

Guyana

370. Editorial Note

During the Johnson administration, the U.S. Government continued the Kennedy administration's policy of working with the British Government to offer encouragement and support to the pro-West leaders and political organizations of British Guiana as that limited self-governing colony moved toward total independence. The Special Group/303 Committee approved approximately \$2.08 million for covert action programs between 1962 and 1968 in that country.

U.S. policy included covert opposition to Cheddi Jagan, the then pro-Marxist leader of British Guiana's East Indian population. A portion of the funds authorized by the Special Group/303 Committee for covert action programs was used between November 1962 and June 1963 to improve the election prospects of the opposition political parties to the government of Jagan's People's Progressive Party. The U.S. Government successfully urged the British to impose a system of proportional representation in British Guiana (which favored the anti-Jagan forces) and to delay independence until the anti-Jagan forces could be strengthened. Through the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States provided Forbes Burnham's and Peter D'Aguiar's political parties, which were in opposition to Jagan, with both money and campaign expertise as they prepared to contest the December 1964 parliamentary elections. The U.S. Government's covert funding and technical expertise were designed to play a decisive role in the registration of voters likely to vote against Jagan. Burnham's and D'Aguiar's supporters were registered in large numbers, helping to elect an anti-Jagan coalition.

Special Group/303 Committee-approved funds again were used between July 1963 and April 1964 in connection with the 1964 general strike in British Guiana. When Jagan's and Burnham's supporters clashed in labor strife in the sugar plantations that year, the United States joined with the British Government in urging Burnham not to retaliate with violence, but rather to commit to a mediated end to the conflict. At the same time, the United States provided training to certain of the anti-Jagan forces to enable them to defend themselves if attacked and to boost their morale.

Following the general strike, 303 Committee-approved funds were used to support the election of a coalition of Burnham's People's National Congress and D'Aguiar's United Force. After Burnham was elected Premier in December 1964, the U.S. Government, again through the CIA, continued to provide substantial funds to both Burnham and D'Aguiar and their parties. In 1967 and 1968, 303 Committee-approved funds were used to help the Burnham and D'Aguiar coalition contest and win the December 1968 general elections. When the U.S. Government learned that Burnham was going to use fraudulent absentee ballots to continue in power in the 1968 elections, it advised him against such a course of action, but did not try to stop him.

371. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson /1/

Washington, February 6, 1964.

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Chronological File 1964. Top Secret. Drafted by Burdett on February 5 and forwarded to McGeorge Bundy](#)

under cover of a February 7 memorandum in which Burnett assumed Bundy would "wish to talk to the President personally" about it.

SUBJECT

Visit of British Prime Minister Home; British Guiana

I recommend you make the following points to Sir Alec Home regarding British Guiana:

1. You are as concerned as President Kennedy over British Guiana.
2. Emergence of another Communist state in this hemisphere cannot be accepted; there is grave risk of Jagan's establishing a Castrotype regime should he attain independence.
3. Prime Minister Macmillan and President Kennedy agreed that British Guiana should not become independent under Jagan^{/2/} and that a change of government must be sought.

^{/2/} Documentation on the Kennedy administration's policies toward British Guiana is in Foreign Relations, 1961-1963, volume XII.

4. Jagan must be defeated in the next election.
5. Suspension of the constitution and imposition of direct rule would help defeat Jagan.
6. Direct British control over internal security, strengthening the police, and a broad interpretation of the powers reserved to the UK in foreign affairs to prevent entry of personnel and funds from Cuba would help overcome the atmosphere of intimidation Jagan is trying to create.

Sir Alec will probably

- (1) confirm the Macmillan/Kennedy understanding;
- (2) endorse the importance of assuring Jagan's defeat;
- (3) question the feasibility of a resumption of direct UK rule unless the grounds can be publicly shown to be fully justified.

Dean Rusk^{/3/}

^{/3/} Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

Attachment

Paper Prepared by the Department of State

BRITISH GUIANA

Background

In a letter of July 18, 1963, to President Kennedy from Prime Minister Macmillan /4/ the British advised us of their decision ". . . to impose a system of proportional representation without a referendum and then to hold elections under a new system". This letter also informed us of a British expectation to "renew direct rule for a period of six months to a year while a new constitution is introduced and new elections held under it". The latter assertion was made on a British assumption that Jagan would resign when informed of the new electoral system at a Constitutional Conference held October 22–31. He did not do so, but has repeatedly stated that he does not feel bound to accept the British decisions.

[/4/ A copy is in the National Archives, RG 59, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204, UK/Macmillan.](#)

Jagan seems uncertain and a little desperate but he is unlikely to resign voluntarily. No occasion has yet arisen to show whether he will obstruct the carrying out of the decisions but probably he will try to hang on, temporizing and avoiding flagrantly illegal acts. His regime has been organizing a protest march on Georgetown as well as secretly promoting a rash of arson in the countryside. The regime is likely to try to foster an atmosphere of intimidation and potential terror in an effort to attract international attention and more particularly to discourage opponents of the regime.

While the UK agrees as to the importance of getting rid of Jagan, it is reluctant to impose direct rule unless Jagan's actions so clearly call for such a course as to pose no presentational problems for the UK. In addition, the UK tends to put somewhat less weight than we do on the advantages of such a step. The UK believes that Jagan would pose as a martyr and could be more dangerous in opposition than as Premier.

In view of the above circumstances, we think it desirable that the UK increase security and interpret its reserved powers in the foreign affairs field broadly in order to frustrate communist aid to the Jagan regime.

372. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, February 12, 1964, 4:30 p.m.

[/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 14 BR GU. Top Secret. Drafted by Armstrong and approved in the White House on February 24 and in S on February 27. The memorandum is part V of VI. The meeting was held at the White House. Prime Minister Douglas-Home made an official visit to Washington February 12–13.](#)

SUBJECT
British Guiana

PARTICIPANTS
British Side
Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
R. A. Butler, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Sir Harold Caccia, Permanent Under Secretary, The Foreign Office

Sir David Ormsby Gore, British Ambassador
Sir Timothy Bligh, Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
Sir Burke Trend, Secretary to the Cabinet

U.S. Side

The President

The Secretary of State

Governor Harriman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

David K. E. Bruce, Ambassador to Great Britain

McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President on National Security Affairs

William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary, EUR

Richard I. Philips, Director, P/ON

Willis C. Armstrong, Director, BNA

[2 lines of source text not declassified] that they were now engaged in registering parties, and he gathered that there had been some problem in the development of splinter parties. Mr. Bundy remarked that people were engaged in party cultivation, but that it was stony ground. The Secretary noted that the East Indians who don't like Jagan are reluctant to come forward. It was understood that party activity was being closely observed. The Secretary went on to say that it was very important not to let Jagan take over in a situation of independence. [11/2 lines of source text not declassified] The Prime Minister said that at some point there would have to be an election, and he thought December might be a good time. /2/

/2/ In a February 27 memorandum for the record, Burdett noted that Bundy stated that the President and Prime Minister had discussed British Guiana privately during the latter's visit and that they had reaffirmed the agreements existing between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan, and in particular the understandings reached at Birch Grove the previous summer. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana White House Meetings) Kennedy and Macmillan met at Birch Grove, England, on June 30, 1963, where the British proposed, and Kennedy agreed, that independence should be delayed, that a proportional representation electoral system be established, and that the alliance between the leading politicians opposed to Jagan be supported; see Foreign Relations, 1961-1963, vol. XII, Document 295.

373. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, February 19, 1964, 10 a.m.

1 Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL BR GU. Confidential. Drafted by Thomas M. Judd, Officer-in-Charge of UK Affairs. The meeting was held in Tyler's office. The memorandum is part 2 of 2; part 1 was not found.

SUBJECT

British Guiana

PARTICIPANTS

US

William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

William G. Burdett, Deputy Assistant Secretary, EUR

Willis C. Armstrong, Director, BNA

Thomas N. Judd, BNA

UK

Patrick Gordon Walker, Labor "Shadow" Foreign Minister

Mr. Tyler asked Mr. Gordon Walker what he thought about British Guiana. Gordon Walker replied that he knew Mr. Tyler was thinking of an article which appeared in The Reporter on February 13 which purported to represent Gordon Walker's views. Since the article had come out, he had been giving considerable thought as to what he had really said to the man who had written the article. To the best of his recollection, he had made the following points which, he emphasized, were his own views which had not been fully checked out with the Labor Party:

1. It makes the Labor Party uncomfortable not to grant independence to any country when the situation is ripe.
2. He recognized the primacy of U.S. interests in British Guiana.
3. Labor believed there would be social revolutions in Latin America. Some of these would be ugly ones which would not fit in with the pattern of the Alliance for Progress. Some Nasser-type governments would undoubtedly emerge.
4. Labor would like to find a way to give independence to British Guiana without affronting or injuring the U.S. Britain of course cannot afford to appear as an agent of the U.S. The way in which the Douglas-Home government was trying to do this was completely unacceptable to the people of British Guiana because it makes the entire country into one constituency. Some other form of proportional representation /2/ might well be considered by Labor.

/2/ At a Constitutional Conference in London in October 1963, the major British Guiana party leaders asked British Colonial Secretary Sandys to devise a constitution, "since they were unable to agree among themselves." Sandys then decreed a new registration and general election under proportional representation for a single house legislature. "Jagan was furious at being outsmarted." (Memorandum from Cobb to Rusk, September 15, 1965, Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana White House Meetings)

There was a discussion of the menace represented by Jagan. Mr. Tyler said we were seriously concerned with the way Jagan conducted himself. We could not live with a Castro-type government on the South American continent. Mr. Gordon Walker thought the U.S. exaggerated the menace of Jagan. There was a limit to what he could do, in view of the racial division in British Guiana; for example, he could hardly have complete control in a situation where the capital of the country was against him.

Mr. Tyler added that we were worried about the Castro aspects— that British Guiana would be used as a base for subversion on the continent. Mr. Gordon Walker replied that a bit of this sort of thing was bound to develop in Latin America. However, if a way could be found for the U.S. to put its troops into British Guiana, the Labor Party would not object. Britain did not want to keep its troops there indefinitely. Britain had no real reason of its own to stay. Furthermore, its troops were spread too thin. One battalion now in British Guiana was not enough.

374. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence

Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, March 18, 1964.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only. A marginal note in Bundy's handwriting reads "OK."](#)

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. Reference is made to my memorandum of 7 March 1964 concerning the efforts of the Jagan-controlled Guiana Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) to gain control of the sugar workers in British Guiana.[/2/](#) During the past week the strike has continued and the situation is still serious. The intimidation by GAWU has forced still more workers to remain away from their jobs, and Ministers of Jagan's government, including Jagan himself, have given their full and open support to the strike. Thus far the management group has remained firm in not recognizing the GAWU, but events may force the companies at least to allow a poll of the sugar workers to determine which union they wish to represent them. This in itself would be a defeat for the anti-Jagan Manpower Citizens' Association (MPCA), which presently represents the sugar workers, and further withdrawals from the MPCA could result in its complete loss of control of the sugar workers.

[/2/ In this memorandum to Bundy, Helms reported on GAWU-inspired violence and killings. \(Ibid.\)](#)

2. The police force has been vigorous in its efforts to control the intimidations and demonstrations, but the force is not large enough to handle the situation completely. British troops have not yet been used.

[2 paragraphs (221/2 lines of source text) not declassified]

5. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to Mr. Burdett. RH

375. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, May 1, 1964.

[1 Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only.](#)

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. An essential element to winning the next general elections in British Guiana [/2/](#) and forming a successful coalition government after the defeat of Premier Cheddi Jagan is the behind-the-scenes co-operation of Linden Forbes Burnham, leader of the People's National Congress (PNC), and Peter S. D'Aguiar, leader of the United Force (UF). Although the two opposition leaders worked closely together at the London Constitutional Conference in

October 1963 and agreed to continue joint discussions when they returned to Georgetown, these discussions have not taken place and there has been no co-operation.

/2/ In a February 19 memorandum to Bundy, Helms reported that [text not declassified] had informed the CIA that the new general elections in British Guiana would be held during the last 3 months of 1964 and that [text not declassified] had agreed that [text not declassified] could inform the leaders of the two main opposition parties [text not declassified] of this timing. (Ibid.)

2. In April 1964 [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] sent a political adviser for each party to British Guiana to assist with preparations for voter registration and secondly to work out a [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] understanding between Burnham and D'Aguiar for co-operation during the election campaign and for the future coalition government. These advisers have arranged for two meetings between Burnham and D'Aguiar, one on 24 April and the second on 28 April. Thus far Burnham and D'Aguiar have agreed to the following:

- a. to share poll watchers in certain areas and to share the costs of challenges in these areas;
- b. to co-operate in a joint publicity campaign before and during the registration period;
- c. to refrain from attacking the other party during the election campaign outside of "honest politicking";
- d. to review their progress at mid-point in the registration period and consult on any corrections that might need to be made;
- e. to decide if specific areas of responsibility are desirable, based on the results of the registration.

3. The two leaders have also discussed cabinet posts for a future coalition government, but have not yet reached agreement on this matter. The advisers report that the meetings have been harmonious.

4. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to Mr. William C. Burdett of the Department of State.

RH

376. Research Memorandum From the Deputy Director of Intelligence and Research (Denney) to Acting Secretary of State Ball/1/

REU-33

Washington, May 12, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. 1, Memos, 12/63-7/64. Secret; No Foreign Dissem; Limited Distribution; Controlled Dissem.

SUBJECT

Outlook for More Violence in British Guiana

Abstract

In an effort to prevent the holding of a UK-imposed proportional representation election, expected to be held late this year, the Jagan regime has been resorting to intimidation and violence. What began some 12 weeks ago as a strike by the pro-Jagan sugar workers' union has developed into a campaign of beatings, bombings, and arson in which 19 persons have been killed and more than a million dollars' worth of property and sugar cane have been burned. This violence has exacerbated the racial tensions between the majority East Indians and the minority Negroes to such an extent that some officials fear that the situation may get out of hand.

Contributing to this concern has been the agitation of activists in the Jagan regime, who have attacked not only members of the competing sugar workers' union but also the opposition parties, which are composed mainly of Negroes and other non-Indians. Local police have uncovered arms buried by members of Jagan's youth organization. [3 lines of source text not declassified]

As the proportional representation election which threatens to oust him from office draws nearer—registration began on May 8—Jagan's despair is deepening. In the hope that the election may be postponed, he has invited Prime Minister Williams of Trinidad to try to mediate the differences between him and the leaders of the opposition parties. It seems unlikely, however, that the opposition parties, hopeful of victory in a proportional representation election, will agree to Williams' proposals. As the Jagan regime grows more desperate, its extremist elements may well be tempted to undertake more ambitious acts of terrorism. Such acts could provoke the threatened Negro minority into large-scale retaliation.

[Omitted here is the remainder of the memorandum.]

377. Telegram From the Department of State [text not declassified] to the Consulate General in British Guiana /1/

Washington, May 13, 1964.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Messages between Consul General/Ambassador Carlson and Ranking Department Officials [file name not declassified] re: Situation in British Guiana, Vol. 1, March–September, 1964. Secret.

Following is a [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] State [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] cable for Carlson [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]:

1. We concur with guidance to Burnham not to resort to counterviolence and that he can be assured that if PPP makes effort take over country by force the U.S. Govt will not stand by and see opposition crushed by terror, and Carlson's comments on arms to Burnham (Congentel 377). /2/

/2/ Telegram 377 from Georgetown, May 6. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23-8 BR GU)

2. We are now exploring possibility of giving counterterrorist training to selected members of opposition. /3/ While this will not have any immediate positive effect on containing violence, it may give boost to opposition. We will inform you when final decisions and plans are made. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]

/3/ In an April 30 memorandum to Bundy, Helms wrote that if the situation deteriorated "to the extent that it is decided to furnish the trainees with the necessary material, this would be furnished them [*text not declassified*] British Guiana." A marginal note in Bundy's handwriting reads "Approved by phone. May 7." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File)

3. Meanwhile we suggest you discuss [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] steps which could be taken to control violence. /4/ It our view that frequent use of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] mechanism should be made not only to work out locally solutions to problems but also to give true picture to Governor so he will in turn influence ColOff. Request cable summary of all [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] meetings [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

/4/ In a March 23 memorandum to Bundy, Helms reported that "the Colonial Office has taken note of the request by the Department of State that the British Guiana elections not be held prior to the U.S. Presidential elections on 3 November 1964." (Ibid.)

4. Please note Deptel 285 /5/ re our approach to British here.

/5/ Telegram 285 to Georgetown, May 9. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23 BR GU)

378. Memorandum From the Deputy Director of Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, May 22, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. On 21 May 1964 the Consul General in Georgetown [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] reported that [*3 lines of source text not declassified*] it was now evident that the security situation had reached the point where it would be essential for a state of emergency to be declared./2/ The Governor has urged both Cheddi and Janet Jagan to end the strike on the sugar estates and to give him the necessary advice of the Council of Ministers to declare a state of emergency, as reported in my memorandum of 21 May./3/ The Governor has reported that Premier Jagan would be prepared to give him the advice of his Ministers on either 22 or 23 May; he said the legal documents were ready for the

emergency order, but there were still a few decisions yet to be made. However, the Jagan emergency order may not contain sufficient powers to control the situation, such as the right to search and detain without a warrant.

/2/ [text not declassified] State [text not declassified] telegram from Georgetown, unnumbered, May 21. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana 1964 [file name not declassified] Progress Report [file name not declassified] State Memos)

/3/ Memorandum from Helms to Bundy, May 21. (Ibid.)

2. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] wished that influence could be brought to bear on Richard Ishmael, president of the Manpower Citizens' Association (MPCA), which is the anti-Jagan sugar workers' union, to co-operate with the pro-Jagan arbitration committee which has been set up to mediate the dispute. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] representatives pointed out to [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] that this would be giving in to Jagan and that Ishmael probably would not follow [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] advice in this matter. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] agreed with this, but said that he would not like [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] to urge defiance from Ishmael.

3. In view of the above, a [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] State [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] cable has been sent to the Consul General [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] in Georgetown, /4/ giving [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] the following guidance:

/4/ No other copy of this cable has been found.

"a. Our principal objective is to defeat the PPP in the forthcoming elections and to bring into power a coalition government of the People's National Congress, the United Force, and alternative East Indian party(ies), headed by Linden Forbes Burnham. While retaining tactical flexibility, all our moves must be directed at attainment of this objective.

"b. We believe that in terms of accomplishing our objective things at this time are going well despite the current wave of violence. Registration of voters to date and the increasing nervousness of the PPP support this assessment.

"c. Therefore, we should make every effort to adhere to the present schedule, i.e., elections under proportional representation in early November, and to avoid being deflected from our present course. The PPP is clearly making every effort to upset this schedule.

"d. We believe that resumption of direct British rule at this stage would impede the attainment of our objective. Resumption could delay elections, make it easier for the British Labour Party, if it comes to power, to tamper with Sandys' decision, and give the PPP additional campaign issues.

"e. We share the view of the Governor that the declaration of a state of emergency probably will be required to cope with the security situation. The British may have to buttress the declaration by dispatching additional troops to British Guiana. We see advantages in the declaration resulting from 'advice' of the Ministers. If 'advice' from the Ministers is not forthcoming, /5/ declaration by a special Order in Council may well be necessary.

/5/ In telegram 298 to Georgetown, May 22, the Department reported that the British Embassy in Washington had informed it that, under pressure from the Governor and the Commissioner of Police, Jagan had notified the Governor that he would "advise" the Governor to declare a state of emergency on May 22 or 23. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23-8 BR GU)

"f. Tactically we would prefer to allow HMG on its own initiative, without urgings by the U.S., to arrive at the conclusion that a declaration of emergency and probably the dispatch of additional troops are required.

"g. We agree with your reasons that it would be disadvantageous for the MPCA to consent to co-operate with the committee to investigate the sugar dispute, which is obviously stacked in favor of the PPP. We also agree that Ishmael is not likely to co-operate. In discussions locally you should continue to take the position that Ishmael should be allowed to make his own decision.

"h. [1 line of source text not declassified]"

4. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to Mr. William C. Burdett of the Department of State. Ambassador Bruce in London has been informed of the above.

RH

379. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Georgetown, May 25, 1964.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 19 BR GU. No classification marking. Drafted by Cobb. The meeting was held in Jagan's office.

SUBJECT

Call on Premier Cheddi Jagan

PARTICIPANTS

Premier Cheddi Jagan of British Guiana
Delmar R. Carlson, American Consul General, British Guiana
William B. Cobb, Jr., British Guiana Desk Officer, Washington

We were received by Premier Jagan in his darkened, air-conditioned office. Jagan explained that because of astigmatism his eyes suffered from the intense glare and therefore he was more comfortable in a dim office.

Jagan said he was most discouraged about the situation in British Guiana. The efforts of the sugar workers to throw off the burden of the company union had led to tension in the community and racial animosities had been aroused. He did not know what would happen now. The struggle against the company union, and the BGTUC is nothing but a company union nowadays, should be resolved and he had appointed a committee to try to resolve it but only the sugar workers were willing to cooperate.

On the political scene he was also discouraged. The British Government had imposed PR although it was admittedly a most unsatisfactory voting method and he wondered what it might lead to. The British had pushed him around since he first organized the PPP and had changed the system on him time and again gerrymandering districts, changing the number of districts, and now even PR. It was most discouraging and Indian voters might well become disenchanted with the so-called parliamentary system of democracy and turn elsewhere if the Guiana experience was any example. Perhaps it was a result of the cold war tensions but parliamentarianism and democracy seemed on the way out. In Latin America for example there are many more dictatorships today than ever before since World War II.

"No matter what I try to do," Jagan said, "I can get no where. I am opposed by everyone, including the CIA which I suppose is the American Government. I laid my cards on the table to President Kennedy, and he gave me to understand that he would help me but he didn't and I can only conclude that he was a liar or that he was influenced to change his decision. The people in BG know that I am trying to help them. They are not dumb. But they see that I am being frustrated by every turn. When I see newspaper correspondents they distort what I tell them. I am being maligned by a press agency in Miami, presumably run by Cuban refugees, which has distributed an article saying that I advocated wiping out the Negroes in B.G. This is completely untrue—it's a deliberate distortion." /2/

/2/ Telegram 403 from Georgetown, May 30, reported Carlson's observations of the meeting with Jagan, including Jagan's view that the United States turned against him after what he thought had been a successful visit to Washington, presumably because "pressure had been brought on President by right wing groups or by CIA." Jagan visited the United States and met with President Kennedy on October 25, 1961; for a memorandum of conversation, see Foreign Relations, 1961-1963, vol. XII, Document 259. Jagan also felt the only answer to the present situation was a grand coalition but that "speaking man to man," Burnham would not join in because the United States would not let him. Carlson reported that he responded that he could not believe that the Premier, or Burnham, or D'Aguiar were or could be puppets of anybody. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 15 BR GU)

In his rambling exposition Jagan mentioned that he listened often to the VOA, and referred specifically to a panel program which discussed the situation in Vietnam. He said that one of the speakers pointed out that the war in Vietnam was being lost because it was not supported by 80% of the population. He inferred that the turmoil in South East Asia was a direct result of American involvement.

380. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, May 25, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. I, Memos, 12/63-7/64. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

I talked to Bill Burdett today about the situation in British Guiana. Bill made the following points:

1. The present unrest in British Guiana is still a long way from being serious. Only a few people have been hurt and the British response has been and has needed to be only a moderate one. The unrest, in part, is a sign that we are on the right track; Cheddi Jagan and/or his people are beginning to feel that they are on their way out and are stirring up trouble in the hope that they can reverse the trend. We will see more of this sort of thing over the next few months.

2. We should keep our eye on November. Apostponement of elections might give a Labor Government in the UK an opportunity to throw a monkey wrench into our effort to get rid of Jagan. /2/

/2/ In a May 28 memorandum Chase reported to Bundy that he had spoken to Burdett about preparing for a Labor Party victory. Burdett advised against talking to Labor before the election, but also recommended that, if Labor won, "our Ambassador should immediately talk to the new Prime Minister." Chase added that he would talk to Burdett's replacement, J. Harold Shullaw, about the need for further contingency planning with respect to a Labor victory. A marginal note in Bundy's handwriting next to this sentence reads "good." (Ibid.)

3. Our policy with respect to BG is the right one and we should stay with it. With a little luck, the events between now and November will be controllable. With a little more luck, events after November, with Jagan in opposition, will also be controllable.

4. There does seem to be an area where some useful work can be done. We probably can usefully do more planning with respect to the moves we will take once Jagan is gone. (I will look into this one—to see what planning has been done and what else needs to be done.) /3/

GC

/3/ A marginal note in Bundy's handwriting next to this sentence reads: "Also contingency planning for a Labor victory in United Kingdom."

381. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, June 9, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. On 3 June 1964 Linden Forbes Burnham, leader of the People's National Congress (PNC), proposed in the Legislative Assembly that a three-party coalition government be formed to run British Guiana until elections are held under proportional representation (PR) later this year. Burnham's reasoning for suggesting a coalition now with the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the United Force (UF) was that it would lessen tensions and allow for more

vigorous police action to control the situation. He further believed that acceptance of an interim coalition would mean that Premier Cheddi Jagan had acknowledged PR as the voting system. Burnham, however, indicated that he would go no further with this idea unless it was accepted by Peter D'Aguiar, leader of the UF.

