

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

American Involvement with British Guiana 1961-1963

by

Hector J. Parekh

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

CALGARY, ALBERTA

JUNE, 1997

© Hector J. Parekh 1997



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-24609-4

Canada

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the American subversion of Dr. Cheddi Jagan's democratically elected government in the colony of British Guiana during the early 1960s. Jagan's brand of socialism concerned President John F. Kennedy because of the domestic political ramifications of the appearance of "another Cuba" in the western hemisphere. For this reason the Kennedy administration negotiated with the British government to rig British Guiana's electoral system in such a way that Jagan's Peoples' Progressive Party would no longer be able to win a majority in parliament. To help Britain justify this action, the United States fomented a debilitating strike in British Guiana in the spring of 1963. This thesis traces the origins and implementation of American policy toward British Guiana and draws on recently declassified US State Department documents as well as correspondence with some of the key players of the time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasant custom which allows me to formally thank those who have been instrumental in helping me to write this thesis. It is doubtful whether this work would have come to fruition were it not for the patience, guidance and professionalism of my supervisor Dean Stephen J. Randall of the University of Calgary. President John F. Kennedy's former Special Assistant, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., provided me with a candid letter detailing his administration's policy in British Guiana which added support to my research. The late-President of Guyana, His Excellency Cheddi B. Jagan, likewise wrote a lengthy missive which aided me in my research. I wish to thank Guyana's Prime Minister, Her Excellency Janet Jagan, for forwarding the letter shortly after her husband's death. On a more personal level, my former roommates Jennifer Pettit and Robin Gendron, in addition to reading and critiquing early drafts of my work, provided me with welcome diversions from the monotony of a very tedious process. Finally, and most importantly, I wish to thank my parents, Hilda and Kersi, for their unwavering faith in my abilities all throughout my university career. Their belief in "education for education's sake" sustained me through difficult times when I often wondered what I was doing studying history.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL HISTORY TO 1960	13
CHAPTER II: ASSESSING THE JAGAN THREAT (1961)	43
CHAPTER III: TOWARDS A NEW POLICY (1962)	69
CHAPTER IV: COVERT ACTION AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS BRITISH GUIANA (1962-1963)	92
EPILOGUE (1964 AND AFTER)	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY	135

INTRODUCTION

In late-1961 the administration of John F. Kennedy took steps to oust the democratically elected leader of British Guiana¹, Cheddi B. Jagan. As an avowed Marxist, Jagan's presence in the Caribbean disturbed Kennedy who felt that the American-trained dentist would turn the British colony into "another Cuba" and thereby give the Soviet Union a second foothold in the hemisphere. Kennedy believed this would inevitably force him act militarily against Cuba and would provide fodder for the Republicans to use against him in the presidential elections of 1964. Therefore the CIA, together with the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and its offshoot the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD), worked with the British Guiana Trades Union Council (BGTUC) and Jagan's main rival, LFS (Forbes) Burnham, to instigate a debilitating strike in British Guiana in 1963. This strike exacerbated racial tension between the colony's African and East Indian populations and gave the British government the excuse it needed to change the British Guianese electoral system to one based on proportional representation. Under this new system, Cheddi Jagan's Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP) lost its majority status in the legislative assembly after the elections of 1964. In 1966 the colony gained independence under an American-backed government which ruled the country corruptly until 1992.

Cheddi Jagan first came to power in 1953 on a nationalist platform that included independence at the earliest possible date. His Peoples' Progressive Party was intent on wrenching economic control of British Guiana from foreign hands. That it sought to implement Marxist reforms troubled the British government which quickly prorogued the

PPP-led legislature and imprisoned some of its leaders. But by 1957 the party was back in power, once again pushing for independence from Great Britain.

John F. Kennedy, like many post-war American presidents, supported the idea of decolonization in theory. As a senator in the 1950s, he criticized France's control of Indo-China and its suppression of the nationalist movement in Algeria.² As president, however, Kennedy was not prepared to deal with governments that did not support the United States. In public he took a hawkish position on Cold War issues and forever tried to prove to the American public that he was not "soft on Communism." During the election campaign of 1960, he berated the Eisenhower administration for its "loss" of Cuba. Fidel Castro's rise to power made the Caribbean a particular "hot spot" in the Cold War during the Kennedy administration and the failure of his Bay of Pigs operation to bring down the Communist leader showed the president that the Cuban problem was more intractable than it appeared. At the very least, Kennedy was determined to avoid the appearance of "another Cuba" in the hemisphere.³

To this end President Kennedy took several initiatives to slow the Communist advance in Latin America, the most famous of which is his Alliance for Progress which gave aid to developing countries. The Peace Corps also became a visible symbol of the Kennedy administration's desire to help underdeveloped countries.⁴ But the historiography of the Kennedy administration, particularly with reference to its dealings in the Caribbean region, shows that there is a marked difference between the image and the reality of John F. Kennedy's foreign policy.

The earlier historical interpretations of Kennedy's foreign policy were written, in

the main, by members of his own administration such as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Theodore Sorenson and Roger Hilsman.⁵ These pieces of historiography, which Burton Kaufman argues verge on "hagiography"⁶ paint a picture of the Kennedy of Camelot, the young, vigorous and vibrant leader who responded to the challenges of foreign policy with poise and judicious consideration--a man who in Hilsman's words was all at once a leader and a "hero."⁷ This was the image that the public saw during the 1960s.

However, later revisionists displayed Kennedy in a very different light. To these men and women of the 1970s and 1980s, Kennedy was the consummate Cold Warrior who forsook diplomacy for confrontation. Louise Fitzsimmons in her 1972 *The Kennedy Doctrine* claims that the president reserved the right to intervene politically, militarily and economically in the affairs of other nations if doing so were in the best interests of the American nation.⁸ Richard J. Walton argues that Kennedy displayed an alarmist and dogmatic view of the world that reflected the president's own "machismo."⁹ To Walton, Kennedy carried on the Cold War in a far more dangerous manner than did his predecessor and he goes so far as to suggest that the Cuban missile crisis was ultimately an irresponsible, reckless and unnecessary episode.¹⁰ David Halberstam's 1972 *The Best and the Brightest* places the blame for America's foreign policy, particularly the mire it found itself in in Vietnam, on Kennedy's closest advisors whom he felt were too eager to "test their new powers."¹¹ Bruce Miroff's 1976 *Pragmatic Illusions: The Presidential Politics of John F. Kennedy* argues that Kennedy sought to control events around the globe¹² and Herbert Parmet's 1983 *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* concludes that "Kennedy's constant need to demonstrate toughness had helped to manufacture

potential disasters everywhere."¹³ Indeed in these revisionist pieces, the image of the Kennedy of Camelot is supplanted with that of Kennedy as Cold Warrior.

But recent scholarship of the Kennedy administration's foreign policy tends to achieve a more balanced view of the President's policies. These works take into account the various domestic and international concerns that influenced Kennedy's foreign policy-making. For example, James N. Giglio, in his 1991 *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, argues that the president became a "victim of his own rhetoric. Having promised to act tough and do more, he limited his options in foreign policy."¹⁴ But acting tough did not mean invading the countries which presented difficulties for him, especially Cuba. Richard Ned Lebow, in his 1990 assessment of the Cuban missile crisis suggests that domestic politics was indeed a concern for the president, but what was at stake during the missile crisis of October 1962 was not the notion of confronting Moscow over the presence of the missiles in Cuba, but the idea of having to invade the island over the issue. An invasion, Lebow argues, was anathema for Kennedy felt that doing so would risk the support of prominent Democratic senators such as Richard Russell (GA) and J. William Fulbright (AS).¹⁵

The subject of American involvement with British Guiana has not hitherto been directly broached by scholars of American foreign policy history. A number of significant sociological and general studies exist which make passing reference to American involvement in the destabilization of the Jagan government and there are several works which deal with CIA/AFL-CIO involvement in the colony. However, these works are based largely on conjecture and do not offer any solid evidence that American efforts

counted for anything in the destabilization of the Jagan government between 1961 and 1963.¹⁶ The reason for this dearth of academic studies on a subject which President Kennedy's special assistant Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. claimed took up "more man hours per capita"¹⁷ than any other issue in early-1962 is understandable given the US government's refusal to release documents surrounding the Kennedy administration's involvement in the colony's affairs for reasons of national security. But in March 1995, the State Department declassified relevant documents in its central files and transferred them to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) building in College Park, Maryland. In addition, in July 1996 the department published several key documents including those found in still inaccessible lot files.¹⁸ Much of the operational details of the American covert involvement in the colony still remain classified for national security reasons, but what is currently available allows for the writing of a more complete narrative of American policy towards the colony of British Guiana between 1961 and 1963 and shows that American involvement was very clearly responsible for the loss of Cheddi Jagan's Peoples' Progressive Party in the elections of 1964.

American involvement in British Guianese politics during the years in question makes for an interesting foreign policy case study whose general significance needs to be interpreted within the context of an analytical model of the foreign policy-making process. Harold Molineu, in an article in David Dent's 1995, *US-Latin American Policymaking*, outlines six important determinants of foreign policy-making. These are bureaucratic politics; psychological approaches; the rational actor/realism model; structural theories; dependency and world systems; and, pluralism and domestic politics.¹⁹

Not all of these models are useful to help study American policy towards British Guiana, however. The dependency and world systems model, for example, can be dismissed immediately because of a lack of evidence. This model holds that foreign policy is pursued with a view to keeping foreign countries economically dependent on the United States. However, there is no documentary proof to suggest that American policy-makers sought the ouster of the Marxist government of Cheddi Jagan in order to safeguard their country's present and future investments. In fact Arthur Schlesinger Jr. claims that the protection of America's economic investments was not a major consideration motivating the Kennedy administration's policy toward British Guiana.²⁰

The bureaucratic politics model suggests that foreign policy actions reflect the interests of whatever faction of the bureaucracy is in control of the policy-making process.²¹ This is not applicable to the case of British Guiana for two reasons. First, the bureaucratic politics model ignores the influence of domestic politics in the formation of foreign policy. This influence is clear in the documents dealing with the issue. Second, it is difficult to use the bureaucratic politics models without documents that show the day-to-day interactions of policy-makers. In the case of American involvement in British Guiana, the State Department has chosen to keep many of these sorts of documents classified for "national security" reasons.

For similar reasons one might dismiss a psychological approach to the study of the American relations with British Guiana. Psychological theories, like Groupthink, require significant numbers of documents of a personal nature, for example memoranda of closed cabinet meetings where policy-makers are more apt to be candid and share their personal

feelings over an issue, journals, diaries et cetera.²² Such documents, though available to some degree, are not sufficiently numerous to allow one to apply a psychological approach to the study at hand.

In contrast to the psychological approach, the rational actor/realist model assumes that every policy action is undertaken for objective reasons, divorced from personal beliefs and emotions. According to this model, politicians formulate policy in pursuance of "national interests." Applying it to the case of American relations with British Guiana, one might argue that the United States attempted to protect its "sphere of influence" in its hemisphere by doing away with the Marxist government of Cheddi Jagan. However, this interpretation's main shortcoming lies in the fact that like the bureaucratic politics model, it marginalizes the role of domestic politics in foreign policy-making. Moreover, defining "national interests" during the Cold War, when "gains" for one side automatically became "losses" for the other, is a difficult endeavour.²³

A more complex version of the rational actor model is the structuralist interpretation of foreign policy-making. This model holds that actions are undertaken not simply to protect "national interests," but because policy-makers perceive action or inaction in a given area to have possible ramifications on US-Soviet relations and on the balance of world power in general.²⁴ The Kennedy administration did in fact form its policy toward British Guiana against the backdrop of Castro's rise to power in Cuba which represented a massive loss of prestige for the United States.²⁵ The fear that British Guiana would become "another Cuba" and act as a Soviet bridgehead to the South American continent is pervasive in the State Department's central files dealing with British Guiana.

Thus, as this thesis will demonstrate, the US government's reaction to the "pro-Communist" government of Cheddi Jagan can be explained, in part, as a case of a "status quo great power protecting its sphere...against challenges to its dominance."²⁶

But more important than geopolitical concerns for President Kennedy were the domestic political ramifications of "another Castro" in the hemisphere. The pluralism and domestic politics approach to the study of foreign policy holds that public and Congressional opinion, as well as that of interest groups and elites, are capable of influencing the course of US foreign policy.²⁷ Given the evidence found in the central files of the Department of State and elsewhere, this model is the best one with which to interpret American relations with British Guiana in the early-1960s. Initially the British government did not want to act against Cheddi Jagan for it did not believe him to be a serious Communist. Indeed until late-1961, President Kennedy and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. agreed with this assessment. However, the public outcry against the thought of "another Castro" in the hemisphere changed their opinion of Jagan and forced them to ask Britain to get rid of him. Schlesinger wrote recently that,

The White House concern was with the domestic political implications of what the Republicans would inevitably describe as the "loss" of a South American country to communism. The "loss" of China had been a major theme in the 1952 election, only a decade earlier; the "loss" of Cuba was on everyone's mind; and what would be taken as an extension of communism to the South American mainland would be used against the Democrats in the 1964 presidential election.²⁸

Thus a concern for the domestic political ramifications of Jagan's leadership was the prime impetus for American policy towards British Guiana during the Kennedy years.

This interpretation falls in line with more recent analyses of Kennedy's foreign policy by historians such as Giglio and Lebow who argue that domestic concerns drove Kennedy's foreign policy to the point where the president had to hypocritically support nationalist independence movements while at the same time seek to depose leaders whose ideologies were too far to the left for the American public's taste.

This thesis does not focus exclusively on the origins of American policy toward British Guiana, however. Chapter One gives an overview of the social, economic and political history of British Guiana down to 1961. Chapter Two deals with America's initial assessment of the threat which Jagan posed to the hemisphere in 1961. Torn between the British belief that Jagan was not a serious danger to the Cold War balance of power and the US public perception of Jagan as another Castro, the Kennedy administration adopted a dual track policy of cooperation with the premier alongside the formation of a covert policy to topple him. In the third chapter, this policy changes in the wake of the February 1962 Georgetown riots which Jagan blamed on the United States. Both the State Department and the Executive believed that working with Jagan in light of his hostility to the United States would not be fruitful and that the premier had to be removed from power. Chapter Four describes the implementation of the American covert policy to oust Jagan. It traces the successful clandestine actions that led to the imposition of proportional representation in the colony. The epilogue briefly describes Jagan's attempt to cling on to the reins of power, including the bloody PPP-inspired sugar strike of 1964, and concludes by examining the legacy of America's involvement with the colony of British Guiana.

America's covert action in British Guiana was successful in the sense that it did what it set out to do and replaced the government of Cheddi Jagan. However, the US supported government of Forbes Burnham quickly turned into a dictatorship and eventually nationalized Guyana's main industries in the 1970s. But at this time the American public, preoccupied with events in Vietnam, did not concern itself with Burnham's turn to the left and he ruled the country corruptly until his death in 1985. In 1996 Arthur Schlesinger Jr. admitted that American policy in the colony had been misguided. "As it turned out," he wrote, "Jagan was neither as sinister nor Burnham as benign as we supposed."²⁹ Yet in the early-1960s, with the US public clamouring for Jagan's removal, it did not seem as if the Kennedy administration had any other choice but to find a means of deposing him.

NOTES

¹The name British Guiana will be used throughout this thesis to describe the colony until 1966. The country only changed its name to Guyana after independence in that year.

²James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1991), p. 14.

³Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point*. (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971), p. 202.

⁴James N. Giglio, *The Presidency...*, p. 46.

⁵Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. (New York: Fawcett, 1965); Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965); Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation. The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy*. (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1967).

⁶Burton I. Kaufman, "John F. Kennedy as World Leader: A Perspective on the Literature," *Diplomatic History*. Volume 17, 1993, p. 449.

⁷Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation...*, p. 582.

⁸Louise Fitzsimmons in Burton Kaufman, "JFK as World Leader..." p. 450.

⁹Richard J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution. The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy*. (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 53.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 233 and 103.

¹¹David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*. (New York, 1972); Burton Kaufman, "JFK as World Leader..." p. 450.

¹²Bruce Miroff, *Pragmatic Illusions: The Presidential Politics of John F. Kennedy*. (New York: David McKay Company, 1976), p. 32.

¹³Herbert Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. (New York: Dial Press, 1983), p. 352.

¹⁴James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 1991), p. 45.

¹⁵Richard Ned Lebow, "Domestic Politics and the Cuban Missile Crisis: The Traditional and the Revisionist Interpretations Reevaluated," *Diplomatic History* 14 (Fall 1990); pp. 471-92. Cited in Burton Kaufman, "JFK As World Leader..." p. 462.

¹⁶Cheddi Jagan's *The West on Trial: My Fight for Guyana's Freedom* (London: Michael Joseph, 1966) and Philip Reno's *The Ordeal of British Guiana* (New York: Monthly Review, 1964) provide a decent narrative of the events in question, though the works are obviously biased and very clearly anti-American. Sociologist Leo Despres dismisses the influence of foreign powers in the collapse of the Jagan government in his *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana* (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1967) and places the blame on the colony's culturally pluralistic social composition. Sociological studies in the 1970s cite class tensions as the main reasons for the troubles in British Guiana during the 1960s. See for example, Andra P. Thakur, "Guyana: The Politics of Race and Class, 1963-1964," M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1973 and Dennis A. Bartels, "Class Conflict and Racist Ideology in the Formation of Modern Guyanese Society," Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1978. Finally, Thakur Rishee, "Politics and Hegemony in Guianese Nationalism, 1945-1965" Ph.D. Thesis, York University (Toronto), 1994, introduces the idea that a desire to maintain an "Anglo-Christian Hegemony" ensured that Jagan, an East Indian Hindu, would not maintain power.

More general histories of Guyana, all of which make at least passing reference to American involvement in the colony, include Roy Arthur Glasgow, *Guyana: Race and Politics Among Africans and East Indians*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970); Basil A. Ince, *Decolonization and Conflict in the United Nations: Guyana's Struggle for Independence* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1974); Robert H. Manley, *Guyana Emergent: The Post Independence Struggle for Nondependent Development* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979); Thomas J. Spinner Jr., *A Political and Social History of Guyana 1945-1983*. (Boulder: Westview, 1984); Kemp Ronald Hope, *Guyana: Politics and Development in an Emergent Socialist State*. (Oakville, ON: Mosaic Press, 1985); and Chaitram Singh, *Guyana: Politics in a Plantation Society*. (New York: Praeger, 1988).

The most significant work dealing with CIA/AFL-CIO involvement in British Guiana is Ronald Radosh's *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*. (New York: Random house, 1969). Other works speaking to the same theme include George

Morris, *The CIA and American Labor: The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy*. (New York: International Publishers, 1967); Colin VF Henfrey, "Foreign Influence in Guyana," in Emanuel de Kadt, *Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean*. (London: Oxford University, 1972); Fred Hirsch and Richard Fletcher, *The CIA and the Labour Movement*. (Nottingham, UK: Spokesman, 1977).

¹⁷Memorandum. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. to Kennedy. 8 March 1962. *Foreign Relations of the United States Volume XII: The Americas*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), p. 548.

¹⁸US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Volume XII: The Americas*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996).

¹⁹Harold Molineu, "Making Policy for Latin America: Process and Explanation," in David Dent, ed., *US-Latin American Policymaking: A Reference Handbook*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), pp. 221-247.

²⁰Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 228

²²Irving Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. 2nd Edition. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. ix.

²³Harold Molineu, "Making Policy..." p. 224.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 226.

²⁵Centre for Strategic and International Studies, *Russia in the Caribbean*. (Georgetown: Georgetown University, 1973), p. 5.

²⁶Harold Molineu, "Making Policy..." p. 226.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 229.

²⁸Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.

²⁹Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.

CHAPTER I: A SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF BRITISH GUIANA TO 1960

British Guiana was a colony with a very complex social structure. Guiana is an Amerindian word meaning "land of many waters." By the twentieth century, after the importation of various races of people to the colony, British Guiana fast became a "land of many peoples." The colony's principle purpose was to supply the mother country, first the Netherlands and later Britain, with resources. As a result, as the colony's economy developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became more and more dependent on Great Britain to the point where British companies virtually owned the colony and exploited its resources at will. Eventually this exploitation took its toll on the peoples of British Guiana and by the 1950s a nationalist independence movement slowly developed with goal of putting control of the reins of the economy in the hands of the Guianese people. Cheddi Jagan's Peoples' Progressive Party first came to power in 1953, but the British government quickly prorogued the legislature to keep controversial "communistic" legislation from passing. In 1957, however, the PPP was still the most popular party in the colony and gained power once again. Americans watched the events in British Guiana during the 1950s with disapproving eyes, not only because of the presence of a "Communist" leader in their hemisphere, but because he threatened the "exciting prospects" that the colony held for foreign investors.

Indeed, from the time of its discovery, observers had always viewed Guiana largely in economic terms as a land of rich bounty available for exploitation. As early as 1596 Sir Walter Raleigh wrote a tract extolling the virtues of the "Large, Rich and

Bewtiful Empire of Guiana.” He eventually died trying to find “El Dorado,” the mythical City of Gold that he believed existed there. Later, Shakespeare wrote of a “region in Guiana all gold and bounty” and Milton of “...unspoiled Guiana whose great city Geryon’s sons call El Dorado.”¹ Though a “City of Gold” never materialized, British Guiana became an important producer for the Dutch, and later the British, of what came to be known as “white gold,” namely sugar. By the twentieth century the colony would also become an important source of bauxite, diamonds, timber and other raw materials for sale on the world market.

The desire to exploit British Guiana's sugar resources led the Dutch, and later the British, to bring in slaves from Africa. After the abolition of slavery, the British brought indentured servants from China, Portugal and India to work on sugar plantations. This meant that the colony developed as a culturally pluarlistic society. According to J.S. Furnivall, a plural society is one which comprises “two or more elements of social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling.”² Plural societies are by definition artificial creations, organized, in the main, for economic production. Providing an institution of government for a plural society, which should theoretically be a vehicle for the expression of the common social will, proves exceedingly difficult. The simple reason for this is that in a plural society it is difficult to define a “common” social will, since each race develops its own sense of nationalism.³

Furnivall maintains that the glue which keeps plural societies together under one unitary political system has to come from the outside. Without some exogenous force, Furnivall claimed, “one nationalism would necessarily be set against the other for

supremacy in the unitary political state.”⁴ Applying Furnivall’s theoretical model to the case of British Guiana means that once the British loosened the reins of imperial power, the non-voluntary union between British Guiana’s different races was due to dissolve and that it was only natural that racial violence, such as occurred after 1962, ensued.

To elucidate the nature of the racial tensions in Guiana, or “racialism” as it is called in much of the sociological literature, it is necessary to briefly describe some of the characteristics of British Guiana’s six peoples, paying special attention to the role that the colony’s two most populous races played in the social strife that occurred during the 1960s. Though East Indians and Africans were by far the most populous races in British Guiana, there were also other minority groups in the country. These included the Portuguese, the Chinese, Aborigines (often referred to in the literature as “Amerindians”) and the British. The British numbered anywhere from 2400 to 4000 during the years in question⁵ and comprised about 0.5 percent of the population. The British in Guiana were very rarely born and brought up in the colony, but rather came merely to work and almost always returned to Britain with their families after a few years. In Georgetown, as Michael Swan has argued, the British population in the late-1950s could be divided up into “Sugar” and “Government,” the two main reasons for British presence in the colony. Because their stays were only temporary, Swan further maintained that “Englishmen go to their own people for true social relaxation.” In this, however, the British were no different than any other race in the colony. Social segregation was self-imposed by each race and each had a certain national identity of its own that set it apart from the others.⁶

The second least populous race in the colony were the Chinese, who in a 1964

census comprised approximately 0.6 percent of the population with about 3,910 people.⁷

The Chinese came to the colony as indentured servants in the nineteenth century, but found life on the sugar plantations difficult. For this reason the majority of them left to become shopkeepers. In 1957, Michael Swan commented, British Guianese of Chinese descent owned almost every store in the colony's mining districts.⁸

With nearly double the population of the Chinese, the Portuguese ranked third from last in terms of size comprising about 1.0% of the population or 6,380 people.⁹ Like the Chinese, the Portuguese also found life on the plantation as indentured servants hard and they soon left to take up roles as shopkeepers. However, whereas the Chinese spread themselves along the periphery in mining towns, the Portuguese went mainly to the capital city of Georgetown. As was the case with all of the colony's races, save for the East Indians, by 1960 the Portuguese had long since given up their ties to their homeland and felt themselves to be Guianese more than Portuguese.¹⁰

The country's Amerindians, the native peoples of Guiana who were there long before Sir Walter Raleigh knew of the existence of the region, were considerably more populous than the Portuguese. Numbering about 29,430, they comprised about 4.6% of the population during the early 1960s.¹¹ They were found mainly in the interior and chose to live in reservations set aside for them by the British Governor. Some Amerindians chose to work in mining or lumber camps, but these were few and far between. Because they were seldom seen by the country's other races, the latter took to referring to them as "bucks," and looked down upon them as simple, primitive, tribesmen.¹²

After the Amerindians, the country's African population comprised the next largest

race with approximately 200,000 people or 31.3% of the population.¹³ Afro-Guianese were brought to the colony by the Dutch and British during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as slave labourers to work on the sugar plantations. With emancipation in 1838, many of them stayed on the plantations to work as wage labourers. But when the East Indians began to be brought in to work as indentured servants, the Africans saw their standard of living decline. For this reason many of them moved to the capital city of Georgetown to find work. After emancipation, when many British colonists returned home, Guianese Africans entered the ranks of the civil service.¹⁴

The African population was quick to adopt the Anglican religion and English culture. The reason for this, as Cheddi Jagan claims, was that there was a social hierarchy in the colony based on 'colour.' The colour of one's skin determined one's social status in the country and the rule went that the lighter one's skin, the higher one's social status. Jagan claims that there was a general belief that everything "white" was good and everything "black" was bad. By adopting English culture and religion, the African community attempted to bring itself closer to the 'white' ideal and thereby guarantee itself better employment prospects.¹⁵

Like the Portuguese and Chinese, the Africans had no real ties with the slave coast of West Africa. By adopting the manners, dress and even religion of the English, the Africans felt themselves to be "Guianese" more than "African." Theirs was a unique nationalism based on the premise of English superiority. According to Roy Arthur Glasgow,

the system had taught [the African] to be contemptuous

of himself and to give a high priority to things of European origin. It had set up the ideals of the metropolitan standards as heights to which all should aspire.¹⁶

