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Government
and Politics

Guyana

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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Government and Politics

A. Introduction (C)

Guyana, known as British Guiana (a Crown Colony) until it became independent on 26 May 1966, has a parliamentary form of government. The African-led administration currently in power professes to be working toward a multiracial democracy under continuing African leadership. It is committed to improving the living standards of the people by developing a mixed economy in which the role of private enterprise would be reduced in favor of state ownership and control of basic industry which in Guyana could extend as far as retail sales. Guyana's politics have become increasingly polarized, and racial tensions have become more pronounced between the East Indians and the Africans and African Mixed, who comprise 51% and 43% of the population, respectively. This has been particularly true since the 1968 general elections.

Guyanese political parties have been organized largely along racial lines since 1955 when Linden Forbes Burnham, the present Prime Minister who was also the co-founder of the PPP, and his African followers challenged Cheddi Jagan, the East Indian Communist leader of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), which was then both African and East Indian. Burnham founded the People's National Congress (PNC) in 1957 shortly after leaving the PPP. He gained power in the 1964 elections and has since controlled the country's politics. Because of the racial tensions and the antagonism between Burnham and Jagan—and despite the Guyanese respect for British institutions—the concept of a constructive parliamentary opposition has failed to develop. The PPP has not cooperated with the Burnham government to any significant extent but instead has tried to thwart it at every opportunity.

The institutions provided by the British made good government possible, and in the days before self-government the colony was fairly and honestly administered by its British overseers. Most of the people were loyal to the British Crown, and a coherent and popular sentiment for full independence was late in developing. In the meantime racial tensions began

to surface and by 1955 the society had polarized into hostile camps of Africans and East Indians. The suspicions and periodic outbreaks of violence between the two racial groups kept the colony in a state of tension and prevented the development of national unity. The political parties, which by now were engaged in a bitter struggle for control, were preoccupied with their rivalry rather than working for the good of the colony. No compromise between the two major parties was possible, and when the British finally granted independence, the government to which they passed political power was a coalition led by the PNC and supported by the United Force (UF), a small multiracial party which had the backing of conservatives and the Amerindians.

During the first 2 years of independence Burnham headed an unsteady parliamentary coalition with the UF, which had been formed after the December 1964 election largely to keep Jagan out of power. Personality conflicts between UF leader Peter D'Aguiar and Burnham led Burnham to become antagonistic toward the coalition. D'Aguiar bitterly opposed Burnham's electoral legislation and, when Burnham disregarded his wishes, D'Aguiar resigned from the coalition in October 1965, largely because of this legislation and fraudulent procedures. Burnham went on to win a majority in the 1968 election and formed the government without the need for a coalition.

Burnham's party won 56% of the seats in the National Assembly and consequently control of the country for the next 5 years. Burnham claimed that his victory was a racial breakthrough and that the East Indians could no longer be considered the property of the PPP. However, while there are indications that Burnham gained some East Indian support, particularly among the Muslims, the inroads into the East Indian vote were not as impressive as the election results might seem to indicate. The racial basis of Guyanese politics had not been changed significantly, and Jagan still retained the support of most of the East Indians. Burnham's impressive electoral margin was due largely to voting regulations and machinery which favored the PNC, and to a political campaign which

far exceeded the combined efforts of the PPP and the UF. Burnham sought to depict his victory as a vindication of the moderate and progressive policies of his administration.

Burnham has since maintained his determination to exclude Jagan from power and retain control of the government. In spite of the electoral manipulation, however, basic political freedoms and a democratic form of government at the national level, for the most part, have been maintained. Burnham has studiously sought to avoid antagonizing the East Indian population and has presented himself as a national rather than a racial leader. Nevertheless, the high East Indian birth rate and the persistent tendency of most East Indians and Africans to vote racially and the fears of each group that the other is determined to enslave it politically have continued to keep racial and political tensions high.

In September 1969 Burnham announced—largely as a symbolic gesture to increase national self-reliance and achieve economic development through the introduction of some socialist measures—the creation of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. By February 1970 Guyana had severed its ties with the British Crown and became the first Caribbean member of the Commonwealth to become a republic. An elected President replaced the Governor-General as titular head of State—but the change was more symbolic than substantive. The Constitution of 1970 provided for a republican form of government and the appointment of a President elected by a simple majority vote of the elected members of the National Assembly. Burnham then sought to clarify domestic policies aimed at “Guyanizing” the economy, and building “a new socio-economic structure free of foreign influence, one that was neither communist nor capitalist.” Burnham attacked foreign aid, including some limited United States assistance, and strongly criticized private foreign investment and banks. He demanded at least 51% equity participation in future foreign investment projects in forests and minerals—this was later expanded to include other industries.

The next step in securing greater government control over the economy was to impose controls on imports and “similar transactions” and to establish cooperatives in the insurance field. The government also ordered all official economic entities to deal exclusively through the National Cooperative Bank. This move was to be expanded with the aim of “miniaturizing” foreign banks and making the Cooperative Bank dominant in the society.

The government's efforts to expand its role in the economy have met with mixed success. Most sectors of

the economy have been forced to accept increased regulatory decrees and foresee more stringent controls in the future. Objections to the government's demand for increased control in the day-to-day operations of the Demerara Bauxite Company, a subsidiary of a Canadian firm, provided the ostensible reason for its takeover by the government in 1971. Nationalization of other foreign firms will follow. Nationalization and its attendant problems of management by a relatively inexperienced bureaucracy have added to the government's basic economic difficulties. Transportation and power facilities remain inadequate for growth. The country is still heavily dependent upon a relatively few exports—mainly bauxite, sugar, and rice, the latter two being especially subject to world market fluctuations. New foreign investment in Guyana has dropped significantly, and the economy has stagnated. The serious unemployment problem has not been reduced, and labor unrest, fueled in part by the rising cost of living, continues. The population is increasing at an annual average rate of 2.7%, adding to the urgency of such problems as creating new jobs and providing more housing and facilities. Racial tensions at times have a serious negative effect on productivity.

Popular acceptance of the Burnham administration remains clouded by the country's racial division. The majority of Africans continue to support Burnham and his policies and readily identify with him because he is black. Some of the more radical and militant blacks believe that he is moving too slowly, and they have withdrawn their support from his government. The East Indians generally view Burnham with indifference or resentment, largely because he is not one of them, and because they have little or no voice in the making of government policies. It appears that at least some East Indians, frustrated with being out of power for so long and discouraged over the prospects of regaining their former role in the government through the electoral process, may be gravitating toward eventually resorting to violence. Thus Burnham may find it difficult to continue to govern by democratic means and may adopt extralegal measures to assure survival of his government and his black rule.

B. Structure and functioning of the government (U/OU)

Guyana gained independence on 26 May 1966 and became a republic within the British Commonwealth on 23 February 1970. It has a parliamentary form of government—patterned after that of the United Kingdom—composed of a unicameral legislature and

a 53-member National Assembly (Parliament). The Constitution, which came into effect on independence day, made provision for the National Assembly to declare the country a republic, at which time the British Monarch as head of state and locally represented by the Governor General was replaced by a President elected by a simple majority vote of the National Assembly (Figure 1). The Constitution provides for an appointed judiciary and a unicameral legislature elected by secret ballot under a system of proportional representation; the minimum voting age is 21 years. The major burden of government is carried by the Council of Ministers, or Cabinet, presided over by the Prime Minister, whose executive supremacy is unquestioned so long as he retains a majority in the assembly. The Constitution contains a Bill of Rights, which enumerates in detail a citizen's rights to equality, personal freedom, and property. The constitution recognizes the role of the Leader of the Opposition and provides for consultation with him by the Prime Minister in a number of important matters. Provision is also made for an Elections Commission, which has responsibility for the registration of voters and the conduct of the elections. The Constitution can be amended by a simple majority vote of the assembly

except for some important provisions, which require a two-thirds vote or, in some cases, a referendum.

I. Executive

The President of Guyana acts as titular chief of state. Executive power lies with the Prime Minister as Head of Government. The President is elected to a 6-year term by the National Assembly. Although normally a figurehead, the President formally appoints the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Ombudsman. These appointees, however, must be individuals who actually command the support of the majority of the members of the National Assembly and the opposition, respectively. However, as in the British parliamentary system, if a majority of the assembly passes a no-confidence motion, the Prime Minister must either resign or advise the President, who may revoke the appointment of the Prime Minister. The President may dissolve the assembly (thus forcing new elections), if the office of Prime Minister is vacant or held by an individual who has received a vote of no-confidence and there is no prospect of finding a person who can command the support of the majority of the deputies within a reasonable amount of time. In all other

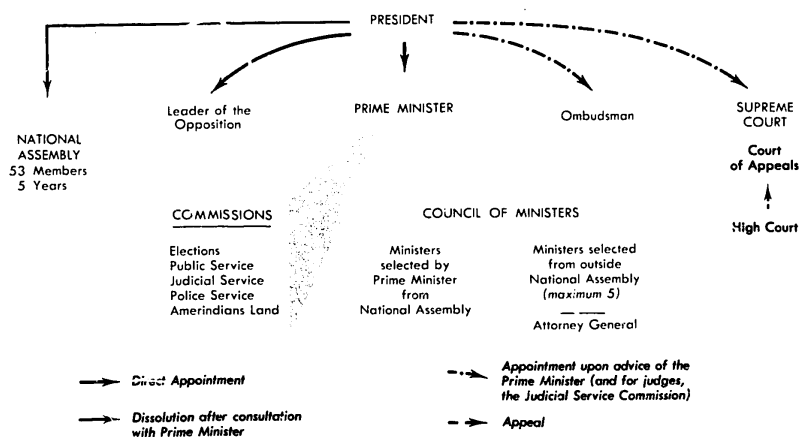


FIGURE 1. Structure of government (U/OU)

instances, however, the President must first obtain the approval of the Prime Minister or one of his designated ministers before acting.

General direction and control of the government rest with the Council of Ministers,¹ which is directly responsible to the assembly. The council is composed of the Attorney General and ministers appointed by the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister. Most of the members are drawn from the majority party in the assembly. The ministers are appointed from the elected members of the assembly or others who are qualified to be elected as such members. The number of ministers who are not members of the assembly may not exceed four; ministers thus appointed are nonvoting members. The Attorney General, the principal legal adviser to the government, is appointed by the President.

In addition to the Prime Minister and the Attorney General, the Council of Ministers is composed of heads of the following ministries:

- Cooperatives and Community Development
- Defense
- Economic Development
- Education
- Finance and Trade
- Foreign Affairs
- Health
- Home Affairs
- Housing
- Information, Culture and Youth
- Labor and Social Security
- Local Government
- Mines and Forests
- National Development and Agriculture
- Public Affairs
- Works and Communications

Also included are Ministers of State for Agriculture and for Public Service and a Minister Without Portfolio. Since 1966 the Prime Minister has retained for himself the portfolio of Defense.

The Constitution specifies that the Prime Minister must consult with the Leader of the Opposition on important matters such as certain senior appointments, but this is a *pro forma* declaration of intent by the Prime Minister and does not imply any deliberative role or veto power for the Opposition Leader. The Prime Minister is required to advise the President on the appointment of an Ombudsman who serves for a 4-year term and may be reappointed. This official, a common figure in Scandinavian governments, has jurisdiction to investigate actions taken by

government authorities, either on his own initiative or upon receiving a complaint from an aggrieved individual or from any member of the National Assembly. The Ombudsman is not empowered to criticize policy but only faults in administration and is restricted from dealing with such matters as national defense, foreign relations, or those cases within the competence of the courts or quasi-judicial bodies.

The Chancellor of the Court of Appeal and the Chief Justice are appointed by the President acting upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. Most appointments in the judiciary, the police, and the civil service are made in accordance with the advice of the Judicial Service, Police Service, and Public Service Commissions, respectively, which, as specified in the Constitution, are to be independent. Despite charges by both Jagan and Burnham that racial prejudices have hampered government programs, the civil service, which is approximately 65% African and 35% East Indian, has generally maintained a professional nonpolitical status, approximating the British tradition. Relations between members of the two races have generally been good on purely civil service issues, and a fairly high esprit de corps has been maintained. The major problem of the bureaucracy has not been nepotism, partisanship, or disloyalty, but rather a low level of administrative and technical competence due to inadequate education, training, and experience.

2. Legislative

Members of the 53-seat National Assembly are elected to a 5-year term—which can be shorter if the assembly is dissolved. Candidates are elected under a system of proportional representation. The assembly may expand its membership beyond 53 and may also change the system of proportional representation to one in which some seats are filled on a constituency basis and the remainder by allocation between party lists in such a way that the overall composition of the National Assembly is in proportion to the votes cast in favor of the respective lists. Qualifications to run include Commonwealth citizenship, residence in Guyana during the previous year, at least 21 years of age, ability to speak and read English, and certain requirements of loyalty and probity.

In addition to its regular legislative powers, the assembly can vote a state of emergency whereby the government receives the authority to detain, without trial or charge, any person whose freedom is deemed inimical to the best interests of the country. A state of emergency is limited to 6 months unless extended by a resolution of the assembly. The case of any person

¹For a current listing of key government officials consult *Chief of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments*, published monthly by the Directorate of Intelligence—Central Intelligence Agency.

detained under emergency measures is automatically reviewed by an impartial tribunal after the state of emergency has expired.

The assembly can amend the constitution by a majority vote of all its members. Amendments of provisions dealing with the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, citizenship, and qualifications for electors and members of the assembly require either a two-thirds vote of all the assembly members or approval by a majority vote in a referendum after a majority vote of the assembly. The provisions defining the constitution as the supreme law, outlining the territorial boundaries of the country, and declaring it to be a sovereign, democratic state are amendable only by referendum after passage by the assembly.

