely no right to chide us for not consulting them more intimately on our thoughts about British Guiana when they were [not even troubling\*\*] with the implementation of the policy it had been agreed we should jointly attempt, and, in the process causing us and the [*Governor rather greater\*\**] headaches.

But to make these obvious points does not advance our cause, or take account of the fact that the most difficult thing for Americans, who are worried about British Guiana, is to accept that theirs is not the prime responsibility. Americans are reluctant to believe that in any circumstances the best policy may be to do nothing. They must be up and doing, and even if they are persuaded that there is nothing for them to do, they want a continual flow of fresh information which they can chew over to reassure them that their inaction is the right course. Agitated Americans, including Congressmen, who write to the State Department urging that America do something about British Guiana are told that this is primarily a British responsibility. Back comes the rejoinder: why don't you ask the British to do something. This is illuminating on the national character.

As the delays in mounting the aid mission grew, the pressure from those opposed to this policy mounted, and the political difficulties in the way of executing it have grown more formidable. This is an election year; in foreign policy Cuba remains a strongly emotional issue of which the Republicans can be expected to make great play. The State Department dare not appear soft on Cuba - or any who are popularly labelled "Castroist". In addition the much vaunted Alliance for Progress is not going well: the State Department can well be accused of not being consistent in their efforts to persuade the other members of the O.A.S. to ostracise Cuba if they appear to be soft on Cheddi Jagan. No doubt, although I have no evidence for this, Venezuela and others have been making their voices heard against Jagan. Again, as an element in internal policy, the more responsible conservatives in this country are being roused to attack the Birchers and other rightists of the lunatic fringe. Among those who have recently declared themselves in this way are numerous conservative Congressmen and journalists who are dead against aid to Jagan, notably the notorious but widely read Mr. George Sokolsky. I would hazard that concern for the long term health of American politics makes the Administration anxious to encourage this trend, and to do nothing by way of comfort to a notorious bete rouge like Jagan to cause these gentlemen to pause to wonder whether the Administration may, after all, not be sound on Communism. It is possible to multiply these considerations until we come down to the not altogether irrelevant fact that Mr. Rooney, the Democrat from the 16th (Brooklyn) District of New York who is of immigrant Irish Catholic parents and important not only in the Democratic Party, but also as the Chairman of the House Appropriations Sub-Committee on the State Department is a close confidant of Peter D'Aguiar!

I do not seek to apologise, but merely to explain some of the considerations which, in addition to those already well known, have inhibited the U.S. Government in executing the policy to which we had thought they had pledged themselves of giving modest but enhanced aid to British Guiana, and which make them heave a sigh of relief that something has happened which offers opportunity for laying that policy aside and gives hope that Jagan may not, after all, prove a permanent feature of the scene.

Rusk in his letter talks of fresh elections as if that is certain to produce a mere healthy result. But I sense that the State Department are less optimistic of this as an immediate solution. They are, I think, hoping for a longer period of British supervision during which the more moderate element in the P.P.P. possibly under Balram Singh Rai, may be persuaded to secede from the party, and join hands, either avowedly or tacitly, with the other opposition parties to form a truly multi-racial coalition.

This expectation of a further period of dependency - which is scarcely veiled - is something to which we have given no encouragement whatever. We have said that you must inevitably await the Governor's assessment, and they can rest assured that you will consult with them as you have undertaken to do. What, however, the State Department has not vouchsafed is any suggestion of the public support or other assistance they might offer us in carrying out such an unpopular policy. Purely on the hypothesis that plans for British Guiana's early independence may have to be deferred, it occurs to me that we might be able to turn Mr. Rusk's demarche to some advantage.

A decision not to proceed as planned will, as the recent debate on British Guiana in the U.N. showed, expose us to some public odium. There may not be all that steam behind it so far as the majority of the Afro-Asians are concerned, but we shall certainly take a few knocks, and some may seek to use it as a stick with which to question our motives elsewhere, e.g., in Central Africa. I have today written to Duncan Watson to warn of a certain restiveness I have detected here at the continued absence of any guidance to the Americans as to how we think things in that part of the world may go, and at the idea that in backing us there the U.S. are being asked to do something of a pig in a poke. Can we not use a decision to carry the responsibility in British Guiana for a while longer - if that is to be our decision - as a claim for even greater American energy in supporting our policy elsewhere in the colonial sphere?

The American reluctance to extend aid to British Guiana is essentially reluctance to extend aid to Jagan. Can we not urge that as a quid pro quo for our agreement to contain Jagan for some longer period and to assist his downfall, America at last commits herself to a really imaginative aid programme in British Guiana and indeed, elsewhere in the West Indies, especially the Federation of Eight - on which the report of last year's economic aid mission has gone into cold storage? So far as British Guiana is concerned there can surely be no question following recent events, that a need is proved sufficient to satisfy even Mr. Fowler Hamilton.

I referred in my earlier letter to the impertinent tone of Dean Rusk's letter. I feel now that impertinence - and I gather it was drafted at quite a high level, possibly by Alexis Johnson - is a reflection of the several present strains on the Anglo-American alliance, and that but for an exasperation with us on other matters it would have been more temperately worded and more calculated to persuade than to offend. But I sense, too, a feeling that acceptance by us, if we are not fully persuaded that it is necessary, of a further period of colonial oversight for British Guiana would be, in the circumstances, a small price for us to pay to maintain the health and intimacy of the alliance. If we do concede this, I would suggest that we do not lose the opportunity to extract the maximum return from the Americans in exchange for our continuing to shoulder a burden in the interests of the political health of the hemisphere, which is more nearly their concern than it is ours.

I am copying this letter to Ralph Grey.

Yours ever

(Signed) John Hennings  
J.D. Hennings

[To:]  
Ambler Thomas, Esq. C.M.G.,  
Colonial Office,  
London, S.W.1

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## 22. MINUTE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES TO THE PRIME MINISTER

(6 March 1962)

SECRET

P.M. (62) 16

PRIME MINISTER

The situation in British Guiana remains difficult and beneath the surface politically tense. I am anxious to have a better assessment of the situation that can be obtained solely by correspondence with the Governor, and if you, and my colleagues on the C.P.C. agree, I propose that Hugh Fraser\* should pay a short visit (leaving on Thursday 8th March with the following general directive.

2. Our main objectives remain -

(a) To secure the release of British troops as soon as possible:

(b) to ensure an orderly transition to independence with the least damage to Anglo-American relations.

3. In some senses these two objectives are incompatible. Nevertheless, it will be the Under-Secretary's task to report to me how these problems, if they cannot be resolved, can be ameliorated.

4. In the political field it is questionable if we can threaten Dr. Jagan with an immediate withdrawal of British troops. Nevertheless, it is possible that a combination of threats and blandishments could have some effect on bringing the leaders of the three parties to work together, at least until a conference is held, so permitting us to speed up our withdrawal.

5. More importantly I wish the Under-Secretary to discuss with the Governor the question of the setting up of a Commission of Enquiry and its composition which would give some reassurance to the public in general, and put Jagan's party, at least, on its best behaviour, even if this meant a delay in the date for the proposed conference.

6. Finally, on the administrative side, the Under-secretary would investigate what steps can be taken to improve the police administration at short notice, and ascertain whether the police force could be reinforced in any way to speed up the withdrawal of British troops. At the same time, the Under-Secretary would discuss with the Governor and the local *[illegible word]* their own precise assessment of the strict necessity for holding five companies in the territory.

I am sending copies of this minute to our colleagues on the Colonial Policy Committee.

6th March, 1962

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**23. TELEGRAM FROM THE COLONIAL OFFICE TO SIR RALPH GREY, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA**

(6 March 1962)

IMMEDIATE  
GOVERNOR, BRITISH GUIANA

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Following from Poynton.  
Begins.

We have been thinking about proposed Commission of Enquiry into last month's riots and implications for Independence Conference. Our current ideas are set out below and Fraser will wish to discuss with you.

We think that it would be constitutionally preferable that the Commission of Enquiry, provided membership and terms of reference were acceptable, should be set up by you, on the advice of Ministers, under the local Ordinance. We do not (not) like the idea of a United Nations representative being on it and would hope that Jagan would be prepared to accept a U.K. legal personality as chairman, with perhaps an Indian and a West African as members. We are taking soundings through the C.R.O. about the latter. We might also consider adding a Trade Unionist from the U.K. and balancing him by a local Guianese should it be possible to find one. The terms of reference, we are inclined to think, should be such as to restrict the recommendations of the Commission to the question of preventing a repetition of last month's disorders. We would not wish terms to be so wide as to permit the Commission to recommend, for example, that independence ought to be deferred for a specified time. With this in mind, we suggest that terms of reference should be: begins. To enquire into the disorders in Georgetown on February 16th and the events leading up to them, and to recommend steps for preventing a recurrence. Ends. We should of course be prepared to consider setting the Commission up from here if so requested, and in so doing could remove disadvantages in the use of local Ordinance to which you drew attention in your tel. No. 64.

On the question of timing, it now seems impracticable to hold the Conference early in May as planned. Late May would not be possible owing to other commitments. We feel that the Conference should have before it the report of the Commission of'

Enquiry and should still discuss a date and the arrangements to be made for independence. On two counts we feel that the Conference should be postponed until July. First, it is essential, if British Guiana is to move smoothly to independence, that the Conference should be successful, and it seems to us that longer time must be allowed for the Government Party and the Opposition Parties to reach a measure of agreement on what they want. It would also be virtually impossible for the Commission to be mounted, carry out its investigation, make its report and give time for it to be considered before May. Postponement of conference might well have an effect on the date of independence.

Secretary of State's plan is that after discussion with you and in the light of Jagan's subsequent reactions, Fraser should report by telegram to him before Tuesday next. The S. of S. would raise the matter with his colleagues on Tuesday morning and if setting up of Commission of Enquiry and postponement of conference from May to July were accepted, announcement to that effect would be made in Parliament Tuesday afternoon and simultaneously released in a statement from Fraser in Georgetown.

Other subjects which Fraser will wish to discuss are: (a) reduction of British troops, (b) the surrender of private arms, (c) reinforcement of police.

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#### **24. TELEGRAM FROM BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE**

(7 March 1962)

SECRET

FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND WHITEHALL (SECRET) DISTRIBUTION

Sir D. Ormsby Gore

No. 747	D. 12.50 a.m. March 8, 1962
March 7, 1962	R. 1.12 a.m. March 8, 1962

PRIORITY

SECRET

British Guiana

The President said on the telephone today that he was worried about the future of British Guiana. He was not satisfied that [group undec.\*] information on developments there was accurate. He had read that Hugh Fraser would be visiting British Guiana shortly and he wondered whether there would be a chance of him returning via Washington. He thought it would be useful if Fraser could discuss our policy with regard to British Guiana with officials here, and indeed he would like to talk to him about it himself.

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**25. FOREIGN OFFICE MEMORANDUM SENT TO LORD HOOD, MINISTER AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON**  
(8 March 1962)

TOP SECRET & GUARD

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1  
March 8, 1962.

We are trying to ensure that you are kept more closely informed about developments in British Guiana on a regular basis. In the meanwhile the following brief round-up may be of use to you (and to Geoffrey Wallinger, to whom I am copying this letter) as background information.

**Internal Situation**

2. Inter-racial tensions are continuing to run high and it is very doubtful whether the troops can be withdrawn in the early future. Neither Dr. Jagan and members of his Government nor Burnham and D'Aguiar, the Opposition leaders, seem to have much in the way of constructive ideas as to how to deal with the situation which has arisen. If Jagan's proposed amendments to the budget proposals are not sufficiently substantial, there is some danger of further strikes.

**H.M.G.'s Policy**

3. A Commission of Enquiry is likely, but so far the Colonial Office and Dr. Jagan have been unable to agree on its composition. Jagan has suggested that one member should be nominated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and one each by India and Ghana. The Colonial Office on the other hand are thinking in terms of an "All-Commonwealth Commission", the Chairman to be nominated by H.M.G. and the two others to be drafted by India and Nigeria. In addition to the composition of the Commission its terms of reference may also be difficult to agree.

4. Hugh Fraser, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the Colonial Office, is flying out to British Guiana today to examine the situation on the spot. Future policy will to some extent depend upon his recommendations. And it is possible that on his way back, he will call in at Washington to discuss British Guiana with the President and members of the Administration.

### **United States Misgivings**

5. The Americans are extremely worried at the situation and are exerting pressure at very high level to try to ensure there should be fresh elections and that an independent British Guiana should not be led by Dr. Jagan. Unfortunately, they do not seem to have any very constructive ideas as to how this could be arranged. Incidentally, on present information, it seems likely that further elections would again result in Jagan's Party being returned. The Americans cannot escape little responsibility for the recent disturbances in British Guiana because of their failure to make a firm offer of aid. But apparently the Administration does not dare in an election year to lay itself open to the charge of being "soft", with regard to a Government like Jagan's, which most Americans believe to be if not Communist, at least Castroist in tendencies.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE**

6. Theoretically, the date for a conference in May still stands and Jagan has made it clear that he thinks he still has a date with the Colonial Secretary. In practice it cannot now be an independence conference. Furthermore, if a Commission of Enquiry is established, it is very doubtful whether its findings would be available in time for a meeting in May.

(H.A.A. Hankey)

Copied to Lord Hood in Washington and to Sir Geoffrey Wallinger in Rio de Janeiro

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## **26. LETTER FROM R.W. PIPER OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE TO R.H.G. EDMONDS, AMERICAN DEPARTMENT OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE**

(9 March 1962)

SECRET AND GUARD

COLONIAL OFFICE  
GREAT SMITH STREET,  
LONDON S.W.1  
Telephone: ABBEY 1266



9th March, 1962

Dear [*Handwriting illegible*],

We spoke this morning about briefing material for Lord Home's discussion with Mr. Dean Rusk in Geneva this week-end, on the subject of British Guiana. You asked me whether the Colonial Office would see any objection to the Foreign Secretary suggesting to Mr. Dean Rusk that there might be further discussions in London on British Guiana, on the lines of the Working Party which met last September.

While no objection is seen to the suggestion that there might be discussion in London after Ministers have considered policy in respect of British Guiana in the light of Mr. Fraser's report of his visit to Georgetown, we are more than doubtful about suggesting that a further Working Party should be set up. The Americans, it seems to us, have failed to implement their side of the report of the last Working Party and we would be suspicious of their intentions in respect of any report arising from the deliberations of any future Working Party. What is perhaps more to the point, over the next few months we shall be fully stretched in making preparations for the British Guiana Conference (quite apart from many of the preoccupations in the Caribbean) which, as you know, is now likely to be held in July. If there were a Working Party it might well be that it might hamper our preparations. For these reasons we hope that your secretary of State if he deems it desirable to make any such suggestion to Mr. Dean Rusk, should limit it to the suggestion that there might be discussions in London and should make it clear that he does not mean thereby another Working Party. We would also hope that the initiative for suggesting discussions should be left to Mr. Rusk.

(R.W. Piper)

[To]:  
R.H.G. Edmonds, Esq.,  
American Department

Foreign Office  
S.W.1

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**27. NOTES ON A MEETING BETWEEN LORD HOME AND DEAN RUSK IN GENEVA ON 12 MARCH 1962**  
(12 March 1962)

SECRET

**Record of a conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Rusk in Geneva on March 12, 1962**

## **British Guiana**

Mr. Rusk said the President had wondered whether the Foreign Secretaries' correspondence had not been a bit "sharp" in tone. I said it was lucky I had not sent my first reply but I hoped he would never hesitate to write to me as frankly and forcefully as he liked and I would do the same. He would reassure the President that this was the normal practice as between Oxford men.

He said the United States were really terrified of another Cuba on their continent. All the South American states joined with the United States in hoping that we could find ways and means of stopping Dr. Jagan from taking his country into the Communist orbit. How could the United States and others help to prevent this?

I said I thought that the first thing was for Hugh Fraser to see the President. The second for us to consider Fraser's report and in the light of that to decide a line on the possibilities of independence. I did not see how we could delay it all that long.

I added that British Guiana and British Honduras were likely to be embarrassments to us. Could they not be integrated somehow into the O.A.S.

If Dr. Jagan was very poor perhaps there might be a price. I said we would keep in touch with them on these matters in Washington.

*[Handwritten note below text: Approved by the S/S - 13/3]*

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## **28. TEXT OF LETTER FROM PRESIDENT KENNEDY TO PRIME MINISTER MACMILLAN**

(14 March 1962)

SECRET

COPY

EYES ONLY

QUOTE

March 14, 1962

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Thank you for your two letters. I shall be glad to have the meeting of experts that you suggest in the letter of March 13, and, in fact, I understand that arrangements are already underway and that my staff is in touch with David Gore as to the best time to begin.

I am giving your longer letter careful study and will be in touch with you on the points you make soon.

I am glad that Lord Home and Mr. Rusk have had a good talk on British Guiana, and look forward to Hugh Fraser's visit.

Sincerely yours,

John F. Kennedy

UNQUOTE

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**29. TELEGRAM FROM LORD HOME (IN GENEVA) TO FOREIGN OFFICE**

(14 March 1962)

SECRET

FROM GENEVA TO FOREIGN OFFICE

(United Kingdom Delegation to Disarmament Conference)

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND WHITEHALL (SECRET) DISTRIBUTION

Sir M. Wright

No. 36

March 14, 1962

D. 12.55 p.m. March 14, 1962

R. 12.58 p.m. March 14, 1962

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 36 of March 14. Repeated for information to Washington

Washington telegram No. 797 to you.

I had only a short talk with Mr. Rusk about this. He said that the United States were terrified of another Cuba on their continent. All the South American States joined with them in hoping we could find ways and means of stopping Dr. Jagan from taking his country into the Communist orbit. He asked how the United States and others could help to prevent this.

2. I said that the first step was for Mr. Fraser to see the President. Thereafter we would have to consider Fraser's report and in the light of it decide a line about independence for British Guiana. I did not see how it could be delayed all that long.

3. I pointed out that both British Guiana and British Honduras were likely to be embarrassments to us. I wondered if they could be integrated somehow into the O.A.S.

4. I promised that we would keep in touch with the Americans on these matters in Washington.

Foreign Office please repeat to Washington as my telegram No. 18.  
[Repeated as requested]

ADVANCE COPIES  
Lord Privy Seal  
Sir H. Caccia Mr. Cheetham  
Head of American Department

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**30. TELEGRAM FROM HUGH FRASER TO FOREIGN OFFICE**  
(18 March 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP                      DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

Sir D. Ormsby Gore

No. 852                      D. 4.43 p.m. March 18, 1962  
March 18, 1962              R. 5.29 p.m. March 18, 1962

PRIORITY  
CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 852 of March 18. Repeated for information to:

Governor Georgetown (Personal)  
UKDIS Geneva (for Secretary of State)

Please pass to Colonial Office.

For Colonial Secretary from Fraser.

I paid a courtesy call on Governor Williams at the State Department on Saturday morning. I later spoke to an influential group including McGhee, Alexis Johnson and Tyler about British Guiana. Schlesinger from the White House was also present. The atmosphere was friendly.

I gave a general review of the present situation emphasising that racial conflict rather than Communism seemed to be the danger. As to the future I told them of the Governor's committee with the three leaders, the coming independence Conference in May and the need for safeguards in the constitution. I stressed the danger of the United States seeming to stand aside now and the desirability of their getting alongside the Indians with whom the future lies. Above all, I pressed for the early dispatch of the exploratory aid mission and discouraged any talk of tampering with alternatives to Jagan. At the same time I tried to put the problem in the proper perspective.

They took this all well. Schlesinger and the others were frank about the Congressional problems. Jagan and Castro are completely associated in the public mind and they have to go cautiously. I think I moved them a little on the idea of getting the mission off soon, and McGhee thought this might be represented as a gesture to the needy people of Georgetown rather than to Jagan. The total amount of United States aid can not be large per capita without upsetting the others in the alliance for progress. They wondered if Canada could help more. There were signs that they hankered after some delay in the programme for independence and were unhappy about the troops leaving. I deployed the usual arguments and they did not press the point. Finally, they accepted this as a joint problem and asked for the closest cooperation over the next few months, This I promised.

I had previously seen the President on Friday evening. He accepts that they have a big role to play, even more than the others but like them, is worried about Congress and the timing of their getting into the game. I shall see him again on Sunday.

Foreign Office please pass to Georgetown and UKDIS.Geneva as my telegrams Nos. Personal 4 and 22 respectively.

[Copies sent to Telegraph Section C.C. for repetition to Georgetown]

[Repeated as requested to UKDIS.Geneva]

[Copies sent to Colonial Office]

DISTRIBUTED TO:

American Department

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**31. NOTE FROM HUGH FRASER TO LORD HOME**

(20 March 1962)

SECRET AND GUARD

Secretary of State.

**Conversations with the Americans in Washington on British Guiana**

I had formal meetings with the President, Alexis Johnson and officials of the State Department and informal conversations with Mr. McCone, Head of the C.I.A., Bobby Kennedy, the Attorney-General and Governor Stevenson, the U.S. Ambassador at the U.N. The conversations were of course exploratory in so far as H.M.G.'s policy has not yet been decided and I pointed out to all that naturally H.M.G. could not be committed by a somewhat mysterious exercise in which I talked to them before I talked to my own Secretary of State.

2. The fact that the President gave me more than two hours of his time and that the others showed such a keen interest makes it clear that the problem of B.G. in American eyes is regarded as one of critical importance. The object of my talks were:

- (i) to tone down any excitement caused by the Rusk/Horne exchange of letters;
- (ii) to get the Americans to accept our policy of a fairly swift withdrawal from B.G. as the best; and
- (iii) to endeavour to change the American attitude in two fashions:-
  - (a) to damp down the importance of British Guiana; and

(b) to abandon their present policy of boycotting the Jagan Government and reneging on the various pledges of aid which the Americans made to Jagan during his visit to Washington.

3. Quite apart from the problem with Congress who are now using B.G. as a crowbar with which to attack the foreign aid programme, Washington opinion is deeply divided on the issue of help to B.G. (It is interesting to note however that McCone, not a brilliant but an entirely honest man, assured me the C.I.A. were taking no covert action in the Territory.) The "soft" school is led by the President, Arthur Schlesinger and, needless to say, Adlai Stevenson, with the Attorney and some of the State Department in a half-way position. What matters, however, is the President's attitude and on my second meeting with him and on leaving him he said he felt that the Aid Mission should go down and Schlesinger, whom I saw later in the day, was of the opinion that the State Department should look very seriously at the project of offering immediate aid or at least some financial facilities towards the reconstruction of Georgetown.

4. I think therefore it would be best to describe how this shift or partial shift in the American attitude to make them offer assistance to a man whom they regard not as a communist so much as the Castro type surrounded by communists, has been achieved. Perhaps for this purpose I should stress the various changes in British policy which I believe the situation calls for.

5. In my opinion the problems of British Guiana are dangerous in the following order:

(i) Racial.

(ii) Economic.

(iii) The threat of communist penetration.

I believe that to proceed to independence with the present Constitution and with only 42% of the voters being behind Jagan and without new safeguards would not be morally acceptable. These new safeguards must be of a constitutional character. I think we will find both D'Aguiar and Burnham will press resolutely for a system of proportional representation and I think further that any safeguard which is written in, whether it be P.R. or a Senate, must have an electoral validation of its own. Therefore, I believe that fresh elections in British Guiana are inevitable. This of course I have not put authoritatively to the Americans but I have said that the Constitutional Conference is almost certain to break down and that we will be faced with imposing or negotiating a constitution which will entail safeguards which will almost certainly mean some new electoral provision whether in the Senate or in the Lower House. This, I hope, I have made clear to them, must flow not from us but from the demands of the British Guianese themselves.

6. Until now I think the Americans have been toying with the idea that somehow Burnham and D'Aguiar could oust the Jagan Government. I think also they have believed in some mysterious way that time was on the side of Burnham and D'Aguiar. I think I have made it clear to them, that over the next ten years the Portuguese will remain a minority and the Africans will

become one, and that therefore their policy must be whilst helping minorities to look to the Indians as the centre of power to concentrate on weening [sic] Jagan and the moderates away from the communist apparat. [sic] This is run, I think, by Mrs. Jagan, and I hope I have made it clear that a line can be drawn between these types of international communists and what I would call the anti-colonial type of communist which as I pointed out to them Jefferson might well have been if the communist manifesto had been written in 1748 instead of 100 years later.

7. Having, I think, sold the ideas to the Americans that British Guiana was really now more their responsibility than ours and would increasingly become more so, I agreed with the State Department that we should keep in the closest touch. The following points of policy I think should therefore be decided:

- i. We should consult with the Governor as to when the American Mission should come down to have the maximum effect recognising that aid money may not be forthcoming until the end of June or July. To balance this probability we should like his recommendations as to what form a more immediate U.S. assistance to the rebuilding of Georgetown should take.
- ii. We should send out a Constitutional Adviser to assist the Governor in his talks with the leaders of the Political Parties as to the form of independence Constitution which would offer adequate safeguards. I think this is most important to keep the talks in being. This Constitutional Adviser should also for our part consider what sort of independence Constitution we should aim at achieving.
- iii. We should I think keep to the May date for the opening of a Constitutional Conference. But this because of deadlock in the Governor's Committee and the report of the Commission of Enquiry could reasonably be degraded to preliminary Constitutional talks and these could probably be done locally by me.
- iv. This having broken down we would summon a further Constitutional Conference in London in July. At this stage we would make proposals to safeguard minority interests.
- v. From this would flow some form of election whether to a Senate or on the basis of proportional representations. Following the elections there might have to be a further conference if the electoral safeguards had to be imposed to decide a date for independence early next year, a financial settlement, etc.
- vi. Having decided our general line of policy, we should have discussions at Ambassadorial level, and inform the United States Government of our broad lines of policy and the most propitious time for the action they may be or are contemplating.

8. I have discussed this minute with the Department who agree with the general line I have taken.

Hugh Fraser  
20 March, 1962.



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**32. NOTE FROM P.F. DE ZULETA (OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE) TO THE PRIME MINISTER**

(23 March 1962)

PRIME MINISTER

I told Mr. Fraser that you might like to see his record of his conversations in Washington about British Guiana. It is remarkable that he had in all about 3½ hours with the President (who is of course an old friend of his) including about 1½ hours in a swimming pool, heated to 92 degrees, which was apparently rather an exhausting experience. You might possibly like to see Mr. Fraser some time to hear his general impressions.

The main point of his recommendations, which the Colonial Secretary has not yet been able to consider, is that Dr. Jagan and the Indians are the people who will run British Guiana in the future and that they are the ones on whom the West should concentrate. We ought probably to have further elections before granting Independence, thereby making a gesture to the Americans, but Independence ought to be achieved by mid-1965 in any event.

[Initialled] P. de Z.

March 23, 1962

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**33. NOTE FROM MICHAEL CARY TO PRIME MINISTER MACMILLAN**

(4 April 1962)

SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

British Guiana

(C.P.C.(62)13)

You will wish to ask the Colonial Secretary to introduce his paper.

2. The rioting in British Guiana has died down and the recent troop reinforcements are in the process of being withdrawn. A Commission of Enquiry has been appointed and the three political leaders have agreed to meet under the Governor's

chairmanship in an effort to find some common ground on constitutional advance. Nevertheless, the further outlook is clearly unsettled.

3. Against this background the Colonial Secretary proposes to hold further constitutional discussions in May and a full-dress independence conference later in the year. On the earlier time-table this conference would itself have been held in May. He would also like authority to arrange for the holding of fresh elections before independence.

4. On the assumption that independence cannot be delayed beyond the early or middle part of 1963, these proposals are clearly sound. They provide for as much agreement on constitutional issues as can be hoped for in the time, and for some positive expression of the electorate's views.

5. But is it right to assume that in view of all that has happened, independence must still be reached in a year? The advantages to us are clearly very great. British Guiana is a running sore which we should be well rid of and only when the territory has become independent will it be possible to persuade the Americans to assume any real responsibility for it. But from another point of view it could be represented as a dereliction of duty. The Colony is bankrupt and on the verge of civil war already. To launch it into independence would be unlikely on any showing to improve its prospects, either economically or politically, and might be disastrous.

6. It is probable that the arguments for allowing British Guiana to proceed to independence are stronger in the light of all that has happened elsewhere, than the arguments the other way. But this is perhaps the main point which the Committee should consider.

MICHAEL CARY

4th April, 1962

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**34. BRIEF PREPARED BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE**

(13 April 1962)

SECRET

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PM(W) (62) 13

COPY NO. 23

WASHINGTON TALKS - APRIL 1962

BRITISH GUIANA

BRIEF BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE

### **Talking Points**

1. The Independence Conference was originally promised for May. It would however be undesirable to hold it until the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Georgetown Disturbances is available, and until the three political leaders have reached greater agreement on the Independence Constitution. The Conference may therefore have to be put back to July, but it would be difficult to go back further.
2. Mr. Fraser will be visiting British Guiana again in May to meet the political leaders and see whether sufficient agreement exists to justify early independence discussions or whether a fresh approach is necessary.
3. It now looks as if further elections before independence are unavoidable and the aim is to secure the agreement of the Guianese political leaders to this course.
4. British Guiana's biggest problem is economic development. The United Kingdom can divert no more resources to British Guiana and the only other major source of aid outside the Soviet bloc is the United States.
5. Dr. Jagan has been persuaded to try for American aid, but has been unsuccessful and now assumes that the Americans don't mean business.
6. The Americans are proposing to send an economic mission to British Guiana, but unless this visit is followed up quickly with an offer of aid, even though small, there will be great disillusionment and the chances of the present British Guiana Government turning to the Soviet bloc will be greatly increased.

Early in January the Americans acquiesced in our intention to hold a British Guiana Independence Conference in May of this year. Since then events in British Guiana, in particular the disturbances of the 16th February, which resulted in four deaths, many injuries and much damage to property in Georgetown, have led the Americans to revert to a more cautious view of British Guiana's independence, and to take a still closer interest in what happens in the territory. It is likely that the Prime Minister may be questioned about our intentions on the following matters.

### **Independence**

2.\* It appears that opinion in Washington is now firmly against the granting of early independence to British Guiana, (under Dr. Jagan's Government) and is in favour of pressing for fresh elections to be held in the territory before independence. The reasons advanced are essentially: - doubt about Dr. Jagan's ability to maintain order in the Colony without outside assistance; his left-wing - and particularly Cuban - associations; British Guiana's unstable financial and economic situation; and a decline in support for Dr. Jagan's Government since the February disturbances. Those are valid considerations but the fact remains that the great majority of the Guianese support the aim of early independence; a near-unanimous Resolution of the British Guiana Legislature requesting independence within the Commonwealth in 1962 is on the record, and Her Majesty's Government have undertaken to hold an early Independence Conference. The attempt to reverse policy at this stage would not only lead to considerable internal political trouble in British Guiana, but would also create difficulties *vis-a-vis* the United Nations, where the question of British Guiana independence has already been raised.

Nevertheless, it would be undesirable to go into an Independence Conference in the absence of substantial agreement between the three principal political leaders in British Guiana on the shape of the Independence Constitution, and before the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Georgetown disturbances, which is being mounted, is available.

There is also a case for holding fresh elections before British Guiana finally becomes independent.

As the President will already be aware from his conversation with Mr. Fraser last month, the three political leaders have been persuaded to sit round the table under the Governor's chairmanship to work out an agreed draft Independence Constitution. The Commission of Enquiry has not yet begun its work, but given the very localised character of the disturbances it is unlikely to take long to submit its report. It therefore looks as if it may be appropriate to hold the Independence Conference about July of this year, possibly preceded in May by preliminary discussions to avoid formally postponing the discussions scheduled for that month. It would be undesirable to give any impression that the position could be held much beyond that date.

### **Internal Stability**

3. Three factors which are crucial to internal stability in British Guiana are: -

- (a) substantial local agreement on the shape of the future constitution;
- (b) adequate arrangements for maintaining internal security after the withdrawal of British troops; and
- (c) financial and economic stability.

The three political leaders have been induced to sit round a table to resolve their differences. It seems unlikely that they will reach agreement on the fundamental issues dividing them, but they should shortly reach the stage at which the areas of basic disagreement will have been defined, which in itself will represent an advance. It is the intention that Mr. Fraser should go to

British Guiana again next month to discuss the progress made and to try and resolve basic disagreements as far as possible. It is doubtful whether he will wholly succeed, but his visit should show whether it would be profitable to go into early independence discussions, or whether the differences between the Guianese parties are such as to make a fresh approach necessary.

4. It is already clear that the local forces at the British Guiana Government's disposal are not sufficient to contain a really determined attempt to overthrow the Government, and the Government is at present contemplating the establishment of a small armed force to supplement the Police. The Report of the Commission of Enquiry will assist the Independence Conference in assessing the capacity of the British Guiana Government to maintain law and order in the absence of British troops.