In this development of a unique Guianese nationalism the colony's African population differed most notably with the East Indian community. Indians remained psychologically and indeed physically aloof from participation in Guianese society. There was a feeling among Indians that Guiana was only a temporary abode until such time as they could return to India.¹⁷ Indeed in 1947, the year of India's independence from Great Britain, one saw a new emergence of nationalist pride among East Indians in British Guiana. In 1955 the British government chartered a boat to return over 300 East Indians to their homeland; a total of 243 took advantage of the opportunity.¹⁸

With over 320,000 people, the East Indian community comprised approximately 50 percent of the population of British Guiana.¹⁹ That they chose to guard their Indian national identity owes a great deal to why a unique local nationalism did not develop among all the peoples of British Guiana. Most Indians lived in country districts and made their living as rice farmers. Those in Georgetown were people of professional ranks; doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, as well as merchants and shopkeepers.²⁰ Despite the notion that the closer one's skin colour was to white the higher one's status in Guianese society, East Indians were never well regarded by the colony's black population, their lighter 'brown' skin notwithstanding. They were regarded as outcasts and as inferior to the Africans mainly because of the fact that their customs held too closely to those of their old country. Their religions, Hinduism and Islam, were markedly different from the

Anglicanism espoused by the colony's African population, and Indians rejected all efforts at proselytization. They were culturally inferior in the minds of the Afro-Guianese and were labeled "coolies," a derogatory term for Indian servants.²¹ That the East Indians were still labeled "immigrants" decades after they arrived in the colony illustrates that they were never really accepted by the African community.²²

Strife between the two races dates back to the days immediately after emancipation when the abolition of slavery brought significant changes to the economic structure of the colony. After 1838, no longer were plantation owners permitted to have slaves, a cheap source of labour and the key to their high profits. The Afro-Guianese, not content to continue working for subsistence pay, demanded higher wages or left the plantations to find work in Georgetown. This left the English plantation owners with a shortage of cheap labour, a condition which ate into their profits and threatened to run them out of business. A solution to this situation appeared to lie in the importation of indentured servants from India and elsewhere. Thus, in the 1840s and after, Chinese, Portuguese and Indians were brought to Guiana, to work for 5 years for free. Their masters only needed to pay their passage, food and shelter. Indians were imported at a far greater rate than either the Chinese or Portuguese, however. According to Walter Rodney, it was at this point that the base conflict and tension between Africans and Indians arose, since the latter were effectively inserted into Guianese society as a means to break the bargaining power of African labour.²³ Indian presence in the colony meant that the British could carry on the exploitation of the country's natural resources without having to worry about paying the African ex-slaves decent wages. Had the Indians not arrived, it is conceivable that the

Africans' standard of living would have improved, at least marginally, since the British master, if he wanted to continue running a plantation, would have been forced to pay higher labour wages, or else leave the colony and turn the property over to the Africans.²⁴

However, by the 1930s, both East Indians and Africans found their lives disrupted by economic changes resulting from the Great Depression and preparations for World War Two.²⁵ In 1938, labour unrest in the Caribbean led the British government to set up the Moyne Commission to look into the social conditions faced by peoples in British Caribbean territories. Its chairman, Lord Moyne, concluded that the average worker suffered unduly under the political system that existed at the time. This resulted in changes to the electoral system of British Guiana, the most notable of which was the decrease in the property requirement for the franchise. It fixed the income qualification to as low as \$10 BWI a month, a wage even the poorest of sugar workers could meet. Another change brought about by the Moyne Commission saw modifications in the composition of the Guianese Legislature. Hitherto there existed only a certain number of elected representatives in the British Guiana Legislative Council, all of whom had to meet strict property and income qualifications. The Moyne Commission changed this system and gave the elected members of the Council a majority in the Legislature while reducing property qualifications for them. It was under this new system that Cheddi Jagan was elected to the British Guiana legislature in 1943.²⁶

Cheddi Jagan, the personable leader of the Peoples' Progressive Party, played a central role in the political life of Guiana since the 1940s. He was the born the son of East Indian plantation workers in the small town of Port Mourant. As a boy, Jagan grew up in

the midst of great economic inequalities. From his early days, the plantation on which his father and mother worked seemed to the young Jagan to be of two worlds, "the world of the exploiters and the world of the exploited, the world of the whites and the non-whites."²⁷ While the British managers lived on the plantation in luxurious mansions, he and fellow East-Indians were relegated to the "bound-coolie-yard," his African counterparts to the "niggeryard." Because mule stables were electrically lit on the plantation and lodges only had kerosene lamps, the saying had it that the mules were treated better than the workers. Indeed since electricity, like many things in the colony, was a status symbol, its presence in the mule barn was particularly demeaning and made a lasting impression on Jagan in his formative years. Mrs. Gibbons, the plantation manager's wife, further exacerbated Jagan's resentment of British rule with her Christmas ritual of throwing pennies from her window in order to watch "coolie" children scramble for them..²⁸

Jagan's father, determined that his eldest son would not have to work on a plantation for a living, saw to it that his son would have the best in education. To this end, he put him through elementary school at Queen's College for Boys, Georgetown's British-owned and operated school that was traditionally the preserve of the country's middle-class. Jagan distinguished himself there, and upon the recommendation of a family friend, went to the United States to study at Howard University, a predominantly Black college in Washington DC. He was a good student and eventually earned a scholarship in his second year of studies. During the summers he worked a series of odd-jobs in order to make ends meet and to relieve his father of a great deal of the financial burden of his

education. Upon graduation from Howard, Jagan went on to study at Northwestern University, again on scholarship, and earned a dentistry degree from the school in 1942.²⁹

While in the United States, Jagan was further exposed to a world of racial inequality, albeit of a different sort. In British Guiana divisions based on race were overt, no one ever claiming that, say, East Indians were the equals of their English masters. But the United States was supposed to be the land of “liberty and equality.” Too much of the reality that Jagan experienced was in “shameful contrast” to this ideal.

His experiences with Americans were not all bad, however. While at school in Chicago, Jagan fell in love with Janet Rosenberg, a young nursing student. They eventually married and Janet came to play an integral role in the political life of the colony of British Guiana as a minister in her husband’s cabinet. In 1943, when the US government sent Jagan a draft card, the young dentist, who had before this been refused the right to vote and practice dentistry in the United States, was incensed. He decided to leave for home in that year, and Janet joined him soon afterwards.³⁰

As was the case with his experiences in his home town of Port Mourant, Jagan’s experiences in Washington and Chicago were formative ones for him. In addition to experiencing racial inequalities first hand, Jagan was to begin an informal academic training that culminated in his adoption and adherence to the principles of Marxism whose tenets of equality among peoples appealed to him. He learned his American history from reading such works as Charles Beard’s *An Economic History of the Constitution*, a now largely discredited tract which describes the founders of the American nation as self-interested businessmen. Matthew Josephson’s work *The Robber Barons* was

instrumental in “explaining” to him how “the powerful in America made their fortunes.”³¹ This selective reading of American history, coupled with his experiences as a poor man of colour in a rich country, tainted Jagan’s impression of the United States. And, though he was a fan of Franklin Roosevelt, whom he believed was a champion of the underdog, Jagan returned to his homeland with an overall negative impression of America as a land of greed and inequality.³² This might explain why he was loathe to pay obeisance to the idea of capitalism when he went searching for aid for British Guiana after the PPP’s election of 1957.

Upon his return to Guiana he set up a dentistry practice but was soon to give it up to form, with Janet, the Political Action Committee, a proto-political party designed mainly as a forum for political discussion. The group met weekly at a library in Georgetown and put out a newsletter, *Thunder*, which railed against the exploitative nature of foreign businesses in British Guiana and for independence from the “tyranny” of foreign oppressors.³³

In his narrative, Jagan attempts to portray himself as an underdog who rose from a life of toil and poverty to lead his people to independence. However, the work is wrought with inconsistencies. While claiming to be one of the poor, Jagan seems to have led, in his early years, something of a bourgeois existence. For example, despite his father’s poverty he was able to afford to send his son to a private elementary school. In exchange for having his school fees paid, Jagan washed his father’s automobile.³⁴ In developed countries, and perhaps even more so in British Guiana, an automobile was the consummate symbol of a middle class lifestyle. That Jagan’s father owned one goes far to

impugn Jagan's contention that he grew up poor. Later, when Jagan finished at Queen's College, his father went to the local legislator to "pull strings" to try to get his son a job in the civil service. How a poor man would have had influence with legislators Jagan never explains. Clearly, Jagan's 1966 *The West on Trial*, was a piece of political propaganda written in large part to censure the bourgeois influences which had contributed to the downfall of his government one year earlier, but in its early chapters he comes off sounding very much like the people whom he claims he grew up to loathe.

A second major figure in the political history of Guiana down to 1961 was L.F.S. (Forbes) Burnham, a Guianese of African descent. Burnham is a key figure in Guianese politics before and after independence for in Burnham the Americans and British saw an alternative to Jagan, whose Marxist proclivities they found troubling. The Western powers cultivated Burnham and eventually set him up as leader of an independent Guyana. He ruled corruptly until his death in 1982.

Burnham's rise in politics mimicked, to a great extent, that of Cheddi Jagan. However, like many Guianese blacks at the time Burnham was born in Georgetown. He attended Queen's College and like Jagan distinguished himself there. He won the prestigious Guiana scholarship in 1942 and went to England to study where he eventually earned a first class Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of London. While at London he began to flirt with leftist ideology. Like Jagan, he was attracted to its notions of equality because of his experiences with racism. Upon his return to Guiana in 1947, he opened a law practice and quickly gained a reputation as a "champion of the underdog."³⁵ In that same year he became President of the British Guiana Labour Party, a multiracial

organization.³⁶

Because of the colony's pluarlistic nature, the development of a unique type of Guianese nationalism was never really achieved until the mid-twentieth century. At this time when other nations in the British Empire began to achieve independence, a certain ersatz nationalism developed around the issue of independence. In his memoirs, Jagan traced the development of nationalism in Guiana to the Second World War where a certain commonality of purpose was found amongst the Guianese.³⁷ This unity of purpose continued through the post-war years, this time with the issue of independence as its glue, and was manifested in the union of Forbes Burnham's British Guiana Labour Party and Cheddi Jagan's Political Action Committee. In 1950, these two parties amalgamated to form the Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP) with Jagan as its leader and Burnham as its chairman. The distinction in leadership titles was subtle, but Burnham, realizing the necessity of a multi-racial, unified, front in the battle for independence acquiesced to play a lesser role. Thus, the party's unity was always tenuous, Burnham's ego simmering under a facade of solidarity.

With independence as its *raison d'être* and espousing socialist ideology, the PPP quickly took to attacking the exploitative economy maintained by foreigners in British Guiana. From the eighteenth century onwards, the British developed Guiana as an exploitation economy, meaning that they extracted its raw materials and then exported them to other countries for processing and refinement. This procedure made the colony dependent on the world economy for several important goods, most notably foodstuffs. The nature of the extractive economy also meant that because Guianese raw materials

were processed outside of the country, for example sugar in Britain or bauxite in the United States, British Guiana lost a considerable amount of revenue that might have accrued from the value-added benefits of the finished product. Finally, the extractive nature of the economy resulted in the lack of development of the colony's own processing and manufacturing industries. British Guiana, then, fit the classic pattern of dependency that characterized so many colonies throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Clive Yolande Thomas, a British-trained economist of Guianese origins, identified in 1965 two main characteristics of a dependent economy and showed how British Guiana met both of them.³⁸ The first of Thomas's preconditions for dependency status revolved around the degree to which a colonial economy depended on the rest of the world to maintain and increase its internal levels of employment, output, demand and prices.³⁹ It is clear that British Guiana during the years in question responded to fluctuations in the world market. For example, in 1959 the State Department blamed the country's poor economic performance on the fact that sugar and bauxite, British Guiana's two major money earners, had bad years on the international market. Export sales of sugar fell by \$8 million (BWI) from 1958 and bauxite fell short of its mark from the previous year's sales. This led the American Consul General in Georgetown to claim that the source of the trouble in British Guiana's economy in 1959 was "not hard to find;" one need only look to the international market to explain fluctuations in the country's internal economy.⁴⁰

Thomas's second precondition for dependency concerned the way in which monetary and financial institutions, as well as individuals and governments, invested a high degree of their assets outside of the economy.⁴¹ Such was indeed the trend throughout

British Guiana's history. Companies, banks and individuals expatriated profits from the colony and reinvested little in the economy's infrastructure. Banks like the Royal Bank of Canada and Barclay's of London sent their local holdings abroad as did Guiana's middle classes.⁴² The case of the bauxite industry is most obvious in this instance. It has been shown that the industry, with a net capital of \$150 million (US), spent only \$15,000 (US) per annum in combined sales and purchases to other sectors of the economy.⁴³

British Guiana exported primary products, chiefly sugar, bauxite, rice, timber and diamonds while it was forced to import machinery, manufactured articles and processed foodstuffs. This pattern of raw material exportation kept the colony from developing its own manufacturing industries which would have allowed British Guiana to diversify somewhat and therefore decrease its dependency on the world demand for its raw materials.⁴⁴

But it was in the interest of the companies with holdings in British Guiana to maintain this exploitative status quo. Maintenance of an oligarchic control over the colony's resources meant that companies could export profits to whatever degree they saw fit from British Guiana, particularly those from the colony's two largest raw materials for export, sugar and bauxite.⁴⁵ By value, sugar accounted for one-third of the colony's Gross Domestic Product and bauxite for another one-fifth. Booker Brothers McConnell and Company, Ltd. was responsible for most of the colony's sugar production while bauxite operations were handled by the Demerara Bauxite Company (DEMBA), a subsidiary of Aluminum Canada, and Reynold's Aluminum, a subsidiary of the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). These three companies largely ran British Guiana's

economy. Bookers and ALCAN accounted for more than three-fifths of all exports and half of all the country's GDP.⁴⁶

Booker Brothers, McConnell and Company was BG's largest sugar producer. It was also the country's largest employer and dabbled in everything from taxis, medical supplies, rum, lumber and petroleum to advertising, real estate, insurance, cattle ranching and shipping. It was not unheard of for the Guianese to refer to their country as "Booker's" Guiana rather than "British" Guiana.⁴⁷

In order to try and gain control of their economy, the members of the Peoples' Progressive Party held meetings, distributed propaganda and published its criticisms in *Thunder*, now a full-fledged newspaper and official organ of their party. Jagan traveled extensively in the 1950s and met with other Commonwealth leaders to discuss the prospects of independence for his country. He went to the Communist World Youth festival in Berlin in 1950 and on his way back met with the Secretary of State for the Colonies Alan Lennox-Boyd in London. He also stopped in New York City to forward a petition to the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner arguing that British Guiana deserved its independence.⁴⁸

The PPP's lobbying quickly reaped rewards. In 1950, the British Government set up the Waddington Commission response to the drive for independence. The Constitution of 1953, the first Constitution in Guianese history to give a measure of self-autonomy to the people, was a direct result of the Commission's recommendations. Under the Constitution, the Guianese were to have a large measure of responsibility for their own internal affairs with the British Governor retaining responsibility for the

country's defense and foreign policy. The Constitution also created a House of Assembly with twenty-four elected members and three *ex-officio* members appointed by the Governor, namely a Chief Secretary, a Financial Secretary and an Attorney General. An Upper House was also initiated with nine members, only three of whom were elected. The Constitution also abolished all property qualifications for both the electorate and the elected. The only qualification that remained was literacy in English.⁴⁹

It was under this Constitution that the PPP was swept into power in April 1953, capturing 18 of 24 seats with 51 percent of the popular vote. This landslide was due in large part to the PPP coherent programme which was based on anti-imperialist principles as well as on an agenda which emphasized socialist economic development. Opposition to the PPP consisted of the Peoples' National Party and the National Democratic Party, both of which drew their support largely from the colony's African population.⁵⁰

But Jagan's government of 1953 was short-lived and lasted only 133 days. Essentially two pieces of legislation, both of which threatened to upset the status quo in the colony, were responsible for this. The first of these was a bill that proposed the secularization of the public school system in Guiana. Though it had a mix of religions, the largest being Hinduism, schooling in the country had always been run by the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. By secularizing the school system, British leaders alleged that Jagan was trying to undermine the Anglo-Christian hegemony that existed in the colony at the time. It gave rise to rumours, such as the unsubstantiated one that the PPP was intent on destroying the Georgetown palace of the Archbishop of the West Indies, which fueled the fires of British official resentment against the presence of a socialist government in the

country.⁵¹

A second, more upsetting piece of legislation, was Jagan's Labour Relations Bill which gave workers the right to determine bargaining units and the conduct of bargaining unit elections. These units were to be administered by the Ministry of Labour which gave rise to rumours that the PPP was intent on "controlling and destroying" the unions.⁵² The British government used this as an excuse to suspend the Constitution, despite the fact that the Governor had veto power over any piece of legislation and could easily have prevented the Bill from becoming law. As further evidence that he was "Soviet-oriented," the British government cited Jagan's visit to Berlin to attend the World Youth Festival in 1950. It also claimed that there was a "well developed cell system organized by the PPP of some 4000 or 5000 members who [were] ready to do violence."⁵³ Governor Alfred Savage declared that suspending the Constitution would "prevent Communist subversion of the government and a dangerous crisis both in public order and in economic affairs."⁵⁴ Jagan maintained that the existence of cells was merely a rumour and that the Colonial Office knew of his trip to Berlin in 1950 and even took him on a tour of Scotland when he stopped off in the United Kingdom on his way home from the Festival.⁵⁵

Naturally, the PPP opposed the suspension and refused to go along with its provision that the party cease all political activity. Jagan was soon arrested for violating the emergency orders and was imprisoned. He served five months in jail and a few days prior to his arrest, his wife Janet was arrested and imprisoned on charges that Jagan felt were fabricated to further punish him.⁵⁶

At the time of the suspension, the United States found itself in the throes of

McCarthyism and Britain's action was therefore roundly welcomed as a positive measure in the fight against Communism. The State Department expressed its gratification that the "British Government [took] firm action to meet the situation" and declared that a possible coup by the "international Communist conspiracy" had been averted.⁵⁷ Despite Jagan's unsubstantiated assertion that the United States asked the British to suspend the BG constitution, there is no evidence that the government of Sir Winston Churchill was under any US pressure to act. Indeed, Churchill disliked Secretary of State John Foster Dulles whom he viewed as the "worst embodiment of narrow-minded, dogmatic, extreme American anti-communism."⁵⁸

For Americans, proof of Jagan's alleged desire to turn the colony over to the Soviet Union came largely in the form of rumour and innuendo as demonstrated by a sampling of the newspaper reports of the day. Americans did not seem to grasp the details of the independence movement, their opinions clouded by the fog of anti-Communist hysteria that was sweeping the nation at the time. One paper, the *Washington Sun Star*, ran the headline "Pert American Blond and Spouse Build Red Role," a title indicative of the short shrift the article was to pay to detail: Janet was a brunette.⁵⁹ Other articles attacked the PPP on account of statements given by Janet Jagan to the effect that she admired the governments of China, India and the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ American newspapers played up the image of the PPP as a Communist party and largely ignored its quest for independence; nor was there ever any distinction made in the newspapers between "Communism" and Jagan's brand of socialism. Rumours were built to give maximum effect. In Congress, for example, Samuel W. Yorty, (R, Ca), called Jagan a "tough

ruthless Communist agent” and noted that he was responsible for a “Red Coup” in British Guiana.⁶¹ The fact that the diminutive Jagan was elected in a free democratic election was lost on Yorty.

After Jagan was imprisoned, the British government kept British Guiana’s self-autonomy in abeyance and “marked time” until a solution to the PPP could be found. Soon after the suspension, the British government appointed yet another commission to look into the situation in the colony. It came to the conclusion that “so long as the PPP retain[ed] its present leadership and policies, there [was] no way in which any real measure of responsible government c[ould] be restored without the certainty that the country w[ould] again be subjected to constitutional crisis.”⁶² For Forbes Burnham, such a declaration provided the impetus he required to leave the PPP. He saw in the British declaration, a chance to rise to the position of the leader of the nationalist movement and father of independence. Noted one of Burnham’s contemporaries, “he [was] an ambitious political leader motivated by a raging desire to be successful as a “founder of the nation.”⁶³ It was not surprising, then, that in 1955 Burnham left the PPP to form his own party, the Peoples’ National Congress (PNC).

The split in the ranks of the PPP occurred largely, but not exclusively, along racial lines. Burnham’s Peoples’ National Congress was comprised mainly of Guianese of African descent while Jagan’s PPP remained largely East Indian. Jagan blamed the split on two factors: British policy and racists within Guiana. By hinting to Burnham that he would be able to lead his country to independence if only he left the PPP, Jagan claimed that the British were pursuing a conscious policy of “divide and rule” in British Guiana.

He believed that they were purposefully weakening the PPP's base by having the Burnhamite faction leave.

Second, Jagan blamed the origin of the split on racist lobbying by the British Guiana East Indian Association (BGEIA) and the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP), both of which tried to advance the status of the colony's East Indians and Africans, respectively, to the detriment of all the others. The BGEIA had a vision that Guiana might one day become a "new India" and was founded to "unite the members of the East Indian race in all parts of the colony for representative purposes."⁶⁴ It soon came to advocate the practice of "apajahat" politics, a Hindi term meaning "vote for your own." This slogan was eventually to become a catch phrase of the PPP, though never officially. The LCP had a similar mandate and was founded to "promote the social, economic, educational and political interests of the people of African descent."⁶⁵ Jagan blamed LCP leader RBO Hart for spreading racial hatred in his newspaper *Clarion*. He believed that "racists" like Hart were responsible for creating an "us and them" mentality in the minds of the people of Guiana.⁶⁶ This, however, is something of an exaggeration given the long history of racial segregation that existed in the colony from the time of emancipation.

Burnham, when questioned about his decision to leave the PPP, painted a very different picture of the split than did Jagan. Burnham contended that Jagan's brand of socialism went too far to the left for his tastes. He felt that Jagan was becoming too much of a Communist "internationalist" and by 1955 had begun pursuing independence with less relish than before.⁶⁷ Indeed that the split occurred along ideological and not necessarily racial lines is evidenced by the fact that when Burnham left the PPP he took with him two

prominent Indians, Jai Narine Singh and J.P. Latchmansingh, while two important African leaders, Sydney King and Ashton Case, stayed with Jagan.⁶⁸ The Wynn Commission, examining the split several years later, concluded that political opportunism, not racial politics, was the key impetus behind's Burnham's decision to leave the PPP.⁶⁹

In 1956, the British proposed another constitution, this time with the Governor firmly in charge. The new constitution made provisions for a unicameral legislature, half of which was to be elected, the other half appointed. (In 1953 all the seats were freely contested.) All of the parties in British Guiana were opposed to this change, but it was adopted and elections were held under it in 1957. The PPP stressed much the same programme as in 1953, though this time it downplayed Communism and emphasized independence. Burnham's PNC took essentially the same line, but added an outcry against Jagan's brand of 'internationalist' Communism. When the votes were tallied, "apanjahat" politics won out and the PPP, though only capturing 47.5% of the popular vote, took nine of the available thirteen seats in the legislature, most of its members coming from rural, and therefore predominately East Indian, ridings. The PNC captured three seats.⁷⁰

Americans continued to watch these developments with keen attention. Though McCarthyism was by now largely discredited, no one wanted a "Communist" in power in the Caribbean. More importantly, at this time, British Guiana came to be viewed as important to the United States because of its bauxite reserves. Bauxite, an important strategic material in the Cold War era, was a profitable commodity for British Guiana, or rather for the Canadian and American companies that mined most of it. During the 1950s and 1960s, British Guiana was the world's third largest producer of bauxite following

Jamaica and Surinam. In the United States, the state of Arkansas was the largest producer of the commodity. However, British Guiana enjoyed a greater comparative advantage in the production of bauxite than did these other countries. For example, whereas in 1960 it cost Arkansas \$12.09 (US) to produce one ton of bauxite, the same amount could be procured for \$6.85 (US) in British Guiana. This was due, in the main, to the fact that the bauxite companies in BG did not have to pay royalties to the government on ore mined from land they owned, and had to pay almost negligible amounts on bauxite mined from crown lands.⁷¹

In addition to being less expensive to mine, BG bauxite was also of high grade. This high grade ore was necessary to mix with lower grade ones, such as those found in Arkansas, to make a stronger metal.⁷²

Comparative advantage and low duties on imports, in addition to the freedom to repatriate profits, made the mining and export of bauxite in British Guiana extremely profitable for ALCAN and ALCOA. Indeed, one contemporary observer, Philip Reno, has suggested that bauxite production in British Guiana had one of the most profitable investment structures in the world. Citing a 1961 US Department of Commerce *Survey of Current Business*, Reno showed that because of the possibility of writing-off capital depreciation, profits for bauxite mining companies in the Caribbean could range anywhere from 26 to 34 percent per year on a capital investment of about \$200 million (US).⁷³ It is little wonder, then, that when queried about why the World Bank granted British Guiana a loan in 1961, Senator William Fulbright remarked,

The reason we had a special interest there was that the

largest investments in British Guiana are American investments. Guiana is the source of bauxite for the largest company in the country...the reason we put aid in there is...because of substantial American investments.⁷⁴

Fulbright was exaggerating when he mentioned that Reynold's was the largest holder in the country. The fact is that America's investments in the country, though significant in their own right, paled by comparison with those of Canada and Britain. Around 1960 British foreign investment in Guiana totaled between \$400 and \$500 million (US) and was mainly in sugar production. Bauxite production, of which Canada and the US were the two largest participants, saw a Canadian investment of about \$80 million (US) and an American one of \$30 million (US).⁷⁵

Though this latter figure seems insignificant beside that of Great Britain, it was important to the United States for what it represented in terms of the potential for further investment and trade with British Guiana. Throughout the 1950s investments in the country grew steadily and trade, in particular, increased dramatically. Between 1959 and 1961 American imports in British Guiana increased from 13.7 percent to 20.1 percent and exports to the United States jumped from 7.7 percent to 21.8 percent. Major purchases from the United States in 1960 included foodstuffs (\$5,335,960 US), manufactured articles (\$2,683,158 US), and machinery and transport equipment (\$5,183,010 US). The market for small scale product trading had noteworthy potential in the eyes of the American Consul General in Georgetown, Everett K. Melby, even though the tariff rate was 15-20% higher on American goods than on those produced in Commonwealth countries. This was due to the fact that American products enjoyed a very high prestige in

the colony. Melby wrote in 1960: “many Guianese would as soon drive an American car, buy an American tractor, and write with an American ball-point pen as the comparable British product.”⁷⁶

In terms of investment potential, even private assessors found the prospects for investment in British Guiana promising. In 1960, Edward Tenenbaum, vice-president of Continental Allied Corporation took a three week tour of the colony in an effort to assess its potential for industrial development. He concluded that the outlook for British Guiana was good and that it was possible to make rapid progress in the development of private industry with the private resource capital that already existed in the country at the time. He maintained that British Guiana had “exciting prospects” and that he had “never seen a country as ready for rapid industrial progress.”⁷⁷ In his view, “British Guiana was sitting on its assets...the trouble was not a lack of local capital, a lack of a large enough domestic market, or even a lack of sufficient investor confidence. “ The problem, as he saw it, was “an appalling lack of technical advice and skills.”⁷⁸

By 1960, private investors began to look, more closely than ever before, to British Guiana as a source of potential investment. Union Carbide completed work on a \$20 million (US) bauxite processing plant in 1960. In 1961 the New York firm of Webb and Knapp Zeckendorff applied for a license to explore for oil in British Guiana.⁷⁹ Pacific Tin Consolidated approached the State Department for advice on investing in British Guiana in November of that year.⁸⁰ By 1965, even the United Fruit Company, which had a ubiquitous presence in Latin America, was making its desire to develop banana plantations in British Guiana known to the US government.⁸¹ Americans were thus

looking to British Guiana as a serious country in which to invest by the 1960s.