The assembly is also given certain powers to regulate judicial procedures. Specifically, it can regulate the making of application to the courts and the procedure of the courts when determining constitutional questions that are related to fundamental rights and elections and to the membership of the National Assembly.

3. Judicial

Law in Guyana, both civil and criminal, is based mainly on the common and statute law of the United Kingdom. The principles of Roman-Dutch law—a heritage from the pre-British period—have been retained, however, with respect to the registration, conveyance, and mortgaging of land. There is absolute equality of the sexes before the law in all matters, including divorce, property, and inheritance.

The constitution provides for a Court of Appeal and a High Court, which together constitute the Supreme Court of Judicature of Guyana. The Court of Appeal consists of the Chancellor, who presides; the Chief Justice of the High Court; and such other justices as the National Assembly prescribes—presently three. The High Court consists of the Chief Justice and, as prescribed by the assembly, nine additional judges. The Chancellor and Chief Justice are appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister; the other judges of both courts are appointed in accordance with the advice of the 6-man Judicial Service Commission, which includes the Chancellor, the Chief Justice, and the Chairman of the Public Service Commission. Once appointed, judges serve until retirement at age 65 in the case of the Chancellor, the Chief Justice, and the justices of the Court of Appeal; and age 62 in the case of the judges of the High Court. However, the Judicial Service Commission may

permit the latter to continue in office until age 65. No judge can be removed from office except for inability to perform the functions of his office or for misconduct, and then only after a tribunal has recommended reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London and that committee has advised removal.

Appeal may be made from the High Court to the Court of Appeal and from the latter to the British Monarch in Council (Privy Council) in cases relating to the enforcement of fundamental rights or the interpretation of the constitution. Although it was anticipated that this right of appeal would be changed when Guyana became a republic because it was considered an undesirable colonial vestige, the Burnham administration decided in early 1970 to retain it. The Supreme Court of Judicature has unlimited jurisdiction in civil matters, which are tried by a single judge without a jury. It also has jurisdiction in criminal matters brought before it by indictment. Magistrates hold courts of summary jurisdiction throughout the country and make preliminary inquiries into indictable cases. The rules of procedure in all courts are substantially the same as in their British counterparts. An executive official, the Director of Public Prosecution, is responsible for instituting, directing, and discontinuing criminal proceedings.

4. Local government

A form of local government has been in existence for over a century in Guyana. The present system of local government is largely confined to the coastal plain and, despite the large number of local government bodies, less than half of the population is reached by the local authorities.

For the purpose of local government Guyana is divided into nine administrative districts (three interior and six coastal) in which there are a number of towns and village and country districts; all but two of the towns and other categories are in the coastal administrative districts. Each of the nine administrative districts is headed by a District Commissioner. Major changes in Guyana's local government system were introduced during 1970 under the government's local government reform program based mainly on the recommendations of Dr. A. H. Marshall (a British consultant). The changes involved the extension of the boundaries of the city of Georgetown and the town of New Amsterdam and the creation of new towns, district councils, and villages.

The new units comprise larger geographical areas, in many cases old village districts were merged to form

the new units, while sugar estates and many other areas came under local government for the first time. About 85% of the rural population has been brought within the ambit of local government. In addition, the electoral system was changed from ward representation to one of proportional representation on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Elections under the new system were held for the first time in 1970. After these changes, there are, apart from the city of Georgetown and the town of New Amsterdam, three towns, 20 district councils, 33 village councils and one country authority. The revenue of the local unit is derived mainly from a rate levied on the appraised value of property within its boundaries. The responsibilities, in addition to the management of local affairs generally, include the provision and maintenance of roads (other than public roads), the operation of markets, abattoirs and cemeteries, environmental sanitation, and certain internal drainage and irrigation works.

The Minister of Local Government is the central authority with respect to the city of Georgetown, the town of New Amsterdam, other towns, and district councils. He is empowered to establish towns and district councils, approve the annual budgets of such councils (except Georgetown and New Amsterdam), authorize councils to borrow money, approve by-laws made by councils, make financial regulations for councils, and order an inquiry into the functioning of a council where it is felt that it has abused its powers or defaulted in the performance of its duties.

The Local Government Board is the central authority with respect to village and country districts. It is a corporate body and comprises 10 members—three ex-officio and seven appointed by the government. Members hold office for 2 years but are eligible for reappointment. The Local Government Board exercises general supervision over the operations of village councils and country authorities, and among its functions is the approval of the annual budgets.

Voluntary associations have been formed by local authorities within each coastal administrative district. These voluntary organizations, called Unions of Local Authorities, meet quarterly to discuss matters of common interest and to decide on means of improving conditions in the towns, local government districts, and villages. The District Commissioners attend and address these meetings, reviewing the main events of the preceding quarter, and commenting generally on current affairs and plans for the future. In the last few years, there have been guest speakers, including ministers of the government and specialist officers in the public service. The voluntary Guyana Association of Local Authorities, which originated in 1908 as the

Village Chairmen's Conference, serves to coordinate the interests of the local private associations and public authorities.

The capital city of Georgetown, whose boundaries were extended in 1970 from an area of about 2½ to about 15 square miles, is administered by a corporate body, "The Mayor and Councillors of the City of Georgetown." This body is autonomous, apart from certain matters which require the approval of the Minister of Local Government. The basis for its selection was broadened under the government's local government reform program, which abolished the former ward system of representation in favor of a system of proportional representation on the basis of adult suffrage. In elections under the new system in June 1970 for 25 seats, the People's National Congress (PNC) gained 21, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) three, and the United Force (UF) one. The new system provided for triennial elections for councilors beginning in December 1972. A mayor and deputy mayor are elected annually from among the councilors. The revenue of the council is derived from a general rate and a water rate levied on the assessed annual rental valuation of property within the council area and from market and other fees.

The town of New Amsterdam, whose boundaries were extended from 1½ square miles to 16 square miles in 1970, is administered by a similar corporate body. In the June 1970 elections for 12 seats the PNC gained nine seats, the PPP two, and the UF one. The town of Linden, also in the district of Demerara with an area of approximately 55 square miles, was transformed from a village district into a town in April 1970. Its corporate body, elected in June 1970, has 18 councilors of the PNC, who were unopposed. The town of Rose Hall (in the district of Berbice), formerly a village district, was established in September 1970. Its corporate body has 12 councilors, all of the PNC, elected in December 1970. The town of Corriverton (also in Berbice) was transformed from a village district into a town in September 1970. In the first elections in December 1970, 15 councilors all of the PNC were unopposed.

In the coastal areas there are six administrative districts: East Berbice, West Berbice, East Demerara, West Demerara, Essequibo Islands and Essequibo. In each district there is a district commissioner whose principal duties are to coordinate the activities of the various government departments and to provide advice and assistance to the village communities. The bulk of the country's population lives in the coastal districts in towns, local government districts, and villages with inhabitants numbering between 15,000 to 30,000.

The interior districts of the North, West, Mazaruni-Potaro and Rupununi cover an area of some 70,000 square miles with a population of under 40,000. Each of these districts has a section of the international frontier as part of its boundary. They are administered by the Ministry of Local Government through a commissioner with a senior staff of three district commissioners and six assistant district commissioners. The overall commissioner is also responsible for the administration of Amerindian affairs; the Amerindian communities are scattered over a very wide area in a great many "districts" and "reservations." A parliamentary secretary was appointed for the first time in December 1964 to be in charge of Amerindian affairs.

C. Political dynamics

As self-government was gradually extended to British Guiana along with other British colonies in the late 1940's, aspiring Guianese political leaders started searching for a suitable platform from which to expound their proindependence views and mobilize popular support. The PPP, formed in 1959 by Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham, was organized to provide such a platform. Ideologically, the PPP platform was intended to appeal to both of the major racial groups in the country by stressing nationalism and socialism. In 1953, after the British had suspended the constitution, Burnham became concerned that the increasingly radical tone of Jagan's pronouncements might be seized upon by the British as an excuse to proscribe the party and deny the colony its independence. By 1955 Burnham's own misgivings over Jagan's policies and his desire for party leadership caused him to break with Jagan. When Burnham left the PPP to found the PNC in 1957, he claimed that he had deposed Jagan as party leader and took most of his fellow Africans with him. The bulk of the East Indians remained in the party with Jagan, thus marking the bifurcation along racial lines of domestic political life. Other political ties have since emerged, but in most cases they have been organized to promote the interests of various racial or religious groups rather than offering the voters a genuine choice on ideological grounds. Racial hatreds have often flared into open violence. In 1962, 1963, and 1964 the machinations of political leaders, principally East Indians, led to serious rioting in which many lives were lost and much property was destroyed. The scars from these three upheavals have been slow to heal and have done much to prevent a rapprochement between the two major political parties. (C)

After October 1962 Guyana's political history revolved around the constitutional conferences held by the British in London in their attempt to pave the way for independence by working out a constitution acceptable to all political parties. These conferences reflected the inability of the PPP and the PNC to compromise or to agree to any arrangement which might put one or the other in power on independence day. From time to time efforts were made to bring the two parties together in a coalition government, but the racial split, the mutually antagonistic personalities of their leaders, and the Marxist character of the PPP, made joint rule impossible. The British concept of a loyal opposition was not well formed. The PNC achieved power largely because the British, after a series of bad experiences with PPP governments, decided to give the PNC a chance. The electoral system—based on proportional representation—which allowed the PNC to come to power with the help of a small third party, was imposed by the British after a typically stalemated constitutional conference in 1963. The PPP in the last preindependence election in 1964 gained 46% of the vote, but it boycotted the 1965 constitutional conference. Nevertheless, the PPP participated in the government, despite its reservations about the constitution. Thus, when the British granted independence to Guyana on 26 May 1966, political life in the former colony had already become polarized along racial lines. (C)

In the years since independence the polarization of Guyanese society along racial lines has also been reflected in the nation's political life, with the African community, which has largely been urban, represented by the PNC led by Burnham, while the great majority of the East Indians from the largely rural areas have supported the PPP led by Jagan. Together these two parties have never polled less than 84% of the vote—in 1968 about 92% (Figure 2). A third party, the United Force (UF) has drawn its major support from the white community—particularly those of Portuguese ancestry. This party has also attracted substantial Amerindian support and, in addition, has appealed to those East Indians who did not approve of Jagan's Communist ideology but would not vote for Burnham. While the UF never won more than 13% of the parliamentary seats or more than 16% of the vote, it suddenly found itself in a pivotal role in 1964 when neither the PPP nor the PNC won a parliamentary majority. Ideological considerations, particularly opposition to the Communist-led PPP, prompted the UF to join with the PNC to form a coalition government. Though this coalition lasted until the eve of the 1968 election, the UF's power and

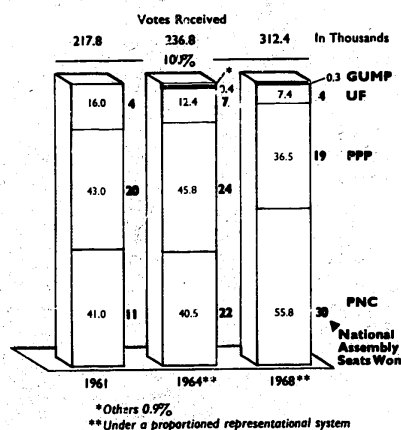


FIGURE 2. Electoral vote and parliamentary representation (U/OU)

prestige were illusory. Burnham barely concealed his distaste for the coalition; it was never more than an uneasy marriage of convenience from which he was prepared to seek a divorce at the earliest possible date. One factor was a personality conflict with the former leader Peter D'Aguilar, a wealthy businessman and chief spokesman for Guyana's conservative commercial class. In addition, both the PPP and the PNC tended to regard the UF as somewhat of an anomaly in Guyanese politics, its shallow political base destined to be eroded by the larger parties. The 1968 election confirmed the basic two-party structure of the Guyanese political system and highlighted the weakness of the UF, which obtained only 8% of the vote. It has since declined in importance. Following the resignation of D'Aguilar in 1969, the UF has been led by Marcellus Fielden Singh. (C)

In addition to the problem of racial division, the two parties are divided over ideological issues. Thus, while Burnham is a nationalist Marxist, Jagan is an avowed orthodox Communist who has long advocated radical changes in the political and economic systems and an abrupt turn toward a pro-Soviet position in foreign policy. Jagan headed the government on two occasions during the preindependence period, but he was unable to remain in office because of London's fears of a possible Communist takeover and civil strife. The first Jagan government was installed after the PPP

won the 1953 election, but his Communist pronouncements alarmed the British, who suspended the constitution and sent in troops. During Jagan's second attempt to govern—1961-1964—the colony was rocked by bloody rioting and general strikes occasioned mainly by his policies, especially state control of trade unions. (C)

The British in the preindependence period, and Burnham since then, have been anxious to keep Jagan out of power. This may prove increasingly difficult because the East Indians are not only the largest racial group but also have the highest rate of natural increase. The principal device used to prevent the PPP from winning control of the National Assembly has been the revision of electoral regulations. The system of the single-member constituency, in effect before 1963, benefited the PPP because its supporters, unlike those of the PNC, were not concentrated in urban areas. In 1961 Jagan won only 43% of the vote against 41% for the PNC and 16% for the UF, but his party held 57% of the assembly seats. In 1964, after the British had replaced that system with one based on proportional representation, the PPP parliamentary strength dropped to 45% of the total seats, bringing the party's seats in line with its proportion of the vote. In 1968 Burnham adroitly timed the elections to enable the PNC to benefit from the electoral regulations which provided for voting by Guyanese living abroad and the increased use of proxies. (C)

The next general election must be held before March 1974 but may be called earlier. In mid-1972 there was little doubt that Burnham would remain in power. The East Indian leadership, however, had become increasingly pessimistic about its chances of success by peaceful electoral means. This growing frustration may increase the temptation to initiate a program of armed struggle, which Jagan has stated is historically inevitable in Guyana. East Indian insurgency is unlikely, however, in view of the possibility that the East Indians would be defeated in any such effort. (C)

I. Major parties (C)

a. People's National Congress (PNC)

Though Burnham (Figure 3) split with the PPP in early 1953, it was not until after the 1957 election that all pretense of PPP affiliation was abandoned and he formally founded the PNC. Although the PNC controls the government, it remains a minority party whose main aim is to perpetuate its rule and deny the PPP and UF a role in the government. The PNC generally espouses a moderate socialism, while



FIGURE 3. Linden Forbes Burnham, Prime Minister, leader of the PNC (U/OU)

approaching national problems pragmatically. The PNC's organization, while looser than that of the PPP, is controlled by Burnham as the party leader. Burnham has tightened his personal control of the party, while at the same time trying to extend its organization throughout the country. The annual PNC congress serves less as a decisionmaking body than as a vehicle for members from outside Georgetown to meet the national leadership and to voice complaints. The elected party leadership includes the party leader, chairman, two vice chairmen, general and assistant secretaries, and treasurer. These officials, joined by area and functional group representatives, form the general council.