### **Economic Stability**

5. British Guiana's most urgent problem is economic development. At present this is barely keeping pace with the population increase, and is not helping to reduce the Colony's serious unemployment problem. The present (£23-million) Development Plan is considered to be the minimum required to maintain the increasing population at about its present standard of living over the next few years; even for this programme the British Guiana Government has been unable to find all the necessary funds. Her Majesty's Government are contributing nearly £13-million of the £15-million so far in sight and are unable to devote more to British Guiana without making inroads into their assistance to other territories faced with problems just as urgent as those of British Guiana. The Canadians cannot contribute any significant amount, and it seems unlikely that the Western European countries will be able or willing to help. The only alternative source is the United States.

British Guiana is currently suffering a severe cash shortage arising from shortfalls on both recurrent and capital account and the cash drain resulting from a run on the local Savings Bank. To remedy the position will require a determined effort on the part of the British Guiana Government to bring the recurrent budget into balance, to effect a reduction in development expenditure, and to restore confidence. Financial aid from the United States would assist.

6. The Americans have given technical assistance to British Guiana, and at one time Dr. Jagan was led to believe that they might be prepared to make an early contribution to British Guiana's Development Plan. They have, however, since made it clear to Dr. Jagan that they are not prepared to commit themselves in any way pending the outcome of an economic mission which they originally proposed to send to British Guiana early in the New Year. In the event, the Georgetown disturbances delayed the dispatch of the Mission and it has still not visited the territory. The British Guiana Government, having regard to what is said in America about its supposed communist character, has not been slow to assume that the Americans have, in fact, no real intention of assisting it. The only effect so far has been to confirm Dr. Jagan in his desire to seek economic assistance from the Soviet bloc.

7. The Americans are now ready to send the Mission. If our aim of policy of keeping British Guiana in with the West, or checking its present tendency to seek aid from the Soviet bloc is to be achieved, it is vital that the Americans should have impressed

upon them that modest aid, given quickly, and without too many preliminary formalities, is likely to do far more good than a larger amount given after the sort of delays which have hitherto characterised American policy. It should also be impressed upon them that to fail to give aid after sending the Mission would be fatal for their cause in British Guiana, and might well make it impossible for Dr. Jagan to resist pressure inside his party to commit himself to the Soviet bloc.

## Elections

8. Although the last British Guiana General Election took place as recently as August 1961, the American (*sic*) wish to see fresh elections hold before independence. The disturbances of last February, the policy mistakes of the present British Guiana Government, and the likelihood that there has as a result been a shift away from Dr. Jagan, combined with the possibility of either eventual agreement on a form of constitution, different from that under which the present Government was returned, or the lack of agreement on a constitution may make a further election inevitable. The aim is now to secure the agreement of the leaders in British Guiana to this course. This is likely to be welcome news to the Americans.

COLONIAL OFFICE,  
13th APRIL, 1962.

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### 35. LETTER FROM A.K. RUSSELL TO P.F. DE ZULUETA (18 April 1962)

18th April, 1962

Dear de Zulueta, I understand from James Robertson that as an annexe to the Minister's brief on British Guiana you require some statistics relating to the racial composition and growth of the population there. I think I can best set this out in the form of a table.

#### Recent trends in population growth (by race) in British Guiana Gross

	Gross	increase/decrease		% increase/decrease
	1936	1945	1960	1936/60
East Indians	140,768	164,522	279,460	99
Africans	129,648	137,442	190,380	47
Mixed	39,664	47,853	66,180	67

Amerindians	* 8,774	* 9,516	22,860	*
Portuguese	8,573	8,247	7,610	-11
Other Europeans	2,188	2,370	5,230	140
Chinese	3,283	3,548	3,550	8
TOTAL	332,898	373,598	575,270	

\* Classified as "Aboriginals" in these years, and not comparable with the 1960 figure.

As you can see, the Indian (or East Indian) element in the population is increasing at about twice the rate of the African element and this change is likely to continue in the future.

I have not today been able to produce figures relating to the racial composition of political parties or of members of the Legislative Council, although as is well known, Jagan's People's Progressive Party is predominantly Indian (but has in B.H. Benn, an African Deputy Leader), Burnham's People's National Congress is predominantly African, and D'Aguiar's United Force largely European and Roman Catholic.

If you require anything further, do please give me a ring. I am copying this letter to Robertson in the Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) A. Russell

(A.K. RUSSELL)

[To]: P.F. de Zulueta, Esq.

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**36. LETTER FROM SIR RALPH GREY, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO A.R. THOMAS, COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON**

(30 April 1962)

SECRET AND PERSONAL

April 30, 1962

*[Salutation illegible]*

Consequent upon Rai's bitter attack on Jagan and the PPP hierarchy after his defeat at Easter in his contest with Benn for the Chairmanship of the Party, when he claimed that the election was the "foulest" ever in British Guiana and that all sorts of improprieties had been devised and practised by Jagan and his clique, and upon the Government's defeat in the Legislative Assembly on the night of April 26, on the Third Reading of the Appropriation Bill, there has been much political excitement here and expectation of startling change. Thus far, what Rai described to me as these "bizarre and newsworthy events" have produced no definite results; but many hours of my time have had to be spent in talks with leading local figures and the purpose of this letter is to give some account of them. I have had talks separately (some lasting for a couple of hours) with Jagan, Burnham, Rai and Jai Narine Singh, the last-named in his self-styled capacity as "the master-mind behind every important political event since 1953." Most of it, of course, has just been talk and it would be a fruitless exercise to attempt to set out what was said on each occasion. A summary will suffice.

2. So far as I can work it out, the important facts are:-

(a) Rai challenged Benn for the Chairmanship of the PPP because he really thought that he had a chance of success.

(b) Rai is thoroughly out of sympathy with recent trends of PPP policy and action; while he has been Senior Vice-Chairman of the Party, he has never been consulted by Chairman Benn or even invited to Party meetings of any consequence; and if he were to exercise any real influence in the Party it would only be as Chairman and therefore that was the only office for which he had himself nominated.

(c) Although a detailed rebuttal by Janet Jagan, as General Secretary of the PPP, of the charges made by Rai about election procedure at the Easter Congress seemed to me convincing, a further detailed commentary given me by Rai on that rebuttal shows how his original charges could well be true, as he insists they are.

(d) Rai now believes that Jagan is a thorough-going out-and-out Communist. Jagan told the Congress that the Party's aim must be to see that every party-supporter has a gun in his house. "We must not only win elections, we must preserve our gains." (This is the sort of thing Castro said; and I can, in my mind, hear Jagan saying it at the Party Congress. But I still doubt Jagan's willingness to serve international Communism. I asked Rai, "Is he an international Communist?" and Rai gave an unhesitating affirmative reply -but his reply was based on all the contacts that we know Jagan has. Rai agreed that there was little, if any, financial support from international Communism beyond the payment of fares for visits to Havana and Moscow, etc. Assemblyman Harry Lall and Pandit Misir have gone to Moscow - for the May Day celebrations, Rai tells me.)

(e) Rai considers that, "As Your Excellency was warning even before the riots, the policy of the PPP can only lead to violence."

(f) Rai's main concern is the preservation of his own reputation and he is undecided whether it will be best preserved by staying on in the PPP, unless and until he is expelled, and fighting the present policies from within, or by some switch of political allegiance or by resigning and returning to his legal practice. He claims to have given "five years of public service" and to be



under no obligation to do more for his country than he has done and he claims (with less conviction) to have no particular ambition to be Premier - particularly at this time when the country is pretty well bankrupt.

(g) Jagan has denied Rai's allegation that he (Jagan) insulted religion and religious organizations at the Party Congress. He was quick to give me this denial and he has since published it. He claims that his sole point was that religious organizations might be used by opponents of the PPP to damage the Party (citing Abdool Majeed's attempt to use the Sad'r Islamic Anjuman to damage the PPP and benefit the United Force). Otherwise Jagan has kept quiet about the trouble with Rai. Janet's rebuttal in *Thunder* and elsewhere of Rai's allegation was unusually restrained and was limited to rebuttal without any attack on Rai. Jagan has indicated to me that although Rai has "chips on his shoulders" and is not a good team-worker he has no intention of removing him from office. (But Benn and others may press for such action.)

(h) If Rai were expelled from the PPP, he would probably go into very active opposition rather than quitting politics altogether (as he might if he decided to resign), and he would probably take S.M. Saffee and Maccie Hamid with him, thus converting the PPP majority of four over the combined Opposition in the Legislative Assembly (nineteen to fifteen, with one seat vacant) into a minority of two (sixteen to eighteen). The Government would certainly then be defeated in the Assembly, not merely in a technical way as on April 26, but in such a way that there would have to be a new Government on a dissolution. (There have been many stories about who would follow Rai if he crossed the floor. Saffee and Hamid would go, if anyone did, but they are both lightweights and neither would be elected again under any other banner than that of the PPP; both know this and, as Rai admits to me, they could not be relied on unhesitatingly to follow him. Ramsahoye has been much mentioned. Rai says he is a "jellyfish". He was named as Returning Officer in the Party elections; Rai says that there was no such post, but Ramsahoye distributed ballots and when reproached by Rai for permitting irregularities, said, "Comrade, the Party moves in devious ways." Ramsahoye is unhappy; he is getting more kicks than ha'pence in his Attorney-Generalship; but Rai says that Ramsahoye is terrified of Jagan and the PPP toughs and is ready to vote for anything and eager to draft anything asked for by the Party. Ranji Chandisingh, an undoubted onetime Communist card-carrier, has quietened down since he married and stopped drinking, but Rai says that Chandisingh would always go along with Jagan.)

(i) Rai's support within the Legislature would be slim. He is not deceived by Burnham's recent statements (to me among others) that he would willingly serve under Rai's Premiership - Rai knows that Burnham would use him temporarily to bring Jagan down but would later cast him aside or swallow him up, But Rai has some following among Indian conservatives - merchants and religious leaders - and he is surprisingly confident that he could beat Jagan for any elective office in the Party, except that of Leader, if elections were fair.

(j) There have been attempts to persuade Rai to form a new "National Party" and, by resigning from the Government and taking Saffee and Hamid across the floor, to bring the Government down and then, if there were no dissolution, to form a Government with Burnham's support and d'Aguiar's goodwill. Jai Narine Singh thinks that unless Rai makes his bid for power now, he will be "killed" by the PPP - not physically, but politically. Rai tells me that Jai Narine Singh only "acts mad" but is in

fact a shrewd political operator; even so, Rai has enough sense to think that the time is not opportune for him to make a bid for power on his own.

(k) Contrary to my assessment of the probabilities, Jagan seems unwilling to go to the country now. In conversation with Morton and others, he has talked of "recall of the he Constitution" if anyone crossed the floor against him. This mysterious reference is to his cherished idea that, as in several States of the U.S.A., there should be constitutional provision that if a man elected on the platform of one party voted against that party, a demand for his "recall" and for a fresh election should be complied with if it were made by a prescribed number of voters. There is, of course, no such provision in our Constitution but the relevance of Jagan's talk of it seems to me to be that if he were defeated by the defection of supporters, he would look to me to dissolve the Legislature rather than to commission some Opposition leader to form a government. But other indications are that Jagan dare not risk another election now. But Rai himself thinks that the PPP might get back, and when I took Burnham through the marginal seats he was unconvincing about how the PPP defeat would come.

(l) The complexities of the situation are (not surprisingly!) too much for d'Aguiar - the "political neophyte" as Burnham calls him. When the Government were defeated on the Appropriation Bill Third Reading, d'Aguiar declared that they should resign, while Burnham said they should be left in office to stew in the juice of their own publicly manifested incompetence. d'Aguiar's next public statement was against a coalition. It does not seem that he counts for much in the present state of affairs: his importance is of a negative kind - Burnham says that he could not possibly have a wholehearted coalition with the United Force as this would forfeit the support of a critically important section of the PNC, not necessarily extremists, but Africans for whom Portuguese of the kind typified by d'Aguiar are a hated symbol of "the old order".

(m) Jagan is receptive to the idea of a coalition with Burnham. I have told both Jagan and Burnham frankly that when I first came here I was advised that the worst possible fate for British Guiana and South America generally was for the wicked Jagan and Burnham to come together, but now it seemed to me that we were in such financial, economic, racial and social difficulties that only a political solution would avail. Jagan professed to agree, said that he had got the support of some of his own party for this view, but that Burnham was "such a difficult chap", although he (Jagan) had been putting out some feelers. Whatever he really thinks, my guess is that his habitual indecision will prevent his getting anywhere with the PNC.

(n) Rai says that only a PPP-PNC coalition could quickly and effectively restore stability to the country.

(o) Burnham says that he would only consider a coalition on terms that he knows Jagan would not accept. Burnham would only join it if he were to lead it. "Why should I serve under a man who has shown himself incompetent?" I said that the reason was that, whether he liked it or not, Cheddi Jagan was a bigger vote-getter than Forbes Burnham. Burnham said, "I won't pussyfoot on that - the last election showed that it is so; but, knowing all I do about Jagan, I will not serve under him." I said that if that were so, then a PPP-PNC coalition was not the solution that it had seemed it might be. It depended on his willing co-operation and if that were not forthcoming then it was of no consequence whether he was right or wrong, the solution failed.

(p) Burnham would like to see the Government brought down now, but he would not undertake to form a government. "You would have to send for Rai." I said that this was out of the question; the Governor could not act on hunches about what was the reality of the political situation. If Rai crossed the floor with a small number of followers, then he could not appear to me constitution-wise "best able to command the confidence of a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly". Burnham said I would have to send for him (Burnham) and he would decline and would advise me that Rai could command a majority. But it is clear that Burnham has in mind no more than a "caretaker" government.

(q) Burnham is eager to try his chances yet again at an election. Although he is determined to demand Proportional Representation in the Constitution for Independence, he would like to have a shot at first- past-the-post under the present Constitution. Whether or not he would fight under some arrangement that purported to give Rai the Premiership if the joint venture were successful is not clear. I think that if the Government fell because of the expulsion of Rai from the PPP or because of his voluntarily crossing the floor, Burnham would have to take Rai into some form of partnership. But I think - and Rai does too - that Burnham would ditch him as soon as possible.

3. So that is the happy state in which we find ourselves. Meantime, I am much more worried about our financial problems than I am about Communism and racialism and so forth - and have written to Arthur Galsworthy to say so and to tell him that I have asked the U.S. Economic Mission (which is already in action here contrary to apparent belief in the Colonial Office to judge from a recent letter of Poynton's) to take a look at our financial situation. Burnham has gone off to U.S.A., and Puerto Rico for three weeks. d'Aguiar is going to Jamaica. Rai asked me what I thought he ought to do. I said that in no other country in the world that I knew of could a man who had said what he had said stay in office, but that, British Guiana being what it is, I thought that he had better just stay where he is and try to influence the PPP from within. He says that Jagan has only just woken up to the importance of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which suggests that he is not a very well indoctrinated Communist, and that if he (Rai) quits it, then there will be mass distribution of arms to party-supporters and all sorts of other evils. If Rai is expelled from the Party in consequence of pressure from Benn and Janet Jagan and Kelshall then it may well be that the Government will fall. If he is not, then I think that Jagan may find that once having failed to discipline Rai, his ability to do so in future is much diminished and Rai may grow to much greater power within the Party. We shall see.

4. I am sending copies of this letter to Cradock in Port-of-Spain and to John Hennings in Washington. The situation is perhaps too fluid for it to be worth copying the letter to the Foreign Office and the Ambassadors in Caracas and Rio Janeiro, but they are much interested in our politics now and, if you think it worth while, I shall be grateful if you will have the letter copied to them.

Yours,

(Signed) Ralph Grey

[To:] A. R. Thomas, Esquire, C.M.G.

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**37. FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM TO BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON**

(1 May 1962)

**SECRET**

OUTWARD SAVING TELEGRAM

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO WASHINGTON

By Bag DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

No. 2361 Saving

May 1, 1962

PRIORITY

SECRET

Addressed to Washington telegram No. 2361 Saving of May 1  
Repeated for information Saving to U.K. Mission New York No. 748.

Following personal for Ambassador from Fraser.

British Guiana Independence

In January the Foreign Secretary asked you to inform the United States Government that Her Majesty's Government proposed to hold the British Guiana Independence Conference in May of this year, i.e., some three months earlier than the earliest date provided for in the independence formula agreed at the Constitutional Conference held in March, 1960. Subsequent events have conspired to upset this timetable. As I told you during my visit to Washington, Jagan's Government made a serious mistake at the end of January in introducing without warning a budget incorporating considerable increases in taxation plus a compulsory savings scheme affecting all incomes of over £20 per month. These drastic proposals aroused great opposition and led to a strike of the civil service, which was followed up by a general strike and culminated in serious disorders on February 16. These disturbances resulted in some loss of life and extensive destruction of property, and were on a scale justifying investigation.

2. One of the effects of the disturbances was to exacerbate the differences between the main political leaders in the territory and to make it virtually impossible to work out agreed proposals for an Independence Constitution for discussion at the proposed Independence Conference. My two main aims in going down to Georgetown last March were therefore to persuade the local Government to agree to the appointment by the Secretary of State for the Colonies of a Commission of Enquiry into the Georgetown disturbances (it being clear that only such a Commission would command local confidence), and to persuade the three main political leaders to meet round a table under the Governor's chairmanship in an effort to work out constitutional proposals which would be likely to command general acceptance or, at worst, to define the areas of disagreement between the three parties.

3. Both aims were achieved but owing to circumstances beyond our control the membership of the Commission of Inquiry is not yet complete, and it looks as if it may not be in a position to begin its work before about the middle of May. Two members, namely the Chairman, Sir Henry Wynn Parry, recently retired from the Chancery Division of the High Court, and Sir Edward Asafu-Adjaye, former High Commissioner for Ghana in London, have been appointed, and we are expecting an early nomination by the Government of India. The inter-party discussions are also running into difficulties. It is clear therefore that the Independence Conference cannot now be held as early as May because of the need (a) for the Commission of Inquiry to be given time to report and for its findings to be considered; (b) for the leaders of the main political parties to conclude their discussions either by agreeing on the details of an independence constitution, or by defining the areas in which no compromise appears to be possible; and (c) to give time for Her Majesty's Government to consider the results of (b). The Colonial Secretary therefore proposes to put off the Conference until later in the year, the earliest possible date being mid July.

4. Although Dr. Jagan, in private talks with the Governor has tacitly accepted that the Independence Conference may have to be postponed, he has not yet publicly admitted this. There is likely to be difficulty both with him and with Mr. Burnham, the leader of the main opposition party when the subject comes to be broached formally, as we shall have to do shortly. For internal political reasons both leaders are likely to oppose a postponement of the Conference, although both recognise its inevitability.

5. You will recall that the State Department have previously urged upon us that there should be fresh elections in British Guiana before the territory goes into independence. We have not hitherto been able to give any assurance on this point, but in view of the latest events in British Guiana, and the possibility that the constitutional safeguards emerging from an Independence Conference will of themselves predicate fresh elections, it is now our intention to seek at the Independence Conference acceptance that fresh elections should be held before independence is reached. These possible elections, together with the uncertainties in the general situation, make it difficult to forecast when the date of independence will be. The putting back of the Independence Conference will of itself make it improbable for the independence date to be in 1962, but if all goes well at the conference and subsequently we should hope for the date of independence to be fairly early in 1963.

6. Our biggest concern continues to be the United States attitude to aid to British Guiana. The Governor's view, which we share, is that a visit by a United States economic mission may well do more harm than good to the Western cause if it is not followed

up by an early grant of substantial aid. If it is the American intention to give aid to British Guiana such aid should be given soon and should not await independence if it is to do any good. We have already made this point to the American Embassy, but it bears reiteration.

7. In my letter of April 24 I told you this saving telegram had already been sent and I thought it had. My apologies.

DISTRIBUTED TO:

American Department

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**38. MINUTE FROM PRIME MINISTER MACMILLAN TO SIR NORMAN BROOK, SECRETARY TO THE BRITISH CABINET**  
(3 May 1962)

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL MINUTE

SIR NORMAN BROOK

British Guiana

It is clear from our talks in Washington that the Americans attach great importance to achieving what they would regard as a satisfactory solution in British Guiana. They are probably moved by internal political considerations as much as by genuine fear of communism. It is surely to our interests to be as co-operative and forthcoming as we can. In the future the Americans will have to carry the burden of British Guiana and so it is only fair that they should have a share in shaping its future.

I understand that you are willing to institute a committee to consider the various aspects of this question and I should be glad to feel that you were doing this.

At the moment I am not sending copies of this minute to the Ministers concerned and I will willingly do so if you think this would be useful.

Harold Macmillan

May 3, 1962

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### 39. MEMORANDUM FROM R.H.G EDMONDS TO N.J.A CHEETHAM

(17 May 1962)

TOP SECRET

BRITISH GUIANA

In paragraph 5 of his paper CPC(62)17 Sir Norman Brook puts forward a number of questions for consideration by Ministers. I understand that Sir Hugh Stephenson is submitting a brief separately on paragraph 5(d) of Sir Norman Brook's memorandum, and that the Americans have now dropped their objections (5(e)) to our plans for strengthening the Special Branch in Georgetown. This brief therefore covers only the first three questions.

#### Possible alternatives to our seeking to bind a Jagan Government to the West.

2. I recommend that we should agree that for the time being there is no alternative to this policy. As the political parties in British Guiana are divided along racial lines it is unlikely that further elections would throw up a majority for a leader other than Jagan. The only possibility of this happening would be if the current disagreement between Jagan and Rai, the Minister for Home Affairs, resulted in a significant split in Jagan's People's Progressive Party. Some weight should, [*however*]\*, be given to the Colonial Office view that, unsatisfactory though Jagan's Government may be, any alternative government led by Burnham or d'Aguiar (or both) would [*administratively*]\* be even [*less satisfactory*]\* **more incompetent** than Jagan's Government. The Americans on the other hand, seem to have been impressed by Burnham who has recently been in the United States. I also recommend, [*however*]\*, that we should welcome Sir Norman Brook's suggestion that we should make a serious effort to secure, by constitutional means, the election of a Government before independence responsive to the wishes of all the communities in British Guiana - if possible a Jagan-Burnham coalition. The Colonial Office may consider that it would be impossible to secure the agreement of the British Guiana political parties to any such proposal; and even if this hurdle were overcome that a British Guiana ruled by a coalition Government of the main political parties might be less, rather than more, stable than a Government controlled by one party. They may be right, but Sir Jock Campbell, the Chairman of Bookers, who knows British Guiana and Dr. Jagan very well, does not despair either of Dr. Jagan or of the possibility of obtaining the formation of a coalition government, and he is strongly critical of the current mood in the Colonial Office, which seems to be dangerously close to sitting back and hoping for the best.

3. As Sir N. Brook points out, we may well have to delay independence for British Guiana, but for U.N. reasons we cannot do so for very long. Furthermore, the longer independence is delayed, the more we are likely to become embroiled with the Venezuelans over their claim to a large part of western British Guiana territory. A note on the claim is attached at Flag B. and the record of the Secretary of State's conversation with the Venezuelan Ambassador on May 9 (recorded in F.O. despatch No. 49 to Caracas) is at Flag -.

4. If it proves impossible to achieve a multiracial coalition government the chances are that we shall have to continue to try to work with Jagan. [*Any success in*]\* **In that event, our chances of** keeping British Guiana bound to the West will depend very much on the aid the West can provide, and particularly the United States. On this score the Americans have not fulfilled the undertaking given at the Anglo-American Working Party (see para.3 of Annex) to provide 5 million dollars during 1962, and show little indication of providing this.

#### Commonwealth membership

5. It would be difficult to deny Commonwealth membership to an independent British Guiana, whether controlled by Jagan or other political leaders. In addition to the considerations described by Sir Norman Brook it should be remembered that we are proposing to sponsor Commonwealth membership for Jamaica and Trinidad. Even if we were prepared not to follow this procedure vis-à-vis British Guiana the chances are that some other member of the Commonwealth would wish to sponsor British Guiana. At the Anglo-American Working Party in September, 1961 it was agreed (see para.1(f) of the Annex) that it was a desirable objective that British Guiana should continue within the Commonwealth after independence. American views on this score may well have changed, but on balance, and even in the face of the possible strain to Anglo-American relations, there seems no alternative to Commonwealth membership for British Guiana if she wants it.

#### Anglo-U.S. Standing Committee

6. I recommend that we should support strongly Sir Norman Brook's suggestion for an Anglo-U.S. Standing Committee, which would go some way to meet the American request to be fully in touch with developments in British Guiana. Indeed the terms of reference for such a Committee might be widened to cover not only British Guiana and British Honduras, but also the Caribbean as a whole. Cuban influence in Jamaica is almost certain to increase after Jamaica becomes independent. The Committee would be a useful forum through which we could exchange information with the Americans and also exert pressure on them with regard to the economic needs of the newly independent countries and the islands in the eastern Caribbean.

7. The Colonial Office may resist the proposal or at any rate make it a condition of their acceptance that the Committee always meets in London. But there would be advantages in the Committee sometimes meeting in Washington when we could make our points direct to the policy makers, especially on the economic side.

8. The Colonial Secretary is seeing Dr. Jagan to-day and may at tomorrow's meeting make an oral statement on his conversations with him. We understand from the Colonial Office that Dr. Jagan is likely to discuss British Guiana's financial problems, which are becoming desperate. Jagan may also discuss his proposal to raise an army, presumably from elements known to be loyal to him. The Chiefs of Staff are averse to this proposal which would also alarm the Americans.

[Signed] R.H.G Edmonds



(R.H.G. EDMONDS)

May 17, 1962.

[To]: Mr. Cheetham

[Signed: N.J.A. Cheetham 17/5]

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**40. NOTE FROM SIR NORMAN BROOK OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE TO PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN**

(28 May 1962)

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

BRITISH GUIANA

At the meeting of the Colonial Policy Committee on 18th May it was agreed that you should send a message to President Kennedy about Colonial problems in general and the problems of British Guiana (and, incidentally, British Honduras) in particular.

I attach a draft of such a message.\* This has been seen by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Colonial Secretaries and incorporates amendments suggested by them.

(Signed) Norman Brook

28th May, 1962

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**41. NOTE SENT TO COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON, BY SIR RALPH GREY, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA**

(30 June 1962)

## NOTE

Mr. M. Gordon Knox called on me on June 27, with the Consul General, and I gave a small dinner party for him that evening. Neither my guests nor I got much out of the visitor - and I don't think that Mr. Melby did either.

2. Mr. Knox said that he had come from Surinam and he was convinced that the future of the three Guianas lay with the "Hindustani". They were more "in touch with the Twentieth Century" than the Africans - also they were multiplying faster. (I could understand and agree with the latter sentiment, but I am not very good at these American assessments like "being in touch with the Twentieth Century.")

3. Mr. Melby told me afterwards that Mr. Knox was "rather academic". Indeed, when we met at a Jazz Concert given by the Paul Wynter Sextet, whom President Kennedy had dispatched to enlighten South America, Mr. Melby said in front of Mr. Knox that the latter had gotten on well with Dr. Jagan as he had lingering traces of the academic manner that went down very well with the Premier.

4. Mr. Knox's visit coincided with appearances before the Commission of Enquiry by Dr. Jagan that resulted in the Chairman's saying that "Dr. Jagan is an avowed Communist." Mr. Melby said that it would be fruitless for me to initiate any action aimed at "improving the Jagan image" in the USA, as, for example, by making the point that Jagan was manipulated into his "avowal" by clever cross-examination and that his avowal had all sorts of reservations and strings attached to it. The damage is done and we must just sit back and wait to see what happens.

5. Inevitably, the discussion got around (as all such discussions do) to the point at which the Governor has to say, "Well, let us suppose for the sake of considering future policy, that Jagan and all his associates are real, genuine, card-carrying, Soviet-lining, Communists; what is to be done?" This is the point at which all American officials (save the long-suffering Mr. Melby and Mr. Sheridan) say, "That is for the U.K. to say - it is **your** responsibility." In an attempt to jolt Mr. Knox into some sign of animation otherwise than on the subject of Hindustanis, I resorted to vulgarity. I said that if my dog (fortunately, I have none, so the metaphor is unlikely to be mistaken for factual possibility) did something quite unforgiveable in Mr. Knox's drawing room, he presumably would not (a) ignore it, pretending it wasn't there, (b) acknowledge its presence but refuse to touch it on the ground that it was unclean, or (c) content himself with saying it was my responsibility because I had not managed the dog better. He admitted that this was quite a metaphor; but he showed no signs of doing anything about it. His only contribution towards hope for British Guiana was that if the Congress of the U.S. passed the Foreign Aid Bill and then went into recess, the Administration could spend some of the money on places like this without having Congress collectively attack it, only individual Congressmen. Towards the end of summer, therefore, we might have a chance in getting help. I said, with as much control as I could muster, that successive splendid reasons for putting off the time when something should be done to save Jagan and British Guiana from Communism had succeeded in driving him farther towards it.

6. Mr. Knox didn't think much of Mr. Burnham.

7. Mr. Knox has a strange official history. I wondered if he were more than he seemed when I read it. Now I doubt if he is more than he seemed when I met him. Mr. Melby seemed pretty discouraged. Mr. Knox is pleasant but if there is fire in his belly it was emitting no smoke.

R.F.A.G  
30/6/62

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**42. LETTER FROM SIR RALPH GREY, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO N. B. J. HUIJSMAN OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON**  
(3 July 1962)

SECRET AND PERSONAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
GEORGETOWN  
BRITISH GUIANA  
3rd July, 1962

My dear \_\_\_\_\_,

In paragraph 7 of my letter of June 19 to John Hennings, I said I was expecting visit from M. Gordon Knox, who has taken over responsibility for "Caribbean Affairs" in the State Department.

Knox duly called on June 27. I enclose a copy of a note which I wrote shortly afterwards.

Dr. Jagan tells me that he asked Knox point-blank if he was opposed to Independence for British Guiana, as he (Dr. Jagan) knew that Mr. Dean Rusk had brought pressure to bear against it. Mr. Knox replied in the negative, and asserted that on the contrary the policy of the United States Government was in favour of Independence for British Guiana. Curiouser and curiouser, said Alice.

There were no very controversial guests at my dinner-party. The time was not appropriate for having Ministers, etc. Lionel Luckhoo was there and I purposely teased him a little about his cross-examination of Jagan before the Commission and said that while it might have been a forensic triumph it did not seem to have any particular purpose, that it had wrung out of Jagan admissions that would be widely publicised in their simple form but that were in fact much hedged about with qualifications, etc., and that this would do the country no good abroad. Knox didn't seem particularly interested.

After this letter was drafted, I had one from Mr. Hennings, saying that when Mr. M. Gordon Knox adorned the London Embassy he was universally beloved. Perhaps they were stormy days and he was an oasis of calm?

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Hennings in Washington.

Yours,

Ralph Grey (signed)

[To:]

N. B. J. Huijsman, Esquire

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**43. NOTE FROM SIR RALPH GREY, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO R. W. PIPER OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON**

(25 September 1962)

SECRET AND PERSONAL GUARD

25 September, 1962

Lloyd Searwar came to see me this morning to tell me some of his troubles. As I have said before, I mistrust him as an informant and many of his troubles are, as I told him again today, due to his over-anxiety to please whomsoever he supposes to be the repository of power - he seeks to please his Church by daily attendance at Mass and then feels very uneasy at the results of subsequent efforts to please his political masters whose activities are anathema to the Church. But he is close to the heart of PPP ministerial activities and sees far more of those activities than I do, even if his account of them and, even more, his deductions from them are not altogether reliable.

2. He said that he has become very worried at what he considers to be a major change in ministerial attitude towards United States aid. Hitherto, Ministers have outwardly professed to be disillusioned with American promises and impatient at delays in receiving aid; but they have inwardly been anxious to get that aid and moderately optimistic about its arrival in the end. Now, says Searwar, "they couldn't care less." Indeed, he thinks that they may even be contemplating some denunciation of American aid. (There is plenty of precedent for that in the utterances of their anti-American friends in Cuba and in South America as well as in the USSR). Searwar says that there is active distrust by Benn and Hubbard in particular, although all the Ministers are of much the same mind, of individual American functionaries. He mentioned David Hughes, the most junior of the Vice-consuls, whom he alleged to be "very indiscreet", and David Horan, the USIS representative. There was corroboration of his story in communications that I have had from Benn, as Acting Premier, asking me to protest to the American authorities against alleged

improprieties by Hughes, who was said to have visited the house of Andrew Jackson, President of the Post Office Workers' Union, one morning at the height of the recent postal strike, when Jackson was bitterly attacking the Government, and by Horan, who has been delivering a series of broadcasts against Communism and seeking to decry the achievements of Governments of the Eastern bloc in their management of State-planned industry and agriculture. (Horan's broadcasts are so unbelievably dull that international Communism ought to be grateful to him for building up a Guianese distaste for all anti-Communist propaganda - but Brindley Benn does not see it that way). These are matters which I must take up with Mebly on his return (expected tomorrow), in addition to the fuss about scholarships (your telegram Personal 279).

