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TENSION CONTINUES ALONG GUYANA'S DISPUTED BORDERS

Negotiations to improve relations between Guyana and neighboring Surinam, in the wake of Guyana's seizure on 19 August of a Surinam police outpost, have yet to produce concrete results. The outpost, complete with airstrip, generating plant, and a fairly elaborate system of sunken bunkers and camouflaged positions, was inside the New River triangle area, a remote border region claimed by both countries. The Guyanese Government had known of the outpost for more than a year, but Prime Minister Burnham did not feel compelled to oust the Surinamers until after their presence became public knowledge on 9 August. He then claimed that public pressure for a defense of "national sovereignty" forced him to act.

The issue has become something of a cause celebre in Surinam. There, national pride has been severely wounded because the Surinam police ran off when the Guyanese attacked, and an angry public is demanding some sort of forceful, face-saving action. Interim Minister-resident Arthur May cannot act on his own, however, and must await a decision by the Dutch, who are charged with handling Surinam's foreign affairs. As a result, independence from the Netherlands has again become an important issue.

The Dutch, embarrassed earlier this year by rioting in their other Caribbean dependencies, are anxious to avoid involvement. They

are trying to develop a settlement formula that will be defensible before their Parliament which opens next month and at the same time will be acceptable to Surinam. They will insist that the Guyanese promise to evacuate the outpost before border talks can begin. Prime Minister Burnham so far has refused to withdraw his troops, especially in view of the fact that the Dutch are not prepared to guarantee that the Surinamers will not return. For his part, Burnham has indicated that he would be willing to submit the dispute to the World Court and that he is ready for talks to begin now, without preconditions.

The reopening of Guyana's dispute with Surinam has given Venezuela a chance to renew its claim to Guyana's western territory--more than three fifths of the country. While insisting that Venezuela will continue to make "all efforts toward achieving a friendly understanding with Guyana," President Caldera has stated his country will continue to press its claim. Among other things he has accused the Guyanese of "using language inconsistent with the objective of friendly relations" and of setting up a "racist regime." This sort of talk has deepened Burnham's fears that Venezuela intends eventually to use force in the border dispute and will cause him to make increasingly forceful requests for the US to forestall such an attack.

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