Under the party organization the country is divided into 14 areas, each with at least one regional representative, who often receives no salary because of a lack of party funds but is given a specially created government job in the district in which he serves. There are 171 local groups, but some, particularly in the interior, are very loosely organized with as few as 10 people. The PNC has a lively youth arm—the Young Socialist Movement—and a women's auxiliary. The party's official newspaper is the *New Nation*.

The Africans have strongly supported Burnham, whom they regard as their champion. They have

tended to regard his victory as theirs and to demand spoils from the party and the government. Moreover, Burnham has felt himself constrained to reward loyal party members and retain the enthusiastic support of the African community. Before the 1968 election, the party made serious efforts to woo traditional followers of the UF and the PPP. It had substantial success in winning over the UF's mixed-African following and even some of the Guyanese-Portuguese. It apparently also attracted some of the wealthy urban East Indians who voted for the UF in 1964. Burnham has attempted to make inroads into Jagan's East Indian support by trying to drive a wedge between Hindu and Muslim. However, while some of the Muslim leaders have been attracted to the Burnham camp, the majority of lower class Muslims, particularly those in the rural areas, have continued to share with other East Indians a deep distrust of the predominantly African PNC and have continued to vote for the PPP.

As a matter of policy, the PNC pays lip service to multiracialism in government, but in reality Africans are given preference over East Indians in a majority of cases, whether it be for jobs, housing, or public services. This apparently is perpetuated in part because of Burnham's pique over the criticism his policies have been receiving from the various opposition sectors. He has stated that he does not intend to tolerate such opposition and has begun to impose harsh controls upon some of his most outstanding critics. The most vocal of these have been the opposition newspapers which have found it difficult to get permits to import newsprint. Some have ceased service. Both Burnham and the government have filed law suits over some of the criticism. The repressive measures may cause serious problems for all the parties and could be a major factor in the upcoming election.

Burnham remains generally optimistic that the PNC will be returned to office after the next general election, which must be held by March 1974. Some of his supporters, however, have expressed concern that the PNC is in trouble because of the persistent unemployment, the serious shortage of housing, and the sluggish economy. Another factor is the rapid growth of the East Indian community, which is now larger than the other ethnic groups combined. Moreover, Burnham's attack upon Eusi Kwayana, black radical leader of the African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA), has produced serious concern in the PNC that Kwayana and his followers will not vote for the PNC, thus reducing the thin margin of black votes the party holds over the PPP and its East Indian supporters.

Should the young blacks that follow Kwayana withhold their votes for the PNC, any manipulations in vote counting, such as occurred in the 1968 election, would be even more evident.

The PNC is plagued with untrained administrators, and some poorly qualified ministers to staff the government. It is split between young radicals and older moderates. Burnham is therefore forced to make most of the major decisions in both government and party activities. He works 16- to 20-hour days in the belief that he must be constantly available to step in and solve even the simplest problems. There are very few PNC members that Burnham can rely upon, and he apparently does not entirely trust anyone. He is concerned for his own safety and often changes sleeping residences without notice. The only man in the cabinet who appears to have any influence upon Burnham is Shridath S. Ramphal, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney General. His influence, however, has declined since he has opposed a number of Burnham's policies. Should Burnham leave the scene, political infighting would ensue immediately, since no heir apparent has been named. Deputy Prime Minister Reid does not appear to be capable of commanding the respect of the majority of government officials and of controlling the more militant elements in the society.



FIGURE 4. Cheddi Jagan, leader of the PPP (U/OU)



FIGURE 5. Janet Jagan, Secretary for International affairs of the PPP (U/OU)

b. People's Progressive Party (PPP)

The PPP, the oldest party, had consistently received a plurality of the electoral vote until 1968. The party traces its lineage to the Political Affairs Committee, the first significant political organization founded in British Guiana. This Communist political education group was formed in 1946 by Cheddi Jagan (Figure 4) and his American wife, Janet (nee Rosenberg) (Figure 5), whom he met in 1943 when he was a dental student in Chicago and she was a student nurse active in leftist circles and reportedly a member of the Young Communist League. In order to give his group a mass power base, Jagan became active in promoting the cause of the sugar workers, and with their support was elected to the Legislative Council in 1947. In January 1950, jointly with Forbes Burnham, president of the British Guiana Labor Union, the Jagans founded the PPP. Its program of immediate reform, its ability to unite the rural East Indians and the urban working class blacks, and the organizational talents of Janet Jagan soon made it the most powerful political force in the colony.

Shortly after the PPP's founding, a low-key power struggle broke out between Burnham and Jagan, at first because of Burnham's aspirations for leadership and later because Burnham believed that Jagan's increasing involvement with international Communist

circles might be seized upon by the British as a reason for proscribing the party. The leadership fight did not become public, however, and the party grew in membership, winning the 1953 election with 51% of the vote.

Once in office, the PPP rejected the existing constitution as an inadequate instrument for achieving independent government and attempted instead to implement its own policies of accelerated progress toward full self-government and the establishment of a Marxist state. The party could not decide whether it wanted to govern with the existing machinery or lead a revolution, and its actions reflected this ambivalence. The economy declined because Western capital was leery of Jagan's Marxist ideas. When the government pushed through legislation aimed at getting full control of the labor movement, the long-established, independent trade unions resisted and strikes broke out. Violent disorders followed, and the British suspended the Constitution.

With the PPP out of office and both Cheddi and Janet Jagan placed under restrictions by the British, intraparty dissension continued to grow, culminating in early 1955 when the Burnham faction called a party conference and installed Burnham as party leader. Because the majority of the blacks supported Burnham and the majority of East Indians supported Jagan, the result was an open split in the party and the beginning of racial politics. Following the split, the PPP became mainly an East Indian party with its electoral support based primarily on race and Jagan's personal appeal. Although there have been several defections and much factionalism since 1957, Jagan's charisma among the East Indians and his intimidatory tactics have been sufficient to compel dissident party members to submit to party discipline or be forced out. There has been a decline in party activities and enthusiasm of party workers. Jagan's appeal, however, is still widespread and is based on his decades of political work, his control of the PPP organizers, and the widespread fear that he may respond to dissidence with violence or economic boycott. Thus, the PPP has remained firmly under his control; in 1970 he became general secretary of the PPP. His wife, Janet, is Secretary for International Affairs.

The Jagans have contended that because of government control of the electoral machinery the PPP could not attain power legally. Yet they have vacillated between the militants who have called for violence and the moderates who have called for a more pragmatic approach. The latter, led by Fenton Ramsahoye and Ashton Chase, have argued that the party lacks a carefully planned strategy and that

Jagan's overt Communist program will continue to stand in the way of the PPP's return to power. However, the call for change failed when Jagan opposed the moderates. Party congresses both in 1967 and 1968 revealed Jagan's almost total control of the party machinery. At the PPP congress in 1969, Jagan and the other leaders did not actually identify the PPP as a Communist party, but they no longer attempted to obscure its Marxist orientation and subservience to Moscow. At the Moscow Conference of Worldwide Communist Parties in July 1969, however, Jagan publicly enrolled the PPP in the World Communist Movement. Jagan also announced his determination to mold the PPP into a more disciplined Marxist-Leninist party and his decision to revamp the organizational structure of the PPP along the lines of the Soviet party. While some of the more moderate PPP leaders were apparently quite unhappy about this line, the party remained at least outwardly united.

The PPP is fairly well organized by Guyanese standards. Party membership is estimated at 6,000 dues-paying members and slightly over 20,000 supporters. The three major organs are the party congress, the general council, and the executive committee. A party congress is held annually, ostensibly to elect the party leadership and to debate and approve major policies. However, the congress has not played a decisive role in party affairs. It has been, for the most part, a rubber stamp for Jagan's pronouncements. Somewhat more significant is the 22-member general council (membership may have been expanded during the 1970-72 council meetings), elected by the party congress and composed of the principal party officers; and generally 14 other voting members. Additional nonvoting members have been appointed when necessary to placate party factions. At the 1968 congress a resolution was passed naming 10 additional nonvoting general council members to be drawn from the party's youth and women's groups, trade unions, farmers, and legislators in an attempt to infuse new blood into the leadership and widen its appeal. However, most of the persons placed on the council are on the payrolls of the party-controlled businesses, and the Jagans' domination is thus assured.

The executive committee, composed of the principal party leaders and five members elected by and from the general council, handles moderately important party business and serves as a forum for discussion. The general council in 1970 expanded the membership of the executive committee to include 10 specialized secretaries and three executive committee members, all of whom are drawn from the general council. Jagan was unopposed for the office of general

secretary, which became the principal decisionmaking position within the PPP, replacing the post of leader which Jagan formerly held. A number of special and standing committees are designed to act in an advisory capacity to the executive committee. However, of the nine standing committees, only the international affairs committee was functioning. Real decision-making is reserved to the Jagans, PPP Chairman Ranji Chandisingh, and Treasurer Boysie Ramkarran.

Under the PPP organization the country is divided into 35 constituencies; each is a link between the local organization, such as the village group, and the national party organization. The village groups send representatives to serve on the constituency committee, which in turn sends a constituency representative to serve on the PPP's national constituency committee. The strength of the party's local organization depends in large part on the effectiveness of the overworked and underpaid organizers. In many areas the PPP's local activities have been hamstrung by the limited funds provided by the national organization and by the low morale of the organizers. The party's primary functional organizations are the Progressive Youth Organization (PYO) and the Women's Progressive Organization (WPO), neither of which has been particularly effective. The party also controls the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU), which is the second largest sugar workers' union and is not affiliated with the Guyana Trades Union Council (GTUC). Other PPP concerns are a publishing company; a newspaper (the *Mirror*); and the Guyana Import-Export Co., Ltd. (GIMPEX), the party's trading arm. This company, from its trading profits, supplies most of the party's funds.

The party's financial position has been relatively tight since 1966. Before that time substantial aid was reportedly received from the Soviet Union via a series of funding operations—some handled through GIMPEX. Since then this aid has diminished to a trickle. Up to mid-1968 some financial aid came from Cuba, which apparently has written off the PPP as basically a racial party and not a revolutionary force and has thus stopped its support. The party continues to be in financial difficulties, and the establishment of the External Trade Bureau (ETB) by the government further reduced its income.

Although the PPP has maintained offices in New York and London, party activities abroad are not as extensive as those of the PNC because the overseas Guyanese population is overwhelmingly black.

2. Minor parties (5)

a. United Force (UF)

The UF, the most significant minor party and the only one since 1961 to win parliamentary representation, was founded in 1960 by Peter D'Aguiar, a wealthy businessman of Portuguese descent. It developed into a genuinely multiracial party and has attracted support from the conservative middle and upper classes (mainly Portuguese, Chinese, and well-to-do East Indians) by its strong stand in favor of private enterprise and against communism. In addition, partly because of its special relationship with the Roman Catholic Church (key Portuguese party members are Catholic), it has also won substantial Amerindian support through the influence of the missionaries. However, because of the lack of widespread popular support, the relatively ineffective leadership of D'Aguiar, a sluggish party organization, and the persistence of race as a political factor, the UF has not been able to develop into a major party. Indeed, its electoral strength, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total vote, has declined.

After the 1964 election, the UF found itself with a key bloc of seats and joined the PNC in a coalition. However, friction between D'Aguiar and Burnham quickly developed—more as a result of personal incompatibility than disagreement over basic policy—which led to a series of coalition crises that grew in intensity as they became more frequent. In September 1967, D'Aguiar resigned his post as finance minister, though he did not withdraw his party from the administration. The UF began to fragment internally in the post-1964 election period. A few of the ablest members left the country or drifted toward Burnham. Others thought the UF was being taken for granted by the PNC, and the coalition crises caused uncertainty as to the proper course for the party. This uncertainty increased as it became clear that Burnham was not interested in a resumption of the coalition after the 1968 election and, instead, was concentrating his efforts on winning a parliamentary majority for the PNC.