3. I asked Searwar how the Ministers knew about Hughes' visit to Andrew Jackson. He said that he supposed that Hughes was being watched by PYO enthusiasts. He said that he thought that quite a widespread system of surveillance of Opposition public figures was being developed. I asked where the money came from. He said that was not a wise question: those were enthusiasts. I remarked that even youthful enthusiasts must fill their bellies. He said that although he did not give much credence to most of the tales about the "Itabo" coffee-bar that has been established below PYO headquarters by Ramjohn Holder and one Stephen Anthony de Castro and that has attracted some local notoriety as a hang-out of the Guianese version of "beatniks", it was commonly said that this was an institution set up by the Party to serve the PYO. Girls (presumably also "enthusiasts") were procured for duty there to attract young men; other excitements were available for the young men attracted; by these means the recruiting for the PYO (which is already very considerable through less disreputable means) was stepped up; and food and drinks were provided for the PYO vigilantes.

4. I asked Searwar where the Ministers thought the needful aid would come from if it did not come from the United Kingdom and US aid was "denounced". I said that Ramsahoye had quickly rejected the suggestion I made recently that his colleagues were living in ill-founded hopes that on Independence Day money would pour in from the Eastern bloc. Searwar said that Ramsahoye does not reflect the thinking of Ministers as a whole (that is true enough) and that Hubbard has been talking about a "Joint Development Fund" to which Eastern bloc countries would subscribe. Searwar's own view was that Russia had shown by her recent acceptance of increased commitments in Cuba that she was coming into the Caribbean in earnest and he thought that Ministers would not be behaving as they are unless they had had some positive assurances from the Eastern countries. He admitted that the aims of international Communist (*sic*) might as well be served by sitting back and waiting for inevitable chaos by giving aid; but he stuck to his assessment that some assurance of aid has been given.

5. Searwar said, "We have always thought that the instincts of the rice-farmer, on whom Jagan so much depends, were against Communism and were a stabilising factor, no matter what nonsense Jagan and his immediate associates might talk. But what if the rice-farmer found that he got the best price for his rice from the Communists and if his tractors were cheaper from Soviet sources? I said that it was a mighty big "if".

6. Searwar regretted the local United States decision that no publicity should be given to the Government's signing of the AID agreement for the \$300,000 road survey on the Atkinson-Mackenzie project; but he saw the obvious American need, just before Congressional elections, to avoid publicity for aid by the Administration to a "Communist-controlled" country. He said

that his sister, who is the moving spirit in a Catholic youth organisation for girls called the "Green Light Organisation", had recently had forty-five days in the United States on an American governmental travel grant. She returned a few days ago and said that Adam Foster and Arthur Schlesinger were still talking about aid for British Guiana and the latter was worrying about how to avoid the Congressional resolution about "no aid to Communist-influenced countries". But Searwar was clearly worried that this family connection with the Americans would land him in trouble at his work, in the present mood of the Ministers.

7. Searwar volunteered the thought that "Jagan has largely lost control". He says that Benn, who formerly was written off inside the party as well as outside as a "light-weight", is now a heavy-weight in his own right and that real power is passing more and more to Benn and Bhagwan and David and people of that kind. He thought Kelshall a dangerous doctrinaire but said his influence on Jagan has much diminished. The PYO is more and more influential and, said Searwar, with bated breath, "It is multi-racial." He thought that Jagan and some others in the Party had always believed in the possibility of introducing a Marxist society by parliamentary means; but they had not understood the time element - Marxist aims could be achieved with acceptable speed only by revolution or by Nkrumah-type action, preserving parliamentary forms but locking up the Opposition. Now that their miscalculations are becoming evident, the strength of the wilder members of the Party grows; the absence of Mrs. Jagan is "tragic" - although she was Communist-minded, she was an efficient administrator and her administrative sense frequently led her to solutions much more conservative than those that would have been suggested on ideological grounds alone; the ill-fated Budget of 1962 would not have been introduced in the way it was if she had been there. He attributed her disappearance from ministerial life to having been battered for too long and wanting to get away from a rigorous desk-job and to have some of the jaunts abroad on which she had been sending others for so long. There is no doubt much in all of this; but as he was prolonging the recital of problems without getting anywhere near a solution, I turned to other things.

8. He reads the Opposition as aiming for a deadlock at the Constitutional talks; but he agrees that continuing PPP government after a deadlock is not likely to do anyone much good. He sees in a getting-together of Jagan and Burnham the only hope for progress.

9. What is worrying about all this is the story of ministerial antipathy for Americans. The Americans have made a thorough muddle of things here - if it had not been for Melby it would have been even worse. It is ironical that American functionaries (again other than Melby) should be so critical of what Britain has done or has not done here when it is they who by their own defects have so greatly contributed to the unhappy state in which the country now is. Their efforts to influence the course of events are the reverse of skilful. I shall have to warn Melby privately on his return that unless they are much more adroit they will, as Searwar volunteered this morning, "worsen the situation here irretrievably" - not only for themselves, but for us also.

10. I send this in duplicate so that you may, if you wish, send a copy to the Foreign Office. I am sending a copy to John Hennings; and I shall give a copy to Cradock, who arrives tomorrow.

Yours,

(Signed) Ralph Grey

[To:]

R. W. Piper, Esq.

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**44. LETTER FROM J.A. DAVIDSON OF THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION, TRINIDAD, TO C.W. FOOTMAN OF THE WEST INDIES DEPARTMENT, COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE**

(11 October 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION  
P.O. Box 778  
Port of Spain  
Trinidad, West Indies

11th October 1962

POL 9/7/1

Dear Charles,

We have told the Trinidad Ministry of External Affairs that the next round of the British Guiana Constitutional discussions will begin on 23rd October, but with Dr. Williams and the senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs away, there has, as might be expected, been little reaction.

There are, however, one or two indication of local views. I have the impression that as soon as a British colony in Africa becomes independent it right away sets itself up as a prime mover for the immediate independence of any other colonies near it. Here in Trinidad there seems to be very little of this and a recent newspaper [*word unclear*] (albeit on a very small scale) suggests that the comparatively few people here who have thought about the matter at all, regard early independence for British Guiana without any enthusiasm. There seems to be no doubt that, whether or not Jagan is a Communist, a number of people think he is one and are alarmed at what he will do when he is off our leash; and there is concern that independence for British Guiana will bring trouble to the Eastern Caribbean.

Dr. Williams has yet to pronounce in detail, but his observation, referred to in my letter POL 9/7/1 of 13th September that British Guiana is "now making a mess of the whole West Indies scene" certainly reflects the main body of local informed opinion.

I fear, however, that all this does not mean that the Trinidad Government and people will support any overt action by Britain which could be represented as maintaining "colonialism" in British Guiana, and there would almost certainly be a hostile reaction here to any British move against Jagan's government which involved the use of force, military or civil, in such a connection. Much would of course depend on Dr. Williams' attitude, and we should be interested to know if the British Guiana situation was discussed with him when he was in London. As you know, the High Commissioner suggested in his letter of 12th September (reference POL 13/7/8) to the Permanent Under Secretary that it was possible, despite the risks, that we may find him useful in this context.

On a narrower field, the recent British Guiana Exchange Control difficulties have not made Dr. Jagan any more popular here. The local feeling is that while British Guiana, the British Islands in the Caribbean and Trinidad all have a common currency, supported by central assets, the convertibility of this currency is at the heart of its standing. Now, because British Guiana is going bad, through what is regarded as the fault of the Government there, the Trinidad financial authorities take it amiss that their currency should, however indirectly, be affected.

I should perhaps mention that the High Commissioner has seen this letter, which I am copying to Sutherland (Washington), Miles (Kingston) and on a Secret and Personal basis to D.A. Murphy, Governor's Office, Georgetown.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J.A. Davidson

[To:]

C.W. Footman, Esq., C.M.G.,  
West Indies Department,  
Commonwealth Relations Office,  
London, S.W. 1.

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#### **45. COLONIAL OFFICE REPORT ON THE BRITISH GUIANA CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE**

(1 November 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL



## THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE said that he had had a report of the consultations which the leaders of the delegations had had with the Governor and he had been very disappointed to learn that no noticeable progress had been made in bringing the parties closer together.

He had considered very fully and after long consultations with the Governor and the Parliamentary Secretary of State, the possibility of making proposals on the basis of which agreement might be achieved. He regretted, however, that he had been unable to think of any proposal which would stand a reasonable chance of becoming the basis of an agreement unless the delegates radically changed the views they had expressed. The fundamental question was that of proportional representation; there were other elements of disagreement, but he could not think of a proposal which had a reasonable chance of agreement in the face of the differences over this question. Since there appeared no prospect of agreement any proposals which he might make at this stage would, he thought, merely become the subject of party political controversy in British Guiana, would harden positions and would lessen the chance of ultimate agreement. This would be undesirable from the point of view of all parties.

He was forced to return therefore to his earlier suggestion that the delegates might agree to accept the arbitration of the British Government in imposing a solution. If they agree to this, he would have full discussions with the leaders both separately and together, in order to produce a solution which would be most nearly acceptable to all parties. He could think of no precedent for an Independence Conference having such wide and continuing divergencies (sic) of opinion; in the end all other Conferences had finally agreed at least to acquiesce in some decision.

He asked therefore for the last time whether there was a prospect of the delegations agreeing among themselves, or to arbitration by the British Government. If not, he thought it would be harmful to allow the Conference to drag on in an atmosphere of increasing bitterness.

DR. JAGAN said that he was sorry that the Secretary of State had not felt able to offer any suggestions for removing the deadlock because he knew that the British people had strong opinions on the basic issue of proportional representation. He regretted that, considering British Commonwealth practice and precedent, the Secretary of State was prepared to allow the Conference to break up on this issue.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE remarked that the Trinidad Conference had ended in agreement whereas the present one had so far showed no signs of doing so. It was a serious matter to fail to agree; it would be a bad start for a country embarking on independence. Precedents were certainly solutions which might commend themselves to the delegations. He was prepared to spend any number of hours necessary to help the delegations to reach agreement. But in the end the delegations must agree, or accept British arbitration, or break up without agreement.

MR. BURNHAM also expressed disappointment that so far it had not been possible to solve the main points of difference. He was very anxious to proceed with further discussions especially between the three British Guiana Delegations. He had come to the Conference knowing that there were differences of opinion. The P.N.C. had made several compromises.

The 1960 Conference had accepted the imposed solution of an upper house instead of proportional representation; but an imposed solution was a poor start to independence. Reference to British precedents and practice might be useful but there was no guarantee that precedents and practice would be observed after independence. British Guiana's difficulties differed from those of Britain or Trinidad.

He recognised that compromise was necessary. His delegation had indulged in that; but they were not prepared to compromise on principles. The Constitution must be drafted for the people not for the parties and the majority of the people wanted proportional representation.

MR. D'AGUIAR said that in his party's view, proportional representation was the only answer for British Guiana. His delegation took their stand on this and could see little point in an adjournment as they had no intention of changing their position. He realised that Her Majesty's Government had the power and responsibility to take action if the Conference failed to agree. He assumed that any such action would be in accordance with the will of the majority of the people of British Guiana and would therefore bring a fair result. But it was not for his party to undertake in advance to agree with any action that Her Majesty's Government might take.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE said he was not prepared at this stage to accept that agreement was impossible. He asked the delegations to consider their positions among themselves very seriously, and to see whether there was not some concession they might make. He would himself be available to talk with the three leaders, either separately or together, after the delegations had considered their positions.

Lancaster House, S.W.1  
1st November, 1962

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**46. TELEGRAM FROM COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TO BRITISH MISSIONS**  
(4 November 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

**OUTWARD TELEGRAM FROM COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE**

TO: OTTAWA  
CANBERRA  
WELLINGTON  
DELHI  
KARACHI  
COLOMBO  
ACCRA (ACTING H.C.)  
KUALA LUMPUR  
LAGOS  
NICOSIA  
FREETOWN  
DAR ES SALAAM (ACTING H.C.)  
KINGSTON  
PORT OF SPAIN  
KAMPALA  
SALISBURY

RPTD. NEW YORK                    ) VIA FOREIGN OFFICE  
WASHINGTON                    )  
(Sent 11.00 hours 4th November 1962)

CYPHER  
W. No. 623 CONFIDENTIAL

Repeated New York and Washington.  
My telegram W. No. 572 of 25th October.

BRITISH GUIANA

Conference is liable to break up in next few days without reaching agreement.  
2. You should therefore be aware of following background.

(a) The breakdown does not indicate any withdrawal by British Government of our willingness to grant independence to British Guiana, nor our general policy of leading our remaining dependent territories towards independence.

(b) Jagan won clear majority of seats at last election with support of only 42% of votes cast. Hence demand by both Opposition parties for change to elections based on proportional representation and for further election on new basis before independence.

(c) Conference has been disappointing in showing serious absence of common ground between the leaders of main political parties and racial groups and none of that spirit of compromise and mutual confidence which is an essential prerequisite to Parliamentary democracy. Jagan and Burnham have failed completely to show the mutual relationship of Williams and Capildeo in Trinidad or Bustamante and Manley in Jamaica.

(d) On four major issues there has been no progress:

(i) introduction of proportional representation (favoured by Burnham and D'Aguiar:

(ii) age of voting (Jagan wants 18 years);

(iii) holding a further election before independence (favoured by Burnham and D'Aguiar);

(iv) entrenchment of certain clauses.

(e) This situation left only three courses:-

(i) to continue discussions - but there is no evidence that further discussions would achieve anything better;

(ii) for H.M.G. to impose a solution which all delegations agreed in advance to accept - but there is no such agreement and anyhow we do not favour the idea;

(iii) to adjourn the talks indefinitely (as happened at Zanzibar Conference earlier this year) and meanwhile to leave the people of British Guiana to continue to try to decide what they want. This is what we shall have done.

3. Events in Cuba have, of course, made other American states more worried than ever at the risk of an independent Guiana under Jagan becoming a Russian satellite, but you should avoid any comment on this point.

4. Copies of report of Wynn Parry commission on the February disturbances have been sent by airmail to all High Commissions and to outposts in India, Pakistan and Nigeria.

Copy to:-

D. II

C.R.O.	Mr. Footman Mr. Barrow
Colonial Office	Mr. Piper Mr. Huijsman
Foreign Office	Miss Hutchinson
C.A.O. Dublin	Registry (4)
U.K. Embassy Washington	Mr. J.D.B. Shaw
U.K. Mission to the U.N., New York	Mr. J.A. Scott

Copies to Foreign Office (Telegram Section) for retransmission to New York and Washington.

WEST INDIES DEPT.

WID 25/86/1

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#### **47. COLONIAL OFFICE MEMORANDUM ON THE BRITISH GUIANA CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE** (5 November 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

##### THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE invited the Governor of British Guiana to report on the discussions which he had held with the leaders of the British Guiana delegation.

SIR RALPH GREY said that he had met the leaders of the three British Guiana delegations on the morning and afternoon of Friday, 2nd November, when there had been full, frank and amicable discussion. The three courses suggested by the Secretary of State - agreement, an imposed solution, or indefinite adjournment - had all been considered. He had urged the

disadvantages of adjournment. Mr. Burnham had strongly opposed an imposed solution, which would not be a happy start to independence. They had therefore looked for means of reaching agreement.

Recognising that the chief issue turned on the electoral system, they had considered possible variants of proportional representation, the possibility of two Chambers, one elected under proportional representation and the other on a single member constituency basis and a division of powers between the Prime Minister and the President or the Leader of the Opposition. He regretted, however, that no progress had been made, and the meeting had broken up with the leaders no closer to agreement.

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE said that the result of these talks was disappointing. It was not the British Government's wish to adjourn the Conference indefinitely without a solution. He asked the leaders of the parties if they could make any further suggestions which might lead to progress.

DR. JAGAN said that, although he had agreed to the proposed procedure of dealing first with minor issues, he would have preferred to have faced the larger issues from the start of the Conference. One reason for the lack of success of the Conference was that the participants had been concerned with the secondary issue of a struggle for power at home, when they should have been concentrating on the transfer of the remaining powers from H.M.G. to the British Guiana Government.

The deadlock hinged on the single issue of proportional representation. If the Conference failed to break the deadlock and refused arbitration (which he agreed was undesirable), there was no alternative but to return home. But the deadlock would continue, and if the British Government withheld independence until British Guiana had settled its own problems, there would be more frustration and agitation. The difficulties must therefore be resolved, not on the basis of what would suit one or the other party, but on principle, constitutional practice in the United Kingdom and precedents in the Commonwealth. The merits and demerits of the major issues contributing to the deadlock had already been argued. The British Government should weigh the arguments, and should then attempt to adjudicate on the basis of British constitutional practice and precedents elsewhere.

This, he felt, would probably mean maintaining the status quo: the single member constituency system of elections would continue (as in Britain), and the P.P.P. would concede that the voting age should remain at 21. On the question of elections, he maintained that the previous elections had been recognised as the pre- independence elections. To insist upon another election at this stage would stir up unnecessary and undesirable emotions in the country. On the question of appointing the Service Commissions, he had already said that he would be prepared to accept the Trinidad model. But he would now go further: he would accept the precedent of any independent Commonwealth country.

MR. BURNHAM said that an imposed solution was neither desirable nor acceptable to the P.N.C. He agreed with Dr. Jagan that there was a struggle for power, but that struggle for power was taking place within the P.P.P. Dr. Jagan had spoken much about British constitutional practice and precedents, but there were no precedents in British constitutional practice for some of the

actions of the present British Guiana Government. For Dr. Jagan to argue that an election would stir up emotions was to argue that an election should never be held in an emergent territory.

Of course, independence meant a transfer of power but it meant a transfer of power which took place on certain conditions and in a stable atmosphere, with a majority of the people satisfied and content. The British Government must accept the wish of the majority of people in British Guiana. The P.P.P. were indulging in sophistry in claiming that they knew better than the people themselves what the people wanted. The P.N.C. and the U.F.P., despite their differences, both wanted proportional representation, and no arguments about a transfer of power or about British constitutional precedents could disguise the fact that a majority of the people in British Guiana also wanted proportional representation. The Conference should devise means of consulting the people of British Guiana on this issue; unless some means were found the P.N.C. would not shift from their stand on proportional representation.

It had been suggested that the British Government could impose a solution but the British Government was situated in Britain and could not in political terms impose any solution since after independence it would have no power in Guyana. The British Government should make proposals which could then be considered by the Conference.

The P.N.C. had approached this Conference in a spirit of compromise. They had already yielded their position on the question of who was to be Head of State although there had been many precedents in their favour, and they had yielded their position in their proposal for a compromise on the Public Service Commission, which had not yet been accepted. The party's proposals were aimed at ensuring harmony through compulsory co-operation and without that co-operation there would be no economic or social progress in Guyana.

MR. D'AGUIAR said that there was a struggle but it was a struggle of people to express themselves freely and with every single vote in an election effective. Proportional representation was not a perfect system but within the present context of British Guiana it would allow every individual an effective vote and create a sense of security which would remove the tensions which had led to riots. At present a minority motivated by an ideology in which freedom was unknown was struggling to keep power, and to hang on that power by slender threads until, with control over foreign policy finally removed, it could call on outside assistance to maintain it,

The two Opposition parties which probably had wide support now than they had had even in the 1961 elections, had approached the Conference with a desire to achieve by it what was the best for British Guiana. They thought the answer lay in a system which would exclude them and all parties from dictatorial power. If the Secretary of State was to make proposals, the United Force Party would of course consider them, but he felt definitely that proportional representation was a fair and reasonable way to ensure that all the people of British Guiana, and not merely one party, are able to exercise power.

THE PARLIAMENARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE summing up, said that Dr. Jagan felt that the major issues on which no agreement had been reached should be decided in accordance with the principles, practice and precedent in Britain and the rest

of the Commonwealth. Mr. Burnham and Mr. D'Aguiar felt that this was not appropriate in the circumstances of British Guiana and did not consider it desirable for Her Majesty's Government to impose a solution, but would be prepared to discuss any proposals that Her Majesty's Government might make. He would report what had been said to the Secretary of State and would inform the delegations of arrangements for their next meeting.

Lancaster House, S.W.1  
5th November, 1962

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**48. COLONIAL OFFICE MEMORANDUM ON THE BRITISH GUIANA CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE**  
(7 November 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE said that the time had come to review the progress of the Conference. He expressed disappointment at the uncompromising attitude of the British Guiana delegations, which offered little prospect of reaching agreement. There were a great number of questions on which he had no doubt they would eventually reach agreement, but even on minor points of difference progress was proving disappointingly slow. But there were at least three major issues on which the Conference appeared to be approaching deadlock; they were the electoral system, the age of voting, and whether there should be elections before Independence. The question of entrenchment might also prove difficult.

He could think of only three possible solutions. First, that the delegations should make a further, and successful, effort to agree. Second that the delegations should agree to accept a solution to be decided on by the British Government. Finally, that the Conference should adjourn in the hope that with the passage of time the parties would find a way out of their deadlock. He would be glad to consider any other suggestions.

DR. JAGAN said that he too was sorry that there had been little progress. He had however anticipated difficulties before leaving British Guiana. In his opening address he had said that the Conference should be primarily concerned with the transfer to the British Guiana Government of the residual powers remaining with the British Government, and not with an attempt to resurrect the struggle for power in British Guiana which should have been resolved for a time by the 1961 elections.

He would be glad to have further discussions with the Opposition Leaders, although he did not know what success could be hoped for.



The Secretary of State had made the suggestion that the British Government might impose decisions. A compromise had been suggested by the Chairman at the 1960 Conference and he hoped that the same sort of compromise solution could be arrived at on this occasion. But the guiding principles should be constitutional practice in Britain and precedents in the constitutions of other independent Commonwealth countries.

He was glad that the Trinidad Conference had preceded the British Guiana Conference, because the Trinidad Opposition had used almost the same arguments as were now being used by the British Guiana Opposition. The situation in British Guiana was very like that in Trinidad and he hoped that it might be possible to resolve the deadlock on similar lines.

He (Dr. Jagan) had always wanted independence to help the country to go forward and he had often tried to get some area of agreement in the country. In 1953 the Constitution was suspended and his Government removed from office because they had argued for land reform and for peaceful co-existence, which had then been considered heretical dogmas (although they were now accepted). They had then already achieved great success in uniting the two major races in the country. As a result of the suspension of the Constitution his party had split and the resulting racial division was now used as an argument against independence. His Government had a majority of seats in the Legislature but the Opposition a majority of votes at the last election and so it was said that it was impossible to resolve the deadlock.

He had clearly said that he wanted a settlement on the basis of British practice and precedent. Even in Britain it was accepted that there were other factors besides seats and votes to be considered in determining the consensus of opinion within a country. If there was indeed an atmosphere of failure and suspicion it would never be reduced until the country became independent because until then it would be argued that it was only British control which prevented his Government from totalitarian actions. Only after full power had been given to a government freely elected under the British type of electoral system would it be possible to remove the suspicions and uncertainties which existed. Until independence was given, British Guiana would be back on the road of political agitation and strife. These were matters that should be decided by the elected Government.

MR. BURNHAM said he too felt a keen sense of disappointment at the Conference's failure to bring British Guiana nearer to independence. It was because of the deep differences of opinion, particularly on the form of the electoral system, that he had originally suggested that the Conference should be held in British Guiana where it would have been influenced by the pressure of public opinion. Dr. Jagan had spoken of the need to remove suspicions, but the P.N.C. could feel no confidence in the sincerity of the P.P.P.'s willingness, on the basis of its past record, to co-operate with other parties. He was disappointed that the British Government did not see fit to put forward proposals although in the last analysis the decision not to do so must rest with them. But it had been generally recognised in their discussions that a majority of the electorate was represented by the two parties which favoured proportional representation. If the British Government were in a dilemma, he suggested, in a final effort to break the deadlock on the issue of the electoral system, that the people of British Guiana should be allowed to decide by means of a referendum. The P.P.P. had themselves suggested a referendum to decide whether British Guiana should have

joined the proposed West Indies Federation, and the form of the electoral system was a question of much greater importance for the country's future stability than that had been.

MR. D'AGUIAR said he recognised that arbitration by the British Government would probably be fair and just, but felt that since they had the power to impose a solution, they should exercise this power without requesting the permission of the three parties. He could not agree that there was anything abhorrent to the British tradition in proportional representation. He agreed with Mr. Burnham that the only further solution that could be put forward was for the people of British Guiana to decide this issue themselves by means of a referendum.

DR. JAGAN said he could not agree to the suggestion of a referendum on the question of the electoral system.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE said that he earnestly hoped it would be possible to overcome the differences that divided the parties at the Conference. In the event, however, despite all the efforts which had been made to bring the views of the parties together, it had not proved possible to reach agreement. He had suggested that the British Government should arbitrate, but this suggestion had not been accepted. He had noted the United Force Party's view that it was for the British Government to impose a solution without obtaining the prior agreement of the three parties. In his view, if the three leaders were not prepared to accept arbitration, it would not be appropriate at this stage to impose decisions against the wishes of the Government party which hold a majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly, or alternatively against the wishes of the Opposition parties which together had polled a majority of votes at the last election.

The British Government had no wish to retain sovereignty over British Guiana longer than was necessary to discharge their responsibility to launch the country on independence under conditions which gave a prospect of its going forward as a viable nation both politically and economically. But in the circumstances he thought the only solution was for the Conference to adjourn and for the parties to return to British Guiana. When the impact of the Conference's failure to agree was felt in British Guiana, the pressure of popular opinion might help the parties to reach agreement.

The Secretary of State stressed that, since continued political uncertainty must inevitably prejudice the social and economic progress of the country, the present state of affairs must not be allowed to continue much longer. If after an interval no agreed solution could be found, the British Government might have to consider imposing a settlement on their own authority so as to enable British Guiana to go forward to independence. But, since this would be a most unhappy way of launching the new nation, he urged the three leaders to make a further serious effort to reach agreement amongst themselves and assured them of his readiness to help in any way which they might consider useful.

The Conference then adjourned for one hour.

## 2. REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference considered the draft Report which had been circulated (B.G.I.(62) 22).

In discussion a number of amendments were agreed.  
The Conference -  
Agreed and signed their report as amended.

### 3. CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS

After discussion, it was agreed that the records of meetings and other Conference documents should, in accordance with precedent, remain confidential. The Secretary of State said that this could not preclude delegates from open discussion of the events of the Conference, but quotations from or references to the Conference documents should be avoided.

### 4. SECRETARIAT

The Conference recorded their thanks for the work of the secretariat.

Lancaster House,  
7th November, 1962

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## **49. BRITISH COLONIAL OFFICE - NOTE FROM R.M.K SLATER TO MR. CHEETHAM**

(20 November 1962)

CONFIDENTIAL

British Guiana

At tomorrow's meeting of the Overseas Policy Committee the Colonial Secretary is raising orally the subject of British Guiana.

2. The joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the British Guiana Constitutional Conference (see report circulated under OP(62)11) brings out clearly the reasons for the failure of the three main political parties to agree on a constitution. There seems to be no more than an outside chance that, on their return to British Guiana, Dr. Jagan, Mr. Burnham and Mr. D'Aguiar will come to some agreement. At tomorrow's meeting the Colonial Secretary may give some indication of the steps he proposes to take in the event of continuing disagreement.

3. The collapse of the Conference will not have been unwelcome to the Americans, who no doubt hope that there is now a better chance of Dr. Jagan being removed from power. In this they may be wrong. We must in any case let them have our assessment before long. We can expect them to be even more sensitive about British Guiana after the Cuban crisis.

4. The Colonial Secretary may mention two problems which are likely to require a decision fairly soon:

(a) British Guiana Defence Force

Dr. Jagan wants a small internal security force after independence. This is legitimate enough, and indeed it would be unusual for a colony to achieve independence without such a force. The important thing is that it should not become Dr. Jagan's private army; it must in fact be multi-racial. Various alternatives have been considered at the official level, including an Israeli scheme for a defence force on Nahal lines. The Colonial Office are inclined to favour this scheme, which is sensible on the face of it, though the political implications would need careful thought. The Americans dislike the idea of any defence force, fearing that it may help to prop up Dr. Jagan.

(b) Aid

A working party established under the Overseas Co-ordination Committee is looking into the question of a financial settlement on independence. It is already clear that British Guiana will need continuing aid from some source or other. An American contribution is most unlikely so long as Dr. Jagan remains in power, and there is always the danger that British Guiana will turn to the Soviet Bloc. A Soviet Trade Mission is expected in British Guiana fairly soon.

(Signed) R.M.K. SLATER)  
November 20, 1962.

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**50. MEMORANDUM PREPARED BY THE AMERICAN DEPARTMENT OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE**  
(29 November 1962)

**SECRET**

**BRITISH GUIANA**

The Colonial Office memorandum (LAO(62)11) is depressing and adds little to the information we already have. It would be interesting to know, in connexion (sic) with paragraphs 6 and 8, whether the Colonial Office can offer any estimate of when a reconvened conference is likely to take place. In other words, how much time is to be allowed, for discussions between the

political parties in British Guiana before the Colonial Secretary considers imposing a settlement? With Anglo-American relations in mind should we try to keep the momentum going or simply let events take their course for the time being? At first sight the former seems the wiser course.

2. Paragraph 7 describes the lack of contact between British Guiana and other countries in South America. It is worth considering whether we should try to stimulate respectable contacts between British Guiana and her neighbours. If we were even in a position to go ahead with the negotiations on the British Guiana/Surinam border, this would be a start. Members of the Venezuelan A.D. Party visited British Guiana recently: would there be any virtue in stimulating this Party, through our Embassy in Caracas, to invite one or two British Guiana politicians to Venezuela? And is there any similar action that might be taken *vis-à-vis* Brazil?

3. The problem of the U.S. attitude to Dr. Jagan is intractable. The Americans will want to know how we see the situation developing, and President Kennedy may well raise this question with the Prime Minister at the forthcoming meeting in the Bahamas. Doubtless the Colonial Office will be producing a brief, and it is to be hoped that the Americans will be left in no doubt of the economic problems of British Guiana and of the consequent danger of her turning to the Eastern bloc for aid. The Soviet Trade Mission is due in British Guiana on December 4.

4. It might also be worth asking the Colonial Office if they envisage early progress on the question of a British Guiana Defence Force.

American Department  
Foreign Office  
November 29, 1962

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**51. BACKGROUND DOCUMENT PREPARED FOR BRITISH PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN FOR HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY IN DECEMBER 1962**

(December 1962)

**SECRET**

**BRITISH GUIANA**

**BACKGROUND NOTE**

**Population**

1. Total population 558,769. About half are of East Indian descent; about one-third of African descent. The remainder include Amerindians (4%), Portuguese, other Europeans, persons of mixed blood.

### **Present Constitution**

2. Under the Constitution of July 1961, British Guiana is internally self-governing. The Governor is responsible for defence and external relations, although in the latter field there is a delegation of authority to local Ministers in respect to trade agreements and missions. In all other matters, including internal security, he is required to act on the advice of his -Ministers.

### **State of Parties after the last elections**

3. At the general election in August 1961 the People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.) led by Dr. Jagan, won 20 of the 35 seats in the Legislative Assembly; the People's National Congress (P.N.C.) led by Mr. Burnham, won 11; and the United Force (U.F.) led by Mr. D'Aguiar, won 4. The election of one P.P.P. member, however, was invalidated through an election petition and another has since defected. Thus, Dr. Jagan can rely on the support of only 18 of the 34 sitting members.

4. At the same election the P.P.P. secured 42.6% of the votes, the P.N.C. 41% and the U.F. 16.4%. Thus, Dr. Jagan's Government was returned on a minority of the total votes polled.

5. The P.P.P. draws its support very largely from the East Indians and the P.N.C. from the Africans. The U.F. relies mainly on middle-class and business interests and the Amerindians.

6. The Civil service and Police Force are largely manned by Africans.

### **Anglo-American Working Party of September 1961**

7. A joint review was carried out in London in the light of the election results. It was agreed to make a "whole-hearted across-the-board-effort" to co-operate with the Jagan Government and to foster association between British Guiana and the West, subject to American insistence on certain safeguards. The Americans promised an economic aid mission and Dr. Jagan was invited to Washington.

### **American change of view**

8. The U.S. Government became increasingly concerned at the Marxist tendencies of the Jagan Government. There was strong public and congressional opinion against giving it aid. The U.S. Administration grew unable or unwilling to implement the policy

of co-operation. There were repeated delays over aid and it is only recently that a mission has visited British Guiana. It is now back in Washington, but it is clear that the U.S. Government will not give any substantial aid to the Jagan Government.