2. D'Aguiar refused to join the coalition. Meanwhile, Jagan was preparing a counter proposal for a coalition of the PPP and PNC, excluding the UF. Jagan's proposal was contained in a letter sent to Burnham on 6 June. His coalition would last for from two to four years before new elections are held; these elections would be held under a combination of PR and the old voting system of first-past-the-post. Jagan proposed that the ministries be equally divided between the two parties, with Jagan as Prime Minister and Burnham as Deputy Prime Minister. Jagan suggested that the coalition continue after independence when the Ministries of Home Affairs and Defense would be divided between the two parties. Between now and independence Jagan asked that a United Nations presence be introduced in British Guiana and that the UN and Commonwealth nations be asked to aid in the creation of security and defense forces.

3. In reporting the above, Consul General Carlson [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in Georgetown said that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Jagan found this to be the expedient moment to propose such a coalition government: G.W.Y. Hucks, British electoral commissioner, had announced publicly on 4 June that voter registration had been very high in the Corentyne, a Jagan stronghold, and low in Georgetown, where Burnham is strongest. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Jagan may have been encouraged over his chances in the coming election or simply believes that now is psychologically an opportune time to press ostensibly reasonable terms of a coalition government on Burnham, hoping that he will panic into settling for half now rather than risk losing it all later on.

[*3 paragraphs (141/2 lines of source text) not declassified*]

7. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to Mr. J. Harold Shullaw of the Department of State.

RH

382. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, June 13, 1964.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. I, Memos, 12/63-7/64. Secret.](#)

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. Attached is Georgetown's 422 [/2/](#) which reports that the Governor of BG has taken over the emergency powers from the Council of Ministers and has started to pick up some of the people who are suspected of being responsible for the recent violence. [/3/](#) This action by the

Governor does not detract from the other responsibilities of the Ministers, which remain intact.

/2/ Telegram 422 from Georgetown, June 13, not attached, reported Governor Luyt's new Order-in-Council "which in effect puts him rather than Jagan regime in charge of emergency." (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23-8 BR GU)

/3/ A June 12 memorandum to Bundy reported that a number of prominent PPP leaders were scheduled for immediate arrest under the secret and about-to-be-invoked Order-in-Council emergency regulations, which permitted the detention of persons suspected of being involved in terrorist activity. (Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File)

2. Harry Shullaw (Bill Burdett's successor) tells me that State (Harry, Alexis Johnson, and Bill Tyler) feels that the Governor is the best judge of the present situation and that his step may give us a breather for a while. Harry feels that there are few negatives involved in the move. Jagan's forces may try to use the development as a new reason for postponing the elections, but unrestrained violence probably works toward this end even more effectively.

3. The Committee of 24 at the UN has been hearing appeals from the Jagan forces and renewed appeals can probably be expected. The British will probably be able to continue to stall off a UN inquiry on the grounds that BG is an internal British matter and that the British are already working towards a solution (i.e. PR). Neither we nor the British favor a UN inquiry since such an inquiry could conceivably lead to a UN recommendation that PR be substituted by another scheme.

4. In general, I think the situation in BG is still tolerable. It merits close watching, however, and I will continue to keep an eye out.

GC

383. Telegram From the Consulate General in British Guiana to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, June 27, 1964, 1600Z.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 15 BR GU. Secret; Limdis. Repeated to London.

443. Premier Jagan called me to his office late afternoon June 26 and talked over an hour along following lines. For first time he is seriously worried about what is happening in BG and where it is going. Several years ago he thought BG had bright future; there was much waiting to be done in way of economic development and possibility help solve problems outside BG. For example, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad were all facing pressing economic problems resulting partly from exploding populations. They were trying solve this by some industrialization but would never be able to keep up. In fact, all these places were just barely keeping the lid on. (He apologized at this point for digressing.)

Now in British Guiana there was this deplorable violence, senseless retaliation, and there

seemed no end in sight. A few days ago he had to take his daughter out of school in Georgetown because of harassment by classmates. Several times he asked somewhat rhetorically "what can be done?" I asked if he were satisfied that he and the two opposition leaders had done everything that was within their power, individually as well as collectively, to stop the violence. He said he thought so but that everybody could not be controlled. He said he wanted this to be a very frank discussion. I asked him if he believed people in Mazaruni had anything to do with violence. He quickly replied that he did not think so but there was this theory of a plan. He said he wished to talk about solutions.

He said as I knew he had been seeking coalition but his efforts had come to nothing. In past few days he had been talking with Governor about such possibility and now he wished to talk with me. As long as U.S. was opposed to having PPP in coalition or in government at all, Burnham would refuse. During coalition negotiations with Burnham when Ghanaian delegation was here, Jagan had made concession after concession, including parity in cabinet, but Burnham always had another demand. This experience and subsequent ones simply illustrate that Burnham will not go against wishes of U.S.

He had thought many times about what caused his relations with U.S. to "go sour." He still did not know specifically how this happened. He used to go annually from 1957 to 1961 to the U.S. and personal relations were very good. In 1961 he had talks with President Kennedy, Chester Bowles, Schlesinger, and other top officials. They had probed him very deeply and he had every reason to believe that he had passed the test. He had been quite frank with them about his socialist views. Generally speaking he was inclined to think there were two reasons for the deterioration: opposition leaders in BG had effectively spread word in U.S. that he was Communist and secondly, there had been U.S. trouble with Cuba. These two elements, in interacting way, had given impression that he was potential menace to U.S. This was myth but was now fact of life in U.S. which he must recognize. In actual fact, he said, U.S. need have no concern on this score.

Recently he had talked with various elements in Georgetown including Pres. Chamber of Commerce, businessmen, Catholic Church, etc. about possible solution to BG problem. Several had told him that he and PPP were Communist, that there was fear of regimentation, exclusion of private enterprise, and, if independent, of invitation by him to Soviets and Cubans to come in. He told them in essence that his record belied any danger to private enterprise. He had publicly pledged to keep his hands off sugar and bauxite industries, and as for regimentation, there could be ironclad guarantees in constitution and he was not fool enough to try tear up constitution with opposition being so strong in BG. As for Soviets and Cubans, he was prepared have treaty of neutrality, e.g., along Austrian lines. If U.S. wanted, it could have right to intervene. This was in fact unnecessary because he realized U.S. would intervene in any event if its security were threatened. Some businessmen had mentioned BG might be another Zanzibar, but he realized BG in same hemisphere as U.S. and events which take place in Africa would not be permitted to take place here.

Jagan said in final analysis only three courses now possible in BG: (1) coalition; (2) civil war; (3) partition. He thought coalition was dependent on U.S. He thought partition was no solution and recalled difficulties and suffering which ensued when India was partitioned. Economically partition would not make sense, but BG already is drifting toward partition. (I agreed that partition would not represent progress.) He could see no end to violence without coalition. Uncontrollable groups were now operating. I asked whether when he said coalition he meant all three parties. He said no, he meant PPP-PNC because their objectives were more similar and in any event there should be an opposition party. I asked whether he had in mind coalition now before election or after or both. He did not see much value in

coalition before election since ministers would just be settling into their jobs "when the dog fight of elections would start in October or November," but he was willing to consider it. He was more interested in agreement for coalition after elections. While he much preferred postponement of election to give time to work out problems, he was willing to consider acceptance of no postponement. He added that PPP had not yet decided whether to contest those elections.

He then asked where U.S. stood and what my views were. I told him that U.S. was assuming that course of events would be determined by elections in implementation of Colonial Secretary's decision and that after the elections we would presumably know with what government we would be dealing. In meantime, pending basic political decision by electorate, we were in effect simply waiting. I indicated incidental opinion that he placed far too much weight on view that Burnham acted on basis of what he thought U.S. wanted. In my experience, politicians of all kinds were guided primarily, if not entirely, by what they thought would get votes and how they would fare at polls. I suggested that what happens in BG is for parties here to decide and matters of coalition or no coalition were not matters for U.S. to determine but could and undoubtedly would be decided by political leaders here. I mentioned that if he wished I would report his views exactly insofar as possible as presented to me. He was extremely pleased. I cautioned however that there would not necessarily be any response but that channels of communication were open and I would faithfully report his views at any time.

Comment: Jagan gave controlled performance. He was purposely calm, reasonable, most courteous, earnest. Only sign of tension was slight shaking of hands at times; otherwise he seemed relaxed. It is obvious that he would give almost anything to obtain U.S. support and will leap at any possibility of favorable response. We can probably expect some more peace feelers.

Carlson

384. Memorandum for the Record /1/

Washington, June 30, 1964.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only. Prepared by Chase on July 2.](#)

SUBJECT

British Guiana Meeting, June 30, 1964

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Tyler; Mr. Cobb; Mr. Helms; [2 names not declassified]; Mr. McGeorge Bundy; Mr. Chase

The meeting was called at Mr. Tyler's request, primarily to discuss recent messages about the situation in BG.

1. Jagan's Coalition Proposal—The group agreed with the Consulate General's assessment that we should steer clear of a coalition government./2/ We are on the right track and should press ahead towards the elections. If necessary, we should stiffen up Governor Luyt

who has given some indications that he may be weakening on the coalition issue—i.e. the Governor is very concerned about the security situation, and may feel that a coalition will reduce the terrorism.

/2/ Telegram 440 from Georgetown, dated June 27, reported Carlson's concern about an abortive Canadian attempt to promote a PPP-PNC coalition. (Ibid., Country File, British Guiana, Vol. I, Cables, 12/63-7/64)

2. Jagan's Emissary to U.S.—While a dialogue with Jagan might conceivably cool down the BG security problem, it was decided that we should not accept a visit from a Jagan emissary./3/ We would be able to get no meaningful concessions from Jagan and the fact that we talked to a Jagan emissary would probably help Jagan's cause. Moreover, it would be difficult to keep a dialogue going (for purposes of cooling down the security situation) since we would have very little to say to Jagan.

/3/ A telegram to London, July 2, reported that Jagan wished to send Attorney General Ramsahoye to Washington to discuss the British Guiana problem with Department officers. The Department requested that the Colonial Office have the Governor decline to transmit Jagan's request. (Ibid., Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File)

3. UN Trusteeship—The group discussed Eric Williams' proposal that BG be made a UN trusteeship for five years. The group did not think this was a good idea since at best it would only delay a bad situation, and at worst might make the Communist menace even tougher to control.

4. The group agreed on the following actions: First, State [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] would cable Georgetown and tell our people that we agree with their assessment and are against a coalition and emissary./4/ Second, State will tell Ambassador Bruce to talk to the British about the BG situation. Bruce will try to get the British to apply whatever force is necessary to control the security situation in BG. /5/ Third, at a somewhat lower level, the U.S. Government and HMG will get together in the near future to compare notes and insure that we are still on the same wave length.

GC

/4/ An undated telegram to Georgetown advised "we do not believe coalition talk should be encouraged" and "we have no intention of receiving any envoy from British Guiana for we do not wish to give Jagan any encouragement." It also stated that Jagan should be advised that the U.S. Government was in no position to direct Burnham to accept or reject a coalition and that any question of an envoy should be taken up with the Governor, the official responsible for external affairs. (Ibid.)

/5/ In an undated telegram to London for Ambassador Bruce, Tyler requested that Bruce inform the Colonial Office that "we are anxious that every effort be made to hold elections in November under proportional representation as planned," that additional UK forces be sent to British Guiana, and that all possible steps be taken to put down further violence there. (Ibid.) A telegram from London to Tyler, July 2, reported that the Colonial Secretary, Duncan Sandys, responded that HMG intended to go forward with the elections as planned, was most reluctant to send more troops to British Guiana, and had reached no conclusion about the possibility of a coalition, but would consult with the United States before doing so. (Ibid.)

385. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, July 17, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only. A marginal note in Bundy's handwriting indicates the memorandum was sent to Gordon Chase for information.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

The following message for you was received from William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] on 17 July 1964:

"1. The US/UK talks on British Guiana on 16 July /2/ chaired by Sir Hilton Poynton, Permanent Undersecretary of the Colonial Office, produced basic agreement on an assessment of the security situation, electoral prospects, and the need to proceed on course with elections in late November or early December. There was agreement on both sides that, although results might be close, registration figures indicated that Premier Cheddi Jagan, at best, could get no more than 48 per cent and probably would not get more than 46 per cent of the vote. This calculation did not presume that an alternative East Indian party would have any strength, and both sides agreed every effort should be made to keep them from falling by the wayside.

/2/ In a July 11 memorandum to Ball, Tyler reported that he and Shullaw intended "to discuss tactics" with the British and that "our objective continues to be the holding of elections later this year under a system of proportional representation which hopefully will result in the formation of a new Government replacing the Jagan regime." Tyler added that the threat to this objective "arises from the deteriorating security situation and from Jagan's efforts to exploit a situation for which he and his followers are primarily responsible, so as to secure a postponement of the elections." (Ibid., Country File, British Guiana, Vol. I, Memos, 12/63-7/64)

"2. The British maintained that the principal threat to elections comes from the deteriorating security situation. They suggested that even with one division peace and order could not be guaranteed. The situation in Georgetown is particularly critical in that violence there could force the postponement of elections. The British urged that Forbes Burnham, leader of the People's National Congress (PNC), be counselled to exercise all possible restraint on his supporters in Georgetown. They noted that the London papers played up the killing of Indian children, omitting African deaths and arson.

"3. The British said the Governor had suggested he be authorized to try to obtain a PNC/People's Progressive Party coalition as a means of reducing tension in the pre-electoral period. They acknowledged that assurances of success were limited, but thought that failure might be attributed to Jagan and serve to discredit him. We explained the bases of our opposition and found that the British did not take issue with them.

"4. On the assumption a non-Jagan government could be formed, we said we would be prepared to extend the same financial assistance we agreed last October. The British

suggested the formation of a US/UK/Canada joint development commission to work out a long term plan. We made it clear that US aid was predicated on Jagan's not being included in the post election government.

"5. When the British inquired what policy might be should Jagan win, we reiterated that such a situation would be politically intolerable in the United States.

"6. On the question of the envoy to the United States the British said they could not oppose if Jagan came in a private capacity and expressed hope he would be received. We said we had made no plans to receive him or any other emissary and hoped the situation would not arise.

"7. The question of possible steps to assist in the security problem were discussed at length and the British agreed to explore with the Governor, who will be recalled for consultation soon:

"a. the possibility of establishing under the emergency regulations communal peace committees, seeking to obtain the public support of Jagan and Burnham for same.

"b. announcing the date of elections at this time as an indication of their firmness of intention to proceed.

"c. the formation of a national government in which all three parties would participate.

"8. Both sides agreed that little leverage existed to force Jagan to cooperate in the elections since he had everything to lose and nothing to gain. "9. An agreed minute is being prepared."

RH

386. Memorandum for the Record /1/

Washington, July 27, 1964.

[/1/ Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only. Prepared by Chase on July 29.](#)

SUBJECT

British Guiana Meeting—July 27, 1964

PARTICIPANTS

William Tyler; Harold Shullaw; William Cobb; Richard Helms; [name not declassified]; McGeorge Bundy; Peter Jessup; Gordon Chase

1. The meeting was called to discuss the attached cable from Georgetown. [/2/](#) The cable reported Consul General Carlson's apprehension about telling Cheddi Jagan we are not ready to receive an envoy.

[/2/ Telegram Georgetown IN 35522, July 24, from Carlson to Shullaw; attached but not printed. \(Ibid.\)](#)

2. The group agreed that a visit to the U.S. by a Jagan emissary would be a bad thing. At worst, such a visit would be interpreted to mean that the U.S. supports Cheddi Jagan; at best it would be interpreted as a sign that we can live with him. The visit would hurt the opposition parties in BG and would not help us domestically.

3. The group then discussed whether it would be advisable to send a lower-level official down to BG to talk to Cheddi Jagan as well as to the two opposition leaders. The advantages of this would be that we would appear reasonable ("willing to listen"), and that it might allow us to stall for time and reduce the rate of violence in the months between now and the BG elections. The main disadvantage is that any talks with Jagan will probably be misinterpreted by the uncommitted voters in BG—which number about 10%; such talks might indicate to these voters that "perhaps the U.S. does not think Cheddi is so bad."

4. The group agreed that Jagan's request to send an envoy to the U.S. should be turned down and that we should not offer to send someone down to BG. However, we should use more gentle wording than the flat assertion now under consideration—i.e. "This proposal has been informally discussed with the Americans and they see no useful purpose for it. Therefore, it would be better if the proposal were dropped." Instead, a more flexible position should be adopted which offers a quid pro quo—i.e. when the violence stops, we will reconsider the proposal. The group decided that a cable should be drafted in this sense and sent to London, /3/ with an information copy to Georgetown (copy attached). /4/

GC

/3/ An attached undated telegram to London requested the Embassy to ask the Colonial Office to modify its instructions to the Governor to the following: "This proposal has been informally discussed with the Americans who see no useful purpose in it at this time. The Americans are obviously influenced in this point of view by continuing pattern of violence in British Guiana and widespread belief in British Guiana, as elsewhere, that PPP as governing party bears heavy responsibility this state of affairs. Their subsequent attitude toward question of emissary naturally would be influenced by course of events in British Guiana." (Ibid.)

/4/ According to an August 1 telegram from Carlson to Shullaw, the Governor delivered the message to Jagan on July 30, but omitted the part suggesting that the PPP was responsible for the violence. Jagan made no objection, observing that "it means then that if things stay quiet emissary will be received" to which the Governor responded that he could not speculate beyond the wording of the message. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana 1964 [file name not declassified])

387. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Tyler) to Secretary of State Rusk/1/

Washington, July 31, 1964.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Special Operations, 1964. Top Secret. Drafted by Shullaw. The memorandum is undated; the date used is the drafting date.

SUBJECT

Proposed Reply to Colonial Secretary Duncan Sandys' Letter on British Guiana

Problem

Duncan Sandys has written to you (Tab B) /2/ stating that he believes order and security in British Guiana can only be restored through an all party coalition government. He asks for our support in bringing about such a coalition.

/2/ The attached July 30 message from Sandys, stated that the British were not certain they would be able to restrain racial violence sufficiently to hold elections and that they were satisfied that the only method of restoring order and security was to bring about a temporary all-Party coalition to bridge the period to the elections.

Discussion

During my talks in London with British officials July 16 and 17 I outlined the reasons why we thought a pre-election coalition of Jagan's party and the two opposition parties was of doubtful value so far as security is concerned and dangerous from the point of view of our political objectives in British Guiana. The British officials with whom we talked were unable to make a convincing case for the coalition. Despite this Sandys has come down on the side of a coalition. I continue to believe this is an unwise and unnecessary move.

Recommendation

That you approve the attached message (Tab A) /3/ to Sandys which reiterates our doubts about a coalition and asks for further consideration before the Governor is given instructions to try to bring one about. /4/

/3/ Document 388.

/4/ Approved by Rusk.

388. Message From Secretary of State Rusk to the British Colonial Secretary (Sandys)/1/

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 19 BR GU. Top Secret. Drafted by Shullaw.

Washington, August 4, 1964.

I fully appreciate your concern at continuing violence in British Guiana and your desire to find some way of preventing a situation developing which could necessitate postponement of the elections you intend holding in the colony later this year. I also sympathize with your capable and courageous Governor in his efforts to carry out his responsibilities under such trying conditions. In the circumstances I am somewhat hesitant to raise again the doubts and misgivings about a pre-election coalition which we expressed to your people at the recent London talks. Since, however, we are in complete agreement on the constructive objectives we are pursuing in British Guiana, I have no hesitation in doing so.

In the first place we seriously doubt that Jagan, who has been using violence for political purposes, would be likely to forego such tactics if a coalition were formed. Apart from that consideration there is, in our opinion, the very real possibility that a pre-election coalition would adversely affect the electoral prospects of the PNC and the UF by confusing the supporters of those two parties. A coalition of the PPP and PNC excluding the UF would endanger the hoped for post election PNC-UF coalition which at the moment is the only

possibility of replacing the Jagan Government. In short, we share your view of the importance of holding the elections later this year but are concerned that nothing be done in the pre-election period in the quest for order and security which would jeopardize the currently hopeful electoral results.

Since the London talks on July 16 and 17 there have been several developments in British Guiana which may be relevant. The strike of the sugar workers has been ended in what amounts to a defeat for Jagan. Whether this will result in any immediate improvement in the security situation, of course, remains to be seen. I also understand that Jagan has broken off his "unity" talks with Burnham and D'Aguiar. In the course of those talks he clearly indicated that the coalition he seeks has as its objective postponement of the elections. He showed no interest in a coalition limited to a brief pre-election period but insisted on a five year coalition.

I would be most grateful if you would give further consideration to these very real concerns on our part about the dangers of such a course of action. /2/

Warm regards,
Dean Rusk /3/

/2/ In a personal message to Rusk, attached to an August 17 covering note from the British Embassy, Sandys' deputy, Sir Hilton Poynton, reported that the risk of violence was diminished and the case for a temporary coalition was therefore less strong. Poynton stated that he was sure that Sandys would agree, upon his return from holiday, that the idea should not be pursued under these circumstances. If, however, violence were to set in again at the pitch it reached in June and July, a temporary coalition might be reconsidered. (Ibid.)

/3/ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

389. Memorandum for the Record /1/

Washington, September 11, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Intelligence File, British Guiana, Special File. Secret; Eyes Only. Prepared by Chase on September 14.

SUBJECT
British Guiana—Meeting on September 11, 1964

PARTICIPANTS
Messrs. William Tyler; Harold Shullaw; Delmar Carlson; William Cobb; [*name not declassified*]; McGeorge Bundy; Gordon Chase

The meeting was called so that Consul General Carlson could brief the group about the current situation in BG.

1. Election Prospects—Mr. Carlson said that the election prospects are good. The Justice Party seems to be doing surprisingly well and everyone, including Jagan, seems to think that the anti-PPP forces will win. At the same time, the PPP is likely to get a plurality.

The group agreed that something would have to be done if the PPP did win. The general feeling was that, despite his conciliatory noises, Jagan is the same unrehabilitated bad egg he has always been; he has not really been "educated" by the US/Cuban experience.

2. Security Situation—Mr. Carlson said that the security situation is fairly good these days. He added that this is the thing to watch before and after the elections. If the security situation gets very bad before elections, the Governor will be inclined to push for a PPP/PNC coalition. Assuming Burnham wins the election, a deteriorating and uncontrollable security situation could conceivably push Burnham and the Governor towards accepting the formation of a PPP/PNC coalition.

3. Burnham—Mr. Carlson made these points relating to Burnham: First, while Burnham is now getting on very well with the leaders of other opposition parties, we should not expect this to last forever. The anti-PPP forces are bound to have plenty of problems with one another in the future. Second, Mr. Carlson noted that Burnham and the British do not get along. The Governor does not like Burnham, who twists the lion's tail whenever he can. We can expect to see a growing British/Burnham problem. Third, Mr. Carlson said that while he is trying to build a relationship with Burnham, it is tough to do so. Burnham, a racist and probably anti-white, remembers slights and repays them; at the same time, he takes advantage of people who treat him softly. A recent frank exchange between Carlson and Burnham, however, proved at least partly satisfactory. Burnham said that if he gets into power he will not recognize the USSR and that he will have nothing to do with Cuba so long as he can find other people to buy British Guiana's rice.

4. Other—Mr. Carlson reported that Burnham had said that it would be helpful if, during his campaign, he could promise the voters something concrete (e.g. the East-West road and the airport terminal). The group agreed that we should go along with Burnham on this.

The group discussed briefly the future of Atkinson Field. Mr. Tyler agreed to call DOD's John McNaughton to get a reading on how important the facility is to us. /2/

/2/ In a May 12, 1965, memorandum to Howard Meyers, Director of Operations for the Office of Politico-Military Affairs (G/PM), Shullaw reported that the Government of British Guiana wanted to resolve the status of Atkinson Field, and asked again for a reading from the Department of Defense regarding its retention. Shullaw stated that Carlson had reported that if the United States was prepared to agree to release the field unconditionally, the Government of British Guiana in return would probably be willing to agree to unrestricted authorization for the United States to use the field whenever it wished. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, [file name not declassified] 1965)

GC

390. Telegram From the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs (Tyler) to the Ambassador to the United Kingdom (Bruce)/1/

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Policy Papers, 1964. Secret.

Washington, September 14, 1964.

For Ambassador Bruce from Tyler. In our view, following considerations argue for desirability of expediting preparations for elections and setting election date as early in November as feasible with appropriate announcement earliest:

- (1) Possible complicity of Burnham in Georgetown violence and conceivably his indictment (which Governor considering),
- (2) likelihood of attempts by Jaganites and others to use such prospects to delay elections and seek alternative courses of action,
- (3) uncertainty of opposition groups over date of election, and
- (4) adverse effect of any late date on present momentum of opposition parties.

Appreciate Embassy conveying this thought to Coloff soonest since Governor Luyt in London this week and will be consulting Sandys.

FYI: Our primary aim with above is to avoid substantial interval when efforts might be made to toy with Sandys' decision in some fashion, especially if Burnham under indictment for conspiracy commit murder. End FYI.

391. Telegram From the Consulate General in British Guiana to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, October 3, 1964.

IN 86222. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] pass following message from Carlson to Shullaw:

In discussions with Burnham at his initiative early this week I found him relaxed and confident. He apparently believes election largely matter of getting vote out and having organized to do so along 1 Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. II, Memos, 12/63-7/64. Secret. lines of U.S. party he foresees no particular problem. Every week or so he plans to spend few days in countryside talking to small groups and has already done so in African pockets of Corantyne. He prefers this method rather than mass meetings in order minimize problem of security. He plans no concentrated campaign with mass meetings until last 3-4 weeks before December 7 election. His party manifesto will appear at start that phase of campaign. In meantime he plans issue separate pamphlets unemployment, education, roads, and rice.