But despite the fact that the British remained in control over internal security and foreign affairs and held veto power over any legislation passed by the BG Legislature, Americans still saw a threat in the form of Cheddi Jagan's government and "on balance at least as many industries were frightened away from British Guiana as attracted to it."⁸² American leaders, therefore, did not waste any time in once again indulging in "red"bashing" as soon as the PPP won the elections of 1957. That a "Communist" could once again come to power in British Guiana incensed American opinion. South Carolina Congressman Johnson, for instance, claimed the Guianese situation

points to the amazingly ridiculous foreign policy our Government is sponsoring, one in which we are spending billions, in Asia, Africa and Europe, to help overcome communism, but are at the same time, not doing anything to curb communistic infiltrations at our own back door.⁸³

This statement foreshadowed the pressure to get rid of Jagan that was to come to bear on the Kennedy government in the years after 1960.

Jagan's PPP was founded with independence as its goal. That this was to be achieved within the framework of a socialist form of government is understandable given the social and economic structure under which he and his colleagues were raised, a structure based on privilege, race and foreign exploitation. "Communism," per se, was not at issue during the elections of 1953 and 1957. The PPP went to the polls with the notion, albeit a "Communist" one, that "'imperialism and colonialism [were] a decadent part of society and must come to a close."⁸⁴ But the ideological subtleties of Jagan's

government were lost on American observers for whom the details of Guiana's independence struggle were of little concern. Americans, never having an accurate grasp of Guianese politics, saw a problem in British Guiana that did not really exist.

NOTES

¹Cheddi Jagan, *The West on Trial: My Fight for Guyana's Freedom*. (London: Michael Joseph, 1966), p. 26.

²J.S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy*. (Cambridge, 1939), p. 447.

³J.S. Furnivall first espoused the theory of cultural pluralism in his 1939 book *Netherlands India*. Leo Despres and M.G. Smith later modified the theory to make it applicable to the study of the Caribbean region. Both of these latter scholars, however, stuck to the basics of Furnivall's definition in their interpretations of the theory. See J.S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy*. (Cambridge, 1939); M.G. Smith, *The Plural Society in the West Indies*. (Los Angeles: University of California, 1965); Leo Despres, *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana*. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 459.

⁵Michael Swan, writing in 1957 claims the population was 2400 in 1957 and Mohammad A. Rauf, citing a 1964 government census claims there were 4000 British people in the colony at that time. The difference between these two figures is not significant for the purposes of this paper as, in either case, the English still formed less than one percent of the overall population. See Michael Swan, *British Guiana: The Land of Six Peoples...*p. 57; and, Mohammad A. Rauf, *Indian Village in Guyana: A Study of Cultural Change and Ethnic Identity*. (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 35.

⁶Michael Swan, *British Guiana...*p. 57.

⁷Mohammad A. Rauf, *Indian Village...*p.35. (Figures cited hereafter are from a 1964 government census.)

⁸Michael Swan, *British Guiana...*p. 56.

⁹Mohammad A. Rauf, *Indian Village...*p. 35.

¹⁰Michael Swan, *British Guiana...*pp. 55-6.

¹¹Mohammad A. Rauf, *Indian Village...*p. 35.

¹²Michael Swan, *British Guiana...*p. 57.

¹³Mohammad A. Rauf, *Indian Village...*p. 35.

¹⁴Michael Swan, *British Guiana...*p. 58.

¹⁵Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial...*p. 336.

¹⁶Roy Arthur Glasgow, *Guyana: Race and Politics...*p. 62.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 95.

- ¹⁸ Michael Swan, *British Guiana...* p. 52.
- ¹⁹ Mohammad A. Rauf, *Indian Village...* p. 35.
- ²⁰ Michael Swan, *British Guiana...* p. 50.
- ²¹ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial...* pp. 336-7.
- ²² Thakur Rishee, "Politics and Hegemony..." p. 268.
- ²³ Rodney is cited in Thakur Rishee, *ibid.*, p. 145.
- ²⁴ S.J. Randall and G.S. Mount, *An International History of the Caribbean Basin*. Manuscript Copy, p. 5.
- ²⁵ Labour has an important history in Guianese politics, but its importance really only becomes germane to this paper after 1961. Hence labour politics will be discussed more fully in the next chapters.
- ²⁶ Vere T. Daly, *A Short History...* p. 298.
- ²⁷ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial...* pp. 18.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, Narrative taken piecemeal from chapter III.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- ³⁵ Airgram. American Consul General (Carlson) to State. 20 August 1965. Subject Numeric 1964-66, Pol 15 BrGu, Box 1948; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ³⁶ Vere T. Daly, *A Short History of the Guyanese People*. (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 298.
- ³⁷ Cheddi Jagan, *The West on Trial...* p. 89.
- ³⁸ Though Thomas' study remains the sole work dealing with dependency theory as it pertains to British Guiana, other works which deal with economic dependency in the Caribbean, in general, include Harold Blademore and Clifford T. Smith, *Latin America: Geographical Perspectives*. (London: Methuen, 1983); Ronald H. Chilcote and Joel C. Edelstein, *Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974); Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. (Berkeley: University of California, 1979); Vicky Randall and Robin Theobal, *Political Change and Underdevelopment: A Critical Introduction to Third World Politics*. (London: Macmillan, 1988).
- ³⁹ Clive Yolande Thomas, *Monetary and Financial Arrangements in a Dependent Monetary Economy: A Study of British Guiana, 1945-1962*. (Kingston: University of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1965.), p. 3.
- ⁴⁰ Foreign Service Despatch. American Consulate General, Georgetown, to Department of State. Confidential. 28 April 1960. Decimal File 1960-1963, 841d.00/4-2660, Box 2478; Central Files of the Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.
- ⁴¹ Thomas, *Monetary...* p. 3.

⁴² Colin VF Henfrey, "Foreign Influence in Guyana," in Emanuel de Kadt, *Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean*. (London: Oxford, 1972), p. 66.

⁴³ Thakur Rishee, "Politics and Hegemony in Guianese Nationalism, 1945-1965." Ph.D. Thesis, York University, Toronto. 1990, p. 125.

⁴⁴ Foreign Service Despatch. American Consul General (Georgetown) to State. Confidential. 28 April 1960. 841d.00/4-2660, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴⁵ "Rice was also an important agricultural commodity though it was produced largely for domestic consumption and for trade with other West Indian colonies. Because this thesis focuses on British Guiana's relations with the United States and to a lesser degree Britain and Canada, a discussion of the important of rice to the Guianese economy is not germane.

Sugar, likewise, was an important agricultural commodity. By the twentieth century, however, its profitability diminished considerably and Great Britain and Canada bought nearly two-thirds of British Guiana's sugar at substantially higher prices than those of the world market because of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. Moreover, Its trade was not at issue for the United States during the period in question.

⁴⁶ Philip Reno, *The Ordeal of British Guiana*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), pp. 73-79.

⁴⁷ Leo Despres, *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana*. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), p 5, and Chiatram Singh, *Guyana: Politics in a Plantation Society*. (New York: Praeger, 1988), p.6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-122.

⁴⁹ Vere T. Daly, *A Short History...*p. 299.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-01; Jagan, *West...*Chapter VI; Reno, *Ordeal...*p. 24.

⁵¹ Colin V.F. Henfrey, "Foreign Influence..." pp. 58-59.

⁵² Philip Reno, *Ordeal...*p. 18.

⁵³ Address by Senator Dodd. 31 August 1961 in *Congressional Record*, 1961. 87th Congress, p. 17660

⁵⁴ Proclamation of the Suspension of the Constitution in British Guiana. In *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵⁵ Cheddi Jagan, *Forbidden Freedom*. (New York: International Publishers, 1954), pp. 56-59.

⁵⁶ Cheddi Jagan, *West...*p. 195.

⁵⁷ *Evening Star*, 10 October 1953.

⁵⁸ Peter Bayle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence*. (Raleigh NC: University of North Carolina), p. 11.

⁵⁹ *Sun Star*, 5 July, 1953.

⁶⁰ See for example, *Sunday Star* (Washington), 20 December 1953.

⁶¹ Remarks by Congressman Samuel W. Yorty (CA), 13 May 1953. *Congressional Record*, 83d Congress, First Session 1953, p. A2576.

⁶² Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial...*p. 198.

⁶³ Airgram. American Consul General (Carlson) to State. Secret. 20 August 1965. Pol 15, BrGu, Box 1948; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁶⁴ Leo Despres, *Cultural Pluralism...*p. 166.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁶⁶ Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 200.

⁶⁷ See, for example, the introduction in his *A Destiny to Mould*. (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1970).

⁶⁸ Thakur Rishee, "Politics and Hegemony..." pp. 82-86.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁷⁰ Philip Reno, *Ordeal*...p. 25.

⁷¹ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 99.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Reno cited in Jagan, *West on Trial*...p. 103.

⁷⁴ Fulbright was queried by Senator Gruening (Alaska). 14 November 1963.

Congressional Record 88th Congress 1963, p. 21865.

⁷⁵ Special National Intelligence Estimate, 11 April 1962. in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume XII: The Americas*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 564-569.

⁷⁶ Foreign Service Despatch. American Consulate General to State. 26 April 1962. Decimal File 1960-1963, 841d.00/4-2662, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁷⁷ *New York Times*. 18 June 1960, p. 30.

⁷⁸ Foreign Service Despatch. American Consul General (Georgetown) to State. Confidential. 28 April 1960. Decimal File 1960-1963, 841d.00/4-2660, Box 2478; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁷⁹ Foreign Service Despatch. American Consul General (Georgetown) to State. Official Use Only, 11 April 1961; 841c.10-841d.10 Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation. Steven Miller, Rep. of Pacific Tin Consolidated Corp. with Gerald Goldstein, Economic Officer, West Indies Affairs. 21 November 1961 Ltd. Official use. Decimal File 1960-1963, 841d.05111/11-2161, Box 2478; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸¹ Telegram. State to American Consul General (Georgetown.) 6 August 1965. Limited Official Use. Subject Numeric 1964-66 AID(US) BR GU Box 538; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸² Foreign Service Despatch. American Consul General (Georgetown) to State. Confidential. 28 April 1960. Decimal File 1960-1963, 841d.00/4-2660, Box 2478; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸³ Address by Congressman Johnson (SC), 20 August 1957. *Congressional Record, 85th Congress, First Session, 1957*, p. 15339.

⁸⁴ *Sunday Star (Washington)*. 20 December 1953. *Star* quoted Janet Jagan.

CHAPTER II: ASSESSING THE JAGAN THREAT (1961)

In the US presidential elections of 1960, John F. Kennedy defeated his Republican competitor by a narrow margin. During the campaign he chastized the ruling Republican administration for its "loss" of Cuba and promised to act tougher in the Caribbean if elected. "[N]o one can call us soft on Communism," he told Chester Bowles after the election.¹ Yet at the same time, Kennedy, ever the pragmatist, desired to placate less hawkish members of his party who wanted to diffuse Cold War tensions.² Where British Guiana was concerned, the result of his desire to "keep everyone happy" was a policy of duality and ambivalence in 1961. In this year, Kennedy attempted to pay heed to various assessments of the threat that Cheddi Jagan posed to the United States, including those of the US public and Congress, the State Department and the British government.

After its victory in the 1957 elections, the PPP preoccupied itself with the job of breaking British Guiana's economic dependency on the West. Jagan realized that he had to achieve a modicum of financial freedom before the colony could attain political independence. Under the Constitution of 1957, the British promised the people of British Guiana full internal self-government, but in 1961 the real political power still remained in the hands of the British governor who controlled the purse strings and told the colony with whom it could trade. As a result, Jagan believed the members of his government were "simple advisors" to the governor and the PPP was "in office but not in power."³

Determined to overcome this helplessness, Jagan devised a five year development plan with the help of Cambridge economist Kenneth Berrill and searched the world for

funds to implement it. He eventually secured a promise of 8 million pounds sterling from the Swiss Bank of London for the construction of a road and hospital. However, the loan fell through because the British government refused to guarantee it, claiming it only had the authority to guarantee World Bank loans.⁴ For this reason, Jagan traveled to the United States to seek the help of the World Bank and the Export-Import Bank. Both institutions gave him "polite nods" and vague assurances that they desired to help the British Guianese situation.⁵

Frustrated by his lack of success to secure loans from democratic governments and sources, Jagan appealed to the Communist Bloc. In 1958 he attempted to bring a Hungarian glass factory to British Guiana but neither Barclays nor the Royal Bank of Canada, British Guiana's two largest banks, would provide any guarantees for the company. Moreover, because Jagan's government did not have a central bank of its own to guarantee the company's investment, the premier had to shelve the deal. The same was the case for an East German rice-bran oil factory that wanted to establish itself in the colony.⁶

In 1960 and 1961, Jagan met with Che Guevara in Cuba to discuss a \$32 million (BG) deal for the construction of a hydro-electric plant. In addition, Guevara offered British Guiana a \$5 million (US) loan at 2 percent interest for the establishment of a government timber project. Despite the favourable terms of the deal, the British Colonial Office, at the this time still firmly in charge of the colony's foreign affairs, refused the aid package, citing economic "unfeasibility" as the reason.⁷

By the spring of 1961, however, Jagan secured a \$1.25 million (US) loan from the

World Bank for the development of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The money was a token amount, compared with the millions Cuba had offered the colony. The World Bank likely gave British Guiana the money in an attempt to stave off any further flirtations with the Communist Bloc and Cuba.⁸

Soon after the loan went through, Jagan put his quest for development loans in abeyance and concentrated the full force of his energies on the upcoming August 1961 elections. At this time, Jagan had to contend with a new political party, the United Force (UF) which had just formed earlier in the year. The leader of the United Force was Peter D ' Aguiar, a colorful, elegant and wealthy businessman of Portuguese heritage.

D ' Aguiar had an intriguing background. Though born into wealth, his parents went bankrupt during the depression and as a penniless but industrious university drop-out, D ' Aguiar founded Bank Breweries after the Second World War. He later expanded into rum and soft drinks, establishing D ' Aguiar Brothers, Inc., which became the colony ' s largest producer of both commodities.⁹

As a millionaire, he formed the United Force party in 1961 on a vehement anti-Communist and pro-business platform. As such, the party derived most of its support from the wealthy upper and middle classes of Georgetown. In addition, D ' Aguiar captured the votes of the colony ' s Catholic-educated Amerindian population who feared the "Godlessness" of the socialist PPP and PNC. For them, D ' Aguiar, who was Catholic, seemed a decent alternative.¹⁰ For this reason, the Catholic Church in Georgetown also endorsed D ' Aguiar ' s leadership, albeit covertly.¹¹

In addition, the United Force received the support and financial help of a far right

anti-Communist group called the Defenders of Freedom. The Defenders purportedly had ties with the US Christian Anti-Communist Movement, an extremist group headed by Joost Sluis and Fred Swartz. The Christian Anti-Communist Movement had a very solid foreign agenda which entailed keeping the world free for the spread of Christianity and capitalism. In 1960 it sent some \$45,000 (US) to the Defenders of Freedom for use in the latter 's fight against the PPP.¹² The Defenders used the money to publish shocking pamphlets describing what they believed was the inherent evil of the PPP.¹³

But despite the Defender 's efforts, the UF captured only four of the BG Legislative Assembly 's thirty-five seats in the election of August 1961. By contrast, the PNC took eleven seats and the PPP twenty. Once again, voters divided along racial lines with the PPP capturing most of the East Indian vote and the PNC most of the African vote. D ' Aguiar captured the votes of the business and Amerindian populations.¹⁴ Neither D ' Aguiar nor Burnham felt that a PNC-UF alliance against Jagan would do any good given that the PPP had more seats than their two parties combined. Burnham, in particular, refused to be linked with the UF for ideological reasons. He claimed that "the accident of both parties being opposed to the PPP" was not a sufficient bond to form a coalition with the UF. As a socialist, he did not want to be seen cooperating with a pro-business party and maintained that he was "irrevocably opposed to any PNC-UF merger" to the point where he would tender his resignation as PNC leader should one ever come about.¹⁵

The elections of August 1961, then, left Jagan firmly in control of British Guiana 's Legislative Assembly. Armed with a new mandate from his people, he poised

himself to continue his search for development aid. This time, instead of seeking the help of socialist countries, which he knew from past experience would be rejected out of hand by the British Colonial Office, Jagan took his crusade directly to the government of the United States in the fall of 1961.

Americans watched the developments in British Guiana in August 1961 with disapproving eyes. They did not, on the whole, welcome the PPP's reelection and many people undertook a decidedly anti-Jagan letter writing campaign to try to discourage official American cooperation with the PPP government. Their opposition to Jagan stemmed more from a visceral anti-Communism than from any logical perception of a strategic or economic threat to the hemisphere. "I expect to be in Washington soon," one distraught citizen wrote, and I will have some reporters with me plus a delegation to protest these occurrences [Jagan's reelection]...and I will be heard!"¹⁵ Another citizen claimed that Kennedy's decision to meet with Jagan placed America number one on the "world's sucker list" and was a sure sign that "pink thinkers" had infiltrated the State Department¹⁷

Many of the letters to various Senators and Congressmen show that the most vocal anti-Jaganites in the US public possessed a very naive understanding of Guianese politics. Rarely was there ever any reference to the colony's economic situation or its quest for independence. Instead, most letters dwelt on Jagan's purported Communist sympathies. One lady, in particular, chastized the US government for not doing anything about the "Communist Party of British Guiana." The State Department duly noted her concern but

gently informed her that British Guiana did not in fact have a Communist Party.¹⁸

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that all Americans cared or even knew about the nature of the Jagan government. Indeed, Senator Thomas Dodd commented that in relative terms, public awareness of the situation in British Guiana was close to nil.¹⁹ But for the vocal few who did occupy themselves with the issue, Jagan, by the very nature of his "Communist" ideology was a threat with which the United States had to reckon.

In the letters to Congress forwarded to the State Department, there is no discernible regional or political bias. Citizens from Florida, California, New Jersey, Louisiana, Indiana, Arizona, New York, Missouri and Wisconsin all sent letters to their Congressional representatives disapproving of Jagan. Moreover, Republican and Democratic Congressmen alike forwarded such letters to the State Department. Each one received a generic response advising that the Department of State intended to "watch developments closely."²⁰

If the opinions of America's citizens were overwhelmingly anti-Jagan, those of the news media were somewhat split over how to perceive him and what, if anything, to do about him. The *Washington Post*, for example, maintained that the best policy the United States could pursue would be to do nothing. Eventually, the *Post* believed, the British Guianese would come to their senses and vote Jagan out of office.²¹ The *New York Times* suggested that the best course of action would be to handle British Guiana with "understanding, sophistication and sympathy." In other words, the US Government should try and woo it into the democratic camp.²² By contrast, the *Saturday Evening Post* described the folly of aiding "British Guiana's Red Regime." Giving aid to a Communist

country simply so that it would stay in the Western camp might lead other countries to blackmail the United States in a similar manner, the article claimed.²³

Congress, too, took a somewhat equivocal position on the issue of British Guiana's "Communist" leadership. However, the most staunchly anti-Jagan representatives in both the House and Senate were passionate over the issue. At this early stage in American involvement with British Guiana, Senator Thomas Dodd and Congressmen Lindley Beckworth and John Rousselot vigorously protested any American cooperation with the government of Cheddi Jagan. Senator Dodd, in particular, delivered two blistering diatribes in the Senate during the summer of 1961 in anticipation of Jagan's scheduled October visit to the United States.

In the first of these in July, Dodd claimed that during the election campaign of 1957, Jagan did not show his true colours in public. To the Connecticut senator he was the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing who hid under a democratic facade in order to be elected. In this way, Dodd argued, Jagan acted much like Fidel Castro who came to power on a platform of "reform and democracy" only to later show his Communist stripes.²⁴

But, for Dodd, a Communist leader in British Guiana was potentially more serious than one in Cuba. Cuba, after all was an island, geographically isolated by miles of ocean. A Communist British Guiana, on the other hand, would give Moscow a bridgehead on the South American continent, a veritable window through which Castro and the Soviets could "feed in arms and provide support for Communist guerrilla movements in Venezuela, in Brazil, in Colombia and in all the surrounding countries."²⁵ Dodd

recommended that the United States and British governments enter into negotiations *posthaste* to "safeguard the freedom of the people of Guiana."²⁶

Jagan's landslide victory in the elections of mid-August 1961 provided the impetus for a second round of Jagan bashing in the Senate. This time, Dodd railed against the apparent naivete of those who argued that Jagan was not necessarily a Communist. For him, absolute proof of Jagan's Communist tendencies was not a prerequisite for a proactive American Government policy against Jagan:

If an animal looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and lives habitually with ducks, I believe that every rational person would be prepared to agree that the animal in question is a duck.²⁷

The idea that the World Bank went ahead with a \$1.25 million (US) loan to the Jagan government in spite of this "evidence" incensed Dodd who believed the money gave the PPP an "unnecessary boost" in the elections of 21 August.²⁸ Congressman Lindley Beckworth joined Dodd in expressing his shock at the idea that the "US government" would give money to a leader so "devoted to the Communist conspiracy."²⁹ Assistant Secretary of State Brooks Hays took pains to explain to Beckworth that the United States only contributed 33 percent of the World Bank's budget and that the Bank was not a US government institution.³⁰

Still, Dodd was adamant that giving more money to Jagan would be impossible to justify to the American public. He pointed out that experience had taught America that "being nice" to Communists like Castro and Tito did not always achieve desired results. Kennedy had to be wary of Jagan during their meeting in October, Dodd warned. Cooperation with him did not mean that British Guiana would stay out of the Communist

fold.³¹

The evidence in the *Congressional Record* shows that Congress was overwhelmingly anti-Jagan in the weeks prior to the Guianese leader's October 1961 visit. However, one representative, Senator George Aiken of Vermont, told the State Department he would be willing to make a positive speech on British Guiana. He did not support Dodd's thesis that giving aid to Communists was a futile action, and suggested that denying aid to Jagan would only drive him closer into the arms of the Communist Bloc.³² However, Aiken's speech, which would have been unpopular in Congress at the time, never did come to fruition.

Congress did not take a very proactive role towards British Guiana during the period in question. It acted mainly as a mouthpiece for public sentiment over the issue of cooperation with Jagan. However, 1961 saw the passage of House Resolutions 543 and 549 which amended the Immigration and Nationality Act to make individuals from British Guiana, British Honduras, the British Virgin Islands and the West Indies non-quota immigrants to the United States. These resolutions were not necessarily anti-Jagan pieces of legislation, but they did show that Congress was very interested in the political development of the newly independent, or soon-to-be-independent, countries of the Caribbean region.³³

While the American public and Congress were anti-Jagan in the main, it is interesting to note that big business in British Guiana favoured appeasing Jagan in 1961. This is all the more significant considering big business stood to lose the most from

nationalization if the colony became independent under "Communist" leadership. Cheddi Jagan was quite forthright with business about the role his government would play in the economy. He claimed he was not intent on nationalizing the sugar or bauxite industries, but did maintain that his government would play an active part in spearheading economic development.³⁴

Both officially and in private, Booker Brothers McConnell and Company, British Guiana's largest business interest, maintained that it had little to fear from Jagan's government. In a 1961 annual report, the multi-national company noted that more than half of its profits came from British Guiana, the West Indies and Central Africa. Officially, it contended that though independence might lead to a "temporary fall in profits," sovereignty was "both inevitable and desirable."³⁵ The new governments of the countries in which it had significant investments were not a threat to Bookers, for the multi-national giant had come to terms with the notion that "these countries must fashion their own destinies."³⁶

The private views of Bookers' sugar representative in British Guiana, Sir Jock Campbell, mimicked his company's official ones. Unlike the American public and their representatives, Campbell did not see any "Communist" threat in Jagan's government. He believed that Jagan was "not really a Communist" and that his cabinet only "looked sinister from a distance."³⁷ He was critical of Jagan to some degree, claiming that the leader was more at ease as an agitator than administrator. Despite the fact that Campbell did not think Jagan's government capable of building a "bicycle shed," let alone an entire economic infrastructure, he felt Jagan to be the best of a bad lot of British Guianese

leaders. To him, Forbes Burnham was an opportunist without vision, and Peter D ' Aguiar was "full of nonsense." ³⁸ Thus in the eyes of British Guiana ' s biggest business, the Jagan government was not a force with which the United States needed to reckon. Accommodating the PPP was the best option in its opinion.

This was much the same advice given President Kennedy by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan when they met in April 1961. Macmillan believed Jagan to be a socialist who was "salvageable for democracy." ³⁹ Foreign Secretary Home informed his American counterpart Dean Rusk in August that Jagan had behaved "reasonably well" since his election in 1957. Moreover, he reassured Rusk that the Governor of the colony maintained a strong veto power over all legislation passed by the British Guianese Legislative Assembly, as well as full responsibility for defense and external affairs. ⁴⁰

The British Government believed that its days of running British Guiana were over. It wanted to leave the country "as gracefully and honourably as possible." ⁴¹ As a result, in 1961 it refused to permit the US Government to undertake any operation in British Guiana which might bring down the Jagan government and thereby prolong the British occupation of the colony. ⁴² Instead it recommended that the United States cooperate with Jagan by giving him all the support necessary to keep him out of the Communist fold.

