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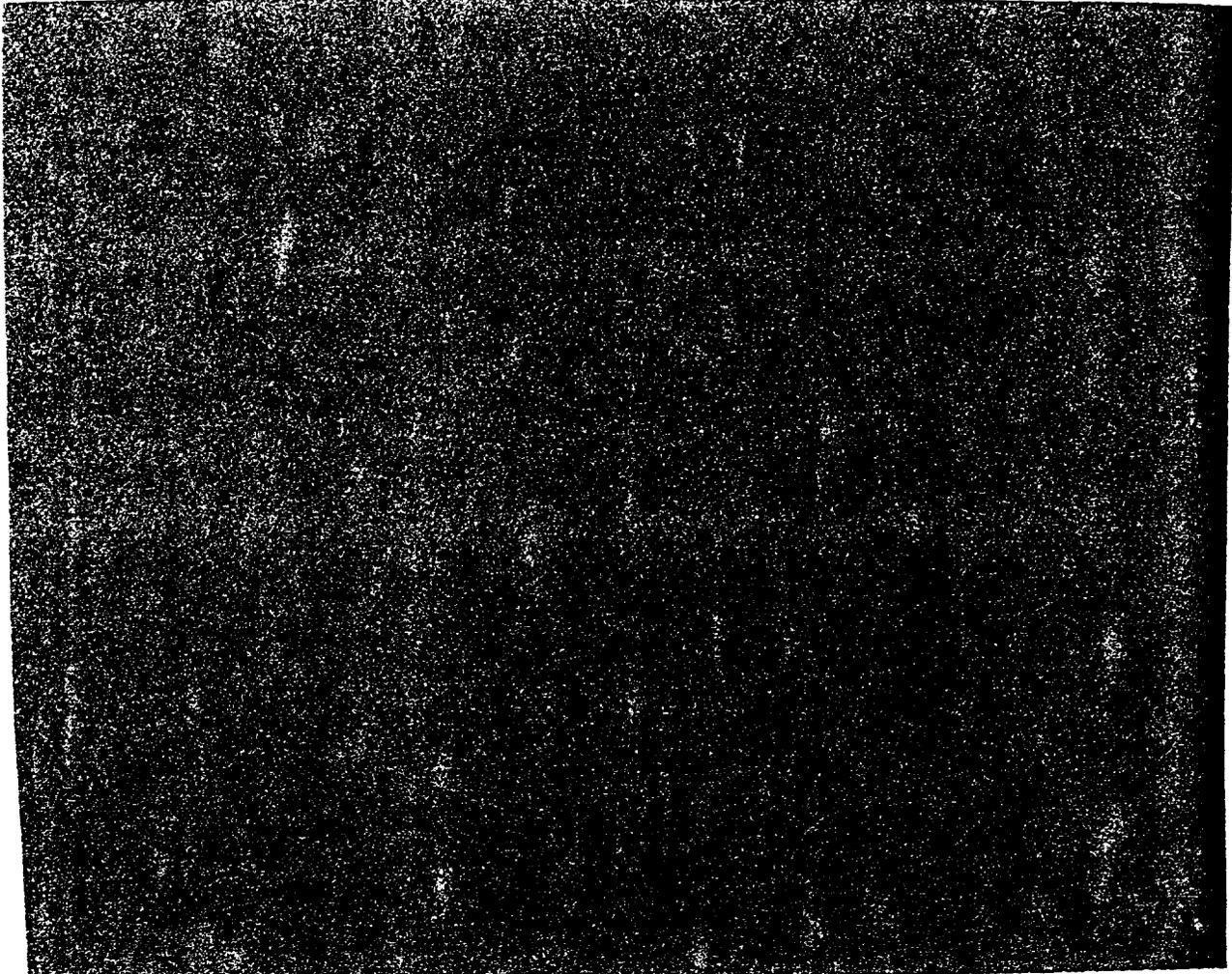
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GUYANA'S PRIME MINISTER WORKING FOR ELECTION MAJORITY
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GUYANA'S PRIME MINISTER WORKING FOR ELECTION MAJORITY

The prospects for Guyana's Prime Minister Burnham to be returned to office with a clear majority are improving. He is making an all-out effort to gain the necessary votes on 16 December and has become increasingly reluctant to form another coalition with conservative Peter D'Aguiar's United Force.

Burnham is basing his electoral strategy on obtaining the lion's share of overseas votes, most of which will be cast by Negroes. He also plans to break up the past voting pattern, which has been almost entirely on racial lines--the Negroes supported Burnham and the East Indians backed pro-Communist opposition leader Cheddi Jagan.

Major aid projects in sectors of the economy dominated by East Indians have been announced recently. In addition, Burnham disclosed last week that Jagan has been clandestinely involved with Castro-Communist extremists in Venezuela. Although it is doubtful that the East Indians will actually abandon Jagan, Burnham strategists are convinced that it would not be overly surprising were the election results to show that Burnham had cut into Jagan's support.

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All is not clear sailing, however, and Burnham is not invulnerable to attack. Last weekend, Venezuelan troops, in pursuit of goals relating to their long-standing border dispute with Guyana, raided a string of Guyanese islands in the river that forms the boundary. The Guyanese did not retaliate because troops were needed elsewhere to maintain security during the election campaign. Jagan has consistently maintained that Burnham has not adequately protected Guyanese territorial integrity and if word of the Venezuelan action leaks out, Jagan may score a propaganda coup.

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There is still a slight possibility that Burnham's plans will miscarry and that he will fail to produce a majority. If this occurs, and he still refuses to enter another coalition with the United Force, he may try to form a minority government, depending on support from borderline opposition legislators on each important issue.

[REDACTED]