Burnham was especially interested in any ammunition we could provide to counter Jagan's exploitation of theme that Cuban rice market depends on his continuation in office. I told him we were aware of this problem and would see what we could develop.

Burnham also much interested in what specifics he could promise in way of projects. I suggested

- (1) improvement of East Coast road;
- (2) maintenance of sea wall;
- (3) airport improvements, including new terminal building;
- (4) Berbice Bar cut. Re sea wall I pointed out he could claim regime jeopardized lives and property by failure do maintenance work over last few years. He could call attention to break in wall and flooding near Buxton early this year. He picked this up with alacrity. He also apparently liked Berbice Bar cut (which incidentally may improve his relations with New Amsterdam PNC boss Kendall who is not always enthusiastic about Burnham). He was all for

East Coast road, but also suggested desirability improving road from New Amsterdam to Skeldon in Corantyne, saying need was especially great because not only is road in miserable condition but also there is no railroad. He also wanted Atkinson–Mackenzie road (estimated total cost U.S. \$8 million) and mentioned desirability developing road to Potaro and eventually on to Brazil. He thought this road would open up agricultural areas. Although he sought my immediate approval to road in Corantyne and Atkinson–Mackenzie road, I made clear I was not in position to go beyond East Coast road without further authorization. He asked me to look particularly into possible authorization of Corantyne road. He has in mind after very brief respite following election to announce full-scale program. He would like during four-year term to complete as many short-range projects as possible and to have made sufficient start on number of long-range projects that public can clearly see what future portends from Burnham administration. Shortly after announcing his program he apparently wishes to make tour abroad, not only for purposes prestige or recognition but also to collect commitments for financial or economic assistance. He did not specify what countries he has in mind but it will undoubtedly include Germany and U.S. He mentioned that Jagan had apparently been given much attention when he visited Washington in 1961. I have little doubt that Burnham will expect be received by the President and that he is already leading up to this suggestion.

Comment: It would be politically desirable for Burnham to advocate Corantyne road since it would so clearly benefit Indian community as well as have immediate impact as adjunct of East Coast road. This road passes through rice and sugar areas from New Amsterdam to Skeldon and is 48 miles long. In 1949–53 this road was rebuilt and paved reportedly at a cost of about U.S. \$3 million, but because of faulty engineering and construction it deteriorated almost completely after 4 years. Since then it has been occasionally patched. It is estimated that rehabilitation and paving with asphalt could be done for about U.S. \$1.5 million. It is suggested that Department explore feasibility of permitting me inform Burnham Corantyne road may also be improved. /2/ The Department may wish consider whether touch base Colonial Office to obtain their concurrence to substitute Corantyne road for some other project or projects of equivalent value now on U.S.–U.K. agreed list. (Actually this road could be considered part of East Coast road.) Burnham will doubtlessly be raising matter of both Corantyne and possibly Atkinson–Mackenzie road with me shortly in order start preparing pamphlet on roads. Therefore, sooner we can decide whether we bless Corantyne road at least in principle the better.

/2/ In an unnumbered telegram to Carlson dated October 7, Shullaw reported that Burnham could be assured that the United States would assist British Guiana in road improvement projects and that this would include East Coast roads at least as far as Skelton. Regarding the Atkinson–MacKenzie road, Shullaw said that "assurances must be hedged at this time," due to the question of how best to finance all the road projects. (Ibid.)

392. Backchannel Message From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom/1/

Washington, October 14, 1964.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana, Policy Papers, 1964. Secret. Drafted by Cobb.

For Ambassador Bruce from Shullaw. There follows a paper on our interest in British Guiana

which you may draw on in talking with Harold Wilson, should he become Prime Minister. /2/ Wilson will undoubtedly have

/2/ In an October 13 memorandum to Bundy, Chase stated that this cable was redrafted to delete mention of a possible Johnson–Wilson telephone call and instead stressed the need for Bruce to talk personally to Wilson, who was "sensitive to the US–UK Alliance." A notation in Bundy's handwriting on the memorandum reads "OK, MB." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. II Memos, 12/63–7/64)

a very tight schedule and countless other problems but we believe it would be best to go straight to him personally on this subject rather than to his Colonial Affairs Minister. So far as we can tell developments in BG are in accordance with our policy objectives and we hope Wilson will agree to continue along the charted course.

TALKING PAPER FOR AMBASSADOR BRUCE
(May be left with Mr. Wilson should he request it)

Since August 1961 the problems of British Guiana as it approaches independence have been discussed at the highest levels of our two governments with a view to seeking ways whereby the colony may obtain independence without posing a threat to the security of its neighbors in the Western Hemisphere.

As you know, Latin America is an area of the greatest importance to us. The establishment of an independent government in British Guiana under leadership which has been markedly receptive to communist ideas and vulnerable to communist subversion would create an intolerable situation for the United States and other countries in the Hemisphere. Previous British Governments have shown an understanding of this situation [*1 line of source text not declassified*] affording a full opportunity for the United States to express its views. [*21/2 lines of source text not declassified*] The President hopes you will share with him the conviction that it should continue along present lines.

It is the opinion of the United States Government that the proposed elections in British Guiana under Proportional Representation, despite the difficulties entailed, provide a democratic means through which the aspirations of all the people and races of British Guiana can be faithfully reflected. We believe that if the electorate participates fully in the elections the results can provide a basis for the formation of a representative government in which the possibility of communist infiltration will be significantly reduced. It is our intention to do what we can to assist a non-communist government in British Guiana so that the country at the earliest practicable date may attain independence with economic and social stability and have the prospect of playing a useful role in the hemisphere and in the community of free nations./3/

/3/ Bruce did not get an opportunity to talk to Wilson personally (the British Labor Party won the general parliamentary elections of October 15 and Harold Wilson, as party leader, became Prime Minister) and transmit this message, but did give it to Patrick Gordon Walker, the new Labor Foreign Secretary; see Document 394.

393. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, October 17, 1964.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. II, Memos, 12/63-7/64. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

Here are a few miscellaneous items on British Guiana.

1. The election prospects still look good. One of the things we are concentrating on is ensuring that the opposition parties turn out to vote on election day; to this end the CIA, in a deniable and discreet way, is providing financial incentives to party workers who are charged with the responsibility of getting out the vote. Another thing worth concentrating on is the job of ensuring that intimidation, threats, and violence do not hamper the conduct of the BG elections; attached is a cable from Carlson which describes British planning in this area./2/

2. With respect to the impact on the BG situation of the Labor victory, State feels that the election was sufficiently close so that Labor will be chary of tampering with the present course of events in BG. While this takes some of the edge off our worry, you may still want to talk about BG with Lord Harlech the next time you see him./3/ 3. We are going ahead with our contingency planning for a likely Burnham victory. In this regard, Harry Yoe, the AID man working on BG, will make a quiet trip to BG between November 4 and November 12 to evaluate projects which we may want to initiate immediately after the BG elections.

GC

/2/ Dated October 10; attached but not printed.

/3/ Two notations in Bundy's handwriting relating to this paragraph appear on the memorandum: one reads "Bruce and Walker talked recently," and the other reads "I did it. He assures me new Govt. will know of our interest."

394. Backchannel Message From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State/1/

London, October 19, 1964.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Policy Papers, 1964. Secret; Eyes Only.

From Ambassador Bruce to Secretary Rusk.

Have had no opportunity to deliver message, 2 as instructed, to Harold Wilson, if elected, on British Guiana.

[/2/ See Document 392.](#)

I did, however, take subject up with Gordon Walker this morning, who will shortly discuss it with PriMin.

Foreign Secretary said present HMG had never approved policy predecessor on BG. They recognized, however, USG particular interest in safeguarding BG against Communist takeover. He will be prepared give answer during Washington trip.[/3/](#)

[/3/ See Document 396.](#)

[1 paragraph (11/2 lines of source text) not declassified]

Comment. 1. I think HMG will permit proposed December elections under proportional representation to take place. *[1 line of source text not declassified]*

2. Appointment of Greenwood as Colonial Secretary bodes no good for us later on in this affair. Nevertheless, I believe PriMin will keep him under strict control.

395. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Tyler) to Secretary of State Rusk/[1/](#)

Washington, October 20, 1964.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. II, Memos, 12/63-7/64. Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Cobb.](#)

We have just learned that Jagan is flying to London October 21 to urge the British to postpone the elections scheduled for December 7 in British Guiana. We also have a message from Ambassador Bruce[/2/](#) who has taken up British Guiana with Patrick Gordon Walker, who says he will discuss it promptly with the Prime Minister. Gordon Walker says he will be prepared to discuss British Guiana in his forthcoming visit and to give us his Government's position at that time. In view of the fact that we got to Gordon Walker first, we think it unlikely that the British will take any decision regarding postponement without consulting with us.[/3/](#)

[/2/ A handwritten notation in the margin next to this sentence reads "attached." Attached but not printed.](#)

[/3/ In an October 20 memorandum to Bundy, Chase reported that, in his "weekly gabfest on BG" that morning with Richard Sampson and William Cobb, the latter had stated that the Labor government was very unlikely to postpone the elections. \(Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. II, Memos, 12/63-7/64\)](#)

Our real difficulties are likely to arise after the December 7 elections, since at that time Colonial Minister Tony Greenwood will naturally expect to play an important role in British Guiana developments.

396. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs (Shullaw) to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Tyler)/1/

Washington, October 27, 1964.

SUBJECT
Recent Events in British Guiana

Several weeks after the Anglo-US consultations in July 1964 violence in BG came to a virtual halt with the end of the sugar workers strike, and the beginning of the election campaign. In mid-August a new East Indian party was formed—the Justice Party—and Jagan announced that the PPP would participate in the elections "under protest."

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Chronological File, 1964. Secret; No Distribution. Drafted by Cobb.](#)

The campaign is now in full swing with the deposit of electoral lists October 26, and the three major parties, as well as several new parties are active. As the campaign intensifies the likelihood of violence increases but every effort is being made to maintain security. To this end the US has just supplied 20 radio transmitter receivers and 10 jeeps for the police.

Jagan's actions indicate that he is on the defensive. He is blaming his government's failure to receive assistance on reactionary elements in the U.S. and the U.K., and he maintains that the intense internal dissatisfaction with his administration is attributable solely to outside influences. The most recent estimate from the Colonial office suggests Jagan would get only 40% of the vote if elections were held today. Last July we thought he would get from 45% to 48%.

We are preparing to move ahead with an assistance program for a non-Jagan government in BG. The program would consist of road rehabilitation, maintenance of the seawall, making a cut through the Berbice Bar to open up the New Amsterdam area, and construction of a road from Atkinson field to the interior. An AID representative will go to BG November 4 to investigate the degree to which the BG administrative services can be used in implementing the projects.

We must anticipate that if Jagan loses by a close vote HMG will press us to agree to a Jagan-Burnham coalition government after elections. They may argue that only in a PPP-PNC coalition can the major groups in the population be represented; that a government which does not contain the PPP will be under continuing attack designed to keep it from governing effectively; and that an African dominated Burnham government will seek to intimidate and repress the East Indians.

We believe a PPP-PNC coalition after the elections would only add to BG's problems. It would be politically impossible for the US to assist a government in which Jagan and his colleagues played a role. Intense personal rivalry between Jagan and Burnham would contribute to instability and intensify racial antagonisms. We hope that a coalition government can be formed without the PPP and that it will be genuinely multi-racial./2/ We will use the influence we have in support of such a government.

/2/ Telegram 125 from Georgetown, October 26, reported a 2-hour discussion between Carlson and Burnham on October 23, during which the latter spoke of his thoughts about whom he wanted for the various cabinet positions in his coming government, with United Front and Justice Party leaders slotted for minor positions. Carlson reported that Burnham's "current thinking somewhat disturbing because may indicate intention make coalition government unduly PNC dominated with other parties' participation kind of sham," which Carlson said would be "very divisive" and would lead to a Burnham administration of "one term or less." (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 14 BR GU)

397. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, October 27, 1964, 10 a.m.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson-Department Messages, Vol. 2, 10/2/64-12/31/64. Secret. Drafted by Shullaw. The meeting was held in Secretary Rusk's office. The memorandum indicates it is an advance copy; no final or approved copy has been found.

SUBJECT

British Guiana

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

The Secretary

William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

J. Harold Shullaw, Director, EUR/BNA

UK

Patrick Gordon Walker, Foreign Secretary

The Lord Harlech, British Ambassador

Sir Harold Caccia, Permanent Under- Secretary, Foreign Office

By way of background the Secretary described the great problem in the Western Hemisphere of ensuring that the long overdue social and economic revolution is carried out democratically and without communist exploitation. He noted that the long tradition of the Monroe Doctrine means the strongest possible feeling in the United States against foreign intervention in this Hemisphere. In the case of Cuba, the two non-negotiable points are the Soviet presence and Cuban interference in the affairs of other Hemisphere countries. Castro has shown no willingness to cease this interference although the Cubans have suffered reverses in the case of Venezuela and the recent election in Chile.

The prospect that the United Kingdom might leave behind in an independent British Guiana a second Castro regime would be a major concern to the United States. Jagan has received aid from Castro and has meddled in Surinam. We cannot take a chance on him [1 line of source text not declassified]. Proportional Representation offers the possibility of unseating Jagan and obviating the need for direct British administration. We are prepared to give substantial assistance to a noncommunist, non-Jagan government. The Secretary described the British Guiana problem as a gut issue on which we need the help of the British Government. He expressed the hope that the elections in British Guiana would be held as scheduled. [11/2 lines of source text not declassified]

In his reply, the Foreign Secretary remarked that a Labor Government could not do less than the Conservatives with respect to trade possibilities with Cuba. He said, however, that he would look into the suggestion made earlier by the Secretary that Britain as an alternative to trading with Cuba attempt to improve its trade ties with other Latin American countries. The Secretary said he would send the Foreign Secretary a message on what we thought might be done to strengthen UK relations with the Hemisphere.

With respect to British Guiana, the Foreign Secretary gave the assurance that his Government would proceed with the elections as scheduled. [2 lines of source text not declassified] The Foreign Secretary said he had a very unfavorable opinion of Burnham who is a thoroughly unreliable person. Regardless of the outcome, the election will provide no answer to the problem of racial conflict and therefore there is little prospect of early independence emerging from it. The previous Government committed itself to an early post-election conference on independence, which in the view of the Labor Government, was not desirable. He thought the preferable course of development would be along the lines of self-government with a Commonwealth Court consisting perhaps of Indians, Nigerians and Canadians to deal with the racial conflict. The actual date for independence could be fuzzed. The Foreign Secretary expressed the hope that even if British Guiana does not obtain early independence, it will nevertheless be possible for the United States to furnish aid. He added that Eric Williams on a recent visit to London had advised strongly against early independence.

The Secretary replied that we would be quite happy to see an indefinite continuation of British authority in British Guiana. Perhaps the Organization of American States might ask the British Government not to grant independence while racial strife continues.

Mr. Tyler added the comment that a Burnham-Jagan coalition would make it impossible to get Congressional approval of aid for British Guiana. The Foreign Secretary indicated that he recognized a Burnham-Jagan coalition would not work although the British Government could not take a public position to this effect.

[1 paragraph (3 lines) of source text not declassified]

398. Airgram From the Consulate General in British Guiana to the Department of State/1/

A-89 Georgetown, November 5, 1964.

SUBJECT

Foreign Policy of Possible Burnham Administration in British Guiana

[/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 1 BR GU. Secret; Limit Distribution. Repeated to London.](#)

This report is intended to make a matter of record certain assurances given to me by L.F.S. Burnham, Leader of the People's National Congress, concerning the foreign policy of a Burnham administration in an independent British Guiana. These assurances (which I conveyed orally during consultation in the Department in September) arose out of a very frank conversation in which I pointed out that while the general trend of Burnham's thinking was known to us, some important foreign policy aspects were unspecified. In the ensuing discussion and in response to my questions, Burnham assured me categorically that:

- 1) He would not recognize the USSR;
- 2) He would not recognize or associate in any way with the Castro regime;
- 3) He would cut off all trade with Cuba if asked to do so, provided that the U.S. arranged an equally good market for British Guiana's rice;
- 4) He would join the OAS.

In a discussion of some adverse impressions among some parts of the local community about Burnham he denied any intention to permit racial considerations to decide policy, to take over the trade union movement, or to establish a dictatorial regime.

Comment: When Burnham gave these assurances he was under the impression that I was being suddenly called to Washington for consultation about the British Guiana situation, including his role here.

Delmar R. Carlson

399. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, December 7, 1964, 1:10 p.m.

[/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL UK-US. Secret. Drafted by Tyler and approved in the White House on December 16. The meeting was held in the Cabinet Room at the White House.](#)

SUBJECT

Scope of Talks

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

The President

Secretary Rusk

Secretary McNamara

Ambassador David Bruce

Mr. George Ball

Mr. McGeorge Bundy

Mr. William R. Tyler

UK

Prime Minister Wilson

Patrick Gordon Walker, Foreign Secretary

Denis Healey, Secretary of State for Defense

Lord Harlech, British Ambassador

Sir Harold Caccia, Permanent Under Secretary of State

Sir Burke Trend, Secretary to the Cabinet

Mr. D. J. Mitchell, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

The President and Prime Minister Wilson joined the group at about 1:10 p.m. The President said that he had had a very enjoyable meeting with the Prime Minister, that both of them

had discussed how to get reelected. Mr. Wilson said that he had very much enjoyed their talk which had related to principles, objectives and political background. They had not tried to get into any arguments for or against any particular solutions. The President said that he and the Prime Minister had whole-heartedly agreed that our objectives and hopes stand upon having a proper understanding of each other. It was better to talk across the table than in the columns of newspapers. He had told Wilson that "a burned child dreads fire," and that he didn't intend to pressure Mr. Wilson, and he felt sure that Mr. Wilson did not intend to pressure him. The President went on to say that he thought it would be useful for our two governments to continue to "reason together," as recommended in Isaiah. He felt that this meeting was a continuance of previous meetings which would permit both sides to explore their common problems and discuss them. Nothing would emerge from this meeting that was black on white or of a nature to make other countries feel that a blueprint of action had been developed by our two governments. We were not undertaking to provide answers to our problems at this meeting. The President said that he had to be very careful because of what the press tended to write.

[Omitted here is discussion of Vietnam and defense matters not related to British Guiana.]

The Secretary reported to the President very briefly on the discussions at Ministerial level which had been held while the two principals were talking alone that morning./2/ It had been decided that we would discuss defense questions this afternoon, also Southeast Asia, Southwest Africa, and other matters. Mr. Wilson said that he wanted to talk to the President about British Guiana. He had told Jagan that whoever wins in BG, the UK would not grant BG independence as there would be a blood bath if it did so./3/ He thought that if both Burnham and Jagan (the latter of whom he described as a naive Trotskyite) were out of BG it would be so much the better. He didn't think a government could be entrusted to either of them and the UK rather felt that the U.S. placed excessive trust in Burnham who was just as bad in his own way as Jagan was in his. In fact, interjected Gordon Walker, "they are both horrors." Mr. Wilson said that it would be necessary to arrange for a Canadian or an Australian distinguished judicial figure to go down to British Guiana in order to lay the groundwork for the organization of the judiciary, eventually.

/2/ A December 7 memorandum of conversation reported Rusk's discussion with Foreign Secretary Walker that morning concerning British Guiana. Walker said that HMG would not "go toward independence in the foreseeable future. Perhaps some steps toward increasing self-government could be devised." The Foreign Minister added that he thought that the U.S. Government "had an excessively favorable estimate of Burnham." (Ibid., POL 16 BR GU)

/3/ In a December 6 memorandum to the President, Ball urged Johnson "to demonstrate your personal interest" in British Guiana to Wilson by emphasizing that the United States attached great importance to a satisfactory outcome, that independence should not be granted prematurely, that the United States could not provide assistance to any government which included Jagan, and that it was hoped that close cooperation and aid would contribute to a racially peaceful, democratic, and non-Communist British Guiana. (Ibid., POL BR GU)

400. Editorial Note

December 7, 1964, elections in British Guiana resulted in Jagan's Peoples' Progressive Party gaining 45.6 percent of the popular vote and 24 seats in the legislature. Burnham's Peoples'

National Congress (PNC) won 40.5 percent of the popular vote and 22 seats in the legislature. However, in accordance with the constitutional tradition in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, the Governor offered the Premiership to Forbes Burnham as the person commanding the most confidence of the legislature as a whole. Burnham was asked to form a government, and he did so by placing his party in coalition with Peter D'Aguiar's United Force (UF), which had won 12.5 percent of the popular vote and 7 seats in the legislature. It took several weeks for the PNC and the UF to agree on terms for a coalition.

Jagan initially refused to resign as Premier and he did so only after an Order in Council was issued in London authorizing his removal. Jagan later held a press conference in which he promised strong but non-violent opposition to the new government.

In telegram 196 from Georgetown, December 10, Carlson reported that the most striking aspect of the election was the extent of racial voting. He reported that "in one district after another the number of votes for Jagan's PPP was approximately the same as number of registered Indian voters." Carlson said that the cause of "such complete racial voting by Indians apparently stems from fear and distrust of Africanled government" and that the PPP's propaganda and pre-election violence played on those fears and "created psychology which made Indians impervious to reason. Thus Indians deserted United Force with its advocacy of multi-racial approach, non-violence, and prosperity. Likewise rejected was Justice Party leader Rai's logical appeal to Indian self-interest to obtain share in non-PPP administration which was certain to come about as result of election." Carlson concluded that the consequence of this racial voting was that the PNC-UF coalition would have to govern without significant Indian representation.

Considering the future, Carlson was pessimistic about the depth of the racial cleavage in British Guiana. He speculated that while the Burnham administration would probably try to "demonstrate responsibility, improved government, and assistance" to all Guianese, it seemed unlikely that such an approach would lead to Burnham's reelection within the next few years, "especially in view of increased number of eligible Indian voters at that time. Therefore it might be expected before another election Burnham administration may seriously toy with more radical solutions, possibly e.g. seeking obtain independence in order to tamper with the electoral system." (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 14 BR GU)

401. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate General in British Guiana/1/

Washington, December 10, 1964.

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Chronological File, 1964. Secret. Repeated to London.](#)

For Carlson from Shullaw.

We believe it would be helpful if you were to talk with Burnham soonest while he is considering composition of the cabinet and make the following points.

1. We were gratified by the election outcome for in our view it provides a basis on which B.G. can move forward toward independence without the danger of communist domination.

2. We were pleased by the report from our Consul General that in his view a PNC/UF coalition appeared certain./2/ We think this is of vital importance as a means of maintaining the broadest possible support for the new government. We do not hold any brief for any specified United Force representation, that is, we hold no brief for including D'Aguiar himself in the cabinet. The important thing is UF representation.

/2/ In telegram 193 from Georgetown, December 10, Carlson reported that Burnham had admitted to him that the United Front commanded much of the managerial talent in the country, "which new administration would need." Burnham's main concern was the "means to overcome what he called 'Jaganism.'" Carlson reported that Burnham "urged desirability of early independence and appealed to me to persuade the USG to use its influence to that end," and that Burnham said that he did not want to be "hampered" by British "fair play" and that "if we do not down this 'ogre Jagan' before too long we will never be able to do so." (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 14 BR GU)

3. We were pleased to hear that Burnham was studying ways to include East Indians in the government. We have heard that he is considering Rai for an important appointive position to head a commission and we think this is a wise move. We also think there would be much merit in having an East Indian Attorney General and perhaps this could be achieved with Ramsahoye by changing the constitution so that the Attorney General would not be a member of the government.

4. We would not be opposed to Burnham trying to bring one or two moderate PPP Indians into his cabinet but in this connection it must be clearly understood that the United States would not be able to provide assistance for a government which involved a PPP/PNC coalition of any kind or which included Jagan or his henchmen. We assume that Burnham will be on guard against approaches by Jagan to get the nose of his camel under the tent.

For your information in our talks in London we will take position that election outcome is advantageous our joint interests. While we are disappointed at showing of JP, GUMP, etc., we do not think idea of alternative EIP/3/ should be dropped. We anticipate that UK may seek our support for a PPP/PNC coalition but we will resist this appeal. Our position is that new government without Jagan should be given chance demonstrate capacity and work for racial harmony and this best achieved by not including PPP members who provoked racial strife for their own ends. We plan to counsel Burnham toward moderation and assist him where possible./4/ To include Jagan and PPP in a coalition would probably lead to strife and jeopardize this assistance.

/3/ East Indian party.

/4/ In a telegram from Georgetown to London, December 11, to the attention of Ericson for Shullaw, Carlson reported Burnham's basic agreement with the U.S. advice. Carlson stressed to Burnham the importance of reaching a coalition agreement with the UF quickly; otherwise the new administration would be vulnerable to claims that it was only a minority government, "and that it would be wise to ensure that UF accepts responsibility for new government." Carlson also advised that UF participation would encourage the business community and private investors. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson-Department Messages, Vol. 2, 10/2/64-12/31/64) In a telegram from Georgetown to London, December 17, to the attention of Ericson for Shullaw, Carlson reported that he had urged that UF leaders be included in the list of original cabinet appointments, after Burnham had stated that "having UF in cabinet would evolve in month or two." (Ibid.)

402. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs (Shullaw) to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Tyler)/1/

Washington, December 21, 1964.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Chronological File, 1964. Secret. Drafted by Cobb.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

There is attached the agreed minute of our official level talks in London, December 17-18./2/

/2/ Attached but not printed.

The talks were from our standpoint most satisfactory. We found that in the British view so long as Jagan continues as the leader of the Indian community racial harmony cannot be re-established without a rapprochement between him and Burnham. You will note that we took issue with this concept pointing out that Jagan's record does not justify any assumption that he can serve as a basis for the establishment of racial harmony. I believe we have in effect bought time which Mr. Burnham can use to try to allay the Indian fears. If Burnham's actions bear out the intentions of his speeches, there may be some basis for hope./3/

/3/ The agreed minutes of the U.K.-U.S. consultations reported that U.S. officials made the case that "the Justice Party could continue to serve a useful purpose" as an alternative for Indian voters and that Indian confidence could be won by including Indians in the government and in other public bodies, especially in the police force. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson-Department Messages, Vol. 2, 10/2/64-12/31/65)

On the question of prompt action to start a vigorous assistance program in British Guiana, /4/ we found that HMG was in such a state of indecision regarding the role of its new Ministry of Overseas Development that we could not get authority for Mr. Yoe to proceed to Georgetown on January 1./5/ They indicated a willingness to give this authority at an early date/6/ and I hope we will not be delayed. The power play between the Ministry of Overseas Development and the Colonial Office may give us a number of problems before responsibilities are finally divided between the ministers.

/4/ In a telegram to Ericson in London for use at the U.S.-U.K. conference, December 8, Shullaw reported that the AID program proposed for British Guiana for the 1965 calendar year included \$5.8 million in grants for road and sea defense maintenance; \$.825 million in grants for technical assistance; \$5.0 million in a development loan for the Atkinson-McKenzie road; and \$3.5 million in loans for public works, small industry, and housing. (Ibid., British Guiana Chronological File, 1964)

/5/ The record of the U.S.-U.K. meeting on economic aid to British Guiana is reported in a memorandum of conversation, dated December 18. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, ARA/NC Files: Lot 69 D 41, Folder Guyana 66)

/6/ In a telegram from Georgetown to London, December 17, to the attention of Ericson for Shullaw, Carlson reported that the Governor thought that the "program looked fine." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson-Department Messages, Vol. 2, 10/2/64-12/31/64)

403. Memorandum of Conversation/1/

Washington, January 4, 1965.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, AID (US) BR GU. Secret. Drafted by Shullaw. The meeting was held at the Department of State.

SUBJECT

Aid Program for British Guiana

PARTICIPANTS

Michael N. F. Stewart, Minister, British Embassy Iain J. M. Sutherland, First Secretary, British Embassy William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary, EUR J. Harold Shullaw, Director, BNA

In the absence of Lord Harlech, Mr. Stewart was asked to come in to see the Secretary today on the subject of British Guiana. Mr. Tyler explained that the Secretary had been obliged to go to the White House and had instructed him to convey his views to Mr. Stewart.

We believe that Burnham has not done badly since taking office and that he has adopted a moderate and constructive line in his public statements regarding racial conciliation. We are under no illusions about Burnham's weaknesses and shortcomings. He is not ideal, but nevertheless he is the only alternative at present to Jagan and the PPP.

We have told Burnham that we would move ahead rapidly on an aid program immediately after the British Guiana elections. We are ready to do so and wish to send an AID official, Mr. Yoe, to Georgetown to work out details. Any delay, we are convinced, would have extremely adverse consequences. Such delay would destroy Burnham's confidence in us and make his relations with Governor Luyt difficult.

We are asking, therefore, with great urgency that the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary authorize our going ahead with the implementation of our aid program./2/ We have had a formal request from Burnham dated December 29 which he states has been submitted with the agreement of the Governor./3/ We have instructed our Embassy in London to give copies of the letter of request to the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Overseas Development. To get the program under way at the earliest date, we are proposing that Mr. Yoe and an engineer proceed to Georgetown on or about January 10.

/2/ At a January 8 meeting Stewart told Tyler that "HMG warmly welcomes the U.S. (aid) proposal." (Memorandum of conversation, January 8; *ibid.*, POL 2 BR GU)

/3/ Not found.

In response to Mr. Stewart's question, Mr. Shullaw said that we had outlined our proposed aid program during our talks with British officials in London on December 17 and 18. We

had also at that time said that we would like to send Mr. Yoe to Georgetown at the beginning of January.

Mr. Stewart said that he would report immediately to London on this conversation and our request for clearance for Mr. Yoe's visit./4/

/4/ In a January 23 letter to Crockett, Harry W. Yoe (AID) reported that he had arrived in British Guiana on January 15 and met with Burnham and Finance Minister D'Aguiar, and was impressed that they and other figures in the government and the civil service had a "sincere desire to utilize the assistance given in the most efficient manner," but that work on the roads and sea wall was hampered by a shortage of machinery and trucks. Yoe suggested that equipment could be obtained quickly from "ready stocks of the Navy." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65)

404. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, February 8, 1965.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT

British Guiana and Cuba

1. [11/2 lines of source text not declassified]2 there is a note of optimism in BG these days, even among East Indians; [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] the Governor is pleasantly surprised by Burnham's performance thus far, and [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] the two men seem to be getting along quite well with each other; [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] we can expect the PPP to come up with some kind of shennanigans during Greenwood's visit to BG,/3/ now scheduled for about February 12-15.

/2/ [text not declassified] British Guiana, visited the country January 16-19. He did not meet with Burnham during this trip, but did meet with him on February 3 in New York. Burnham was en route to British Guiana from the United Kingdom, where he met the new Colonial Secretary, Anthony Greenwood, whom Burnham found "not as pro-Jagan as he had originally assumed." (Memorandum to Cobb, February 4; Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson—Department [file name not declassified], Vol. 2, 10/2/64-12/31/64)

/3/ [text not declassified] reported PPP intentions "to assume a more aggressive attitude" toward the new Burnham government. (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65)

2. [7 lines of source text not declassified]

3. BG Rice Exports—There is a glut of rice in BG these days and we are working [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]/4/ on ways of moving some of it into the export market. This is important; as you may recall, one of Cheddi's major claims during the campaign was that only the PPP was able to dispose of BG rice (grown primarily by East Indians).

/4/ In a February 26 memorandum to Deputy Director Helms, Assistant Secretary Tyler requested [text not declassified] on a project involving the disbursement of up to \$550,000 to subsidize the clandestine purchase of 5,000 tons of rice from British Guiana. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana White House Meetings)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to British Guiana.]

GC

405. Memorandum From the Officer-in-Charge of British Guiana Affairs (Cobb) to the Director of the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs (Shullaw)/1/

Washington, February 19, 1965.

SUBJECT

Events in British Guiana—February 5–19

1. The Greenwood visit was very successful from our point of view. Jagan behaved like a petulant adolescent, while Burnham and D'Aguiar made favorable impressions.² The security situation did not Guyana 899 1 Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana White House Meetings. Secret. 2 In telegram 290 from Georgetown, February 15, Carlson reported a discussion with Greenwood, who agreed that Burnham had done well but thought that "sooner or later Cheddi would win an election." Greenwood said, "I don't subscribe to the view, you know, that Cheddi is a Communist," he was "in his way brilliant although rather incompetent. He then remarked: 'On the other hand, here is this other man who knows so quickly relationships, where British Guiana fits in the wider scheme of things, procedures, etc., whereas Cheddi just does not grasp those things.'" (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 15 BR GU) get out of hand even though there was a marked increase in the number of troublesome incidents. Jagan is reportedly going to Leipzig to get bloc funds but whether his line of credit with the bloc is still good remains to be seen.

2. Reynolds metals signed on February 16 a 25-year contract with the government. It will double production to 600,000 tons annually and Reynolds has paid \$500,000 in advance income taxes. Total taxation bauxite industry will be 50% of profits this year according to D'Aguiar.

3. Rice is still our number one problem. An American rice broker arrives in British Guiana February 22 to try to arrange a sale with Peru but the Rice Market Board may not do business since it seems to insist on a premium price. Puerto Rico's Governor is seeking ways to help out also. An American rice growing specialist will go to British Guiana in March.

4. Burnham told Carlson he had asked Police Commissioner to give us a list of the equipment needed to modernize police force. We sent a message stressing that we could provide no equipment until we conducted a public safety survey and that we would not conduct a survey unless HMG requests it./3/ I doubt we should be in the police business so long as the UK is in BG./4/

/3/ Telegram 156 to Georgetown, February 12. (Ibid., POL 23–8 BR GU)

/4/ In telegram 305 from Georgetown, February 24, Carlson agreed but added that the situation was "so different from that elsewhere" that it merited special consideration and suggested supplying the police with vehicles and motorcycles after obtaining U.K. approval. (Ibid., AID (US) BR GU)

5. In response to a request from D'Aguiar for financial advice we indicated we could send on a short visit an FSR and a FSO who might be helpful.

6. HMG is not amused by public reference to John Carter as next BG Ambassador to the U.S. and asks us to discourage same.

7. To get the AID program going we need to buy road machinery in a hurry. Gordon Chase is checking with Defense to see if they have stocks which we might tap (the Navy Department told us it does not have) and AID has been asked to assemble the machinery and trucks as quickly as possible but it looks as if we will have a 90-day delay which isn't good.

8. 100,000 pounds of dried milk was shipped from Panama in early February and this should keep the glasses filled until the shipment from New Orleans arrives. Carlson has asked for a PL-480 adviser since the BG Red Cross wants to get out of the milk business July 1. The specialist who recently worked out a program for Jamaica will be available to go down in late March or early April.

9. At the Canadians' request Harry Yoe is going to Ottawa to coordinate assistance planning for BG. I advised the U.K. Embassy.

406. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate General in Georgetown/1/

Washington, February 25, 1965.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson—Department Messages [file name not declassified], Vol. 3, 1/1/65–7/6/65. Secret.

Foll for Carlson from Shullaw: Your message /2/ re Greenwood visit extremely enlightening. Was apparently more productive than we had anticipated. We agree with Governor that it is important to take advantage of Greenwood's good will and provide him with basis for [garble—convincing?] Labor Party that Burnham is more responsible than many Laborites have believed. You should therefore after briefing Governor on our views, pass them on to Burnham in manner you judge most likely be effective.

/2/ See footnote 2, Document 405.

1. U.S. has heard very favorable report about Greenwood's visit from HMG, /3/ and is aware Burnham's astute statesmanship was major factor in visit's success.

2. U.S. believes that if Burnham agrees now to authorize Greenwood to establish commission to examine question of racial imbalance he will in effect speed up setting date for constitutional conference.

/3/ A February 18 memorandum to Bundy indicated that Greenwood had been very impressed by Burnham, "commenting that he had no idea that he was a man of such

stature," while the performance of Jagan and his party was "lamentable." Greenwood no longer believed a coalition of Jagan's party and Burnham's party would work. Greenwood reportedly felt that if the racial imbalance question in the security forces could be resolved, then a constitutional convention to prepare the way to independence could be held. (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65)

3. If Burnham drags his feet on authorizing appointment commission he will retard setting date for conference./4/

/4/ In a February 25 telegram from London to Shullaw, Ericson reported that the Foreign Office insisted on cooperation from Burnham on the Commission to study racial imbalance. However much Greenwood's attitude toward Burnham and Jagan had changed, Greenwood was "politically committed here to commission idea and could not sell independence conference or return of emergency powers to his Labor colleagues unless Burnham accepts commission." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson—Department Messages [file name not declassified], Vol. 3, 1/1/65-7/6/65)

4. While Burnham no doubt disappointed over emergency powers, he has gained far more than he realizes, and rather than be discouraged he should build on his gains. For example, securing Greenwood's agreement to amendment constitution to permit appointment Ramphal as Attorney General is master stroke and real achievement. Tactically Burnham should play this appointment up as major step toward racial harmony and betterment relations between races. Burnham might wish announce further that he will no longer press for lifting emergency powers. Will ask new Attorney General to undertake thorough study conditions and thereafter advise the Governor, Premier and Cabinet when emergency might be lifted. This is suggested as one way getting over this hurdle and avoiding any "horse trade."

5. U.S. hopes Burnham will seize this chance to make progress toward independence by in effect providing Greenwood the tools he needs to do the job, i.e., authorize Greenwood to go ahead with commission to examine racial imbalance, and work with him toward this end. We urge him to send Greenwood a message giving the authorization Greenwood requested.

407. Telegram From the Consulate General in British Guiana to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, April 11, 1965, 4 p.m.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 15 BR GU. Secret; Limit Distribution. Repeated to London.

376. Following is course of developments over past 36 hours in Burnham-D'Aguiar budget crisis since our tel 375 London 201/2/ which indicated grave threat to continued coalition. This threat now appears to have been brought under control and impasse resolved after intensive pressure by ConGen.

/2/ In telegram 375 from Georgetown, April 9, Carlson reported his talk with D'Aguiar earlier that day about the latter's intention to resign. D'Aguiar told Carlson he had "no political future," the PNC intended to merge with or swallow up his party, and that, therefore, he would direct all his efforts towards doing a "good job as finance minister."

D'Aguiar thought that since "there is no hope in hell of balancing the budget" due to PNC politically inspired spending increases, that the only hope for the country was "in providing image which will attract private investment" through a good budget, "especially by abolition property tax." (Ibid.)

During mayor's reception evening April 9 for newly appointed BG commissioner to UK, Lionel Luckoo, Minister of Works and Hydraulics Kassim (UF) told me that at cabinet meeting scheduled that evening it was anticipated that decision would be made for D'Aguiar to leave cabinet. Kassim did not know whether other UF ministers would remain but thought they would. This meeting apparently went far into night but without real results. D'Aguiar did not attend but other UF ministers did with his permission.

On morning April 10 at briefing on rice problem by Dr. Efferson (Dean of School of Agriculture, Louisiana State University) in Burnham's office which was attended by Kassim, Minister of Trade and Industry Kendall, Minister of Agriculture John, and by myself and other US representatives, message was received about one hour later from Burnham summoning key ministers to special meeting at his residence. On way out I urged Kendall, whose political judgment Burnham respects, to see that if D'Aguiar had to go that it be done smoothly on grounds personal and health reasons, preferably with commendatory letter of appreciation from Burnham, but sought impress on Kendall importance of retrieving situation if at all possible. I also spoke with Kassim, who seemed uncertain and depressed. Gave him same advice along with view that D'Aguiar's departure from government would be damaging but departure of UFs would be disastrous and consequently every effort must be made to retain D'Aguiar's services.

Toward midnight April 10 I learned [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] that UF executive had held meeting at which D'Aguiar claimed matter of principle and substance was involved on which he felt strongly: that party's choices were:

- (1) for him to resign with other UF ministers remaining;
- (2) for all UF ministers to resign; and
- (3) for all UF members to resign from legislative assembly. After lengthy discussions executive voted for all ministers (3) to resign and to defer question of leaving assembly (7 members) until constitutional aspects could be determined. Report also indicated that D'Aguiar scheduled meet with Burnham at 9 a.m. April 11 for final session.

Immediately sought reach Burnham without success. Called D'Aguiar early morning April 11. He was just arising so invited him to breakfast. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] Decided try combination of flattery, pleading, and strong language related to horrible consequences of breakdown anti-Jagan forces. Told D'Aguiar how much US entities appreciated his contributions to Burnham administration, what favorable impact his presence in government had on various visitors, e.g., that American businessmen usually say after seeing ministers that they are good but D'Aguiar is really outstanding. (D'Aguiar usually does make better impression than any other minister on businessmen.) Told him one of main reasons for USG support and confidence in BG was coalition and constructive role D'Aguiar was playing; everyone knew he was outstanding member of cabinet and counting on him; that Washington would not be able believe that on issue of abolition of property tax worth about \$1 million he would hand BG to Jagan on a silver platter; that I had just been to Washington and had given optimistic appraisal stability Burnham administration, and USG on basis such reports had gone to extraordinary lengths to expedite aid and to make it substantial; that because of this stability and his presence in cabinet potential foreign investors were being encouraged; that I could not believe that after all effort put into saving BG from communism, including strenuous efforts by D'Aguiar

(all those miles and all those speeches), it was going to be thrown away. I stressed it would be bad enough if he felt he must leave government but to permit UF to leave was to sell his country out; that with all trouble spots Secretary and senior officers had to cope with, such as Vietnam, Russians, Castro, Chinese, were we now going to have to add BG to the list? I asked him to think about consequences in BG itself which would doubtless see return to violence, possibly against his own supporters.

Then suggested that there must be compromise and that he must realize Burnham could not give way totally under ultimatum of resignation. Burnham must save face and D'Aguiar must give at least little bit. I asked if he would accept idea of moratorium if I could obtain Burnham's agreement, or some kind of depletion allowance which would permit government to collect property taxes with one hand and refund it with the other. We discussed matter and arrived at compromise whereby existing industries could deduct cost of any expansion or capital improvements from taxes owed or, if company did not qualify in this way, purchase of government debentures would be regarded same as paying tax. New industries would be exempt from tax. (First \$50,000 is not taxable in any event under existing legislation.) At my insistence he also reluctantly authorized moratorium of two years but only as last resort if Burnham rejected above.

At this point, with D'Aguiar's concurrence, I informed Burnham that 9 a.m. meeting with D'Aguiar postponed if agreeable and I would meet with Burnham first. He agreed. D'Aguiar said he also wished have Burnham's agreement to downward revision of income tax rates and to simplifying tax structure by decimal system. This tax now ranges from 6 percent on first \$1,000 to 70 percent on \$13,200 and above. Total cost of D'Aguiar's plan would be about \$125,000 BWI. He was prepared not to inaugurate it until 1966 but wished make some allusion to possibility in budget message scheduled April 14.

Finally, D'Aguiar confided other matters which have been bothering him in coalition, some of which are petty annoyances which probably loom much larger than otherwise in view his fatigue: there were too many long cabinet meetings at night with important matters decided at late hours; lack of expeditious handling of agenda items, inadequate air conditioning, and belief that no one but he felt free to be critical. I offered to talk to Burnham about reducing number of night sessions or possibly exempting D'Aguiar in some fashion, as well as proposing more personal consultation with D'Aguiar. D'Aguiar thought it would be good idea have committee with each side represented on party basis to express freely to the other any matters of concern. I did not commit myself to support this idea as I am not certain that it would be productive.

D'Aguiar throughout whole first part of discussion, kept reiterating desire to resign, but by end of discussion had specifically agreed to stay indefinitely and to give it another try.

I saw Burnham immediately afterward and informed him of likelihood UF ministers resigning, possibility of UF leaving legislative assembly and recalled series of serious consequences previously drawn to his attention. Told him it seemed essential to keep D'Aguiar in government at least at this stage and to settle this tax issue at any cost. Told him Washington had been given favorable view of stability his administration during my recent visit, that USG would find collapse of coalition over tax involving \$1 million incomprehensible, that if events should take this disastrous turn, I had little doubt USG would have to reevaluate its aid program since there would be little point in improving country for Jagan. I then described compromise which Guyana 905 D'Aguiar was now willing to accept on tax issue and Burnham readily accepted it, even claiming he had proposed most of it to D'Aguiar yesterday. (This may be more face-saving.) Told Burnham that more

than just taxes was involved here: D'Aguiar was tired, unsure he was really wanted or appreciated, and Burnham should pat him on the back occasionally. I outlined D'Aguiar's complaints and suggested Burnham find ways to ameliorate them. I suggested he call D'Aguiar in at least once each week and talk over important matters personally, making clear that D'Aguiar was not just another minister. In short, that although Burnham might find it distasteful, he should turn on some of his charm.

In order not to risk agreement coming apart in Burnham-D'Aguiar meeting, I suggested that no meeting be held but that either Burnham or I simply inform D'Aguiar of Burnham's concurrence with tax compromise. Burnham agreed and telephoned D'Aguiar, who said he wished to see Burnham anyway "to thrash out a few things." Burnham then asked me to remain during this session. D'Aguiar made notes on all major tax changes in new budget, asking Burnham in each case to agree. Burnham was considerate, readily agreed, although offering occasional language changes. Burnham exempted D'Aguiar from cabinet meeting evening April 11 or any meeting April 12 to free him to work on budget. He agreed to try operate cabinet meetings more expeditiously, to consider farming out items to subcommittees, to have better air conditioning in cabinet room, and to have more personal consultation. D'Aguiar suggested periodical special committee meeting on party basis in which criticism would be freely offered on any subject without thought of offense. Burnham agreed but suggested it be limited to cabinet officers and parliamentary secretaries. D'Aguiar agreed and read back all of his notes. By this time three hours had passed and Burnham invited us sample his bar./3/

/3/ In an April 12 memorandum to Cobb, Shullaw reported that he sent the following message to Carlson: "Heartiest congratulations your efforts." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana Chronological File (Burdett), 1965)

Carlson

408. Information Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Davis) to Secretary of State Rusk/1/

Washington, May 21, 1965.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 19 BR GU. Secret. Drafted by Shullaw and Cobb.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

The question of holding a constitutional conference and fixing a date for independence is becoming an increasingly serious issue in British Guiana. Premier Burnham is becoming suspicious of both the United States and the United Kingdom and his suspicions have been intensified by press stories in Britain to the effect that the United States Government is opposed to early independence on the grounds that an independent British Guiana might go communist. /2/

/2/ In a telegram from Georgetown for Shullaw, May 17, Carlson reported that he assured Burnham that these press stories were completely false. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Telegrams and Reports, 1965)

The British have informed us that they expect to hold the promised constitutional conference as early as practicable, presumably, if all goes well sometime toward the end of this year, but they have not been willing to be this explicit to Premier Burnham. Instead they have told him that the conference could not be scheduled until there had been time to study a report on racial imbalance in the public services^{/3/} which the British Guiana Government has requested from the International Commission of Jurists.

^{/3/} In a telegram from Georgetown for Shullaw, May 22, Carlson reported that the Governor had confirmed his earlier assurance that the "only stipulation [concerning timing] was that of time to 'study' ICJ report before constitutional conference and that there was no mention of requiring its implementation." (Ibid.)

Our Consul General in Georgetown has been told to try to allay Burnham's suspicions of footdragging on the part of the British and to deny press reports that the United States opposes independence. ^{/4/} We have suggested to the British that a more forthcoming reply to Burnham's request for a constitutional conference in September might be helpful. ^{/5/} Specifically we have suggested that since it is their intention to convene this conference this year Premier Burnham might be advised of this fact.

^{/4/} In a telegram from Georgetown for Shullaw, June 1, Carlson reported that Burnham was "quite unimpressed" with and unconvinced by U.S. arguments that the United Kingdom was not dragging its feet on independence. Carlson stressed to Burnham that the United States did favor early independence. (Ibid.)

^{/5/} In a telegram to Georgetown for Carlson, May 21, Shullaw reported that he had called in John Killick of the British Embassy and "suggested that HMG might wish to consider being somewhat more forthcoming," and that there could be "considerable gain were HMG to tell Burnham that the conference would be held this year." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65)

409. Action Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Davis) to Secretary of State Rusk

Washington, May 25, 1965.

[Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65. Secret. 1 page of source text not declassified.]

410. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, June 23, 1965.

1 Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65. Secret; Sensitive.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. Attached are some State documents which describe the problem we are now having with Greenwood/2/ [3 lines of source text not declassified]

/2/ In a June 22 memorandum to Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs John M. Leddy recommended informing Dean "We believe it is absolutely essential we continue as necessary our covert financial support to the anti-Jagan political parties in British Guiana" and that it would be appreciated if the Ambassador would convey to Prime Minister Wilson and Foreign Secretary Stewart "our deep concern [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]." (Ibid.)

2. Rusk spoke to Ambassador Dean yesterday and made a hard pitch.

3. Harry Shullaw called me this afternoon to say that we have indications that we may be getting a negative answer from the British. To ward this off, your help is needed. He offered the following possibilities:

(a) You could call Ambassador Dean and, without mentioning the fact that we know the British are thinking negatively, refer to the Secretary's conversation with the Ambassador yesterday and indicate that the White House (the President, if you can say it) is also very interested in an early affirmative /3/ answer.

/3/ The words "early affirmative" were underlined and a marginal note in Chase's handwriting reads: "FYI we need to write some checks for Burnham."

Also, you want the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to know this.

(b) You could authorize the State Department to make the above point to the British on your behalf.

4. Shullaw feels that a direct call from you to Dean will be most effective and that the sooner you make the call, the better (the British may be replying to us any time now)./4/ I agree with Harry on both accounts.

/4/ According to a July 9 memorandum of conversation Dean advised Rusk that [text not declassified] had approved the U.S. covert support program. (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, British Guiana, White House Meetings)

GC

I will call Dean as per Paragraph 3(a)./5/

/5/ A marginal note next to this paragraph reads: "done."

Tell State to make the pitch on behalf of the White House.

See me.

411. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, July 14, 1965.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64–11/65. Secret.](#)

SUBJECT

British Guiana—Constitutional Conference in November

In response to your question, here are some reasons why the announcement of a Constitutional Conference [/2/](#) seems a good thing. 1. Since we can in no way be assured that the British will stay in BG for 5 or 10 years, it is probably better to get the British out of BG sooner rather than later.

