

Christmas Message from Dr. Cheddi Jagan

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Dear Friends,

From my party and myself, kindly accept warmest Christmas Greetings.

Christmas is a time of great joy, peace and goodwill, My wish is that not only all of you listening to me, but humanity in the world-at-large will be caught up in the spirit of Christmas. To me, love-thy-neighbour-as-thyself should have no boundaries.

It is said that man is not an island unto himself. This is true for increasingly we are becoming more interdependent, nationally and internationally.

So while we are celebrating Christmas, let us remember that there is much suffering at home and abroad.

Many able-bodied Guyanese cannot find work. Others have been retrenched just before Christmas. Still others face retrenchment in the new year. What peace-and-joy is there in the lives of these our Guyanese brethren?

What peace, what joy is there today for the thousands of young Americans who face the prospect of death in far-off Vietnam and hundreds of thousands more of Vietnamese, who are made homeless, who are maimed and killed?

What peace, what joy is there for the millions the world over who go to bed hungry every night, who face death by starvation?

Jesus Christ said "suffer the little children to come unto me; and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

But today in Vietnam children are burnt alive by incendiarybombs. and disfigured by napalm, while the bomb and napalm manufacturers grow richer and richer, In the Congo and elsewhere hundreds of thousands of children die or become mentally and physically deformed from starvation.

Have we stopped to think of the irrationality, indeed the lunacy, of our world society which permits these evils to persist in the face of potential plenty.

When I say potential plenty I mean such things as the failure of vested interests to take advantage of some of the latest inventions and discoveries; the destruction of foods by dumping, burying and burning; the denial of the use of land or the payment of bonuses to farmers to keep land out of cultivation; the squandering of hundreds of millions of dollars in amassing more and more weapons of mass

destruction. So great is the store of these monstrous weapons that if a Hiroshima-size bomb, a bomb that destroyed 100,000 human beings and millions of dollars of property had been dropped every day since the birth of Christ - 1,966 years, 365 days each year - a total of such explosions would consume only 70% of the present US nuclear stockpile.

Clearly, mankind is now precariously poised on the precipice of disaster.

Today nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction pose a threat to the security of mankind. The very existence of these weapons, and the constant threat they pose, coupled with man's alienation, his sense of not-being-able-to-influence; his sense of helplessness, are also sources of anxiety neurosis, mental disorders and anti-social behaviour.

Some say that the ills of our society stem from greed, from hate, and that efforts must be concentrated to change men's hearts. Others who believe in dialectical materialism say that that is a vain hope. They say that the capitalist system of organization of society is responsible for the ills, that only with the abolition of this system will those ills go and will men's hearts in time be transformed.

One thing is certain. Whatever the differences, international disputes cannot be settled by resort to thermo-nuclear bombs. There must be attempts at peaceful solutions. Dialogue now taking place between Christians and Communists is a step in the right direction.

It is urgent that dogmas be set aside, that scientific analysis and logic be brought to bear to realize our common goals and objectives based on the brotherhood of man and a society free from exploitation, fear, insecurity, mayhem and mass murder.

It behoves us all, whether Christian or non-Christian, whether theist or atheist, to work for world peace; to recognize representative institutions, the free expression of the people's will, and the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty and national self-determination, in the conduct of international relations. Only by the observance of these principles can there be progress on a foundation of lasting peace.

We can all begin to shape a new world and a secure future for ourselves by concentrating our efforts to bring an end to US intervention in Vietnam. The Vietnamese people like all other peoples must be left to decide their own future, free from foreign interference. Once again, a very merry Christmas to all.