When asked for their opinions of the Jagan threat, the Intelligence communities in the United States, specifically the Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Department of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Joint Staff, found Jagan ' s brand of "Communism" difficult to assess. A Special National

Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) of 21 March 1961, showed that the American intelligence community viewed nationalism and Communism as one and the same in British Guiana.⁴³ Though acknowledging that Jagan himself was not a Communist, the SNIE reported that he bore "the marks of the indoctrination and advice the Communists have given him in the past."⁴⁴

The intelligence communities did not believe that Jagan would establish an avowedly Communist state were the British to grant independence in 1961. The reason for this, they argued, was British Guiana's primitive state of political and social development. It could not do without international help in its early years and might look to Cuba and the Soviet Bloc for help which it would almost certainly receive.⁴⁵ In short, the intelligence assessment of Jagan was ambivalent. He was not a Communist, yet because he might the go the way of Castro, he nonetheless posed a threat to the United States.

The views expressed by the public, Congress, business leaders and the intelligence communities regarding British Guiana, though important in themselves, were only opinions and did not necessarily make foreign policy. In the US political system, this function is reserved for the Department of State and the Executive Office. In the case of American relations with British Guiana, the State Department played a crucial role in helping to form a coherent policy towards the Jagan regime. Despite the advice given it by Bookers and the British Government, the Department was decidedly anti-Jagan in spirit if not in action. Secretary of State Dean Rusk believed Jagan and his wife were "very far to the left indeed" and that their continued leadership in British Guiana would only be a

"setback for the hemisphere."⁴⁶ But Rusk was cognizant that the British believed Americans, by and large, exaggerated Jagan's Communist tendencies and as a result he demurred to any suggestion of covert action.

However, after the reelection of the PPP on 21 August, Rusk sent a memorandum to the British Foreign Secretary Lord Home calling for a joint reassessment of policy action toward Jagan's regime. He broached the possibility of covert action and maintained that he attached a great deal of importance to it.⁴⁷ Given British reticence over the issue of clandestine operations in the colony, Rusk knew that any independent steps towards removing Jagan from power would have "abrasive effects on Anglo-American relations."⁴⁸

It was this desire to avoid upsetting the status quo in Anglo-American relations that led Rusk, in September 1961, to accept the British thesis that Jagan was "salvageable" and merely needed to be "educated."⁴⁹ Indeed so convinced were the British of this that Rusk believed he had "no option" but to agree with them for, after all, British Guiana was still a colony of Great Britain, even if it was in the American hemisphere.⁵⁰ Accordingly, in early-October 1961, the Secretary sent a memorandum to certain foreign service posts declaring that official State Department policy towards British Guiana would be a "wholehearted, across-the-board effort to work with the new Jagan government and to foster effective association between British Guiana and the West."⁵¹ The memorandum made no mention of the department's desire to placate British sentiment by accepting this policy. Instead, it claimed that the colony did not have any alternative leaders to Cheddi Jagan and that "withholding aid would only result in

[Jagan's] gravitation towards the Soviet-Castro Bloc."⁵²

But this new policy was not as "wholehearted" as the State Department claimed. The same memorandum which called for full cooperation closed with the phrase "In the final analysis we should plan for the possibility that we will have no reasonable alternative but to work for Jagan 's political downfall."⁵³ Rusk 's reluctance to let go of the idea of ousting Jagan from power stemmed from a far-fetched belief that the American-trained dentist might be a Soviet "sleeper" agent.⁵⁴ A sleeper agent is a spy inserted into a country by a foreign intelligence service. Once there, he or she assumes an identity and builds up a life in the enemy country until such time as controlling intelligence service "activates" its agent.⁵⁵ That Jagan, who spent his life in British Guiana and training at reputable American schools, could be a Soviet spy was a remote possibility at best. Yet it was nonetheless a factor in influencing Rusk 's assessment of the British Guianese "threat."

The State Department also hesitated to practice its policy of "wholehearted cooperation" on the grounds that doing so would "inflate Jagan 's ego and make dealing with him more difficult."⁵⁶ The logic behind this statement is difficult to understand. If Jagan were indebted to the United States, it makes sense that he would be more tractable and easier, not harder, to deal with.

A second, more reasonable, explanation for not practicing the policy of wholehearted cooperation was that increasing aid to British Guiana simply to keep it out of the Communist fold, would set a dangerous precedent for other countries. Paying too much attention to Jagan would lead other leaders to imitate his tactics. The United States,

in the long run, might end up being bribed by countries who threatened to "go Communist" unless America provided them with aid.⁵⁷

For these reasons, the State Department kept the possibility of covert action in British Guiana alive in the months prior to Jagan 's October 1961 visit. The American Consul General in Georgetown, Everett K. Melby, explored certain covert options including the possibility of brokering a PNC-UF alliance against the PPP. But Forbes Burnham did not see a union with a pro-business party as politically expedient and the idea fell through.⁵⁸

The State Department also cultivated ties between itself and Richard Ishmael, leader of the British Guiana Trades Union Council (BGTUC). On 10 October 1961, Ishmael came to Washington ostensibly for "medical reasons."⁵⁹ In reality, he came to seek AFL-CIO aid in strengthening the British Guianese trade union movement against the encroaching Communist "threat" that the PPP represented. Though Rusk favoured AFL-CIO cooperation with the BGTUC, he feared that such cooperation would be misconstrued in British Guiana as US Government interference.⁶⁰ The seeds were sown in this meeting for what was to become the chosen method of US covert action in British Guiana in April 1963.

From the outset of the formation of American policy towards Jagan, the State Department took a far harder line over the issue than did the Executive branch of government.⁶¹ The Executive did not want to resort to covert action in 1961. However, whereas the State Department shied away from covert action for fear of upsetting the

British, the Executive branch of government had its own reason for wanting to avoid clandestine operations for as long as possible.

Since the end of the Second World War, the United States had denounced colonialism and pushed vigorously for self-government for all nations under colonial rule.⁶² The Kennedy administration did not want to deviate from this line. Publicly, Kennedy was nonchalant about Jagan's victory in the elections of August 1961, telling *Izvestia* editor Aleksei Adzhubei that he did not care what kind of government British Guiana elected, just as long as the elections were held honestly and freely.⁶³ Having Britain withhold independence on the grounds that the colony's leader disagreed with the political ideology of the United States, would represent a seachange in America's policy towards colonialism.

Kennedy's reluctance to get vigilant with Jagan's government in 1961 also stemmed from the fact that Jagan's August reelection followed closely on the heels of the Bay of Pigs debacle four months prior. The ill-conceived covert plan to overthrow Cuba's Fidel Castro, based on a series of gross intelligence miscalculations, left the Executive, State Department and CIA red-faced with embarrassment.⁶⁴ When the invasion failed, Kennedy chastized himself by asking how he could have been "so stupid."⁶⁵ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Kennedy's Special Assistant, believed that the blame for the failure lay squarely on the shoulders of the president's advisors. Because no one called into question any of the CIA plans for the invasion of Cuba, the White House staff, of which he was a member, "failed in their job of protecting the president."⁶⁶ Therefore it is arguable that after the Bay of Pigs, the Executive learned its lesson about the danger of ill-advised

covert action as a tool of foreign policy.⁶⁷

For this reason, Kennedy and his advisors approached the issue of what to do with Jagan with guarded caution. This is particularly true of Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who concerned himself during the period in question with the problem of British Guiana. He treated the situation far more rationally than did Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Indeed, from of their tenure in the Kennedy administration, the two men failed to get along professionally. The Secretary of State saw the former professor as a "fifth wheel in decision-making" and did not like the way the intellectual interfered in policy formation.⁶⁸ For example, in the case of British Guiana, Schlesinger disagreed with the notion that Jagan was a "sleeper agent" and wrote to Deputy Under Secretary of State Alexis Johnson that the Department should ensure the British knew the Kennedy administration did not "seriously entertain" such an idea.⁶⁹ Schlesinger, in fact, agreed with the British contention that reaching an amicable working relationship with Cheddi Jagan was the best course of action for the American Government. Covert action, in his opinion, should be limited to its proper function: intelligence gathering.⁷⁰

But Schlesinger was very cognizant of the outcry in Congress against Cheddi Jagan. Though he believed in the desirability of friendly relations with the premier, he feared any friendliness, for example, bringing British Guiana into the Alliance for Progress, would alarm Senator Dodd.⁷¹ Thus, even at this early stage, the Executive recognized the possible domestic political ramifications of appeasing Jagan.

In addition to possible domestic repercussions, Schlesinger agreed with the State Department that giving aid to British Guiana would set a dangerous precedent for other

countries. He suggested that any aid grants should not be out of proportion with what the United States doled out to other countries in Latin America via the Alliance for Progress. Anything more, would look as if the United States was rewarding Jagan for his pro-Communist reputation.⁷²

But despite their concerns about Jagan, Schlesinger and Kennedy had qualms about implementing any covert programme without first meeting with him.⁷³ The Executive, prior to meeting with Jagan, gave the PPP leader the benefit of the doubt. The reason for this was that covert action to oust Jagan along side a "whole-hearted across-the-board" effort to work with him would have been counterproductive. "Nothing is worse than a half-hearted courtship," Arthur Schlesinger told the State Department.⁷⁴ Thus, it was with an open mind and a desire to find an accommodation with Cheddi Jagan that Kennedy met with the Guianese leader in late-October 1961.

But accommodating Jagan did not mean giving him the \$40 million (US) he sought. The International Cooperation Administration (ICA) recommended that British Guiana be given only \$5 million (US) after surveying the colony prior to Jagan's visit.⁷⁵ Yet Congressional opposition to Jagan, as well as State's uncertainty about the Premier's ideological disposition, led Kennedy to remain reticent, but open-minded, about giving even this much. The premier's appearance on *Meet the Press* one day before his meeting with Kennedy in which he refused to say anything negative about the Soviet Union caused the president to grow skeptical of Jagan. After his appearance on the show, Kennedy called for a reexamination of "all aspects of the [British Guiana] problem" and refused to

commit himself to any aid to British Guiana.⁷⁶

The meeting on 25 October did little to improve Kennedy's image of Jagan. The president, along with White House aides Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Goodwin, as well as Under Secretary of State George Ball and Acting Assistant Secretary of State William Tyler met with Jagan in the White House for several hours. Jagan took up most of the meeting by outlining British Guiana's social problems and the goals which his government hoped to accomplish.⁷⁷ At one point, when Jagan intimated that his socialist orientation would likely inhibit the US government from giving him any aid, Kennedy interrupted him by saying,

I want to make one thing perfectly clear. We are not engaged in a crusade to force private enterprise on parts of the world where it is not relevant. If we are engaged in a crusade for anything, it is for national independence. That is the primary purpose of our aid.⁷⁸

The president pointed out that the United States gave aid to "socialist" countries like Yugoslavia in the past and that British Guiana's internal political system would not be a criterion in his decision to give Jagan aid. He also noted that the United States did not react with hostility when Mexico and Bolivia nationalized American interests during the 1930s. He expected Jagan to provide full compensation to American companies in British Guiana should the premier one day wish to exercise his sovereign right of nationalization.⁷⁹ Finally, Kennedy told Jagan that any trading British Guiana did with the Soviet Union was of no significance to the United States provided that it did not lead to economic dependency on the Bloc.⁸⁰

The president then questioned Jagan about his ideological beliefs. The premier

responded evasively claiming that though he was a follower of the British socialist Anuerin Bevan, he was not able to distinguish between "various forms of socialism."⁸¹ "Well, Bevanism, Sweezyism, Hubermanism, Baranism - I really don't get those ideological subtleties," Jagan told his White House audience. At this statement, Kennedy grew even more wary of Jagan and began to see a certain duplicity in his manner.⁸²

The meeting closed on a negative note with Kennedy refusing to discuss aid figures with Jagan. As a result the premier told Arthur Schlesinger the next day that he felt the American government was giving him a "run around."⁸³ In mid-October, when Jagan had left British Guiana to visit Puerto Rico, Canada and the United States, British Guianese newspapers implored him to "bring home the bacon."⁸⁴ Going home with only a vague promise of further help would put him in a politically difficult position, he told Schlesinger. The president's special assistant empathized and gave him a statement which committed the US government to send an economic mission to British Guiana provided that Jagan upheld "political freedoms and defend[ed] parliamentary democracy."⁸⁵

For Kennedy, the meeting with Jagan was not a success. The premier failed to convey an impression of honesty, particularly with regard to his ideological convictions. Kennedy confided to Arthur Schlesinger that as a result of what he heard at the meeting, he did not believe that Jagan would remain committed to parliamentary democracy. He argued that

...in a couple of years he will find ways to suspend his constitutional provisions and will find ways to suspend his constitutional provisions and will cut his opposition off at the knees...Parliamentary democracy is going to be damn difficult in a country at this stage of development. With all the political jockeying, it's going to be almost impossible for Jagan to

concentrate the energies of his country on development through a parliamentary system.⁸⁶

Kennedy's conclusion led the State Department to believe in the righteousness of exploring options for covert political action in British Guiana. During the closing months of 1961, the department continued to look at the possibility of sending aid to British Guiana's trade union council through the AFL-CIO and the American Ambassador in London, David Bruce, initiated meetings with the British over the issue.⁸⁷ The British Colonial Office told him that Britain wanted nothing to do with influencing BG labour unions, but any attempt on America's part to do so should be "careful, discrete and long-term."⁸⁸ Ambassador Bruce also wired the department explaining that there were rifts in Cheddi and Janet's marriage which, if deftly exploited, could upset the PPP's image in British Guiana.⁸⁹ It should be emphasized, however, that these actions were only exploratory. America did not instigate covert operations against the Jagan government until 1963.⁹⁰

Thus, 1961 came to a close with the American government pursuing a dual track policy towards British Guiana, one which called for a whole-hearted effort to work with Jagan along side an exploration of covert political options. Kennedy took into account the British government and Guianese business view of Cheddi Jagan as the best leader of a bad lot. However, several other factors led him to see Jagan as a threat with which he would have to deal. The foremost of these was the notion that Congress and the public were very much anti-Jagan. Second, the US intelligence community and the State

Department argued that Jagan would likely turn into another Castro upon independence and ally himself with the Soviet Union. Finally, Kennedy's meeting with Jagan convinced him that the premier was not forthright about his Communist convictions. But despite all this, Kennedy did not order any change to the policy of whole-hearted cooperation. He desired to make a concerted effort to win Jagan's loyalty before implementing more drastic measures. However events in British Guiana in mid-February 1962 soon forced him to reassess the viability of this course of action.

NOTES

¹ Herbert Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. (New York: Dial Press, 1983), p. 49.

² James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. (Lawrence KS: University of Kansas, 1991), p. 28.

³ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...pp. 224-225.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁹ Airgram. Georgetown (Carlson) to State, 23 September 1964. Confidential. Pol 12-6 BrGu 1964-66, Box 1948. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁰ Forbes Burnham, *A Destiny to Mould*. (New York: Africana Publishing, 1970), p. xxi.

¹¹ Airgram. Georgetown (Carlson) to State, 23 September 1964. Confidential. Pol 12-6 BrGu 1964-66, Box 1948. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹² Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 245.

¹³ Andrew Gordon, "Communism is Evil," a pamphlet published by the Defenders of Freedom, Georgetown. 1960-1963, no code, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁴ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 248.

¹⁵ Open letter to *Sunday Chronicle* (British Guiana), 9 April 1961.

¹⁶ Letter from Alan Balter, New York City, to Senator Kenneth B. Keating, 12 September 1961. No security classification. 741d.00/9-1261, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁷ Letter from Dennis Oliver, Milwaukee WI, to Senator William E. Proxmire, 18 October 1961. No security classification or code. Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁸ Letter from Miss Romance, Chairman of International Affairs, Service League, of the Women 's Club of Sarasota, Florida, to Senator George Smathers, 28 December 1961. No security classification. 741d.00/12-1361, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD). Alexis Johnson 's response is attached to this letter.

¹⁹ Address by Senator Dodd, 27 June 1963. *Congressional Record, 88th Congress, 1st Session 1963*, p. 11913.

²⁰ This sampling of letters was taken from 1960-63 741d.00\various, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²¹ Address by Senator Dodd, 31 August 1961. *Congressional Record, 87th Congress, 1st Session. 1961.*, p. 17660.

²² Ibid.

²³ *Saturday Evening Post*, September 1961. 741d.00/9-2861, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁴ Address by Senator Dodd, 17 July 1961. *Congressional Record, 87th Congress, 1st Session. 1961.*, p. 12631.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Address by Senator Dodd, 31 August 1961. *Congressional Record, 87th Congress, 1st Session. 1961.*, p. 17660.

²⁸ Memorandum of Conversation. Senator Thomas Dodd (CT) with E.K. Melby and David Martin, 6 September 1961. Limited Official Use. 741d.00/9-661, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁹ Brooks Hays (State Department) to Lindley Beckworth, 21 September 1961. No security classification. 741d.00/9-1161, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Address by Senator Dodd, 31 August 1961. *Congressional Record, 87th Congress, 1st Session. 1961.*, p. 17660.

³² Internal Memorandum. William Tyler to Alexis Johnson, 15 September 1961. Confidential. No decimal classification, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³³ HR 543 and 549. Sponsored by Adam C. Powell (NY). *Congressional Record 87th Congress. 1961*, Index. The US Immigration and Naturalization Act was not amended until 1965. The decision to let in more people from the West Indies was partly a response to the new emphasis on civils rights within the American system. Also, at this time Britain began to diminish its immigration quotas for people from the Caribbean. By taking up the slack, the new US policy acted as a relief valve thereby staving off the possibility of further Communist revolutions in the Caribbean.

³⁴ Foreign Service Despatch. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 20 September 1960. Limited Official Use.

³⁵ Donald Maclean, *British Foreign Policy Since Suez*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), p. 141.

³⁶ Ibid.

- ³⁷ Airgram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 21 March 1961. Confidential. (1964-66) Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Telegram. Department of State to Rusk at Paris, 5 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 519.
- ⁴⁰ Message from Foreign Secretary Lord Home to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, 18 August 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 521.
- ⁴¹ Memorandum of Conversation. Sir Ralph Grey with Rockwood Forster and Everett K. Melby, 16 February 1961. Confidential. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 513.
- ⁴² Telegram. George Ball to Rusk at Paris, 5 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 519.
- ⁴³ SNIE 87.2-61, 21 March 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...pp. 514-517.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 514.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Telegram. Rusk to Embassy in the UK (Bruce), 11 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 520.
- ⁴⁷ Telegram. Rusk to Embassy in the UK (Bruce), 26 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 523.
- ⁴⁸ Telegram. Rusk to Embassy in the UK (Bruce), 31 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 527.
- ⁴⁹ Telegram. Rusk to Embassy in the UK (Bruce), 4 September 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 528.
- ⁵⁰ Memorandum. Director of Bureau of Intelligence and Research Richard Hilsman to Deputy Under Secretary of State Alexis Johnson, 17 October 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 535.
- ⁵¹ Information Airgram. Department of State (Burdett) to Certain Posts, 4 October 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 533.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid., p. 536.
- ⁵⁴ Telegram. State (Rusk) to Embassy in the UK (Bruce), 5 September 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 530.
- ⁵⁵ Memorandum. President 's Special Assistant Arthur Schlesinger Jr. to Deputy Under Secretary of State Alexis Johnson, 7 September 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 531.
- ⁵⁶ Telegram. State (Rusk) to Embassy in the UK (Bruce), 5 September 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 530
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Foreign Service Despatch. Melby to State, 10 April 1961. Confidential. 741d.00/9-261, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁵⁹ The phrase "medical reasons" was in quotations in the original document, suggesting that Ishmael came for another reason. Telegram. State (Rusk) to Georgetown (Melby), 10 October 1961. Secret. 841d.062/10-1061, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.

- ⁶¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to the present author, 19 October 1996.
- ⁶² Peter Bayle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence*. (Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina, 1990), p. 8.
- ⁶³ Interview with Aleksei Adzubei, 25 November 1961. *Published Papers of the United States Presidents. John F. Kennedy. 1961*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 743.
- ⁶⁴ Irving Janis, *Groupthink. 2nd Edition*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 14.
- ⁶⁵ Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), forward.
- ⁶⁶ Irving Janis, *Groupthink*...p. 30.
- ⁶⁷ David Nunnerly, *Kennedy and Great Britain*. (New York: St. Martin 's Press, 1972), p. 30.
- ⁶⁸ Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It*. Edited by Daniel S. Papp. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), p. 520.
- ⁶⁹ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Johnson, 7 September 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 531.
- ⁷⁰ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 30 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 525.
- ⁷¹ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 28 August 1961. Confidential, *FRUS Volume XII*...pp. 523-4.
- ⁷² Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 30 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 525.
- ⁷³ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 31 August 1961. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 526.
- ⁷⁴ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Johnson, 7 September 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 531.
- ⁷⁵ Memorandum of Conversation. Schlesinger et al with Jagan et al, 26 October 1961. Confidential. *FRUS*...p. 539.
- ⁷⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 775.
- ⁷⁷ Memorandum of Conversation. Kennedy et al with Jagan, 25 October 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 536.
- ⁷⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 775.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 776.
- ⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation. Kennedy et al with Jagan, 25 October 1961. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 538.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 537.
- ⁸² Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 776.
- ⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation. Schlesinger et al with Jagan et al, 26 October 1961. Confidential. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 539.
- ⁸⁴ Telegram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 14 October 1961. Unclassified. 741d.00/10-1361, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁸⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 777.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Telegram. Rusk to Georgetown (Melby), 10 October 1961. Secret. 841d.062/10-1061, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁸ Airgram. London (Bruce) to State, 14 November 1961. Secret. 841d.06/11-1461, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁹ Airgram. London (Bruce) to State, 15 December 1961. Secret. 741d.00/12-1561, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁹⁰ In 1994, Tim Wiener suggested that Kennedy formulated a plan to get rid of Jagan immediately after their meeting in October 1961. Tim Wiener, "Kennedy-CIA Plan Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 1.

CHAPTER III: TOWARDS A NEW POLICY (1962)

The Georgetown strike in February 1962 eventually brought the question of what to do with British Guiana to a head. For various reasons a policy of working with Jagan seemed impracticable after the strike. The problem the Kennedy administration now faced was exactly how to get rid of Jagan. A direct overthrow would incur the wrath of the newly emerging nations, something which the British Foreign and Colonial Offices wished very much to avoid. Thus, the Colonial Office suggested tinkering with British Guiana's electoral system in order to rig it so that no one party could win majority status in the legislature. But how to go about doing this while maintaining at least the facade of self-rule in British Guiana was the question that remained for the British and American governments by the latter half of 1962.

After his meeting with Kennedy, Jagan returned home to British Guiana disgruntled but hopeful. Armed with the official statement Schlesinger gave him, he managed to deflect criticism that his aid mission failed and in November, the BG Legislative Assembly set an independence date for 31 May 1962. The PNC agreed to the date, but D'Aguiar's UF adopted the slogan "no independence under Jagan."¹ Similarly, the British Colonial Office refused to accept the date, indeed even to talk about independence. Jagan had to appeal to the United Nations for help in December 1961 and finally, in January 1962, bowing to international pressure, Colonial Secretary Reginald Maudling agreed to discuss the prospect of BG independence in May 1962.²

At exactly the same time, the US government began to view the matter of aid to

British Guiana with a greater sense of urgency. After the meeting in October, the Agency for International Development (AID), the government bureau charged with administering foreign aid, did not immediately make preparations to send an economic mission to the colony. In January 1962, Schlesinger believed that any further delay in implementing the US policy of “wholehearted cooperation” would give rise to a sentiment in Georgetown that the United States was not interested in helping. Such a feeling would likely lead Jagan to look to Cuba or the Soviet Bloc for help.³ For this reason, State and AID representatives met in early January and agreed to immediately grant \$1.5 million (US) in technical aid, and dispatch the economic mission that Schlesinger promised Jagan in October 1961.⁴

However, Schlesinger felt that this small gesture would not be enough to convey to the British Guianese people that the United States really wanted to help them and he called for a more “dramatic commitment...to reestablish credibility and confidence.”⁵ This included a further \$5 million (US) to initiate the construction of a road from Mackenzie, a bauxite mining town, to Atkinson field, an air base given to the United States under the destroyers-bases deal of 1940. But AID disagreed with Schlesinger’s idea for several reasons. First, AID’s statute compelled the agency to undertake a feasibility study which would take several months before committing itself to any dollar figures. Second, AID did not think that spending \$5 million (US) on one single project was an economically sound idea. Finally, the agency was aware of the outcry against Jagan in Congress and did not want to be seen as supporting a “Communist” regime.⁶

Thus, because various factors hamstrung AID’s ability to act quickly,

Schlesinger's idea for a "dramatic commitment" would have to wait. Kennedy, however, did instruct AID director Fowler Hamilton to expand technical assistance to \$1.5 million and to send an economic mission to the colony by mid-February.⁷ But Hamilton barely had enough time to act on the president's directive before a strike broke out in Georgetown and threw the country's political and economic situation into disarray.

The pretext for the BGTUC-led strikes in February 1962 was the PPP's budget proposal, commonly called the Kaldor budget, after its creator, a Cambridge University economist named Nicholas Kaldor. The BG government feared a huge budget deficit in 1962 which it blamed on the high salaries of civil servants, teachers and policemen, as well as on a huge flight of capital from the colony. For this reason, the Kaldor budget called for new taxes and a compulsory savings scheme.⁸

Kaldor chastised the "bourgeoisie" of British Guiana for putting their money in foreign banks and argued that British Guiana teetered on "the brink of a serious economic crisis..." because of the flight of bourgeois capital.⁹ Jagan estimated the drain on the colony's currency reserves to be around \$18 million (BWI) in 1961 alone. The managers of Barclays and the Royal Bank of Canada disputed this figure, however, and claimed the real amount was closer to \$2 million (BWI).¹⁰ Whatever the case, the Kaldor budget called for a compulsory savings scheme which held 5 percent of salaries over \$100 (BWI) per month and 10 percent of profits made by self-employed persons. It also instituted new capital gains taxes, gift taxes, and indirect taxes on alcohol and tobacco.¹¹ Despite the fact that the *New York Times* and the *London Times* called the budget "courageous" and

“economically sound,” the levies cut deep into the pockets of both wealthy and poor Guianese.¹²

The BGTUC opposed the budget, calling it “anti-working class” and “Communistic.” For this reason, it called a general strike on 13 February 1962 and refused Jagan’s offer to negotiate aspects of the budget with its representatives. The strike began peacefully enough in Georgetown. On 15 February, 20,000 people, led by PNC leader Forbes Burnham marched in front of the Legislative Assembly and called for a complete withdrawal of the budget proposal.¹³ One day later, however, the situation took a turn for the worse.