[/2/ In telegram 182 from London, July 14, the Embassy reported that Greenwood would announce the next day in Parliament that he had proposed November 2 as the date for the British Guiana constitutional conference in London. \(National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 19 BR GU\)](#)

(a) With the British in BG and the East Indian population growing, there is always the chance that the British will change the rules of the game (e.g., coalition, a new election). In this regard, it is probably true that Jagan feels he still has a chance so long as the British are around. With the British gone, Jagan himself may decide to bug out.

(b) With the British gone, it is highly likely that Burnham will do what is necessary to ensure that Jagan does not get back into power on the wings of a growing East Indian population (e.g., import West Indian Africans; establish literacy tests for voters—these would hurt the PPP).

(c) The chances for violence probably won't increase significantly with independence. Generally speaking, the East Indians are timid compared to the Africans and, without the British to protect them, they might be even more timid. Also, it is conceivable that a British military presence could be maintained even after independence.

(d) If Burnham does not get fairly early independence, his credibility as a national leader will be questioned—i.e., not able to deliver on his big promises. 2. Once we assume that relatively early independence is probably not only inevitable but also desirable, it would seem to make sense to announce it. In this regard, it should be noted that Burnham has been pressing the British very hard to live up to their previous commitment on a Constitutional Conference, and British reluctance (until now) to agree to a specific date strained Burnham/British relations; this, in turn, has, on occasion, led Burnham to suspect that we were encouraging the British in their stand. In short, an unpleasant situation, all around, was building up. GC PS—Best guess on date of independence is mid-1966. [/3/](#)

[/3/ The postscript was handwritten by Chase.](#)

412. Paper Prepared in the Department of State/1/

Washington, July 30, 1965.

[1 Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 1 UK–US. Secret. Drafted by Cobb on July 30. Transmitted as enclosure 2 of airgram CA–](#)

1173 to Georgetown, August 2, in which the Department reported receipt of a brief on British policy in British Guiana on July 23 from the British Embassy in Washington in preparation for the first of a series of "periodic discussions on policy toward British Guiana as it approaches independence." The British brief was enclosure 1 to the airgram. The first meeting was held on July 30 between representatives of the British Embassy in Washington and Department of State officers led by Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard H. Davis, during which this paper was given to the British.

UNITED STATES COMMENTS ON BRITISH BRIEF

The United States Government has studied with interest the brief on British policy in British Guiana which was received July 23, 1965.

The United States welcomes the intention of the British Government to convene the constitutional conference in November which will, among other tasks, fix the date for independence.

The United States shares with the British Government the view that the Indian community should be represented at the conference. It would normally expect that Dr. Jagan and his party would attend the conference even though they might not wish to see independence granted under the present government, just as Mr. Burnham and Mr. d'Aguiar represented their parties at earlier constitutional conferences under somewhat similar circumstances. However Dr. Jagan's behavior since the election in December gives rise to the question whether he appreciates the responsibilities of the role incumbent upon him as leader of the opposition. His failure to resign the office of Premier, his failure to meet jointly with the Colonial Secretary and present Premier to discuss racial imbalances, his announced intention to refuse to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry of the International Commission of Jurists, and his erratic pattern of attendance at sessions of the House of Assembly may indicate that no matter what steps are taken he will find some pretext to refuse to attend the Conference. We therefore suggest that consideration should now be given to the possibility that other persons in the Indian community in B.G. may have to be invited in order to assure that this important section of the community be represented at the conference. /2/

/2/ In a brief on British policy in British Guiana, September 3, the British doubted whether they could invite other persons to represent the Indian community if the PPP refused to attend, since these special invitees could hardly claim to be democratically elected representatives. (Ibid., POL 32-1 BR GU-VEN)

The United States also shares the British view of the importance of allaying Indian fears for the future, and hopes that the report of the ICJ Commission will contribute toward this objective. We have noted that the British Government is anxious that Dr. Jagan's party cooperate with the Commission in order that the report not be open to criticism that evidence was tendered from one side only. Should Dr. Jagan's party fail to avail itself of the opportunity offered by the ICJ Commission it would seem to bear out the view that the leaders of the party are not genuinely interested in alleviating alleged imbalances and discrimination but have used this charge as a smoke screen for their political objectives.

The United States Government believes that the racial fears in B.G. will be difficult to assuage, based as they are on deep racial cleavages. These are not easily susceptible to

rapid transformation and several generations may be required to effect more than marginal progress toward this objective. While efforts of government make a contribution toward this task, it should not be assumed that any government, no matter how well intentioned, will be able to eradicate long standing suspicions. Only years of education, association and understanding can break down the wall of segregation on which racial fears rest. Nevertheless there is a major role for the security forces in B.G. to play in the task of seeking stable conditions. The presence of British troops in British Guiana during the past year provides ample evidence for this conclusion. If British troops can remain after independence until adequate local forces are recruited and trained and equipped to meet the security requirements of the area, this would contribute substantially to allaying Indian fears.

Since the maintenance of internal security and stability will be no small task, the nature, composition and objectives of the B.G. security forces will not, we hope, have to take into account the possibility of a foreign threat. The United States hopes that problems arising from the Venezuelan boundary claim can be resolved amicably between two such good friends as Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Venezuela. It would be unfortunate if a continuation of this claim were to be used as the pretext for establishing an Army in B.G. or for recruiting security forces in excess of the Government's domestic requirements and of a nature not suitable to the countries' needs, thereby imposing a possibly excessive burden on the developing economy.

The United States welcomes this opportunity to exchange views on B.G. and looks forward to receiving additional briefing on British policy in the Colony.

413. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Operations of the Central Intelligence Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, August 6, 1965.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64-11/65. Another copy is in Central Intelligence Agency, DCI \(Helms\) Files: Job 80-B01285A, Chronological File DDCI & DCI, 1 Jan-31 Dec 65. Secret; Eyes Only.](#)

SUBJECT

Current Situation in British Guiana

1. The coalition government of Forbes Burnham's People's National Congress (PNC) and Peter D'Aguiar's United Force (UF), installed as a result of the December 1964 elections, is having some success in restoring responsible government to British Guiana. The coalition is not an easy one, however, since Burnham and D'Aguiar neither like nor trust each other and hold conflicting political views. They are united by their opposition to Cheddi Jagan. Jagan's opposition People's Progressive Party (PPP) is suffering from increased factionalism caused by conflicting personal ambitions and differences of opinion concerning its role as an opposition party. There is no evidence to indicate that Jagan has lost the political support of the vast majority of the Indian population. Some evidence is coming to light of increased Chinese Communist interest in the PPP, and a number of party leaders recently visited China including two leaders of the militant group within the PPP which reportedly wishes to break away from Jagan and form a Communist Party of British Guiana. Jagan has taken a

public position opposing the granting of independence to British Guiana under Burnham, and this also has caused him some difficulties.

2. The International Commission of Jurists is now conducting an inquiry in British Guiana into the question of racial imbalance in the public service, including the security forces. It is expected to produce a report about 1 October 1965. The British Government has informed Burnham of its intention to convene a conference in London to devise a constitution for British Guiana and to set a date for independence. This conference will take place once the International Commission of Jurists' report has been submitted, and a date of 2 November 1965 is tentatively established. If this sequence of events is not interrupted, it is expected that British Guiana will achieve independence in the spring of 1966.

3. The security situation in the country remains disturbed and Jagan is believed to be directing arson and sabotage activities, attempting to increase these to such an extent that the British Government will be forced to delay the independence conference. The leadership of the Guiana Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU), which is loyal to Jagan, plans a major strike effort on the sugar estates during August and September. This could lead to racial violence, and it may be Jagan's intention to utilize the strike for this purpose. Local security forces continue to be less than adequate, and the presence of 1300 British troops is still required to insure internal security.

4. The United States Government is providing approximately \$12,000,000 in financial aid to the Burnham government, some of these funds being useful for attacking unemployment in the Georgetown area. The economic situation is slightly improved in British Guiana although the government's inability to find a market for its rice crop is causing some unrest, particularly among the Indian population, and provides Jagan a handy criticism of the government.

5. The *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* program in British Guiana has three objectives:

a. to obtain intelligence on the PPP's capabilities and intentions, particularly Jagan's plans in the immediate future;

b. to keep Burnham and D'Aguiar working together in the coalition government, and to keep their parties organized in support of the coalition government and prepared for a quick election if one should be necessary; and

c. to counter Jagan's efforts to gain control of organized labor in British Guiana. *[1 paragraph (8 lines of source text) not declassified]*

6. The following items are suggested for discussion at the forthcoming meeting:

a. the current situation in British Guiana;

b. current United States Government policy with respect to British Guiana;

c. anticipated problems in the immediate pre-independence and post-independence period. The withdrawal of British troops from British Guiana and the inadequacy of local security forces are of immediate concern.

d. *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* maintaining covert channels to Burnham and D'Aguiar and how this should be carried out. RH

414. Telegram From the Consulate General in British Guiana to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, September 16, 1965.

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Telegrams and Reports, 1965. Secret; Priority.](#)

Ref: Message dated 15 September 1965.[/2/](#) Following message for Shullaw (info Brubeck) from Carlson:

[/2/ Not found.](#)

Had long and useful discussion with Burnham evening September 15 lasting until well after midnight, after which he still planned to do some work at his office. He is not looking as well as he should, probably due to overwork and possibly because of recent crash dieting program which took off about 30 pounds. At moment he also has what seems to be painful sacro-iliac condition.

Opportunity arose early in conversation to seek determine how he views central problem of assuring re-election in 1968. It is clear that he prefers to hope that significant fraction Indians can be won over to his party or to one he can work with. If, however, it appears that such development not occurring he then strongly favors program for importation West Indian Negroes and while conceding there would be practical problems, believes they could be overcome. If such program not possible, I gather he would be willing consider such ideas as unitary statehood with Barbados or, conceivably, disenfranchisement of illiterates. He finds such thoughts very distasteful but believe he would do so if convinced there is no other way to survive politically against PPP.

This topic enabled me to raise matter of anxiety in some quarters, such as UF, regarding his ultimate intentions and to talk to him along following lines. Impression is that there is increasing anxiety within UF that Burnham might establish police state. This is undoubtedly having effect on D'Aguiar but apparently that is only one aspect of what is bothering him. Indications are that he is becoming dissatisfied again and while situation has not reached stage of crisis comparable to weekend when coalition was in danger of collapse, time to do something about this reviving potential danger is now. It is essential to seek to improve relations with D'Aguiar and to try to go to London in general accord.

In addition to concern over Burnham's intentions, D'Aguiar apparently feels that he is not being consulted sufficiently, is too often overridden in cabinet on fiscal matters, that expenditures higher than should be and sometimes include unnecessary items, as well as projecting increased expenses next year. His concern is understandable. It is natural for there to be anxiety about intentions in period of great uncertainty when country is emerging as independent. Such apprehension should be recognized and steps taken to cope with it. One must remember that UF regards itself not as junior partner but as key. On fiscal side, D'Aguiar's services are needed. It is not easy task to look after the purse when needs are legion and ministers are in hurry to achieve success, but somebody must do it. He is probably more inflexible than necessary on occasion, [/3/](#) but perhaps Burnham is too much the other way. In any event, substantive points should be talked out and cultivating D'Aguiar, in my opinion, would have great effect in facilitation agreement on substantive matters. D'Aguiar is man who needs to be appreciated. Complimenting him is effective. I

realize this course of action may be disagreeable but politicians—and diplomats—sometimes have disagreeable tasks. Burnham can do this job. I suggested that he might wish consider some of the following approaches: consult D'Aguiar much more frequently; reassure him at appropriate stage soon about intentions; be frank and genuine on this subject; perhaps have him to dinner or other private meeting weekly until London conference; seek his opinion and advice on various subjects, even if your mind is already made up; compliment him privately and perhaps publicly in press conference just before leaving for London, in course reviewing accomplishments your administration; consider asking him to visit United States and talk to business groups (I told Burnham that if this useful I will be prepared give D'Aguiar invitation at USG expense); refrain, at least for present, from raising items involving expenditures which D'Aguiar most likely regard as unnecessary.

/3/ In a September 16 telegram for Shullaw, sent earlier in the day, Carlson reported that D'Aguiar had told him that morning that he was generally concerned by Burnham's tentative 1966 expenditure plans, and that "there would be a balanced budget for 1966 'or else'." (Ibid., Carlson—Department Messages, Vol. 4, 7/7/65–2/14/69)

Burnham agreed with my analysis and prescription and indicated intention begin this operation soonest.

Plan to see D'Aguiar if possible today.

415. Memorandum From Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, October 5, 1965.

1 Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/64–11/65. Secret.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

Today I had lunch with Del Carlson who is presently in town on consultations. Here are some of the points which came up.

1. BG Security Forces—The way matters now stand, (a) independence is likely to come in April 1966 and (b) the British will want to take out their troops a few days before independence. Unfortunately, the local BG security forces will not be in a position to handle the security job effectively before September, 1966. The problem—to delay independence (not likely) or to keep the British troops in place after independence.

Del said that the British have not yet made a firm decision on this matter and that we might be able to convince them to keep troops in BG after independence. I indicated to Del that we will be happy to lend a hand in this effort when he and State give us the word. /2/ He assured me that he and State will have our offer clearly in mind.

/2/ In a September 21 memorandum to Chase, Cobb reported that during the next exchange of views with the British Embassy, the Department of State planned to present the advantages of keeping British forces in British Guiana until September 1966. (Ibid.)

2. Burnham's Visit—Burnham is expected to come to the United States sometime in early December. Del emphasized that the trappings of the visit are as important as the visit itself. He urged that, in addition to the appointment with the President (which is a "must"), we should try to give Burnham some red-carpet treatment. For example, it would be wonderful if we could get Burnham into Blair House. /3/

/3/ A marginal notation in Bundy's handwriting next to this sentence reads: "This should be easy."

I told Del that we will be as helpful as we can.

3. Venezuela/British Guiana Border Dispute—Del said that the Venezuelan claim against British Guiana (Venezuela is claiming about one-half of BG as its own) irritates the hell out of Burnham and that the Venezuelans seem to be getting more serious as time goes on. Del thought that we should look very hard at this one in the fairly near future to see if we should be doing anything. For example, we could urge both parties to go to the International Court of Justice; [4 lines of source text not declassified] /4/ I told Del that I would look into the matter to see if there is anything that we should be doing at this stage of the game.

/4/ At a meeting between Secretary Rusk and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Irabarren Borges on October 7 Rusk "expressed the hope that the Venezuelan Government would pursue this matter bilaterally with the U.K. and not seek to involve the U.S. at this point 'since we have more than enough other problems.'" (Memorandum of conversation, October 7; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 32-1 BR GU-VEN)

4. East Indians—Del said that we are so far getting nowhere with respect to building up an alternative East Indian party. He went on to say, however, that the situation is still very fluid and that we should probably wait until after independence before we get to work on this problem in earnest. The big hope is that we can locate an alternative East Indian leader; so far no one of any stature appears to be on the horizon. A lesser hope is that Burnham will, by sensible and progressive policies, be able to win the East Indians over to his side. Burnham, however, is not at all confident that he can ever translate East Indian acceptance of his regime into East Indian votes. Neither is Del.

Del added that even if the East Indians cannot be wooed away from Jagan, Burnham will probably do whatever is necessary to win the election in 1968. This could take the form of importing Negroes from other Caribbean countries or, in a pinch, establishing literacy tests for Guianese voters. Literacy tests would hurt the East Indian population more than the Negro population.

5. Carlson's Availability—Carlson will be in Washington for the next week or so; he will, of course, be delighted to come over and talk to you if you want to get an up-to-date briefing. Are you interested?

GC

Yes. Set it up. Not this time. /5/

/5/ Bundy checked this option.

416. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, October 18, 1965, 11 a.m.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 16 BR GU. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Shullaw and approved by S October 27. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office. The memorandum is part I of II.

SUBJECT

British Guiana

PARTICIPANTS

US

The Secretary

J. Harold Shullaw, Director, BNA

UK

Anthony Greenwood, Secretary of State for the Colonies

Sir Patrick Dean, British Ambassador

Ian Wallace, Assistant Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office

C. G. Eastwood, Assistant Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office

The Colonial Secretary said he believed Jagan and the PPP would attend the Constitutional Conference scheduled to begin in London on November 2 although they would probably walk out at some point in the proceedings. Mr. Greenwood expressed satisfaction with the course of developments in British Guiana during the past year under Burnham's leadership. He also expressed an optimistic view of the Conference prospects and satisfaction that Burnham is prepared to accept the recommendations in the report of the International Commission of Jurists. Mr. Greenwood said this was not easy for Burnham to do, but it should be a helpful gesture on the eve of the Constitutional Conference.

The Secretary expressed concern at the security situation in British Guiana following independence and asked if it would be possible for the UK to leave some military forces after independence. Mr. Greenwood replied that in view of our concern /2/ he would be prepared to recommend retention of British forces for a limited period of time after independence. /3/ He stressed that there was no precedent for doing so. Mr. Greenwood said Burnham was being pressed to get on with the creation of local security forces, but it would be a year from now before such forces would be able to take on the job of security. While Burnham was asking for independence in February, Mr. Greenwood thought June or July would be more realistic. The Colonial Secretary added that Burnham is agreeable to British forces staying on for a period after independence.

/2/ In a meeting later that day at the White House with Bundy and Chase, Greenwood said that to shorten the gap between independence and the readiness of local security forces the British would delay independence until June or July and institute a phased withdrawal of British troops. Bundy expressed continuing Presidential interest in British Guiana. Greenwood complimented Bundy on the U.S. Consul General in Georgetown. Bundy responded "we have taken particular pains in our selection of personnel for all agencies operating in British Guiana." (Memorandum of conversation, October 18; Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, British Guiana, Vol. III, Memos, 12/63-7/64)

/3/ At a meeting on November 27 Dean informed Rusk that the British Cabinet, acting upon Greenwood's recommendation, had decided to allow British troops to remain in British Guiana after independence on May 26, 1966, until October 1966 when Guyanese forces would be prepared to assume their responsibilities. (Memorandum of conversation, November 27; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, DEF 6 UK)

In response to the Secretary's question about the Venezuelan claim Mr. Greenwood said the claim was without a sound legal basis and for that reason Venezuela would be uninterested in referring the dispute to the International Court. The Secretary expressed the hope the matter could be resolved before independence since otherwise the existence of the dispute would constitute a bar to membership for Guiana in the OAS. The Secretary asked whether there was any possibility of minor border adjustments. Both Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Wallace replied that any territorial concession to Venezuela would be exploited by Jagan against Burnham.

The Colonial Secretary in the course of the conversation described Burnham as a "good Prime Minister" whose performance has been above expectations. He suggested that Burnham has made some progress in reassuring the small, well-to-do Indian business community and noted that return of Indians to areas which they had left during the racial disturbances. The Colonial Secretary's references to Jagan were unsympathetic. He believes Jagan's position has deteriorated in the past year as his party has suffered from internal differences.

417. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Operations of the Central Intelligence Agency (Helms) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)/1/

Washington, December 10, 1965.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, [file name not declassified] Telegrams and Reports, 1965. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT
British Guiana

1. The British Guiana Independence Conference concluded in London on 19 November 1965 by setting the date of 26 May 1966 for the independence of what will be known as the state of Guyana. The conference also produced agreement on a draft constitution for the new state and stipulations in the conference record for consultations between the leaders of the two parties in the coalition government. A number of compromises were worked out between Premier Forbes Burnham and Finance Minister Peter D'Aguiar which, hopefully, will ease some of the strains between them. The conference did not, however, succeed in bringing the two leaders much closer together; they remain basically incompatible on both personal and political grounds and are united only in mutual defense against the threat posed by Cheddi Jagan.

2. [5 lines of source text not declassified] It was generally agreed that the basic division of the country along racial lines would continue, that Jagan and the PPP would continue to enjoy the support of the vast majority of the Indian population and that this would continue to pose a serious threat to the government of independent Guyana. [less than 1 line of

source text not declassified] informally indicated that the British Government was alert to the possibility of racial violence breaking out following independence and would continue to be sensitive to any developments which might bring into question the good judgement of the British Government in granting independence to a government led by a representative of a minority racial grouping in the circumstances now prevailing in British Guiana.

3. Apart from the conference, the British Government and Premier Burnham made some progress in negotiating other agreements, primarily with respect to the internal security of the country. The British have agreed to maintain troops in Guyana until the end of October 1966 and to train and provide a cadre for the newly formed Guyana Defense Force. This force and the augmented Guyana police forces are to be brought to a sufficient level of capability to permit the withdrawal of British troops in October 1966. The adequacy of this solution cannot be judged at this time.

4. In a conversation [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] on 20 November, /2/ Forbes Burnham stated that his immediate objective is to launch his economic development plan so that he will be able to induce large numbers of West Indians of African descent to settle in Guyana prior to the December 1968 elections. His purpose is radically to alter the racial balance now existing in the electorate in sufficient time to enable him to win a plurality in the 1968 elections. Burnham stated that he will seek aid from both the British and American Governments for this purpose. He said further that he was confident his scheme was feasible and that it was the only possible course of action which would prevent Jagan returning to power with the support of the Indian community.

/2/ An unattributed memorandum, dated November 26, reported that [*name not declassified*] met with Burnham on November 20. Burnham said that the British had rationalized the outcome of the Conference "to save their own consciences," fully expecting that the constitutional safeguards would inevitably lead to East Indian control by constitutional methods, which he said was "not going to come about." The report highlighted not only Burnham's plans for West Indian immigration, but also his idea "that under the new constitution absentee voting would be permissible." (Ibid.)

5. A copy of this memorandum is being made available to Mr. J. Harold Shullaw at the Department of State. Richard Helms /3/

/3/ Printed from a copy that indicates Helms signed the original.

418. National Intelligence Estimate /1/

NIE 87.2-66
Washington, April 28, 1966.

/1/ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, NIC Files, Job 79-R01012A, NIEs and SNIEs. Secret. According to a note on the cover sheet this estimate was prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency with the participation of the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the National Security Agency. The United States Intelligence Board concurred in this estimate on April 28.

GUYANA (BRITISH GUIANA)

The Problem

To estimate the prospects for Guyana over the next year or two.

Conclusions

A. British Guiana will probably make a relatively smooth transition to independence, but racial suspicions between East Indians and Negroes will continue to dominate Guyanese politics.

B. When (or whether) these tensions break out again into violence will depend in large measure on the conduct of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, leader of the Negro party (the PNC), and of Cheddi Jagan, leader of the East Indian party (the PPP). For over a year, Burnham has governed with considerable restraint and Jagan has refrained from violent opposition. But new elections are due by late 1968, and between now and then tensions will rise and may at some point get out of hand.

C. Even after British troops depart in October 1966, Guyanese security forces can probably cope with sporadic violence. If violence got out of control, Burnham would probably call for a return of British troops. If US consent were forthcoming and British troops were available, we believe that London would comply.

D. The governing coalition of Burnham, a professed but pragmatic socialist, and the conservative United Force leader, Peter D'Aguiar, will continue to be a tenuous one. Friction between the partners over patronage and fiscal issues will probably be intensified after independence, but chances are that a common fear of Jagan will hold the coalition together.

E. Guyana's economy will need substantial foreign capital, much of it from the US. The need for aid will keep Burnham on tolerable terms with the US, UK, and Canada, though his administration will incline toward a neutralist posture in foreign affairs. If Jagan came to power, he could, because of his Marxist sympathies and his connections in Communist countries, count on some help from these countries. However, they probably would furnish only token quantities of aid.

[Omitted here is the Discussion section of the estimate.]

419. Telegram From the Ambassador to Guyana (Carlson) to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, July 15, 1966, 2:30 p.m.

/1/ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Director of Operations Files, Job 89-00998R, Latin American Division. Secret.

[telegram number not declassified] Please pass foll to Mr. Cobb from Ambassador. Proposed action program designed to ensure government victory in the next general election.

1. It is believed that the action proposed in this paper, designed to ensure a victory in the next general election (1968-69) for the parties of the coalition government led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, must be tempered and weighed in light of the following basic considerations:

A. Present indications are that the East Indian people, as a whole, dislike the African, distrust him, especially fear him, and believe that they must stay together, particularly as a voting unit, if their rights are to be protected and their aspirations achieved.

B. The East Indians, generally, believe that if they maintain their solidarity, they can, by virtue of their rapidly increasing numbers, win any future election.

C. Most East Indians do not now think, and will not easily be convinced, despite a plethora of anti-Communist and anti-Jagan propaganda, that Cheddi Jagan is anything less than an altruistic leader who, although perhaps capable of error, loves his people and is motivated by a desire to act in their best interests. His charismatic appeal continues basically undiminished, although apparently some of the gloss has gone from his image.

D. Within the PPP, those relatively few East Indians who question Jagan's motives and leadership and might even welcome a replacement are most reluctant to oppose him openly for fear of intimidation—which the government cannot prevent. The February 1966 murder (undoubtedly inspired by Jagan's People's Progressive Party—(PPP)) of Ackbar Alli, a PPP activist who turned on Jagan, is one of many incidents that have made a strong impression on the East Indian mind. The few PPP leaders who oppose Jagan also realize that the mass of party supporters are likely to favor Jagan over them in any open contest.

2. As sobering as the foregoing observations may be, the seemingly solid East Indian, Jagan-built wall must inevitably develop some cracks. There are a few indications that economic improvement, especially the road program, is making a favorable impression on some East Indians. It is too early to tell how significant this may be. The following proposals are of the type which seem best designed to hasten the development of East Indian disaffection from Jagan, enhance the position of the government and provide a much-needed assist to the economy of the country—which if not improved can only further complicate the political situation:

A. Intensify and expand the road building program, giving special emphasis to the predominately East Indian areas such as the Corentyne. The major artery from New Amsterdam to Crabwood Creek (the last village in the Corentyne) should be paved before the election.