D'Aguiar bitterly opposed Burnham's electoral legislation and, when his wishes were disregarded, withdrew the UF from the government in October 1968. Last-minute attempts to revitalize the party were insufficient to overcome the damage done by D'Aguiar's past neglect of organizational work and his disregard for his supporters. The party's electoral chances were further hampered by D'Aguiar's lackluster campaign. In selecting the PNC rather than the PPP as the main target, he probably lost supporters

who considered the Jaguars to be the primary threat to peace and private property in Guyana. Among UF leaders who defected to the PNC were John Jardim, who had been the party's chief fund raiser, and D'Aguiar's own nephew, Kit Nascimento, who had been chairman of the UF's 1964 election campaign and at one time had headed UF's youth arm.

Ever since the PNC gained a majority in parliament in the 1968 elections and no longer depended upon a coalition arrangement with the UF, the latter has been floundering with little support. D'Aguiar's retirement in 1969 compounded the party's problems. Marcellus Feilden Singh, a capable lawyer and former UF chairman replaced D'Aguiar as party leader. Singh had served as Minister of Works and Hydraulics in the past coalition government. He is opposed to Jagan and has been consistently anti-Communist. Singh was reelected in 1971 despite open opposition from some party elements.

Political infighting and diminishing funds weakened the UF's effectiveness, and it has little hope of ever becoming a major party and even fears that it may not survive. Efforts to infuse new life into the party have met with varying degrees of success. The youth arm of the UF—the Guyana United Youth Service (GUYS)—was disbanded in January 1972 and a new group—the Young Democrats (YD)—was formed. This step caused a further split within the party. It is difficult to estimate whether those in the Portuguese upper and middle classes who have backed the UF since its loss of a role in the government power structure have shifted their support from the UF to Burnham.

The party organization generally follows that of the PPP and the PNC. D'Aguiar was, however, a less effective leader and organizer than Jagan or Burnham, and was not inclined to take a continued and active part in day-to-day party activities. Thus, the party organization has tended to disintegrate between elections. There is little activity on the district or local level, and the few meetings of the executive committee or general council that have been held usually were unruly and accomplished little. However, when D'Aguiar saw fit to involve himself, his word was law, in part because he supplied most of the party's funds. The UF operates a newspaper, the *Sun*, and has a Women's Auxiliary Force, in addition to its youth group.

b. The Guyana National Liberation Front (GNLF)

The GNLF, a new political party formed on 1 February 1973, is currently an underground

movement and is building up a cadre for guerrilla warfare. The party numbers around 200 and the aims of the party executives include violent revolution, and they reportedly have discussed soliciting aid from the Government of Venezuela. It is composed largely of East Indians and some former United Force party supporters. Its impact on Guyana's politics is unknown. The GNLF reportedly will not participate in the 1974 elections.

c. People's Democratic Movement (PDM)

On 17 March 1973, C. Llewellyn John, barrister and former People's National Congress leader, formed the People's Democratic Movement (PDM). Party membership is said to be around 100 and so far John has not been able to induce any of his legal colleagues to join him, nor has he been able to draw on any influential persons in the country. It is doubtful that the PDM will have much influence of the country's politics at this time.

3. Pressure groups (C)

Interest groups are either made up almost entirely of one race or are divided because of their multiracial composition. Many interest groups of the latter type, such as the small businessmen, are thus prevented from becoming true pressure groups. Men who might be expected to speak with one voice and as a group to support the party or policy which offers the best program for their advancement are prevented from doing so because East Indians feel that they must support Jagan, and Africans feel that they must support Burnham.

Almost all sugar workers and rice farmers are East Indians. Thus far most of them have remained loyal to the PPP in spite of efforts by the Burnham administration to woo them by aiding the sugar and rice industries. However, many East Indians are small entrepreneurs and would probably be willing to vote for a less radical East Indian party, and some support the PNC and UF.

While labor unions are not formally affiliated with political parties, many labor leaders are politically active. Union leaders and members alike reflect the polarization of the country's politics along racial lines. Thus, unions with predominantly East Indian membership tend to support the PPP, while those composed mainly of Negroes tend to back the PNC. Rural workers, particularly the sugar workers in the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union, have been used by the PPP to initiate strikes and foment unrest, and for this reason they are an important disruptive force.

The foreign companies, such as Bookers, a British firm that controls a major portion of Guyana's sugar production, and the Canadian and U.S. bauxite firms which control a large share of the country's economy, have been able to work more smoothly with the Burnham government than with the previous Jagan regime. Anxious to avoid rocking the boat, they try to maintain a nonpartisan, nonracial approach and steer clear of politics. This attitude is generally held by most foreign firms, even though the government has nationalized some industry and property owned by interests abroad.

Although most East Indians belong to one of the Hindu or Muslim organizations, religion and the influence of religious leaders are of declining importance in the political arena. As young East Indians become educated, they tend to pay more attention to political leaders than to *pundits* and *mullahs*. Some of these religious figures have expressed concern over Jagan's Communist inclinations, but their warnings have had little effect on their followers. Though some efforts have been made to turn the Muslim community into a potent political force, little has been accomplished. The small and politically insignificant Guyana United Muslim Party (GUMP) has tried to become an independent Muslim party, while the PNC has attempted to weaken the PPP by drawing off Muslim support. In spite of these efforts, Jagan can continue to count on the loyalty of the great majority of East Indians, regardless of their religious backgrounds.

There is relatively little student involvement in politics, although in the pre-1964 period Communists and other leftists exerted considerable influence in student circles. In a country in which nearly half of the population is under the age of 20, Burnham recognizes the potential of youth as a political force. He has announced his intention to introduce compulsory youth service with the stated purpose of involving youth in national development. National youth organizations, which have tended to be divided into Communist and non-Communist camps, have generally been ineffective.

4. Electoral laws and practices (C)

While the franchise in local elections is still limited by income and property qualifications, the constitution provides for universal suffrage in national elections for all citizens of Guyana 21 years of age or older who are domiciled in the country, or have been resident there for 1 year or more. In addition, suffrage is provided for Commonwealth citizens, 21 years of age or older, who are domiciled in Guyana and have

been resident there for at least 1 year. Under the 1967 Guyana Citizenship Act, non-Commonwealth immigrants are required to reside in Guyana for 8 years before becoming eligible for citizenship and thus to vote. However, the 1968 amendment to this act allows the Minister of Home Affairs to determine shorter periods of residence for naturalization. The PPP has attacked this provision as a device by which the government could selectively increase the number of votes.

An interesting tradition in Guyanese elections is the proxy voting system, under which a voter who finds it impractical or seriously inconvenient to vote in person can give his proxy to another registered voter from his polling district. In the 1964 election, regulations permitted a voter to cast a maximum of two proxies in addition to his own vote. In 1968 the maximum was raised to three proxies. In practice, an individual may collect any number of proxies from other voters so long as they are from the same polling division. These proxies can then be turned in to party headquarters where they are redistributed to party activists, each of whom can then vote three proxies in addition to casting his own ballot.

The 1967 National Registration Act established a system of national registration for both census and electoral purposes. The act provided for the division of the country into registration districts—38 at present; the districts are then subdivided into registration divisions, numbering 720 in 1972. The act also provided for the appointment of a number of officials under a Commissioner of Registration to administer the system and compile and maintain a central register, as well as divisional registers, for the respective registration divisions. In addition, the bill authorized the issuance of laminated identity cards with photograph, signature, and thumb print to registered persons.

The 1968 registration is illustrative of the process. All persons over 14 were registered. Registration was basically carried out through visits of field registrars to the homes of persons in their assigned areas. In addition, registration centers were established throughout the country to serve persons who found it more convenient to appear at the centers. After completing registration forms, registrants were asked to visit photographic centers to complete the registration process. The National Registration Center then processed the registration cards. Cards of persons over 21 years of age were separated from those under 21, and a preliminary electoral list was compiled from the former category of persons meeting citizenship requirements. As provided in the National Registra-

tion Act, this preliminary electoral list was then posted in at least two places in each registration division and there was an opportunity to file claims and objections. Each claim had to be accompanied by G\$2 and each objection by G\$5. These sums were returned if grounds for the challenges were found to be reasonable. Decisions rendered by the registrars or deputy commissioner might be appealed to the Commissioner of Registration whose decision was final. Last of all, a final electoral list was drawn from this registration and published.

The government has favored a loose interpretation of the constitutional provision granting the right to vote to qualified Guyanese residents abroad. Opponents have argued that Guyanese who live abroad and pay no taxes should not be allowed to share in determining the nation's destiny. Moreover, they have railed against the Burnham government's extension of the franchise to Guyanese residents abroad, who have become naturalized citizens of the countries in which they are living while retaining their Guyanese citizenship. The government, for its part, has argued that Guyanese who go overseas for economic reasons but who still regard Guyana as their home cannot be deprived of their birthright. Behind these moral arguments is the political fact that over 90% of the overseas Guyanese are blacks and vote for the PNC. Thus, Burnham favors giving them the vote while the PPP opposes it. The registration of persons over 21 domiciled in Guyana but registered abroad is provided for by the National Registration Act. Registration of Guyanese citizens living abroad began in mid-1968 and the processing was much the same as in the case of domestic registration. Proxy voting was not allowed for citizens living abroad. The total overseas vote in 1968 was about 36,745, though the registration was much higher.

The Constitution provides for an Elections Commission consisting of a chairman—who must be a judge—selected by the Prime Minister and one representative of each party which won at least five parliamentary seats in the previous election. The U.F., which did not receive five seats in the 1968 election lost its membership on the commission. The PPP for several years has boycotted the commission and has publicly called upon the government to permit the commission to do its job "without interference." The PPP charged the government with "hypocritical utterances" and "undemocratic processes," stating that the conduct and supervision of the election, including the registration of voters that preceded it, were undertaken solely by handpicked activists and supporters of the PNC, in violation of the Constitution

of Guyana. The opposition also charged that the PNC had usurped the functions of the Elections Commission.

A provision of the 1968 electoral legislation stipulated that the deliberations of the Elections Commission were inadmissible in court and, further, that the courts could not inquire into the activities and the functions of the commission or any of its members. In addition to the internal impediments to the effective functioning of the commission, there are indications that the commission's role relative to the registration process may have been eroded by the provisions of the National Registration Act giving the Commissioner of Registration the final voice regarding challenges to the registration list. Thus far, the relationship between the Elections Commission and the Commissioner of Registration, who is responsible to the Minister of Home Affairs, has not been clearly delineated, but in 1968 the Ministry had the advantage.

For the National Assembly election the entire country is presently treated as a single constituency and voters cast a single ballot in favor of a party list. The seats in parliament are then allocated to the parties in proportion to the number of votes cast. The total number of valid votes is divided by the number of parliamentary seats to give the number of votes needed for each seat. Each party's vote is then divided by this number to compute the number of seats to which it is entitled.

Previously, each party presented a rank order listing of candidates for parliamentary seats. This meant that if a party won four seats on the basis of its electoral showing, the first four on the list would gain seats. The 1968 electoral legislation stipulated that the lists of candidates would be in alphabetical rather than rank order and that the party leadership could decide after the election which of the candidates would be given the available party seats. In theory, the seats would go to the party candidates who contributed the most to the party's electoral success. This change, in effect, shifted the burden of choice from before to after the election and strengthened the control of the party leaders. It also had the virtue of maintaining the enthusiasm and industry of all the candidates and inhibiting the pre-election defection of those who found themselves low on the rank order listing. Opponents of this change argued that it was undemocratic in that it robbed the voter of the opportunity to weigh the alternative merits of the candidates on the list, to take account of the order in which they appeared on the list, to make an assessment of the probable number of seats to be

allocated to each list, and then—on the basis of a balancing of his individual preference among all the candidates and the chances of their election on one or another of the lists—to decide for which list he would vote. In answer, the government stated that nothing precluded the contending parties from informing the electorate beforehand of the rank order. None of the parties, however, took this course.

The specific mechanics of the election, such as the manner of voting and the ballot system, are fixed by electoral legislation and by government regulation. The following procedure obtained in the 1968 election. Polls were open on election day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The voter showed his registration-identification card, or alternate identification, and was given a ballot stamped with the official mark. The voter entered a private booth and placed an "X" within the blank space opposite the name and symbol of the list of candidates of the political party of his choice. He could vote for only one list of candidates. After marking his ballot, the voter was required to fold the ballot so as to conceal his vote but to show the official mark appearing on the back. The presiding officer then stained the voter's finger with ink to prevent double voting, and the voter placed his ballot in the ballot box.

Ballots cast by Guyanese living abroad, which were a different color than the domestic ballots, were either mailed directly to the voter from Georgetown or distributed by appointed ballot officers abroad. If the ballot had been mailed to the voter from Georgetown, he returned his marked ballot directly to the Chief Election Officer in that city. Otherwise, the marked ballots were returned to the ballot officers for forwarding to the same official.

It has become traditional for the PPP to charge fraud and claim that the government was rigging the election—in part, to provide an alibi in the event of defeat. However, in the case of the 1968 election these charges were not without foundation. In spite of the government's adherence to some democratic principles, such as freedom of speech and assembly, and the use of the secret ballot, the government has controlled and manipulated the electoral process. The 1968 electoral legislation, for example, was bitterly opposed by both the PPP and the UF, and indeed, led to the dissolution of the PNC-UF coalition. The alphabetical listing of candidates was attacked, as was the provision for overseas voting, the expansion of proxy voting, and the restrictions on the role of the Elections Commission. During and after the election, the opposition parties leveled a torrent of charges against the government's handling of the election. The

alleged abuse of the proxy vote and the overseas registration were singled out for particular criticism. It is clear that the PNC took maximum advantage of the expanded proxy vote to insure that every one of its African and mixed-African supporters voted. In addition, many East Indian supporters of the PPP were pressured by PNC activists to turn over their proxies and many did so. In 1968, 92% of the eligible domestic voters cast ballots. The percentage was lower among eligible voters living abroad, presumably as a result of logistical problems.