February 16, 1962 is known as “Black Friday” in Guianese history. On this day, some of the worst looting and damage to Georgetown occurred. So great was the destruction, that the city still bore scars from Black Friday as late as 1994.¹⁴ The day began calmly, but when a crowd of protesters caught wind of a rumour that a tear gas bomb had killed a child, several pitched battles broke out between police and a handful of violent strikers. Though the rumour was later proved false, the violence in Georgetown developed a momentum of its own and citizens began to light fires and loot stores. “Everywhere people were to be seen carrying goods, shoes and shirts, bales of cloth, cutlery and cooking utensils and even heavy furniture,” Jagan wrote.¹⁵ Large gusts of wind “fanned the flames” of the fires; the centre of the city burned.¹⁶ And, because the strike had closed Georgetown’s electrical plant, firemen could not use the city’s electrically pumped water supply to stop the fires from spreading.¹⁷

British troops, flown in from all over the Caribbean, restored calm to the city in the

early hours of 17 February, but not before a minimum of \$11,000,000 (BWI) worth of damage was done to Georgetown's shops and homes. Four people died in the rioting and police and British troops arrested more than 700 for looting. The general strike ended officially on 19 February when Jagan withdrew the budget and agreed to give wage increases and fringe benefits to teachers and clerical workers.¹⁸

There is no evidence to suggest any official US government involvement in the riots of February 1962. Shortly after the disturbances, the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* claimed that several "reports" revealed that organizers of the disorders received financial support and arms from the CIA.¹⁹ However, this allegation was little more than a rumour. Assistant Secretary of State Cleveland wrote a top secret letter to Adlai Stevenson, America's representative at the United Nations, stating emphatically that the "CIA...was in no way involved in the recent disturbances in Georgetown."²⁰ More, Forbes Burnham would later complain to the State Department that he could have used arms during the strikes²¹ and BGTUC leader Richard Ishmael alleged that had he received guns and dynamite, "Jagan would have been deposed."²²

The idea of American covert involvement during the February 1962 strike likely came about because of the presence of a number of US labour leaders in the colony. According to Consul General Melby, these men provided a "heaven sent pretext" for blaming the riots on the United States rather than on opposition to the Kaldor budget.²³ However, the visits of the labour leaders had been planned several weeks before the riot. William McCabe and Ernest Lee, for example, were in Georgetown to give the Civil Servants' Association advice on pressing wage demands.²⁴ The AFL-CIO did play a role

in the strikes by sending food and clothing to British Guiana, but these were sent through government facilities with “full publicity” given to the US donors of the items.²⁵ In the crisis atmosphere brought about by the disturbances, British Guiana’s government leaders understandably distorted the nature of the US labour representatives’ visits

Also, official American government involvement in the riots can be discounted in light of the fact that the American Consulate did its best to keep a tight rein on Americans agitating against the PPP government in Georgetown. Prior to Black Friday, rumours abounded of a network of US intelligence agents in the colony. In reality, these men were “adventurers, naive businessmen and probably one psychopath” acting on their own volition.²⁶ The consulate was concerned that the presence of these individuals in Georgetown during the strike would be misinterpreted as US government involvement. For this reason it did its best to persuade them to “shut up and get out.”²⁷

However, the fact that the Consul General did not know of any covert operations is not proof that the CIA did not play a role in the strikes. The agency might have chosen not to tell Consul General Melby of the operation in order to allow him plausible deniability in the event of a disclosure of CIA involvement.²⁸ President Kennedy, shortly after taking office, reiterated that the American ambassador in every country should supervise “all agencies, including the CIA.” However, former CIA Deputy Director (Operations) Richard Bissell, noted that though the ambassador had the right to know of any covert operations in his/her jurisdiction, under special circumstances, for example a request from the Secretary of State, the CIA station chief in a given country could withhold information from an ambassador.²⁹ Still, to date there is no available evidence to

link the CIA or the US government, even tangentially, to the Georgetown riot of 16 February 1962.

Instead, responsibility for the strike can be laid squarely on the shoulders of the BGTUC and its leader Richard Ishmael. The Wynn Parry Commission, assigned to investigate the causes of the strike, found that American covert involvement was not to blame for the riots. Nor, for that matter, were racial tensions which in the culturally plural British Guiana could have been expected to flare up in a moment of crisis. Rather, it was Richard Ishmael's opposition to the Kaldor budget that led to the strike. The commission wrote that Ishmael was more than a labour leader: he had political aspirations as well. The strike was a way to make a name for himself in British Guiana.³⁰

The February 1962 strike had a profound impact on Anglo-American policy towards British Guiana. If Kennedy's policy of "wholehearted" cooperation with Jagan was, before the strike, politically dangerous in light of Congressional and public opposition, it was even more so afterwards. Giving aid to a purportedly "Communist" government that very obviously did not have the full support of its people would be very difficult to justify. Therefore, almost immediately after the strike, the American and British governments undertook to reassess the desirability of wholehearted cooperation with Jagan and began to spend "more man-hours per capita on British Guiana than on any other... problem."³¹

The strike of 1962 proved to the State Department that the policy of working with Jagan, which it only reluctantly accepted because of British pressure, was the wrong

course of action. The department knew that the policy of wholehearted cooperation had not been implemented since AID did not have a chance to send an economic mission to British Guiana before the strike broke out in February.³² However, in the State Department's mind, the strike made any attempt to cooperate with Jagan irrelevant. The heavy presence of businessmen and labour leaders in the colony led Jagan to grow suspicious of American intentions. He now believed that America was intent on deposing him. As a result, State felt it was doubtful that a working relationship with the premier could be established.³³

For this reason, Secretary Rusk personally reversed US policy toward British Guiana in a telegram to Foreign Secretary Lord Home, without informing the White House.³⁴ In the top secret missive, dated 19 February, Rusk told Home the British contention that Jagan was the best leader in British Guiana had to be reassessed in light of the riots. Americans would no longer countenance any cooperation with the PPP, Rusk wrote, "public and Congressional opinion...is incensed at the thought of our dealing with Jagan."³⁵ He concluded by saying that it would not be possible for America to "put up with an independent British Guiana under Jagan."³⁶ The inference in this last sentence was unmistakable: something had to be done to get rid of Cheddi Jagan.

Rusk copied this telegram to Adlai Stevenson at the United Nations who shortly afterwards wrote the Secretary of State with concerns about his new policy toward British Guiana.³⁷ Stalling, canceling or deferring the scheduled May 1962 date for the British Guianese independence conference would only strengthen Jagan's position in British Guiana and the United Nations, Stevenson claimed. The use of covert action, which Rusk

implied in the last sentence of his telegram, would undermine “America’s carefully nurtured position of anti-colonialism among the new nations of Asia and Africa, [and] grievously damage [its] position in Latin America” should it be disclosed at any point.³⁸ Obviously concerned about Rusk’s impetuosity, Stevenson sent a copy of his concerns directly to President Kennedy.

British Foreign Secretary Home agreed with Stevenson’s analysis of the dangers inherent in using covert action to oust Jagan.³⁹ Deposing a democratically elected leader was a thorny issue in which Home did not want to involve himself. Also, Home told Rusk that Britain had other worries in the world. It did not have to single out British Guiana for special treatment simply because the United States disliked Jagan’s ideological orientation. “While territories like British Guiana may be of special concern to you in your hemisphere,” Lord Home wrote bluntly to his American counterpart, “there are others of at least equal importance to us elsewhere.”⁴⁰

One of these places was British Honduras, which Guatemala was threatening to annex upon independence. Home intimated that a certain *quid pro quo* arrangement might be made between the American and British governments, were the United States willing to help Britain with the problem of British Honduras. He wrote,

As the present regime in Guatemala would hardly have come into being without your support in 1954 and since, I shall be asking you to use your good office at the right time to prevent another possible misadventure on your doorstep.⁴¹

In other words, if the United States were to help Britain with its problem in British Honduras, Britain would be more amenable to tabling a solution to America’s problem in

British Guiana.

In addition to being preoccupied with other colonial matters, Britain's nonchalance over the British Guiana issue stemmed in part from the fact that it still did not see Cheddi Jagan as a threat. Former Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod and Colonial Secretary Reginald Maudling, for example, told Arthur Schlesinger that Jagan was not a Communist but a "naive London School of Economics Marxist filled with charm, personal honesty and juvenile nationalism."⁴² In their eyes, he was infinitely more preferable to Burnham who was a mere political opportunist.

Also, Britain wanted to extricate itself from British Guiana for economic reasons. British Guiana's colonial status cost Britain approximately \$7 million (US) per year. Deposing Jagan and reimplementing direct rule would raise that figure to approximately \$20 million (US).⁴³

In short, getting rid of Jagan in 1962 was neither desirable nor necessary for the British. Maudling summed up British feeling over the matter most pithily when he told Schlesinger, "if you Americans care so much about British Guiana, why don't you take it over? Nothing would please us more."⁴⁴

Though no one had thought of going that far, the State Department and the CIA both believed that a firm decision had been made to get rid of the Jagan government as a result of Rusk's February 19 memorandum to Lord Home.⁴⁵ In late-February and early March, State Department officials began cultivating Forbes Burnham, the leader of the Peoples' National Congress, as a replacement for Jagan. To this end it invited Burnham to visit Washington, a move Ambassador Bruce strongly opposed, believing that the visit

would be interpreted by the British as a US decision to get rid of Jagan unilaterally.⁴⁶ Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William C. Burdett also spoke to Burnham in Georgetown and while there sought out the advice of Ann Jardim, a UF member and staunch anti-Jaganite. Burdett further took it upon himself to organize a meeting between labour representatives from British Guiana and the United States, including Andrew Jackson, president of the BG Federal Union of Government employees, and William C. Doherty, then head of the Postal Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI).⁴⁷

To halt such actions, which very clearly violated the policy of wholehearted cooperation with Jagan, President Kennedy issued a National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) on 8 March which declared that “no final decision will be taken on our policy toward British Guiana and the Jagan government until...the Secretary of State has a chance to meet with Lord Home...”⁴⁸ The NSAM also put forth three questions which needed to be answered before Kennedy would order a change to the policy of “wholehearted cooperation.” The first was to determine whether Great Britain could be persuaded to delay independence for a year. Given the opinion of Lord Home and Colonial Secretary Maudling, this did not appear likely. In such an instance, then, Kennedy wondered if Jagan would win another election before independence. Finally, Kennedy called for a fuller investigation into the possibilities and limitations of any United States covert action in British Guiana.⁴⁹

By the end of April, Kennedy had the answers to the questions put forth in the NSAM. Lord Home, after meeting with Dean Rusk on 13 March, announced the Wynn Parry Commission to look into the February disturbances in British Guiana. The

commission acted as a delaying tactic to put off independence temporarily and “muddy [the] situation sufficiently to reopen Britain’s present commitments as to schedule.”⁵⁰ Thus the British could indeed be persuaded to delay independence, at least for a little while.

John McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, answered Kennedy’s NSAM query about Jagan’s chances of winning another election before independence in the affirmative. In an SNIE of 11 April, the director wrote that under the electoral system in British Guiana at the time, the PPP would win again, even if the PNC and the UF formed a coalition to oppose it. Jagan was the most popular leader in the colony and had the vote of the East Indian community, the most populous race in the colony.⁵¹ Thus the United States had little alternative but to begin exploring the “possibilities and limitations” of further American involvement in British Guiana.

In mid-March 1962, the State Department prepared a paper which outlined four possibilities for American policy in the colony and commented on the advantages and disadvantages of each one.⁵² The first course of action was the one that the United States had been pursuing since 1961; that is, full support of Jagan with the hope of keeping him in the Western camp. This was advantageous since the United Kingdom favoured the policy and it made sense in light of the fact that there was no conclusive evidence of Communist Bloc control of Jagan. Such a policy would also win America support amongst the newly independent states in the United Nations.⁵³

On the other hand, the paper noted that working with Jagan had become increasingly difficult because of the premier’s belief that the CIA caused the February riots in Georgetown. The department believed that Jagan would interpret any further

cooperation as a CIA attempt to get rid of him, the department believed. Convincing the premier that America was his friend would necessitate increasing development assistance to the colony to a level of about \$5 million (US) per year on a continuing basis.⁵⁴

Even more important than cost, however, was the idea that different American lobby groups opposed cooperation with Jagan. The AFL-CIO came out strongly against the Jagan government, believing that the United States should take all the steps necessary to prevent another Castro-like dictatorship from developing in the hemisphere.⁵⁵ In addition, the largest American business interest in the colony, Reynolds' Aluminum, feared that its assets would be nationalized if British Guiana became independent under Jagan.⁵⁶ Finally, Joost Sluis, of the right wing Christian Anti-Communist Crusade had captured the attention of the White House in his quest to get rid of the Godless PPP in British Guiana. Should the White House continue to work with Jagan, it would be difficult to stop men like Sluis and groups like the AFL-CIO from intervening in British Guiana to overthrow Jagan.⁵⁷

Continuing the policy of wholehearted cooperation would also be difficult given Congressional and public opposition to the PPP. By March 1962, the State Department received 113 Congressional letters and 2400 public letters condemning any policy which included working with Jagan.⁵⁸ At this time, President Kennedy was having a difficult time getting foreign aid legislation passed in the Congress.⁵⁹ Further criticism of aid to Jagan, would have ramifications on foreign aid in general.⁶⁰ Thus for domestic political reasons, the State Department did not recommend a continuation of America's policy of "wholehearted" cooperation with Jagan.

A more pragmatic short-term policy, the department believed, would be the postponement of British Guiana's independence to give the United States more time to formulate a plan of action. The State Department remarked paternalistically that this would provide a "period of further British tutorship" during which time "a more responsible leadership might emerge."⁶¹ However, the British opposed indefinite postponement on several grounds. First, keeping a British presence in the colony cost money and tied up troops which could be used in other areas. Second, making an exception of British Guiana in Britain's worldwide decolonization policy would draw the wrath of newly independent states in the United Nations. Finally, postponing the date of independence would draw the fire of the Labour party in Britain's parliament.⁶² Were the White House to accept postponement as a course of action, it had to be prepared to accommodate Great Britain by supporting it in the United Nations and by shouldering part of the costs of maintaining a British presence in the colony.⁶³

A third, more extreme, proposal for dealing with the problem of British Guiana was covert action with the explicit intent of bringing down the government of Cheddi Jagan. Such a course of action would obviate any need for expensive aid donations and time consuming negotiations with the British. However, the problems of such a plan were manifold. State wondered whether it would be possible to topple Jagan while "maintaining at least a facade of democratic institutions," and if he were toppled, whether it would be possible to find better alternative leaders. Moreover, the consequences of disclosure would be severe. Jagan would become "a martyr of Yankee imperialism." His position in British Guiana would be strengthened and America would be seen as an evil

imperialist in the eyes of the world.⁶⁴ Thus, though covert action would provide a “quick fix” to the British Guiana situation, it was the most precarious option the United States had at its disposal.

A fourth and final policy option put forth by the State Department in mid-March was, by the department’s own admission, a “radical solution.” It involved putting British Guiana under an OAS “trusteeship” whereby the United Kingdom would be relieved of all political responsibility, the United States could postpone a decision on what to do with Jagan, and most importantly, US domestic uneasiness over the British Guiana issue would be assuaged. The problem with such a course of action, however, was that it had never been tried before. A significant amount of study would have been needed before America could make any attempt to implement it. With Jagan clamouring for immediate independence, this plan was not feasible.⁶⁵

In the collective mind of the British government, the circumstances in British Guiana were “puffed up out of all proportion.”⁶⁶ Hugh Fraser, Parliamentary Undersecretary for Colonies, encouraged America to “keep a sense of humour” when considering the situation. Jagan was not the serious Communist that the American public made him out to be. He told the Department of State that that the colony’s East Indians, Jagan’s main base of support, were an acquisitive people, and not at all inclined towards Communism. They supported Jagan because he was one of their own, not because he was a Communist.⁶⁷ *Apanjhat*, or “vote for your own,” politics was the way the Guianese elected their leaders.

Hugh Fraser believed that Jagan was, in essence, a “nice man” who surrounded himself with “tough-talking” but harmless advisors, most of whom should not be taken seriously.⁶⁸ Indeed Mr. Huijsman, one of the men who accompanied Fraser on a trip to British Guiana, remarked that “there [was] no sinister Communist plot in British Guiana; only [the] maneuverings of a bunch of hicks...”⁶⁹ Moreover, the colony’s main business interest did not fear Jagan. The chairman of the Bookers’ Group, Antony Tasker, told William C. Burdett that America exaggerated the Jagan threat and that the premier’s image in the United States as a dangerous Communist was a distorted one.⁷⁰ Jagan’s ideological disposition was not a concern for the colony’s main business interest. Thus, it made little sense to the British that the United States government should be worried.

The reimposition of direct rule in British Guiana in light of this evidence was out of the question according to Hugh Fraser.⁷¹ The only possible solution that the British government would countenance at the time was changing the colony’s electoral system from the first-past-the-post method to one based on proportional representation (PR). Proportional Representation is a type of electoral system whereby a party is granted a percentage of the seats in a legislature commensurate with the percentage of the vote it receives. Because the PPP derived its support, in the main, from East Indian farmers whose ridings were far more numerous than those of the city-dwelling Africans, Jagan won a larger percentage of the seats in the BG Legislative Assembly than he did a percentage of the popular vote. In the August 1961 elections, for example, Jagan took 57 percent of the seats in the assembly with only 42.7 percent of the vote. Under PR, he would have only been granted 42.7 percent of the seats, not enough to grant him a

majority, since Burnham had captured 41 percent of the vote. Therefore under PR none of the parties in British Guiana would be able to attain majority status in the Legislative Assembly.⁷²

Hugh Fraser recognized the utility of implementing PR in British Guiana, but stressed that his government would not impose a new electoral system on the colony. Doing so would be tantamount to simply proroguing the Legislative Assembly and telling Jagan he could not run in another election, an action which would be roundly condemned by the international community. Instead, Britain and the United States had to try to persuade the Guianese people that proportional representation was the right thing for their country.⁷³ How to go about this was not clear to either the British or the Americans.

In the interim, the United States explored other international dimensions for a solution to the British Guiana situation. Turning Jagan's ouster from a bilateral into a multilateral effort would lend a credence to the action in the eyes of the world community. Canada, with its large investment interests in British Guiana, was the most logical choice to go to for moral and financial help. With \$80 million (US) tied up in British Guiana, versus America's \$30 million (US),⁷⁴ Canada, Dean Rusk believed, would jump at the chance to contribute to the "stabilization" of British Guiana.⁷⁵ But during the period in question, Canada was only "lukewarm" over the idea of toppling Jagan⁷⁶ and did not give the United States any direct help with its covert actions.⁷⁷

In January 1962, Undersecretary of State George Ball approached the Canadian government about absorbing part of the \$5 million (US) expense for the construction of a

road from Mackenzie, an important ALCAN mining area, to Atkinson field.⁷⁸ The Canadian government responded negatively to this idea, noting that it only allotted \$50,000 (CDN) in aid to British Guiana per year.⁷⁹ Rusk expressed his shock at the refusal of the Department of External Affairs to extend this aid figure in light of the large amount of Canadian investment in the colony,⁸⁰ but by April 1962 Canada only agreed to send a forestry expert to British Guiana to help America with its aid assessments.⁸¹

Canada's reticence to act on what the Americans believed was a serious problem can be explained in two ways. First, Canada agreed with Great Britain's contention that Jagan was not a threat to North American hemispheric security.⁸² Moreover, ALCAN, Canada's largest investor in the colony, did not feel that Jagan would nationalize its subsidiary, the Demerara Bauxite Company, because British Guiana lacked native skilled personnel to operate the company, especially in the engineering departments.⁸³

Second, Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and US president John Kennedy deeply disliked each other. Though this dislike was long-standing, Kennedy further exacerbated it when he delivered a speech to the Canadian parliament in May 1961 in which he implicitly criticized Canada's aid contributions to Latin American countries and to the developing world in general.⁸⁴ In response, Diefenbaker told a Toronto audience that he believed Canada should make decisions about international policy that were in its own interests rather than "be [an] unquestioning follower[] of the views of other nations, however friendly."⁸⁵ Giving more aid to British Guiana was not necessarily in Canada's best interests, and it was not likely that Diefenbaker would help an American president whom he disliked personally with what amounted to a problem of American

domestic, not international, concern.

However, whereas Canada was very reticent to act in British Guiana, Israel willingly jumped into the fray, even without America's encouragement. Israel was aware of the delicate situation that the United States faced in the colony and wanted to "inject some sense into Guianese thinking"⁸⁶ by aiding in the development of a Guianese police force. Great Britain, by the end of its history as a colonial power, hardly spent any money on establishing effective police forces in the areas it ruled.⁸⁷ In the case of British Guiana, this meant an untrained and undisciplined force of 1,500 men, mostly of African background.⁸⁸ Jagan wanted to remedy this situation, the Americans believed, by forming another police force comprised of PPP youth and based on the Israeli "Nahal" model. This model, which envisaged turning the East Indian youth into soldier-farmers, was a cause for American alarm for the State Department believed that such a force would give political support to the PPP.⁸⁹

Israel's motive for offering the assistance was simple. The Israeli Ambassador in Washington, Hannan Bar-On, believed that as a country surrounded by neighbours who were intent on its destruction, Israel needed to cultivate as many friends among newly emerging nations as possible. His country was merely trying to win a favourable position for itself in the new countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America by giving away free technical assistance.⁹⁰ But in view of the possible political ramifications of two racially distinct police forces in British Guiana, Secretary Rusk ordered the State Department discourage the Israelis "discretely" from providing any assistance in the development of a Nahal-type police force.⁹¹

Thus America welcomed international assistance in British Guiana provided it was of the sort that it wanted. When none was forthcoming, it knew it had to act alone. In 1962 and 1963 the United States went on to implement a covert programme in the colony which led to the imposition of proportional representation and Jagan's eventual ouster from power two years later.

NOTES

¹ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 250.

² Ibid., pp. 251-52.

³ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 12 January 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 541.

⁴ Ibid., p. 540.

⁵ Ibid., p. 541.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Memorandum. Kennedy to Hamilton (AID), 12 January 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 542.

⁸ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...pp. 252-53.

⁹ "Interview with Nicholas Kaldor," *Guiana Graphic*, 21 February 1962.

¹⁰ Telegram. Melby to State, 21 December 1961. Limited Official Use. 841d.131/12-2061. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹¹ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...pp. 252-53.

¹² Ibid., p. 254.

¹³ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. 11-18 January 1964, p. 19842.

¹⁴ Tim Wiener, "CIA-Kennedy Plot Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 1.

¹⁵ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...p. 264.

¹⁶ Tim Wiener, "CIA-Kennedy Plot..."

¹⁷ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. 11-18 January 1964, p. 19842.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Telegram. American Embassy Moscow to State, 20 February 1962. Limited Official Use. 741d.00/2-2062, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁰ Letter. Cleveland to Stevenson, 9 March 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 552.

²¹ Memorandum of Conversation. LFS Burnham with William C. Burdett and E.K. Melby, Georgetown, 27 March 1962. Secret. 741d.00/3-2762, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA

(College Park, MD).

²² Telegram. Melby to State, 22 February 1962. Confidential. 841d.062/2-2162, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²³ Telegram. Melby to State, 18 February 1962. Secret. 741d.00/201862, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁴ Telegram. Melby to State, 19 February 1962. Confidential. 811.062/2-1962, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁵ Telegram. Melby to State, 19 February 1962. Confidential. 811.062/2-1962, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁶ Telegram. Melby to State, 15 February 1962. Secret. 741d.00/2-1562, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The present author is grateful to Mr. James MacDonald, a doctoral candidate at American University, Washington DC, for suggesting plausible deniability as an alternative explanation for the February 1962 riots.

²⁹ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*. (New York: Dell, 1974), p. 320.

³⁰ Thakur Rishee, "Politics and Hegemony..." p. 90.

³¹ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 8 March 1962. No security classification. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 548.

³² Memorandum. Assistant Secretary of State William Tyler to Rusk, 18 February 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 543.

³³ Ibid., p. 544.

³⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 778.

³⁵ Telegram. Rusk to Home via Embassy in UK (Bruce), 19 February 1962. Top Secret, Priority, Eyes Only Ambassador Bruce. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 544.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Letter. Stevenson to Rusk, 26 February 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 545.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 546.

³⁹ Letter. Home to Rusk, 26 February 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 547.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 548.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 547.

⁴² Memorandum. Schlesinger to London (Bruce), 27 February 1962. Confidential. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 549.

⁴³ SNIE, 11 April 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...pp. 564-69.

⁴⁴ Memorandum. Schlesinger to London (Bruce), 27 February 1962. Confidential. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 549.

⁴⁵ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 8 March 1962. No security classification. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 548.

⁴⁶ Telegram. Bruce to State, 1 March 1962. Secret. 741d.00/2-2862, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴⁷ Memorandum of Conversation. Andrew Jackson, Wm. C. Doherty, Wm. Legge (PTTI) with Wm. Burdett, 8 March 1962. Secret. 741d.00/2-862, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA

(College Park, MD).

⁴⁸ NSAM No. 135, 8 March 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 551.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Telegram. Rusk to State, 13 March 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 553.

⁵¹ SNIE 87.2-62, 11 April 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 566.

⁵² "Possible Courses of Action in British Guiana," Paper Prepared in the Department of State, 15 March 1962. Secret, Eyes Only, White House. *FRUS Volume XII*...pp. 555-558.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 555.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 556.

⁵⁵ Letter. William C. Doherty Jr., Vice President, AFL-CIO, to Vice President Lyndon Johnson, 21 June 1962. No classification, Box, 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁵⁶ Letter. Walter L. Price, Vice President, Reynolds' Aluminum to Griffith Johnson, Asst. Secy. of State for Economic Affairs, 19 June 1962. Unclassified. 841c.10-841d.10, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁵⁷ "Possible Courses of Action in British Guiana," Paper Prepared in the Department of State, 15 March 1962. Secret, Eyes Only, White House. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 555.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 596.

⁶⁰ Memorandum of Conversation. Various State Department and White House Officials with Parliamentary Under Secretary for Colonies Hugh Fraser, 17 March 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 563.

⁶¹ "Possible Courses of Action in British Guiana," Paper Prepared in the Department of State, 15 March 1962. Secret, Eyes Only, White House. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 556.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 557.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 558.