B. By means of a soft loan, assist with the re-organization and modernization of the rice industry. While this effort may not attract any new support for the government, it is needed as a means of stabilizing a major industry of importance to the economy.

C. Give consideration to special assistance to the anti-Jagan Man Power Citizens' Association (MPCA), the largest labor union in the country and the one officially representing some 20,000 sugar workers. Such assistance might include establishment of a credit union to assist the predominantly East Indian MPCA-affiliated worker to satisfy his basic needs. Obviously, it would enhance the position of the MPCA and weaken its arch rival, the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union—Jagan's principal pirate labor arm. Most important, it would give the East Indian tangible evidence that his individual lot was being improved under the government, actively assisted by the U.S.

D. Carefully examine the extent of need and the feasibility of making grants or soft loans to expand the government's credit facilities in the agricultural sector. Again, if the small

farmer, who is predominantly East Indian, can perceive tangible benefits under the present administration, in a manner he has not known before, considering his basically pecuniary nature, he might consider severing his ties with Jagan. This might also be an opportunity to promote a diversification program in agriculture by giving priority consideration to the farmer willing to plant some of the basic agricultural commodities which the country is now forced to import. A new rural credit agency, initially endowed by Guyana 925 the U.S. and geared to give rapid small loans to the farmer on a nonracial basis, might have merit.

E. Explore assisting the government in the construction and renovation of small school buildings in the rural areas. This would include assistance in the acquisition of basic educational tools such as books.

F. Assist with the modernization and expansion of medical facilities in the small medical stations in the rural areas. Again, in this effort the East Indian would receive considerable benefit.

G. Consider assisting the government to greatly expand its present youth program, including a CCC-type project involving rehabilitation, training and trail building in the interior.

3. Activities of a less orthodox nature which are recommended or are now being conducted would include the following:

A. Consider giving financial assistance and active encouragement on a selective basis to East Indian individuals or groups which might emerge and show promise of being able to influence politically a significant segment of the East Indian population. (At the present time, the prospects in this area are not particularly encouraging. The anti- Jagan East Indian Justice Party and the Guyana United Muslim Party have been discredited, and consequently offer little, if any, hope of being able to contribute substantially to any future anti-Jagan effort. However, if nothing new appears before 1968, and there is reason to believe that these basically defunct organizations can still play a useful role, consideration should be given at that time to pumping new blood into their emaciated bodies. It is not believed that any action in this regard is justified at present.)

B. Continue to promote the growth and attempt to extend the influence of the small moderate group within the PPP in the hope that its members might succeed in replacing the Jagan leadership or gain sufficient strength to break away and form a new viable East Indian party.

C. Encourage the government to consider the feasibility of exiling Cheddi and Janet Jagan. Without them the PPP, as presently constituted and oriented, would be hard-pressed to continue. The exiling of Janet alone would probably not be sufficiently useful in the light of the problems involved, including that of splitting a family. While she is highly important as the organizer, Cheddi is the vote getter and could probably keep the Indian community largely intact. As a practical matter, the government is not likely to take any such action unless the Jagans provide it with some good pretext; and this may never happen.

D. Encourage the government, and assist where necessary, to conduct a survey of its supporters who live abroad for the purpose of ascertaining their exact numbers and qualifications to cast absentee ballots in the next election. Government offices in London, Washington, New York, and Ottawa should be able to assist by requesting Guyanese in their areas to register.

E. At the Washington level, have election experts conduct a study and make detailed recommendations as to how best (preferably in the simplest and most fool-proof manner) the government might proceed to rig, if necessary, the next election. Particular attention should be given to the absentee ballot which would seem to lend itself to manipulation, as well as to any maneuver in Guyana.

F. Consider the possibility of buying East Indian votes. (Circumstances do not now appear to lend themselves to this practice. For fear of being exposed to the wrath of the PPP, the East Indian would most likely immediately denounce to the PPP any such attempt to influence his vote, or, at best, quietly take the money and then proceed to vote as his blood line dictated.)

G. Continue to assist the coalition parties of the government to maintain their organizational structures; and be prepared in the next election to give all the support necessary to enable these parties to register all their potential supporters, conduct a vigorous campaign and ensure that all their people arrive at the polls on time.

H. Continue to encourage the government to pursue a benign policy toward the East Indian, attempting to convince him of the government's impartiality and genuine desire to improve his standard of living, etc.

4. Prime Minister Burnham is reasonably convinced that West Indian (Negro) immigration might well solve his electoral problem. More objective observers tend to be more skeptical, primarily because there is not enough time before the next election. While there is no doubt that additional human resources will be required to subdue the extensive Guyana wilderness, with local unemployment still high (at least 15 percent of the total work force) it would seem that immigration cannot proceed in the next year or so at an inordinate rate. The East Indians are, understandably, solidly against this migration scheme and many of Burnham's supporters will oppose it unless they first have jobs. As a short term election device, immigration does not seem to be very practical. In fact, Burnham might easily lose more supporters from within than he hopes to gain from without—particularly if he immediately pushes for the fifteen-twenty thousand immigrants he has in mind.

5. Burnham is pressing for some type of Caribbean grouping and envisions himself as a likely leader of whatever might emerge. Also, he has entertained the possibility of putting together some form of unitary state with Barbados or Antigua, or one or several of the smaller islands. (Burnham told the U.S. Ambassador on July 4th that Grenada and St. Lucia had recently expressed an interest in merging with Guyana 927 Guyana.) This plan might prove workable, but again there is no assurance that anything will materialize within the next two to three years. Arrangements of this nature, obviously, cannot be unduly pushed; but they should certainly be discreetly encouraged where possible.

6. Best estimates available indicate that the domestic non-East Indian voting population in 1968-69 will still exceed the East Indian electorate by five to eight thousand. No provision is made in these estimates for new immigrants. Absentee voters probably number between ten and fifteen thousand, with the non-East Indian in the majority. Balanced against this apparent margin in favor of the government, is the fact that the government could easily lose the votes of as many as ten thousand of its nominal supporters. They would be the dissatisfied and the disgruntled who might well refuse to go to the polls or in some cases conceivably even vote for the PPP. Facing a contest such as this, a man as astute as Burnham, will probably want to enter the game with at least a few extra aces. (In 1964 the PPP received 109,000 votes; the coalition parties a total of 126,000; the total vote was

238,530 out of 247,495 registered, the projected registration in 1968–69 is estimated at 284,387.)

7. Burnham is not considering calling an election before 1968, and apparently there is no great advantage in doing so. Prior to that time, he will not be able to demonstrate major accomplishments, such as substantially reducing unemployment, etc. In short, he can probably afford to give Jagan a few more votes conceivably by virtue of the greater numbers of East Indians who will have arrived at the voting age by 1968, in the hope that by waiting, he, Burnham can not only better satisfy his own supporters but hopefully wean away a few of the East Indian voters.

8. Burnham has confided to close colleagues that he intends to remain in power indefinitely—if at all possible by constitutional means. However, if necessary, he is prepared to employ unorthodox methods to achieve his aims. In these circumstances, probably the best that can be hoped for at this time, is that he might respond to guideline and thus take the most effective and least objectionable course to attain his goals.

420. Letter From the Ambassador to Guyana (Carlson) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Gordon)/1/

Georgetown, August 4, 1966.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 7 BR GU. Secret; Official Informal.

Dear Mr. Gordon:

1. I trust you may have seen my telegram (Georgetown 99)/2/ reporting how impressed Prime Minister Burnham was with his visit to the United States. He was especially taken with President Johnson and believes that the President strongly supports him. I thought you would be interested in the Prime Minister's brief confidential summary to me of the topics discussed with the President privately./3/

/2/ Dated August 3. (Ibid., POL 7 GUYANA)

/3/ Burnham had a private meeting with President Johnson at 5:11 p.m. on July 22 at the White House. They were joined from 5:32 to 6 p.m. by Guyanese Ambassador Sir John Carter, Assistant Secretary Lincoln Gordon, and Ambassador Carlson. According to a notation in the President's Daily Diary, Rostow and Bowdler said that there was no substantive reason for this meeting. No other record of this conversation has been found. (Johnson Library)

A. The President expressed appreciation for Burnham's congratulatory telegram on the successful flight of Gemini 10.

B. Burnham raised the subject of Viet Nam, apparently indicating support of the United States and expressing wonder as to how the Communists always seem to get away with their case before much of the world.

C. After the discussion of Viet Nam, which was relatively short, the conversation turned to civil rights. Burnham expressed admiration for all that had been accomplished to promote

Negro voting rights and education. His remarks were complimentary of the President's achievements in this field.

It was not clear from Burnham's rather sketchy account whether it was at this point, earlier, or as seems probable later, that the President said something along the following lines: "Remember you have one friend in this corner going for you and his name is Lyndon Johnson."

D. Finally, Burnham related to the President the idea of migration from the over-populated British West Indian islands to Guyana and the needed electoral benefit to the Burnham administration. The President's subsequent inquiry to you as to whether we are "on top" of this idea has been interpreted as a very significant indication of the President's sympathetic attitude toward it.

2. While I assume that this private meeting was intended as off-the-record, I thought it might be useful for you to have the highlights as they appear from this end. If no record of any sort is appropriate, please destroy this letter and so advise me. I am not sending a copy to anyone else but you may wish to let John Hill and Bill Cobb see it.

3. Incidentally, I note that the Prime Minister's account corresponds to a considerable extent with my prediction about the points which he would raise, as reported in Bill Cobb's memorandum of July 22 to Bill Bowdler, /4/ and that he did not raise any of a variety of specific economic matters more appropriate to lower levels.

Best regards,

Sincerely, Del

/4/ Not printed. (Ibid., National Security File, Country File, Guyana (Brit. G.), Vol. 1, Cables, Memos & Misc., 5/66-11/68)

421. Memorandum Prepared for the 303 Committee /1/

Washington, March 17, 1967.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, 303 Committee Records, April, 1967. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT

Support to Anti-Jagan Political Parties in Guyana

1. Summary

It is established U.S. Government policy that Cheddi Jagan, East Indian Marxist leader of the pro-Communist People's Progressive Party (PPP) in Guyana, will not be permitted to take over the government of an independent Guyana. Jagan has the electoral support of the East Indians, who are approximately 50% of the total population of Guyana. It is believed that Jagan has a good chance of coming to power in the next elections unless steps are taken to prevent this. Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, leader of the majority People's

National Congress (PNC) in the coalition, is aware of the problem, and has stated that he is fully prepared to utilize the electoral machinery at his disposal to ensure his own re-election. Burnham has initiated steps for electoral registration of Guyanese at home and abroad,^{/2/} and has requested financial assistance [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] for the PNC campaign. It is recommended that he and his party be provided with covert support in order to assure his victory at the polls. At the same time, it is believed that support to Peter D'Aguiar and his United Force (UF), the minority party in the coalition government, is also essential in order to offset Jagan's solidly entrenched East Indian electoral support. It is recommended that the 303 Committee approve the courses of action outlined in this paper at a cost of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].^{/3/}

^{/2/} In a meeting [*text not declassified*] on September 16, 1966, Burnham requested money for various political purposes and outlined his plans to issue identification cards to all Guyanans above the age of 10, and to identify and register all Guyanans of African ancestry in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States in order to get their absentee votes in the next elections. "Conversely, Burnham acknowledged with a smile, East Indians living abroad may have trouble getting registered and, if registered, getting ballots." (Ibid., [*file name not declassified*] Telegrams and Reports, 1965)

^{/3/} According to an April 10 memorandum for the record, the 303 Committee approved this proposal at its April 7 meeting. [*text not declassified*] emphasized during the Committee's discussion the importance of starting early in the implementation of the proposal. (Ibid., Guyana 1969, 1970)

2. Problem

To prevent the election of Cheddi Jagan in the next elections in Guyana.

3. Factors Bearing on the Problem

a. Origin of the Requirement

Under the Guyana Constitution, new elections for the National Assembly must take place prior to 31 March 1969, and can take place at any time should the Prime Minister bring about the dissolution of the Parliament.

Prime Minister Forbes Burnham of Guyana is aware that the U.S. Government is opposed to Cheddi Jagan's assumption of power in Guyana. He is also acutely conscious of the racial factors in the country which work to Jagan's advantage, and he realizes that he must immediately initiate a vigorous campaign if he is to defeat Jagan.

Burnham has personally undertaken the task of reorganizing the PNC, which has not functioned in many areas since the last elections. He plans to establish campaign headquarters in Georgetown and other urban areas where the African vote is concentrated, and will also send organizers throughout Guyana to re-enlist PNC supporters who have been inactive in party affairs since the last elections. At the same time, Burnham is sending a trusted political adviser abroad to survey the potential absentee vote which he can expect from Guyanese residing in the U.S., the U.K., Canada and the West Indies.

Burnham believes that he would have great difficulty ensuring his own re-election without support from the U.S. Government. He has requested financial support [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] for staff and campaign expenses, motor vehicles, small boats,

printing equipment, and transistorized public address systems. He also wishes to contract for the services of an American public relations firm to improve his image abroad and counteract Jagan's propaganda in the foreign press.

Since we believe that there is a good likelihood that Jagan can be elected in Guyana unless the entire non-East Indian electorate is mobilized against him, we also believe that campaign support must be provided to Peter D'Aguiar, the head of the United Force (UF) and Burnham's coalition partner.

b. Background

The U.S. Government determined in 1962 that Cheddi Jagan would not be acceptable as the head of government in an independent Guyana. When elections were scheduled for December 1964, *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* was instructed to ensure Jagan's defeat by the provision of guidance and support to Burnham and D'Aguiar, leaders of Guyana's two anti-Jagan political parties. This was accomplished. Burnham and D'Aguiar established a coalition government which is now in power. This is, however, an uneasy arrangement and Burnham desires a PNC majority in the Assembly to result from the forthcoming election. While we are not yet persuaded that Burnham's objective is feasible, we believe it is essential that he wage a vigorous campaign against Jagan from this moment on.

The following tabs provide further background: Tab A, Background to the Jagan Problem; Tab B, Burnham and D'Aguiar; Tab C, Other Courses of Action./4/

[/4/ All attached but not printed.](#)

b. Relationship to Previous 303 Committee Actions

Action to remove Jagan from power in British Guiana was considered by the Special Group during the period 6 April 1961–23 May 1963. *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* financial support to the British Guiana Trades Union Council during the strikes of 1962 and 1963 was approved. The Special Group did not approve other political action against Jagan during that period because of British Government concern. Since early 1963, political action operations in Guyana have not been the subject of Special Group consideration.

c. Pertinent U.S. Policy Considerations

U.S. policy towards Guyana has since 1962 been to prevent the return to power of a Communist government headed by Cheddi Jagan.

d. Operational Objectives

To prevent the installation of a Jagan-led government in Guyana by providing support to the PNC and the UF for the purpose of assuring an electoral victory for the non-Jagan parties.

[Omitted here is subsection e., "Cover Considerations."]

f. Risks Involved

Jagan has consistently and publicly accused the U.S. and U.K. Governments of having undermined him and of having aided Burnham. It is expected that he will continue to reiterate these charges and to accuse the U.S. and U.K. of supporting Burnham, regardless of what course of action Burnham may follow. Jagan has cried wolf so often in the past that a reiteration of the same charges is not expected to carry much impact, particularly if the timing of the operation is handled appropriately. In this connection, Burnham is thinking of utilizing voting machines in certain districts in Guyana, knowing that this will attract Jagan's attention and lead to charges of fraud. Since Burnham does not intend to rig the machines, and the tallies will in fact be accurate, he believes this will not only divert Jagan's attention during the election campaign but will add credibility to the results after the fact.

Burnham has been made aware that the U.S. Government will attach the utmost importance to tight security practices in the event that support is provided to him as proposed in this paper. He recognizes that any exposure of this support will reflect on him as well as on the U.S. Government, and he is prepared to deny receipt of any such aid. American and British press coverage of the 1968 elections must be expected to be relatively intensive, and it is likely that some British and American correspondents may be favorably predisposed to Jagan. For this reason, it will be essential that Burnham not only counter Jagan's assertion that Burnham represents a minority of the electorate, but also that the U.S. Government's involvement not be revealed in any way. Recent publicity resulting from the Ramparts exposures had led to charges in the press that AFL/CIO assistance to the British Guiana Trades Union Council during the general strike of 1964 was in fact CIA action and overthrew the Jagan government. There has been no allegation in the aftermath of the Ramparts exposures that the U.S. Government was involved in the December 1964 election. Therefore, it is believed that since the AFL/CIO is not involved in this proposed course of action in any way, and since there has been no exposure of U.S. Government involvement in the 1964 elections, necessary risks involved in the proposed course of action can be undertaken with appropriate safeguards.

The present security forces in Guyana are considered adequate to contain limited or sporadic violence. However, should Jagan resort to large-scale violence such as occurred during the 1962-64 period, the present security forces would not be adequate. If this should occur, it is problematical as to whether the U.K. could be persuaded to send in British troops, even if Burnham so requested. In any event, the British would have difficulties in sea-lift and logistical support.

g. Other Courses of Action

In recent months various methods for dealing with the Jagan problem have been considered by the Department of State [less than 1 line of source text not declassified], and discussed with representatives of the British Government. The proposed course of action outlined in this paper is believed to represent the most desirable course of action under current circumstances. Should it appear, as the election campaign develops, that this proposed course of action is not sufficient, other actions may become necessary to supplement this proposal. Whichever courses of action are pursued, it is believed necessary that we anticipate that elections will be held in Guyana no later than March 1969 and support to Burnham for the PNC and to d'Aguiar for the UF is essential in any case. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] will continue to monitor the Guyana situation to permit identification and evaluation of other courses of action should Jagan depart from his current strategy or should it appear that he is likely to win an election despite our best efforts to prevent this. These other courses of action are outlined in Tab C.

h. Timing of the Operation

[61/2 lines of source text not declassified] For this reason, we recommend the immediate and continuing injection of fiscal support to both the PNC and the UF, and we propose to maintain close contact with Burnham and d'Aguiar and their principal associates in order to influence the course of the election wherever necessary. This should be initiated at the earliest possible date, so that alternate tactics can be considered.

[Omitted here is Section 4., "Coordination."]

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the 303 Committee approve this proposed course of action at a level not to exceed [less than 1 line of source text not declassified].

422. Telegram From the Ambassador to Guyana (Carlson) to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, June 1967.

1 Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson—Department Messages, Vol. 4, 1965–69. Secret. The date is handwritten on the bottom of page 1 of the telegram.

Following message for ARA/NC Cobb from Ambassador Carlson.

1. In course discussion with Prime Minister Burnham last night I raised subject coming elections and explained election mathematics at my disposal tended show that the PNC majority over the PPP and the U.F. would require at minimum 60,000 votes additional. Even Prime Minister Burnham does not consider that overseas vote can be blown up to that extent; even 50,000 figure used by him very hypothetically and 30,000 accepted as more realistic (Embassy finds in excess of 25,000 not believable). Earlier Prime Minister Burnham said that overseas vote figures could be manipulated pretty much as he wished and he tentatively had in mind say 25,000 for a new coalition government and 5,000 for the PPP. When pressed by these mathematics, Prime Minister Burnham said he "would not break his lance" over the PNC majority, meaning that if the U.S.G. made issue of it he would not pursue it. Clear however he intends to follow number of election tricks to add to the PNC totals and detract from the PPP votes. Accumulated total of these may well produce a surprisingly good showing for the PNC, though falling short of absolute majority. Adds that he well aware of need that these election tricks be done smoothly and without controversy.

2. Prime Minister Burnham appreciated point of view that motive behind his pining for majority lies in great part in difficulties doing business with Finance Minister Peter D'Aguiar. I suggested that solution this problem lay less in engineered majority than it did in arranging for D'Aguiar's honorable withdrawal from politics and government after the election is won and a new coalition government formed. Observed Burnham would have much less trouble with remaining U.F. officials. Burnham receptive to idea but saw no U.F. official on horizon who could take over. I suggested this would be an U.F. problem which could be arranged provided D'Aguiar withdrawal was affable and in constructive agreement with Prime Minister Burnham.

423. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Coordination of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Trueheart) to the Director (Hughes) and Deputy Director (Denney)/1/

Washington, December 6, 1967.

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970. Secret.](#)

SUBJECT
Guyana

There follows a review of recent 303 Committee actions on Guyana. It provides operational background that you may find of use in your review of SNIE 87.2-67. [/2/](#) 303 Committee action has been predicated on the assumption that Jagan is a Communist or an accurate facsimile of one, and that his becoming Prime Minister of Guyana would be disastrous for Guyana, would prove a dangerous stimulus to Castro, and would introduce an unacceptable degree of instability into the Caribbean area.

[/2/ Document 424.](#)

The final paragraph of the Estimate, on the significance of a Jagan victory, has therefore attracted a good deal of attention in ARA, and CIA/DDP as it has gone through its several revisions. In its earlier forms the paragraph reflected a judgment inconsistent with that which motivated the policy decisions of the 303 Committee; in its latest form the inconsistency has considerably diminished. For its part, DDC finds the current version acceptable.

On 10 April 1967 the 303 Committee approved a proposal to provide Prime Minister Forbes Burnham of the Guyanan People's National Congress with covert support in the next national elections. [/3/](#) The cost of the assistance necessary to assure a Burnham victory over Cheddi Jagan of the People's Progressive Party was estimated at [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. Some of this was to go to Burnham's coalition partner, the United Force.

[/3/ See Document 421.](#)

Committee approval was grounded in the belief that as Prime Minister Jagan would be an instrument of Communist influence in Latin America. The [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] paper embodying the proposal noted that during Jagan's years (1961-4) as head of the government, some 50 PPP youth trained in Cuba in guerrilla warfare, a "Guyana Liberation Army" was organized and equipped largely with Cuban weapons, and \$3,000,000 of Soviet bloc funds entered Guyana for the support of the PPP. [/4/](#) The paper also stated that some 90 PPP youths were currently being trained (?educated?) in Bloc countries and that in Guyana Jagan's Accabre College was training Guyanan youth in Marxist thought.

[/4/ Information on Soviet Bloc assistance to Jagan's government was attached at Tab A; see footnote 4, Document 421.](#)

The paper forecast that the vote would be an extremely close thing even if Burnham had our assistance. The [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] suggestion, adopted by

the Committee, was to make 12 equal monthly payments to Burnham to help him in revitalizing his party and in organizing his absentee vote strength. If Burnham's electoral prospects appeared bleak, [11/2 lines of source text not declassified]. These measures, it was hoped, would forestall the necessity of exile of Jagan, or his detention, or coup d'état after the elections.

The Committee's approval was attended by a recommendation by the Executive Secretary for a quarterly progress report on the progress of the campaign. On 7 August [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] reported to the 303 Committee that some [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] of the original sum had been committed, that a [21/2 lines of source text not declassified]. In oral presentation an [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] representative noted that the vote might go as high as 350,000 (instead of the 278,000 previously predicted) and that the increase was expected to be largely Indian and therefore pro-Jagan. /5/ The race, he said, would be nip-and-tuck all the way. The [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] disposition at the moment, and that of ARA, is to continue to rely on the electoral process in Guyana (no matter how much that process will need "adjustment"), [2 lines of source text not declassified]. If it does, the issue will be submitted to the 303 Committee for review.

/5/ The minutes of the meeting of the 303 Committee of August 7 reported [text not declassified] the estimated voting figures. The minutes recorded that Rostow and [text not declassified]. (Memorandum from Donald S. MacDonald to Sayre; *ibid.*, Guyana, 1969, 1970)

424. Special National Intelligence Estimate /1/

SNIE 87.2-67
Washington, December 7, 1967.

/1/ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, NIC Files, Job 79-R01012A, NIEs and SNIEs. Secret. According to a note on the cover sheet this estimate was prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency with the participation of the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the National Security Agency. The United States Intelligence Board concurred in this estimate on December 7.

GUYANA

The Problem

To consider the prospects for Guyana, with particular attention to problems and consequences of the coming parliamentary election.

Conclusions

A. Voting in the coming election, which according to the Constitution must take place by the end of March 1969, will again be predominantly along racial lines. Cheddi Jagan, the East Indian leader and an enthusiastic Marxist-Leninist, has a basic advantage: The East Indians are now probably a slight majority of the population. The Negroes, almost all of whom support Forbes Burnham, the present Prime Minister, constitute about 44 percent.

B. Burnham, whose coalition with the small, conservative United Force (UF) has always been fragile, /2/ is working on various schemes to enlarge the Negro vote. He will try to obtain a substantial number of absentee votes from Negro Guyanese residing abroad. Beyond this, he is exploring means to merge Guyana with one or another Caribbean island (most likely St. Vincent) /3/ so as to increase the proportion of Negro voters.

/2/ D'Aguiar resigned from the Cabinet on September 26 despite Carlson's best efforts to dissuade him. (Telegram 295 from Georgetown, September 25, and memorandum from Bowdler to Rostow, September 25; both Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana (Brit. G.), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68)

/3/ An October 24 memorandum from Trueheart to Hughes reported that the move to associate with St. Vincent would probably not succeed. It stated that "we understand that the Commonwealth Relations Office in London is negatively disposed." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970)

C. If Burnham became convinced that such arrangements would not suffice to keep him in power and Jagan out, he would probably rig the election. In any case, he would have to rely on the small civilian police and Guyana Defense Force (GDF), both of which are predominantly Negro, to maintain order. They probably could do so, except in the unlikely event of a major East Indian uprising.

