



TEXT OF ADDRESS BY DR CHEDDI JAGAN
PRESIDENT OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC
OF GUYANA
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE
PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
OCTOBER 28, 1992.

Mr Chairman; fellow Heads of Government of Caricom; Mr Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community Secretariat; Deputy Secretary General; other distinguished guests:

I am touched by the cordial welcome which Prime Minister, Hon. Patrick Manning and the people of Trinidad and Tobago have extended to me and my delegation. I wish to record our deep gratitude.

Mr Chairman, I wish also to acknowledge your presence and that of the representative of Prime Minister Hon. James Mitchell at my Inauguration and the many fervent good wishes which my colleagues have transmitted to me following the victory of the PPP/CIVIC at the recent poll. I am delighted to know that such an enormous fund of goodwill has been placed at my government's disposal.

When I was sworn in on October 9, the same date when British troops had overthrown my first government thirty-nine years ago, I said it was a new beginning -- a beginning to attain national, racial/ethnic and working class unity, which we had then achieved.

Today, I can say that for the region, it is also for me a new beginning. It is like home-coming. For it was in 1945, as a youthful trade unionist and political aspirant, that I had adopted the Caribbean Labour Congress resolution at Montego Bay for Federation with dominion status and internal self-government for each unit -- a position which I recorded in 1948 in a debate in the Legislative Council on regional integration, a position for which I was attacked by the plantocracy and vested interests.

Regrettably, the unity achieved in the then British Guiana and in the Caribbean was shattered by the cold war. We were the principal victims. But the region also suffered immensely. Our dreams for national and social liberation evaporated.

We were caught in the cold tug-o-war between the East and West. Ideals, principles and solidarity were often jettisoned for pragmatism and self-interest. We talked