D. National policies (C)

1. Domestic policies

Since gaining complete control of the government in 1968, Burnham's main purpose has continued to be the maintenance of a PNC government and the exclusion of Jagan and the PPP from power. His tendency to conceive most policies in this frame of reference reflects not only the deep distrust between the two parties but also the racial and ideological divisions which afflict Guyana. In addition, it demonstrates his awareness of the longer range problem represented by the rapidly increasing East Indian population which is growing at a faster rate than the African. Burnham, a black, has sought to conciliate the East Indians, present himself as a national rather than a racial leader, promote peace and stability, and demonstrate to the electorate that he can attract investment and foreign aid and promote employment more effectively than Jagan could. The regime is moderately socialist and advocates a dominant role for the government in determining economic policies. The role of private enterprise has been downgraded since the Burnham administration began to push state-owned cooperatives with the aim of making them the dominant sector of the economy.

a. Race relations

The relative peace and stability of the last few years have not eliminated the racial character of politics, however. Conditions have not improved to the point where a substantial number of East Indians would reject the leadership of one of their own race, and Burnham has not allowed the Guyanese motto "One nation, one destiny, one people" to obscure the fact that his base of power remains rooted in the African community. Though he has been willing to pursue economic policies which would benefit the East Indian population—such as rural development, roads, and aid to agriculture—Africans have been favored in

the public service and government agencies; and the government has not eliminated the African predominance in the security forces which has existed from the preindependence period. Moreover, Burnham has encouraged blacks from the United Kingdom and the overpopulated British Caribbean islands to settle in Guyana. Faced with the reality of long-term demographic trends which favor Jagan and the East Indians, the Burnham administration has sought to lessen racial antagonisms in order to fragment the East Indian community, weaken its support for Jagan, and woo Muslim support away from the PPP.

While Burnham's conciliatory policies have been designed to forestall a recurrence of the 1962-64 civil strife, the government nevertheless has developed various legal and military resources to handle violence. The Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defense Force have been given antiriot training, while the National Security Law gives the government wide powers to control explosives, firearms, and ammunition. It also provides for the preventive detention and restriction of movement of individuals thought to pose a danger to public order, but this provision has yet to be invoked.

Policymakers also are concerned with the Amerindians, among whom there are various tribal groupings with profound diversities in culture and social organization, but who nonetheless tend to act politically as one element. Although accounting for only about 4% of the population, the Amerindians are a pawn in the Guyana-Venezuela border dispute (discussed below under Foreign Policies). In addition, given the delicate balance of Guyanese politics, the Amerindian vote of about 10,000 assumes considerable significance. While in the past the UF has had the greatest success in attracting the Amerindian vote, both the PPP and the PNC have been increasingly seeking it. Pursuant to a decision made at the 1965 Constitutional Conference in London that the Amerindians should be granted legal ownership or rights of occupancy in areas where they are ordinarily resident, an Amerindian Lands Commission was set up to investigate and recommend the awarding of such lands to individuals, families, village councils, or tribal groups. The commission was also empowered to recommend limits on the amount of land to be assigned to an individual or tribe, whether such title would include subsoil rights, and how subsequent sales should be regulated in order to protect the less sophisticated Amerindians from unprincipled land speculators. No information is available concerning the conclusions reached by the commission.

The government's policy toward the Amerindians is relatively enlightened, stressing improvement of their material and social welfare and their gradual integration into Guyanese society. Implementation of this policy has suffered from administrative deficiencies and, in the 1964-68 period, from differences of opinion within the parties of the governing coalition. Thus, while the UF has upheld the rights of the Amerindians as the original inhabitants, the PNC has tended to be more concerned with promoting the rights of the Africans; Burnham has also considered the idea of settling the interior with blacks from the eastern Caribbean islands as one way of maintaining the balance between Africans and East Indians. While the UF supports the Amerindian claim to all the lands they have traditionally occupied, including mineral rights, Burnham has tended to prefer a legalistic interpretation that the interior is all Crown land. In the government's view, the Amerindians own only those lands to which they were granted title by the Crown—a relatively small portion of the area to which the Amerindians claim ownership. The Burnham administration has yet to reconcile its advocacy of integrating the Amerindian community into the larger Guyanese society with the Amerindians' determination to remain on large reservations specifically designed to sustain a purely Amerindian way of life. The Amerindian question is tied to the larger problem of settling and developing the interior—including the questions of the number of settlers to admit and the terms under which they should acquire land.

b. Economic development

A major goal of the Burnham administration is to promote Guyana's economic development and raise the standard of living, although the establishment of a socialist state dominates the economy. In the preindependence period many Guyanese began to view colonialism as the root cause of all national problems and independence as a panacea which would lead immediately to a new prosperity for all. Beset by racial and ideological tensions and with few loyal and talented men available for government service, it fell to Burnham to seek to satisfy the inflated expectations of the newly independent Guyanese. Political instability had eroded investor confidence, while the tax structure proved to be an additional impediment to business and investment. Guyana's infrastructure had been neglected—roads required maintenance, sea defenses were in disrepair, the international airport was badly in need of reconditioning, and the communications and power

networks were years behind in expansion programs. Urban unemployment was high and rural conditions primitive. In addition, sugar and rice, the mainstays of the agricultural sector, were problem industries. World sugar prices were below the cost of production in Guyana, and the industry depended upon preferential markets for survival. The rice industry was inefficient, plagued by low yields and poor quality, and had been distorted by Jagann's policy of inflating prices to growers.

From the beginning, the administration sought to discourage the unrealistic popular assumption that the government could immediately solve all problems or that foreign assistance would obviate the need for sacrifice at home. Instead, the government stressed that independence brought with it greater responsibilities and that there was no substitute for self-help. Though under no illusions concerning the time and investment which would be required to develop the country, the Burnham administration quickly took charge and enjoyed some early success. Burnham's moderate tone and pro-Western orientation stimulated international confidence and helped to attract foreign aid and investment, while his success in ending the violence and lowering the level of racial tensions helped to reverse the economic downturn of 1963 and 1964.

Although economic problems had previously received systematic study and analysis, the Burnham administration, with U.N. technical assistance, drew up a Seven Year Development Plan (1966-72), calling for better utilization of natural resources; increased agricultural and industrial productivity; development of new industries and additional agricultural exports; and construction projects such as sea defenses, dams, private and official housing, schools, hospitals, roads, and facilities for air transport and for storage. Other goals included development of additional coastal farm acreage, provision of hydroelectric power for an expanded aluminum industry, and improved access to the interior. The construction projects were expected to aid the campaign to reduce unemployment. This plan was dropped before completion and the government is preparing a new 15-year plan for 1972-86, including an operational 5-year plan for 1972-76.

Polymakers accorded the highest priority to agriculture in the development program, with emphasis on expanding sugar production and improving rice cultivation and marketing. Other plans included diversification to reduce dependence on imports of agricultural commodities and to increase exports to the countries of the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA). Development policy also

encourages mining, especially bauxite. Some gold and diamond deposits are also being exploited, and a geological survey has indicated that deposits of other metals and minerals of commercial value may be present.

The government has introduced changes in the tax system designed to stimulate savings and investment and to encourage private enterprise. Other fiscal policies have sought to restrict nonessential imports, encourage the development of local industries, particularly food processing, and improve the foreign exchange position. However, the limited size of the domestic market prevents the development of self-sufficiency in a wide range of manufactured goods.

Although the government is moderately socialist, prior to 1970 the regime had officially favored a mixed economy with private enterprise playing an important role in national development. In reality the government did little to attract significant foreign investment, even though a few approved companies were provided by the government with tax holidays and investment guarantees. In 1970, government policies took a marked turn to the left in order to gain greater control over the "commanding heights" of the economy. A major action was the nationalization, with compensation, in July 1971 of the Demerara Bauxite Co., a subsidiary of the Aluminum Co. of Canada. The government has also indicated that it may be forced to nationalize the U.S.-owned Reynolds Guyana Mines, because the company has expressed a desire to cut back operations which would result in laying off nearly 25% of the company's work force. The company blames the cutback on the depressed world market for aluminum. Prime Minister Burnham, meanwhile, claims that political considerations do not allow him to permit the company to proceed with its plan, and he may have to take over the company in order to prevent the layoffs.

Burnham announced in 1970 that in any future development ventures by foreign-owned firms, majority control in basic industries would have to rest with the Guyanese Government or the cooperatives. He added that while there remains a place in the economy for foreign investment, success in developing Guyana will be measured by what the Guyanese can do for themselves. Foreign investment, he said, can only be ancillary since it is controlled by external elements not necessarily influenced by what is best for Guyana.

In line with its emphasis on economic nationalism, the government has also imposed restrictions on foreign-owned firms and their right to repatriate profits from Guyana. In 1970 legislation was enacted

requiring foreign insurance companies to reinvest 95% of their profits in Guyana. Prime Minister Burnham in 1972 disclosed a new policy under which all Guyanese pension funds presently invested abroad will be returned to Guyana and all future funds are to remain within the country. The government has opened discussions with various firms and cooperatives operating pension schemes, in order to make these funds available for investment in various development sectors.

In addition, the government was instrumental in the formation of the National Cooperative Bank with the ultimate intention of reducing the influence of foreign banks making the Cooperative Bank dominant. This effort is being aided by government pressure on depositors to shift accounts from the five foreign banks to the National Cooperative Bank. This bank is currently estimated to hold about 7% of commercial bank deposits.

The government's monetary and fiscal policies have been directed toward encouraging savings, facilitating noninflationary financing of government deficits, and stimulating economic growth. Public savings and investment have increased steadily; public investment, including that financed through external grants and loans, now account for about one-third of total investment. Most of this public investment has been channeled into projects to improve and expand the infrastructure. At the same time, there has been a decline in foreign investment resulting from the government's moves against foreign firms operating in Guyana, together with a flight of capital on a modest scale.

Guyana's foreign trade is of crucial importance to the country's economic well-being. Its most important trading partners are the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, and to a lesser extent the regional members of CARIFTA. Guyana has also sought to expand its trade with the countries of Eastern Europe, Cuba, and, most recently, with East Germany and the People's Republic of China. Guyana's exchange and trade controls are somewhat less restrictive than those of the other Latin American countries.

Government controls on imports and exports were tightened in 1970 when the External Trade Bureau (ETB) was created. Despite its name the ETB is not limited to foreign trade matters. The ETB became the sole importing agency for a wide range of imported foodstuffs and drugs, and 100 items have subsequently been banned from the country. In creating the ETB, the government hopes to reduce prices while at the same time eliminating the private distributive chain.

Hostility from the business community has grown substantially since the introduction of the ETB. Retailers complain that prices have risen since the ETB took over and that savings, if any, have not been passed on to the consumer. In addition, shortages of certain foodstuffs, cement, and vital drugs have occurred. The ETB has also been criticized by some members of CARIFTA which claim that the ETB discriminates against CARIFTA-manufactured goods by subjecting them to "the maladies of price control, distribution costs, profit margin dictates, etc." A related charge is that Guyanese manufacturers are privileged in home markets where they do not have to distribute their products through the ETB and are allowed free access to other CARIFTA markets.

c. The role of cooperatives

Prime Minister Burnham has placed increasing emphasis on the "co-operative movement" as the primary mechanism for increasing the government's control over the economy. In Burnham's view, the cooperatives are to be the instrument for restructuring the economy and increasing the role of Guyanese in economic development. Unlike the consumer and producer cooperatives which developed in Europe and the United States, the Guyanese cooperatives are under the direct control of the government. In theory, the cooperative sector is to coexist with the private and public sectors, but in reality the distinction between the public and cooperative sectors is becoming increasingly artificial because most cooperatives are government-sponsored rather than voluntary. Government sponsorship of the cooperatives is deemed necessary because the Guyanese population lacks the skills and funds to establish anything more complex than small community services or self-help groups.

Originally, the cooperatives were to be involved primarily in the agricultural and manufacturing areas, as well as to provide the investment mechanism to mobilize Guyanese savings for national development. In early 1972 the government announced plans to eventually expand the cooperatives into virtually every area of economic activity. Tariff protection, monopoly privileges, and subsidies are to be used to make the cooperatives dominant. Two of the more important and successful cooperatives are the Cooperative Bank and the Wholesale-Retail Cooperative, which was organized in 1972 with plans to operate nearly 100 cooperative supermarkets. Although members of the business community are hostile to the cooperative movement because it is aimed at them, they have not given up or lost hope that they can hold on.

d. Labor relations

Labor unrest proved to be an important ingredient in the pre-independence disorders and, indeed, was a tool used by political leaders, principally East Indian, in racial and political antagonisms into several violent confrontations. While the level of political and racial tension diminished after 1966, substantial labor unrest remained. The Burnham administration has sought to ease labor-management tension by proposing arbitration tribunals to be used after normal conciliation and mediation procedures have failed. Policies to assist labor include support of the principle of closed or union shops and compulsory union dues, as well as the adoption of the National Insurance and Social Security Scheme to provide a wide range of workers benefits, including medical insurance and a pension program; this plan was approved by the cabinet in October 1968 and passed the National Assembly in 1969. Policies to protect the workers' real wages and check inflation include a system of price controls instituted in 1963 over such basic commodities as rice, sugar, flour, cooking oil, salted fish, milk, and butter. The Burnham administration has added such items as agricultural machinery and tools, fertilizers, building materials, and drugs.