### **Disturbances of February 1962**

9. In an effort to bring the almost bankrupt state of British Guiana finances into better balance, the Jagan Government introduced a budget imposing large additional taxation. This sparked off the disturbances which led to the dispatch of British troops. The Commonwealth Commission of Inquiry (whose report is annexed) criticised both Dr. Jagan and the Opposition Leaders. The budget proposal was ineptly handled by the Government which had also brought about a feeling of insecurity and lack of confidence. The Opposition Leaders were inspired by political rivalries which led them to irresponsible and provocative actions and statements.

### **Postponement of Independence Conference**

10. This Conference had twice to be postponed as a result of the disturbances and the fact that the Commission was enquiring into them.

### **Independence Conference**

11. This was held between the 23rd October and the 6th November, 1962. All three main Parties sent delegations. Some progress was made on minor issues, but dead-lock resulted on the major issues, viz: .system of voting, question of elections before independence and the age of voting. The Government delegation advocated single member constituencies (as at present), voting at 18 and no elections before independence. Both Opposition Parties asked for proportional representation, voting at 21 (as at present) and fresh elections. The most crucial of these issues was the method of voting. Owing to basic disagreement it was recognised that there were only two other possible courses at this stage, viz: arbitration by the British Government or adjournment of the Conference. All three Leaders were unwilling to agree to arbitration. The Secretary of State did not consider it appropriate at this stage to impose decisions against the wishes of the Government Party which held a majority of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, or alternatively, against the wishes of the Opposition Parties which together had had polled a majority of votes at the last election. It was left\* (*sic*) that a further effort should be made by the three Leaders to reach agreement amongst themselves in British Guiana, but that, since continued political uncertainty must worsen the already bad economic state of the country, the British Government might have to consider imposing a settlement if after an interval no agreed solution could be found. The Report of the Conference is annexed.

### **Further political outlook**

12. It is likely that a period of a few months must be allowed to show whether local agreement can be reached. It is, however, very unlikely that it will. It is possible that during that period the Jagan Government may be overturned by natural political

processes. Their present majority in the house is 18 to 16. One by-election should be held arising out of the invalidation of the election of a P.P.P. candidate in August 1961 (though Jagan is strongly resisting holding one). If held, this would probably result in the return of a Burnham supporter. In this case a single defection from Jagan's party would remove his majority.

13. H.M.G. is not committed to imposing any particular settlement if after a period the leaders fail to agree, but a referendum on the system of voting may be the best answer. Constitutionally, this could be imposed by Order in Council, but as it would probably be in the teeth of opposition by the British Guiana Government, it would be an easy matter to decide or implement.

### **Economic needs**

14. Meanwhile the already critical financial and economic condition of the country is bound to deteriorate. It must be recognised that the American Government will not give significant aid to a Jagan Government. It is, however, to be hoped that if there is a change of government in British Guiana, American aid will be really substantial and very promptly given and will include short-term as well as long-term benefits.

### **British Aid**

15. To meet the Development Programme 1959-64, the British Government undertook to provide the C.D.&W. grants of approximately \$US13.4 million. It has already provided Exchequer loans of about \$US14.56 million for the purposes of the programme, and has undertaken to consider providing a further \$US6 million in Exchequer loans during the remaining two years. This is a pretty large effort which we cannot increase.

### **Proposal to form a British Guiana Army**

16. It is accepted that the forces available for internal security should be strengthened. This was shown to be necessary by the disturbances of February 1962. The British authorities consider that the most effective way of doing this would be to expand the Police Force. But the British Guiana Government will not support this method and they are responsible for internal security. They want an army, primarily for internal security duties. Two Israeli officers have been in British Guiana on an invitation from Dr. Jagan and have drawn up a proposed scheme on Nahal lines. The War Office have independently prepared a scheme as a guide to what might be necessary should British Ministers decide that H.M.G. should take on the job of training up an Army. The Colonial Secretary has recently decided to pursue the idea of expanding the Police Force. It is clear that the British Government will have to meet the cost of expansion, whatever form this took.

### **United Nations**

17. Dr. Jagan has previously put his case for early Independence before the Committee of 17. Since the Conference he has sought the backing of the Afro-Asian Group for a resolution of his own drafting. It is not clear what support he is getting. The



British Mission in New York is fully briefed. It has been intimated indirectly to Mr. Burnham that it would be useful for him to put the Opposition case informally to the Afro-Asian Group in New York but we cannot take any positive action in this direction since on principle we do not accept the right of petitioners from Colonial territories to be heard. The Mayor of Georgetown, (one of Mr. Burnham's supporters) has since visited New York and spoken to the American and the Afro-Asians.

### **Venezuelan Claim**

18. The Venezuelan Government have revived an old claim to two-thirds of the area of British Guiana. This was the subject of an arbitral award in 1899, which was accepted as a full and final settlement by the British and Venezuelan Governments. As the Government responsible for the external affairs of British Guiana, we cannot accept that the Venezuelan claim has any basis. Nor can we fail to give support in this matter to the Government of a territory on the eve of independence. We have, however, offered the Venezuelans an opportunity to participate in a tripartite examination of all the documents in the case, in the belief that this will make it plain to them that their claim has no foundation.

Colonial Office  
December, 1962

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## **52. TALKING POINTS PREPARED BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE FOR BRITISH PRIME MINISTER HAROLD MACMILLAN FOR HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY IN DECEMBER 1962**

(December 1962)

### **SECRET**

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

P.M.(B) 62  
December 1962

TALKS WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY,  
DECEMBER, 1962

BRITISH GUIANA  
(Brief by the Colonial Office)

Talking Points

The recent Independence Conference ended in a deadlock and had to be adjourned. The reason for the deadlock was the diametrically opposed view point on three issues adopted on the one hand by the Government party led by Jagan and on the other by the major Opposition party led by Burnham and the minor Opposition party led by D'Aguiar. These issues were

(1) the system of voting, on which Jagan wanted to continue the present system of single member constituencies and the Opposition parties wanted to go over to P.R.;

(2) the question of holding fresh elections before independence, which Jagan opposed and the Opposition parties insisted upon; and

(3) the age of voting, (Jagan wanted it reduced to 18; the others wanted it to remain at 21).

Although Jagan might be willing to compromise on (3) and possibly even on (2) there is no expectation of any compromise for either side on (1) which is the crucial issue.

None of the parties was willing to agree to an arbitral award by H.M.G. The Colonial Secretary was unwilling to impose at that stage a solution which would be bound to go against the wishes either of the Government party which has a majority of seats in the elected Assembly or the Opposition parties which together polled a majority of votes at the General Election of August 1961. In these circumstances the Conference was "adjourned" to enable the leaders to make a further effort to reach agreement after their return to British Guiana. The prospects are very slim. It may be necessary for H.M.G. to impose a settlement in a few months time and this might take the form of a referendum on the method of voting; but this would undoubtedly be difficult in the face of opposition by the local Government. Meanwhile the political scene may change (Jagan has only a bare majority in the Legislature) and we are, as the President knows, in close touch with the Americans.

We recognise the difficulty of the Americans in giving economic aid to the present Government, but we must ask that if there is a change of Government, they should give it promptly and liberally and in a manner which brings quick as well as long term benefits, since if financially and economically the country is in a parlous (*sic*) state.

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### **53. APPOINTMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND POLICE FORCE IN BRITISH GUIANA** **(Document Prepared by the Government of British Guiana)** (April 22nd, 1963)

The leader of the People's National Congress (PNC), Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, according to reports in the local press, is alleged to have stated at a press conference in New York City on March 8, 1963, that Dr. Jagan had packed the Police Force with officers of Indian descent and had given civil service posts to "blue-eyed boys of the Party" [*Guiana Graphic*, March 9, 1963]

2. Mr. Burnham was also reported to have criticized what he described as the patronage system practised by Dr. Jagan in the British Guiana Civil Service. He charged that there has been "a deliberate lowering of the physical and educational qualifications to permit packing of the police force by Jagan." [*Daily Chronicle*, March 9, 1963]

3. These allegations by Mr. Burnham have no foundation in fact.

4. The ethnic composition of the Service Commissions is as follows:

**Public Service Commission**

Indo-Guianese - 1  
Afro-Guianese - 2  
Mixed - -  
Other - 2  
Total - 5

**Police Service Commission**

Indo-Guianese - 2  
Afro-Guianese - 1  
Mixed - -  
Other - 2  
Total - 5

5. The present People's Progressive Party (PPP) Government assumed office in September, 1961, at which time the ethnic composition of the Government and of the Party in both Houses of the Legislature was as follows:

**Government (Council of Ministers)**

Indo-Guianese - 4 Members  
Afro-Guianese - 3 Members  
Mixed - 3 Members  
Other - -  
Total - 10 Members

**Legislative Assembly (Lower House)**

Indo-Guianese - 11 Members  
Afro-Guianese - 7 Members  
Mixed - 1 Member  
Other - 1 Member  
Total - 20 Members

### **Senate (Upper House)**

Indo-Guianese - 3 Members  
Afro-Guianese - 3 Members  
Mixed - 2 Members  
Other - -  
Total - 8 Members

6. The ethnic composition of the two opposition parties (PNC and United Force) in both Houses of the Legislature at the time of the formation of the present Government (September, 1961) was as follows:

### **Legislative Assembly**

#### **PNC**

Indo-Guianese - 1 Member(s)  
Afro-Guianese - 7 Members  
Mixed - 1 Member  
Other - 2 Members  
Total - 11 Members

#### **UF**

Indo-Guianese - - Member(s)  
Afro-Guianese - 1 Member  
Mixed - 1 Member  
Other - 2 Members  
Total - 4 Members

### **Senate**

#### **PNC**

Refused to nominate its quota (2) of members

**UF**

Other - 1 Member

7. The racial composition of the Police Force at July 31, 1957, when the former PPP Government assumed office, was as follows:

	Officers	Chief Inspectors	Sub-Inspectors	Other ranks
Indo-Guianese	2	-	6	140
Afro-Guianese	16	3	35	1180
Europeans	8	-	-	-
All Others	4	-	11	114
Total	30	3	52	1434

8. Information similar to above at the time of assumption of office of the present PPP Government in September, 1961, is set out hereunder:

	Officers	Chief Inspectors	Sub-Inspectors	Other ranks
Indo-Guianese	2	-	4	197
Afro-Guianese	25	5	34	1093
Europeans	8	-	-	-
All Others	6	-	9	111
Total	41	5	47	1401

9. After the present PPP Government had been in office for approximately 18 months, that is, up to March 31, 1963, the ethnic composition of the Police Force was found to be:

	Officers	Chief Inspectors	Sub-Inspectors	Other ranks
Indo-Guianese	4	1	6	248
Afro-Guianese	30	4	38	1099

Europeans	6	-	-	-
All Others	5	-	8	103
Total	45	5	52	1450

10. Ethnic details of the promotions in the Police Force, from Inspector to Deputy Commissioner, made on the advice of the Police Service Commission, during the period September, 1961, through March 31, 1963, are given hereunder:

Indo-Guianese - 5  
 Afro-Guianese - 25  
 European - 3  
 All others - 2  
 Total - 35

11. The statistics indicate that in July 1957, September 1961, and March 1963, Indo-Guianese constituted 9.7% and 13.5%, and 16.5%, respectively, of the total strength of the Police Force. The corresponding figures for Afro-Guianese are: 83.4%, 77.4%, and 75.4%.

12. These figures do not support Mr. Burnham's allegation made in New York. The slight increase in the percentage of Indo-Guianese in the Police Force from 9.7 in July 1957, to 16.5 in March, 1963, is due to the fact that more people of this ethnic group (47.8% of the population as compared with 32.8% of Afro-Guianese) are being attracted to the Police Force rather than to any attempt to pack the Force with persons of Indian descent, as alleged.

13. During the life of the Police Council (under the Chairmanship of the Governor), set up in April, 1960, the Council agreed that there was urgent need for the Police Force to represent as soon as possible a reasonable cross-section of the community.

14. With regard to the alleged lowering of physical standards required for entry into the Police Force, the only exception made was in respect of the minimum height of 5'8" of the applicants. The possession of technical (radio or motor mechanic) or general educational (GCE or School Certificate) qualifications enabled applicants of all ethnic groups who were slightly below the minimum height to be recruited.

15. The numbers of persons recruited and/or promoted to vacancies in the civil service, on the advice of the Public Service Commission, during the period September, 1961, through March, 1963, are as follows:

#### **Grade of Senior Clerk and above**

	Recruited	Promoted
Indo-Guianese	136	104
Afro-Guianese	212	234
Total	348	338

### **Below Grade of Senior Clerk**

	Recruited	Promoted
Indo-Guianese	157	28
Afro-Guianese	200	70
Total	357	98

as follows:

Indo-Guianese - 2  
 Afro-Guianese - 4  
 Mixed -10  
 Other - -  
 Total -16

16. The ethnic composition of Permanent Secretaries and Principal Assistant Secretaries in the Civil Service at present is

17. The ethnic composition of Senior Professional and Technical Officers in the Civil Service at the present time is given hereunder

Indo-Guianese - 22  
 Afro-Guianese - 27  
 Mixed - 13  
 Other - 11  
 Total - 73

18. The racial distribution of teaching staff in all-age primary schools as of August 31, 1962, ranging from Headteachers through Pupil and Junior Teachers, is as follows:

Indo-Guianese - 974 Teachers  
Afro-Guianese - 2,000 Teachers  
Europeans - 3 Teachers  
All others - 222 Teachers  
Total - 3,199 Teachers

19. The racial composition of the professional staffs of the Education Department and of the Government Training College is as follows:

Indo-Guianese - 6  
Afro-Guianese - 17  
All others - 2  
Total - 25

20. The foregoing data clearly indicate:

(a) that the PPP Government and Legislators represent a fair cross-section of the multiracial Guianese community, which neither the PNC nor the UF legislators do;

(b) that there is absolutely no truth in the allegations made by Mr. Burnham of the packing of the various branches of the public service with Indo-Guianese, or of the deliberate lowering of physical and educational standards to permit such packing of the Police Force.

21. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into disturbances in British Guiana in February, 1962 (Colonial No. 354, H.M.S.O., London) had this to say in paragraph 28:

"We found little evidence of any racial segregation in the social life of the country and in Georgetown. East Indians and Africans seemed to mix and associate with one another on terms of the greatest cordiality, though it was clear that the recent disturbances and the racial twist given to them by some of the unprincipled and self-seeking politicians had introduced slight, but it is hoped, transient overtones of doubt and reserve. Among the inhabitants of Georgetown there is, of course, always present the danger that hostile and anti-racial sentiments may be aroused by a clash of the hopes and ambitions of rival politicians. We draw attention to this possibility because there have been indications of such friction in the past, although, as will appear in the course of this report, the disturbances of February 16th did not originate in a racial conflict, nor did they develop into a trial of strength between the East Indians and the Africans."

22. Paragraph 147(3) of the same Report concluded:



"Political rivalries and the frustrated ambitions of some of Dr. Jagan's erstwhile supporters fostered a sense of resentment and antagonism towards Dr. Jagan and his Party"

23. There are no real, deep-seated racial differences in Guiana, but misrepresentations of the type made by Mr. Burnham, which attribute imagined grievances to alleged racial prejudices of the present Government, are calculated to intensify racial feelings and to incite the hooligan elements of the population to acts of violence under certain circumstances.

24. The PPP has always maintained that racial harmony is a prerequisite for constitutional and economic progress. But the policy of the Colonial Office in British Guiana after the suspension of the Constitution in 1953 led to a split in the Party which encouraged Mr. Burnham (former PEP Chairman) to pursue a racist line in order to attract support. This he has been doing ever since. The defeat of Mr. Burnham's party at the 1957 General Election resulted in a more pronounced Afro-Guianese race consciousness. This led Professor Peter Newman of the University of Michigan to remark as follows in an article entitled "Racial Tension in British Guiana," in RACE (the Journal of the Institute of Race Relations, London, May, 1962):

"Not surprisingly, this attention to a unified African front led to a need for a common enemy a role which was filled by the East Indians. Operating within the restricted social and economic framework that I have discussed, the main animus of the party [PNC] was focused on the racial issue, and even official party pronouncements began to take on a racial tinge. Since the PPP continued to maintain a public image of non-partisanship (although its local support was often less unbiased), many African intellectuals, especially among the younger group, began to feel dissatisfied with the racial policies of the PNC. Except in a few cases, this did not lead them to the PPP, but it did cause them to withhold active participation from the African party; partly as a result, the second-rank leadership of the PNC is distinctly less able than the corresponding echelons of Jagan's party"

25. In summary Mr. Burnham's misrepresentations in New York were meant to prejudice overseas public opinion against the PPP Government, and to intensify racism at home, from which both his party (the PNC) and the UF hoped to profit at the expense of domestic racial harmony even though this would tend to endanger the possibility of independence for British Guiana.

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#### **54. LETTER FROM THE PREMIER, DR. CHEDDI JAGAN, TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR RALPH GREY**

(12 June 1963)

Office of the Premier  
Public Buildings  
Georgetown

12th June 1963

His Excellency Sir Ralph Grey, KCMG Governor  
Government House  
Georgetown

Your Excellency,

Today the public peace has been disturbed in and around the Public Buildings and the Ministers of the British Guiana Government have been under siege by large assemblies of persons who have squatted in front of the entrance to prevent ingress and egress into the Public Buildings.

The solution to this problem is in taking serious steps to disperse these assemblies which are responsible for the false imprisonment of Ministers, public servants on duty and members of the public transacting lawful business within the precincts. This can be done by the use of reasonable force if necessary with measures being progressively stronger if the situation deteriorates.

The pages of this country's history are being written in the blood of the Fast Indian community, the majority of whose members have shown every restraint in the face of injuries to person and property on a wanton and widespread scale. The arguments of Great Britain for their refusal to transfer power to the elected Government include the argument that Great Britain has responsibility for the welfare of the people of British Guiana and cannot renounce this responsibility in present circumstances.

If only in loyalty of their interest in upholding the principle of the general welfare, Her Majesty's Government should take active steps to see that the rule of law is maintained in this country at the present time. Riotous and tumultuous assemblies of persons should be dispersed and be prevented from squatting within the precincts of public offices. Lawlessness has increased to the point where members of the crowd now sit in the offices of Ministers who are denied entry and who are prevented from carrying on the business of Government. In Georgetown business places are being looted, robbery from the person has become an offence of common occurrence and assault and hounding have become more widespread than at any previous time in our history. Yesterday I requested that the Army should be allowed to support the civil power but this request was considered inappropriate by the Commissioner of Police. It is my opinion that the adequacy of the Police should be measured by objective and not by subjective considerations.

It is my painful duty to have to write to Your Excellency about the public peace in Georgetown. I have never and will never deny so long as it is within my power any help which the security forces need and which I have power to give. I have done and am prepared to do everything reasonably necessary to compromise upon matters which are alleged to have given cause for complaint in the first place. But I cannot abdicate the functions of Government.

It is under our law the duty of the Commissioner of Police to maintain public peace and public order. In my opinion, the Commissioner of Police should be urged to take stronger measures to perform this duty. His failure in this respect will result in irreparable damage to this country.

Yours sincerely,

Cheddi Jagan  
Premier

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**55. LETTER FROM THE PREMIER, DR. CHEDDI JAGAN, TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR RALPH GREY**  
(12 June 1963)

Office of the Premier  
Public Buildings  
Georgetown

12th June, 1963

His Excellency Sir Ralph Grey, KCMG  
Governor  
Government House  
Georgetown

Your Excellency

I am seriously concerned about the apparent breakdown of law and order in Georgetown. I met large and small businessmen and I'm to meet another group of small shopkeepers in a few days. The feeling is growing among businessmen and citizens generally that Government must take more effective measures to preserve order and prevent injury to person and further loss of private property. Not only is the incidence of violent crime rising alarmingly but looting is now becoming a regular feature of our life. If further incidents occur involving riot and/or looting the Government will have to face very serious criticisms and the seeds would have been sown for grave consequences in the future.

2. I have given the whole question close consideration and have come to the conclusion that the instability now apparent in the city has resulted from the lack of a firm policy of containment on the part of the law-enforcing agencies - the judiciary the

magistracy and the Police. It is elementary knowledge that known infringements of law must never be allowed to pass unpunished. It has been often stated by authorities that it is certainty of punishment rather than severity of penalty which is the real deterrent to crime and that punishment must be speedy if it is to be effective.

3. I have already brought to your attention my views on the judiciary and magistracy, the decisions they have given and the statements they have made from the bench attacking the Government. Last week I sent you a copy of a letter from the Commissioner of Police on this subject. In this letter, I wish to deal exclusively with the Police.

4. The threat to law and order which is now so painfully obvious stems directly from the general feeling in Georgetown that the Police is not prepared to take effective action against members of the opposition supporters. It must be admitted that the record of the last 16 to 17 months shows that this general belief appears to be based on experience. In support of this I wish to mention the following:

(i) On February 16 last year when picketing of the Public Buildings assumed the aspect of general riotous behaviour, there was no effort on the part of the police to quell the disturbances or to disperse the crowd. While the Minister of Home Affairs did not give specific orders to have the crowds dispersed, this was no doubt largely due to the fact that he was influenced by Senior Officers of the Police Force. These men insisted that operational control of the Force must rest with the Commissioner and they advised that the Police Force would not be able to control the crowd.

(ii) This was quickly followed by far more serious incidents in which Mr. Burnham, Mr. D'Aguiar and Mr. Ishmael together with other well-known leading members of the community openly participated in riotous behaviour and broke the law in defiance of senior Police Officers who were present. No action was taken against these men either at that time or since. I cannot help but feel that even if fear for their own safety prevented the police officers doing their duty by immediately arresting these leaders, at least action should have been subsequently taken by warrant or by summons.

(iii) It is now commonly known that during the disturbances there were several incidents in which members of the Police were guilty of insubordination and cowardice. One of the Assistant Commissioners reported sick and left his duties in circumstances which should have been the subject of investigation. I do not know just how fully the whole matter of insubordination has been gone into. What I do know is that the general public has been given the impression that action amounting to mutiny during a civil disturbance has been condoned by those in charge of administering the Police Force. While this impression has been fostered by the Governor's action in re-instating the only Police Officer disciplined, Inspector Braz, I cannot escape the feeling that so injudicious an action by the Governor could not possibly have been pursued if the senior officers of the Force involved had pressed their point of view with the preservation of discipline as their justification.

(iv) Shortly after these 1962 disturbances the Police on information, which I am told came from my Party, arrested two men with a mobile broadcasting station in a van owned by D'Aguiar Bros. A tape which had been broadcast and which I was informed by the then Chief Security Officer was in the voice of Senator Jardim was found and proved to be a bitter and

venomous denouncement of the Government and of certain members of the Government. In the context of the existing tensions this whole operation was clearly an incitation to riot and violence. The Police elected to institute only a minor charge for operating an unlicensed transmitter. This charge was, in the circumstances, ludicrous and worse than no action at all. Not only did the charge fail, I understand that the van was returned to D'Aguiar Bros!

(v) Recently when as Premier I held a public meeting at the Parade Ground in Georgetown to report to the people on the outcome of the Independence Conference, the Police allowed a relatively small number of opposition supporters to disrupt the proceedings. Not only was there organised interference by singing and shouting in unison but stones were thrown at me, and cars, including that of the Minister of Agriculture, were damaged. Several persons in the crowd were set on by gangs acting in concert and badly beaten.

Throughout all of this, no effective Police action was taken to quell the disturbances nor was anyone arrested. The riot squad which was standing by was never called into action. On that occasion the Commissioner of Police and other senior officers were present. When I spoke to the Commissioner of Police subsequently and asked why no effective action was taken, he told me that he did not consider, contrary to the views of the legal adviser (Police), what occurred to have been disorderly behaviour and a breach of the peace. Rather, he felt that his conception of his duty was to close down the meeting if it appeared to be getting out of hand. If this is his conception then while he retains operational control it follows that public meetings would become impossible in British Guiana, for it is quite easy for any political party to create disturbances at meetings called by its opponents. In truth and fact, while he claims that this is his interpretation, it is by no means the interpretation of his subordinates. If attempts are made by supporters of the Government Party to disrupt opposition meetings the Police invariably act promptly and effectively against the unruly elements. I brought to his notice that several PPP supporters were charged and severely punished by the magistrate for their behaviour at a United Force meeting at Windsor Forest, a PPP stronghold.

(vi) Let me cite two other incidents. Not too long ago, the TUC organised an unemployment protest march. The marchers were in a large number of cases openly armed with offensive weapons, such as sticks with nails imbedded, motorcycle chains, lengths of pipe. No attempt was made by the Police to disarm and/or charge the offenders. When members of the PNC Opposition party attacked the PPP members who were picketing Government House and a fight ensued it was the PPP members who were arrested by the Police and the signs being carried by the PPP were seized.

On Friday, 5th April, when disturbances broke out at the Rice Marketing Board as a result of an inter-union dispute the Police once more failed to show a determined front. When the picketers of the RMB attacked Mrs. Jagan's car and injured its occupants action should have immediately been taken to disperse the crowd. Twenty minutes later when the crowd went further and burnt the car of the leader of the recognised union again action was delayed. Naturally the result was that the violence escalated and widespread looting commenced. One does not have to be an experienced Police Officer to know that this looting was the direct result of lack of firmness on the part of the Police at the commencement of the incident. And I would like to point out that my opinion is borne out by the fact that when, later that day under heavy pressure brought by me and by the late Minister of Home Affairs on the Commissioner of Police, he finally decided to order firm action, the disorder terminated at

once. Unfortunately, this was a case of "too little too late". I regret to point out that the Commissioner's general attitude on this occasion and since was a demonstration of lack of firmness. Instead of breaking up the unruly mob, he tried to put pressure on the Chairman of the RMB and the late Minister of Home Affairs to discontinue the loading of the Soviet ship then in port.

The entire incident of April 5 reflects most discredibly on the Police. At the discussions which we subsequently had in the Security Committee I made the point that no damage would have occurred to Mrs. Jagan's car had not a Police Officer stopped it at the gate and insisted on searching. It was, so far as I am aware, no part of the Police duties to do this. The parcels in the car had already been screened by the Customs Guard whose duty it was. Superintendent Lambert took it on himself to stop the car, find and "clear with" the Customs Officer. While he was doing this, part of the crowd scaled the RMB fence and destroyed the car and injured the occupants. When I ventured the opinion that had the car been allowed by Superintendent Lambert to pass through the gate, no incident would have occurred, and consequently Superintendent Lambert should be held responsible, Colonel Buckland gave it as his opinion that if the car had not been stopped it would most probably have been overturned and the occupants perhaps killed or severely injured. I then said that if that was the mood of the crowd, then it should have been dispersed there and then.

My own judgement leads me to believe that had Superintendent Lambert directed his attention to quelling the riotous crowd instead of interfering with Mrs. Jagan's car there would probably not have occurred the destruction of Mrs. Jagan's car, the burning of Armstrong's car and the looting and destruction of property later that day.

5. And now I turn to the present crisis. At the beginning of the strike I made the observations that this was a political rather than an industrial strike. This was later confirmed by Mr. Burnham some weeks ago when I consulted him. At the very first meeting with me he said that the Labour Relations Bill was not the *causa belli* but the *casus belli*; in other words, not the cause of the war but the occasion of the war.

6. We must remember that we are dealing with a frustrated Opposition, an Opposition which lost three successive general elections and sees no prospect of winning in the future free and fair elections according to the rules laid down. The Opposition, therefore, is seeking other means - fear, intimidation, violence, economic dislocation by strike, lockout and blockade - in an effort to remove my Government from office. In this, it is being aided by reactionary elements both here and abroad. The TUC has many of its top-ranking leaders deeply involved in politics. This was clearly brought out in the findings of the Riot Commission. And the TUC has association and close connections with the United States arm of the ICFTU and ORIT whose sole objective since 1950 has been the destruction of the PPP. In 1953, Mr. Romauldi, then head of ORIT, not only applauded the suspension of the constitution and the removal of the PPP Government from office, but helped to destroy the then TUC which was supporting the PPP Government. Today the same Romauldi is closely associated with the American Institute of Free Labour Development which is itself associated with the US State Department and USAID and has been training and financing local trade unionists. It is to be noted that Romauldi recently remarked that as long as I am in the Government he will see to it that no United States aid comes to British Guiana for the British Guiana Government. This frustrated Opposition is no longer arguing

about the merits or demerits of the Bill. You have observed the many compromises we have made to resolve their so-called fears, and also their stalling tactics during the course of negotiations to prolong the strike.

7. In such a situation it is incumbent on all concerned not to do anything consciously or unconsciously directly or indirectly to embolden the Opposition. If done, it will undermine not only confidence in the Government, but also respect for the rule of law and the law enforcing agencies - the Police, the magistracy and the judiciary. Unfortunately this is precisely what has been done in the course of several months. The Opposition has become emboldened as a result of acts of omission and commission particularly by the Police. If there is to be respect for the Government and respect for the law enforcing agencies then the Government must not only govern, but must appear to be able to govern; the law enforcing agencies, particularly the Police, must not only be firm, but must appear to be firm. Otherwise there will be a complete break down of law and order.

8. I wish to recite a further series of events which have helped to undermine confidence in the Government and which have psychologically emboldened the Opposition:

(i) Firstly the case of Police Constable Naraine. Naraine, a body-guard assigned to the Minister of Finance, was recently removed by the Commissioner of Police from his post. This was, in effect, for him a demotion. It occurred after a magistrate closely associated with the PNC made some uncalled-for observations that PC Naraine was not the kind of person to be entrusted with a pistol. It is to be noted that PC Naraine attended a meeting at which I, the Minister of Finance and others were present at Pouderoyen. Rotten eggs were thrown inside the building in which the meeting was held. As a result the meeting became disorderly. PC Naraine then went downstairs to investigate. He was set upon and badly beaten and severely injured. It was only then that he fired his pistol. Incidentally among the articles recently seized at the Police raid on PNC headquarters was a plan of the very building at which the meeting was held. Who knows whether PC Naraine did not forestall an attempt at assassination of members of the Government. Yet in spite of all this Naraine was removed from his post as body-guard which was, in effect, demotion.

(ii) Secondly the searching of Jack Kelshall's home. You will recall my conversation with you on this question. I asked what was the purpose of this search. Kelshall has been the butt of attack from the Opposition from the time he came to serve in this country. Even if he were in possession of an illegal weapon as the Police claimed it was informed, did he intend to use this weapon to break and enter or to murder? Clearly there was no such intention on his part. The most that can be said is that his life was threatened, he needed protection and had been refused permission by the Police for the use of a revolver. Such a search would not have taken place in another country, knowing the high position he held as Private Secretary to the Premier. More alarming than this search was the statement made immediately by the Commissioner of Police that he saw it as his duty to search Ministers' homes if it became necessary. This was subsequently followed by an actual search on the home of the Minister of Agriculture.

(iii) More than this, recent searches which have been carried out have been, in the vast majority of cases, in the homes of Government supporters. Why have PNC and UF supporters not been harassed as much as Government supporters especially

when such vital evidence and damaging material were found at PNC headquarters, when a "GUYS" youth at a UF meeting was caught in his person with a home-made bomb?

(iv) Thirdly, the events of last Wednesday which occurred at the cemetery during the course of the burial of the late Minister of Home Affairs, Claude Christian. I am advised by the President of the Senate who was put in charge of the funeral arrangements that after consultation with the Police, it was agreed that proper security precautions for the safety of Ministers of the Government, bereaved relatives and friends of the late Minister, would have been taken. Instead, in spite of adequate warning at the funeral parlour and at the Brickdam Cathedral where disorderly behaviour was much in evidence, no proper arrangements were made. As a result, I and other Ministers were attacked. I was hit on the head with a stone. Other persons with me were also hit. The car in which I travelled was bombarded and stoned. The Minister of Agriculture told the Commissioner of Police at a meeting in my office how an attacker approached him with a knife and how the car in which he travelled was bombarded by stones at very close range with the Police and horse-guards hardly intervening. Several Government supporters were also injured at the cemetery after my departure. Please see attached statements by the Minister of Agriculture and the President of the Senate. Failure to take proper security precautions and effective and firm action to disperse the unruly crowd merely emboldened it. This, in turn, resulted in the racial outbursts, grievous injury to persons and serious loss of property on the evening of the same day.

(v) Fourthly Ministers of the Government are being held up to ridicule. On the 28th May 1963, when the Speaker ruled against me and three of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly the crowd outside the Public Buildings, became very emboldened and excited. They booed several members as they left the Public Buildings. Later, even after a heavy downpour of rain, they came out again and flowed over into the street. They prevented Mohammed Saffee, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, and legislator Hamid from leaving the Public Buildings. These two legislators were forced to stand on the driveway approaching the entrance of the Public Buildings for nearly three-quarters of an hour. I called the Commissioner of Police by telephone and suggested that the crowds be dispersed. Subsequently when the Minister of Communications and I joined the two other legislators and were about to leave we were told by the Officer in Charge, Supt. Subryan, that it would not be safe to leave and we should await the arrival of reinforcements that he had summoned. The mob outside the Public Buildings was howling, jeering and laughing. It was at this point I returned to the Public Buildings and put in another telephone call to the Commissioner. I had to wait for several minutes before Police reinforcements arrived. This situation obviously was one most humiliating to me personally as Leader of the Government. When Ministers and other leading Members of the Government are put in this embarrassing position, almost as caged prisoners, then there can be no respect for the Government. Incidentally this same situation developed at the cemetery when we were surrounded by a howling and jeering mob pelting stones from about a distance of 15 to 20 yards.

