

CONFIDENTIAL

July 2, 1962.

Your Excellency,

(49) (56) I received your letter on Saturday. Further to what I told you this morning at your office, these are my comments. I am not only disappointed but disturbed. The request for a date to be fixed for Independence and an Independence Conference was first made by me in the latter part of last year in London. Mr. Maudling then refused to give definite dates and stated that the matter would have to be discussed at Cabinet level.

As I was dissatisfied with so vague a promise, I raised the issue before the United Nations and, you will probably remember, there was every possibility of a vote adverse to the United Kingdom in the Fourth Committee. A matter of hours before the question was due to be put to the Committee, we were informed that Mr. Maudling had agreed to hold the Conference on the 15th May. It is important to note that this was a date certain and that in view of this promise the matter was not pursued before the Fourth Committee.

Subsequently, the Colonial Office offered the excuse that because a riot occurred here discussion of the country's independence should be postponed. The talks were adjourned from the date actually set to an "unspecified" time in July, "if possible". It must be noted that I objected strongly to the principle implicit in this postponement and that my stand in this regard was supported by Mr. Burnham, the leader of the majority opposition party. Nevertheless, over my objection, the talks were postponed and in the House, Mr. Maudling is reported to have said that while I did not consent I "acquiesced". This was a subtle distinction which I must confess is beyond me. You will remember that I might have been prepared to agree to postponement had it been to a fixed date in July but that I was firmly opposed to any postponement from a fixed date to some unspecified time. My primary purpose was to see the outcome of the Trinidad talks but you will remember that I objected to the eventual holding of the Conference being tied in any way to the findings of the Riot Commission.

Although I objected the talks were in fact adjourned. I was heartened some time ago to be informed by you that the date had actually been fixed for the 16th July. Now, however, I am informed that the date of the Conference is to be postponed until "after meetings of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in September". Once more there is postponement from a date certain to an unspecified date. Once more, from the context of the telegram copied to me, there arises the unaccountable principle of making the Conference conditional upon the availability of the Commission's report.

I wish now to protest to you in the strongest possible terms and I wish to ask you to forward this protest and the relevant portions of this letter to Mr. Maudling directly.

I wish to repeat that this continued policy of procrastination is in breach of Her Majesty's Government's undertaking to the Fourth Committee which was both explicit and implied in the statement made to delegates by Her Majesty's

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representative at the United Nations. I wish further to point out that the continual adjournments are in direct breach of Her Majesty's Government's undertaking to me as elected representative of the people of this country.

I wish further to point out that to continue to imply that the postponement of this country's independence is in any way related to the findings of the Riot Commission is to put a premium on arson, violence and looting. The moral cannot ~~help~~ but be drawn by those involved that if legislative control is unpopular the proper tactic ~~course~~ is to ignore the rule of law and rely on insurrection. In support of this contention I wish to cite the following:

- (a) The delay in supporting the civil power by the necessary military force after I had requested the same of you was one of the factors which directly contributed to the extent of the disturbances. This has been interpreted by many people as a recognition by Her Majesty's Government of the basic rectitude of the opposition's position and as a tacit attempt to assist them in their attempt to overthrow the Government by violence.
- (b) The failure of the Director of Public Prosecutions who is responsible only to you to take adequate legal steps against those members of the community who openly broke the law, encouraged and participated in violence on February 16.
- (c) Acceptance by Her Majesty's Government of the principle that independence must be delayed until after the Riot Commission's findings which in a sense implies that the Commission was sitting in trial of the Government and not of the insurrectionary elements responsible for the violence.

Subsequent to having last fixed the date for our Independence Conference, Her Majesty's Government allowed to be published without denial or published in the TIMES for June 26th, the statement that the British Guiana Conference would be held during July. This statement caused protest from the supporters of the United Force here and from newspapers controlled by them, and to rescind the decision now and postpone the Conference for a second time is likely to create in the minds of this minority faction the feeling that their pressure has persuaded Her Majesty's Government to abandon the avowed decision.

May I point out that this policy of vacillation on the part of Her Majesty's Colonial Office is, in the circumstances, most unfortunate. The experience of other territories, and in particular of Trinidad, has been that a disgruntled and dangerous opposition tends to settle down and cooperate to a much greater extent once the decision to grant independence to the majority has been taken or is clearly in the offing. In the context of this country, the continued unwillingness to concede the rights of a majority of over 84% of the people represented in the two major political parties, the P.P.P. and P.N.C., to their freedom is merely fostering the determination of the small reactionary opposition to resort to extra-constitutional means to block the people's will.

I wish formally to warn you that the policy, or rather the lack of policy, now shown by the Colonial Office can have only one effect. It will lead to further disturbances. What is needed now is a clear, categorical statement by Her Majesty's Government that this country will be granted its independence at a definite date this year. You are, I am sure, as well aware as I that in matters of this sort there can be nothing worse than a policy which is weak and amenable to minority pressure. I have only to refer you to the unhappy history of Algeria to point this out.

I hope that you will send my comments to the Colonial Office together with my objection and I propose to regard the matter as open until I hear further from you.

If in spite of these considerations Her Majesty's Government insist on the postponement I shall feel myself justified in any such action as may be possible to me in pursuing the just demands of the people.

Yours faithfully,

CHETTI JAGAN

Cheddi Jagan.

His Excellency the Governor,
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