2. Foreign policies

a. Relations with other countries

Preoccupied largely with domestic issues, the government's concern in foreign affairs has focused primarily on the promotion of Caribbean regionalism and on problems arising from border disputes with Venezuela and Surinam. Because of the country's slender economic resources the scope of its diplomatic activities has been limited. Membership in the United Nations, however, enables Guyana to maintain contact with many states, especially those in which Guyana cannot afford to maintain diplomatic missions. Guyana's major diplomatic ties are with the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Venezuela, Brazil, and the Caribbean Commonwealth countries. Guyana has diplomatic and commercial ties with the larger trading nations of Western Europe, and more limited relations with the South and Central American states and few nations in Asia and Africa.

Guyana signed a trade agreement with the People's Republic of China in November 1971. Early in 1972 Peking established a seven-man mission in Guyana and extended interest free credit of \$26 million for industrial projects. Full diplomatic relations were established with the People's Republic of China on 27 June 1972. Diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union

were established in December 1971, but Burnham did not allow the Soviets to open a resident mission because of security considerations and because he felt that the Soviets would increase their aid to Jagan. In March 1973, however, Burnham agreed to allow the Soviets to establish a small embassy in Georgetown. This agreement was made after Burnham had been assured that the U.S.S.R. would discontinue direct dealings with Jagan and would channel future assistance through the Guyanese Government instead. Guyana also has diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, although neither country has established a resident mission; a number of other Eastern European and Asian nations have expressed interest in either trade or diplomatic exchanges.

Formal diplomatic relations were established with Cuba in December 1972. Burnham has tried to enhance his standing in the Third World by establishing ties with the Castro government. Burnham's interest in contacts with Third world countries was indicated by his hosting the Nonaligned Foreign Ministers' Conference in August 1972. Mexico and Guyana established diplomatic relations in February 1973. Guyana has been the only country on the American Continent with which Mexico has not had diplomatic relations.

While friendly to the United States, Burnham has described Guyanese foreign policy as one of nonalignment. On East-West issues, Guyana has generally adopted a pro-Western orientation, despite efforts by Jagan to have Guyana support anti-U.S. and pro-Communist positions. In direct contradiction to the government position, the PPP has condemned the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, supported the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, and favored the Arab position in the Middle East. Although the PPP has failed in its major objective of eroding U.S.-Guyanese relations, it has succeeded in tempering Guyana's pro-Western orientation.

Proposals for the economic and political integration of the Caribbean states appeal to the Burnham government because of the prospects of larger markets, enhanced bargaining power and increased foreign aid. The obstacles are formidable, however, in view of the widely varying size, population, wealth, and level of development of the various states. In addition, there are numerous impediments resulting from personal political rivalries, relatively underdeveloped trade and communications, and economies that are far more competitive than complementary—all of which have hampered efforts to promote closer regional cooperation and integration. Burnham has also pushed regional cooperation for purely foreign policy

reasons—to ease Guyana's political isolation and gain stronger Commonwealth Caribbean support against Venezuela's efforts to keep Guyana out of hemispheric organizations. Thus, on 1 November 1971 the Guyanese Government proposed an ambitious undertaking, the so-called "Declaration of Grenada" which called for a loose federation of Guyana with the British Associated States of Anguilla, St. Christopher-Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenada. Antigua was uninterested. Plans to establish the federation were developed under the aegis of Burnham, who pictured himself as the leader of a unified eastern Caribbean with Georgetown as the capital. The smaller states were under the misapprehension that once the agreement was reached, other independent states in the region—Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados—would decide to join, thus offsetting dominance by Guyana. The scheme lost its initial momentum after Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Jamaica decided not to join. Most of the smaller islands have now withdrawn their support for the movement. This effort, like that of the West Indies Federation (1958-62), was doomed from the outset because of the insular attitudes and petty jealousies of the individual island leaders.

Some progress, however, has been made toward regional cooperation. In 1965 Guyana signed an agreement with Antigua and Barbados setting up CARIFTA with its secretariat in Georgetown. By August 1968 the original signers were joined by Trinidad and Tobago, the West Indies Associated States of St. Vincent, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Dominica, St. Lucia, and Grenada, and finally by Jamaica. The Guyanese Government hoped that CARIFTA would provide a larger market for local products, but thus far the liberalized trade arrangements have not spurred the development locally of light manufacturing industries to supply the CARIFTA market. In January 1970 Guyana also had a leading role in founding the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the first international institution of its kind in the region. The CDB consists of four regional states (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Barbados), 12 Caribbean territories, and two nonregional nations (Canada and the United Kingdom). The CDB was initially capitalized at US\$50 million. Of the total capital, \$20 million was subscribed in equal shares by Canada and the United Kingdom and the remaining \$30 million by the regional members. The United States is not a member, but has made a loan to the Bank. Guyana has not drawn upon its account.

Although Guyana's closest contacts traditionally have been with its English-speaking Caribbean neighbors, since independence the Burnham administration has devoted considerable attention to the Afro-Asian nations through Guyana's representatives at the United Nations. Guyanese attentiveness to these nations derives from both the growing popular interest among Guyana's Africans and East Indians in what were once their ancestral homelands and the desire to identify with other developing states. Even greater efforts have been made to end Guyana's isolation from Latin America. Guyana, however, is barred from membership in the Organization of American States (OAS) until the boundary dispute with Venezuela has been ended. Guyana was extended "permanent observer" status by the Permanent Council of the OAS in February 1972 and has expanded somewhat its contacts with other Latin American states. One notable triumph occurred in 1968 when a Guyanese was elected president of the Latin American U.N. Group and was successfully sponsored by the Latin American states for the election to the vice presidency of the U.N. General Assembly in that year. Venezuela, however, has used its influence to impede closer relations between Guyana and the Latin American states. There has, however, been a temporary relaxation of tensions in Guyana's relations with Venezuela and Surinam, despite continuing border disputes with both countries. The Government of Guyana takes its membership in the United Nations very seriously and considers the United Nations as an important if not crucial factor in Guyana's security. The government regards the United Nations as the principal forum in which it can win international sympathy and support in its territorial disputes, and it counts heavily on U.N. pressures to deter Venezuela from military action. Related to this viewpoint is a keen interest in the U.N.'s role in peace-keeping and disarmament. The Government of Guyana is also active in several specialized agencies and attaches particular importance to those U.N. activities which bear on development problems. Guyana has had a strong U.N. delegation, considering the limited size and inexperience of its diplomatic corps.

b. Boundary disputes

Upon independence Guyana inherited boundary disputes with both Venezuela and Surinam. By far the more serious is the quarrel with Venezuela, which has advanced claims to five-eighths of Guyana's territory. Surinam claims an additional 5,800 square miles of Guyana's territory.

The Venezuelan claim to 55,000 square miles west of the Essequibo River (Figure 6) is based on the contention that an international arbitration tribunal award in 1899 was biased through bribery by the British of the Russian chairman. The issue remained relatively quiet until the late 1960's. In February 1966, as final preparations were underway for Guyana's independence, the United Kingdom, British Guiana, and Venezuela agreed to the establishment of the Venezuelan-Guyanese Mixed Commission to discuss disputes arising out of the Venezuelan claims. The commission had little success, and Venezuela provoked several incidents, including the seizure in 1966 of Ankoko Island, a strategic border island, half of which is claimed by Guyana. Throughout 1967 and 1968 Venezuela conducted a semiclandestine campaign to subvert the Amerindians, in addition to encouraging the abortive uprising in January 1969 of white ranchers in the Rupununi District (see below, E. Threats to Government Stability—under Subversion). Although Burnham spoke out sharply against this

provocation, he has treated the general issue circumspectly. Brazil appears to be sympathetic to the Guyanese position, partly to counter Venezuela's potential economic influence in the Guianas and partly to keep dormant the historic issues with respect to its own borders. Nevertheless, Brazil seems anxious to avoid direct involvement. After nearly 4 years of fruitless negotiations the commission was suspended, and by prior agreement the two governments agreed to settle the question by one of the means provided in the United Nations Charter. In June 1970, however, representatives of the two nations and of the United Kingdom met in Trinidad, at which time Venezuela pledged not to assert its claim for a period of 12 years, and the parties concerned agreed to the establishment of a commission to examine means of avoiding potential future border incidents. This agreement has become known as the "Port-of-Spain Protocol."

Guyana's border dispute with Surinam has become entwined in the local politics of both countries and is an impediment to mutual cooperation. The dispute

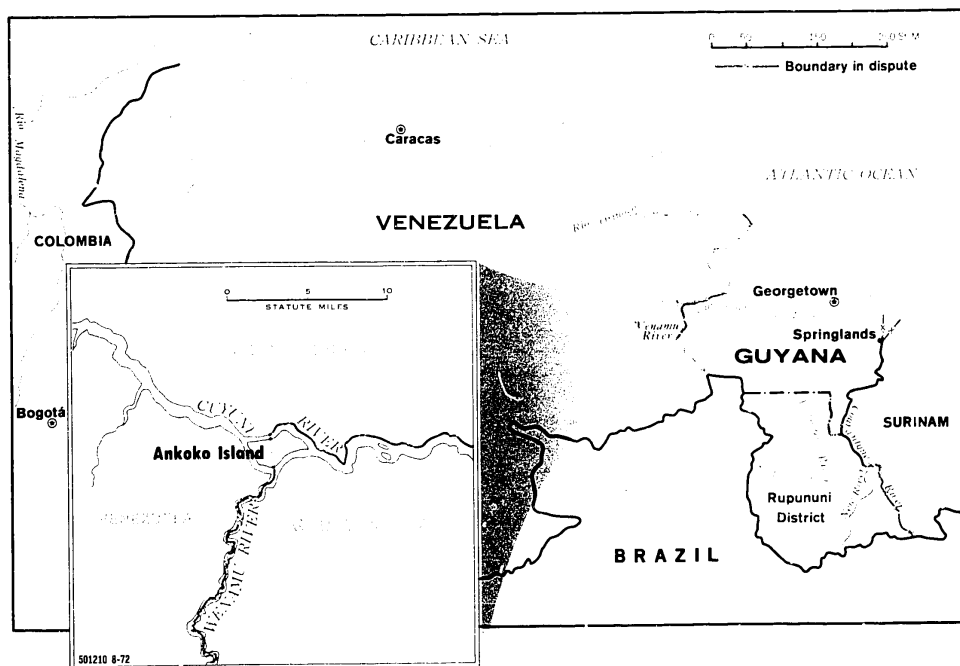


FIGURE 6. Territorial claims and boundary disputes with Venezuela and Surinam (U/OU)

has its origins in the colonial period when neither the British nor the Dutch agreed on a formal delineation of the boundary between the two colonies and instead accepted the left bank of the Courantyne River as the frontier. The two colonial powers agreed on the river boundary as early as 1799, but the difficulty arose because the exact location of the Courantyne was never established. It is fairly well delineated for several hundred miles from the Atlantic Ocean, but then divides into two tributaries—the New River and the Upper Courantyne River. The latter is called the Coeroeni River in Surinam, and farther south it is known as the Kutari. For many years the Kutari was generally believed to be the headwaters of the Courantyne and thus the boundary, but with the discovery of the New River in 1871, the Dutch began to argue that it, rather than the Kutari, was the principal tributary and should be the boundary. The British refused to concede the point and continued to occupy and exercise jurisdiction over the disputed region between the Kutari and New rivers. In 1939 the United Kingdom and the Netherlands negotiated a treaty which would have resolved the dispute in the former's favor. However, the treaty was never signed because of the outbreak of World War II. Following the war, the Netherlands refused to accept the treaty because of opposition by Surinam. Until Guyana's independence the situation had remained relatively quiescent, but in December 1967, elements of the Guyana Police Force ejected a team of Surinamese hydrographic engineers from the contested area. Johan Pengel, who was Surinam's Minister President at the time, threatened drastic reprisals but merely expelled a small number of Guyanese from Surinam and established a couple of police posts in the disputed region. Burnham, in turn, ordered his military force to move against the Surinamese police forcing their withdrawal from one key post following an armed clash. The situation was calmed after the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands urged both parties to exercise restraint. Although several border confrontations have aggravated the issue, the amicable discussions held in June and November 1970 between the Prime Ministers of both nations appear to have eased tensions and paved the way for an eventual settlement. All Surinamese forces have been removed from the region as a result of these talks, and Guyana has retained "administrative" control over the area. For the present, however, achievement of a final settlement of the border disputes is expected to be difficult.

Guyana is also engaged in a controversy with Surinam over the ownership of possible offshore oil

deposits at the mouth of the Courantyne. Surinam has contended that Guyana's offshore rights on the continental shelf should run more or less straight out from the coastal town of Springlands, while the Guyanese maintain that, in accordance with generally recognized modern methods of such calculations, the line should be equidistant from the nearest point in both countries; the disputed area is, therefore, a triangle of shallow coastal water with the apex at Springlands.

A similar quarrel with Venezuela over potential offshore oil deposits remains unsettled and involves waters off the disputed Essequibo territory. While there is no definite evidence of oil, Venezuela has stated that any oil belongs to it, and any concessions granted by Guyana will not be respected.

In line with its professed desire to pursue a nonaligned foreign policy, Guyana has refrained from becoming a party to major treaties or agreements of a strategic nature—either bilateral or multilateral. In early 1972, however, Guyana and the United States signed an agreement that permits the United States to overfly Guyana and utilize Timehri International airfield (formerly Atkinson Field) for the purpose of assuring the defense of the Western Hemisphere and maintaining international peace and security within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations.