9. Whenever I have asked in my personal discussions with the Commissioner for firm action somehow he always managed to refer to our weakened position in Georgetown and the strength of the Opposition. I wish to remind you that in the period October 1953 to 1957, the Police and Army were faced with an equally strong Opposition to the Interim Government. The PPP was strong not only in the country but also in the city. Law and order was maintained because the Government was prepared to act firmly. There was practically no disturbance then as compared with the present time. In spite of the fact that there were no



riots, no looting and no serious breach of the peace, persons were detained and restrictions were imposed on prominent members and supporters of the People's Progressive Party. Incidentally not one person was shot from October, 1953 to 1957. I'm not aware that the Police had to open fire on anyone. Yet the British armed forces were in evidence everywhere in aid of the Police to maintain law and order. I mention this because it seems from what the Commissioner has been telling me that the rules have now changed for whenever I have talked to him in terms of requesting support from the Army he has given me the impression that the Army could not be called out until the Police have actually opened fire, i.e. persons were actually shot. As I have indicated to him and to you on more than one occasion. it is not the Government's intention to shoot anyone but it is my definite impression that the very presence of the British Army is likely to have a sobering effect on those who are determined to act as hooligans and barbarians, injure and maim innocent people, start racial warfare, pose a serious threat to law and order, and overthrow the constitutionally elected Government.

10. When the Commissioner referred to the strength of the Opposition in the capital I reminded him about Aden and Venezuela to cite only two examples. In Aden, the local government backed by the British Government is maintaining law and order in the face of strong opposition from the working class, the trade unions and the TUC and their political parties. May I say the opposition forces in Aden who are now being contained by the Police have moral justification for their demonstrations, etc. The local government backed by the British Government cancelled general elections which were due to be held in January this year for fear that the workers, the TUC and their allied political parties would have won the elections and having won the elections would have sought to federate Aden with the Yemen - a federation to which the British Government was opposed. The recent demonstrations which were broken up by the Police were, according to the BBC, a result of the refusal by the British Government to allow a United Nations team (I believe from the Anti-Colonial Committee) to visit Aden. Not only had demonstrators been dispersed but newspapers belonging to the TUC banned, meetings prohibited and trade unionists jailed. One can ask how is it that the Police, the local government and the British Government, even though in a morally indefensible position, took and are taking in Aden firm action, whilst in British Guiana the Opposition is being emboldened in its attempts to use intimidation, coercion, economic blockage, lockout and violence to overthrow the Government.

11. In neighbouring Venezuela, in certain respects, the situation as regards geographical distribution of political support in town and country is the same as in Guyana. At the last general elections in Venezuela four parties, the AD, the URD, COPEI and the Communist Party contested the elections. The AD, the party of President Betancourt, won mostly in the countryside. It failed to win support in the city of Caracas, where the URD and the Communist Party won the largest votes in order of sequence. The Government was at first formed as a coalition of three parties, the AD, the URD and COPEI. In 1960, the URD which held the portfolio of foreign affairs broke with the coalition on the question of Cuba. It did not agree with the policy of the Betancourt Government which was in support of United States foreign policy. Since then the AD has been split in three. The first split was of the leftist-Marxist city-strong wing which is now in alliance with the URD and the Communist Party in a left front which practically dominates Caracas. The second split which took place recently in AD took away from President Betancourt some support of trade unionists and peasants. Nevertheless, in spite of these splits, in spite of minority support for the Government and lack of support in the city, the Government continues to govern constitutionally and is supported to the hilt by the West, particularly the USA.

12. You are aware that the Government was accused at the beginning when the Labour Relations Bill was introduced of wanting to destroy the trade union movement. At first we were charged for not consulting the Opposition. We have not only consulted, we have gone a far way farther than many had expected in making compromises in order to show to the TUC that we have no skeletons in the cupboard. It should be now clear, that the Opposition will use any pretext - last year it was the Budget, this year it is the Labour Relations Bill - to subvert and destroy my Government.

13. Unfortunately our situation is complicated by the fact that there is outside interference, particularly of the USA, in our affairs. I have already referred to the fact that our trade unionists are working in close collaboration with the American Institute of Free Labour Development sited in Washington, which is also working in close collaboration with the US State Department and USAID. It is likely that there are CIA agents operating here in devious ways as information officers, trade unionists, etc. The Americans have built up a vast propaganda against British Guiana and my Government. The popular image in the United States is that British Guiana is going to be another Cuba and Jagan another Castro; consequently every means is being used to subvert and destroy my Government. What we are witnessing at the moment is not merely a strike of workers but ordinary simple people being used by so-called trade unionists and politicians and big business both here and abroad to subvert and overthrow a democratically elected Government.

14. President Kennedy complains about communist subversion. What about capitalist, imperialist and fascist subversion? He talks about peaceful constitutional process. Note the message he sent to President Betancourt. (His predecessor, President Eisenhower, gave the Venezuelan dictator, Col. Peres Jimenez, a "Legion of Merit", the highest US decoration):

"I should like, through you, to extend my congratulations and those of the people of this country to the people, government and armed forces of Venezuela for their action in preserving constitutional democracy against those who have attempted to overthrow your freely elected government.

The preservation and strengthening of freely elected constitutional government is the aspiration of all the peoples of the Americas and progress in this continent under the Alianza par el Progreso depends in large measure in effecting change through peaceful and democratic means and avoiding violent interruptions of the constitutional process."

President Kennedy espouses the electoral process, free and fair elections, ballots and not bullets. During his interview with the Editor of *Izvestia* he said that-

". . . the United States supports the idea that every people should have the right to make a free choice of the kind of Government they want. . . Mr. Jagan . . . who was recently elected Prime Minister in British Guiana is a Marxist, but the United States doesn't object because that choice was made by honest election, which he won."

Fine words! But the actual fact is that Americans are today aiding and abetting an irresponsible Opposition not only to dictate to a constitutionally elected government, but also to destroy it. Incidentally a strike such as we are now witnessing, particularly of

essential services and industries will not be tolerated in the United States of America. The President would in the national interest have sought a court injunction and ordered the workers back to work. But in British Guiana, Americans who are directing the strike behind the scenes are doing precisely the opposite. If they cannot succeed in causing the suspension of the constitution and the removal of my Government from office, then by lockouts and blockade, they hope to strangle my Government financially and economically. Their intention is that even if I stayed in the Government, I will not be able successfully to carry on; I will not have the money to pay salaries; I will not have the funds to solve the economic and social problems. It will then be only a matter of time before the people turn against me - at free and fair elections! This is western democracy in action. By the way, the advice from the Public Service Commission and you about not dismissing pilots who have broken the law is symptomatic of the general attitude that the Opposition can do anything and get away with it.

15. Those in authority with the law enforcing agencies do not seem to, or want to, appreciate the fact that the Opposition has now abandoned the constitutional process and is now engaged in actual subversion and rebellion. There is increasing evidence both here and abroad that the reactionary elements faced with the prospect of being defeated at democratic free and fair elections, are abandoning the constitutional process. In quite a few foreign countries the military-in-power have either cancelled the results of the ballot box or cancelled announced elections.

In this country the Opposition cannot cancel the result of the 1961 general election - they are looking to the British Government to do this. They see no prospect of winning future elections. Witness Burnham backing down when I accepted his challenge a few weeks ago to go to the country (a new general election). This is why it is now engaged in wrecking the economy and in rebellion. The materials - guns, acid, sulphur and other bomb-making components - charts and military plans seized at PNC headquarters bear testimony to this. Unfortunately when I made a statement in the Legislative Assembly to bring out the enormity and seriousness of this, the Commissioner pooh-poohed and played it down. As a result, an editorial comment by the *Daily Chronicle* held me to ridicule. Note also the large quantities of dynamite found under the wharf at the Rice Marketing Board.

The fact that the Police has not taken firm action is due to lack of proper leadership, and lack of comprehension of the totality of our situation. Neutrality seems to be the Commissioner's creed. Steve Naraine in an article in the *Sunday Graphic* of May 19th quotes him as follows: - "Our duty as a Police Force is keeping a delicate balance between the two freedoms - freedom of speech and freedom of action. Today we find ourselves holding the ring while the politicians fight it out. We don't mind once it is only metaphorical."

The Police, the vital sector of law enforcement cannot be neutral in the face of intimidation, violence and rebellion. Or is it the intention to keep the pot boiling here so that the British Government, goaded by the Americans, can use the "situation" to delay indefinitely the granting of independence to this country as it did last year with the February disturbances to delay the independence talks?

16. Indeed such neutrality perhaps because of the ethnic composition and political sympathies of the Police Force, can result as Government supporters allege in biased action against them. Recall the oft repeated boast of Mr. Burnham that we govern but he rules (through the Police and the civil service). I told you that with my own ears I heard Mr. Burnham tell a large crowd of supporters at a Bourda Green meeting immediately after the last general election that they must not be disillusioned because of failure of victory that they must not leave the country His further advice to the Police was to stay back and fight "your enemies", meaning the PPP Government.

17. The Commissioner's neutrality in the words of Prime Minister Nehru, President Nkrumah and other leaders of non-aligned neutral states, must be "active". He cannot merely hold "the ring"; he must act. And he and others in high authority must distinguish between the concepts "just" and "unjust", "good" and "bad", "right" and "wrong". Otherwise with present attitudes, there can and will be no effective action.

18. Effective action demands good leadership. Our Police has demonstrated that it can act decisively (My observations must not be construed as a blanket destructive criticism of the Police Force.) What above all is needed now is good and effective leadership.

19. If democracy and parliamentary systems of Government are to be preserved in this country and if there is to be future peace and progress in this country then there must be a determined stand to maintain law and order and the rule of law This means that so long as the Government is just and reasonable the law enforcing agencies must use every means at their disposal to stamp out incitement, intimidation, violence, subversion and rebellion.

Yours sincerely

Cheddi Jagan  
Premier

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**56. LETTER FROM PREMIER DR. CHEDDI JAGAN TO COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, PETER G. OWEN**  
(21 June 1963)

21st June 1963

Secret

Dear Mr. Commissioner

I write to you about the progressive deteriorating of law and order in Georgetown which resulted in another orgy of assault and maltreatment of Indians and culminated in the Public Building being besieged on Wednesday, 12th June, 1963, and a large-scale attack being launched on me in full view of the Police and while under Police escort, as I left the Public Building.

2. This breakdown of law and order which took place was no surprise to me. I see the events of 12th June as the direct consequence of the repeated failure of the police to take appropriate and effective action in the preceding weeks. The behaviour of the mob on that day about the Public Building and elsewhere resulted from the feeling that had grown up among them that they could defy the police with impunity.

3. In the weeks before 12th June, I saw the increasing boldness and impudence of the mob in Georgetown, and the causes of it. After the disturbances of 5th April, 1963, I told you that it was my view that if effective measures had been taken to disperse the riotous crowd, the disturbances would not have occurred. After the riotous behaviour of the mob on 30th May, 1963 (during and after the funeral of the late Senator Claude Christian), I told you that the looting and destruction of the property of Indians, and the widespread and savage attacks on their persons, would not have taken place if strong action had been taken at the cemetery, and the situation had not been allowed to get out of hand. There is no doubt that the hooligans became bolder and bolder as they succeeded in perpetrating their savage and dastardly acts free from punishment.

4. The events of the week flowed from all these. I will show how the situation became progressively worse until Wednesday, 12th June, when action was taken to restore order, and how the improvement in the situation has been the result of the action I had been suggesting for some time.

### **Monday 10th June, 1963**

5. On the morning of Monday, 10th June when I entered the Public Building there were several persons waiting at the entrance. They followed me upstairs. Soon after, I saw them squatting on the floor outside my room. They were soon joined by a large number of others who sat on the desk and chairs of officers of the Ministry and on the floor of the various rooms. The same thing happened in the Ministry of Finance and other offices in the Public Building.

6. I left the Public Building at about 9.15 a.m. to proceed to Le Ressouvenir, East Coast, Demerara, to deliver a lecture at Accabre College. I returned at about 11.30 a.m., and remained at home as I was advised not to return to my Office, as the crowds in the office and in and around the Public Building had become larger, and the Police were using tear smoke to disperse them.

7. Mr. H.R. Persaud, of my office, who was at work at the Public Building, told me on the phone that the staff of my Ministry were very concerned about their safety and that they were afraid to leave the building. Two persons including a typist from the Audit Department had been attacked by the crowd when leaving. Mr. Searwar of the GIS also phoned to say that Mr. Forsythe, a member of his staff, had been attacked, and the other members of his staff were being intimidated.

8. I thereupon spoke to you, informed you of the violence and intimidation around the Public Building, and advised you to disperse the crowds, as they were contravening the law and the proclamation which forbade assemblies of five or more persons. I also told you that it was my view that the Police could no longer cope with the situation, and that the Army should be asked to aid the civil power. You did not agree with my view.

**Tuesday, 11th June, 1963**

9. On Tuesday the crowds again assembled around the Public Building, particularly in Brickdam and High Street. Later that morning, they looted stall-holders around the Stabroek Market Square and beat up a number of Indians. Attached please see a signed statement by three members of my staff. The looting of fruits was seen by the entire staff of my office, and by Ministers who had attended a Council of Ministers' meeting. Mr. R. Tiwari rang the Police about it. I have already told you that during the course of a Council of Ministers' meeting that morning, Mr. Chandisingh and Mr. Tiwari saw people running away with fruits which they had looted towards D'Aguiar's Building. I remember that when I told you that Mr. Searwar had informed me of the looting, you indicated that you did not believe it and said that Mr. Searwar was "hysterical".

10. During the luncheon interval, Mr. Persaud and the rest of my staff remained at the Public Building. Mr. Persaud rang me up and told me that Indians were being mercilessly and savagely beaten by gangs just outside the Public Building and nothing was done to help them. I told you on the phone of how Mr. Persaud's voice broke and how he was overcome with emotion as he narrated to me the savage and inhuman attacks on defenceless Indians. Mr. Persaud later told me of how a gang of twenty mobbed an Indian youth, beat him down on the road, and then after robbing him, went over him raining blow after blow upon him. One of the assailants who could not get near to the victim because of the number of the attackers, poked him repeatedly with a large stick between the legs of another assailant. Mr. Persaud said that when he rang the Police, he was told, "Don't be hysterical; policemen are in the area, but we will send some more." Mr. Westmans who returned from lunch and witnessed some of the beatings also rang the Police imploring them to send help to the luckless victims.

11. On Tuesday afternoon, having seen the further deterioration of the situation, and seeing that firm action was not being taken to disperse the riotous mobs, I spoke to His Excellency the Governor and suggested that he summon a meeting with you and Colonel Pemberton for 4.30 o'clock that afternoon. A little earlier, at about 2.00 o'clock, I had had to disturb His Excellency during his rest period to bring to his attention the alarming news, which Mr. Persaud and others were conveying to me while I was at home, about further beating up which was taking place in the Stabroek Market Square and in the vicinity of the Public Building.

12. At the meeting at Government House which commenced at 4.30 that afternoon, I requested that the Armed Forces should be brought out immediately to aid the civil power. It was agreed beginning early Wednesday morning that the Army would do static duty at places to be decided by Colonel Pemberton in consultation with you. It was my view that the Electricity Corporation, the Rice Marketing Board, the Water Works and the Public Building should be the areas at which the Army should do static duty. His Excellency also felt that the Rice Marketing Board should be included, this being a trouble spot, because of

the presence of the Russian vessel and because Cuban vessels were due to arrive later. It was also agreed at the meeting that Colonel Pemberton, you and I would meet on Wednesday morning, when Colonel Pemberton would give his decision on my suggestion about the deployment of the Army

### **Wednesday 12th June, 1963**

13. The three of us met on Wednesday morning at Government House Annexe. Colonel Pemberton said that it was unwise to use the military power at that time, as the Police were not incapable of coping with the situation, and that my suggestion about the deployment of his forces, if the military was to be used, was contrary to all his training experience.

14. In answer to Colonel Pemberton, I said that I was no expert, but that my suggestions on the deployment of his forces were based on my observation, knowledge and experience of the people of this country, and the situation as it was developing in Georgetown. You had mentioned to me on several occasions that you could deal effectively with a large crowd if they were really fighting, but found it much more difficult to deal with a number of small bands employing hit-and-run tactics. It was with this in mind that I suggested the deployment of the Army on foot patrols all over the city.

15. You also said that you were of the view that the army should not be called to aid the civil power.

16. At this stage, I made it quite clear that there were two separate points to be considered. The first was the use of the army and the second, the deployment of the army when it was brought in. I said that I was withdrawing my suggestion about deployment but maintained my request that the army be called in to the help of the civil power. I told you that I was going to see the Governor immediately and would tell him that I did not agree with the advice you had tendered. I saw the Governor, told him of our discussion and requested him as Commander-in-Chief to bring out the army forthwith to aid the civil power.

17. At 9.30 o'clock, I returned to my Office at the Public Building, where the Ministers had gathered for the usual Wednesday morning meeting of the Council of Ministers. Crowds were assembling all along High Street and Brickdam. The crowds grew larger after I arrived, and at about 10.30 a.m., were not only on the parapets but on the streets. They also sat in front of the three gates of the Public Building. I learnt later that they had also put their own locks on the gates. It was evident that knowing that the Council of Ministers met at the Public Building on Wednesday they had gathered to besiege them. While some were singing songs, others were shouting taunts and threats, and generally behaving in a disorderly and riotous manner. The Police used tear gas on a few occasions, but this was proving ineffective. The crowd had brought handkerchiefs and rags which they soaked in water which was obtained from puncheons and through hoses at the premises of D'Aguiar Bros.

18. The crowd was so disorderly that at one stage I called the Governor and asked him to come himself and observe what was taking place. He indicated to me that he would consult you, and soon after called and told me that you did not think it would be good for him to appear on the scene, but that he would send Mr. Murphy. Mr. Murphy arrived, walked through the crowd, and, after climbing over the heads of some of the squatters, came up to my office, where we had a brief discussion. I told him that I

had reported to you that looting was taking place around the Stabroek Market area, and that this had been witnessed by officers of the Ministry and Ministers, but you had said that you had not received any reports. I told Mr. Murphy that what was occurring outside was a deliberate flouting of the proclamation, and that unless serious steps were taken to disperse the crowd, there was likely to be grave disorders later. Mr. Murphy remarked that the Public Building was in a stage of siege.

19. Mr. Murphy left, the crowd became rebellious. I called you and asked that it be dispersed. You told me that you would not do this, because your view was that if you dispersed them greater trouble would follow

20. My colleagues and I had continued with our meeting which concluded at 1.00 p.m. The Ministers were now ready to leave. Mr. Ramkarran first left the Public Building. I understand that the lock which the squatters had put on the gate had to be broken. (Mr. Ramkarran, incidentally told me that he heard Mr. Carrington, President of the Transport Workers' Union, say that they were given permission by you to assemble until 1.00 p.m. I do not believe this, but you may wish to comment.) Subsequently at about 1.45 p.m. Mr. Nunes left the Public Building to go to his office. He was stoned and then the crowd closed in on him and beat him severely. He finally reached the Ministerial Building, after receiving many blows on his back and two cuts on his head.

21. At this stage, I again called you and asked you to disperse the crowd. You answered that all you were prepared to do even at that stage was to assure me that all the Ministers would be given safe conduct out of the Public Building. I told you that I was concerned not only about myself but also about members of my staff and others who were working in the Public Building, especially since Mr. Forsythe of the GIS and two other persons leaving the Public Building had been beaten the day before. You told me that you would be asking Superintendent Carl Austin to come to the Public Building.

22. Superintendent Austin arrived at about 2.00 p.m. I told him that I was not leaving the Public Building unless the crowd was dispersed. I related to him what had happened to Mr. Nunes. He assured me that there would be no trouble, and if there was there would be plenty of "fireworks". I was reluctant to leave, but as I had an appointment with Mr. Stoll and Mr. Low-A-Chee at my home at 2.30 p.m., I agreed to do so.

23. In the meantime, the mob had gone into a frenzy Having assaulted and beaten Mr. Nunes in full view of the Police with impunity this audacity got the better of them and they lost control of themselves. They ran towards the railing around the Public Building as if to climb over it, and began yelling and gesticulating wildly. At this time, the riot squad cleared the gate leading into High Street and a passage leading into the Street.

24. I went down into my car, and we started off. As we approached the gate, the crowd shouted abuse and threats and moved in a menacing manner. However, we came out of the Public Building compound without incident, but as we turned from Brickdam into High Street, the crowd surged forwards and directed a shower of bottles and stones at us. Most of them struck the car, but one of them entered the car through the left rear window and struck one of my bodyguards, Constable Hussain, on the left jaw seriously injuring him. At this point, Superintendent Austin opened fire; he was followed by my two bodyguards on



my right and left in the rear seat of the car. The stoning continued until we had passed Croal Street. I understood afterwards a number of persons were hit when Superintendent Austin and my two bodyguards opened fire.

25. Constable Hussain's face was lacerated and swollen and he was taken to the hospital for treatment. I requested that the Police take a photograph of him, but he told me that this request was refused. I have no doubt that, had Constable Hussain not been sitting next to me, the stone would have struck me. That the intention of some of those opposed to me and my Government is to injure, and possibly assassinate me, has already become clear. There has been a great deal of incitement in sections of the press during the last few weeks. On Thursday 13th June, 1963, the day following the attack on me described above, the Daily Chronicle carried the following headlines:

"Bullets from Jagan's car injure 6  
More violence sweeps City"

And the article begins:

"Bullets popping cowboy-style from Premier Cheddi Jagan's car around 2.20 p.m. yesterday injured at least half-a-dozen persons, gave thousands of demonstrators the scare of their lives, and started a fresh wave of violence, looting and disturbances in the City"

Elsewhere on the front page, the *Chronicle* carried the following headlines also:

"PNC condemns 'new form of brutality' and 'D'Aguiar hits [out] at wanton shooting'."

It is obvious that the intention of all this is to incite the people to violence against me. I may remind you also of the transmitter and tape seized in a D'Aguiar Bros van during the disturbances of February 1962. You know that the Georgetown mob has been inflamed against me and my ministers through lies, half-truths, distortions and inflammatory language over a period of time and are prepared to do the evil work of the inciters, if given an opportunity. By failing to disperse the crowds that had gathered tumultuously in defiance of the proclamation and the law and by failing to take strenuous action at the right time, the Police very nearly gave the mob the opportunity it wanted.

### **Georgetown since Thursday, 13th June, 1963**

26. On Thursday 13th June, Georgetown was quiet, in striking contrast to the period before, particularly the preceding days. The incidence of acts of violence in Georgetown has been considerably reduced. The situation reports issued by the Security Branch of the Police Department throw light on the change. The report for 14th June states:

"This change in pattern may be attributable to many causes: among them sheer tiredness among the hooligan element after three days of rampage; removal of a focal point for disturbances by the blocking off of the Public Buildings; slackening in the TUC's civil disobedience campaign, and the fact that the British troops in the country are taking an increasing share of security duties."

and

"The TUC decided to call off its civil disobedience campaign. It appears that the Executive Council has at last recognised the fact that these demonstrations, in itself non-violent, have, in fact, been the starting point of serious disorders over the past few days."

The report for 18th June reads:

"Vigorous methods of control by the Police, the allocation of some security duties to UK armed forces, and the removal of certain focal points for crowd gatherings, caused a steady abatement of this situation, and by 13th June, 1963 the city was quiet."

All I need to add to the security report is that I have been saying all these things to you for some time - that the so-called passive resistance campaign has been leading to violence, that the Public Building ought to be cordoned off, that the crowds ought to be dispersed and that stem measures ought to be taken to stop riot behaviour when it starts to prevent the situation from getting out of hand. As regards the troops, I had already pointed out the salutary psychological effect they would have in the present circumstances. Other citizens also felt this way. Please see copy of a letter from the Reverend H.C. Malagee, M.B.E., to the Governor which is attached\*. But you did not share these views.

27. I have set out in fair detail the distressing details of the events of last week. I think it is appropriate that I should do so. I think it is appropriate also that I should, in conclusion, draw your attention to what took place only a few days ago in Swaziland. According to the BBC news broadcast, it was said that after four days of general strike, all the strike leaders were in jail, and units of the British army were patrolling the streets to maintain law and order. This is a striking contrast to the position taken up by you and others in regard to the situation in British Guiana. In all the circumstances it would appear that, in pursuit of British imperial aims, human life (of supporters of the Government) in British Guiana and liberty in Swaziland, are freely expendable.

Yours sincerely

Cheddi Jagan  
Premier

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**57. NOTE FROM PREMIER DR. CHEDDI JAGAN TO MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS JANET JAGAN**

(3 July 1963)

3rd July 1963

Secret

Hon. Minister of Home Affairs,

I have received information that dynamite is being stolen from Mackenzie and is being sent to the PNC in Georgetown by a launch owned by someone called Chapman or by a private truck. I understand, also, that certain Police constables or officers help in transporting it to Georgetown.

2. I understand that a set of four boxes came down on Monday 1st July 1963 by Chapman's launch.

3. Please take necessary action.

*(Source: Cheddi Jagan Research Centre)*

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**58. EXTRACT OF BRITISH CABINET MINUTES**

(4 July 1963)

SECRET

Ref: CAB 128/37

CABINET MEETING OF JULY 4th, 1963

4. The Colonial Secretary said that . . . in normal circumstances the Colony would by now have attained Independence; but Dr. Jagan's Government was not only communist in its sympathies but also incapable of maintaining order unaided. No satisfactory alternative Government, however, was in sight; and it might therefore become necessary to suspend the constitution and resume direct rule. But In view of the possible consequences of such a course in terms not only of developments in British Guiana itself but also of our relations with other members of the Commonwealth and with the United Nations, he was considering whether he should personally visit the Colony and examine the situation before advising the Cabinet on the action to be taken. The United States Government had already indicated the concern with which they would view the emergence of an Independent Communist regime on the mainland of South America: and their interest in the future of British Guiana would have to be borne in mind.

*(Source: National Archives of Guyana)*

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**59. EXTRACT OF TELEGRAM FROM BRITISH MISSION AT THE UN TO BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE**  
(23 September, 1963)

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: FO 371/172600

23rd September, 1963

From: New York to Foreign Office (United Kingdom Mission to United Nations)

To: Sir Patrick Dean\*

. . . 3. Conversations with a number of Commonwealth Missions including Ghana, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica suggest that rejection of the proposal by Her Majesty's Government would be interpreted as confirmation that:

(a) We are set on a course of non-cooperation with the Commonwealth as far as our colonial affairs are concerned; and;

(b) We have a plan up our sleeve for imposing a settlement on British Guiana which will satisfy United States requirements.

4. On balance, the general opinion seems to be that Jagan has made out a more reasonable case than Burnham.

*(Source: National Archives of Guyana)*

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**60. EXTRACT OF NOTE FROM THE BRITISH MISSION AT THE UN TO SIR G. HARRISON OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE**

(25 September 1963)

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: P0371/172600

. . . . British Guiana and a Commonwealth Initiative

3. The proposal was received at a further meeting of the Commonwealth Group in New York on March 20, but was again turned down, one reason being that a Commission might favour Dr. Jagan's point of view on the electoral system and this could impede an ultimate settlement.

4. . . . . It [acceptance of a Commonwealth Plan] would also be liable to be interpreted as meaning we have a plan for imposing a settlement on British Guiana which will satisfy the Americans. . . .

5. On the other hand the acceptance of a Commission on the lines now proposed would displease the Americans, who would regard it as an abdication of our responsibilities and as prolonging the political life of Dr. Jagan.

(Signed) S. Falle  
25th September, 1963

[To:] Sir G. Harrison

*(Source: National Archives of Guyana)*

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**61. NEWS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE COLONIAL OFFICE**

(4 October 1963)

## COLONIAL OFFICE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

### **BRITISH GUIANA CONFERENCE TO BE RE-CONVENED**

In his statement to Parliament on July 17, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Duncan Sandys, said that he intended to re-convene the Conference not later than October. Mr. Sandys has now invited the Premier and the opposition leaders to bring delegations to a conference opening in London on October 22.

**October 4, 1963**

Note for Editors: - The Parliamentary statement referred to was made by Mr. Sandys on July 17 in the House of Commons following his return from a visit to British Guiana. He ended by saying, "I think it is right to give the party leaders a further short period in which to make a last effort to reach agreement among themselves. But in any case I intend to re-convene the conference not later than October. If, in the meantime, they are able to resolve their difference, that will greatly ease my task. Failing agreement, I think it is now generally accepted that the British Government will have to settle the outstanding issues on its own authority; and that is what we propose to do."

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### **62. STATEMENT IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR JANET JAGAN, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS**

(1 June 1964)

On 15th June, 1963, less than a year ago, His Excellency the Governor by instrument under the Public Seal appointed me as Minister of Home Affairs and charged me under the Constitution with, among other things, responsibility for certain matters and Departments of Government. Among these were the maintenance of public safety and public order and the Police Department. A few days later I entered this House as a Senator under the Constitution.

2. I did not expect my Ministry to be a bed of roses. I recognised that my Ministry was of supreme importance. The maintenance of law and order is one of the first duties of a Government. I was also not unaware of the problems that had arisen in respect of the Police Force. Indeed, my appointment was heralded by an expression of these problems in a practical form. No one will easily forget the sordid events that took place on 30th May, 1963, at the funeral of my predecessor and friend, the late Senator Claude Christian. I know that you, Mr. President, will remember this only too well. You will recall that you were in charge of the funeral arrangements and had discussions with the Police on the matter. The Police were advised that there would be a large number of people at the funeral and that the burial place should be cordoned off and other security precautions taken for their safety. In spite of all advice, and indeed, in spite of the disorderly behaviour of crowds at the funeral parlour and at the Brickdam Cathedral, the Police took no precautions. In the event, Ministers of the Government and bereaved relatives and friends of the late Minister were viciously attacked at the cemetery, and this in turn resulted in racial outbursts,

grievous injury to persons and serious loss to property later the same evening. A report by the Commissioner of Police on these events stated in part:

"In all 50 civilians were injured, 42 of them being East Indians, 6 Africans and 2 Portuguese. 20 of these detained in hospital, 3 of them being considered as seriously hurt. 3 Policemen were injured, none of them seriously. 20 persons were arrested by the Police for varying offences.

3 cars were damaged and 1 shop broken into. There were 20 reports of larceny from the person but most of these involved the injured persons mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Many shops owned by East Indian businessmen were stoned and windows broken."

Later reports indicated that during the night Indians were attacked in their homes and beaten and robbed.

3. These were the events that heralded my appointment as Minister of Home Affairs in succession to Mr. Christian.

4. I mention the incident to show that at the time I was charged with responsibility for the Police, I had no illusions about the difficulties of the problems confronting me. The events of the time and indeed of February, 1962, had fully shown the gravity of the problem. But I felt that with an earnest and sustained effort and the goodwill of all concerned, the problem would be solved and we would evolve a balanced and impartial Police Force working cooperation with the Government and the people.

5. It is now almost a year since I have been in office. And I fear that in spite of all my efforts, I have not been able to achieve this objective.

6. But let me recount my efforts in this direction.

7. On 26th June, 1963, soon after I assumed office, I warned the Commissioner of Police at a meeting that the situation on the East Coast of Demerara would deteriorate unless steps were taken to assure the public of the total impartiality of the Police. I was constrained to say this because certain actions by the Police had given the impression that they were taking sides. At that time the disturbances were restricted to Georgetown and had not yet spread to the countryside. Two days later, on 28th June, 1963, I wrote the Commissioner naming a number of incidents which smacked of discrimination by the Police and pointed out that the situation was explosive. I showed how persons associated with the People's Progressive Party were being harassed by the Police, and pointed out that this factor, together with events in Georgetown, would intensify and spread the area of disturbances. On 2nd July, 1963, I again wrote to the Commissioner of Police and advised him to "put an officer reputed for fairness and not tagged with a political bias" on the East Coast because the presence of the Officer in Charge "who was a firm partisan of the People's National Congress and had openly demonstrated his alliance" was a threat to peace in the area. All my warnings and advice were ignored. Police discrimination continued and the result was that the conflict spread to the East Coast.

8. You will remember, Mr. President, that the 1963 disturbances which occurred in the rural areas did not, in any way, approach in intensity or scale those which occurred in Georgetown, where they started. Yet the Police showed much more activity in the rural areas. I pointed this out in a letter to the Commissioner of Police dated 28th June, 1963. I wrote: -

"The incidents of violence in the rural areas were not in any way on a par with what has taken place in the urban areas. Yet there appears to be more Police action in the former resulting in more arrests than in the latter."