D. Prospects for a second Burnham Administration would depend in major part on how he won. A merger with St. Vincent, for instance, would almost certainly raise fears, among East Indians and UF supporters, of discrimination and possibly even of persecution under a government completely controlled by Negroes. Such fears could produce unrest and some violence. If Burnham returned to power as head of a coalition in an election that appeared reasonably fair, prospects would be good for continuing stability and further gradual economic progress. The need for outside economic aid would nonetheless continue.

E. If Jagan's party won, he would probably not be permitted to exercise power. Burnham could use force to keep him out, or suspend the Constitution and rule by fiat, or even press for a grand coalition which he himself would seek to head. Alternatively he could permit Jagan to take office—only to subvert his government at a later date.

F. In the unlikely event that Jagan did take and hold power, the Communist orientation of his government, more than its actual capabilities, would make it a new disturbing factor in hemispheric affairs, especially in the Caribbean area. Communist countries would make considerable propaganda capital of the fact that such a government had come to power by free elections. The USSR and some other Communist governments would move quickly to establish diplomatic or trade missions in Georgetown. Both the Soviets and Castro would probably provide Jagan with small amounts of economic aid.

G. A Jagan administration would, however, be beset by powerful internal opposition and would not have the resources for an adventuresome program abroad. Thus, Jagan would not try to launch an independent Communist revolutionary effort on the continent or in the Caribbean, though he probably would cooperate in the overt and clandestine activities sponsored by the USSR or Cuba. Such actions would encourage Venezuela to press its territorial claims against Guyana and perhaps even to undertake military action.

[Omitted here is the Discussion portion of the estimate including sections on Background, the Burnham Government, Preelection Maneuvers, and Security Forces.]

V. Postelection Prospects

21. If Burnham wins, the postelection prospects will depend in major degree on how he manages to do so. If he were returned to office as head of a coalition, and as a result of a more or less normal and reasonably fair contest, the prospects for his government would be good. He would require continuing economic aid from the US, and if he got it, Guyana would almost certainly make gradual further economic progress. He would more than likely again have trouble within the coalition, and opposition on the part of Jagan and the East Indians Guyana 939 would become increasingly bitter. But there probably would not be disorders and violence of such magnitude that the Guyanese security forces could not control them.

22. If, however, he blatantly rigs the election, or if he wins by means of a merger with St. Vincent or another Caribbean island, the political situation is likely to be more unstable. Should Guyana join with St. Vincent, for example, the additional number of Negro voters in the new nation would produce fears among East Indians and UF members alike that the Burnham government would become solely a Negro-run institution and that they would be excluded from power indefinitely. Jagan would be the first to claim that the merger was engineered by the US and would use it in his anti-US propaganda in Guyana and abroad. At least initially, some unrest and violence would be likely. The Guyanese security forces would probably remain loyal to Burnham and be capable of preventing violence from getting out of hand.

23. If, in spite of Burnham's preelection activities, Cheddi Jagan's PPP gained a majority of seats in the Assembly, Cheddi probably still would not be permitted to form a government. Burnham might call upon the security forces to keep Jagan out, or suspend the Constitution and rule by fiat, or even try persuading Jagan to join in a grand coalition which he, Burnham, would head. Any of these actions, with the possible exception of the last, would raise racial tensions and produce danger of violence—both probably more inflammatory than the merger possibility discussed above.

24. It is possible that for appearances' sake Burnham would let Jagan take office—only to subvert his government at a later date. It is unlikely that Burnham would go into loyal opposition, but if he did, Jagan would still face a highly troubled tenure. The Negroes in opposition would probably be more militant than the East Indians have been, and Jagan could not count on the security forces.

25. However determined Jagan was to take measures to favor the East Indians or to carry out Marxist economic policies, he would be severely inhibited by circumstances. Sooner or later, he would have to make numerous concessions to the Negroes or risk being deposed. He has talked of nationalizing the important foreign enterprises, but he is probably aware that expropriation of the foreign aluminum companies or of the big British-owned sugar properties would be disastrous economically. He would, in any case, encounter certain economic difficulty. There would be a loss of confidence on the part of private investors, and most of the economic assistance from which the Burnham government has benefited would probably not be forthcoming to Jagan. /4/ His friends among the Communist countries would probably provide some help, but less. Cuba would most likely give Jagan a favorable price for Guyana's rice crop and the USSR would probably give limited credits.

/4/ In 1965–1966, the US committed \$18 million in aid to Guyana of which \$13 million has been drawn down. [Footnote in the source text.]

26. In the unlikely event that Jagan did take and hold power, the Communist orientation of his government, more than its actual capabilities, would make it a new disturbing factor in hemispheric affairs, especially in the Caribbean area. The USSR and other Communist countries would make considerable propaganda capital of the fact that such a government had come to power by free elections, and the Jagan government would support the Communist nations in international forums on basic issues. The Soviets and some other Communist governments would move quickly to establish diplomatic or trade missions in Georgetown. Yet a Jagan administration would be beset by powerful internal opposition, and its internal weakness would require it to move cautiously in order to retain power while trying to strengthen its political base. It would not have the resources to carry out an adventuresome program abroad. Thus, Jagan would not try to launch an independent Communist revolutionary effort on the continent or in the Caribbean. He probably would cooperate in the overt and clandestine activities sponsored by the USSR or Cuba. All actions of this kind would encourage Venezuela, certain to be suspicious of Jagan regardless of his policies, to press its territorial claims against Guyana and perhaps even to undertake military action.

425. Memorandum From James R. Gardner of the Office of the Deputy Director for Coordination of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research to the Deputy Director for Coordination of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Trueheart)

Washington, December 11, 1967.

[Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970. Secret. 2 pages of source text not declassified.]

426. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, January 22, 1968, 11:25 a.m.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA. Confidential. Drafted by Bowdler and approved in the White House. The meeting was held in the President's office. Burnham visited Washington for medical care at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center. A Department of State briefing paper prepared for the meeting recommended the President congratulate Burnham on 3 years of stability and racial peace, assure him of the high priority of the AID program in Guyana and that "we have also selected our best people to send to Georgetown," and be aware that Burnham might request that the United States influence the Government of Venezuela to ease its border dispute pressures on Guyana. (Memorandum for the President from Rusk, January 20; *ibid.*)

PARTICIPANTS

The President

Prime Minister Forbes Burnham of Guyana

Sir John Carter, Ambassador to the United States from Guyana

Mr. Robert M. Sayre, Acting Assistant Secretary of State

Mr. William G. Bowdler, the White House

Two substantive issues were discussed in Prime Minister Burnham's 20-minute meeting with the President.

On the Guyanese elections the Prime Minister thought he would have to go to elections by November 1968. He said he was "calmly confident" about the outcome. The President stressed the importance of maintaining his coalition strong. /2/

/2/ A January 20 memorandum for the President from Rostow noted that Guyana's uneasy coalition partnership had become shaky over appointments and budgetary issues and stressed that "a word from you on the importance of maintaining uneasy political combinations in election years would be useful." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana (Brit. G.), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68)

The Prime Minister described his border difficulties with Venezuela during the past year. He referred to Venezuela's having blocked Guyana from eligibility to sign the Latin American Nuclear Free Zone Treaty at the UN last session. /3/ He asked the President if the United States could use its influence with Venezuela to be less "bellicose" about the boundary problem. Mr. Sayre explained that we had been active with both sides in keeping the dispute quiet. The President asked Mr. Sayre for a memorandum on the subject./4/

WGB

/3/ The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America was signed at Mexico City on February 14, 1967, and entered into force on April 22, 1968. The United States was not a signatory, but was party to two Additional Protocols dealing with matters concerning non-Latin American nuclear powers. (Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements, Texts and Histories of Negotiations, 1982, pp. 59-81)

/4/ See Document 430.

427. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, January 23, 1968, 10:30 a.m.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA. Confidential. Drafted by Hill and approved in S by Shlaudeman. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office. The memorandum is part 1 of 5. Part 2, Caribbean Regional Problems, and part 5, World Situation, are *ibid*. Part 3 is Document 428; part 4 is Document 429. Sayre sent Rusk a January 22 briefing memorandum for this meeting. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA)

SUBJECT

Call of Prime Minister Burnham
Electoral Situation in Guyana

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign

L. Forbes Burnham, Prime Minister of Guyana
H.E. Sir John Carter, Guyanese Ambassador to the United States

United States
The Secretary

Mr. Robert M. Sayre, Acting Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
Mr. John Calvin Hill, Jr., Director, North Coast Affairs

Following his release from a physical check-up at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Prime Minister Burnham paid a 45-minute courtesy call on the Secretary.

After an exchange of pleasantries, the Secretary asked the Prime Minister how he saw the situation in Guyana. Burnham replied that he was "quietly confident" about the outcome of the elections, which could be held at any time before the end of March 1969. Amplifying on this at a later stage in the conversation, he said he thought that the government had picked up support and that, while it would be untruthful to suggest that there was a landslide of defectors from the P.P.P., there were some who had gone over to the government in some areas. He might pick up 3% to 4% of the East Indian vote. He was also counting "heavily" on the overseas absentee ballots, which were concentrated in the U.K. and, secondly, in the U.S. He said that last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision which had the effect of allowing Guyanese citizens who had also become naturalized U.S. citizens to vote without losing their U.S. citizenship would be helpful. The Secretary expressed some uncertainty whether the decision contemplated voting by such citizens while they were resident in the U.S. and whether electioneering in this country would present problems. He said we would look into this. Mr. Burnham indicated that no objectionable electioneering was contemplated and, in substantiation of his assessment that his electoral prospects were good, pointed out that Cheddi Jagan was already setting the stage among his followers for a defeat by claiming the elections would be rigged, he would not be allowed to assume power, etc.

428. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, January 23, 1968, 10:30 a.m.

[/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA. Confidential. Drafted by Hill and approved in S by Shlaudeman. The memorandum is part 3 of 5; regarding parts 1, 2, 4, and 5, see footnote 1, Document 427. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office.](#)

SUBJECT

Call of Prime Minister Burnham of Guyana
Border Disputes

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign L. Forbes Burnham, Prime Minister of Guyana
H.E. Sir John Carter, Guyanese Ambassador to the United States

United States

The Secretary

Mr. Robert M. Sayre, Acting Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
Mr. John Calvin Hill, Jr., Director, North Coast Affairs

The Prime Minister alluded to the border dispute with Surinam which had flared up before his departure and reported that, in the interval, Sir Lionel Luckhoo, the Guyana High Commissioner in London, had taken the matter up in the Hague with the Foreign Minister when he was presenting his credentials as Ambassador to the Netherlands. Sir Lionel was in the process of returning to report in detail, but he had gained the impression that the

Netherlands was not backing the Government of Surinam and that the matter could be settled quietly.

The border dispute with Venezuela was more worrisome, especially as it was also an election year in Venezuela with the consequent temptation to agitate the issue. The saving factor grace was the Venezuelans were pledged not to use force and that they seemed to realize the problems which would result from a hostile government on their frontiers. The Mixed Commission was now working satisfactorily (except that the Ankoko Island question remained unsolved) /2/ and it was setting up a Sub-committee to look into economic cooperation. Guyana appreciated the efforts that the U.S. had been making to keep matters cool on the Venezuelan side and was counting on the U.S. to continue those efforts, as the Opposition in Guyana was only too anxious to cry "sell out" at any sign of failure to maintain the nation's sovereignty. The Secretary commented that border issues were often agitated in political situations but that it was contrary to Venezuela's traditions and objectives in the OAS and UN to settle matters by force. He remarked that, in the 40 or so border disputes around the world, it was our observation that those in possession seemed to win out and that the thing to do was for all to remain cool.

/2/ In 1966 Venezuela moved to occupy the tiny border island of Ankoko, half of which was claimed by Guyana, according to a background paper attached to a January 22 briefing memorandum from Sayre to Rusk (see footnote 1, Document 427). That paper also described how Venezuela had "effectively blocked Guyana from becoming a party to the Organization of American States by the Act of Washington which bars admission to American States that have unresolved border disputes with a member state."

429. Memorandum of Conversation /1/

Washington, January 23, 1968, 10:30 a.m.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA. Confidential. Drafted by Hill and approved in S on January 23. The memorandum is part 4 of 5; regarding parts 1-3 and 5, see footnote 1, Document 427. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office.

SUBJECT

Call of Prime Minister Burnham of Guyana
U.S. Assistance

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign

L. Forbes Burnham, Prime Minister of Guyana
H.E. Sir John Carter, Guyanese Ambassador to the United States

United States

The Secretary

Mr. Robert M. Sayre, Acting Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
Mr. John Calvin Hill, Jr., Director, North Coast Affairs

The Secretary invited the Prime Minister to take five minutes or so to say frankly what he thought the U.S. should be doing in Guyana. The Prime Minister noted with appreciation that the U.S. had been in the forefront of contributors of assistance to his development

effort but that, as he had indicated at the Donor's Conference in Georgetown, his principal problem had been to raise sufficient local currency financing to make use of the external financing offered. In fact, part of last year's British assistance had to be foregone because local cost financing could not be raised. He understood the Congressional and U.S. balance of payments considerations which put constraints on U.S. assistance for local costs, but it would be useful to have the utmost flexibility in this regard. Meanwhile, he had been exploring with the U.S. the possibility of a PL 480 program (for instance, Guyana was importing \$15 million or more in U.S. wheat) which would provide counterpart which could be used for local cost purposes. The Secretary indicated sympathy with regard to the local cost financing problem, which emanated from our balance of payments, and with regard to PL 480. He indicated he would want to take up the PL 480 problem with Messrs. Hill and Sayre later. There followed a brief discussion of the recent U.S. balance of payments problems, in which the Secretary emphasized the effort which had been taken to avoid an adverse impact on investments in and trade with the less developed countries.

430. Information Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson /1/

Washington, January 25, 1968.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana \(Brit. G.\), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68. Confidential.](#)

SUBJECT

Guyana's Border Dispute with Venezuela

During Prime Minister Burnham's call he asked for our help in persuading Venezuela to be less "bellicose" about the border dispute. You asked for a memorandum. [/2/](#)

[/2/ See Document 426.](#)

The dispute, involving some 5/8 of Guyana (see attached map), [/3/](#) goes back to colonial times. We became involved in the 1890s in an arbitration effort between the British and Venezuelans. The award generally corresponds to Guyana's present boundaries. Venezuela has never accepted it.

[/3/ Attached but not reproduced.](#)

Venezuela allowed the case to lie dormant until Guyana approached independence. Thinking that it could get more concessions out of a Britain anxious to get rid of a problem colony than an independent new nation, the Venezuelans began agitating their claim. They blocked Guyana from joining the OAS and becoming part of the Latin American Nuclear Free Zone.

In 1966 at Geneva the British and Venezuelan Governments agreed to establish a Mixed Guyana-Venezuela Commission to discuss the dispute. The agreement provides that if the dispute has not been resolved by 1970, the Commission will be dissolved and the problem taken to the United Nations.

The Commission has not made any progress toward resolving the boundary question but it has succeeded in draining off some of the political heat. Last year there was a small flareup when Venezuela occupied the border island of Ankoko, half of which is claimed by Guyana.

We have made it clear to both governments that they should use the Mixed Commission to work out their differences. We follow the controversy closely and counsel restraint when things get unsettled. After the Ankoko incident interrupted the dialogue, we encouraged President Leoni to receive an emissary from Guyana to resume bilateral talks. Venezuela eventually agreed to this, and offered to consider joint economic development projects in Guyana under the aegis of the Mixed Commission. Prime Minister Burnham accepted this suggestion in the understanding that the projects would not be limited just to the disputed territory.

The prospects for reaching a solution to the border controversy in the near future are not bright, unless there is a sharp change in attitude by the Venezuelans. For internal political reasons, they now find it convenient to agitate the issue from time to time. Our strategy is to use our influence to restrain the Venezuelans from further adventurism along the frontier and from too much politicking at home. We have repeatedly reminded the Venezuelans that if they undermine Burnham, they run the risk of getting a communist bridgehead at their back door under Cheddi Jagan.

Walt

431. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter- American Affairs (Oliver) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Bohlen)/1/

Washington, February 13, 1968.

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970. Secret; Eyes Only.](#)

SUBJECT

Electoral Assistance to Guyanan Prime Minister Burnham—Progress Report

Attached is a [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] memorandum of 22 January [/2/](#) reporting the progress that has been made in putting into effect the 303 Committee's decision of April 1967 to provide anti-Jagan forces in Guyana with covert support for the next national elections, which are scheduled for late 1968 or early 1969. The bulk of the assistance, whose total cost was estimated at [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], was to go to Prime Minister Forbes Burnham of the Peoples National Congress (PNC); a lesser amount was to go to the PNC's junior partner in the government coalition, the United Force (UF).

[/2/ The attached memorandum reported that the PNC claimed to already have 20,000 overseas Guyanese registered, \[text not declassified\], and that, "according \[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*\]," Cheddi and Janet Jagan and a small hard-core group of Marxists around them had purged the PPP of the majority of its moderate leaders at the party congress in late August 1967.](#)

The Committee's decision was grounded in the belief that as Prime Minister Jagan would be

an instrument of Communist influence in Latin America. He is a declared Marxist, and during his years as head of government in 1961–64 demonstrated in a number of ways his close sympathy with both the Soviet Union and Cuba. The [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] memorandum of proposal that formed the basis of the Committee's April decision pointed out that in these years some 50 members of his People's Progressive Party (PPP) were trained in guerrilla warfare in Cuba; that some 90 PPP youths were currently being educated in Bloc countries; that the Soviet Union during Jagan's premiership had given over \$3,000,000 in direct support of the PPP; and that Jagan's Accabre College, which he established in Guyana in 1965, is a base for Marxist indoctrination of PPP members.

The attached memorandum notes a number of steps that have been taken to implement the 303 Committee decision. A PNC training program in organizational and campaign techniques is in progress [*4 lines of source text not declassified*] to publicize Guyana's progress and thus attract the maximum number of these voters.

Nation-wide registration of all Guyanese over 15 has been all but completed; the information it yields will be helpful in indicating likely areas and groups for PNC campaign effort. For its part, the UF has begun working in both urban and rural areas and among its potential supporters in Amerindian settlements. Of the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] originally authorized, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] was committed in FY '67. Of the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] programmed for FY 1968 only [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] has been committed thus far, but the report anticipates an early quickening in the pace of outlays.

Despite these endeavors, the election still promises to be a nip-and-tuck affair. The country's vote will once more be cast almost completely along ethnic lines, and there is no solid assurance that Burnham's Negro supporters, even with their strength supplemented by their overseas compatriots, will carry the day against the East Indian supporters of Jagan. The feasibility of Burnham's design to effect a preelection merger with St. Vincent and thus take advantage of that island's largely Negro vote is still uncertain. Guyana's border problems with Venezuela and Surinam are being vigorously exploited by Jagan, as are charges that the United States, and especially the CIA, is involving itself in Guyana's internal affairs. /3/ But although prospects are thus unclear, they are bright enough to justify keeping to our present course.

I recommend that the attached memorandum be noted in the next 303 Committee meeting.

/3/ Jagan charged that the Shoup Registration System International of Pennsylvania was a front for the CIA and would help with the rigging of the coming elections, according to a December 17, 1967, New York Times article, a copy of which was attached but not printed.

432. Editorial Note

Secretary of State Rusk met with Guyana Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Finance Dr. Ptolemy Reid on May 24, 1968. Dr. Reid's primary purpose in coming to the United States was to generate electoral support for the People's National Congress (PNC) among Guyanese living in the United States. Reid took over as Minister of Finance from United Force leader, Peter D'Aguiar, in late September 1967, after the latter's resignation. Ambassador Carlson estimated that Reid would assume the leadership of the anti-Jagan forces in Guyana in the event of Burnham's death or incapacitation.

(Memorandum from Oliver to Rusk, May 23; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA)

Reid had progressively assumed more responsibility for economic development matters in Guyana and his visit occasioned a review of the U.S. aid program in Guyana. The briefing memoranda prepared for his visit reported that the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) program in Guyana "has been progressing well with inputs of grants, loans, and PL 480 foods of roughly \$10 million per year since the Burnham government took office in December 1964." These memoranda stated that substantial improvements had been made in the main coast road, and that Morrison-Knudson was preparing to begin work on the last remaining unimproved coastal road section, around Corentyne in the eastern part of the country, financed by a \$7.5 million AID loan. (Memorandum from Oliver to Rusk, May 24, Tab B—Briefing Notes; *ibid.*) Another AID project was the building of a 50-mile road from Atkinson Field to the previously isolated mining town of Mackenzie, begun in 1966 and finished the summer of 1968. Major improvements were made through AID funds to the international airport developed at Atkinson Field. An AID loan was also planned for Guyana's rice industry, to construct drying/storage centers at a number of sites along the coastal rice growing areas, to modernize Guyanese rice mills, to establish a rice research station, and to provide technical assistance. The loan was approved in November of 1968; see Document 440.

Further information on Reid and his May 1968 U.S. visit is in the National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 7 GUYANA, POL GUYANA-US, and POL 6 DR. REID.

433. Memorandum Prepared for the 303 Committee/1/

Washington, June 5, 1968.

[/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970. Secret; Eyes Only.](#)

SUBJECT

Support to Anti-Jagan Political Parties in Guyana: Progress Report

1. Summary

On 7 April 1967 the 303 Committee approved [/2/](#) a proposal to support anti-Jagan political parties in Guyana in the national elections scheduled for late 1968 or early 1969. Previous progress reports on this activity were considered by the 303 Committee on 7 August 1967 [/3/](#) and 16 February 1968. [/4/](#)

[/2/ See footnote 3, Document 421.](#)

[/3/ See footnote 5, Document 423.](#)

[/4/ The 303 Committee meetings on August 7, 1967, and February 16, 1968, were review and discussion, rather than decision, meetings. The facts noted in Document 431 and in the January 22 memorandum cited in footnote 2 thereto were among the topics reviewed at the February 16 meeting.](#)

This progress report describes current and projected activities in the election campaigns of the People's National Congress (PNC) and the United Force (UF), notes a new turn in Prime Minister Forbes Burnham's electoral strategy and describes the current state of Guyana's border disputes with Venezuela and Surinam.

This report also refers to the previous progress report on this activity, considered by the 303 Committee on 16 February 1968, which stated that of the [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] originally approved by the Committee, approximately [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] were spent in FY 1967 and [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] were programmed for FY 1968. This report further points out that these funds have now been spent and it is estimated that an additional [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] will be needed for the remainder of FY 1968 and [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] will be needed in FY 1969. Approval for the expenditure of this amount is recommended. /5/ (The [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] are available [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]. Of the [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] needed for FY 1969, [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] are available or programmed [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]; the remaining [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] would have to be provided from the [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] Reserve for FY 1969.)

According to the minutes of the July 12 meeting of the 303 Committee, [name not declassified] acknowledged "the seemingly high costs for such a 'postage stamp' country election but indicated that known Cuban or Soviet subsidies to Jagan are on almost the same scale." The additional funding was approved by the Committee. (Memorandum from McAfee to Oliver, July 16; Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970)

2. Current Activities

Preparations for the elections are proceeding satisfactorily with the following activities now under way:

A. Campaign in Guyana

The campaign organizations of the People's National Congress (PNC) led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham and the United Force (UF) led by Peter D'Aguiar have been set up in Guyana and both these parties are now engaged in their electoral campaigns. Due to its larger size and the wider and more varied activities demanded of it, the PNC is more advanced in its state of organization than is the UF. PNC offices have been set up at the precinct level throughout the populated areas of the country and party activists have begun to canvass potential voters. The UF began its campaign later than the PNC due to its smaller size and the somewhat more restricted area in which it must organize. However, the UF campaign is now beginning to get underway, party organizers are canvassing urban areas where most UF voters are located and are also making an increasing number of visits to the interior, where Amerindian voters, who made up approximately one third of the UF vote in 1964, are located. /6/ The UF and the PNC each has a campaign manager in Guyana [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]. Both of these are professional political organizers and are doing an excellent job in getting the parties organized for the elections.

/6/ According to a July 2 memorandum from Oliver to Bohlen, part of the additional funds was for PNC and UF motor vehicles and boats to reach Amerindian voters and funds to contact overseas voters. (Ibid.)

B. Guyana National Census and Voter Registration

The Government of Guyana is carrying out a census of all citizens 14 years of age and over who reside in Guyana. The names of Guyanese of voting age will be drawn from the census list to compose the voter registration lists for the elections. All three parties, the PNC, the UF and the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) led by Cheddi Jagan, are now working to make sure that their adherents are properly registered. [3 lines of source text not declassified] The Government of Guyana at one time planned to have the census completed in early 1968; however various delays have occurred and the government recently said privately that the census will not be completed until the end of July, at which time registration will be closed. Due to these delays, the government's contract with the company expired, company representatives who were in Guyana returned to the US, and Guyanese are completing the census without the company's help. Prime Minister Burnham recently said that he believes the registration can be completed in time to permit elections to be held in early December 1968 but that there is a possibility that they may not be held until February 1969. According to the constitution, elections must be held by the end of March 1969.

