

Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...

Statement delivered by me to British government clearly indicated that Dr Jagan considered the 1899 award a final settlement

Dear Editor,

Recently, I received a copy of the *Stabroek News* of Sunday, 12 November 2000 from a friend in Guyana. I was asked for my views on Cedric Joseph's Monologue entitled "How Guyana's national security and territorial integrity were compromised" since many people seemed to feel that it was Dr Jagan who had made the compromise possible as he was not "fully seized of all aspects of the matter", and especially, since no one in Guyana seemed so far to have had anything to say publicly in respect of what my friend Cedric had written about Dr Jagan's "acquiescence" in the tripartite agreement.

Knowing Cedric as well as I do, I know his authority to speak on such matters derives from his scholarship and wide experience in diplomacy and

public management. However, I am not sure how well his comments in respect of Dr Jagan's "acquiescence" were considered in the context of certain limited constitutional conditions which circumscribed Dr Jagan and his Government in the 1960's.

I was the Assistant Secretary to the Council of Ministers (the Cabinet) at the time. I vividly recall preparing the first draft of a Statement which accurately reflected the decision of the Council of Ministers on the subject of the Guyana-Venezuela boundary. The Statement was prepared in keeping with the results of extensive and intensive research by scholars and officials of the Premier's Office. I was part of the research exercise. The Statement was duly vetted in the Attorney General's Chambers and finally approved by the

Council of Ministers for transmission to His Excellency the Governor for dispatch through the usual diplomatic channels to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. I delivered the Statement personally to the Office of the Governor and received a written acknowledgement.

The Statement conveyed a message in very clear and precise terms that the Premier (Dr Jagan) and the Government of British Guiana considered the 1899 Award as a "full, perfect and final settlement" of the Guiana-Venezuela boundary, and any dispassionate examination of the relevant documents would confirm this status. Also, the posthumously revealed Mallet-Prevost letter was irrelevant and inadmissible and should not be taken into consideration to prejudice the

validity of the 1899 Award.

At the time, the British Government exercised ultimate responsibility for the external affairs, defence and security of British Guiana. It was therefore the duty and responsibility of the British Government to ensure that British Guiana's position was not in any way compromised in favour of Venezuela. In the circumstances, it is my view that as Premier, Dr Jagan displayed much of the qualities of a Statesman.

Readers may wish to access copies of the Booklet "Guyana/Venezuela Relations" published by the Ministry of External Affairs, Georgetown, in September 1968 for more information.

Yours faithfully,
Rampersaud Tiwari
Scarborough, Ontario,
Canada