On 15th August, 1963, the Commissioner replied saying that he was conscious of the country's need for a completely impartial Police Force and he sought to brush aside reports of partiality as "false or grossly exaggerated". He stated also that "the number of persons charged in connection with offences attributable to the Emergency is 1647 - of these only 651 were of East Indian origin". This means that 39% of the people charged were East Indians. This is a high percentage; for the strike and disturbances were practically confined to the urban areas. But these figures, taken in conjunction with others, are even more significant. The record of police searches for the period from the end of the strike to December, 1963, reveals that 61% of the searches done by the Police were on East Indians. Yet, by the Commissioner's own figures, only 39% of those charged during the disturbances were East Indians. Indeed, even this does not give the full measure of the discrimination. The figure of 61% does not include persons other than East Indians who were searched because they were supporters of the Governing Party. This would bring the percentage up to well over 70%. These statistics were not available to the people but the evidence of Police partiality was abundantly clear to them.

9. The result of all this is that thousands and thousands of law-abiding citizens have lost all confidence in the Police Force, will not put themselves under their protection even when exposed to attack and are, indeed, demanding their removal from their respective areas.

10. The chronicle of instances of Police discrimination would fill several volumes. It is necessary to give only a few instances taken at random. On 25th October, 1963, the Ministry of Home Affairs received information that certain persons at Ann's Grove were reported to have firearms and explosives. This information was passed on to the Police. Nothing more was heard until 9th December, 1963, when the Commissioner of Police replied to the report. He wrote: -

"The information received at the Ministry is far from reliable, and the informant was prompted by political leanings to accuse persons named therein of secreting arms."

The Commissioner appended to his letter a report from the Superintendent of the Division as follows: -

"I have made discreet enquiries into the background and present activities of the persons named and formed the opinion that they are not concerned in any way whatsoever with the trafficking of illegal weapons and do not possess them. I do not consider that it will serve any useful purpose to carry out searches on the premises of these persons as from information obtained they have never been known to do any act which would create the belief that they possess firearms."



The same Police Officer who refused to search the houses of five known P.N.C. members after he had made "discreet enquiries" searched the houses of 83 persons, mostly P.P.P. supporters, and found nothing except two licensed shot-guns and one person with 50 rounds of ammunition in excess of what he was permitted to have. Did he make "discreet enquiries" about the 83 persons searched? The question is asked, "Why does the Commissioner of Police condone such brazen discrimination?" Is it not this attitude which leads to such incidents as that which took place at Ann's Grove when an armed policeman stood by while a man was beaten to death?

11. Let us look at another incident during the 1963 disturbances. It is well-known that the perpetrators of the disturbances used explosives to destroy a number of government buildings. Among those buildings was the Ministry of Home Affairs which was dynamited on 23rd June, 1963. Shortly after the explosion, the Police dog, Rio, was brought to the Ministry. When set loose, he immediately went to the Chambers of Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, Leader of the People's National Congress, nearby, and there held on to a man. The man, a resident of Ann's Grove, who had been brought to Georgetown with others for such activities, was apprehended by the Police. Did the Police then make any serious searches? Did they, for example, go immediately to Ann's Grove and search premises associated with this man? Did the Police then search Mr. Burnham and other P.N.C. leaders? No! As is public knowledge, no one is convicted of this offence - the dynamiting of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In reply to the report that certain persons at Ann's Grove had firearms and explosives, the Commissioner of Police had written that the informant was "prompted by political leanings". Perhaps the Commissioner would say that the dog, Rio, who traced the Ann's Grove saboteur to Mr. Burnham's office was also "prompted by political leanings!"

12. Indeed, Mr. President, Rio would appear to be thoroughly brainwashed. For when another public building was dynamited - the Department of Housing - Rio ended up at the home of Mr. Richard Ishmael! I would remind the Commissioner of Police of the saying that there are none so blind as those who **will** not see.

13. Before completing my observations on events of 1963, I should like to pay a passing tribute to the delicacy of the Police towards a leading P.N.C. activist, Dr. P.A. Reid, in whose yard occurred a great explosion and in which was found buried detonators. The polite and apologetic interrogation of the activist at his home was a nice study in decorum. And, of course, no charge was preferred. Compare this with the treatment of Ministers whose persons were searched and one of whose homes was ransacked by Police and of a husband and wife on the East Bank, Demerara, in whose yard, the Police, acting on information, found some explosive material. The couple were dragged to Police Headquarters in the usual Police manner. And yet the Commissioner of Police insists that there is no partiality, no partisanship, no discrimination.

14. We come now to the events of 1964. The partiality of the Police in 1963, the loss of confidence it created, and the resulting precipitation of violence in rural areas had made a deep impression on me. I was determined to do my best to help establish a Police Force which had the confidence of the community. Examinations for recruits were different and of varying standards depending upon the areas from which they came and I sought to ensure that the entrance examination into the Force was fairly conducted, and that all recruits be given just and fair treatment by being made to take one and the same examination at any given time. At the very beginning of the present unrest, on 13th March, 1964, I wrote the Commissioner of Police reminding

him of my letter of 2nd July, last year, and pointing out that "the situation can worsen if any of the groups involved in the dispute feel that the Police are taking sides". I pointed out that these charges were already being made and mentioned that the Police were firing tear gas shells at people at short range, using the shells as weapons rather than for the effect of the gas. I wrote: -

"You admitted that this was unfortunately the case and informed me that you had issued warnings that gas shells must not be aimed at people. . . . The fact that you had to remind (your officers) about the correct use of gas shells plus the unnecessary use of bayonets at Non Pareil is sufficient indication that my fears may be justified. . . ."

I asked the Commissioner why he had permitted the use of tear gas shells and bayonets on peaceful squatters on the East Coast, when he did not take similar action last year even when squatters invaded Government offices. I wrote: -

"Your task is to see that law and order are maintained as impartially as possible. You have to expect a comparison of Police action now with such action last year. If squatters in 1963 could invade Government offices without receiving bayonet wounds it is not too much to expect that squatters should be allowed to sit on roads without being injured."

As was to be expected, the partiality of the Police soon led to further deterioration in relations between the Police and the public. The use of Police to escort scabs to work on the sugar estates further exacerbated the situation as did the clouded picture of events leading to the death of Kousilia at Plantation Leonora.

15. In the case of the recent disturbances, as in 1963, there are countless examples of Police partiality. I shall draw attention to one or two of these. Let us take the case of Bachelor's Adventure, for example. On 21st and 22nd May, delegations from Bachelor's Adventure came to my Ministry and drew attention to the dangers to which the people are constantly exposed. A man had been knifed and killed while trying to move his house. I spoke to the Commissioner on both occasions and requested that more attention be paid to the village, as it was evident that the residents were in danger. All the signs of further violence were there. After these warnings, a pregnant woman was beaten to death. I have had repeated reports from Bachelor's Adventure that even with Police on the scene at the time of violence, nothing is done. One might tend to doubt these reports if events, particularly at Wismar, were not so glaringly apparent.

16. At Buxton, also, the behaviour of the Police followed the now familiar pattern. On 25th May, a man in Buxton was moving his furniture out of his house. When he returned to his house, he found that a number of hostile people had already invaded it. He went for his licensed firearm to protect himself and his family and then the Police arrived. They took him to the Police station and while there, his house was destroyed by fire. Persons allege that houses in Buxton have been set on fire in full view of the Police. This too would be hard to believe if there were not Wismar to remember.

17. At Meten-meer-Zorg, fire was set to the homes of Inshan Boodram and Rasheed. The Police refused to allow neighbours to help extinguish the fires. They themselves gave no help. And it was not until a British soldier interceded that the fires could be put out.

18. I spoke to an old man from Buxton last week, whose house was burned almost to the ground. He wanted me to help him get protection so that he could remove what was left. I said that I would speak to the Commissioner of Police and get him Police protection. The old man refused to accept it. He said that the Police would not protect him and he could not risk what was certain attack. He preferred to lose the rest of his life's savings than have anything to do with the Police. This is the attitude of thousands of Guianese towards the Police. This is the grim consequence of discrimination, of the blind eye being turned by the Police to incidents they do not wish to see, of arrest without cause and unjust prosecution, of merciless beatings by the Police of suspects belonging to the People's Progressive Party and of partiality to the supporters of the People's National Congress. Is it any wonder that half the community has no confidence in the Police?

19. At Vergenoegen, on Sunday, 24th of May, a woman and her daughter were attacked by a group of men at their home which is near the road. The attackers fired a shot at the woman but missed. They then attempted to rape her daughter. The husband however, heard the shot and cries and came to their rescue. He saw a jeep passing on the Public Road. He shouted "Soldiers, come". On hearing this, the attackers ran. But it was a Police jeep and it did not stop. The attackers came back. Fortunately, the daughter had got away during the interval. They then beat up the father and burned the house down. Up to the time I met the mother, she had not seen the Police except for the brief glimpse of the jeep on the road.

20. (a) I shall leave the multitude of instances of Police partiality on the East and West Coasts of Demerara and come to the events of Wismar, 65 miles up the Demerara River, on Monday 25th May, 1964. The events on the Coast pale into insignificance before those of Wismar. The heightened violence leading to riots commenced on the night of Sunday, 24th May. I am called Minister of Home Affairs and I am charged under the Constitution with responsibility for the maintenance of public safety and public order. And yet I never, at any time, received information from the Police that rioting was actually taking place at Wismar. All that I was told was that the situation was tense.

(b) About midday on Monday, I received private information that things were worsening. I spoke to Mr. Puttock at Force Control at 12.50 p.m. after being unable to contact the Commissioner of Police, and I was told that there were sufficient forces there to deal with the situation.

(c) At 2.00 p.m. I met the Commissioner of Police and the Garrison Commander and asked whether British troops ought not to be sent to the area. I was told that it was not necessary, that the Volunteer Force had been embodied, and that an Assistant Commissioner had been sent to assess the situation and report. The action to be taken would depend on his report. I told the two officers that in my opinion, the Volunteer Force would be of no use since it was made up of the very same people who were associated with the trouble. The Volunteers could hardly be expected to take firm action against their own neighbours, friends and relations. Needless to say, my advice was not heeded.

(d) At about 3.00 p.m., just after the conference, I received another private call which indicated that the situation had gone beyond control; a large number of buildings were burning and people were being attacked, raped and murdered. I immediately called the Commissioner of Police who said that he had the same information and was then asking Colonel King to fly up troops. By this time, a section of Wismar had been razed to the ground, the most sordid and unthinkable crimes had been committed, about 172 houses had been burnt and more than fifteen hundred people had become homeless.

21. Certain basic and fundamental questions must be asked. If the situation at Wismar was serious from Sunday evening, why was the Commissioner of Police not aware of this? Why was it only at midday that he recognised the seriousness and sent up the Assistant Commissioner to assess the situation - when most of the damage had been done? Was it that the Officer in Charge at Wismar/Mackenzie did not properly inform the Commissioner of Police, or was it that the Commissioner received information and did not properly assess the situation? Why was no information given to me by the Police that rioting had broken out at Wismar?

22. The accounts of what took place at Wismar are shocking and revealing. Armed Police and Volunteers stood by while looting, arson, rape and murder were committed and made no effort to intervene. Two girls, for instance, were being raped on the Wismar side of the river. Persons on the Mackenzie side who saw the incident asked four armed Volunteers who stood by to rescue the girls. The Volunteers refused. Eventually four men from Mackenzie - a member of Demba staff, an officer of Saguenay Terminals and two others - crossed the river and rescued the girls.

Another Wismar resident saw his house pillaged and burned, while two armed Volunteers stood by and watched.

Dozens of such incidents took place in full view of the Police and Volunteers and reports indicate that nothing was done to stop them.

23. On the West Coast of Demerara, two men were shot and killed by a policeman for moving "under suspicious circumstances." They were two individuals, unarmed, and not in a group and were crossing a public road when they were shot and killed. At Wismar riotous mobs roamed the streets plundering houses, raping women and carrying on assault and murder, and armed policemen and Volunteers stood by unmoved. Is it that the rioters were not moving "under suspicious circumstances" like the two unarmed youths who were shot and killed by Police while crossing a public road on the West Coast of Demerara?

24. Is it possible for anyone to believe that with the widespread violence, arson, rape and murder that there could have been no show of force by armed Police and armed Volunteers? Since this is impossible to accept, one can only come to the conclusion that planned genocide of a village was carried out with the connivance of all involved.

25 (a) It is revealing to look at the events that preceded the rioting at Wismar. On Thursday, 21st May, a leading P.N.C. activist visited the Wismar district. Two refugees have reported a conversation with this activist who was in a Police jeep along with a

Police sergeant and a constable. He told them that they were going to take care of the East Indians at Wismar - that they would pay for the deaths of two persons at Buxton. I have no reason to doubt reports that P.N.C. activists not only threatened persons but organised and incited the terrible acts which took place.

(b) In fact, the Police have known since last year that a gang of ten P.N.C. activists had been organised as saboteurs at Mackenzie/Wismar and trained at Congress Place in the use of explosives and in fighting.

26. My efforts to bring partisanship to an end have been of no avail. Take as an example the important post of Security Chief. The last holder of the post was known to have a close personal association with a close relative of Mr. P.S. D'Aguiar, and it is alleged protected members of the United Force from police searches. When the grave impropriety of the Security Chief having a liaison with a member of the family of the leader of the United Force attracted attention, the Security Chief resigned only to be succeeded by an expatriate officer of known anti-Government sentiments. I protested against this appointment, on the grounds that the officer had known anti-Government sentiments and that the position of Security Chief should be filled by officer known for his impartiality. I suggested the appointment of a Guyanese to the post. My advice was not heeded nor did the Governor care to intervene although he indicated that reasons for doubting the impartiality of the officer were sound.

27. (a) Mr. President, during the year I have been Minister of Home Affairs, I have had to stomach the discriminatory practices of the Police Force. By their partisanship, the Police have been largely responsible for the suffering that has taken place in the country this year and in 1962 and 1963. By their unfair treatment of a large section of the Guyanese community, they have helped to spread the disturbances in the country. They have failed to maintain law and order for which they are responsible and they have completely lost the confidence of half of the community.

(b) Let me say, at this stage that I know that a good section of the Police Force of all ranks are conscientious, fair-minded and loyal. But many of these have had to close their eyes to injustices for fear of disfavour. I know Police officers of all races who have been harassed and hounded because they have sought to do their duty as they know in conscience it must be done. And I want to pay tribute to those officers and men who have behaved with fairness and impartiality in the face of pressures of all kinds. The tragedy is that the effectiveness of the loyal section of the Police Force is seriously impaired by the misdeeds of their colleagues.

(c) The blame for the loss of confidence of the community in the Police Force and the loss of respect for the Force, with all the evils to which these give rise, must fall fully on the shoulders of the Commissioner of Police, who has refused to heed my advice and has refused to discipline his officers for their misconduct and has condoned their partisanship and improper behaviour.

(d) For my part, after a year in office, I see that I have no power to curb or prevent discriminatory practices or correct injustices perpetrated by the Police with increasing frequency and complete immunity. And so I have come to the inescapable conclusion that under existing Constitutional arrangements, and with the Police Force as presently constituted, my hope of having a balanced and impartial Police Force cannot be achieved.

28. In view of all that I have related, and in the existing circumstances, I cannot continue to bear responsibility for the maintenance of public safety and public order and the Police Department. I therefore propose to tender to the Premier at the end of this sitting of the House, my resignation as Minister of Home Affairs. My only hope and prayer is that immediate steps will be made to correct the evils that I have described which are aiding in the destruction of all efforts to have a peaceful Guyana.

JANET JAGAN  
1st June, 1964

*[Source: Cheddi Jagan Research Centre; also National Archives of Guyana]*

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### **63. RADIO BROADCAST BY THE PREMIER, DR. CHEDDI JAGAN**

(6 June 1964)

Last week when I spoke to you our country was engaged in a grave civil strife. Over the past week the situation has improved considerably. There are still, however, cases of violence here and there. I hope that in the coming week a complete stop will be put to all forms of intimidation and violence, and that we will have seen an end to attacks, counter attacks and reprisals.

We must have peace. All of us, whatever our racial-ethnic background, have to live and die here. And we have to live together. This should not be difficult. We have all lived side by side, gone to school together, worked together and played together. And after all, we are brothers in the same cause - to improve the lot of all whether we work by hand or by brain.

There are some who try to accentuate differences among us. I would like to talk about the things which we have in common, and which unite us. For instance, no matter where our ancestors may have come from we have a common historical background. We have sugar in our veins; we have all nurtured and fertilised the sugar cane with our sweat and blood.

Whether you are an industrial worker or a farmer you have the same interest. Sugar workers, bauxite and manganese mineworkers, be they Indo-Guyanese or Afro-Guyanese, want increased wages, improved working conditions and security in old age. Rice farmers - I am glad to note that an increased number of Afro-Guyanese are now engaging themselves in the cultivation of rice - need guaranteed markets, stable prices and freedom from the ravages of too much water or too little water. If you are a farmer planting crops other than rice, say in the Canals Polder, Pomeroon or North West District, you want, whatever your racial origin, to know that you will not get low 'glut' prices when you reap your ground provisions and when your permanent trees like coconut, coffee, cocoa and citrus begin to bear. And those of you in the City whether you are employed, unemployed or underemployed, you want security of employment and full employment.

I know that there are many fear-mongers who go among you and try to influence you emotionally. Some go among the Indo-Guianese and say that I am sacrificing them and wooing and embracing the Afro-Guianese. Others go among the Afro-Guianese and tell them that my Government is an Indian Government, that because of racial considerations it does everything for the country and little for the city; that the Indo-Guianese own the land, real estate, and dominate business; and that if they the Afro-Guianese do not get together, they will soon lose even their jobs. In this way I am caught in the crossfire. Needless to say my Government cannot be for and against Indo-Guianese, for and against Afro-Guianese, at the same time. All this propaganda is meant to build up fears in your minds.

Clearly, the solution to our ills is not for the many to scramble for the relatively few jobs and limited drained and irrigated land; the solution is to create an expanding economy, to make more jobs and more land available.

Let me divert here a moment and tell you of my private conversations with the late President Kennedy and his aides. I told them in November 1961 that our problems are acute, that in 1957 when I first entered the Government we had inherited a very heavy burden. You will remember that according to the I.L.O. expert, Mr. McGale, we then had an unemployment rate of 18 percent and underemployment rate of 9 percent. (Incidentally, latest figures seem to indicate that there was a drop in the unemployment figure to about 14.5 percent in 1960.) I pointed out to the late President Kennedy that it was necessary for us to move forward rapidly in the industrial field if we were to avoid an explosion. I gave two reasons for this; firstly, that the unemployment rate was highest in the urban areas; secondly, the urban people were mostly Afro-Guianese who wanted industrial jobs. I argued that rapid industrial development was necessary both for economic and political reasons. I said further that we could not rely only on conventional methods of development; that is, reliance mainly on private enterprise, both domestic and foreign. I referred to the recession in the West and the gluts in the world's markets at the time - to refer to one item alone, the Canadian aluminium interests had a few weeks before told me that there were five million tons of existing and planned surplus aluminium capacity in 1961. I argued that it was necessary for British Guiana to negotiate for aid and trade not only with the Western but also with the Eastern countries.

My economic arguments were no doubt convincing because President Kennedy promised to aid, and later, after his interview with the editor of Izvestia, indicated approval of me and my Government. Unfortunately irresponsible people have thwarted my efforts. President Kennedy being a politician was subjected to the same hysteria with which my Government is faced in this country. You know that leading persons have gone to Washington and New York and argued that no U.S. aid should be given to my Government; that the PP.P was getting money from Russia, that British Guiana was going to be a second Cuba and I another Castro. Facing his second-term elections, President Kennedy no doubt felt that British Guiana was too hot to handle. This is what some of my advisers and I gathered in talking to high-placed American officials and advisers who, in explaining the reversal of U.S. attitude, apologetically said that nothing must be done to prevent President Kennedy from winning a second term with a large majority. It is ironic and unfortunate that the President was shot before the coming elections.

I repeat - what we need in British Guiana is an expanding economy. This means political stability and independence but our present disturbed situation as in 1962 and 1963 will no doubt be used as an excuse for postponing independence. This is why in

my recent speeches everywhere I went I have emphasised the four cornerstones for our present needs - racial harmony, national unity, national independence and peace and progress. I pointed out that without racial harmony there can be no national unity and without national unity there can be no national independence, and without independence there can be no progress.

As I see it, the quickest way to achieve these four objectives is to have a coalition government between the two major parties. I have been saying so since 1955. I anticipated our present tragedy after the split of the PP.P in 1955. In 1956 I was instrumental in getting established an all-party conference under the chairmanship of the late Dr. J.B. Singh. I proposed a united front government but our then Governor Sir Patrick Renison and other reactionary influences opposed this move. They deemed this as a communist trick and said it was evidence of dictatorial tendencies and of an intention to set up a one-party state. In 1957, when I was in Ghana attending the independence celebrations, I attempted to get West Indian leaders and the Prime Minister, now President of Ghana, to use their good offices to bring whatever influence they could bear on Mr. Burnham to reunite the PPP or bring the two factions of the PPP in a coalition before the 1957 elections. But my efforts failed. Again, just before the 1961 elections, through the efforts of two Guianese resident in New York and the good offices of the Ghana Mission at the United Nations, an attempt was made to bring about a coalition between the PPP and the PNC. Identical letters were written to both parties. The PPP agreed, but the PNC declined the offer. Unfortunately, at both the 1957 and 1961 elections, the main Opposition party felt it would have won. And having lost, it became sulky and refused even then to accept my offer of a coalition. I recite these events not for the purpose of recrimination. I merely record them to show that our present tragic situation could have been avoided had the Opposition travelled a different road and acted responsibly like a democratic Opposition or participated with us in the Government.

There is still time, but the hour is late. I know that there are many in both parties who will oppose a coalition government of the PPP and the PNC. At the bottom, emotions today are very charged. As someone told me last week, it is difficult to talk about peace and unity to a man whose house has been burnt down; the man whose house has been burnt down thinks only about one thing - to burn someone else's house. But as I said last week this is a time to think not only with the heart but with the head. We cannot go from burning to burning and from killing to killing.

We must have peace. Unity at the top level is therefore absolutely essential whatever the risks, if unity and peace are to be achieved at the bottom.

I know that many will be dissatisfied with this line of approach. But we cannot procrastinate. Our situation is too charged. Let me relate my experience at one of my meetings. Last Sunday, at Success, I spoke about the need for racial harmony, peace and national unity. At question time an Afro-Guianese came up. He was one of a very few of the non-Indo-Guianese at Success. He asked me to put to the people whether they would allow him to stay there. He related the plight of his position that if he moved his house and went into an African dominated village, he would be attacked because he was known as a PPP supporter. I appealed to the people that a man must not be judged by the colour of his skin. They were satisfied with my appeals. However, one person got up and asked if I believed in the Law of Moses. I had to ask him where he thought an-eye- for-an-eye



philosophy will get us at the moment. Of course, I understood his feelings. He was from Wismar. Prior to 1953, he was a leading PPP activist. After the suspension of the constitution he was hounded and victimised. One sympathises with the deep emotional feelings of such an individual but we cannot allow the philosophy of an-eye-for-an-eye or might-is-right to prevail.

Coalition between the PPP and the PNC, I am sure, will not be a bed of roses immediately but will be the shortest road to peace, and, I hope, progress. Some may question why is it that I have not decided on the formation of a national government which will include the United Force. As I see it, we do not have mainly a racial problem. Race and fear are merely reflections of the deeper but fundamental struggle of the masses to be free from exploitation and to have a place in the sun. The United Force is too rooted in the preservation of the colonial status quo. The PPP and the PNC, on the other hand, have professed similar intentions and objectives - welfare of the masses, a socialist domestic programme and a non-aligned foreign policy. A PPP/PNC coalition will achieve unity of the working class and can work out our own Guianese socialist road to peace and progress. Such a government is likely to work together with less friction. The United Force will then become a democratic opposition. Issues will then be contested between the Government and the Opposition not on the basis of race but on the basis of programme and policy.

One of our Guianese intellectuals has posed this problem very well. I refer to Clive Y. Thomas who recently reviewed Dr. Raymond Smith's book *British Guiana*. At the end of this review article, Clive Thomas wrote:

"There are two basic problems facing Guianese society: (i) The integration of the various cultural groups in the community and this has to take place largely by creolization; (ii) The need for a revolutionary change in the structure and values of [the] creole system itself.

In relation to these problems the PNC stands for solving (i) and then possibly (ii). The PPP stands for the simultaneous solution of both. This factor explains why, despite all the justified reservations about the left wing content of the PPP, the economic basis of its support, etc., it remains to the left of all other political groups.

When seen from this standpoint, 1953 is important, not only because of the coalition that the PPP in fact represented then, but also because of what was left out of the 1953 coalition were those elements that would have solved problem (i) by way of extensive creolization and would have refused to consider (ii) as a problem. Not unnaturally, the most vocal elements outside the PPP coalition (1953) were those who favoured the existing creole system by reason of their ascribed status within this system. This group was dominated by the upper urban coloured middle classes.

In relation to the two problems the UF stands out quite clearly. The UF are primarily those elements that could not accommodate themselves to the promise of "revolutionary" change in the structure of the creole system that still exists in the PNC. A coalition of the PNC and the UF is certain to mean a watering down of the "revolutionary" content of the PNC. In addition, excluding the wide support of the Indians, it is certain to fail in any attempt at a genuine solution to problem (i). Thus this type of coalition in office is the worst premise that exists for the future of Guiana.

A coalition of the PNC and PPP in office can ensure the solution of problem (i). It is however likely to have paradoxical effects. Within the PPP those elements that accept the need for commitment to a common set of Guianese values are likely to be strengthened. Whilst within the PNC those elements that would resist a serious solution to problem (ii) will be strengthened. This is the ultimate price of coalition. This is why it is inevitably medium-term. It leads to a solution of problem (i) and then the coalition is likely to be faced with the dilemma of what to do next or alternatively, how to approach problem (ii). There can be no agreed programme between these two parties that will go beyond successful integration (creolization).

And now to come back to the PPP/PNC coalition. Because of the present deterioration of our society, because of the dangers to the future of our country, everything must be done to bring this about. I am prepared to bend over backwards. You may be interested in knowing that when the Ghana Mission was here, I made several concessions including parity to meet the wishes of the Opposition. Recall that at the United Nations talks last year, I had opposed the demand for parity in the Council of Ministers. I did so not because I was seeking to maintain a position of superiority or to give an additional ministerial post to one of my colleagues. I did so because we feared obstruction in our programme for social change. On this score, our apprehensions are shared by others besides ourselves like Clive Thomas. It must not be forgotten that many of those who opposed us in 1953 now hold dominant positions in the PNC leadership.

We are prepared to concede parity however unjustified the demand may be. I concede this even though I realise it may be a drag on our forward march. I am prepared to do this in the national interest and in the interest of peace. A coalition with parity will probably lead to friction but once an agreed detailed programme is hammered out at the beginning, there is less likelihood of serious friction, and if there is, then the issues could be put to the people for national debate and decision.

It is clear to me now, as it was since 1955, and I am glad to see that this is now dawning on many others also, that the best way forward is a coalition of the PPP and the PNC.

I have today written Mr. Burnham, as the Leader of the Opposition, inviting him to join me in the Government. In this letter, the details have been set down. I hope that Mr. Burnham, in the national interest, will agree to meet me to discuss the four questions - constitutional, industrial, security and rehabilitation - which are today the cause of controversy and are tearing our country and people apart. I urge you to help me in this difficult task of forging this unity which is so vital at this critical juncture of our country's history. Let us jointly work together to settle outstanding differences and bring lasting peace to our country.

*[Source: Cheddi Jagan Research Centre; also National Archives of Guyana]*

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**64. LETTER FROM PREMIER DR. CHEDDI JAGAN TO BRITISH PRIME MINISTER ALEC DOUGLAS-HUME**  
(24 June 1964)

24th June 1964

Dear Prime Minister

I have noted that Mr. Harold Wilson, Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, suggested in the course of his speech on the final day (17th June) of a debate in the House of Commons on Britain's Foreign Policy that Her Majesty's Government should put the troubled situation in British Guiana on the agenda of the forthcoming Prime Ministers' Conference.

Wilson, who later in his speech described the decisions of Her Majesty's Government which are now being imposed as a "fiddled constitution", went on to suggest that a high level Commonwealth Mission should come to British Guiana to try to work out a solution and thought that the Mission "might consist of perhaps Canada, Jamaica, Trinidad, India and a representative of a West African State."

It is reported that Mr. B. A. Butler, Foreign Secretary replying to Mr. Wilson said that the Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, had assured him that Mr. Wilson's request would receive consideration.

I welcome this proposal by Mr. Wilson as I am convinced that the Commonwealth can play a useful part in helping the leaders of this country to solve the present constitutional deadlock and other problems.

### **Commonwealth Consultation Appropriate**

It is considered appropriate that this matter should be the subject of Commonwealth consultation. It is increasingly accepted that the Commonwealth has a role to play in matters of this kind. Her Majesty's Government has taken the view for instance, that the question of Southern Rhodesia is properly the subject of Commonwealth consultation and agreement. And during the recent debate on British Guiana in the House of Commons the Secretary of State for the Colonies, after Members of Parliament had suggested Commonwealth consultation, stated that he would refer the question to the Commonwealth Conference if he thought that the conference could find a solution.

There are reasons why it is specially appropriate that the Commonwealth should be invited to assist with the solution of the British Guiana question. British Guiana has historical, racial, religious and cultural links with many parts of the Commonwealth quite distinct from its special relationship with the United Kingdom.

It has hitherto been a sad commentary on the value of the Commonwealth connection that Her Majesty's Government considered it more appropriate to have discussions on one of its dependencies with the United States rather than with the Commonwealth.

## **Erosion of the Powers of my Government**

There is at present a widespread breakdown of law and order. This has largely come about because of the erosion of the powers of my Government by Her Majesty's Government. These measures constitute a virtual suspension of the constitution and make a mockery of the powers of an elected Government.

Two Orders-in-Council made earlier this year empower the Governor acting under the direct authority of Her Majesty's Government to make provision for the registration of voters for elections under proportional representation and to recruit a Special Service Unit for internal security. Registration of voters and internal security are functions of the Government of British Guiana.

Another Order-in-Council seeks to amend the Constitution by substituting for the present bicameral legislature a unicameral legislature elected under a system of proportional representation. The provisions of Sections 2 and 3 of the Order will enable the Governor to dissolve the existing Legislature about one year before the time when the Legislature will normally be dissolved. This is another clear infringement of established constitutional principles.

More recently the Governor has assumed full powers under the Emergency which was declared because of the disturbances in the country. This enables him to act without the advice of the Ministers of the Government. Using such powers the Governor has arrested and detained without trial among others the Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Lands and Deputy Premier, and five legislators. Such action destroys the concept of the collective responsibility of the Cabinet and will moreover prevent the passage of legislation and other measures by the elected Government which no longer holds a majority in the Legislative Assembly.

In this connection I should like to remind you that British Guiana, like Southern Rhodesia, is a fully internally self-governing country. In the case of Southern Rhodesia, Her Majesty's Government has maintained that it cannot amend its constitution to take away any of the powers already granted to it because it is internally self-governing.

The convention that Parliament cannot amend the constitution of an internally self-governing territory is well-established. Thus Mr. Godber, British Representative to the 4th Committee of the United Nations, stated in a debate on Southern Rhodesia that "from the middle of the 19th century. . . there had been a convention against Parliament legislating for self-governing Colonies without their consent and the same applied to Southern Rhodesia. This convention was now very powerful".

Mr. Duncan Sandys has himself made the same point. In a debate in the House of Commons on 8th November, 1961, Mr. Sandys stated:

"Having nearly 40 years ago given a constitution which is virtually self-governing at home in Southern Rhodesia, it would be constitutionally improper and impracticable for us, without the consent of Southern Rhodesia, to impose upon it a new constitution with much wider representation to Africans if we thought that was right and desirable."

Apparently, however, this convention does not apply to British Guiana.

### **Necessity for an Acceptable Solution**

It is all too evident that the decisions of Her Majesty's Government which are now being imposed on British Guiana cannot restore harmony between the various sections of the community and bring lasting peace to the country. A constitutional arrangement which ignores the wishes of half of the people of the country can hardly be expected to do this. What is clearly needed is a settlement which is acceptable to the great majority of the people of British Guiana. The work of healing and reconciliation and social and economic development cannot begin without such a settlement and for this the country cries aloud.

### **Background to Present Situation**

To understand the situation in the country at the moment, it is necessary to go back to the general election of August 1961, when my Party, the People's Progressive Party was elected to govern under a Constitution which gave internal self-government to British Guiana. This was the third successive general election that the Party had won. The Opposition now felt that they had no hope of winning an election and attaining office and so they looked around for other means to attain their objectives. They turned to the use of force in order to bring about

(a) the suspension of the Constitution

(b) the indefinite delay of independence; and

(c) the imposition of a constitutional and electoral formula which would bring the Opposition into power.