C. Registration of Overseas Voters

The main thrust of present PNC and UF efforts overseas is to get potential voters registered. This will be strictly a registration of voters as no census is being conducted in overseas areas. This registration effort is going slowly but reasonably satisfactorily in the US and Great Britain but has run into snags in Canada. Steps are being taken to correct this problem. It is difficult to estimate what the total number of overseas registrants will be as there are no figures to be used as a basis for such an estimate. There may be as many as 20,000 potential voters in Great Britain and possibly 15,000 in the US and Canada. As many as 25,000 of these may be supporters of the PNC and the UF.

3. New Developments

[less than 1 line of source text not declassified] representatives met with Prime Minister Forbes Burnham in late April to discuss operational matters related to the electoral campaign. At this meeting Burnham stated unequivocally that he plans to conduct the registration and voting in such a manner that the PNC will emerge with an absolute majority in the Guyana National Assembly. Burnham said that he will never again allow the life of his government to depend upon his coalition partner Peter d'Aguiar and that if the voting should turn out in such a manner that he could not form a government without the help of d'Aguiar, he would refuse to form a government. Burnham said that he plans to register 17, 18, 19 and 20 year old PNC adherents (minimum voting age is 21 years) to make up part of the vote he needs and will direct his campaign in such a way as to attract enough additional East Indian voters to put the PNC approximately on a par with the PPP in Guyana. The additional votes he would need to give the PNC an absolute majority would come from the overseas Guyanese. On the other hand Ambassador Carlson [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] in Georgetown have commented that they believe this is wishful thinking by Burnham. They believe Burnham would encounter insurmountable administrative and organizational difficulties in attempting to rig the elections to the extent necessary to assure the PNC an absolute majority.

It should be noted that Burnham's plans to get an absolute majority in the elections constitute a basic change in strategy. Planning heretofore had been based upon the PNC and UF running separately but re-forming the coalition after the elections. Burnham will probably still be willing to have a coalition government after the elections but wants an

absolute majority so that the coalition will be formed on his terms and so that the life of his government will not depend on the UF and Peter d'Aguiar.

[Omitted here are sections 4-8, "Additional Development," "Security," "Coordination," "Future Plans," and "Recommendations."]

434. Memorandum From Secretary of Agriculture Freeman and Administrator of the Agency for International Development Gaud to President Johnson /1/

Washington, June 21, 1968.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana, Vol. I, Memos. Forwarded as Tab B to the President under a July 11 memorandum from Rostow requesting Johnson's approval. Tab A to Rostow's memorandum was a July 8 memorandum from Director of the Bureau of the Budget Zwick concurring with Gaud and Freeman's recommendation. Johnson checked the approve options on Rostow and Zwick's memoranda. (Ibid., Guyana (Brit. G.), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68)

SUBJECT

Public Law 480 Program with Guyana

We recommend that you authorize us to negotiate a PL 480 sales agreement with Guyana to provide approximately 1,500 tons of edible vegetable oil, 2,000 tons of wheat/wheat flour, 100 tons of tobacco and 3,000 tons of potatoes for which the current export market value (including applicable ocean transportation costs) is approximately \$1.0 million. The proposed terms are payment in dollars of 5 percent on delivery and the balance in approximately equal installments over 20 years; interest will be 2 percent per annum during a two-year grace period and 2.5 percent thereafter. The Departments of State and Treasury concur in this recommendation.

Need for Program

The Guyana (Burnham) Government has undertaken with help from the United States Agency for International Development and the British and Canadian Governments an ambitious economic development program over the past three years. We have given particular priority to assisting this government in its effort to demonstrate what a democratic government can achieve following the years of difficulties under the rule of communist-oriented Cheddi Jagan. The Burnham government is making a special effort to accelerate its development projects, particularly for agriculture, but local currency costs for development have placed a substantial strain on the Burnham government's budget.

This agreement would assist the Burnham Government to sustain its record of economic achievement and progress, which is important at this time since national elections will be held in Guyana prior to March 31, 1969, with Jagan again opposing Burnham.

Self-Help Efforts

In negotiating this agreement, we will seek the following commitments from the Government of Guyana:

The local currency generated from the sale of the commodities in the importing country shall be made available for development of agriculture as follows:

1. For the construction and improvement of roads connecting rural areas with the market cities and also for planning and construction of access roads in the Atkinson/McKenzie land settlement project.
2. For the modernization of agriculture through the expansion of adaptive research and extension and increasing the means for storage, processing and distribution of basic food crops and for land development and water control in farming areas along the coast.
3. For the improvement of facilities and operation of the government maternity and child health centers, especially for projected family planning, and including vaccinations for polio, etc.
4. For strengthening systems of collection, computation and analysis of statistics to better measure the availability of agricultural inputs and progress in expanding production and marketing of agricultural commodities.
5. For other improvements in the agricultural sector to be agreed upon by the USAID Mission and the Government of Guyana.

Military Expenditures Review

With respect to Section 620(S) of the Foreign Assistance Act, State/AID has concluded that U.S. developmental assistance is not being diverted to military expenditures and that Guyana's resources are not being diverted to military expenditures to a degree which materially interferes with Guyana's development. A summary of State/AID conclusion is attached./2/

Recommendation

That you authorize us to proceed with this PL 480 sales agreement.

Orville L. Freeman
William S. Gaud

/2/ Attached but not printed.

435. Telegram From the Ambassador to Guyana (Carlson) to the Department of State/1/

Georgetown, June 28, 1968.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Carlson—Department Messages [file name not declassified], Vol. 4, July 7, 1965–February 14, 1969. Secret.

For Hill ARA/NC from Amb Carlson.

1. Had long discussion with Prime Minister Burnham June 27 on variety subjects but my primary purpose was to assess his attitude re dimension of possible electoral results and whether reports referred to in your message to me of June 21st /2/ should be viewed as definitive.

/2/ In a June 21 telegram Hill had advised Carlson to warn Burnham not to rig the election so extremely as to show an African majority in the population. (Ibid.)

2. I first touched on status of possibility SA loan, /3/ mentioning that while great progress had been made toward authorization and I was hopeful, it was at the moment still not certain. There was, however, another matter involved in this which was of concern to me. Some of the friends of Guyana in Washington had recently become apprehensive as to whether Prime Minister might plan Tammany Hall tactics on so massive a scale as to taint the results, raise questions of legitimacy, and embarrass the U.S. I was sure that he would no more want to have us all in the funny papers than would our friends in Washington. I said I assumed that Sonny Ramphal had already mentioned to him that John Hill has expressed this anxiety to Ramphal in New York. In addition, an ingredient in the discussion in Washington of my request for SA funding had been question as to whether election was to be so fixed as to make such funding unnecessary thereby saving us several million dollars. (Burnham seemed impressed by this point.) Moreover because of our strong support of the Burnham administration in the past, which was well known, and the closeness of GOG-USG relations what he does will inevitably affect our image too.

/3/ Supporting Assistance loan, which could provide over \$2 million for small public works projects, reducing unemployment and resulting in maximum political impact during the pre-election period. In a June 28 telegram [text not declassified], on Carlson's behalf, requested [name not declassified] immediate intercession, since the loan agreement had to be signed prior to the end of the fiscal year (June 30) and Gaud was reluctant to proceed. Carlson planned a direct appeal to the Secretary of State "if day's events require," but the loan was approved without this proving necessary. (Ibid.)

3. Burnham asked what these people thought was reasonable and I told him the matter was not one of any precise equation but simply one of dimension. We wanted him to win; we had backed him to the hilt; neither of us wanted a scandal. He agreed. I asked him what he really expected electorally. He said he foresaw the PNC in about the same range of votes in Guyana as the PPP; i.e., roughly even, perhaps not quite as much as the PPP, or perhaps slightly more but in general about the same order of magnitude. Burnham told me he expects work hard on Muslims and hopes have some success as well as with various other non-Africans so as to give PNC more multi-racial image. He hoped part of this process could take place before election and mentioned various individuals including Kit Nascimento and Ann Jardim.

4. As far as overseas was concerned, he thought registration of as many as 50,000 was within realm of possibility because of ease with which persons can qualify as Guyanese, i.e., descendant if mother was Guyanese and even foreign wives of Guyanese under the law qualify. He was urging his agents to work vigorously toward this large registration but he thought prospect was not good for high voter participation overseas. He expected not more than about 30,000 to vote if registration went high as 50,000. We agreed that overseas vote should be heavily PNC, i.e., 75-90% (with him more inclined to the latter figure). We agreed that it was entirely logical that it should be heavily PNC.

5. Since all indications from collateral reporting showed that his intentions were much more reasonable than had been feared this was far as I thought it necessary to go. Our conversation generally tended to confirm reports from several other sources few days before [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] that Burnham is not planning or expecting massive rig. ([less than 1 line of source text not declassified]) reports that he is mentally prepared to accept plurality and is hoping for 26 seats with thought that if coalition is not reestablished (presumably due D'Aguiar on scene trying set terms) that he will be able persuade at least two if not three UF legislators to join him in forming majority.

436. Circular Telegram From the Department of State to All American Republic Posts/1/

Washington, July 17, 1968, 2314Z.

/1/ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 32-1 GUYANA-VEN. Confidential. Drafted by Luers and George F. Jones, cleared by Hill and Richard A. Frank (L/E), and approved by Sayre. Repeated to London, USUN, USCINCSO, and Montevideo for Assistant Secretary Oliver.

204263. Subject: Guyana-Venezuela Border Dispute.

Following is summary developments Guyana-Venezuela border dispute that can be drawn on as appropriate.

1. Background: Dispute originates in 1899 Arbitral Award of territory west of Essequibo River (about five-eighths of what is now Guyana) to Great Britain. GOV has since 1962 maintained officially that arbitral award was result "fraudulent deal" between British and Russian members tribunal and therefore award is null and void. In period immediately prior to British granting independence to Guyana, Venezuela pressed for reopening question of where boundary should lie in belief that Venezuela could more easily twist tail of British lion than of small newly sovereign neighbor. In February 1966 at Geneva UK, British Guiana and Venezuela Governments signed agreement establishing Mixed Commission to discuss dispute arising out of Venezuelan claim. Since Guyana's independence May 1966, Mixed Commission has met 9 times and has generally served as useful channel for diversion political heat generated in both countries.

2. Mixed Commission meetings have been frustrating to GOV, however, since it apparently saw purpose Mixed Commission to redraw boundary, whereas Guyana saw it as forum to examine validity Venezuelan allegations concerning Arbitral Award. In effort break impasse GOV offered contribute to joint economic development of disputed territory. GOG expressed willingness discuss Venezuelan economic assistance but broke down when it became clear to GOG that GOV wanted exercise more authority over project than normal for economic assistance donors.

3. Last year Venezuela occupied tiny border island Ankoko, half which claimed by Guyana. As dispute boiled over "Ankoko Affair" early summer 1967 we encouraged President Leoni receive Guyana emissary. Talks resulted in easing of tensions and assuring GOG that Venezuela did not intend to use force in dispute and that matter would be played in low key during pre-electoral period in Guyana.

4. In May 1968 Venezuela reiterated a 1965 warning that any commercial concessions GOG might grant to foreign firms in disputed territory would not be recognized by GOV. (GOV has policy not to grant new concessions for mineral exploration in territory it controls.) This brought angry charges from Guyana Government that Venezuela violating Geneva Agreement by publicizing its claim outside Mixed Commission and committing "economic aggression" against Guyana. In late June GOV withdrew from sub-commission for economic development following refusal GOG entertain joint development of disputed territory.

5. On July 9 Venezuelan President issued decree claiming 9 miles of territorial sea beyond 3 miles claimed by Guyana off coast of disputed territory. "Explanatory note" published with decree pointed out Venezuela claims 12 mile territorial sea off its own coast and wished put on record its claim to similar area off disputed territory. However since Guyana does not claim zone from 3 to 12 miles Venezuela feels free claim zone and, "explanatory note" implies, exercise immediate sovereignty over it by some unstated "physical act of possession" or "concrete act of dominion." GOV member Mixed Commission told press foreign merchant ships would have right innocent passage through zone (which includes major shipping lanes) but no fishing rights. Naval vessels could pass with GOV permission. GOV FonMin told US Ambassador privately he "assumed" GOV will institute naval patrols of zone.

6. On July 13, Under Secretary asked explanation decree's meaning from Venezuelan Ambassador in Washington stating that if Venezuela intended exercise rights of sovereignty in 3 to 12 miles zone off Guyana US would take "most serious" view situation. Under Secretary pointed out:

a) In addition to fact USG does not recognize 12 mile territorial seas, US does not accept decree's validity if it implies actual exercise sovereignty and if matter came up in international forum we could not support Venezuela. /2/

b) We viewed decree's explanatory note with allusions such as "physical act of possession" as more disturbing than decree itself and wondered about GOV intentions in view earlier assurances from Venezuelan President that GOV would not resort to force./3/

/2/ Telegram 206210 to Georgetown, July 20, reported that Under Secretary Katzenbach met with Prime Minister Burnham earlier in the day and assured him "that U.S. viewed decree as invalid under international law and had so informed GOV firmly." (Ibid., ORG 7 ARA)

/3/ Telegram 206216 to Georgetown and Caracas, July 20, reported that President Leoni of Venezuela, in the presence of Foreign Minister Iribarren, gave Ambassador Bernbaum assurances that "no incidents would occur and that the right of innocent passage would be honored." The telegram reported that these assurances were conveyed to Burnham following his meeting with Katzenbach. (Ibid., POL 7 GUYANA)

c) We concerned that GOV actions might erode Burnham electoral strength and divert his attention from campaign prior to crucial electoral confrontation with Jagan /4/ which will possibly take place in December this year.

/4/ Telegram 7021 from Caracas, July 20, reported that after Bernbaum's conversation with Leoni and Iribarren (see footnote 3 above) Foreign Office Director of Political Affairs Herrera Marcano met with Carlson who outlined the effect GOV's actions were having on Guyana's domestic political situation stressing how they were helping Jagan and hurting Burnham. Carlson pointed out that Jagan's position had been on ebb, but that Burnham had felt

compelled to bring him in to consult on Guyana's position in order to present a united front, thus lending Jagan some new respectability. Carlson also said that "recent Government of Venezuela 'provocations' distracted Burnham" and that they could have a significant effect on Burnham's campaign effort. (Ibid., POL 32-1 GUYANA-VEN)

7. US has consistently maintained neutral stance on merits of dispute itself and has so informed GOV and GOG. We may, however, be compelled make our position public at future date on legal aspects recent decree and its implications for peace in area. We will attempt to avoid making public our legal position until GOV responds to Under Secretary's inquiry.

8. GOG has undertaken at UN present case to regional groups and particularly seek support from LA countries. Burnham also contemplating bringing matter to UNSC.

9. Press reports implying US favors GOV inaccurate and to date press reports of GOV military or naval movements also appear inaccurate.

10. Foregoing can be used as background in discussion with government officials provided such action would not be interpreted as lobbying for interests of either government.

Rusk

437. Memorandum for the Files /1/

Washington, July 26, 1968.

/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana, (Brit. G.), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68. Confidential. Drafted by Bowdler.

SUBJECT

Meeting of Guyana Prime Minister Burnham with the President, Friday, July 26, 1968-5:30 p.m. /2/

/2/ In a July 24 memorandum to the President, Rusk advised that although Burnham's U.S. visit was private and unofficial, he had come to Washington to discuss his government's concerns about Venezuela's recent territorial waters decree with Katzenbach. Rusk recommended that Johnson meet with Burnham for a brief courtesy call because "Burnham needs to demonstrate in Georgetown that he has received highest level consideration of the Guyana position on the recent Venezuelan decree," adding that Cheddi Jagan's newspapers "have taunted Burnham that U.S. silence on the decree constitutes tacit approval of this new Venezuelan claim." (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 15-1 GUYANA)

Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, accompanied by Ambassador John Carter, paid a courtesy call on the President.

Assistant Secretary Oliver was also present. After an exchange of greetings the Prime Minister described the Venezuelan decree claiming nine miles of territorial waters beyond the three-mile limit off the disputed territory of Essequibo. Mr. Burnham also mentioned the Venezuelan warning to firms seeking concessions in the disputed territory. He said the warning had already scared off one Canadian investor. In making the presentation, the Prime Minister gave no indication that he was seeking Presidential help. /3/

/3/ In a July 23 memorandum to Johnson, Rostow stated that the appointment "must be handled in such a way that it does not offend our Venezuelan friends. This is manageable and the Prime Minister will certainly play ball." Rostow added that "State is doing all possible to defuse the incident without taking sides on the territorial dispute. So far, these efforts seem to be meeting with success." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana (Brit. G.), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68)

The President inquired about the outlook for the elections in Guyana. The Prime Minister expressed optimism. While no date has been set for the election, he thought it would be in early December.

The President, mentioning his interest in regional integration, asked the Prime Minister how he saw the Caribbean Development Bank shaping up. The Prime Minister described past difficulties with Jamaica. He noted that recently there seemed to be a change in the Jamaican attitude which gives some reason to hope they would join the Bank and bring the Bahamas and British Honduras with them. Mr. Burnham added that on his way back he expected to talk to Prime Minister Shearer about the Bank.

The President said he would like to be as helpful to Guyana as he could. He told the Prime Minister he could give careful consideration to any proposals he wished to make. Mr. Burnham thanked him for his understanding and willingness to support him.

WGB

438. Memorandum From the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division of the Central Intelligence Agency (Broe) to Director of Central Intelligence Helms

Washington, November 7, 1968.

[Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Job 89-00998R, Box 3, Folder 40, OPI: 57 Latin American Division. Secret. 3 pages of source text not declassified.]

439. Memorandum Prepared for the 303 Committee/1/

Washington, November 21, 1968.

/1/ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Guyana 1969, 1970. Secret; Eyes Only.

SUBJECT

Support to Anti-Jagan Political Parties in Guyana: Progress Report

1. Summary On 7 April 1967 the 303 Committee approved a proposal to support anti-Jagan political parties in Guyana in the national elections scheduled for late 1968 or early 1969. Previous progress reports on this activity were considered by the 303 Committee on 7 August 1967, 16 February 1968 and 12 July 1968.

This report notes that the elections have been set for 16 December 1968, describes progress in the election campaigns of the People's National Congress (PNC), led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham and the United Force (UF), led by Peter D'Aguiar, notes the

outcome of the national census and voter registration effort in Guyana and describes the problems facing Burnham stemming from his having padded the registration lists in the United Kingdom excessively in an attempt to win an outright majority in the elections. This report also notes the security implications arising from Peter D'Aguiar's having become aware of this padding and his efforts to counter it.

This progress report also states that somewhat under half of the funds approved for this activity for fiscal year 1969 were obligated by mid-November 1968.

[Omitted here are sections 2-6, Current Activities, Date of Elections, New Developments, Additional Pertinent Developments, including Border Problems, the MPCA, the PNC-UF Coalition, and U.S.-U.K. Discussions, Security, and Coordination.]

7. Future Plans [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] will continue to provide financial support and electoral guidance to the PNC and the UF for their campaigns in Guyana and overseas. The PNC contracted with a U.S.-based motion picture company to produce newsreel films showing the progress made by the Burnham government; the first two of a projected ten films are now being shown in Georgetown and depict Burnham inspecting self-help projects in small villages and the visit of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Guyana.

The United States government will continue to exert all possible influence to persuade Burnham to pursue a moderate and statesmanlike course toward the PPP and the UF with regard to the registration problem and to the objections of these parties to the electoral law. To date, however, Burnham has not responded in the manner desired to U.S. advice to avoid an overly large false registration and to U.S. urging to plan for the formation of another coalition government after the elections. He feels that his own pride, self-respect and competence as a leader are called into question when he is urged to continue his cooperation with Peter D'Aguiar, whom he hates. Racial considerations are most likely a significant ingredient in Burnham's attitude. Thus we have no assurance that he will accept our guidance in this regard. Peter D'Aguiar also is an extremely difficult person to deal with and so far has rejected our attempts to persuade him to take a more moderate and flexible line toward Burnham. D'Aguiar has been in close touch with Cheddi Jagan regarding the lawsuit that each of their parties is instituting and at one point it appeared that the two parties would cooperate closely in the suits. Jagan and D'Aguiar have now agreed to consult and cooperate in their attacks on Burnham and the government. D'Aguiar continues to maintain a strongly anti-Communist attitude and told Jagan that he dislikes his Communist sympathies and will work with him only to obstruct any government plans for electoral chicanery. However, D'Aguiar despises Burnham passionately and has a paranoid streak in him; this combination may well induce him to take attitudes and to pursue courses of action that a better balanced man would avoid.

Of the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] approved for this activity for fiscal year 1969, a total of approximately [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] has been obligated through mid-November 1968.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the 303 Committee note this progress report.²

² In a December 18 memorandum to Bohlen, Trueheart reported that Rostow read the memorandum for the 303 Committee and asked that the other 303 Committee principals

see it and note it at the next Committee meeting, but that it not be formally placed on the agenda. Trueheart added that the memorandum reported that [*text not declassified*], with 303 Committee approval, had contributed some [*text not declassified*] to the electoral campaign of the PNC and the UF. (Ibid.)

440. Action Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson /1/

Washington, November 23, 1968, 10:40 a.m.

[/1/ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Guyana \(Brit. G.\), Vol. I, Cables, Memos, and Misc., 5/66-11/68. Secret.](#)

SUBJECT

Loan for Guyana Rice Industry Bill

Gaud is asking urgently for your approval of a \$12.9 million loan to modernize the rice industry in Guyana (Tab B). [/2/](#) Charlie Zwick recommends your approval (Tab A). [/3/](#) Treasury has no problem on balance of payments grounds.

[/2/ Reference is to a November 18 memorandum from Gaud to the President, attached but not printed.](#)

[/3/ Memorandum from Zwick to the President, November 21, attached but not printed.](#)

The critical elections in Guyana will take place December 16. Prime Minister Burnham has done a very good job of preparing the political ground to fend off Cheddi Jagan's challenge at the polls. Although the East Indian population outnumbers Burnham's predominantly black following, some of Jagan's supporters have been won over by Burnham's good government record. The outlook is for a very narrow Burnham victory, barring last-minute surprises.

This rice loan project plays a key part in Burnham's electoral strategy. The government's efforts to modernize Guyana's rice industry, well publicized for over a year, will help split Jagan's almost solid political support among the small rice farmers, all of whom are East Indian. The project has been delayed for technical reasons long past the intended starting date. Nonetheless, announcement of the loan within the next few days will still have important political benefits for Burnham and help to guarantee his election.

This is a good project on its economic merits. The overriding argument, however, is that it provides important political support for Burnham at this crucial point. Ambassador Carlson urges your approval in time for an announcement to be made in Georgetown early next week.

I recommended that you approve authorization of this loan.

Walt

Approve [/4/](#)

Disapprove

See me

/4/ This option is checked.

441. Editorial Note

The People's National Congress (PNC) of Prime Minister Burnham won 30 of the 53 seats in Parliament in the December 16 elections. Burnham's PNC won 50.7 percent of the domestic vote and a heavy majority of the overseas which raised his total to 55.8 percent of the registered voters. The United Force (UF) party of Portuguese businessman Peter D'Aguiar emerged from the election with only 4 seats in Parliament. Jagan's People's Progressive Party (PPP) won only 19 seats. (Airgram A-349, December 31; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 14 GUYANA)

Ambassador Carlson reported that Burnham "was somewhat disappointed at not making greater inroads into East Indian community [Jagan got almost all of their votes] in view his four year record of peace, stability and economic progress." (Telegram 2201 from Georgetown, December 20; *ibid.*) Burnham named members of the PNC Parliamentary delegation on December 24 and named his new cabinet on December 31, including East Indians and other non-Africans in both groups. (Airgram A-349, December 31; *ibid.*)

[*text not declassified*]

More information about U.S. Government reporting of the December 16 Guyana election is *ibid.*, POL 14 GUYANA.

Abbreviations

A, airgram

AG, Agricultural Bank

AID, Agency for International Development

ARA, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State

ARA/CAR, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Office of Caribbean Affairs, Department of State

BG, British Guiana

CAR, Office of Caribbean Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State

CAS, Controlled American Source

CIA, Central Intelligence Agency

CIAP, Inter-American Committee on the Alliance for Progress

CINCARIBESEAFRON, Commander in Chief Caribbean Sea Frontier

CINCLANT, Commander in Chief, Atlantic

CINCOS, Commander in Chief, Southern Command

C/S, Chief of Staff

COMOR, Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

CT, Country Team

DAS, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission

Deptel, Department of State telegram

DG, development grant

DL, development loan

DO, Directorate/Director of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency

DOD, Department of Defense
Embtel, Embassy telegram
Exdis, Exclusive distribution
GAWU, Guyana Agricultural Workers Union
IAHRC, Inter-American Human Rights Committee
IDB, International Development Bank
IBRD, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
INR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
INR/DDC, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Deputy Director for Coordination, Department of State
INR/IL, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Office of Intelligence Liaison, Department of State
Limdis, Limited distribution
LOC, line of communication
MOD, Minister of Defense
MPCA, Manpower Citizens Association
NIE, National Intelligence Estimate
Nodis, No distribution
OAS, Organization of American States
ODC, Overseas Development Council
PL, Public Law
PNC, Peoples' National Congress (British Guiana/Guyana)
Polad, political adviser
PPP, Peoples' Progressive Party (British Guiana/Guyana)
Reftel, reference telegram
S, Office of the Secretary of State
SA, Supporting Assistance
SNIE, Special National Intelligence Estimate
UF, United Force (British Guiana/Guyana political party)
US, United States
USG, United States Government
USIA, United States Information Agency
USIB, United States Intelligence Board