E. Threats to government stability (S)

1. Discontent and dissidence

The most serious threat to Guyana's political and social order lies in the deep distrust and suspicion which have historically divided the country's two dominant racial groups—the Africans and the East Indians. The dispute is essentially political and economic, and focuses on such basic issues as which group will wield political power and which will have preferred access to the limited number of employment opportunities. By the time Guyana achieved independence in 1966 there had developed what is essentially a two-party system polarized along racial lines. The black community has been represented by the PNC led by Prime Minister Burnham, while the great majority of East Indians have supported the PPP, a Communist party formed by Burnham, Cheddi Jagan, and his American-born wife. The PPP leadership, frustrated by its failure to gain control of the government despite the party's electoral strength, has been under pressure by extremists in its ranks to raise the banner of revolution, employ terrorism, and resort to strikes, economic boycotts and similar tactics

as a means of gaining control. There is, however, widespread disagreement within the PPP over the wisdom of such tactics, perhaps reflecting the indecision of the Jagans themselves as to whether the party should seek to govern through the existing machinery or lead a revolution. Furthermore, all political factions recognize that disorder and turmoil might encourage Venezuela to assert its territorial claims more vigorously.

The future prospects for stability in Guyana will be determined to a considerable extent by whether the government will be able to meet the expectations of its citizens for a better life. The key to achieving this goal lies in accelerating the pace of economic development, but this must be done in the face of serious handicaps such as a narrow resource base, a shortage of investment capital, a lack of skilled manpower, and political pressure for nationalization of foreign enterprises that tends, at least in the short run, to limit output and discourage vital investment from abroad. Also, the high rates of unemployment and underemployment compound the problems. About 20% of the population is unemployed; the problem is most acute in the major urban centers where a shortage of low-cost housing and poor living conditions tend to exacerbate the situation. The government is keenly aware of the needs of the people, but the lack of funds raises doubts as to whether any significant progress can be made in the foreseeable future. Burnham apparently believes his self-help scheme to feed, clothe, and house every Guyanese within the next 5 years is the answer to the festering problem.

Despite the potential for political, social, and economic instability, extremist elements enjoy little influence at present, either within the two major political parties or in the country as a whole. There are small groups of extremists—ranging from extreme leftist factions receiving support from China to black power advocates—but they are ineffectual and do not present a direct threat to government stability at this time. Although elements within the opposition PPP advocate violence as the only way to achieve power, the party's capacity to mount guerrilla operations is virtually nonexistent.

While the Burnham government's policies have done little to remove or assuage the root causes of Guyana's deep-seated racial animosities, there has been nothing approaching a recurrence of the 1962-64 civil strife, and consequently the level of racial and political tensions has been somewhat lowered. There are indications, however, that such tensions are on the increase. It appears that the government has decided

to deliberately harass the Indian organizations which oppose some of its policies. There is also evidence that Burnham is growing weary of the constant criticism of government policies and may take steps to press the opposition to reduce its criticism and opposition by intimidation and withholding even more job opportunities. Lip service has been paid to equal opportunities for all races, but preferences are given to the blacks in nearly every case in which the government has control. There apparently is no clear-cut course of action contemplated by the opposition, and the extent of disunity among the divergent factions and groups makes it unlikely that serious violence will develop in the short run.

2. Subversion

a. Amerindians and white ranchers

The government's concern about subversion has related primarily to the threat posed by Venezuela's attempts to advance its claim to all Guyanese territory west of the Essequibo River (discussed above, under Foreign Policies). Venezuela's semiclandestine campaign to win the loyalty of the Guyanese Amerindians, especially those living near the disputed border led to the expulsion of a Venezuelan diplomat in early 1967. The efforts of the Venezuelan Government to persuade the Amerindians that they could expect better treatment from Venezuela have continued. Venezuela helped to establish, finance, and direct a small but now discredited Amerindian political party—the Guyana National Party (GNP). The Venezuelans also distributed free books, food, and other gifts; tried to teach the Amerindians Spanish; extended invitations for them to visit Venezuela; and initiated paramilitary training of several hundred tribesmen. Although little was accomplished, these efforts were aided by the fact that the Amerindians ignore national boundaries and have always moved freely between the two countries.

Tensions heightened in January 1969 when a small-scale insurrection broke out in the southwestern area known as the Rupumuni District, inhabited by Amerindians and a small group of cattle ranchers of mixed Scottish and U.S. origin. These independent-minded ranchers, fearing a challenge from the government in Georgetown concerning land to which they have no title, have always tended to have separatist leanings. After receiving Venezuelan encouragement, training, and arms, the ranchers and some of their Amerindian employees, who were for the most part pawns, launched a surprise attack and momentarily seized the town of Lethem, the

administrative center of the Rupununi District. Elements of the Guyana Defense Force, however, were quickly flown to the area, the hard-core rebels fled, and the troops razed their ranches. Most of the ranchers and some Amerindians fled to Brazil and Venezuela. Venezuela denied Guyanese charges of responsibility and did not respond to rebel calls for help, but it offered them sanctuary and financial aid. Although the Burnham government spoke out sharply against the rebels and their foreign supporters, it avoided making a *cause celebre* of the issue. Guyana sought instead, within its limited resources, to strengthen the armed forces and to improve the capability of forces in the border area. Information is not available on the current situation in the border area, particularly with respect to subversive activity there.

b. Jagan and his followers

Cheddi Jagan's PPP is the only political organization with a potential for undermining the government, but as long as the PPP remains committed to achieving power by legal means the party is unlikely to constitute a serious threat to political stability. The PPP draws its principal support from the large East Indian community, most of whom are not Communist in orientation. The top leadership of the party, however, invariably follows the Soviet line and Jagan has publicly proclaimed his and the PPP's allegiance to Moscow. The PPP's emergence as the country's largest party—even before independence—buoyed the leadership, and it has been further encouraged by the rapid growth of the East Indian community which has established itself as the largest ethnic group in Guyana. The party leadership, therefore, has been disposed to follow the electoral path to power. It has, however, become increasingly pessimistic about the possibility of achieving power by peaceful means, and increasingly suspicious that Burnham would neither conduct honest elections nor surrender power to a duly elected PPP government. The party has charged that the British delayed granting the colony independence, and altered the electoral system, in order to ensure that the PPP would not be in power at the time of independence. They contend further that Burnham has continued this policy, prevented a PPP victory in the 1968 election and, indeed, caused the party to fall below the PNC in electoral strength. They accuse him of manipulating the electoral regulations and rigging the election. The PPP's poor showing in 1968 was to some degree due, however, to the party's dispirited campaign and Jagan's defeatist attitude.

The growing frustration in the PPP may increase the temptation of extremists to initiate a program of armed struggle, which Jagan has stated is historically inevitable for Guyana. Although there are no clear indications that the party has made plans to take such a course of action, extremists within the party reportedly have stressed the need to train and arm PPP members for "the coming conflict." The party's capacity to mount guerrilla operations is extremely limited. Although between 30 to 50 members of the PPP reportedly have received guerrilla training in Cuba, and there have been reports of classes in guerrilla tactics, the party lacks the necessary weapons and supplies to support a guerrilla movement.

c. Non-Communist subversive groups

The small but growing black power movement presents a potential threat to Guyana's internal security. The larger and more active black power group, the African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA), was formed in 1964 primarily to emphasize the African heritage of black Guyanese by developing educational programs related to African history, culture, and language. In addition, there are programs for providing free educational courses for some of ASCRIA's members and promoting instruction in Swahili. ASCRIA's present acknowledged membership is about 200, but it is probably considerably larger, and it has several thousand sympathizers. ASCRIA's membership to some extent overlaps with that of other groups; some PNC officials, for example, are reported to be members of, or to be in sympathy with, ASCRIA. Some of Burnham's supporters participate publicly in black power activities, such as special social evenings and lectures.

Since 1968 ASCRIA's founder and present leader, Sydney King, who has taken the African name of Eusi Kwayana, has tried to reorient the organization toward an aggressive racist position, with the avowed goal of destroying white influence in the country. He also takes a Marxist line on international and economic matters. Kwayana's former position as chairman of the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC) gave him significant influence within the PNC. Prime Minister Burnham believed that it was good politics to have the popular Kwayana in the administration, but only as long as he was able to maintain the upper hand over the militant leader. This relationship had become strained by mid-1971. Burnham apparently became annoyed with Kwayana's sharp criticism of the government, particularly his charges of corruption in high places in the administration. Kwayana's insistence that Burnham

draw up a code of behavior for public officials appears to have been the last straw and led to a complete rupture of the once close relationship. Burnham is determined not to allow Kwayana to hold a position in either the PNC or the government and he has moved to strip Kwayana and ASCRIA of all influence. Kwayana's popularity with the younger Africans—many of whom comprise an important part of Burnham's electoral support—could become a serious threat to continued PNC rule should they withhold their support for Burnham at the polls.

Another small black power group is led by Brindley Horatio Benn, a Negro who served as chairman of the PPP for 10 years until he fell out with Jagan in 1965. Benn has visited Peking and reportedly has received financial aid from the Chinese Communists. Benn and his handful of followers, however, are only a nuisance factor and have not developed significant support. In October 1965, Benn founded the Afro-Asian-American Association (AAAA) as a new Marxist-Leninist front to demonstrate to Jagan that he had an independent base of support and thus was a force to be reckoned with. Benn also registered the National Union of Workers composed of a few workers in diverse trades in Georgetown. (Any group of seven can legally be registered as a union.) The two organizations are minuscule and serve primarily as political vehicles for Benn. In December 1968, Benn announced the formation of "Guyana's first Communist party," to be based upon the black power principles of Stokely Carmichael and to be called the Working People's Vanguard Party. This also is an insignificant organization and probably represents an effort by Benn to obtain more funds from Peking.

During 1970-71 a spate of potentially disruptive groups emerged, especially the Guyana Anti-Discrimination Movement (GADM), Fundamental Rights Action Committee (FRAC), Movement Against Oppression (MAO), and the Patriots. All four groups represent themselves as apolitical and dedicated to preservation of democratic processes and safeguards. Their avowed purpose is to awaken and mobilize public opinion on current issues. Although these groups do not pose a threat to the government at the present time, they are disruptive and one or more probably hope to develop into political parties. Thus the government must devote some time and energy to monitor their activities. GADM, composed mostly of East Indian doctors and lawyers, is regarded by many as a potential East Indian equivalent of ASCRIA, which is purely African. GADM began its activities in November 1970 and is still building its organization. It may in time try to become a political party. GADM

leaders have rebuffed PPP efforts to draw them into an alliance with Jagan. FRAC, a smaller group, but multiracial in character, was launched in December 1970 and reportedly intends to become a civil liberties champion. MAO appeared in January 1971 and is probably the most dangerous of the four. MAO was inspired in part by radical university professors affiliated with an older dissident group known as Ratoon. (*Ratoon*, a local term for the sharp stump left after sugarcane has been cut, was adopted as the symbol of Guyana's exploitation by foreign economic interests.) Ratoon appears to be very much alive; the Marxist orientation of the organization is reinforced by its militant opposition to the government and anti-U.S. stand. MAO is a peculiar amalgam of university radicals and a number of toughs and known criminals from the notorious Tiger Bay slum. Both the PPP and the PNC have indicated publicly their interest in and concern for the welfare of members of MAO, possibly because they recognize MAO's potential for violence. The Patriots is the newest of the four groups, and appears to be the personal vehicle of a prominent local lawyer and writer, Cleveland Hamilton. Hamilton has stated that the organization will "contribute to the creation and maintenance of a strong body of public opinion, and undertake by various means some responsibility for public education." Of the four groups, the Patriots probably has the least chance to develop into a significant force. All four evidently have a small membership and minimal organization, and for the near future, no mass base. All can be expected to attack the government and any other element of the society that opposes their goals.