The campaign of the Opposition led directly to the disturbances of February 1962 and the strike of Trade Unions and disturbances of 1963. Indeed the strike of 1963 was animated mainly by political motives and financed by US money. The background to these disturbances and those of this year are given fully in Appendix I.\*

In November 1961, three months after the general election the newly elected legislature passed resolutions calling on Her Majesty's Government to fix a date for the independence of British Guiana, and on 14th January, 1962 after the question had

been taken to the United Nations, Her Majesty's Government announced that it had agreed to hold a Conference in May 1962, "to discuss the date and arrangements to be made for the achievement of independence by British Guiana".

The 1962 disturbances, as had been hoped by its instigators, brought about a delay in the summoning of the Independence Conference, the Conference being postponed from May until October/November of that year. That Conference broke down as the Secretary of State insisted on unanimity i.e. that all parties must agree among themselves on all issues, as the basis for the grant of independence. Likewise, the 1963 disturbances have led to the indefinite delay of Independence and the decision at the 1963 Conference to impose the electoral system of proportional representation designed to prevent the People's Progressive Party from winning an election.

### **Demands of the Opposition**

The Opposition therefore came to the 1962 and 1963 Conferences with two main demands: elections before independence and a change of the electoral system from first-past-the-post to proportional representation.

The demand for elections before independence was not in keeping with the declarations made during the 1961 elections campaign by the main Opposition Party - the People's National Congress - the leaders of which had fixed May 31, 1962, as the date for independence and had categorically stated during the election campaign that whichever party won the elections would be leading the country to Independence. However, the Opposition justified its demand for new elections before Independence on the ground that the Government was not governing with due regard to the wishes of the Opposition and that there were fears and apprehensions about the future.

The Opposition based their demand for the change of the electoral system on the results of the 1961 general election at which the PPP had polled 43% of the votes but had obtained a majority of seats (57%). These figures did not however give the true picture as my Party had only contested 29 out of the 35 seats, whereas the Opposition parties, the PNC and UF, had respectively contested 34 and 35 seats.

Before the Conference I suggested to Mr. Sandys that a date for Independence be fixed and that a Commonwealth team be invited to help negotiate a satisfactory settlement between the Government and the Opposition. This suggestion did not find favour with the Colonial Secretary Nor did my suggestion that the Trinidad Constitution be adapted for British Guiana meet with approval.

### **1963 Conference**

The various proposals of the governing party (PPP) and the Opposition (PNC and UF) put forward at the 1963 Conference were as follows:

***Governing Party (PPP):***

- (i) Retention of the traditional first-past-the-post system for the election of the Legislative Assembly
- (ii) In keeping with modern trends the reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18 years.
- (iii) The reconstitution of the Senate (Upper House), to which the majority party in the Legislative Assembly now has a right to nominate a majority of members, on the basis of parity between the Government and Opposition and later on the basis of elections, possibly under proportional representation.
- (iv) The introduction of reasonable safeguards in addition to the existing Fundamental Rights provision of the existing constitution.
- (v) An undertaking that Government would consult with the Opposition in keeping with United Kingdom Parliamentary conventions and the establishment of whatever consultative machinery was required.
- (vi) The appointment of Commonwealth Officers to help train and be in charge of security forces.
- (vii) The establishment of a civil United Nations or Commonwealth "presence" in the country to ensure that the constitutional guarantees were honoured and respected by the Government and Opposition.
- (viii) Fixing of an early date for Independence.

***Opposition Parties (PNC and UF):***

- (i) The introduction of a new electoral system on the basis of proportional representation. It is to be noted however (i) that the PNC, the main Opposition party, had at this stage expressed its willingness to accept a mixed electoral system; (ii) the PNC originally advocated an elimination figure of 15% below which parties would not share in the distribution of seats. This figure was subsequently reduced to 10% which was also in keeping with the demands of the United Force, the other Opposition Party
- (ii) Retention of the voting age at 21.
- (iii) The replacement of the bicameral legislature with a single-chamber wholly elected legislature (at the 1960 Conference the PNC and other Opposition elements had insisted on the replacement of the then single-chamber legislature by a bicameral legislature).

(iv) The holding of fresh elections before independence.

When the Leaders of the three parties failed to reach agreement, it was decided to ask the Secretary of State to settle outstanding issues on the authority of the British Government.

### **Context in which Secretary of State was Asked to Settle Issue**

The context in which the Secretary of State was asked to work out a settlement should however be made clear. This Conference was called to discuss Independence and thus, when I asked Mr. Sandys to impose a solution I expected that Her Majesty's Government would act in good faith by transferring residual powers to my Government and resolving differences on the basis of Commonwealth principles and precedent. Moreover, the Secretary of State had been authorised to act on the basis of the undertaking given at the 1960 Conference at which after a prolonged debate and the most careful consideration the course to British Guiana's Independence was meticulously charted.

It was firmly agreed at the 1960 Conference that the Constitution that had been hammered out, was, with the appropriate consequential changes, to be the constitution for an Independent Guiana, and that the only "question of substance" that had to be decided on at the next conference was the fixing of a date for independence.

The Command Paper (998) issued after the 1960 Conference, and referred to above, states at paragraph 12:

"Her Majesty's Government accept the principle of independence for British Guiana. On the assumption that constitutional changes are introduced as a result of this Conference, then if at any time not earlier than two years after the first General Election held under the new Constitution or upon it being decided that the West Indies Federation should attain independence, whichever is the shorter, both Houses of the British Guiana Legislature pass resolutions asking Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to grant independence to British Guiana, Her Majesty's Government will early thereafter call a further Conference to consider when it would be practicable to implement this request. Provided that the new situation caused by the decision that the West Indies Federation should attain independence would not be regarded as giving ground for considering any change in the then operative British Guiana Constitution until it had been in effect for not less than one year."

The Constitutional changes agreed to in 1960 and referred to in the above extract were put into effect in 1961. In the same year, both Chambers of the British Guiana Legislature duly passed resolutions asking Her Majesty's Government to grant independence to British Guiana, and the Conference to consider this request was convened after being postponed, as has been mentioned, in October/November 1962. It is to be noted that the purpose of this Conference was, pursuant to the above declaration, to decide "when it would be practicable to implement this request" (i.e. the request of the British Guiana Legislature to grant independence to British Guiana).



Moreover, the 1960 Conference had narrowed down the issues which were to be discussed at the next Conference, and had by implication defined its terms of reference. Paragraph 59 of this Command Paper sets this out in the following terms:

"The revision in 1961, resulting from the deliberations of the Conference formed, in the views of Her Majesty's Government, a comprehensive and carefully balanced whole, naturally leading to the expectation that, when another Conference between Her Majesty's Government and a Delegation from British Guiana was held, there should be no question of substance for discussion save that of independence, the principle of which had been accepted in the terms of the formula set out in paragraph 12 of this Report".

The issues to be determined by the next conference were thus clear. All parties agreed, and Her Majesty's Government fully accepted, that the "comprehensive and carefully balanced" Constitution hammered out at the 1960 Conference, was to be, not a temporary or transitional one, but with the appropriate consequential changes, the final one for an independent Guiana, and that the only "question of substance" to be resolved at the ensuing conference was the date on which the residual powers retained by Her Majesty's Government under this Constitution were to be transferred to the Government of British Guiana.

There can be no doubt that the then Secretary of State for the Colonies envisaged that on independence the only changes that would have to be made to the 1961 Constitution would be those necessary for transferring the residual powers of Her Majesty's Government to the Government of British Guiana, that is, control over external affairs and defence, the power to amend the constitution and a few minor modifications, but certainly no changes of substance.

There was only one exception to this - the question whether the voting age should be reduced from 21 to 18 years. The Secretary of State had decided that it should be left at 21, but had stated that he was willing to consider the question if it was raised again by the Legislature. This is recorded in Conference Paper B.G.C. (60) 11 of 10th March, 1960, which states:

"DR. JAGAN said that, as suggested by Mr. Benn at an earlier meeting, and in keeping with modern trends, he would like to see the voting age in British Guiana reduced from 21 to 18 years.

MR. MACLEOD said that he did not think that the trend towards a lowering of the voting age to 18 was as widespread as had been suggested. For the new constitution the age should be left at 21 years, but it was entirely open to the Legislature to consider this proposal and to make recommendations."

The reservation on the voting age was the only exception to the decision that there should be no major changes in the 1961 Constitution when British Guiana attained independence.

It should be noted in particular that the electoral system was one of the major questions discussed and firmly decided on at the 1960 Conference. Paragraph 39 of the Command Paper records that "it was accepted that election to the Legislative Assembly

should be by the first-past-the-post system in single-member constituencies." The various delegations to the Conference reserved their positions on certain issues, but the electoral system was not one of these.

### **Decisions of Mr. Sandys**

Mr. Sandys acting on this request to settle the constitutional deadlock decided:

- (i) to abolish the first-past-the-post system and to impose a system of proportional representation without any provision for exclusion on a percentage basis;
- (ii) to retain the voting age at 21;
- (iii) not to fix a date for independence;
- (iv) that elections should be held under the new electoral system before independence;
- (v) that after elections Her Majesty's Government would settle the remaining constitutional differences and fix a date for independence.

It will thus be seen that Her Majesty's Government decisions were in no sense a compromise but amounted to a capitulation to the Opposition and indeed went much further than the demands of the Opposition who at that stage were willing to accept a mixed electoral system. It moreover seemed that Her Majesty's Government had rewarded or appeared to reward the use of force and the abandonment of parliamentary action by the Opposition in the events which had led up to the disturbances of 1962 and 1963.

### **Room for Commonwealth Assistance**

There is therefore room for the working out of a genuine constitutional compromise and settlement by a Commonwealth team. Such compromise and settlement should take account of the following issues:

#### *(i) Attitude of US Government*

There can be little doubt that an important element in the present situation is the distrust and suspicion with which the present Government is viewed by the U.S. Government. It is no secret that the U.S. Government regards my Government as a security risk in its main sphere of influence. This attitude of the US Government has served to encourage irresponsible elements in their total opposition to Government and has made compromise and a settlement impossible. A settlement should therefore be built

on a basis which would reassure the State Department on the question of security The Commonwealth it is considered is in a good position to provide such a basis.

(ii) *The need for security forces in which there is public confidence*

It is evident that the security and defence forces must be constituted so that they reflect, at all levels, a broad cross-section of the population. This needs to be put in hand immediately and done in the shortest possible time. In the implementation of this, Commonwealth assistance will be useful.

(iii) *Need for economic aid*

The provision of Commonwealth aid:

(i) for the general social and economic development of the country. Recent crises have adversely affected the revenue of the country and have made it nearly impossible to raise loans. At the same time the birth-rate continues to outstrip economic growth. Present tensions are partly the result of economic difficulties and urgent attention must be given to these if there is to be a lasting settlement.

(ii) to assist with the rehabilitation of displaced persons and persons who have suffered loss or injury in recent disorders.

(iv) *Outstanding Constitutional and political differences*

One of the methods by which a settlement can be achieved is a coalition of the two major parties, the PPP and the PNC. In order to bring about such a settlement I wrote to Mr. Burnham on 6th June as follows:

"I therefore, . . . invite you to join me in the formation of a coalition government between the People's Progressive Party and the People's National Congress on the following terms:

Council of Ministers: The PPP and PNC to have an equal number of Ministries - 5 to each party - with the Leader of the PPP being Premier, and the Leader of the PNC being Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier shall be the Leader of the Legislative Assembly The term of office of the coalition government is to be two, three or four years with a minimum period until August 1965, the life of the present Government.

It is my considered view that in the charged atmosphere of today, a holding government for a short period until the proposed general elections later this year will not suffice to create unity, peace and harmony which are so necessary today at all levels. It

is my view that the coalition should continue after the next general elections on an agreed basis and that the party leader of the majority party should be the Prime Minister and the other Leader the Deputy Prime Minister.

On Independence, the Ministry of Home Affairs should go to one Party with a Junior Minister to the other Party; the Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministry should go to the Party which does not hold the Home Affairs Ministry and Junior Minister to the other Party Head of State: On Independence the Head of State should be mutually agreed upon by all Parties.

House of Assembly: The future House of Assembly is to be made up on the Surinam model of a combination of the first-past-the-post and proportional representation system. I suggested the existing 35 constituencies to be the basis of new general elections at a time to be mutually agreed upon. In addition, there should be 17 seats to be allocated to each party on the basis of the votes polled with the proviso that no party would share in the allocation of these seats unless it polled a minimum of 15% of total valid votes cast. This proviso is in keeping with your proposals to the Constitution Committee of 1959 for the prevention of fragmentation and the formation of a multiplicity of parties. It is also in keeping with our present electoral laws which cause a candidate to forfeit his deposit if he or she does not obtain 15% of the total votes cast in the constituency

Senate: I suggest that the Senate be reconstituted as follows:

6 PPP  
4 PNC  
1 UF and  
2 others.

United Nations Presence: Between now and Independence there should be a United Nations Presence in British Guiana. During this interim period all preparatory steps must be taken to create with the help of the United Nations and British Commonwealth territories, Security Police and Defence Forces, and institutions in which there is public confidence.

Agreed Programme: The PN.C. and the PP.P should immediately set to work to produce an agreed programme based on a domestic policy of democracy and socialism, and a foreign policy of non-alignment. A central committee and various sub-committees should be established to produce a detailed domestic programme within two months.

British Government: Immediate representation should be made to the British Government for the latter's agreement to electoral reform and other arrangements proposed above."

This offer has however not met with a sympathetic response from Mr. Burnham.

In view of the foregoing, I should be grateful if you would use your good offices to ensure that the forthcoming Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers should consider the question of British Guiana with a view to resolving the present

constitutional deadlock, and the other problems of the country. You may also wish to consider whether Mr. L. F S. Burnham, the Leader of the principal Opposition Party and myself should be invited to London for the discussions.

The principles, on which the Commonwealth has been founded and to which I adhere, are today in jeopardy in British Guiana. This appeal is made in the conviction that Commonwealth assistance holds out the best hope for the restoration of parliamentary government and the rule of law in my country.

Yours sincerely Cheddi Jagan  
Premier

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**65. LETTER FROM PREMIER DR. CHEDDI JAGAN TO BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES ANTHONY GREENWOOD, 20 OCTOBER 1964**

20th October 1964

Dear Secretary of State,

Certain disclosures during the last few weeks have thrown new light on the cause of the disturbances in British Guiana during the last three years. On 9th August, 1964, one Emanuel Fairbain was arrested by the Police after being found in possession of 657 rounds of ammunition, 2 pistols, explosives, two time devices for setting off electrical charges and several items of equipment used by the local security forces. Fairbain himself has since been revealed to be merely a paid thug and assassin, but the "Fairbain affair" has precipitated some startling disclosures concerning the political situation in my country and the role of the security forces.

2. First of all, the Fairbain affair caused to be brought to light evidence of the organisation and activities of a well-organised centrally-directed terrorist gang connected with the political opposition. This gang has been organised for violence, murder and sabotage for the purpose of overthrowing the elected Government and was in fact responsible for widespread murder and arson during the last two or three years. The other revelation was that of the inability, partisanship and corruption of the security forces, and the complicity of many of their members in the activities of the terrorist organisation. Let me say at once that many of these things had long been known to the elected Government (see Background to the present Situation appended to the letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 24th June, 1964, which accompanies this letter); but now for the first time the Government and the public became aware of the fully documented and other conclusive evidence of the existence of the organisation and its activities and membership, including the central directorate of the body.

3. A week after Fairbain's apprehension, on 17th August, 1964, the Commissioner of Police issued a statement confirming the existence in the country of organised thuggery which is centrally directed and which had been responsible for over 100 murders including 22 committed in Georgetown in which "women were bombed in shops and a cinema and children burned in their beds". The Commissioner gravely added that law-abiding citizens should know what they and the Police were faced with in the country

4. In the meantime, a hue and cry was raised by opposition elements that Fairbain had been tortured by the Police, and an application was made for a writ of habeas corpus for his release. In connection with this writ, the Commissioner of Police on 29th August, 1964 swore to an affidavit that he had refused permission to Mr. J.R.G. Hope, a barrister-at-law, to see Fairbain on 9th August, 1964, because "Communication at that stage would have hindered inquiries which were instituted as a direct result of the arrest in respect of a series of serious crimes such as murder, arson, causing explosions to buildings and the subversive and criminal activities of a terrorist gang attached to a political party known as the People's National Congress, and of which gang the subject (Fairbain) admitted that he was a member".

5. In connection with Ex Parte Fairbain Habeas Corpus, the Commissioner of Police submitted the following security papers as part of his instruction to the Law Officers:

(i) Research Paper on the activities of the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation, dated 14th August, 1963;

(ii) A report by a Police Officer (on the same subject) to the Assistant Commissioner, Crime, dated 11th September, 1963; and

(iii) A report by a Police Officer (on the same subject) to the Commissioner of Police, dated 21st August, 1964.

A copy of each of these reports attached as appendices to Council of Ministers Memorandum CP(64)330 is also forwarded herewith.

6. The security papers give full information on the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation. They give the names of about 50 of its members, both the paid thugs and assassins and the central directorate. They show that there was evidence to sustain a charge of conspiracy against 25 of the 50 members of the Organisation. (A few of these have now been charged and are before the courts for murder and other serious crimes.) The directorate of the Terrorist Organisation consists of some of the leaders of the political opposition and the trade union movement. The papers show beyond a shadow of doubt that the violence during the disturbances was politically motivated. The marauding bands who roamed the streets of Georgetown looting business places and beating people, the large number of bombings resulting in great damage to property, loss of life and injury to persons - all of these were centrally directed by the leader of the People's National Congress. It is to be noted that the victims of the looting, bombings, violence and murder were, or were believed to be, supporters of the Government.

7. A study of the security reports makes it abundantly clear that the object of the sabotage, violence and terrorism was the overthrow of the elected Government. The first security report called "Research Paper on the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation" states as follows:

"This Organisation, which is backed by a trade union representative and political leaders, has resorted to acts of sabotage and terrorism. It is paving the way for the overthrow of the democratically elected Government by force and it should be considered as a security target of great importance if the democratically elected Government should be given the protection and security of governing for the period it should be in office".

8. The security papers show that members of the Police Force and Volunteers were involved in the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation. Paragraphs 45 to 50 of the Research Paper tell of meetings between the leaders of the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation and members of the Volunteer Force, and of the support promised to the Terrorist Organisation. Thus several members of the Volunteer Force were involved in the activities of the gang. Mention is also made of six policemen who were members of the gang. Paragraph 49 reads in part as follows:

"The men who are members of the BG Volunteer Force mentioned that they would give the party (PNC) all support in relation to instructions in the handling of arms in defensive measures. Ninety-five percent of the members of the Volunteer Force were already (sic) to defend themselves, the PNC and the United Force against communism. . .

And paragraph 50 reads in part as follows:

"The Staff Sergeant who was questioned . . . . said that he was permanently employed with the Volunteer Force; he was a supporter of the PNC. He was in charge of arms. The Volunteer Force had 600 men, more than 600 rifles, 80 stem guns and 60 bren guns. . . .

It should be mentioned that members of the Volunteer Force including a sergeant named in the reports as a member of the Terrorist Organisation have since been charged with the murder of six members of two families.

9. There is evidence, too, in the security papers that foreign countries are giving aid to the Terrorist Organisation. Paragraph 3 of the Research Paper mentioned that it was proposed at the time of the formation of the Organisation that efforts would be made to get funds from the United Kingdom and the United States of America and arms from Dutch Guiana (Surinam) and Venezuela. Paragraph 49 of the same paper also states:

"A revolution must start at some point, with the British Army taking over strategic points and the Volunteer Force standing by in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. Within thirty-six hours the Americans would be in the country and within forty-eight hours the Government would be ousted from office".

Paragraphs 108 to 110 of the Report of 11th September, 1963 describe a meeting of members of the Terrorist Organisation at the home of a People's National Congress activist and one of the leaders of the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation on 26th August, 1963. The Report reads:

. . . . had decided not to blow up the Government oil tanks at Kingston anymore because it could be dangerous; many lives would be lost, including lives of members of the Party He mentioned that when the Cuban ship arrived they would have to blast it up because they did not want any communist goods to come into the country and they would make an example to show results to the American people".

It is mentioned, too, that monetary transactions are arranged between an American citizen, who pays frequent visits to British Guiana, and a prominent member of the local trade union movement.

10. The security reports were withheld by the Police from the Minister responsible for internal security and from the Government. So the elected Government could take no action in this matter. Nor did the Police, despite the information at their disposal since 1963, take any action against those they know to be carrying out acts of terrorism and subversion. Had the 50 members of the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation - a few of whom have now been charged for the series of bombings in Georgetown - been kept under surveillance, had their homes and offices been searched at the time the information became available to the Police, had they been arrested and charged as was recommended in one of the security reports, many lives would have been saved, including those of "women ... bombed in shops and a cinema and children burned in their beds", to which the Commissioner of Police referred in his statement. Nor could the great tragedy of Wismar have occurred in which a few people were killed, many injured, 220 homes burnt, and 2,000 people driven from the place they had made their home, destitute and bereft of the results of their life's work.

11. I wish to emphasise that while the elected Government knew that the political Opposition was using violence as an instrument of policy, it did not then have positive or conclusive evidence of this. Such evidence was available to the Police and the British Government as early as August, 1963 but it was withheld from the elected Government. The then British Government apparently suppressed this evidence for political purposes. Despite the information at the disposal of the Police, when powers of detention were assumed by the Governor, these powers were immediately used to detain 34 members and supporters of the People's Progressive Party and only 2 from the People's National Congress. Thus the Opposition Party was protected and the Government Party was wrongly smeared and accused of crimes of which they are innocent.

12. My Government considered the security documents referred to above at a meeting on 9th September and agreed that the Governor be advised

(i) to release immediately the members of the People's Progressive Party who are wrongly detained for acts now clearly known to be the acts of the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation;



(ii) in the interest of justice, to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that those members of the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation named in the security papers against whom there is evidence of murder, conspiracy, and terrorist and other illegal activities are prosecuted; and to detain at once the other members named in the papers as being involved in the activities of the Organisation;

(iii) to dismiss all civil servants, government employees and teachers recorded as being members of the Terrorist Organisation;

(iv) to disband immediately the Volunteer Force, which is drawn from the Opposition strongholds of Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Mackenzie;

(v) to recruit a new force of Volunteers consisting of twelve companies from twelve recruiting areas scattered throughout the country, thus ensuring that the force reflects a broad cross-section of the community;

(vi) to take immediate steps to correct the racial imbalance in the Police Force, not in the next five to seven years, but in the next few months, and to seek a grant from the United Kingdom for this purpose;

(vii) to revoke the Order for the recall of licensed firearms and to return all such arms to their owners;

(viii) to dismiss the Commissioner of Police, Mr. P. G. Owen, for withholding vital information relating to the security of the country from the Government, for failing to take action against a Terrorist Organisation which he knew was carrying out acts of terrorism, subversion and murder, and for acting generally against the interests of the country; and

(ix) to bring to the attention of Her Majesty's Government the state of affairs in the country, and the consequences of foreign intervention, particularly the existence and activities of a widespread Terrorist Organisation, which have led to the political arrangements and constitutional innovations (failure to grant independence, the imposition of Proportional Representation, the rape of the constitution and the efforts to force the Government into an election before the expiry of its normal term of office) aimed at the defeat and destruction of the Government; and to request that an attempt be made to bring about a political and constitutional settlement acceptable to the great majority of the people of this country

So far very little action has been taken on these decisions.

***Need to review constitutional arrangements now being imposed on this country:***

13. There can be little doubt that the disturbances had been organised with the object of removing the elected Government from office and to bring about at the same time the postponement of Independence. The disturbances of 1962 in fact led to the postponement of the Independence Conference from May to October, 1962, and the delay in granting independence itself. The

disturbances of 1962 and 1963 haunted the Independence Conference held in London in October, 1963 and were the decisive factor in its deliberations and conclusions. In announcing his decisions to the Conference on 31st October, 1963, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Duncan Sandys, said:

"That (i.e. racialism) is the curse of British Guiana today The whole life of the country is poisoned and weakened by mutual suspicion and fear between two predominant racial groups, the Indians and the Africans. The state of tension has become acute in the last few years, and has led to racial murder, arson and violence. Last summer it reached the point where law and order could not be maintained without the assistance of two battalions of British soldiers.

"If confidence and co-operation are to be restored more positive steps must be taken to encourage the healthy development of political life along non-racial lines. The opposition parties have insisted that in order to achieve this, a change in the electoral system is essential.

"Unfortunately, in British Guiana this electoral system (first-past- the-post), while providing clear parliamentary majorities, has not provided strong government. The fact is that the administration of the country has been largely paralysed, the Government is insolvent, and law and order can be maintained only with the help of outside troops".

14. It will be seen from the foregoing that the evidence upon which the former Secretary of State based his conclusion that the first-past-the-post electoral system had produced ineffective Government was in fact not evidence of the failure of the system but of the results of carefully engineered activities of a terrorist organisation. There is therefore need to review the constitutional arrangements now being imposed. It must be pointed out, incidentally, that the imposition, including a general election under proportional representation, is being carried out with a large number of the members and supporters of the Governing Party under detention, and with the security forces intimidating, harassing and terrorising activists of the Party The Governing Party has had to protest to the Governor repeatedly the last few weeks against acts of intimidation and terrorism carried out by the security forces against activists and organisers of the People's Progressive Party, apparently designed to prevent them from carrying out their organising activities.

15. It is already clear that the proposed proportional representation system is unlikely to produce stable government. A realistic estimate of present electoral support, and recent events, have served to confirm my view that the most likely outcome of the proposed proportional representation election will not lead to a settlement in British Guiana.

16. At the last General Election the main political parties were returned as follows:

People's Progressive Party - 20 seats  
People's National Congress - 11 seats  
and United Force - 4 seats

If the new elections contemplated later this year were on the basis of the existing 35 constituencies, the voting results would probably be the same as in 1961. However, the voting system has now been changed from first-past-the-post to the list system of proportional representation, in the hope of bringing about the defeat of the People's Progressive Party. Should the People's Progressive Party fail to get over 50% of the votes, it is very probable that the People's National Congress with even fewer votes than the People's Progressive Party can form a minority Government relying on United Force voting support in the Legislature. The constitution as presently amended by the Colonial Office makes no provision whatsoever which would ensure the cooperation of the majority parties. It therefore seems certain that the proportional representation system is unlikely to result in the cooperation of the majority parties and hence a situation will come about which will lead to further disorders and violence.

17. An even more serious outcome of an election under the proportional representation system would be the crystallisation and hardening of racialism (two new parties have now been formed - the first appealing to Muslim Indians and the second appealing mainly to Hindu Indians) and the bringing into power of a group whose chief instrument as has already been shown is terrorism and organised thuggery.

### ***Reorganisation of the Security Forces:***

18. The events of the last three years have shown the need for reorganisation of the Security Forces to reflect a broad cross-section of the community and to make them more adequate to the needs of the country. There is considerable evidence of dereliction of duty and discriminatory practices by the Police and Volunteer Forces. (The text of the statement by former Minister of Home Affairs is appended to the letter\* to the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 24th June, 1964, which accompanies this letter.) The security papers already referred to also show that several members of these forces are members of or are involved in the People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation.

19. At present Indians while constituting 51% of the population form only 17% of the Police Force and the proportion in the Volunteer Force is substantially less.

20. The Governor has recently set out proposals for correcting racial imbalance in the British Guiana Police Force. This was to be done by increasing the proportion of Indians in the Force from approximately 17% to approximately 35% over a period of 5 years. The Governor has proposed an increase in the Force from 1,559 of which 274 were Indians, to 1,988 by the end of 1969, of which 429 would be Indians.

21. However the Governor's proposed programme would not result in a reflection in the Police Force of the racial composition of the country in the near future; for at the end of the 5-year period (by 1969) the other races would still out-number Indians by 1,293 to 695. The imbalance in the Police Force is one of the causes of the breakdown in law and order and the lack of confidence in the Force. There is need for a crash programme such as has been put into effect in many emergent countries. (In Israel and East Africa, there have been large extensions of the Police and Military with no marked drop in standards.) But the

Governor takes the surprising view that a 'crash' programme should be introduced only if it first obtained the blessing of the Opposition Parties and the Police Federation. The Governor must surely be aware that in the existing circumstances and for obvious reasons it would be impossible to obtain such support either from the Opposition Parties or the Police Federation.

22. My Government has recently considered this matter and has submitted proposals for

- (i) the reorganisation of the Police Force;
- (ii) the preservation of the balance in the Special Service Unit;
- (iii) the disbandment of the present Volunteer Force and the recruitment of a new Force in its place.

These proposals are set out in the memorandum\* on the reorganisation of the Security Forces which accompanies this letter.

**Attitude of United States Government:**

23. There can be little doubt that an important element in the present situation is the distrust and suspicion with which my Government is viewed by the United States Government. It is no secret that the United States Government regards my Government as a security risk in its main sphere of influence. This attitude of the United States Government has served to encourage irresponsible elements in their total opposition to Government and has made compromise and a settlement impossible. I therefore recognise that settlement should be built on a basis which will reassure the State Department on the question of security

***Urgent need for economic aid:***

24. Recent crises have adversely affected the revenue of the country and have made it nearly impossible to raise loans. At the same time the birth rate continues to outstrip economic growth. Present tensions are partly the result of economic difficulties and urgent attention must be given to these if there is to be a lasting settlement. There is need for generous economic aid (i) for the general social and economic development of the country; and (ii) to assist with the rehabilitation of displaced persons and persons who have suffered loss or injury in recent disorders. A detailed request for such aid has already been sent forward.

25. In view of the points made herein my Government asks the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs

- (i) to take steps to ensure that early action is taken on the decisions of Government on the security reports;
- (ii) to review the constitutional provisions now being imposed on the country;

(iii) to take urgent steps to ensure that the security forces are reconstituted so as to reflect a broad cross-section of the community;

(iv) together with the British Guiana Government to enter into discussions with the United States Government towards a treaty settlement which would reassure the United States Government, on the problems of hemispheric security;

(v) to provide aid on a scale in keeping with the urgent needs of the country.

26. I should be grateful to have an early opportunity of discussing these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Cheddi Jagan  
Premier

N.B.: The following documents accompany this letter:

1. Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 24th June, 1964\* including the following appendices:

Appendix I - Background to the Present Situation: The Disturbances of February 1962, 1963 and 1964.

Appendix II - Statement by Senator the Honourable Janet Jagan, Minister of Home Affairs.

Appendix III - Appointments in the Public Service and Police Force in British Guiana.

2. Memorandum CP(64)330 - The People's National Congress Terrorist Organisation:\*

Failure to take action by the Police

Background Papers

Minutes of Meeting of Council of Ministers

3. CP(64)364 - Court of Inquiry - Emanuel Fairbain. Minutes of Meeting of Council of Ministers.\*

4. CP(64)383 - Reorganisation of Security Forces. Minutes of Meeting of Council of Ministers.\*

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## **Appendix I**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT SITUATION:**

#### ***The Disturbances of February, 1962***

In November, 1961, the newly-elected legislature passed resolutions calling on Her Majesty's Government to fix a date for the independence of British Guiana, and on 14th January, 1962, after the question had been taken to the United Nations, H.M. Government announced that it had agreed to hold a Conference in May 1962, "to discuss the date and arrangements to be made for the achievement of independence by British Guiana".

As soon as the date of the Independence Conference was announced, the United Force, led by Mr. P. D'Aguiar, began an intense campaign against Independence. And when, at the end of January, 1962, the Government introduced its budget, which made proposals for increased taxation, a compulsory saving scheme and measures to prevent widespread tax evasion and avoidance, in an effort to raise money for social and economic development, the United Force, in its search for weapons to be used in its battle to block Independence, seized upon the budget. Other Opposition elements joined the United Force, and the campaign which the latter party had already launched against Independence now became more bitter and virulent. Every trick of propaganda and all possible techniques of incitement were used. False rumours, inflammatory speeches and demonstrations kept the urban populace in a perpetual state of excitement. The bigger merchants raised the prices on all commodities, whether they were affected by the new budget or not, in an effort to arouse hostility against the Government. It was felt that this campaign would bring about the overthrow of the government or a suspension of the Constitution.

The Government became aware that large-scale violence was being planned, and that a plot was being hatched to assassinate the Premier and Ministers of the Government. On 9th February, 1962, the Premier told the Legislative Assembly of the plot which had come to light:

"It has come to the knowledge of the Government that violence is actually being planned on a general scale by certain elements acting for a minority group. In addition, it is understood that attempts against the Premier's life and the lives of certain of his Ministers and supporters are contemplated.