⁶⁶ Memorandum of Conversation. Various State Department and White House Officials with Parliamentary Under Secretary for Colonies Hugh Fraser, 17 March 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 559.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Telegram. London (Bruce) to State, 23 March 1962. Secret. 841d.10/20362, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁷⁰ Memorandum of Conversation. Antony Tasker with Wm. C. Burdett and E.K. Melby (Georgetown), 26 March 1962. Secret. 741d.00/3-2662, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation. Various State Department and White House Officials with Parliamentary Under Secretary for Colonies Hugh Fraser, 17 March 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 563-64.

⁷² Memorandum. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., to Alexis Johnson, 14 September 1961. 741d.00/9-1461, Box 1667. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁷³ Memorandum of Conversation. Various State Department and White House Officials with Parliamentary Under Secretary for Colonies Hugh Fraser, 17 March 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 564.

⁷⁴ SNIE 87.2-62, 11 April 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 567.

⁷⁵ Telegram. Rusk to American Embassy in Ottawa, 12 April 1962. Confidential. 841d.10-2263, Box 2478; RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁷⁶ Memorandum of Conversation. Rusk et al with Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, et al, 4 December 1963. Secret. Pol 15 BrGu, Box 3839.

⁷⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.

⁷⁸ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 12 January 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 540.

⁷⁹ Telegram. American Embassy Ottawa (Merchant) to State, 12 February 1962. Secret. 841d.10-2243, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁰ Telegram. Rusk to American Embassy Ottawa (Merchant), 12 April 1962. Confidential. 841d.10-2263. Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸¹ Telegram. American Embassy Ottawa (Merchant) to State, 19 April 1962. Confidential. 841d.10-2283, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸² Memorandum of Conversation. Rusk et al with Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, et al, 4 December 1963. Secret. Pol 15 BrGu, Box 3839.

⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation. J.G. Campbell, Demerara Bauxite Company, with Wm. C. Burdett and E.K. Melby (Georgetown) 25 March 1962. Secret. 741d.00/3-2562, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁴ H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs*. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989), p. 198.

⁸⁵ Richard A. Preston, *Canada in World Affairs 1961*. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1965), p. 132.

⁸⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, Mr. Hannan Bar-On, Counselor of the Israeli Embassy, Washington with Rockwood Foster, Desk Officer, West Indies Affairs. 13 August 1962. Confidential. 741d.00/18-1362, Box 1668, RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁷ David M. Anderson and David Killingray, *Policing and Decolonization*. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1992), forward.

⁸⁸ SNIE 87.2-62, 11 April 1962, Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*..., p. 568.

⁸⁹ Telegram. Rusk to American Embassy London. 18 October 1962. Secret. 741d.00/10-1862, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁹⁰ Telegram. Rusk to American Embassy London. 9 August 1962. Secret. 741d.00/8-962, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁹¹ Telegram. Rusk to Georgetown (Melby), 17 August 1962. Confidential. 841d.008a/8-1762, Box 2479. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

CHAPTER IV: COVERT ACTION AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS BRITISH GUIANA (1962-1963)

Proportional representation presented the perfect opportunity to bring down the Jagan government democratically. However, convincing the British Guianese people that PR was necessary and desirable was a daunting task. Jagan was clearly the most popular leader in the country and there was no chance that he would voluntarily agree to change the electoral system to one under which he would never again win a majority government. What was needed was some sort of emergency to show the Guianese people that Jagan was not fit to lead and that changing the electoral system would solve the country's problems.¹

To achieve this end, the United States planned to use covert action in British Guiana in the summer of 1962. It is now a matter of public record that a covert plan to oust the Jagan government existed.² The details of this covert action remain unclear since the State Department and CIA have seen fit to keep much of them classified for national security reasons. However, a clear general picture of what the covert action entailed can be constructed from declassified State Department documents.³

Because secret intelligence operations act as panaceas for policy makers, allowing them to effect policy in other nations without having to go through difficult and time-consuming diplomatic negotiations, covert action is often deemed the "handmaiden of foreign policy."⁴ The proper role of a foreign intelligence service is to gather information necessary to help policy makers come to a decision on an issue. In reality, however, the CIA has often played a part in effecting American foreign policy in other lands.⁵ The

Church Committee, for example, commented in 1976 that “covert action has been a tool of United States foreign policy for the past 28 years.”⁶ American intervention in British Guiana fell in line with this trend of using covert action as a means to implement foreign policy. In Theodore Sorenson’s words, President Kennedy “did not doubt either the necessity or the legitimacy of dirty tricks.”⁷

In a broad sense, American policy makers have used covert action to influence the internal political power balance or the climate of opinion in a country.⁸ In 1948, National Security Council (NSC) directive 10/2 deemed covert action to be a function of the newly created Central Intelligence Agency.⁹ Richard Bissell, former Deputy Director (Plans) of the CIA, in a 1968 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, outlined seven different ways the CIA used NSC 10/2 to intervene in the domestic affairs of other nations. These were political advice and counsel; subsidies to an individual; financial support and “technical assistance” to political parties; support of private organizations including labour unions; covert propaganda; private training of individuals; and economic operations designed to overthrow or to support a regime.¹⁰ There is evidence to suggest that in the case of British Guiana, the CIA supported political parties and labour groups and trained private individuals to help foment an economically debilitating strike in the colony in 1963. The US government did not, however, engage in paramilitary activities as it did in Guatemala in 1954. In short, American covert intervention in British Guiana was low-key but nonetheless effective.¹¹

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. maintains that covert action in British Guiana was the CIA’s brainchild. According to him, the Agency officials “decided [Jagan] was some great

menace and they got the bit between their teeth.”¹² Though intelligence analysts were hard-pressed to make any direct link between Jagan and the Soviet Union, the CIA was ever-ready to see Jagan as a potential threat to national security.¹³ The president’s former special assistant claims the reason for this was twofold. First, the Agency’s reaction to Jagan was partly a reflex action to the idea of another Castro in the hemisphere.¹⁴ The CIA worked in ignorance of Jagan’s true ideological disposition as did nearly everyone on the American side who played a part in ousting the British Guianese leader.

More importantly, however, Schlesinger suggests that CIA covert action was the result of the agency’s desire for self-preservation. In 1962, the CIA was still smarting from its loss in the Bay of Pigs debacle. The clandestine operations directorate, the Deputy Directorate for Plans (DDP)¹⁵ needed a place to practice its skills, to hone its techniques of covert action; in short, it wanted to “show [its] stuff.”¹⁶ Schlesinger wrote recently that,

The CIA had a large force of covert action operators who, in order to justify their existence, had to keep coming up with plans and projects. British Guiana was an obvious target.¹⁷

The Bay of Pigs called into question the utility of covert action as a method of effecting foreign policy. British Guiana presented the DDP with an opportunity to redeem itself.

The first covert plan that the CIA came up with involved manipulating an election in British Guiana, presumably one under the first-past-the-post electoral system. This plan, however, met opposition in the White House and State Department. The President’s National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy wrote Kennedy that he did not believe the

“CIA knows how to manipulate an election in British Guiana without a backfire.”¹⁸

Schlesinger concurred with this analysis of the Agency’s covert abilities and asked Kennedy whether the CIA could “carry out a really *covert* operation - i.e., an operation which, whatever suspicions Jagan might have, will leave no visible traces which he can cite before the world...as evidence of US intervention.”¹⁹ This reticence led to a reexamination of the Agency’s tactical plans for manipulating a first-past-the-post election in British Guiana, the result of which was the instigation of a politically safer, but no less effective, approach to covert action: the manipulation of the BG trades union movement.²⁰

Since the beginning of postwar covert action in Western Europe in the late-1940s, the CIA has enlisted the help of labour unions to stave off Communist infiltration in various countries.²¹ During the period in question, the AFL-CIO acted as a partner with the government to rid labour unions in Latin America and elsewhere of Communist elements.²² It also convinced big businesses that their only hope of survival in many countries lay in a free trade movement which acted as a bulwark against extremist movements and siphoned away worker discontent.²³ However, at the time, in Stanley Meisler’s words, “anyone expressing concern about the notion of an American labour movement becoming tangled in the purse strings of government and industry [was] pooh-poohed as a silly left-winger.”²⁴

During the 1960s, American government policy toward the Caribbean and West Indies included an “encourage[ment] and strengthening of democratic trade unionism and an appreciation on the part of West Indian trade union movements of US foreign policy and defense objectives.”²⁵ After the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy grew worried that

the AFL-CIO and its international arm, the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), could not do enough to fend off Communist influences in Latin American labour unions. For this reason he chartered the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) in August 1961.²⁶

According to William C. Doherty Jr., AIFLD's director after April 1962, the Institute's role was to provide foreign trade unions with funds for education and social development, as well as to give minor amounts for administrative overhead and office expenses.²⁷ But AIFLD also had a more sinister agenda: it acted as a secret arm of the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1962, 62 percent of its budget came from "government" sources.²⁸ Former CIA operative Philip Agee in a 1975 tell-all book, *Inside the Company*, claimed that William C. Doherty Jr. worked for the CIA in his capacity as director of AIFLD²⁹, and Arthur Schlesinger has noted that AIFLD "very likely played a role in organizing and financing opposition to Jagan."³⁰

In addition to supporting labour unions financially, AIFLD trained foreign labour "operatives" at its school in Front Royal, Virginia, in the art of "harassing the government by go-slow strikes, sabotage and other subversive activities..."³¹ At the end of their training period, foreign labour leaders returned to their countries as a "corps of salaried anti-Communist activists ready to do the bidding of the State Department."³² In the summer and fall of 1962, AIFLD trained no less than six British Guianese operatives who played pivotal roles in organizing and fomenting strikes in their country.³³

The Public Services International (PSI) a London-based labour movement and affiliate of the AFL-CIO also had a part in the covert plans to oust Cheddi Jagan. In

particular, Howard McCabe, a man who, according to Ronald Radosh, had no previous union experience,³⁴ liaised with BGTUC leader Richard Ishmael on several occasions and kept the State Department informed about developments in the trade union movement.³⁵ The *London Times*' "Insight" team later claimed that McCabe was not a labour leader at all, but rather a CIA agent working covertly with the BGTUC to effect Jagan's ouster.³⁶

The US government implemented covert action in British Guiana concomitantly with an overt policy of cooperation. President Kennedy did not forget his government's October 1961 promise to send an economic mission to British Guiana, and by the summer of 1962 the Hoffman-Mayne mission went to the colony as a gesture of goodwill.³⁷ At the same time, the State Department continued to make overtures to Jagan's main rival Forbes Burnham. The British considered Burnham to be clever, but at the same time a demagogue and racist who looked to politics as a means of achieving personal power.³⁸ American assessments were likewise negative. PSI representative and purported CIA agent Howard McCabe had a low opinion of Burnham after having met him,³⁹ and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. told Kennedy that British Guiana would be worse off under Burnham than under Jagan.⁴⁰ The only redeeming feature Burnham had going for him was that he did not have the same damaging Communist reputation in the United States that Cheddi Jagan did. The State Department, therefore, brought him to Washington in May 1962 to meet with State and AID officials and various labour leaders including Serafino Romualdi.⁴¹

Burnham made a favourable impression on the labour leaders he met with in Washington⁴² and because he was more anti-Soviet than Jagan, the State Department favoured him as a "lesser risk" than Jagan.⁴³ After returning to British Guiana, he kept in

touch with the US government via the PTTI between May and October 1962.⁴⁴ Then on 14 October, less than two weeks before a scheduled Independence Conference, Burnham met in secret once again with State officials. This time he arrived with “customs courtesies arranged,” a consideration not warranted by his status as BG opposition leader.⁴⁵ At this meeting, State officials told Burnham that on no uncertain terms would he receive any US economic aid should he join with Jagan to form a coalition government.⁴⁶

Armed with the moral support of the State Department, Burnham returned to his country and adopted the slogan “no PR, no independence.”⁴⁷ He saw to it that the Independence Conference held in Georgetown on 25 October degenerated into a squabble over proportional representation. Burnham rejected any of Jagan’s ideas or efforts to compromise on the issue and remained obstinate that PR was necessary before independence.⁴⁸ By cultivating Burnham’s support, the United States successfully implemented a policy of divide and rule in the colony in late-1962 and bought itself more time to continue covert involvement with the BGTUC.

But by March of 1963, Consul General Melby reported from Georgetown that time was on Jagan’s side and the longer the United States dithered, the further Jagan and his party would spread their “tentacles into Guianese life” and the harder it would be to dislodge them from government.⁴⁹ Melby noted that the PPP began to stack the bureaucracy with its supporters.⁵⁰ It appeared to be accepting kickbacks from government coffers and began to manipulate the media. Though private owners controlled the colony’s broadcasting company, for example, the party vetted local news reports to make

sure they would not “embarrass” the Government.⁵¹ Melby further expressed concern over the fact that the PPP was actively recruiting the colony’s youth while the PNC overlooked this significant segment of the electorate. Finally, in early 1963, the UF began to lose the support of all but the white and Amerindian populations in the colony because its leader, Peter D’Aguiar, had failed to “develop any political intelligence” since he formed the party in 1961.⁵² In short, Melby believed the United States had to act expeditiously in British Guiana lest the PPP’s political position solidify to a point where Jagan’s removal would be impossible. “The immediate objective,” he wrote his boss Dean Rusk in March 1963, “is the replacement of the PPP in office.”⁵³ The longer the US waited the more the PPP would solidify its political position and the harder it would be to “unscramble and reassemble the Guianese egg.”⁵⁴

In addition, the more time the United States took to come up with a solution to the Jagan government, the more time the British had to rethink their offer of changing the electoral system in the colony. Specifically, Melby worried that the Conservative government of Harold Macmillan was on its way out of power in 1963 and he believed that a Labour Party government would not be as amenable to the idea of PR in British Guiana. Indeed, in the past, the Labour Party had queried the Conservative government in Parliament about the date of the colony’s independence.⁵⁵ David Ennals, Secretary of the Labour Party’s Overseas Department, informed Ambassador Bruce in London that his party did not believe Jagan was another Castro and that it considered PR an obvious trick to oust Jagan from power. Moreover, the Labour Party felt that PR would only accentuate racialism in the country since treating the colony as a single constituency would

discourage parties from trying to attract multiracial support in smaller areas.⁵⁶ Thus in Melby's opinion, something had to be done to force Harold Macmillan's government to suspend British Guiana's constitution and impose PR before it lost the next election.

The problem, however, was that Macmillan needed a sound excuse to suspend the constitution; nothing short of a "grave emergency" would be required. Melby contended that any prolonged work stoppage in the colony would be just such a "grave emergency,"⁵⁷ yet he did not think that one would happen in the near future. Though there was a possibility that a strike might develop in the sugar industry, he believed it would be easily settled with "increased daily wages and fringe benefits."⁵⁸

Shortly after Melby expressed his concerns, the British and Americans received the help of an ally which would be of significant use to them twice in 1963: luck. An opportunity for a work stoppage presented itself when Jagan introduced a controversial labour relations bill in the Legislative Assembly similar to the one that led to his ouster from office in 1953. In 1963, British Guiana's union system was not a consolidated one and different unions vied for jurisdictional power in a given industry. Sometimes these disputes turned violent, as on 5 April 1963 when inter-union rivalry at the Rice Marketing Board in Georgetown resulted in minor rioting, 1 death, 24 injuries and 109 arrests.⁵⁹ Jagan felt compelled to act after this event and proposed a national labour relations act modeled on the Wagner Act of the US New Deal Era.⁶⁰

Jagan designed the bill to eliminate "company unions," something which he viewed as a serious problem in British Guiana's trades union movement. He always maintained that the Man Power Citizen's Association (MPCA), the largest union in the BGTUC, was

a pro-Bookers union.⁶¹ Ian Mikardo, sometime Executive Member of the British Labour party wrote that the MPCA was a company union dependent on company money. This was clear, he claimed, if one read the union's official newspaper, the *Labour Advocate*, whose most interesting feature was not its editorial matter, but its advertisements:

In this trade union journal there are 146 column-inches of text and 94 column-inches of employers' advertisements. The back page contains a full page advertisement for - guess who? You have got it - Bookers. It is pretty obvious where the money comes from to keep this union journal going.⁶²

Jagan's labour relations bill aimed to outlaw company unions such as the MPCA.

In addition, the labour relations bill sought to end jurisdictional disputes amongst unions such as the one which caused the mini-riot of 5 April. The Guiana Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU), for example, refused to recognize the authority of the MPCA in the sugar industry.⁶³ The bill, when enacted, gave workers of a certain industry the right to vote for the union they wanted to represent them in the BGTUC. Jagan maintained that the bill was merely an attempt to inject a modicum of democracy into the trade union system.⁶⁴ But the BGTUC did not see it this way. In reality, the bill gave the government the power to decide "after due investigation" which unions should be recognized by employers. In this sense, the BGTUC believed that Jagan's bill had as its sole aim "the destruction of free trade unions in Guiana" and it called a general strike on 22 April. Refusing to be intimidated, Jagan passed the bill on the same day.⁶⁵

The labour relations bill was merely a smoke screen to mask the real intention of the BGTUC. On 7 May, Home Affairs Minister Claude Christian agreed to hold off

enacting the legislation until he had a chance to speak with the BGTUC, but the union rejected his overture outright.⁶⁶ Indeed, according to Consul General Melby, who was in regular contact with BGTUC head Richard Ishmael, the real objective of the strike was the overthrow of the Jagan government.⁶⁷

During the strike, Jagan believed that everyone from the BGTUC to the PNC and UF along with the CIA, British Intelligence and the press were out to get him.⁶⁸ D'Aguiar and Burnham used their rhetorical powers to sweep the people into a frenzy. Burnham in particular was a spellbinding orator⁶⁹ and played a significant role in maintaining and spreading anti-Jagan feelings amongst the populace. On 9 May, conditions were such that Jagan asked Governor Grey to declare a state of emergency in the colony.⁷⁰ By proposing the labour relations bill, Jagan had given the BGTUC a reason to strike. If the situation deteriorated further, the British would have the excuse they needed to impose PR. The CIA took it upon itself to continue covert activity in the colony with the intention of bringing about the requisite "grave emergency" as quickly as possible.

American covert operators and funds played a pivotal role in blowing the strike of 1963 out of proportion. Without funds, the strike of 1963 would have lasted no more than a few weeks at best. Instead, it lasted 80 days and virtually crippled the Guianese economy. Richard Ishmael received overt international support from world trade unions such as the American AFL-CIO, the British Trades Union Council, the Caribbean Confederation of Labour as well as ORIT. These organizations sent food and medical supplies to the BGTUC to aid families of the strikers as well as the general population affected by the strike.⁷¹ But nourishment was not enough to keep the strike going; the

BGTUC needed actual funds to keep morale high. International labour groups did not have sufficient funds help it in this in this manner. For this reason, the Department of State played a key role in coordinating the strike relief efforts both from Port of Spain and Georgetown.⁷² For example, the US government arranged for the deposit of a minimum of \$30,000 (US) in the accounts of Joseph Pollydore and Walter Hood, British Guianese trade unionists affiliated with ORIT, to help the BGTUC “meet the shock of [the] first checkless payday.”⁷³

Hitherto, the source of the BGTUC’s funding remained a secret. The AFL-CIO openly admitted that it supported the BGTUC financially in its struggle against the Jagan government but claimed that the funds came from union coffers and nowhere else.⁷⁴ The US government maintained that it had nothing to do with the strike efforts. However, in the memoranda sent back and forth through government channels, one gleans evidence to the contrary. For example, Adlai Stevenson, America’s representative at the United Nations, found out through a UK delegate that the United States had undertaken “operations aimed at weakening Jagan and his party” during the strike.⁷⁵ At the beginning of the strike, Consul General Melby wired the State Department that it should be wary of sending money directly to BGTUC head Richard Ishmael who “is too erratic, talks too much [and] *would be bound to give away [the] source of [the] funds.*”⁷⁶ Because the source of the funds was supposedly the AFL-CIO and its affiliates, who openly admitted to supporting the BGTUC, the source that Ishmael “was bound to give away” had to be none other than the US government.

How much the US Government spent on the strike of 1963 is a matter for

speculation since the State Department is still not forthcoming with the information. Chaitram Singh estimates that the US government through the CIA spent approximately \$1 million (US) on the strike, exclusive of the generous \$250 (BWI) per month salaries that AIFLD paid their trained Guianese union leaders. What is clear, however, is that America financed the BGTUC so generously that it considered ending the strike an unpalatable option. Robert Willis, General Secretary of the British Typographical Union, who attempted to mediate the strike, reported that “if Dr. Jagan had called me and told me that the unions could write their own demands and he would agree to them, the TUC would have still found reasons for not accepting them.”⁷⁷

How the US Government channeled the funds to the BGTUC also remains a matter of conjecture. In February 1967, Neil Sheehan reported in the *New York Times* that the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, an affiliate of the London-based PSI, distributed CIA funds to unions in Latin America. The American Newspaper Guild, for example, received about \$1 million (US) from the Gotham Foundation and the Michigan Fund, both of which Sheehan believed were CIA conduits.⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that Gene Meakins, President of the American Newspaper Guild, had to sneak into British Guiana clandestinely during the strikes because Jagan refused him entry.⁷⁹

Providing the BGTUC with funds allowed it to prolong the strike without having to fear starvation or a drop in its members' living standards. But the strike was just a means to an end. The real goal of the US Government was to cripple British Guiana's economy to the point where Great Britain would have no recourse but to intervene and

force Jagan's resignation.⁸⁰ To effect this complete crippling of the economy, Jagan claimed the CIA imposed a "full blockade on shipping and airlines."⁸¹ In reality, however, airports closed simply because there was not enough staff to operate them and the shipping union refused to unload foreign ships at Guianese docks. Oil was British Guiana's "Achilles heel" and without it the rice industry suffered considerably. Cuba sent oil tankers to British Guiana so that the economy did not grind to a complete halt, and Jagan noted in his memoirs that "the Cuban fuel and gasoline really saved my government."⁸²

What Jagan did not acknowledge, however, was that the British government actually kept the Cuban oil tankers safe from BGTUC sabotage. CIA Deputy Director (Plans) Richard Helms noted that the Cold Stream Guards protected Cuban tankers which arrived carrying food and fuel to break the strike. They also supervised the loading of a Russian freighter.⁸³ Previously, the State Department had been assured that the Cold Stream Guards would only be used to maintain essential services and would not act as strikebreakers.⁸⁴

Jagan's contention that everyone was out to get him needs to be reassessed in this light. The government of Great Britain had always wanted to leave British Guiana as soon as possible. It had never seen the necessity of replacing Jagan and its support of his government during the 1963 strike angered and scared the State Department who feared that the British government would "wash its hands of British Guiana by granting early independence [and] leave the mess on [America's] doorstep."⁸⁵ At this point, Dean Rusk and Richard Helms noted that British Guiana had become a major issue "with the highest

foreign policy implications” for both the United Kingdom and the United States.⁸⁶ For this reason, Kennedy and Macmillan met at Birch Grove, England, at the end of June 1963 to further negotiate what to do with the Jagan government.

Until quite recently, there has been no real public record of what the UK and US government discussed at Birch Grove. The joint communiqué that the two countries released after the meeting did not mention anything about British Guiana.⁸⁷ The memoirs of Harold Macmillan, Theodore Sorenson, and Dean Rusk are all silent on the issue, and Arthur Schlesinger’s *Thousand Days* covers the important discussion in only one cryptic sentence.⁸⁸ In the 1970s, Dean Rusk wrote to historian Thomas J. Spinner that he had “no recollection that the matter [of British Guiana] figured prominently when President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan met at Birch Grove in 1963.”⁸⁹ In reality, however, the discussion was very important for the US Government, for it finally settled the question of British equivocation over the issue of British Guiana.

The meeting was at the highest level with Kennedy and Macmillan participating directly in the discussion of British Guiana. On the American side, Secretary of State Rusk, Ambassador Bruce, NSC advisor McGeorge Bundy and State Department official William R. Tyler were present. On the British side, Foreign Secretary Home, Ambassador to the United States Sir David Ormsby Gore, Colonial Secretary Duncan Sandys and other government officials attended the meeting which began first thing in the morning of 30 June 1963.⁹⁰ Colonial Secretary Sandys opened the discussion by outlining four courses of action for the British and Americans in Guiana. These were to “muddle on” as they had

been doing; to grant independence right away; to suspend the constitution and implement direct rule; or, to establish a UF-PNC government and then grant British Guiana independence.⁹¹

Each of these solutions posed problems for the British, the foremost of which was financial. Staying in British Guiana was costly, and reimplementing some sort of direct rule would be even more so. Second, if Jagan were forcibly deposed, Sandys believed that he would form an underground resistance movement prone to violence. Third, if the British government removed Jagan from office, its image in world affairs would be “pretty severely tarnished.” Sandys feared that there would be pressure from the international community to do the same thing in Southern Rhodesia. Finally, if the United Kingdom were to grant British Guiana its independence under a Burnham-D’Aguiar alliance, such a coalition would most certainly collapse on its own. America, Sandys believed, had to be prepared to shore up an independent PNC-UF-led Guyana lest Cheddi Jagan return to power.⁹²

However, Kennedy was not concerned with financial matters. His main worry, one which he reiterated twice during the US-UK discussion at Birch Grove, was the elections he faced in 1964 and how a “Communist” British Guiana would look in the eyes of the American populace.

...the great danger in 1964 was that, since Cuba would be the major American public issue, adding British Guiana to Cuba could well tip the scales, and someone would be elected who would take military action against Cuba. [Kennedy] said that the American people would not stand for a situation which looked as though the Soviet Union had leapfrogged over Cuba to land on

the continent in the Western Hemisphere.⁹³

Coming hat in hand to the British at Birch Grove paid off. When Sandys asked whether the United States would be prepared to support Britain in the United Nations should the latter resume direct rule in the colony, Kennedy piped up enthusiastically: "It would be a pleasure. We would go all out to the extent necessary."⁹⁴ Thus the Americans left England on 30 June with a promise that the British would reimpose direct rule in the colony. Kennedy felt assured that Jagan would be deposed and that he could enter the 1964 election race with one less worry on his mind.

The strike ended on 6 July 1963, just a few days after the Birch Grove meeting. There is no direct correlation with the strike's end date and the results of the Birch Grove meeting. However, the strike only ground to a halt when the BGTUC agreed to drop its demand for back pay during the strike period and accepted an offer for loans to its members equivalent to two weeks' salary.⁹⁵ Jagan capitulated to the all the other demands of the BGTUC, including a complete abrogation of the labour relations bill and a promise to consult trade unions before proposing any new labour legislation.⁹⁶ Duncan Sandys estimated the cost of the strike at \$14.5 million (BWI) in Budget revenues alone⁹⁷ and Governor Grey doubled this estimate to \$30 million (BWI).⁹⁸ Sugar production fell 40,000 tons short of its expected target, and ALCAN began looking around for other sources of bauxite after its production fell by nearly 25 percent.⁹⁹ But pecuniary loss was only superficial and did not do any long run damage to the BG economy. The real costs were in the human suffering brought about by the American-sponsored strike.