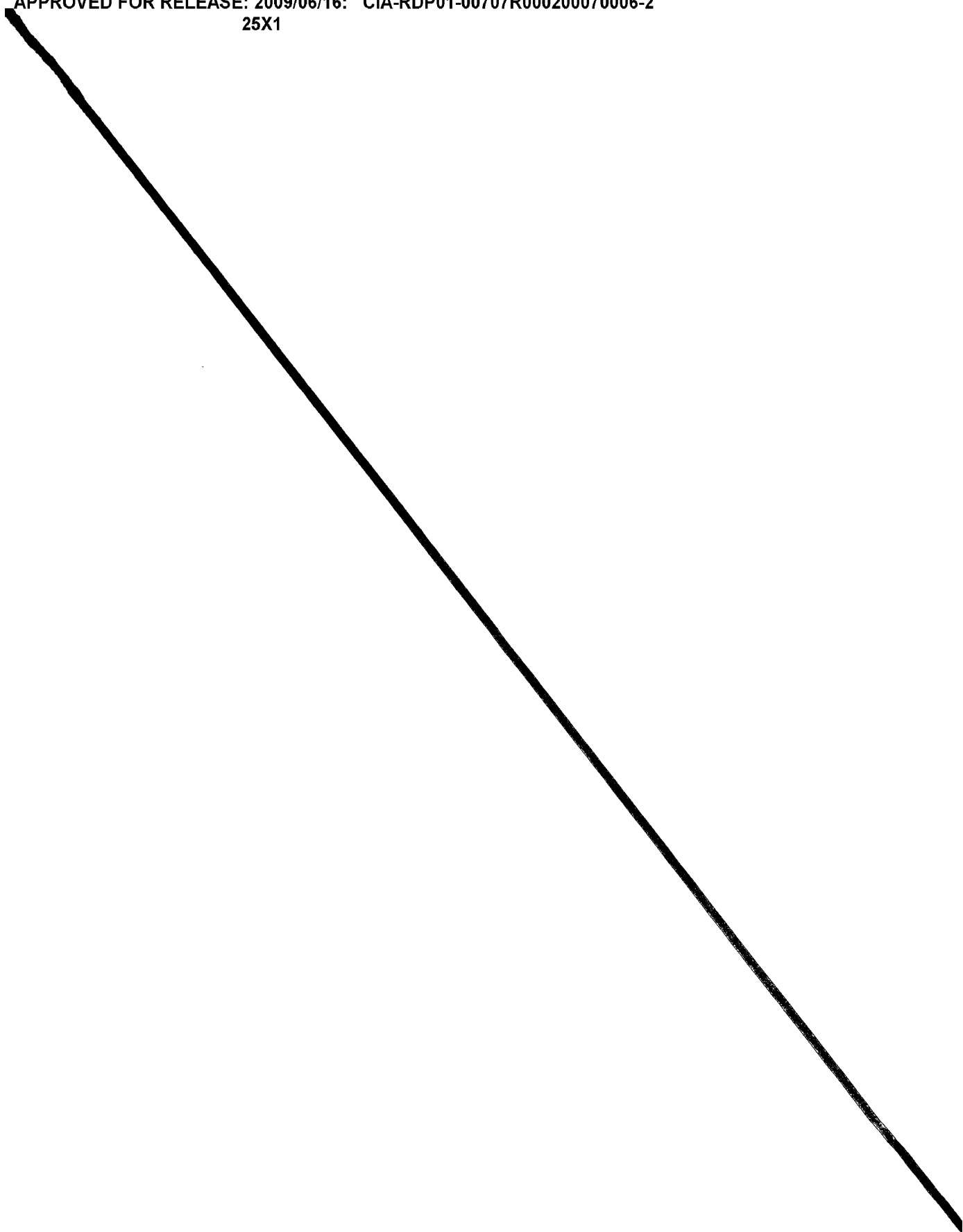
Young people are not a major political or disruptive force in Guyana at this time. Although each political party has a youth arm, the youth are not well organized and do not generally play a separate role in political affairs. In part this is probably due to the fact that Guyana has a very young population, and its leadership is also mostly quite young. Moreover, government leaders have been in the forefront of efforts to accomplish radical change. Guyanese youth, therefore, do not in general feel alienated from their national leaders and the "establishment."

F. Maintenance of internal security (S)

1. Police

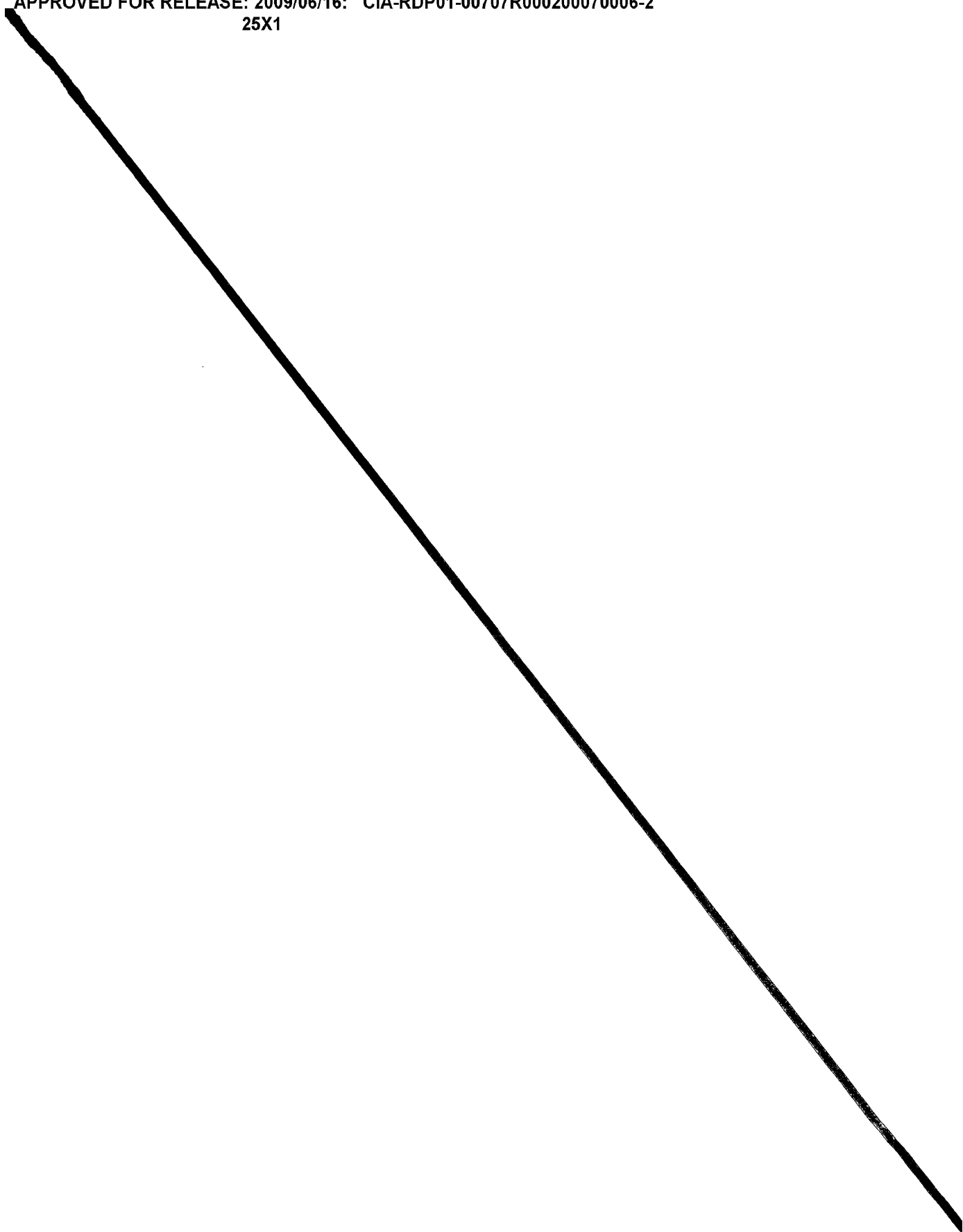
The Guyana Police Force, established in 1839, is charged with responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, the prevention and detection of crime, the repression of internal disturbances, the protection of

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Chronology (u/ou)

1498

Columbus sails along coast of present-day Guyana during last of his three voyages.

1616

Dutch expedition establishes settlement on island in Essequibo River.

1621

Colony placed under direction of the Dutch West Indian Company.

1814

Three Dutch settlements of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice are ceded to the United Kingdom following Congress of Vienna.

1831

The three settlements unite to become the colony of British Guiana with administration centered in Georgetown.

1838

Emancipation of slaves sets off large-scale immigration of indentured East Indians.

1928

Full crown colony government is introduced, and women acquire the vote.

1950

January

Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham organize the People's Progressive Party (PPP).

1953

April

PPP wins overwhelming majority in general elections.

1955

February

Burnham breaks with Jagan and forms the PPP(B).

1957

August

PPP(J), Jagan's faction of the party, wins general election.

October

Burnham drops pretense of PPP affiliation and forms the People's National Congress (PNC).

1961

August

PPP wins general elections; Jagan becomes Premier.

1962

February

A general strike degenerates into bloody racial rioting as the opposition tries to bring down the Jagan government.

1963

April-July

General strike accompanied by violence paralyzes economy; state of emergency is declared; Cuba aids Jagan financially to prevent his fall from power.

1964

May

Increasing bloodshed and racial violence cause U.K. Governor to assume emergency powers.

December

PPP gains slim plurality in elections, but Burnham takes over as Premier by forming a coalition with the smaller United Force party and gaining a parliamentary majority.

1966

February

Venezuelan claim to territory west of Essequibo River is submitted to a commission established to reach a settlement within 4 years.

May

British Guiana becomes independent state of Guyana with Burnham as Prime Minister.

New constitution establishes an appointed judiciary and an elected unicameral legislature.

September

Guyana becomes a member of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

1968

December

Prime Minister Burnham's PNC gains parliamentary majority in general election.

1969

January

Small-scale insurrection, encouraged by Venezuela, breaks out in southwestern area and is suppressed by the Guyana Defense Force.

March

Defense force becomes exclusively Guyanese when Col. Pope, British adviser, departs on 27 March.

April-June

Venezuela renews and intensifies campaign to regain the Essequibo, raising Guyanese fears that Venezuela eventually intends to use force to recover the disputed area.

July

Cheddi Jagan publicly enrolls the PPP in the World Communist Movement at the Moscow Conference of Worldwide Communist Parties.

August

Guyana Defense Force drives small contingent of Surinamese police from disputed border area.

1970

January

Border tensions rise as both Venezuela and Guyana concentrate troops on the border.

February

Guyana becomes a republic but remains within the Commonwealth (first Caribbean member of the Commonwealth to do so); officially known as the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

1971

January

Government alarms business community by imposing unexpectedly sharp tax increases and foreign exchange restrictions. Outflow of funds of foreign firms also restricted.

April

Prime Minister announces new economic program with a strong nationalistic and socialistic bent.

May

Government moves to extend its control over existing foreign investments. Demands at least 51% equity participation in future concessions that exploit the nation's natural resources.

June

Venezuela and Guyana sign the "Port-of-Spain Protocol" for a 12-year moratorium on the dispute.

Surinam and Guyana agree to shelve their longstanding border dispute and promote better relations. Guyana retains "administrative control" of the disputed region.

July

PNC sweeps local elections, captures 80 of the 97 council seats contested. Opposition boycotts elections and charges fraud.

Government establishes the External Trade Bureau (ETB), to serve as the sole importer of goods from Communist countries, later expanded to handle all imports and exports.

Government nationalizes the Demerara Bauxite Co. (DEMBA), a subsidiary of a Canadian firm, after nearly 8 months of bitter negotiations; company renamed the Guyana Bauxite Company (GUYBAU).

November

People's Republic of China and Guyana sign trade agreement.

December

Soviet Union and Guyana establish "non resident" diplomatic relations.

1972

January

Economic difficulties, attributable in part to world oversupply of bauxite and alumina, intensified by recent "Guyanization" measures by the government.

"Permanent observer" status extended to Guyana by the Permanent Council of the OAS.

March

Peking establishes seven-man trade mission in Guyana and extends \$26-million interest-free credit for industrial projects.

April

Burnham pushes for increased government controls over the economy and reiterates intention to strengthen the cooperative movement.

June

People's Republic of China and Guyana establish resident diplomatic relations.

Government-owned alumina plant temporarily closes because of the depressed international market for aluminum.

SECRET

Glossary (u/ou)

ABBREVIATION	ENGLISH
AAAA.....	Afro-Asian-American Association
ASCRIA.....	African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa
CARIFTA.....	Caribbean Free Trade Association
CDB.....	Caribbean Development Bank
DEMBA.....	Demerara Bauxite Company
ETB.....	External Trade Bureau
FRAC.....	Fundamental Rights Action Committee
GADM.....	Guyana Anti-Discrimination Movement
GAWU.....	Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union
GAY.....	Guyana Assembly of Youth
GCC.....	Guyana Credit Corporation
GDC.....	Guyana Development Corporation
GDF.....	Guyana Defense Force
GIMPEX.....	Guyana Import-Export Co., Ltd.
GIS.....	Guyana Information Service
GMC.....	Guyana Marketing Corporation
GNP.....	Guyana National Party
GTUC.....	Guyana Trades Union Council
GUMP.....	Guyana United Muslim Party
GUYS.....	Guyana United Youth Service
MAO.....	Movement Against Oppression
MPCA.....	Manpower Citizens' Association
NACCIE.....	National Association of Clerical, Commercial, and Industrial Employees
NUW.....	National Union of Workers
OAS.....	Organization of American States
PNC.....	People's Nations Congress
PPP.....	People's Progressive Party
PYO.....	Progressive Youth Organization
RDC.....	Rice Development Corporation
RMB.....	Rice Marketing Board
RWU.....	Rice Workers' Union
UF.....	United Force
WPO.....	Women's Progressive Organization
WPVP.....	Working People's Vanguard Party
YD.....	Young Democrats

Places and features referred to in this Chapter (u/ou)

	COORDINATES	
	° 'N.	° 'W.
Ankoko Island (<i>island</i>).....	6 43	61 08
Coeroeni Rivier, Surinam (<i>stream</i>).....	3 23	57 36
Corriverton.....	5 52	57 10
Courantyne River (<i>stream</i>).....	5 57	57 06
Cuyuni River (<i>stream</i>).....	6 23	58 41
Essequibo River (<i>stream</i>).....	6 59	58 23
Georgetown.....	6 48	58 10
Kutari River (<i>stream</i>).....	2 22	56 52
Lethem.....	3 23	59 48
Mackenzie.....	6 00	58 17
Matthews Ridge.....	7 30	60 10
New Amsterdam.....	6 15	57 31
New River (<i>stream</i>).....	3 23	57 36
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.....	10 39	61 31
Rose Hall.....	6 16	57 23
Rupununi District.....	3 00	59 00
Rupununi River (<i>stream</i>).....	4 03	58 34
Springlands.....	5 54	57 09

SECRET

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