"These acts of violence are intended to secure the overthrow of the legally elected Government by force and the tax proposals in the budget are being used as a screen for the general strike for Monday, February 12. Since there is no likelihood of this strike call being widely supported by the workers, certain elements of the business community plan to shut down their business houses. The intention is in effect to stage a general lock-out on the excuse that the strike has created conditions which prevent continued business operations. Every step possible is being taken to bring the Civil Service in on this strike and if these designs are successful the total result will be to cause widespread dislocation of the colony's economy

"Such a course of action will be very likely to end in riot and violence. The people who plan this operation must be aware of this. It seems that they are seeking to cause turmoil and unrest in order to halt our march to Independence and economic well-being for all. This small clique is determined to preserve their positions of privilege. They' want to create another Congo here. They talk about freedom and democracy but are determined to use unconstitutional means to achieve these ends. They feel that they can depend on foreign support.

In the circumstances, the Government intends to take energetic steps to forestall this plan and I am now appealing to all reasonable public-minded citizens not to allow themselves to be persuaded or fooled into taking part in what can only be a disastrous and futile effort on the part of a small misguided and selfish element in the community to turn back the clock of history"

As foretold in the Premier's statement, a general strike was called. Many businesses and employers locked out their employees. The Civil Service was induced to come out on strike, and every effort made to create disorder and chaos. On 16th February, 1962, the people of Georgetown (the rural areas were unaffected) stirred to a pitch of frenzy, broke out into widespread rioting, looting and arson.

In the midst of these disorders, the campaign of incitement continued. A pirate radio stirred the people to further violence. This radio was eventually tracked down and the illegal transmitter discovered in a van owned by Messrs D'Aguiar Bros. Ltd. (The principal shareholder and chairman of the firm of D'Aguiar Bros. Ltd. is Mr. PS. D'Aguiar, the leader of the United Force.) The tape found in the van contained an inflammatory recording intended to provoke the populace to further acts of violence.

These disturbances were investigated by the Wynn Parry Commonwealth Commission. The Commission consisted of eminent jurists from the UK, India and Ghana. The Commission found that during the disturbances the commercial community the trade union movement and political parties were "arrayed against the Government", each for reasons of its own. The United Force and the commercial people "were actuated by personal motives rather than ideological differences". The leaders of the People's National Congress (the main Opposition party) were actuated by "the failure of their ambitions and a realisation that there was no future for them as Dr. Jagan's allies and supporters". Mr. L.ES. Burnham, the leader of the People's National Congress, was himself spurred on by a "desire to assert himself in public life and establish a more important and more rewarding position for himself and bring about Dr. Jagan's downfall". Many members of the commercial community, "were in entire sympathy with the strikers, and their attitude encouraged and fostered the strike." There was "close collaboration between the trade unions and the political leaders"; the three most important trade unionists "were deeply involved in politics", and Mr. Ishmael himself, the President of the British Guiana Trades Union Council was actuated "by a strong feeling of animosity towards the Premier, and Mr Hubbard, a Minister of Dr. Jagan's Cabinet". The Commission records that "these forces combined to form a veritable torrent of abuse, recrimination and vicious hostility directed against Dr. Jagan and his Government, and each day gave fresh vigour to the agitation". (Paragraphs 51, 64, 65, 80, 119 and 120 of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry: Colonial No. 354 of 1962.)

### ***The 1963 disturbances***

The plot of February 1962 had been foiled. But the violence perpetrated by the Opposition reaped rich rewards for them. It caused the Independence Conference to be postponed from May to November, 1962, and delayed the granting of Independence to British Guiana. After the breakdown of the Independence Conference in November 1962, new attempts were made and new plans concerted to overthrow the Government by force. In some respects, the plan in 1963 followed that of February 1962, but certain documents which came to light indicated the existence also of a secret insurrectionary movement.

(a) *The strike of 1963*

As in 1962, the violence was heralded by a strike. In 1962 the dissentient elements used the Budget to start trouble. In 1963 they used the Labour Relations Bill. The Bill, which was based on the United States Wagner Act, was intended to ensure the right of workers to decide by secret ballot which unions should represent them, and the recognition by employers of such unions with the minimum of disturbance and strife. Jurisdictional disputes have long bedevilled the local trade union movement and indeed, on April 5, eleven days after the publication of the Bill, a jurisdictional dispute between unions at the Rice Marketing Board, which management and the Trades Union Council had been unable to resolve, led to rioting and looting in the City in which one person was killed and many injured.

The trade union movement, which had played a leading part in the disturbances in 1962, had, in the meantime, been geared for its role in the overthrow of the Government. The Opposition parties had succeeded in infiltrating the leadership of many of the unions, and the leaders in the British Guiana Trades Union Council were all either members of the Opposition parties or associated with them.

The members of the largest single trade union the MPCA (the sugar workers union) which controlled a third of all votes in the TUC were sympathetic to the government but were unable to express their will because the voting system used by the union had been manipulated to ensure that the leadership of the union consisted of elements hostile to government. Other trade union elements who expressed support for government were either penalised or removed from office.

American trade unionists and emissaries from certain extreme right-wing McCarthyite organisations, including the well-known Christian Anti- Communist Crusade, who had begun visiting British Guiana in 1961 came in increasing numbers, and stirred up and organised opposition to the Government. These American groups were active both in the political parties of the opposition and in the trade unions. The Christian Anti- Communist Crusade admitted that it had spent over \$76,000 during the 1961 general elections in its efforts to defeat the People's Progressive Party.

The American trade union movement also organised a training scheme for local trade unionists in the United States. The trainees were carefully placed at an organisation known as the Institute for Free Labour Development in Washington DC. On their return to British Guiana, the unionists were placed in key positions in the trade union movement so that they could use the training they had received in the United States to harass the Government by "go-slow" strikes, sabotage and other subversive activities. Mr. Victor Reisel, the journalist, and Mr. Serafino Romauldi, the Director of the Institute of Free Labour



Development, have both admitted the purposes for which these Guianese unionists were chosen and trained. Meanwhile the United States trade union movement had continued to pour money on a massive scale into the pockets of the local trade union leaders, and also into the coffers of the local movement, so that the policy of subversion could be carried out and sustained.

When the Labour Relations Bill was introduced, the various subversive elements felt it was a good opportunity to overthrow the Government. The American trade union movement and the Opposition politicians and their allies who held key positions in the local trade union movement used the Bill as a pretext to publicly join forces. A strike was thus called, involving not only workers in commerce and industry, but also teachers, Government employees and civil servants.

The American unions then used their influential and dominant position with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to induce this body to come out openly against the British Guiana Government. The efforts of the American groups were successful, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions soon instructed its affiliates in other countries to carry out an economic blockade against British Guiana in the hope of forcing the Government out of office. All supplies were cut off by this blockade. Food, medicines, fuel and other essential items fell into short supply. The blockade threatened the country with famine and chaos. A complete breakdown in law and order was envisaged, since without fuel, for instance, the Police would have become immobile. The Government anxiously sought supplies from all the traditional sources, but these were withheld on one pretext or another. Finally, the Government managed to purchase a supply of food and fuel from Cuba, which British Guiana had for some time been supplying with rice. The arrival of these supplies of food and fuel saved the country from the complete disaster which the perpetrators of the blockade had expected.

#### (b) *The Insurrectionary Movement*

Even as the strike started, investigations disclosed the existence of an insurrectionary movement, which was carrying out military training and had concerted plans for the forcible overthrow of the Government. A police raid on Congress Place, the headquarters of the People's National Congress, brought to light a great deal of arms and ammunition and a number of documents, which confirmed the reports that had been received. One of these documents reads:

"There are rules governing X13

The Committee should comprise men governing different sections or a particular type of work. The Chairman could be a person employed by the party and of a very high character, subject to the approval of the Council. I, therefore, recommend Comrade Van Gendren. He would be known or referred to as the "Old Man". He will be responsible directly to the leader Comrade L.F.S. Burnham, for projects, plans, etc., of this organisation; he would be adviser, organiser, and co-ordinator.

Comrade I. Thomas would be responsible for all the military training and military advice, posting of men for different duties and all orders should come through him from the committee, to the men. All leaders and sub-leaders of the military side should deal

directly with COMRADE I. Thomas, he will be responsible to the committee for all action taken. He should not arrive to a decision unless first discussing same with the committee.

No one should have the right to communicate directly or indirectly to a member or members any orders. All orders must come through the person responsible for that section.

Comrade Wilson would be responsible for radio communication and all records, he will also be responsible to the committee and no one should have the right to interfere with this field of work, unless first going through Comrade Wilson, who would be responsible to the committee.

Comrade Smith will be responsible for Medical Supplies and advice; he will also be responsible for all actions taken.

Comrade Leacock will be a spear to the Committee and he will be known as Area Commander, he will be responsible to Comrade I. Thomas for all military actions taken in that area. These six gentlemen would form the committee which would dictate the policy of this organisation, and no action should be taken unless the matter was discussed by the committee comprised of the said".

Other material relating to the insurrectionary plot was also found at the homes of other People's National Congress activists. Thus at the home of "Comrade I. Thomas" named in the "X13" plan, were found manuals on training and firearms and a book on guerrilla warfare.

There is evidence that training in the use of arms and in "commando tactics" and in the making of explosives had already proceeded a good way.

The various systematic bomb attacks against private homes and government buildings, the skilful laying of dynamite and other explosives for purposes of sabotage, and the manner in which the bands who roamed the streets and the villages attacked their numerous victims, clearly pointed to an organisation of long standing. Indeed, the marauding bands acted with a speed precision and offensive technique which could only have been derived from such training.

The discovery of the existence of the insurrectionary plot and the public horror it evoked, caused a temporary halt in the movement. Plans had however already been laid; and the widespread violence which broke out on the evening of 30th May 1963, and continued for over five weeks through June into July, was the direct result of the abortive insurrection. Hundreds of people were beaten, many maimed and some killed. Much property was also destroyed by bombing and arson.

*(c) Suborning of the Police and incitement of the populace by Political leaders and the Press.*

As part of the plot against the Government, the Opposition sought to win the support of the Police Force by appealing to the racial feelings of the predominantly African force in various ways. One of the main techniques was to claim that Indians were given preferment in promotions in the Force, and this aspect of racial propaganda was even carried into the Legislature by certain Members, including Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, the Leader of the main Opposition party. No attempt was made to prove the accusations, which were distortions or outright lies. In addition, pressure of one kind or another was used on individual policemen, and officers who tried to remain loyal were subjected to attacks at every opportunity both in the courts and on the political platform.

Both leaders of the Opposition parties, Mr. Burnham and Mr. D'Aguiar tried to whip their followers and sympathisers into the frenzy necessary for them to break out into violence. Demonstrations were regularly organised in Georgetown; the Public Building where the Legislature meets was frequently picketed when the Legislature was in session, and insults and abuse were publicly hurled at the Government Legislators by picketers and other organised mobs.

In his public speeches, Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, in particular, used mysterious-sounding and ominous language, calculated to foment hatred and violence, without apparently committing himself. He spoke continually of the "power" of his followers which "no hell or high water" could stop. He always summoned them to pursue mysterious "plans". To incite his followers to violence, he spoke continually of threats on his life. On 17th March, 1963, speaking to a large gathering of his followers at the Parade Ground, Georgetown, he said:

"You have stopped the nonsense which was being perpetrated this morning. In fact, comrades, you do not realise your power, but I do not want you to use your power recklessly. We must be able to use our power with control and discretion. For instance, some of you who were at the demonstration this afternoon witnessed what happened when we came to the corner of Lamaha and High Streets. When the Police Officer, Mr. McGill Smith, who fills an office which should have been filled by one of our Guianese Officers, he became frightened when he thought that we were going straight. Comrades, if we wanted to go straight, we could have gone straight, no hell or high water could have stopped us."

(The reference was to the attempt of the demonstrators to deviate from the route approved by the Police and march past the Premier's residence.)

"We shall peacefully pursue our plans and those of you comrades who are interested in further pursuing these plans, because you are unemployed anyhow, and therefore you have most of your time at your disposal, you will please report to the Secretary of the Party tomorrow morning at six-thirty at the Party's Office."

Speaking at Bourda Green, Georgetown, on 24th May, 1963, when the strike was a month old, Mr. Burnham said:

"The PNC does not fear authoritarian regime. The PNC says that if you give the PPP an opportunity over the other parties to get a majority of seats with a minority of votes, such a party would attempt to form an authoritarian regime, using the Legislature

as an instrument, and therefore you see there would have to be a shifting of the scene of agitation and opposition from the Legislature to places where they grow rice. And who will benefit from that? The PPP cannot suppress us, beat us, more or less until thy kingdom comes. We can give more than we take. . . .

"They (the PPP) have planned violence and they want to propose to execute violence. Comrades, but I say this, that we shall keep the pressure on them, and if, perchance, they do anything absurd or unfortunate, we must be in a position to apply the remedy

"As I told you earlier my life is worth nothing, I am prepared to give it so that my people in this country so that my fellow Guianese may live in freedom and prosperity after."

Mr. Burnham's reference to the "places where they grow rice" is one charged with strong racial undertones.

In this way, the political leaders incited the populace, created and maintained tensions, and sought to subvert the Police.

Sections of the press, owned or controlled by the Opposition, joined in and supported the politicians in their efforts to suborn the Police and incite the populace against the Government. Every journalistic technique and gimmick was used to whip up racial feeling and to spread hate and fear. The vast picture splash, the huge banner headline, the spread of rumour and false reports, highly biased reporting and insinuations of every sort, were some of the devices used by unscrupulous newspapers.

*(d) The course of violence: attacks on supporters of the Government and on Indians and Civil Servants; dynamiting of public buildings:*

The prolonged incitement of the populace by political and trade union leaders and by sections of the press led eventually to the outbreak of violence. Defenceless Indians going about their business peacefully were attacked in Georgetown and were mercilessly and savagely beaten. The first major outbreak was on 30th May 1963, on the occasion of the funeral of Senator Claude Christian. Disorder broke out among the crowds which had gathered along the funeral route, and the police had to use tear gas to quell unruly mobs, which later roved about the town attacking Indians and damaging their business places. About fifty persons, chiefly Indians, were attacked and beaten. Several of them were severely injured. In a few cases, where members of other races, horrified by what was happening, intervened to help, they were also subjected to violence. A report by the Commissioner of Police of the events of the night of 30th May states in part the following:

"In all 50 civilians were injured, 42 of them being East Indians, 6 Africans and 2 Portuguese. 20 of these detained in hospital, 3 of them being considered as seriously hurt. 3 Policemen were injured, none of them seriously

20 persons were arrested by the Police for varying offences.

3 cars were damaged and 1 shop broken into. There were 20 reports of larceny from the person but most of these involved the injured persons mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Many shops owned by East Indian businessmen were stoned and windows broken."

Later reports indicated that during the night Indians were attacked in their homes, and beaten and robbed.

The events of 30th May were merely the beginning of the attack on the Indian community. In the weeks that followed, any Indian who dared to walk the streets of Georgetown was attacked and savagely beaten, often in full view of the Police. One Indian was beaten to death; others were maimed and incapacitated for life.

The attacks on Indians in Georgetown led inevitably to reprisals in the rural areas and to further violence. The attacks on Indians were accompanied by similar attacks on civil servants of all races who had refused to go on strike. These attacks were designed to prevent them from working and so bring the administration of the country to a standstill.

The Opposition also directed violence against the People's Progressive Party Legislators and Ministers of the Government. Mr. George Robertson, a People's Progressive Party member of the Legislative Assembly was attacked after leaving a meeting of the Assembly on 17th May, 1963. The Hon'ble Gladstone Wilson, Minister of Communications was attacked while leaving his Ministry Senator the Hon'ble CV. Nunes, Minister of Education and Social Development, was attacked and beaten by a crowd on 12th June, 1963, outside the Public Building, after leaving a meeting of the Council of Ministers. Later the same day as the Premier was leaving the Public Building, he was attacked by the riotous crowd, and would have been seriously injured or killed if the Police Officer accompanying him, Assistant Commissioner of Police Mr. Carl Austin and his two bodyguards, had not opened fire on the crowds.

The violence and terrorism assumed uglier and more dangerous proportions when a campaign began to dynamite and blow up government offices and other public buildings.

The main public buildings so attacked are the following:

17th June, 1963 - Transport and Harbours Department Office

20th June, 1963 - Campbellville Government School

23rd June, 1963 - Georgetown Ferry Stelling

23rd June, 1963 - Ministry of Home Affairs

23rd June, 1963 - Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing

24th June, 1963 - Central Housing and Planning Department

25th June, 1963 - Education Department

In some cases the destruction of property was accompanied by injury to persons in the buildings at the time. Attempts were also made to dynamite the Rice Marketing Board wharf and the Licence Revenue Office (24th June) but these were not successful. In the case of the Rice Marketing Board, a large quantity of dynamite was placed under the wharf where 200 workmen were engaged in loading rice on to a ship. Had the lighted fuse not been discovered in time, the wharf would have been blown to bits, large stocks of rice destroyed and the lives of 200 workmen endangered.

The violence and disturbances of 1963 did not succeed in their immediate objective of bringing about the fall of the Government or the suspension of the Constitution. But they did result in the delay of independence and the imposition of a constitutional and electoral formula designed to bring the Opposition in power.

### ***The 1964 disturbances***

The present unrest in the country had its origin in a strike in the sugar industry. The strike is in support of a claim by the Guiana Agricultural Workers' Union for recognition by the Sugar Producers' Association (the employers organisation) as the bargaining agent for the workers in the sugar industry. The strike was called by the GAWU after its request for recognition had been rejected by the Sugar Producers' Association. The Man-power Citizens' Association is now recognized by the SPA. The GAWU, however, claims that the overwhelming majority of the sugar workers now support it because of dissatisfaction with the MPCA.

From the outset the Government was concerned about the dispute and sought through the Department of Labour to help resolve it. Among the proposals put forward was one for a poll in the industry to determine which union had the majority support. But every proposal was rejected by the SPA and the union at present recognised, the MPCA. It should be observed here that the Labour Relations Bill proposed by the Government in 1963, would have enabled a dispute such as the present, to be settled by poll. Unfortunately, as a result of the campaign launched by the TUC and the Opposition (Mr. Burnham and the TUC had supported a similar Bill in 1953 and the TUC in 1963 had declared in favour of the principle of a poll), the Bill had to be withdrawn with the present unhappy consequences.

In the meantime, as the strike went on and brought the sugar industry to a virtual standstill, the SPA resorted to the employment of scabs. The employment of scabs to break the strike inevitably led to disturbances. The majority of workers in the sugar industry are Indians and many, but by no means all, of the people recruited by the SPA to break the strike are Africans. Hence an essentially trade union dispute has gathered around it racial overtones. Attacks on scabs have led to

counter-attacks and reprisals, and the situation has been aggravated by propaganda in sections of the press owned by the minority groups who derive political advantage from the strife between the two major sections of the population.

These disturbances, originating from the strike have culminated in the events of 24th and 25th May at Wismar, a mining village 65 miles up the Demerara river. Wismar is not in the sugar belt and had no connexion with the strike in the sugar industry. On 24th May, Indians who formed a minority of the people at Wismar, were suddenly attacked by large mobs. People had to run for their lives. Some sought safety in the bushes and canals. A large number were beaten, a few of them to death. Women were raped and subjected to other sordid crimes and indignities. More than 190 houses and other buildings were destroyed by fire and about 2000 people uprooted from the place where they had made their homes.

A committee to enquire into the Labour dispute has been appointed but has been unable to begin its work because injunction proceedings have been brought against it. A State of Emergency has been declared and British troops have been called in.

Factors which have come to light during the disturbances of the last three years in British Guiana. The disturbances in British Guiana during the last three years have brought certain facts to light. Some of these are:

*(a) Restriction of authority of British Guiana Government by HM Government:*

The 1961 Constitution was intended to give internal self-government to British Guiana. But by diffusing powers between the Governor and the elected Ministers of the Government, H.M. Government has ensured that the British Guiana Government does not have the power to govern effectively and does not have effective control administratively psychologically and otherwise, of the machinery of the state.

The various Service Commissions - those of the Public, Police and Judicial Services - are not executive. Power is still in the hands of the Governor. All this has conditioned the Services to the feeling that they should look to the Governor to protect them from the "big bad" Government. Policemen guilty of insubordination or discrimination or dereliction of duty in respect of the Government or its supporters are not disciplined. It has also been noted that the majority of persons appointed to the Magistracy and Judiciary are known to be hostile to the Government. In some cases indeed, the Governor has appointed, or approved the appointment of, people who have contested elections as candidates of parties opposed to the governing Party.

As a result, during the disturbances of 1962 and 1963, the civil service went on strike against the Government; the Police discriminated against or were guilty of dereliction of duty in respect of the Government and supporters of the Government (some members of the Police Force even mutinied in February 1962); and the Director of Public Prosecutions did not take action against those who openly flouted the laws of the country.

The attitude of the British Government is best seen in the events of 12th to 16th February, 1962. These events have already been described. Those who were seeking the violent overthrow of the Government openly broke every law against public safety

and public order. Riotous mobs roamed the streets unhindered. When the Minister responsible for the Police Department and for the maintenance of public safety and public order requested that action be taken, the Commissioner of Police insisted that operational control of the Force must rest with him. It was also urged that the Police could not control the crowds. On the question of the use of the army to aid the civil power, the views of the Governor were significant. The army could not be used, the Governor said, to support a Government which was carrying out unpopular policies and decisions. (The "unpopular" policy was the 1962 Budget. All that is necessary to say here is that the Wynn-Parry Commonwealth Commission that investigated the 1962 disturbances came out in defence of the Budget and severely criticized the irresponsible behaviour of the Opposition.) Also of significance are the views expressed by the Governor to the Premier at the time. In discussions on the situation, the Governor repeatedly urged the Premier to resign. However, the Governor finally agreed on 14th February that the army would be brought to Georgetown at 1.00 o'clock on the morning of Friday, 16th February. However the army was not called in until more than 12 hours later, at 2.30 p.m., when there had already been widespread violence, looting and arson and the commercial section of the City was in flames. (The Governor later denied that he had agreed to bring in the troops at 1.00 am. on 16th February. He said that the summoning of the troops was conditional on the police and prison officers going on strike.)

The events of February 1962 had made it abundantly clear that it was necessary for the Government to have impartial security forces. Later in 1962, the Government therefore passed a Defence Bill providing for the establishment of a British Guiana Army. The Bill was passed on 26th October, 1962. On 19th January, 1963, an Official Gazette notice stated that it had been "reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure". The Bill has not yet been enacted and indeed nothing more has been heard of it. Now a Special Service Unit is being recruited by the Commissioner of Police on behalf of the Governor under the direct authority of HM Government. The Order-in-Council establishing this unit provides among other things that "The Special Service Unit shall be constituted in such manner as may be prescribed by the Governor. In addition the Governor has wide power to make regulations regarding the composition of the force, its training, functions, duties, powers, etc. These facts speak for themselves and are in sharp contrast to the attitude of H.M. Government on the need for security forces elsewhere. Thus the Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home in a television broadcast on 20th February, 1964, dealing with the Army revolt in the African territories stated:

"I was afraid - and this has been proved of course, beyond all doubt now - that these African countries would get their independence before they had two essential things that are necessary if you are to run a country. One is a police force loyal to the Government, and another is armed forces loyal to the elected Government of the day. They had not really had time to train either the police or the army or indeed, to train their administration".

*(b) Imbalance of the Security Forces:*

The conduct of the Security Forces during the disturbances of the last two years, particularly between 15th June, 1963 and 31st May 1964 when Mrs. Janet Jagan was Minister of Home Affairs is set out in a statement made by Mrs. Jagan to the Senate on 1st June, 1964, when she resigned as Minister of Home Affairs (See Appendix 2). A note on the racial composition of the Public Service, Police Force, etc. is also appended in this connexion and for general information. (See Appendix 3.)



A study of these documents will reveal what the disturbances have made clear, that is, that impartial security forces can only be achieved if they were reconstituted so as to represent at all levels a broad cross section of the community

*(c) United States Intervention in British Guiana Affairs:*

United States interference in the affairs of British Guiana go back to the time of the 1961 general election. During the election campaign, the United States Information Services held film shows at street corners. The USIS had never before arranged for such shows in public. These film shows highlighted anti-Castro and anti-communist propaganda. This line of propaganda coincided with the smear campaign then being conducted against the Government by the Opposition.

United States citizens, Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Sluis of the Christian Anti-Communist crusade openly interfered in the domestic affairs of the country during the 1961 election campaign when they supported the Defenders of Freedom, a political front organisation, and the United Force. Dr. Sluis visited British Guiana six times between 21st February 1961 and 26th April 1962, including a two-month visit just prior to and during the 1961 general elections. As has been stated before, they later admitted spending the sum of about \$76,000 BWI during the campaign. (It is to be noted, incidentally, that the Representation of the People Ordinance, 1957 limits the expenses which may be incurred by a candidate to \$1,500 and there were only 35 seats.)

While very little assistance was given to the Government, the impression was created in the country by Mr. Peter D'Aguiar leader of the United Force that he would be able to secure substantial financial assistance from the US Government. During the election campaign the United Force cited a figure of one billion dollars, half a billion dollars as loans to the Government for "infrastructure" development and half a billion for industrial development by private US investors. These statements were not denied by the United States Consul General in British Guiana or any other US official.

Similarly, press reports had stated that Dr. Claude Dembow, President of the League of Coloured Peoples and who is closely associated with the People's National Congress had contacted, during a visit to the United States of America immediately prior to the 1961 general election, a group of prominent Guianese professional men now resident in New York, some of whom had interviews with State Department officials, at which it was reported offers of assistance were made to help the Opposition to "liberate" British Guiana from the present Government.

The intervention of the United States in the disturbances of 1963 and after is recorded by Mr. Drew Pearson, the well-known US columnist. In an article headed "Castro and Jagan", published on 22nd March 1964, Mr. Pearson wrote:

"The US permitted Cuba to go Communist purely through default and diplomatic bungling. The problem now is to look ahead and make sure we don't make the same mistake again. We are already on the way to making it in Haiti. But in British Guiana, President Kennedy, having been burnt in the Bay of Pigs operation, did look ahead.

Though it was never published at the time, this was the secret reason why Kennedy took his trip to England in the summer of 1963. He had promised Premier Fanfani and Chancellor Adenauer to go to Rome and Bonn, but London was added to the itinerary only because of Kennedy's haunting worry that British Guiana would get its independence from England in July, 1963, and set up another Communist government under the guidance of Fidel Castro. If this happened just before the Presidential Elections of 1964 and if at that time a Communist Guiana began seizing the Reynolds Metals aluminium operation and other American properties, Kennedy knew the political effect would be disastrous.

It wasn't in the communique issued by the U.S. and England after the Kennedy-Macmillan meeting, but the main thing they agreed on was that the British would refuse to grant independence to Guiana because of the general strike against pro-communist Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan.

The strike was secretly inspired by a combination of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency money and British Intelligence. It gave London the excuse it wanted. British Guiana has not yet received its independence and another Communist government at the bottom of the one-time American lake has been temporarily stopped."

That the United States had exerted pressure on HM Government was of course known before the publication of Mr. Pearson's article. A leading State Department Official, Mr. William Tyler, giving evidence before a US Appropriation Sub-Committee stated that the American Government was out of sympathy with the British Guiana Government and would like to see it out of office. Moreover, during the President's visit to the United Kingdom his Press Secretary, Mr. Pierre Salinger, stated this quite openly on BBC television. The British press, notably the *Times* and the *Guardian* also indicated that British Guiana was one of the issues discussed by the two leaders. And at the end of the 1963 Constitutional Conference, a section of the British press pointed out that H.M. Government had given way to American pressure.

The British Guiana Government was fully aware of the activities of the US personnel in engineering and supporting the disturbances of 1963. It was known that large sums of money were being sent into British Guiana every week to finance the attempt to overthrow the Government. At that time, another U.S. journalist wrote a very revealing article. This was Victor Reisel. He told of U.S. financial support given to the trade unions. He mentioned the rush training given in the United States to key figures in the British Guiana trade union movement and of specific tasks given to each of these trainees in their work of subversion.

The role of the US in British Guiana is summed up by Mr. Iain McLeod, former Secretary of State for the Colonies, who during the recent debate on British Guiana in the House of Commons, said:

"There is an irony we all recognise in the fact of America urging us all over the world towards colonial freedom except where it approaches their own doorstep.

I believe their fears are exaggerated. I do not think Dr. Jagan is a Communist.

The American attitude seems dangerous because in my experience if you put off independence because you fear you may get a left wing government, the most likely thing to happen is that you will get a government even further to the left."

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## **Appendix II**

### **STATEMENT IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE JANET JAGAN, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS - (1 June 1964)**

*[See File No. 62]*

## **Appendix III**

### **APPOINTMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND POLICE FORCE IN BRITISH GUIANA.**

*[See File No. 53]*

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### **66. LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, SIR RICHARD LUYT, TO PREMIER DR. CHEDDI JAGAN** (11 December 1964)

11th December 1964

My dear Premier

I have received the following personal message for you from the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

"The Governor has told me that in the course of discussions about the election result\* you have expressed serious doubts about whether you and your Government should resign forthwith. I do not think that you can seriously maintain that you could get a majority in the new Assembly and I want desperately - as I am sure you do - to see stability in British Guiana. Apart from anything else I am afraid that continued uncertainty may lead to further bloodshed and unhappiness. I do ask you most earnestly to take this into account and to enable the new Government to be formed. We have no wish to resort to Constitutional amendment. But we should have no alternative if you obstructed the formation of a new Government. This is very urgent. That is why I am making this personal approach.

ANTHONY GREENWOOD"

Yours sincerely  
Sir Richard Luyt  
Governor

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**67. LETTER FROM PREMIER DR. CHEDDI JAGAN TO ANTHONY GREENWOOD, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES\***

(12 December 1964)

12th December 1964

My dear Secretary of State:

Thank you for your personal message delivered by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Richard Luyt. I share your concern about the situation here and your hope for stability. Unfortunately, a series of events - betrayal by the British Government of solemn pledges given at the 1960 Constitutional Conference, lack of adequate and firm support on the part of the police and security forces for my constitutionally elected Government, condonement of and connivance with a secret Opposition Terrorist Organization, the imposition of the rigged system of proportional representation, and election irregularities - have all helped to cause instability and a loss of confidence in successive British Governments.

In spite of fiddled constitutional arrangements and gross electoral irregularities - changed system of registration of voters, extensive use of proxies, etc. - a majority of the population see the election results as a vote of confidence in my Government. My Party polled 46% of the vote, increasing its share by 3%, whereas the People's National Congress dropped by 0.4% and the United Force by nearly 4%. And the results show that had the election been fought under the traditional system of first-past-the-post, my Party would have won the same 20 out of 35 seats which it won in 1961.

You have sought my cooperation by requesting my resignation. You must know that I have cooperated at all stages and have endeavoured to do all in my power to bring about unity, peace and progress in my country. My refusal to resign is not to be regarded in any way as obstruction. It is merely a continuation of our protest - you must know that we have contested the general election under protest.

You say you have no wish to resort to constitutional amendment, but that you would have no alternative if I obstructed the formation of a new government. I regret to say that alternatives were open to you and are still open to your Government.

Although you inherited a triumphant wrong in the imposition of proportional representation, which your Party in Opposition severely criticised and your Prime Minister as Leader of the Opposition deemed a "fiddled constitutional arrangement," your Government failed to take steps to postpone the election and to act on the suggestion made by your Prime Minister as Leader of the Opposition in July, 1964, that a Commonwealth team should come to British Guiana to re-examine our situation. In spite of these criticisms you now seek to implement the results of the fraud in British Guiana. Surely, you cannot be unaware that the main beneficiary of the proportional representation system is the ultra-reactionary United Force. The system of proportional representation has allowed this small party representing a very small section of the community to become a wedge between major groupings of the country. Clearly, this is undesirable in Guiana, which has experienced three successive years of communal strife and which needs a large measure of cooperation between the major sections supporting the PPP and the PNC.

I suggest that an alternative is still open to you at this late stage. I propose that you take the initiative of working out a constitutional formula which would provide representation in the Government of the major section of the people now excluded by the freak result produced by the form of proportional representation introduced by your predecessor. This is not impossible.

You must have noted that the imposed system of proportional representation has not achieved what its local advocates and the British Tory Government had proclaimed would have been achieved, namely, that proportional representation would force the major parties to work together. Should you resort to constitutional amendment, this would result in grave dissatisfaction among more than half of the people of British Guiana. Already there is evidence of a rising tide of demand for partition of this country. Unless your Government intervenes to work out an amicable solution, I fear that this demand will grow and create even further problems. There is still time.

I again urge and appeal to you to intercede to bring about a solution mutually satisfactory to all concerned. History will no doubt blame the Tories for the fraud committed in British Guiana. If you and your Government acquiesce in this fraud, you will have to share equal responsibility

Sincerely yours,

Cheddi Jagan  
Premier