Ten people, including one British soldier, lost their lives during the riots that ensued between April and July 1963 and countless more suffered injuries, both in Georgetown and the rural areas.¹⁰⁰ It seemed that the strike brought to the fore the deep-seated racial antagonisms that existed in the colony from time immemorial. Racial overtones became apparent when the government, to keep economic production from ceasing entirely, brought in “scabs” of East Indian origin to replace striking African workers.¹⁰¹ “Indians going peacefully about their business were attacked in Georgetown and were mercilessly and savagely beaten,” Jagan wrote. Nearly everyday during the 80 day strike some form of violence and looting occurred.¹⁰² But the violence was not one-sided. Indians reciprocated with rough attacks of their own. On 6 July, for example, British troops had to kill two East Indians in an attempt to stop a racial battle in a village.¹⁰³

The racial tension in British Guianese society dates back to the days of emancipation and the beginning of indentured servitude in the nineteenth century, but the short term cause of the violence in 1963 was American involvement. Tension bubbled to the surface and developed into full-blown violence only after the strike had gone on for over a month.¹⁰⁴ American funds allowed the BGTUC to carry on its strike for as long as it did. Without financial aid, the work stoppage would most certainly have ended sooner. But, to suggest that foreign intervention alone caused the violence would be an exaggeration. Looting and racial rioting, for example, stills exists in the culturally pluralistic Guyana. The most recent flare-up occurred after the 1992 elections.¹⁰⁵

The racial violence in the colony gave the British government the excuse it needed

to keep its promise to Kennedy and impose a solution. "Each race has a deep-rooted fear of the prospect of living under a Government controlled by the other, after independence," Colonial Secretary Sandys said about the Indians and Africans. After the strike, he told both Burnham and Jagan that he would not discuss independence or constitutional change as long as the threat of further violence remained.¹⁰⁶

But, as the racial strife simmered, Sandys agreed to meet Jagan, Burnham and D'Aguiar in London. The Constitutional Conference of October 1963 was a failure from the outset. When discussion reached the point of deadlock, Sandys, an impatient man,¹⁰⁷ threw up his hands in despair and adjourned the Conference, leaving the Guianese leaders to come with a solution on their own.¹⁰⁸ The private discussion was equally unproductive. On 25 October, Jagan, Burnham and D'Aguiar sent a joint letter to Sandys asking the British government to "settle all outstanding constitutional issues," on their behalf.¹⁰⁹

Jagan agreed to allow Sandys to impose a solution because he believed that the Colonial Secretary would "act in good faith."¹¹⁰ By giving the British free rein, however, Jagan might as well have resigned his position as Premier. Chaitram Singh calls this Jagan's "biggest blunder of his political career."¹¹¹ But, recently released documents show that this was not as a great mistake as was once believed. The Constitutional Conference of 1963 was a sham and Sandys had no intention of honouring anything the three party leaders might have agreed upon. The British intended, quite simply, to impose a solution, regardless of the outcome of the conference.¹¹²

Thus, the *carte blanche* given to Sandys by the BG leaders shows that luck was once again on the side of the Americans and British in late-1963. With his free rein, he no

longer needed to impose a solution on British Guiana, an action that would have drawn fire in the United Nations. Sandys immediately declared that the root of the trouble in British Guiana was the development of party politics along racial lines and that proportional representation would resolve this problem by “encourag[ing] interparty coalitions and multi-racial groupings.”¹¹³ British Guiana was to have new elections under this system before Great Britain would allow independence, Sandys maintained.¹¹⁴

Jagan returned to his country disgruntled and angry at Britain’s “breach of faith.”¹¹⁵ He refused to accept the Sandys decision and began making anti-colonialist speeches all over British Guiana. “The Sandys decision points a dagger at your throat,” he told an audience of East Indian rice farmers in November 1963, “you must tell the British Government of your unanimous categorical rejection of their imposition.”¹¹⁶ In December, he informed a crowd that “the colonialists will give freedom if they are forced to do so as in Algeria...”¹¹⁷ Both the dagger analogy and the reference to Algeria suggested that Jagan would resort to violence if the British imposed PR. Indeed, 1964 would be marred by further racially driven disorders and this time Jagan and the PPP were the instigators, not the BGTUC and the United States.

NOTES

¹ Airgram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 14 March 1963. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII...*p.593.

² See for example the State Department and White House memoranda from July 1962 published in *FRUS Volume XII...*, pp. 577-78.

- ³ These documents support the version of events described most succinctly by Ronald Radosh in his 1969 work *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*. (New York: Random House, 1969).
- ⁴ Roy Godson *Dirty Tricks or Trump Cards: US Covert Action and Counterintelligence*. (Washington: Brassey's, 1995), p. 120.
- ⁵ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*. (New York: Dell, 1974), p. 280.
- ⁶ Stephen Knott, *Secret and Sanctioned*. (New York: Oxford, 1996), p. 160.
- ⁷ Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p. 631.
- ⁸ Roy Godson, *Dirty Tricks*...p. 134.
- ⁹ Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Post War World*. (New York: Basic Books, 1987), p. 36.
- ¹⁰ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA*... p. 63.
- ¹¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.
- ¹² Tim Wiener, "Kennedy-CIA Plot Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994.
- ¹³ SNIE 87.2-62, 11 April 1962. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 565.
- ¹⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.
- ¹⁵ This directorate was later renamed Deputy Directorate Operations (DDO).
- ¹⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. quoted in an editorial. *Nation*. 4 June 1990, pp. 763-64.
- ¹⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.
- ¹⁸ Memorandum. Bundy to Kennedy, 13 July 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 577.
- ¹⁹ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 19 July 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 578. Italics are Schlesinger's.
- ²⁰ Memorandum. Bundy to Kennedy, 13 July 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 577.
- ²¹ Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Post War World*. (New York: Basic Books, 1987), p. 14.
- ²² The most comprehensive work on the role of labour in American foreign policy is Ronald Radosh's *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*. (New York: Random House, 1969).
- ²³ National Security Council Report. (NSC 60002/1) 21 March 1960. Secret. *FRUS Volume IV: American Republics, 1958-1960*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991), p. 435.
- ²⁴ Stanley Meisler, "Dubious Role of AFL-CIO: Meddling in Latin America," *Nation*. 10 February 1964, p. 134.
- ²⁵ National Security Council Report. (NSC 60002/1) 21 March 1960. Secret. *FRUS Volume IV: American Republics, 1958-1960*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991), p. 435.
- ²⁶ Ronald Radosh, *American Labor*...pp. 415-16.
- ²⁷ William C. Doherty, Jr., letter to editor. *New York Times*, 6 November 1994.
- ²⁸ Ronald Radosh, *American Labor*...p. 417.
- ²⁹ Philip Agee, *Inside the Company*. (New York: Bantam, 1975).

- ³⁰ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.
- ³¹ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 300.
- ³² Ronald Radosh, *American Labor*...p. 422.
- ³³ Jagan claims there were six AIFLD graduates during the strike of 1963, while George Morris puts the number at eleven. See Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 300 and George Morris, *The CIA and American Labor. The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy*. (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 89.
- ³⁴ Ronald Radosh, *American Labor*...p. 402.
- ³⁵ Telegram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 22 February 1962, Confidential. 841d.062/2-2162, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ³⁶ "Macmillan, Sandys Backed CIA Anti-Jagan Plot," *Sunday Times* (London), 23 April 1967.
- ³⁷ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 21 June 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 572.
- ³⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *Thousand Days*...p. 778.
- ³⁹ Telegram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 22 February 1962, Confidential. 841d.062/2-2162, Box 2478. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁴⁰ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 21 June 1962. Top Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 572.
- ⁴¹ Memorandum of Conversation. Forbes Burnham with Alexis Johnson, Wm. C. Burdett et al., 5 May 1962. Secret. 741d.00/5-562, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁴² Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *Thousand Days*...p. 778.
- ⁴³ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.
- ⁴⁴ Memorandum of Conversation. Forbes Burnham with Alexis Johnson, Wm. C. Burdett et al., 5 May 1962. Secret. 741d.00/5-562, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁴⁵ Telegram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 12 October 1962. Secret. 741d.00/1262, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁴⁶ Memorandum of Conversation. D.A. Greenhill, Counselor, British Embassy, with Wm. C. Burdett, 7 September 1962, Confidential. 741d.00/9-762, Box 1668. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁴⁷ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 267.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-269.
- ⁴⁹ Airgram. Melby to State, 14 March, 1963. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 590.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 588.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 589.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 590-91.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 593.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 587.
- ⁵⁵ Mr. Worsley questions Colonial Secretary Maudling. *Hansard (UK)*, 3 July 1962.
- ⁵⁶ Telegram. London (Bruce) to State, 8 November 1963. Secret. 1963 Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

- ⁵⁷ Airgram. Melby to State, 14 March, 1963. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 593.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 592.
- ⁵⁹ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. January 11-18, 1964, p. 19844.
- ⁶⁰ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 271.
- ⁶¹ Thakur Rishee, "Politics and Hegemony in Guyanese Nationalism." Ph.D. Thesis, York University (Toronto), 1990, p. 169.
- ⁶² Cited in Ashton Chase, *A History of Trade Unionism in Guyana, 1900-1961*. (Ruimveldt, Guyana: New Guyana Company, 1966), p. 219.
- ⁶³ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 271.
- ⁶⁴ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 271.
- ⁶⁵ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. January 11-18, 1964, p. 19844.
- ⁶⁶ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. January 11-18, 1964, p. 19844.
- ⁶⁷ Telegram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 24 April 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3840. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁶⁸ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 272.
- ⁶⁹ GS Mount and SJ Randall, *An International History of the Caribbean Basin*. (Manuscript Copy), p. 5.
- ⁷⁰ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. January 11-18, 1964, p. 19844.
- ⁷¹ Telegram. State (Rusk) to London (Bruce), 5 July 1963. Secret. AID (US), Box 3313. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD) and *New York Times*, 22 February 1967, p. 17.
- ⁷² Telegram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 24 April 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3840. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁷³ Telegram. Port of Spain to State, 28 April 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁷⁴ Address by Senator Thomas Dodd, 27 June 1963. *Congressional Record 88th Congress, 1st Session. 1963.*, p. 11913.
- ⁷⁵ Telegram. Stevenson to State, 17 June 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3840. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁷⁶ Telegram. Melby to State, 24 April 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3840. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD). (Emphasis added by present author).
- ⁷⁷ Chaitram Singh, *Guyana: Politics in a Plantation Society*. (New York: Praeger, 1988), p. 33.
- ⁷⁸ Neil Sheehan, "CIA Men Aided Strikes in Guiana Against Dr. Jagan," *New York Times*. 22 February 1967, pp. 1 and 17.
- ⁷⁹ George Morris, *The CIA and American Labor. The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy*. (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 88.
- ⁸⁰ Telegram. Melby to State, 11 May 1963. Secret. DEF BrGu, Box 3715. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).
- ⁸¹ Tim Wiener, "Kennedy-CIA Plot Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 1.
- ⁸² Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...pp. 275-77.
- ⁸³ Memorandum for the Record. (Meeting on British Guiana). President Kennedy with various members of the Department of State, AID, the White House and CIA, 21 June

1963. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 605.

⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation. M. Gordon Knox, State Department, with John D. Hennings, Colonial Attaché, British Embassy, 23 May 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3840. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁸⁵ Telegram. Rusk to American Embassy London (Bruce), 21 June 1963. Secret. *FRUS*...p. 606.

⁸⁶ Telegram. Rusk to American Embassy London (Bruce), 21 June 1963. Secret. *FRUS*...p. 606.; Memorandum for the Record. (Meeting on British Guiana). President Kennedy with various members of the Department of State, AID, the White House and CIA, 21 June 1963. Secret. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 605.

⁸⁷ Drew Pearson, "Castro and Jagan," in Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 304.

⁸⁸ The sentence reads as follows: "Then on to Birch Grove in England, where Macmillan said no on the multilateral force and yes on British Guiana." Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 886.

⁸⁹ Thomas J. Spinner Jr., *A Political and Social History of Guyana, 1945-1983*. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1985), p. 111.

⁹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation. Kennedy and Macmillan et al, 30 June 1963. Secret. *FRUS*...p. 607.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p. 608.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 609.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *Commonwealth Survey*, 13 August 1963. Volume 9, No. 7., p. 733.

⁹⁶ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 11-18 January 1964, p. 19845.

⁹⁷ *Commonwealth Survey*, 13 August 1963. Volume 9, No. 7., p. 732.

⁹⁸ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 11-18 January 1964, p. 19845.

⁹⁹ Philip Reno, *Ordeal*...p. 57.

¹⁰⁰ *Commonwealth Survey*, 13 August 1963. Volume 9, No. 7., p. 732

¹⁰¹ Dennis A. Bartels, "Class Conflict and Racist Ideology in the Formation of Modern Guyanese Society." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1978., p. 171.

¹⁰² Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 284.

¹⁰³ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 11-18 January 1964, p. 19845.

¹⁰⁴ Jagan contends that the violence began in earnest on 30 May at the funeral of his Home Affairs Minister Claude Christian. Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Greg Chamberlain, "Mobs Rampage as Guyana Poll Goes Badly for Regime," *Guardian* (London). 7 October 1992, p.11.

¹⁰⁶ *Commonwealth Survey*, 13 August 1963. Volume 9, No. 7, p. 731.

¹⁰⁷ Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*...p. 386.

¹⁰⁸ *British Guiana Conference 1963*. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963), p.3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...p. 323.

¹¹¹ Chaitram Singh, *Guyana*...p. 34.

¹¹² Telegram. London (Jones) to State, 3 October 1963. Secret. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹¹³ *Commonwealth Survey*, 19 November 1963. Volume 9, No. 24, pp. 1004-1005.

¹¹⁴ *British Guiana Conference 1963*. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963), p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...p. 323.

¹¹⁶ Airgram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 8 December 1963. Unclassified. E5 BrGu, Box 3368. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹¹⁷ Airgram. Georgetown (Melby) to State, 29 December 1963. Unclassified. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

EPILOGUE: 1964 AND AFTER

Kennedy's untimely death in November 1963 left the records of American relations with British Guiana somewhat dislocated.¹ However, the change of Presidents did not lead to any modifications in American policy. One of Lyndon B. Johnson's biographers, Philip Geyelin, noted that the "Cuban syndrome" continued to exert a profound influence in all levels of the bureaucracy from Johnson down.² British Guiana with its "Communist" leader still posed a threat to the Johnson administration. But, at this point, America had achieved its aims in British Guiana. Its fear that British Guiana would turn into "another Cuba" had been largely assuaged by Britain's Birch Grove promise to implement PR or direct rule in the colony, either of which would depose Jagan. What is more, by late-1963, British Guiana's importance in American foreign policy had diminished because of the emergence of other, more pressing, matters including Vietnam, the nuclear test ban treaty, and the civil rights struggle.³

In British Guiana, the PPP-supported GAWU, a sugar workers' union comprised mainly of East Indians, initiated a series of strikes on individual sugar estates in mid-February 1964. Ostensibly these strikes began because of a concern over the rate of pay for cutting cane.⁴ They later grew into a struggle for recognition in the BGTUC. Hitherto the pro-business MPCA had represented the East Indians in the BGTUC, a situation the latter group did not feel was fair.⁵ In reality, however, the sugar strike was a retaliation by the PPP for the imposition of PR. Deputy Premier Brindley Benn, for example, suggested that he could apply pressure on the British Government to reverse the Sandys decision by shutting down the sugar industry for 80 weeks.⁶

Violence broke out on 17 February after the BGTUC brought in African scabs from the cities to replace the striking East Indian plantation workers.⁷ In 1964, there was no mistaking the racial origins of the violence that took place. However, whereas the disturbances in 1963 were spontaneous and largely the result of “hooliganism,” the violence in 1964 was particularly horrifying because of its premeditated and especially brutal nature. On 6 March, for example, a worker drove a tractor through a crowd of people, killing one woman and injuring fourteen others. On 23 March, an unidentified assailant--some speculated he was with the PPP--threw a bomb at a school bus carrying children of a plantation’s managerial staff. One child died. Finally, Arthur Abhram, a senior civil servant of Portuguese origins and a supporter of the UF, died along with seven of his eight children when arsonists burned his home on 12 June.⁸

The AFL-CIO deplored the violence that occurred in British Guiana as a result of the GAWU strike, but placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the PPP and the “GAWU assassins.”⁹ Secretary of State Dean Rusk argued that the GAWU strike was illegal and that the BGTUC, as the duly recognized union in British Guiana, should be given the full protection of the law.¹⁰

Jagan and the PPP government believed that British Guiana’s largely African police force allowed the violence to go unabated. He suggested that in one instance armed police officers stood by and watched while a gang of thugs raped two women.¹¹ Eventually Janet Jagan resigned her position as Home Affairs minister when the Commissioner of Police, P.G. Owen, refused to ask for the help of British troops in stopping the violence, claiming that she could not work as Minister of Home Affairs

without the complete cooperation of the police.¹² Her resignation was a well-crafted political move designed to attract international attention to the fact that the British government was not helping to stop the violence in British Guiana.

The strike officially ended in June when Governor Sir Richard Luyt assumed full emergency powers in the colony. He detained a number of PPP leaders, including Deputy Premier Brindley Benn, Moses Bhagwan, leader of the PPP's youth organization, and Harry Lall, president of the GAWU. This seemed to stop the violence, though incidents continued throughout June and July.¹³ The GAWU never did achieve its demands, but 176 people died in the effort.¹⁴

Other than moral support given to the MPCA and BGTUC by the AFL-CIO, America did not play any part in the violence of 1964. After the strikes, however, the State Department continued its cultivation of Forbes Burnham as an alternative to Cheddi Jagan. Burnham remembered quite clearly State's contention that aid would not be given to a PPP-PNC alliance and he refused all of Jagan's overtures to form a coalition government to end the strife.¹⁵ Consul General Carlson met with Burnham in November 1964 and had him promise that should the United States give him assistance, British Guiana would not recognize the USSR or associate in anyway with the Castro regime.¹⁶

Jagan's future seemed bleak in 1964. Politically, he knew he was drowning, and he flailed away as best he could to try to keep from going under. To this end he undertook initiatives in foreign affairs, actions not permitted him under the BG Constitution and therefore *ultra vires*. He appealed to Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah to assist in negotiating an agreement between the PPP and PNC.¹⁷ Of course, Burnham's

intransigence assured that nothing came of the Ghanaian mission's efforts. Jagan also made overtures to socialist countries for technical help which he believed might give the British Guianese the impression that he was in the process of developing some "grandiose scheme" to better the economy.¹⁸ Finally, he asked the leader of Trinidad and Tobago, Eric Williams, to mediate in the colony. Williams' agreed, though his motives were not wholly altruistic. His country was culturally pluralistic as well, and he feared that the racial violence in British Guiana would spill over into Trinidad.¹⁹ Williams' proposal was an impracticable long-term scheme for a United Nations trusteeship whereby the colony would be ruled temporarily by a UN delegation.²⁰

But Jagan's appeal to the international community failed to save him. Under the British Guiana Constitution Order brought into effect on 23 June, the colony held elections on 7 December 1964 under the new proportional representation system. Not surprisingly, voting was split distinctly along racial lines. The PPP captured 45.8 percent of the popular vote, while the PNC came up with 40.5 percent, and the UF 12.4 percent.²¹ The PPP's share of the popular vote actually went up by 3.2 percent as a result of defection from the UF and PNC and an increase in the East Indian population. The UF and PNC, on the other hand, saw their proportion of the popular vote diminish by 3.9 percent and 0.4 percent, respectively.²² Splinter groups, including the religiously-based Guiana United Muslim Party took a handful of votes, but nothing substantial.²³ Clearly, Jagan was still the most popular leader in the country.

Under PR, the parties won a percentage of the seats in the Legislative Assembly commensurate with their percentage of the popular vote. Therefore, the PPP took 24

seats, the PNC 22, and the UF just 7 seats.²⁴ Thus none of the parties had a majority in the Legislative Assembly and legislative politics would be hamstrung unless two of the parties coalesced to form a majority government. Under the old system of first-past-the-post, Jagan would have had enough seats in the Assembly to govern.²⁵

In October 1964, when the Labour Government came to power in Great Britain under Harold Wilson, Jagan held some hope that Macmillan's policies towards the PPP would be reversed. Wilson, after all, was a socialist of sorts like Jagan.²⁶ However, Wilson decided to toe the American line in British Guiana, claiming that he would not be betraying the socialist cause because the PNC was a socialist party.²⁷ Once in power he realized that British Guiana was a financial drain on his government's coffers. Still, he told George Ball that his government would not grant independence to British Guiana until the situation justified it. But he did not put forward any changes to PR which suggested that he wanted to cooperate with the United States over the issue.²⁸ Indeed in opposition, Patrick Gordon Walker, then Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, told Assistant Secretary of State Tyler that the Labour party wanted to cooperate with the United States and sought a way to give British Guiana independence without "affronting or injuring the United States," while at the same time not appearing to be America's lackey.²⁹ The Macmillan government annoyed the United States in January of 1964 by selling a number of buses to the Cuban government. Though the actual number was not significant, the loan disturbed the US Government all the same. It touched the State Department at its "highest point of sensitivity," for it represented "interference with well-advertised US policy."³⁰ The British government of Harold Wilson did not want to

jeopardize its relationship with the United States by offending it in a similar manner.

The same was true of the Canadian government. John Diefenbaker's ostensibly anti-American Conservative party had been replaced by Lester Pearson's Liberals in 1963. However, they were no more inclined to help the United States with British Guiana than the Conservatives were. A series of high level meetings took place between Canada and the United States over British Guiana in late-1963 and early-1964. The Canadians were akin to the British in that they did not see Jagan as a great threat to Western hemispheric security. Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, told Dean Rusk that DEMBA, ALCAN's subsidiary in British Guiana, spoke highly of Jagan, and called him the best choice amongst the leaders in the colony. Rusk retorted caustically that businessmen in Nazi Germany had thought the same thing about Hitler.³¹ Nevertheless, Martin indicated that though ALCAN had well over \$100 million (CDN) invested in British Guiana, the Canadian Government would be more worried over a failure to obtain the bauxite than over any threat of nationalization. Accordingly, he sent a commissioner, a war hero named Brigadier General Gregg, to the colony in the spring of 1964 to keep an eye on the situation.³²

By 1965, however, the circumstances seemed to be well under control. Burnham and D'Aguiar agreed to form a coalition. This was a marriage of convenience, more than anything, designed solely to keep Jagan from forming a government. Burnham, who only a few years before claimed that he would resign his position as leader if he even had to form a government with D'Aguiar, was well aware of the irony of his socialist party's union with the pro-business United Force.³³

Jagan refused to resign his position as Premier, feeling that he had been “cheated, not defeated” in the elections of December 1964³⁴ and had to be forcibly removed from the legislature by a Privy Council Order signed by the Queen.³⁵ In the eyes of Consul General Delmar Carlson, he seemed like a “little boy who won’t play ball unless he can pitch.”³⁶ The disgruntled ex-premier attempted a colony-wide sugar strike in the fall of 1965 which failed because most workers wanted to reach their year end production targets in order to receive bonuses. He was successful, however, in organizing a complete Indian boycott of rural schools, though this had little impact on the economy as a whole.³⁷

During 1965, the United States heeded the warning that Sandys gave Kennedy in June of 1963 regarding the instability of a PNC-UF alliance and provided a significant amount of aid to the country. The State Department promised to deliver an aid package to the Burnham-D’Aguiar government consisting of \$10 million (US) in loans and grants.³⁸ Delmar Carlson made the announcement in Georgetown where the Burnham administration could “obtain maximum mileage” from it.³⁹ The United States also arranged for surplus rice to be sold to various non-Bloc countries.⁴⁰ Finally, in September 1965, the US AID programme gave the Burnham administration about \$17 million (US), including \$3 million (US) worth of goods under PL 480, for a housing project. This gesture made a “deep impact on [the] Guianese” who now began to look more favourably upon the United States as a provider and ally.⁴¹ Several pieces of road-building equipment, donated by the American government to British Guiana were emblazoned with the symbol of a pair of hands “clasped in friendship.” Such a symbol, Consul General Delmar Carlson declared, “represented the spirit of the American aid programme.”⁴²

Cheddi Jagan, still refusing to “play ball,” boycotted an independence conference in London on 19 November 1965.⁴³ By the end of 1965, the colony, with America’s blessing, prepared for independence in May 1966 without Cheddi Jagan as its leader.⁴⁴ The State Department felt that it was in the best interest of the United States to have a visible presence at the independence celebrations since Guyana was the first nation on the South American continent to attain independence in more than a century. Assistant Secretary of State John M. Leddy wrote to the Defense Department requesting either a naval destroyer or destroyer escort as well as naval aerial acrobatic teams be sent to Guyana. Both the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds were unable to attend, but the Defense department did see to it that a Coast Guard destroyer was present in Georgetown harbour for the May 1966 celebrations. On 26 May British Guiana received its independence and changed its name to Guyana while the American Consulate in Georgetown was elevated to Embassy status on the same day.⁴⁵

But independence did not bring prosperity to the Guyanese people. Though the United States government got what it wanted, that is an independent Guyana without Cheddi Jagan at its head, Forbes Burnham eventually proved to be more sinister than he initially let on. Shortly after independence his coalition government passed a “National Security” Act which gave the government the right to suspend habeas corpus and to detain Guyanese citizens when necessary for “national security” reasons. It also tabled legislation to permit voting by Guyanese citizens living overseas and allowed a greater use of proxies. But this law was abused by Burnham. A British investigative television production, for example, discovered that only about 15 percent of the names on the 1968 overseas

electoral register were valid.⁴⁶ Burnham's coalition government also manipulated the constitution and declared that political parties no longer needed to list candidates before an election; they were to be appointed by the party leaders after the voting was complete. He further extended the franchise to expatriates holding citizenship in another country, then to anyone whose father had been born in Guyana , and finally to the wives of anyone who fell into these categories.⁴⁷ All of this went far to consolidate a dictatorial hold on the new country. By 1983, the US Department of State declared that "since independence, the political scene has been marked by fraudulent elections...repression of the political opposition...wire taps, mail interception and physical surveillance...to monitor and intimidate political opponents of the government..."⁴⁸

American governments have usually countenanced dictators as long as they toe the line given them by the United States. During the Cold War this meant that as long as a leader was anti-Communist, he could depend on American government support, or at least indifference to his actions. Though Burnham was anti-Communist, he remained to the end a socialist. "He describes himself as a socialist--sometimes as a 'Scandinavian Socialist,'" Consul General Delmar Carlson wrote the State Department from Georgetown, "but he does not seem to be interested in socialistic theory and has no intention of nationalizing anything."⁴⁹ However, no sooner did he manipulate the Guyanese constitution for his own benefit than he began plans to nationalize Guyana's sugar and bauxite industries. In 1970 he started to slowly acquire shares of the Demerara Bauxite Company, the ALCAN subsidiary. By 1973 he opened negotiations with the American company Reynolds Aluminum and by 1976 he moved to nationalize Bookers

Brothers McConnell and Company, the business that had long been the dominant economic force in Guyana and the chief symbol of foreign control. Burnham's "turn to the left" also included a "hero's welcome" for Fidel Castro when he visited the country in September 1973.⁵⁰ But in the early 1970s, this turn to the left was all but ignored by the United States government and public who were both preoccupied by events in South-East Asia.

Granted, the Kennedy administration did not know for certain that Burnham would turn to the left upon independence when they began cultivating him as an alternative to Cheddi Jagan in the 1962. However, it did know that Burnham was a political opportunist who would leave an independent British Guiana worse off than would Cheddi Jagan.⁵¹ But despite this negative prospect, Burnham was the most expedient alternative since he promised to toe the American line in the Caribbean, particularly with regard to trade with Cuba and the Soviet Bloc. Thus, for reasons of Cold War hemispheric security, Kennedy supported the idea of an independent Guyana under the more tyrannical Burnham. In doing so he merely followed the pattern set by Presidents like Franklin Roosevelt who purportedly said of Anastasio Somoza: "He's a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch."⁵²

The story of American involvement with British Guiana during the Kennedy period does not portray the administration in a flattering light. It is a story of surprising hypocrisy: a president who openly supported the idea of independence for British Guiana-- "...if we are engaged in a crusade for anything, it is for national independence," Kennedy told Jagan⁵³--concomitantly implemented a covert plan to delay decolonization. At the

same time, however, it must be remembered that deposing Jagan was not Kennedy's own idea. Indeed in the early days of 1961 he tried to find some way of accommodating Jagan without offending public and Congressional sentiment. Eventually, the fear that "another Castro" in the hemisphere would force him to act militarily against Cuba led him to see deposing Jagan in favour of Burnham as the most viable policy option. Thus America's policy had the avoidance of war with Cuba as its objective. Ironically, an argument might be made that the Kennedy administration formulated American policy towards British Guiana with this more noble intention in mind.

As James N. Giglio argues, by promising to act tough on Communism, Kennedy limited his policy options.⁵⁴ At the same time, as this thesis has shown, he desired to accommodate those in the United States who sought to diffuse Cold War tensions. Kennedy's initial dual track policy toward British Guiana in 1961 was characteristic of his pragmatic approach to politics. Clearly, he did not seek to depose Jagan simply because of the Guianese leader's Marxist inclinations. Rather, pressure for his ouster came from the public as manifested in Congress. The result is neither the picture of the Kennedy of Camelot nor of Kennedy the staunch Cold Warrior. The reality is more complex. This study of American relations with British Guiana shows Kennedy as a pragmatist, an undoctinaire leader who responded to public sentiment, albeit for his own political reasons.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. remarked in 1994 that "even if British Guiana had gone Communist, it's hard to see how it would be a threat."⁵⁵ Indeed the colony never posed a strategic threat to the United States. The Soviet Union did not want to engage in military

activities on the South American continent for doing so would have required heavy economic expenditures.⁵⁶ During the 1960s, Nikita Khrushchev maintained that Communist parties and national wars of liberation were the proper means to achieve the world-wide Communist revolution. To him, the Cuban revolution demonstrated the limits of American power in the Western Hemisphere and suggested that Communism could come to the fore of Caribbean politics on its own accord.⁵⁷ Moreover, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. notes that the USSR did not directly involve itself in British Guiana but rather saw Jagan's ascension to power as a "windfall."⁵⁸ Thus the strategic threat of a Communist British Guiana was more perceived than real. But during the Cold War, when any "loss" for one side was an automatic "gain" for the other, defining what constituted a threat was a difficult task.

This study of American policy toward British Guiana also falls into the larger category of Anglo-American Cold War relations. It is often argued that the United States and Great Britain were bound by a so-called "special relationship." Initially this relationship was based upon historical and cultural ties between the two nations. After the Second World War, the "special relationship" was significantly more "special" for the British than for the United States for it allowed the former to gracefully retire its status as the preeminent world power. But during the 1960s, the relationship became special for the United States too.⁵⁹ In British Guiana, Cheddi Jagan would not have been deposed had Macmillan not promised Kennedy at their June 1963 Birch Grove meeting to change the colony's electoral system. More, the case of British Guiana shows that Britain did not act as America's lackey in the Cold War. For example, British troops protected Cuban

freighters in Georgetown harbour during the strikes of 1963 much to the chagrin of the State Department. Ultimately, the case study of British Guiana shows that the Anglo-American "special relationship" was one of mutual benefit during the Kennedy administration.

American involvement in British Guiana also broaches important questions surrounding the history of America's use of covert action to effect policy and the right of the public to know the truth about clandestine operations. Unfortunately, the curtain of "national security" keeps a chapter of the story of American involvement in the colony closed. However, merely because the CIA and State Department refuse to declassify many of the key operational documents surrounding covert involvement in British Guiana does not necessarily mean that they have something sinister to hide. It is possible that the government chooses to keep certain operational documents secret because it does not want to damage the confidence that many countries place in American government institutions. AIFLD, for example, which played a large role in supplying funds and training Guianese labour operatives, still operates in foreign countries today. Official disclosure of its clandestine activities in British Guiana would breach the trust of the nations in which it is now present. At any rate, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who is particularly contrite about what the Kennedy administration did in British Guiana, claims that there was no grand plan to topple Jagan beyond what has been described above.⁶⁰

Finally, this thesis answers the debate over exactly why the Jagan government fell. The theory of cultural pluralism which some, like sociologist Leo Despres, blame for the violence that was pervasive in British Guiana during the 1960s might have been

responsible for the racial tensions, but the evidence presented above shows that it was American funds channelled to Richard Ishmael's British Guiana Trades Union Council through the AFL-CIO that kept the debilitating 1963 strike going for as long as it did. More, it is clear that had the United States not intervened and demanded Jagan's removal from power, the British government of Harold Macmillan, which did not see the premier as a "Communist" threat and was more concerned with the economic cost of a prolonged official presence in British Guiana, would have allowed the colony to become independent with Cheddi Jagan as its leader.

For Guyana, the legacy of America's intervention in the colony is profoundly negative. By the time of his death in 1985, Forbes Burnham had run up a debt of \$2 billion (US), nearly five times the country's Gross Domestic Product, and people became Guyana's biggest export.⁶¹ Also in 1985, Guyana had one of the lowest per capita GDPs in the Caribbean, \$584 (US),⁶² and today the Guyanese see the phone sex industry as a means to boost their depressed economy.⁶³ One historian, Thomas Spinner, suggests that if any good has come of the Burnham regime, it is that his oppressive and corrupt rule forced Afro and Indo-Guyanese to put aside their racial differences and unite in opposition to the government.⁶⁴

Whether Jagan would have done any better is a matter for speculation, but clearly America's early support of a leader whom they knew to be opportunistic and self-serving did not have positive ramifications for the Guyanese people. In 1976, Senator Frank Church wrote that "the illusion of American omnipotence" contributed to the "fantasy that it lay within [America's] power to control other countries through the covert manipulation

of their affairs."⁶⁵ In the case of British Guiana, however, this notion was not fantasy. America's covert involvement was successful for it did what it set out to do and removed Cheddi Jagan from power. Whatever its motives, the Kennedy administration's actions contributed to the subversion of a democratically elected government. In the final analysis, says Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the full story of American involvement with British Guiana during the years in question validates Oscar Wilde's quip that "the one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it."⁶⁶

NOTES

¹ US Department of State. Press Release, 26 July 1996. Summary of contents of *FRUS Volume XII*...

² Philip Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*. (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1966), p. 246.

³ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.

⁴ *Commonwealth Survey*. 13 November 1964, p. 1010.

⁵ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial*...p. 353.

⁶ Chaitram Singh, *Guyana*...p. 35.

⁷ Colin VF Henfrey, "Foreign Influence..." p. 72.

⁸ These are only some of the brutalities that the peoples of British Guiana inflicted upon each other in 1964. Andra P. Thakur enumerates other major acts of violence in his "Guyana: The Politics of Race and Class 1953-64," MA Thesis, University of Alberta, 1973, p. 116.

⁹ Telegram. Rusk to Georgetown, 9 March 1964. Confidential. LAB 6 BrGu, Box 1283. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁰ Telegram. Rusk to Georgetown, 9 March 1964. Confidential. LAB 6 BrGu, Box 1283. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹¹ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...p. 360.

¹² *New York Times*, 2 June 1964, p. 10. See also Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial*...p. 359.

¹³ *Commonwealth Survey*. 13 November 1964, p. 1011.

¹⁴ Chaitram Singh, *Guyana...* pp. 34-5.

¹⁵ Telegram. Georgetown (Carlson) to State, 27 June 1964. Secret. Pol 15 BrGu, Box 1948. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁶ Airgram. Georgetown (Carlson) to State, 4 November 1964. Secret. Pol BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁷ Telegram. Rusk to London, Georgetown, 18 February 1964. Secret. Pol 15 BrGu, Box 1948. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Memorandum of Conversation. Sir Ellis Clarke, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, with Asst. Secretary Thomas Mann, 20 June 1964. Confidential. Pol BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁰ Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister*. (London: Andre Deutsch, 1969), pp. 294-300.

²¹ *New York Times*, 10 December 1964, p. 13.

²² Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial...* p. 370.

²³ Andra P. Thakur, "Guyana: The Politics of Race..." p. 119.

²⁴ *New York Times*, 10 December 1964, p. 13.

²⁵ Cheddi Jagan, *West on Trial...* p. 371.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 372.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 380.

²⁸ Memorandum. Ball to President Johnson, 12 June 1964. No classification marking. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

²⁹ Memorandum of Conversation. William Tyler et al, with Patrick Gordon Walker, 19 February 1964. Confidential. Pol 19 BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³⁰ Telegram. State to various embassies and consulates, 24 January 1964. Secret. Pol UK-US, Box 2786. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³¹ Memorandum of Conversation. Rusk et al with Martin et al, 4 December 1963. Secret. Pol BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³² Memorandum of Conversation. George Ball et al with Lester Pearson et al, 22 January 1964. Secret. Pol BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³³ Colin VF Henfrey, "Foreign Influence..." p. 72.

³⁴ Cheddi Jagan, *West On Trial...* p. 371.

³⁵ *New York Times*, 15 December 1965, p. 13.

³⁶ Telegram. Carlson to State, 5 November 1965. Secret. Lab 6 BrGu, Box 1283. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³⁷ Telegram. Carlson to State, 15 November 1965. Secret. Lab 6. BrGu, Box 1283. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³⁸ Memorandum of Conversation. Michael NF Stewart, British Embassy with Wm. Tyler, 8 January 1965. Limited Official Use. Pol2 BrGu, Box 3839. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

³⁹ Telegram. Carlson to State, 6 March 1965. Limited Official Use. AID(US) BrGu, Box 538. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴⁰ Telegram. Kingston (Klosson) to State, 13 March 1965. Limited Official Use. Pol BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴¹ Airgram. Carlson to State, 17 September 1965. Secret. Pol2-3 BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴² *Guiana Graphic*, 29 April 1965; Canada donated \$850, 000 worth of road-building equipment one year later. Airgram. Georgetown to State, 31 March 1966. Limited Official Use. E BrGu Box 695. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴³ *Report of the British Guiana Independence Conference, 1965*. (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1965), p. 11.

⁴⁴ *New York Times*, 20 November 1965, p. 16.

⁴⁵ Telegram. State to All Diplomatic and Consular Posts, 25 May 1966. Unclassified. Pol BrGu, Box 1947. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁴⁶ Thomas J. Spinner Jr., *A Political and Social History*...pp. 122-125.

⁴⁷ Colin VF Henfrey, "Foreign Influence..." pp. 73-74.

⁴⁸ Thomas J. Spinner Jr., *A Political and Social History*...p. 211.

⁴⁹ Airgram. Carlson to State, 20 August 1965. Secret. Pol15-1 BrGu, Box 1948. RG 59, NARA (College Park, MD).

⁵⁰ Thomas J. Spinner Jr., *A Political and Social*...pp. 138-148.

⁵¹ Memorandum. Schlesinger to Kennedy, 27 February 1962. Confidential. *FRUS Volume XII*...p. 549.

⁵² David W. Dent, *US Latin American Policymaking*...p. 404.

⁵³ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*...p. 775.

⁵⁴ James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*...p. 45.

⁵⁵ Tim Wiener, "Kennedy-CIA Plan Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Centre for Strategic and International Studies, *Russia in the Caribbean*...p. 13.

⁵⁷ Eusebio Mujal-Leon, ed., *The USSR and Latin America: A Developing Relationship*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. xvii.

⁵⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Personal letter to author, 19 October 1996.

⁵⁹ David Nunnerley, *President Kennedy and Britain*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), p. 7.

⁶⁰ Schlesinger publicly apologized to Jagan at a luncheon in June 1990. See *Nation*, 4 June 1990. His 19 October 1996 letter to the present author also confirms that there was no

"Guatemala-type" plan to topple the government. "Rigging the election by changing the electoral law and fomenting strikes, etc, were the actions I remember," he wrote.

⁶¹ Tim Wiener, "Kennedy-CIA Plan Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 1.

⁶² Clive Y. Thomas, *The Poor and Powerless*. (London: Latin America Bureau, 1988), p. 7.

⁶³ Mike Mills, "Lucrative Phone Sex Export Industry Provides a Lift for Guyana's Economy," *Washington Post*, 23 September 1996, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Thomas J. Spinner Jr., *A Political and Social History...*p. 213.

⁶⁵ John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II Though the Persian Gulf*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), p. 337.

⁶⁶ Tim Wiener, "Kennedy-CIA Plan Returns to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY MATERIAL

Government Records

United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.
Central Files of the Department of State (Record Group 59).

Government Reports

Secretary of State for Colonies (UK), *British Guiana Conference, 1963*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963.

-----,-----, *Report of the British Guiana Independence Conference*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965.

Published Primary Sources

Bayle, Peter. (ed.) *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence*. Raleigh: University of North Carolina, 1990.

Central Office of Information (UK). *Commonwealth Survey. Record of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs 1960-1966*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960-1966.

US Government, *Congressional Record*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953-1966.

-----,-----, *Foreign Relations of the United States. Volume XII: American Republics, 1961-1963*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996.

-----,-----, *Foreign Relations of the United States. Volume IV: American Republics, 1958-1960*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991.

-----,-----, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*. Washington: Government Printing House, 1961, 1962, 1963.

News Journals

Evening Star (Washington)

Globe and Mail (Toronto)

Guiana Graphic

Keesing's Contemporary Archives

New York Times

Sunday Star (Washington)

Times (London)

Washington Post

Memoirs

Agee, Philip. *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. London: Penguin, 1975.

Burnham, Forbes. *A Destiny to Mould*. New York: Africana Publishing, 1970

Hilsman, Roger. *To Move a Nation. The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.

Jagan, Cheddi, *The West On Trial: My Fight for Guyana's Freedom*. London: Michael Joseph, 1966.

———, ———. *Forbidden Freedom*. New York: International Publishers, 1954.

Johnson, Lyndon B. *Vantage Point*. New York: Holt, Reinhart, Winston, 1971.

Macmillan, Harold. *At the End of the Day, 1961-1963*. London: Macmillan, 1973.

Marchetti, Victor and John D. Marks. *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*. New York: Dell, 1974.

Rusk, Dean. *As I Saw It*. Edited by Daniel S. Papp. New York: W.W. Norton, 1990.

Schlesinger Jr., Arthur M. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Sorenson, Theodore C. *Kennedy*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965.

Williams, Eric. *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1969.

SECONDARY MATERIAL

Monographs

- Adams, Jan. *American Foreign Policy in Transition: Moscow's Retreat from Central America and the Caribbean 1985-1992*. Durham: Duke University, 1992.
- Ameringer, Charles. *US Foreign Intelligence: The Secret Side of American History*. Lexington MA: Lexington Books, 1990.
- Blakemore, Harold and Clifford T. Smith. *Latin America: Geographical Perspectives*. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Bliss, Michael. *Right Honourable Men. The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 1994.
- Cardoso, Fernando Henrique and Enzo Faletto. *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California, 1979.
- Center for Strategic and International Studies. *Russia in the Caribbean*. Georgetown: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1973.
- Chase, Ashton. *A History of Trade Unionism in Guyana, 1900-1961*. Ruimveldt, Guyana: New Guyana Company, Ltd., 1966.
- Chilcote, Ronald H. and Joel Edelstein. *Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974.
- Daly, Vere T. *A Short History of the Guyanese People*. London: Macmillan, 1975.
- Despres, Leo. *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana*. Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1967.
- Furnivall, J.S. *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1939.
- Garthoff, Raymond. *Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking: A Decision Point in the Kennedy Administration*. Washington: Brookings' Institution, 1984.

- Geyelin, Philip. *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*. New York: Praeger, 1966.
- Giglio, James N. *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 1991.
- Girard, Charlotte M. *Canada in World Affairs, 1963-1965*. Canadian Institute for International Affairs, date unknown.
- Glasgow, Roy Arthur. *Guyana: Race and Politics Among Africans and East Indians*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970.
- Godson, Roy. *Dirty Tricks or Trump Cards: US Covert Action and Counterintelligence*. Washington: Brassey's, 1995.
- Halberstam, David. *The Best and the Brightest*. New York, 1972.
- Herring, George C. *America's Longest War: The US and Vietnam 1950-1975 2nd Edition*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1986.
- Hirsh, Fred and Richard Fletcher. *The CIA and the Labour Movement*. Nottingham, UK: Spokesman Books, 1977.
- Janis, Irving. *Groupthink. Second Edition*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982.
- Ince, Basil A. *Decolonization and Conflict in the United Nations: Guyana's Struggle for Independence*. Cambridge: Schenkman, 1974.
- Kessler, Ronald. *Inside the CIA: Revealing the Secrets of the World's Most Powerful Spy Agency*. New York: Pocket Books, 1992.
- Knott, Stephen F. *Secret and Sanctioned: Covert Operations and the American Presidency*. New York: Oxford, 1996.
- Latin America Bureau, *Guyana: Fraudulent Revolution*. London: Latin America Bureau, Ltd., 1984.
- Lyon, Peyton V. *Canada in World Affairs, 1961-1963*. Toronto: Oxford, 1968.
- Maclean, Donald. *British Foreign Policy Since Suez. 1956-1968*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970.
- Manley, Robert H. *Guyana Emergent: The Post-Independence Struggle for Nondependent Development*. Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1979.

- Miroff, Bruce. *Pragmatic Illusions: The Presidential Politics of John F. Kennedy*. New York: David McKay Company, 1976.
- Morris, George. *The CIA and American Labor. The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy*. New York: International Publishers, 1967.
- Mujal-Leon, Eusebio. (ed.) *The USSR and Latin America: A Developing Relationship*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- Newman, Peter. *British Guiana: Problems of Cohesion in an Immigrant Society*. London: Institute of Race Relations, 1964.
- Nunnerley, David. *President Kennedy and Britain*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972.
- Parment, Herbert. *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Dial Press, 1983.
- Patterson, Thomas. (ed.) *Kennedy's Quest for Victory. American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*. New York: Oxford, 1989.
- Prados, John. *President's Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II Through the Persian Gulf*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996.
- Preston, Richard A. *Canada in World Affairs, 1959-1961*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1965.
- Radosh, Ronald. *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Randall, S.J. and G.S. Mount, *The Caribbean Basin: An International History*. In Press, Routledge, 1997.
- Randall, Vicky and Robin Theobal, *Political Change and Underdevelopment: A Critical Introduction to Third World Politics*. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- Rauf, Mohammad A. *Indian Village in Guyana: A Study of Cultural Change and Ethnic Identity*. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1974.
- Reno, Philip. *The Ordeal of British Guiana*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964.
- Robinson, H. Basil. *Diefenbaker's World. A Populist in Foreign Affairs*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989.
- Simms, Peter. *Trouble in Guyana*. London: Allen Unwin, 1966.

- Singh, Chaitram. *Politics in a Plantation Society*. New York: Praeger, 1988.
- Smith, M.G. *The Plural Society in the West Indies*. Los Angeles: University of California, 1965.
- Spinner Jr., Thomas J. *A Political and Social History of Guyana, 1945-1983*. Boulder: Westview, 1984.
- Swan, Michael. *British Guiana: The Land of Six Peoples*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957.
- Thomas, Clive Yolande. *The Poor and the Powerless*. London: Latin America Bureau, 1988.
- , ———. *Monetary and Financial Arrangements in a Dependent Monetary Economy: A Study of British Guiana, 1945-1962*. Kingston: University of the West Indies, 1965.
- Treverton, Gregory F. *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World*. New York: Basic Books, 1987.
- Walton, Richard J. *Cold War and Counterrevolution. The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Viking, 1972.
- Williams, William Appleman. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. New York: Delta, 1959.
- White, Mark J. *The Cuban Missile Crisis*. London: Macmillan, 1996.

Theses

- Bartels, Dennis A. "Class Conflict and Racist Ideology in the Formation of Modern Guyanese Society." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1978.
- Thakur, Andra P. "Guyana: The Politics of Race and Class, 1954-1964." M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1973.
- Rishee, Thakur. "Politics and Hegemony in Guianese Nationalism, 1945-1965." Ph.D. Thesis, York University (Toronto), 1994.

Articles

Henfrey, Colin VF. "Foreign Influence in Guyana," in Emanuel de Kadt, *Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean*. London: Oxford, 1972.

Karabell, Zachary and Timothy Naftali, "History Declassified: The Perils and Promise of CIA Documents," *Diplomatic History*. Volume 18, 1994.

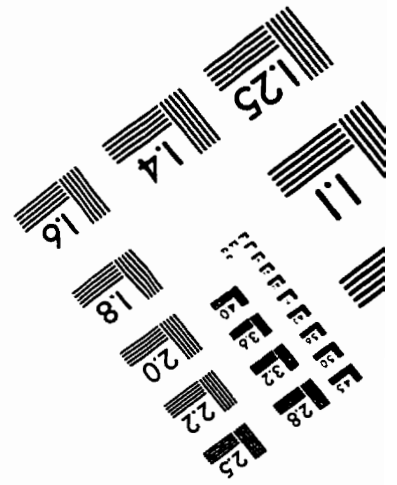
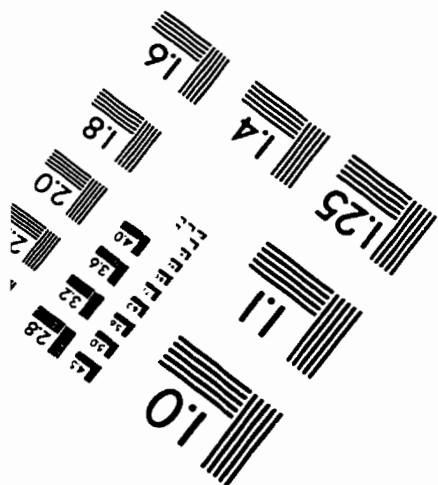
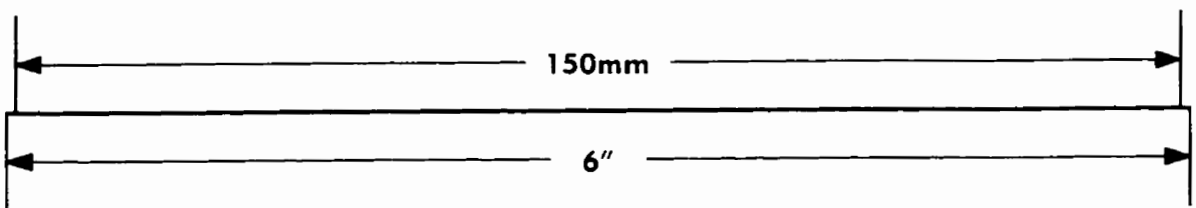
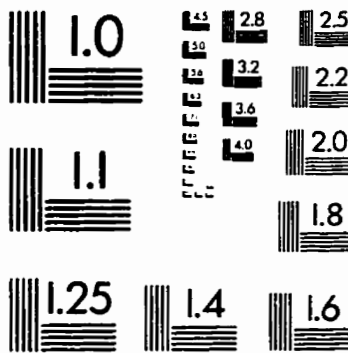
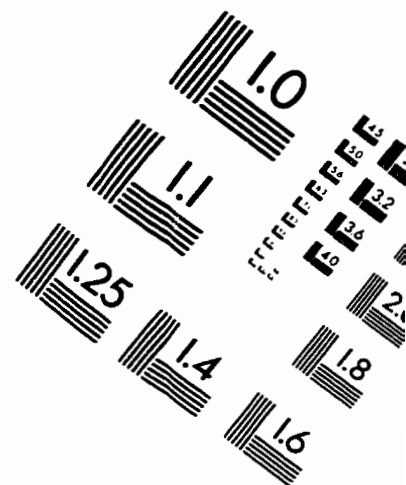
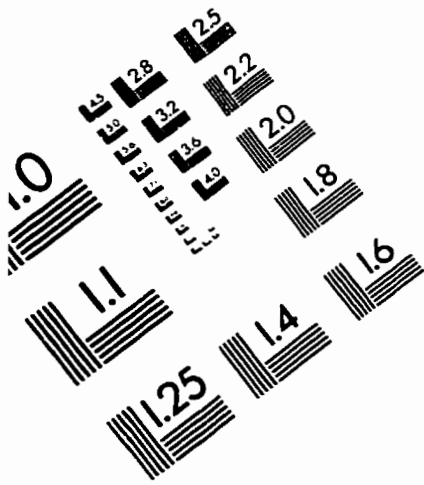
Kaufman, Burton I. "John F. Kennedy as World Leader: A Perspective on the Literature," *Diplomatic History*. Volume 17, 1993.

Mars, Perry. "Destabilization and Socialist Orientation in the English-Speaking Caribbean," *Latin American Perspectives*. Volume 11(3) 1984, pp. 83-111.

Meisler, Stanley. "Dubious Role AFL-CIO: Meddling in Latin America," *Nation*. 10 February 1964.

Small, Melvin. "Kennedy Without Tears," *Diplomatic History*. Volume 14, 1990.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved