

# National Assembly Debates

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN Part I of II**

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32<sup>ND</sup> Sitting

14:00h

Thursday 1 November 2007

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## ***MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)***

### ***Speaker (1)***

**The Hon Hari N Ramkarran SC, MP**

*Speaker of the National Assembly*

### **Members of the Government (42)**

#### **People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)**

#### **The United Force (1)**

The Hon Samuel A A Hinds MP

*(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)*

*Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications*

The Hon Clement J Rohee MP

*Minister of Home Affairs*

The Hon Shaik K Z Baksh MP

*Minister of Education*

The Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey MP

*Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation*

The Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy MP

*(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)*

*Minister of Health*

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES 1 NOVEMBER 2007**

The Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett MP

*(R# 9 - U Takutu/U Esseq)*

*Minister of Amerindian Affairs*

\*The Hon Dr Ashni Singh MP

*Minister of Finance*

\*The Hon S Rudolph Insanally OR, CCH, MP - (AOL)

*Minister of Foreign Affairs*

The Hon Harry Narine Nawbatt MP

*Minister of Housing and Water*

The Hon Robert M Persaud MP (AOL)

*(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)*

*Minister of Agriculture*

The Hon Dr Jennifer R A Westford MP

*(R#7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)*

*Minister of the Public Service*

The Hon Kellawan Lall MP

*Minister of Local Government and Regional Development*

\*The Hon Doodnauth Singh SC, MP

*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*

The Hon Dr Frank C S Anthony MP

*Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport*

The Hon B H Robeson Benn MP

*Minister of Transport and Hydraulics*

\*\*The Hon Manzoor Nadir MP

*Minister of Labour*

The Hon Priya D Manickchand MP

*(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)*

*Minister of Human Services and Social Security*

The Hon Dr Desrey Fox MP )

*Minister in the Ministry of Education*

The Hon Bheri S Ramsaran MD, MP

*Minister in the Ministry of Health*

The Hon Jennifer I Webster MP

*Minister in the Ministry of Finance*

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The Hon Manniram Prashad MP

*Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce*

Mr Donald Ramotar MP

The Hon Gail Teixeira MP

Mr Harripersaud Nokta MP

Mrs Indranie Chandarpal MP

Ms Bibi S Shadick MP

*(R# 3 – Essequibo Is/W Demerara)*

Mr Mohamed Irfaan Ali MP

Mr Albert Atkinson JP, MP

*(R# 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)*

Mr Komal Chand CCH, JP, MP

*(R# 3 - Essiquibo Is/W Demerara)*

Mr Bernard C DeSantos SC, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mrs Shirley V Edwards JP, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr Mohamed F Khan JP, MP

*(R# 2 - Pomeroun/Supenaam)*

Mr Odinga N Lumumba MP

Mr Moses V Nagamootoo JP, MP

Mr Mohabir A Nandlall MP

*(AOL)*

Mr Neendkumar JP, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

\*\*\* Mr Steve P Ninvalle MP

*Parliamentary Secretary*

Mr Parmanand P Persaud JP, MP

*(R# 2 - Pomeroun/Supenaam)*

Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury CCH, JP, MP

*Parliamentary Secretary*

\*\*\*Mrs Pauline R Sukhai MP

*Parliamentary Secretary*

Mr Dharamkumar Seeraj MP

*- (AOL)*

Mr Norman A Whittaker MP

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*(R# 1 - Barima/Waini)*

\*Non-elected Minister \*\*Elected Member from TUF

\*\*\*Non-elected Member

**Members of the Opposition (28)**

**(i) People's National Congress Reform 1-Guyana (22)**

Mr Robert HO Corbin - *(Absent)*

*Leader of the Opposition*

Mr Winston S Murray CCH, MP

Mrs Clarissa S Riehl MP

*Deputy Speaker, performing duties of Speaker of the Nat. Assembly*

Mr E Lance Carberry MP - *(Absent)*

*Chief Whip*

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer MP

Mr Anthony Vieira

Mr Basil Williams MP

Dr George A Norton MP

Mrs Volda A Lawrence MP

Mr Keith Scott MP

Miss Amna Ally MP

Mr James K McAllister MP - *(Absent)*

Mr Dave Danny MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr Aubrey C Norton MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr Ernest B Elliot MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Miss Judith David-Blair MP

*(R# 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)*

Mr Mervyn Williams MP

*(Re# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)*

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Ms Africo Selman MP

Dr John Austin MP

*(R# 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)*

Ms Jennifer Wade MP

*(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)*

Ms Vanessa Kissoon MP

*(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)*

Mr Desmond Fernandes MP

*(Region No 1 – Barima/Waini)*

**(ii) Alliance For Change (5)**

Mr Raphael G Trotman MP

Mr Khemraj Ramjattan MP

Mrs Sheila VA Holder MP

Ms Latchmin Budhan, MP

*(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)*

Mr David Patterson MP

**(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild (1)**

Mr Everall N Franklin MP

***OFFICERS***

Mrs Lilawatie Coonjah

*Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly*

Ms Hermina Gigeours

*Assistant Clerk of the National Assembly*

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES 1 NOVEMBER 2007**  
**PRAYERS**

*[The Deputy Clerk reads the Prayers]*

**OATH OF A NEW MEMBER**

**Resignation and Oath of a New Member**

**Resignation of Ms Chantalle Smith**

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, with the resignation of Ms Chantalle Smith, a seat in the National Assembly has become vacant. The vacancy is in accordance with Section 99(a) of the Representation of the People Act, Chapter 1:03, to be filled by a person whose name is to be extracted from the list of candidates for which Ms Chantalle Smith's name was extracted.

As Ms Smith's name was extracted from the Alliance For Change list of candidates, I have in accordance with Section 99(a) of the said Act, call upon the Representative of the said list, to further extract from that list the name of a person who is willing to become a Member of the National Assembly to fill the vacancy in the Assembly.

**Oath**

**Ms Latchmin Budhan**

Honourable Members, following the resignation of Ms Chantalle Smith, and my call upon the Representative from the Alliance For Change list of candidates, I have been informed that the name of Ms Lachmin Budhan, was extracted from the list and that Ms Budhan was on 23 October, 2007, declared to be an Elected Member of the National Assembly. Before Ms Budhan can take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, she will have to make and subscribe the oath before the Assembly as required by Article 167 of the Constitution. Ms Budhan is present. She can now make and subscribe the post, which would be administered to her by the Deputy Clerk.

*[Ms Latchmin Budhan made and subscribed the oath which was administered by the Deputy Clerk] [Applause]*

Congratulations, Honourable Member.

*[Ms Latchmin Budhan escorted to her seat]*

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ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

**(1) Congratulations and Welcome to a New Member**

Honourable Members, I would like on behalf of the Members of the National Assembly and on my own behalf to congratulate Honourable Member Ms Latchmin Budhan on her becoming a Member of the National Assembly. I welcome her to the Assembly and I extend best wishes to her.

**(2) Welcome to Members of the National Assembly**

Honourable Members, I would like to welcome all of you back to the National Assembly after our annual Recess. I hope that you have all been refreshed and you are now restful and had an enjoyable Recess, whether in or out of Guyana and I hope and expect you are ready and well prepared for the challenges in the coming year.

**(3) Repairs and Retiling to Upper Corridor**

Honourable Members, as you have noticed, the Parliament Office has repaired and retiled the upper corridor of the



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Parliament Building at a cost of \$3,797,750.00 - monies from the Consolidated Fund.

### **(4) Absence of the Clerk of the National Assembly**

Honourable Members, Mr Sherlock Isaacs, the Clerk of the National Assembly continues to be away from the Office due to illness. In his absence, Ms Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, is performing the duties of the Clerk of the National Assembly. She is being assisted by Ms Hermina Gilgeous, Assistant Clerk.

### **(5) Photographs/Identification Cards**

Honourable Members, the Parliamentary Management Committee had decided some time ago and I am sure you are aware of it that all Members of Parliament would be issued with Parliamentary identification cards. To facilitate the preparation of the ID card your photographs would have to be taken. I therefore give approval for the photographer to take your photographs during today's Sitting. I have instructed the Clerk to work the details with the Chief Whips for the photographing of individual Members.

### **(6) Catering for Members of Parliament**

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Honourable Members, the selection of a caterer for the National Assembly is presently engaging the attention of the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board. In the meantime the Parliament Office has made arrangements for Banks DIH to cater for today's sitting.

### **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

- (1) By the *Speaker of the National Assembly*:
  - (i) Ethnic Relations Commission Report on an investigation and review of Employment Practices in the Public and Private Sectors in Region 4.
  - (ii) Ethnic Relations Commission Report on the award and distribution of economic opportunities in Guyana.
  - (iii) Ethnic Relations Commission Report on the Public Procurement in Guyana with special regard to openness and fairness.

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- (iv) Ethnic Relations Commission Report on the Research on the award of academic scholarships in Guyana.
  
- (v) Ethnic Relations Commission Report on the study of land distribution in Guyana.

The documents that you have before you

- 2. By the *Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*:  
  
Annual Report of the Supreme Court Registry for the year, 2006
  
- 3. By the *Minister of Home Affairs, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Report on the award of the Arbitral Tribunal between Guyana and Suriname

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member. You are still on the floor Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

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(4) Summary of the Security Sector Reform Action Plan 2007-2011.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**QUESTIONS AND NOTICE**

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, there are four questions in the Order Paper. Questions Nos. 1, 2 and 3 are for written replies. The answers therefore have, in accordance with our Standing Orders, been circulated.

**For Written Replies**

- 1. RE EMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL OFFICER - REGION 6**

**Member Asking: Dr John Austin**

Could the Honourable Minister of Education please inform this National Assembly:

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- (i) Why a retired Regional Education Officer was re-employed as Regional Education Officer of Region 6?
  
- (ii) Why that individual was re-employed when it was known that there were many other available eligible and suitably qualified and experienced persons

**Written reply submitted by the Minister of Education:**

The re-employment of a retired Regional Education Officer, Region 6 is a matter for the Public Service Commission and not the Ministry of Education.

**2. INCLUSION OF A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING AT SANTA MISSION IN 2007 NATIONAL BUDGET**

**Member Asking: Mr Mervyn Williams:**

Could the Minister of Education please inform this National Assembly:

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- (i) What were the factors which informed his decision to include the new school building at Santa Mission in the 2007 National Budget, when this item was not included in the 2007 Work Programme for the Region 3 Education Department?
  
- (ii) Whether the inclusion of the proposed school at Santa Mission was responsible for the deletion of a proposed new school building to replace the existing Bagotville Primary School Building.
  
- (iii) Whether he is aware that the Bagotville Primary School is in such a state of disrepair that it presents serious risks to life and limb as well as serious health hazard for both students and teachers.
  
- (iv) If, in view of the fact that no contract has, as yet, been awarded for the construction of the new Santa Mission School, he would consider deferring the construction of this school to 2008, in order to construct the new Bagotville Primary School, as an emergency education project, to rectify the serious problems being experienced by pupils, teachers and the

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Bagotville community, due to the dilapidated condition of the existing Bagotville Primary School?

**Written reply submitted by the Minister of Education:**

The questions under this head should be directed to the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development under whose Ministry falls the Region 3 Regional Democratic Council.

**MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO ASSIST SENIOR CITIZENS' HOMES**

**Member Asking: Mrs Volda Lawrence**

Could the Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security please inform this National Assembly:

- (i) What are the present mechanisms in place to assist senior citizens' homes which provide accommodation for senior citizens and other

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persons to defray the high water and electricity costs?

- (ii) If no such mechanisms are now in place, when does her Ministry plan to institute such mechanisms to provide relief for these homes by defraying the high costs of water and electricity which they are compelled to pay?

**Written reply supplied by the Minister of Human Services and Social Security:**

Many senior citizens' homes are assisted by the Government of Guyana through subventions provided from the National Budget, which subventions are approved by the National Assembly.

**For Oral Reply**



3. GUYSSUCO'S TENDER DOCUMENT

**The Speaker:** Question No. 4 is for oral reply. Honourable Member Ms Sheila Holder, please answer the question.

**Mrs Sheila VA Holder:** Thank you Mr Speaker, but I just do not see the Hon Minister present.

**The Speaker:** Proceed with the question please. We will cross that hurdle when we come to it.

**Mrs Sheila VA Holder:** Could the Hon Minister of Agriculture say what action he has taken with respect to GUYSSUCO's Tender Document where GUYSSUCO omitted to request NIS and PAYE Compliance Certificates that were submitted to him by yours truly on 29<sup>th</sup> June this year, for the supply of seventy (70) desktop computers and sixteen (16) Laptop computers.

**The Speaker:** Hon Prime Minister.

**Hon Samuel AA Hinds:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg that the answer to this question be deferred as the Hon Minister of Agriculture is away on duty.

**The Speaker:** For the next Sitting?

**Hon Samuel AA Hinds:** Yes.

*[Oral Reply Deferred]*

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STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY  
STATEMENTS**

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation

**The European Union Sugar Protocol**

**Hon. Dr Henry B Jeffrey:** Mr Speaker, as is well known, Guyana is part of CARIFORUM and is presently negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union.

During the last Session of Parliament, I was invited by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Foreign Relations to attend and discuss the state of play of these negotiations. On that occasion, I circulated a substantial paper, but the meeting was unfortunately postponed. I am still of course, available for a Session at a date of mutual convenience.

Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, allow me to make a brief statement on the status of sugar in these negotiations.

Mr Speaker, under the COTONOU Agreement, which essentially gave life to the EPA process, the Commodity Protocols, sugar being one of them, are also to be considered. They are to be reviewed with the intention of making them

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WTO compatible and maintaining their benefits for the given countries

For some time, the Asian, Caribbean and Pacific countries have been negotiating with the European Commission on this matter. Our demand for a joint review as stated in the COTONOU Agreement has fallen on deaf ears in the EU. Instead, early this year on 4 April, the EC published its market access offer and signalled its intention to denounce the sugar Protocol.

CARIFORUM and I daresay all ACP stakeholders are unanimous in their view that even within the context of a WTO rule, the EU offer does not maintain the benefits of the sugar Protocol.

Mr Speaker, an Agreement on sugar is to be negotiated in the context of the Economic Partnership Agreement, which is to come into force on 1 January 2008 and the discourse on sugar has been ongoing.

However, in the midst of these discussions on 27 August 2007, the EC indicated its intention to denounce the Protocol and invited us, that is, ACP countries to join with it in doing so. In a discourse with Commissioner Mandelsohn, Trade and Fisher Bowl Agriculture, I stated that the position of the Commission was unwarranted and unacceptable. How could they possibly expect us to join in denouncing what we have without having anything in hand?

Further, since sugar is to be part of the EPA's process, which is to be completed this year, any denunciation would be

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untimely and in itself a vote of no confidence in the EPA process. However, on 20 September 2007, the European Union unilaterally denounced the historic Sugar Protocol which during its lifetime has served both of our regions well. This action should be and has been universally condemned and later this month ACP countries will meet and decide upon future action, including the consideration of legal remedies

Insofar as CARIFORUM is concerned, in keeping with the position, developing solidarity with ACP partners, Heads of Government of the Caribbean meeting recently in Montego Bay, Jamaica, condemned the unilateral denunciation and supported the consideration of legal redress.

CARIFORUM stakeholders have decided that if sugar is to be successfully incorporated into the EPA, the EPA must contain the following guarantees:

- (i) A total CARIFORUM quota of 610,000 tonnes, inclusive of 100,000 tonnes for the Dominican Republic that from the start of the EPA when necessary, any shortfall in the CARIFORUM quota will firstly be re-allocated within CARIFORUM;
  
- (ii) That any EU safeguard mechanism for sugar will only be activated after the CARIFORUM quota is delivered and/or accounted for;

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- (iii) That CARIFORUM will be able to sell any type of sugar to any EU buyer from the start of the EPA;
  
- (iv) That between 2012 and 2015, if the actual EU market price for sugar should fall below the EU projected reference price of €335 per tonne by more than ten percent the EU would introduce compensatory measures; and
  
- (v) That there will be close consultation between CARIFORUM, the ACP and the EU on relevant developments in the sugar sector including for the post - 2015 period.

Such consultations could be requested by any of the parties and will continue throughout the life of the EPA Agreement.

In Jamaica, Heads of Government considered and adopted these as minimum conditions.

Mr Speaker, the European Commission likes to tell the world that the Economic Partnership Agreements are intended to be different from normal trade Agreements. They are to emphasize development and seek to progressively and sensibly link ACP States into the world economy.

If the Commission's approach to the sugar issue is anything to go by, Mr Speaker, if these issues and if these outcomes are to be realised, much vigilance will be required.

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Thank you, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Presentation and First Reading**

**DEEDS REGISTRY AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT)  
BILL 2007 - Bill No. 22/2007**

*By the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**(1) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**MOTIONS**

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**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order No. 28 (2) I have given permission for the following Motion to be proceeded at this Sitting: Security Sector Reform Action Plan. The Minister of Home Affairs will move the Motion.

**1. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM ACTION PLAN**

*WHEREAS the Government of Guyana has pledged in this Ninth Parliament to enhance Public Safety and the Rule of Law in Guyana;*

*AND WHEREAS the Administration has achieved consensus among Law Enforcement entities on the implementation of a specified number of activities labelled the Security Sector Reform Action Plan 2007 -2011, intended to achieve that enhancement;*

*AND WHEREAS the Administration is aware of the importance of garnering public Support for the Law Enforcement agencies in their implementation of the activities in the above-mentioned Security Sector Reform Action Plan;*

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*AND WHEREAS the Administration commits itself to reporting regularly to this House on progress in the implementation of activities in the Security Sector Action Plan;*

*AND WHEREAS the Summary of the Security Sector Reform Action Plan 2007-2011 with its eleven priority areas has been laid and circulated in this House;*

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

*That this House takes note of the Administration's Security Sector Reform Action Plan and fully support its implementation;*

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

*That this House appoints a Special Select Committee on the Security Sector Reform Action Plan 2007-2011 to:*

- (a) receive and examine official annual reports*



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*from the Administration on  
the status of the  
implementation of the  
activities in the eleven  
priority areas on an  
annual basis;*

- (b) *provide a Final Report to  
the House on the  
completion of their  
examination of the reports  
on the implementation of  
the entire Security Sector  
Reform Action Plan.*

Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, you may now proceed.

**Hon. Clement J Rohee:** Mr Speaker, the Motion that we have before this Honourable House, treating with the Security Sector Reform Action Plan, I believe by very nature, is non-contentious and should be at first hand win the general acceptability and consensus by all in this Honourable House.

In fact, it is unprecedented that a Government would be presenting before the National Assembly an Action Plan, which encapsulates the general interest and trust of the

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Government in moving to enhance public safety and the rule of law in Guyana.

It is true that there has been quite a lot of debate, sometimes controversial in respect to public safety and rule of law. I believe that in all the Debate that has taken place around these two concepts, public safety and rule of law, at the end of the day, the politics influencing the statements and the positions that were adopted would be quite acceptable in the democracy where political parties would seek to influence the mood of the people; seek to garner an influence and keep in good stead (I would say) their constituents by giving a political spin to the positions they would adopt from time to time, on public safety and the rule of law.

So, it would not strike a Government like the PPP/C as unusual if political parties in the democracy of the nation that we have here in Guyana who had seek to use these issues to advance their political fortunes in the country.

Mr Speaker, I believe the crux of the matter or as they say, notwithstanding all the political humdrum or political spinning that might be given to these issues, what must be primordial or overarching is the safety, protection of life, limb and property of the citizens of the country. I believe that this is the trust of this Action Plan.

It seeks by way of the Administration to garner the consensus among the law enforcement Agencies in this country to hold to one common position on one common action ground.

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From time to time, we would hear in this Honourable House, Members on the Opposition side asking the question, sometimes rather rhetorically, sometimes provocatively, sometimes politically, where is the Plan? Where is the Plan? What is the strategy? Well we brought the Plan. As if this was the tip of the iceberg to whet their appetite, we have more to come. I did not say plans. I am not going to allow you to put words in my mouth.

Mr Speaker, we have managed to achieve consensus among the law enforcement Agencies in respect of their approach to this Action Plan and I believe that this is indeed a noteworthy situation, because again from time to time, we would hear Members from the Opposition Benches creating political mischief by insinuating that the Joint Services or the Law Enforcement Agencies are not acting in unison in respect of their mandate to ensure public safety and the rule of law in Guyana.

But, once again I would like to put that perception to rest, because this Action Plan creates a singular platform on which the Joint Services, which is part of the Law Enforcement Agencies of this country, will move to implement the Plan. This Plan is not just words, because I anticipate with due respect and I do not want to sound pre-emptory in this sense that one may very well hear from the other side of the House that this is a rather bland, mundane, has no teeth, has no muscle in it. Therefore, for the benefit of those who would wish to understand the nature of this Plan, the Administration has sought to specify a number of activities within this Security Sector which forms the basis on which this Plan has been formulated.

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Mr Speaker, the administration has gone further and in furtherance of winning acceptability for this Plan, the administration will, intends to, and by virtue of this activity, where we are presenting this Plan in the National Assembly, seeking to win public support for the Law Enforcement Agencies in the implementation of this Plan.

Mr Speaker, winning public support for a Plan of this magnitude is an act that should not be underestimated. I hear laughter; I hear sounds of cynic and critics from the other side of the House as though this is a joke. Mr Speaker, I have said time and again in this Honourable House that this Administration means business and it is not going to be business as usual in fighting crime and ensuring public security in this country, notwithstanding what we hear from time to time; notwithstanding the statements we hear from time to time, which in essence create public mischief in our country. And I want to say without fear or contradiction, that this political foot-balling of the fight against crime and security issues, we must put an end to this, because people's lives are involved, people's property is involved, but you know, Mr Speaker, when you are in the opposition ... we have been in the opposition, but we were a very responsible opposition. *[Noisy Interruption]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, please!

**Hon. Clement J Rohee:** Mr Speaker, winning public confidence and support for an Action Plan of this nature, is critical for its success and I have absolutely no doubt that notwithstanding the political *acrobatting* that is taking place the Government of Guyana will succeed in winning public

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confidence and support for this Plan. *[Applause]* We know it is not going to happen like that. You know how it is going to happen? It is going to happen, because we are going to work to make it become acceptable. That is what we are going to do. So, if the Honourable Members feel that this work will simply end with the presentation of this action Plan in the National Assembly, as I said, there is more to come.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the fact that we are going to be regularly reporting to this House on the progress for the implementation of the activities of this Security Action Plan, I think the opposition should actually be saying that congratulations to the Government is in order. And we would like you to say that, do not be bashful, because the people outside there are waiting to hear - the public is waiting to hear what is likely to be a response to this action Plan and based on the position we take, judgment will be made.

So, I would say, Mr Speaker, that it is in the interest, and I am giving free advice, no cost, no charge. I am giving the Honourable Members free advice that it is in their political interest to support and not only support, but to support unanimously; to support unequivocally this Plan that is now before us. *[Applause]* It is in your political interest to do so, because I heard the Honourable Member Mr Norton and I remember within recent times, issued statements both inside and outside, sending mixed signals. I have heard Honourable Member on that side of the House sending mixed signals about the fight against crime; sending mixed signals about your sincerity and your dedication to the protection of life and limb in this country. I want to say, Mr Speaker, that that is not good for our country. It may be good for the political party in the

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opposition, but I heard them say also that we must put country before party. I heard them say that: we must put country before the party, but I say, Mr Speaker, that in supporting this Plan, you will be putting country before your party and that will bring an end to the mixed signals that emanate from time to time by various spokespersons on the opposition benches. Mr Speaker. I thank you. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member. *[Noisy Interruption]*

Allow Mrs Backer to start please. The Honourable Member Mrs Backer

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** Sir. It is not often that I am caught by surprise.

**The Speaker:** I think he might be coming back to the Plan.

**Mrs Deborah J Backer:** It is not often I am caught by surprise, but Mr Rohee obviously ran out of steam before he started. I am almost tempted to say that it is a still-born, but that would be carrying us back a long time.

Sir, when the PNCR-1G met to look at the Order Paper, obviously the summary of the Security Sector Reform Action Plan - the SSRAP... *[Interruption: 'SCRAP!']* ... the SSRAP; we looked at it and our first concern was, when we juxtaposed it to the Motion, whereas we have had the courtesy of having a summary circulated to us; the actual Motion standing in Mr Rohee's name to which he is yet to speak on, spoke about a

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Security Sector Reform Action Plan. So, we were given a summary, but we were asked, in the Resolve Clause, we are being asked to note and support the implementation of a Security Sector Reform Action Plan.

Being an orderly party ... [*Interruption: 'What?'*] I said that especially for you ... we contacted our colleagues on the other side and we were told, in no uncertain terms, from no less a person than former Minister and now Presidential Advisor, Ms Gail Teixeira, whom I have the highest regard for, that in fact, the summary was the Plan. That is what we were told. Ms Teixeira is here, she is not shy to correct people if they are wrong, but those were my instructions.

Sir, if that is so, I would have thought that Mr Rohee would have had the courtesy as he stood to indicate to the House that at the appropriate time he would move an Amendment to say *be* it resolved that this House takes note of the summary Security Sector Reform Action Plan.

Because according to Ms Teixeira, they are one and the same. So, we either have a choice. We either delete *summary* and then let us accept that this is the entire Plan or let there be an amendment or something, but standing as they are, there seems to be a contradiction. But I still hope, because I know Mr Rohee will have a chance at the end to move an Amendment. If not, Sir, I am placing it on record the PNCR-IG will, through another person, move such an Amendment, because we have been reliably informed that this is the Plan, there is nothing else; this is it. That in itself is quite disappointing, but I will get to that just now.

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Mr Speaker, we are debating this Motion today, because of the authority vested in you under Standing Order No. 28 (2) in which time could be abridged.

I wondered and particularly now I know this is the entire Plan, what could possibly have been the rush to get this Plan here in three or four days? In other words, the Sitting next week would have satisfied the time limit, but as I surf the net, I came across an Address by His Excellency Mr Fraser Wheeler, the British High Commissioner to Guyana, who is still the High Commissioner and who in fact, we are privileged to have sitting with us today. I realise why they had to seek to invoke Standing Order No. 28 (2) and I read from the High Commissioner, Mr Fraser Wheeler's speech on 10 August of this year and that was the day when the Memorandum of Understanding, on behalf of the British Government with the Government of Guyana to signify an agreement to implement a far-reaching Security Sector Reform Action Plan. So, His Excellency spoke about a Security Sector Reform Action Plan. Later on in his presentation, he said this:

*The Plan will be implemented over four years  
and is estimated to cost approximately  
million. ...*

And this is the part I would like to emphasize ...

*The next steps are that the Guyana Government  
will table in Parliament by 31 October this year  
...*



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hence the rush; they should have really tabled it yesterday, but even that the Government cannot get right.

*The next steps are that the Guyana Government will table in Parliament by 31 October this year, the summary of the Security Sector Reform Action Plan.*

But earlier on in his presentation, the High Commissioner spoke about the Security Sector Reform Action Plan and when you look at the back towards the end, it speaks about:

*We will also be bringing our experts to do some further detailed work on how the Action Plan will be implemented and funded.*

So, one gets a very, very clear impression that there are two things and I sincerely hope that we are not being hoodwinked by the Government when they say to us that this is the extent of the Plan, because if this is the extent of the Plan, without fear of contradiction and with great respect to all concerned in its drafting; it falls woefully short of an acceptable Plan. I say so Sir, with respect, but with a deep conviction, that I am correct.

Sir, the WHEREAS Clause of this Motion that Mr Rohee has not touched are not in itself contentious; I have drawn the House's attention to the fact that the first RESOLVED Clause speaks about a Security Sector Reform Action Plan and asking us to note it and asking us to fully support its implementation whereas we have not been yet or apparently there is none - there is actually no Security Sector Reform Action Plan.

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Nobody could have a summary of something without having something. So, that is all I would want to say on the first RESOLVED Clause.

Mr Speaker, with your leave very briefly, I would want to make a few observations on the summary of the Security Sector Reform Action Plan. This summary has attached of its first two pages, (well, I do not know if this is a summary of a summary) but this was the two-page document that was attached to it and the first sentence of Paragraph 2 says this:

*The Administration focused on the Security Sector led to provision of significant annual increases in the budgetary allocation for entities in the Security Sector*

That is true. We just have to look at our budget for the last year and we will see that. But the reality, Sir, what the Government remained silent about and what is of concern to people, as I keep saying, it is not how much you spend, but what you did get in return as a result of what you spend.

So, while we have had an increase in budgetary allocation, we say without fear of contradiction, that this increase in budgetary allocation has not been met with the concomitant increase in the safety and well-being of our citizenry. It has not been met. No one can deny that. We can run outside and do a poll, unless the AFC take come comfort in that, not the Dick Morris poll, but we can run out and do a poll and we will see that the average person does not feel that there is an

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increase in safety. Yes, we have more police vehicles; yes, we have more money allocated to traffic, but our traffic deaths have reached unprecedented height. It was 177 and even as I speak, it is growing or it has grown.

Extra-judicial killings, I would come to that shortly.

So, yes we have more money allocated, but what is it? Are we a safer community? That is the question. And, I say no. *[Interruption: 'You should put it right.']* You should be put away as part of the safety plan, Sir. *[Laughter]* In fact, I was tempted to say he should be put down, but I know the Speaker would have ruled against me had I said he should be put down. *[Interruption: 'You said it.']* Oh, I said it? Sorry.

Sir, they speak about and I am on to the same two-page document, which is right at the end of the first page that they will focus on two critical aspects. One being the operational capacity in the Guyana Police Force and in fact, one of the priority areas, I think it is 8 or 9, speaks about that. But, Sir, we have heard or we know, I think I just mentioned it that the British Government is investing approximately £3 million in our Security Sector Reform. I want to place on record, lest Mr Rohee or I think, it is Dr Bheri Ramkarran, or Ramsaran, who is on Channel whatever every night ...we want to place on record unequivocally our gratitude to the British Government for their continued interest, not only in the security aspect of our country, but in several other aspects. So, I want to place, on behalf of the PNCR-1G our unequivocal appreciation.

My question that I want to ask is what is the PPP/C putting into it? We speak about operational capabilities. We know

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that donor communities do not deal with salaries; we appreciate that. If we are talking about the operational capabilities in the Guyana Police Force, I have thought, in fact, I was confident the Honourable Minister would have said in his non-presentation, that the salaries of the Guyana Police Force will be significantly increased, because your human resource is your most valuable resource and if we continue to pay peanuts and I think we can follow that logic to the end. If we continue to pay peanuts, we know the people we are likely to attract, we know the kind of commitment we have. If you are earning good money, if you have proper chances - accelerated promotion; if you have special plans for early pension, you would get QC students, Bishop's High School students, Saints students, University of Guyana students, who are prepared to come into your Police Force and our Police Force and give ten years and give seven years, but what do we have now? The incentive we have now, you do not get that calibre of people into the Police Force and can we say it is not true, but that is the truth. It is not an indictment on the Guyana Police Force. Let us be very clear. I am not making an indictment on the Guyana Police Force. The indictment is to fall fairly, squarely and wholly on the Government of Guyana. You have to pay people proper salaries.

In His Excellency's short address he spoke about, and I would say, perhaps above all, the combination of these effects will contribute to reversing the brain drain from this country and we know that one of the reasons for the brain drain is our low salaries. So, we have to find a way. The Government has to find a way to enhance salaries, to enhance pension, to enhance the whole remuneration package, so that people will see

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policing as a first option and not a last option because they are waiting to go away or they have no other qualifications so they could go into the Police Force and see what they could make at the end of the month. We have to get rid of that syndrome and the most significant way we can get rid of it is to raise salaries. The PPP/C has been consistent in turning a Nelson's eye to this very, very stark reality. [*Interruption: 'You have to get Globe Trust money back.'* "Oh, be quiet! You better talk about the murders ... we will get to that" ]

Mr Speaker, if I could very briefly, I would like to talk on the eleven priority areas and Sir, I promise I will not touch on all eleven priority areas. But the first one strikes me, as coming ... (sorry for my saying so with the greatest of respect) entirely from outside of the borders of the Guyana. It speaks about establishing operations with regard to terrorism, hijacking, hostage release and negotiation. Now, I am not saying that terrorism is not a serious problem; hijacking is not a serious problem; hostage release is not a serious problem, but is it really Guyana's priority area one in Guyana now, as we sit here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? And this is one of the rhetorical questions, because I know Mr Rohee will not be able to answer that. When we look under Actions it speaks about provide additional operational capacity by sponsoring a special operational specialist. Let me repeat that *provide additional operational capacity by sponsoring a special operational specialist* and I have a little note here says not Kerick but will that person also come from out of our borders. And then it speaks about recruitment and selection of new recruits from this Priority Area No.1. And the question that begs itself: Will these people have enhanced salaries? Will these people

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have enhanced salary? Are they going to come in with the same low salaries that the Police Force previously are recipients of? So, it cannot be that the Special Firearm Support Unit Team is a priority one. Mr Rohee may say these priority areas are at random. Well, if he says that we will have to accept it, but I suspect they are deliberately put in a particular order.

Anti-crime Unit, I can more or less say the same about that and then we speak about Crime Intelligence as Capacity No. 3 - Priority Area 3

*Priority Area 4 - Forensic Capacity* - I note that the Team, because it said so, had recourse to the Disciplined Forces Commission and in fact, Priority Area 4 covers in essence Recommendations 9, 10 and 11 of the Disciplined Forces Commission Report and that is something that has been around since 1994, languishing for three years. Then we have something coming back up Priority Area 4 in 2007, which basically has plucked the recommendations of the Disciplined Forces Commission, re-organised them a bit and put them here as Forensic Capacity.

Then *Priority Area 5 - Leadership* - Leadership is also dealt with in the Disciplined Forces Commission.

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Then *Priority Area 6* - We speak about Traffic Policing and we see here, Sir:

*Action - Provide the services of an experienced and professional Civil Engineer to work with Guyanese Sector Specialist.*

From where is this person coming? Is this person another ex-patriot? On that same page, we speak about ... and I do not know what this means:

*Sponsor the erection of traffic control measures to reduce traffic congestion, collisions and related industries involved motorised transport.*

And then it speaks, Sir, about review current legislation. Sir, did we have to wait for a Security Sector Reform, which we will then benefit £3 million from and I hope that is not the motivating factor because you notice, Government has a way - they seem not to want to have the capacity to do anything on their own. They always wait for donor funds. Donor funds are good but I think if we could show our donor Agencies that on our own, we can do something, we may even get more than £3 million and that £3 million must enhance what we have put in place, but it seems that the Government is willing to sit back and if they do not have any donor funds, they would not do anything. This reviewed current legislation we do not need to wait for Security Sector Reform to tell us this. That is in the Disciplined Forces Report, it is in the Simon's Report, which preceded it and it is in every other day in letters to the Editor.

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There was a promise by the then Minister Teixeira about banning music. That is an amendment to a Regulation in the Traffic Act. Why one year and a half on, we have not done that as yet? Surely we do not have to wait for \$3 million grant before we can do things like that. It cannot be. We must show some initiative ourselves; we must not remain forever mendicants and I feel very, very strongly about that.

I am on to the other page; it says *provide sustained support to a road safety education programme*. That is commendable, Minister Rohee and the authors of this Plan - that is commendable, because you have to try to prevent the accidents before they happen. So you have to have a very aggressive road safety education programme and I applaud that. In the same way Minister Ramsammy has now suddenly realised that alcohol use in Guyana is very high, but at least he has recognised it and hopefully he would do something about it soon as he has done with smoking. But, this is good and I would look forward, I think all members of the community would look forward to a very aggressive road safety education programme.

We now go, Sir, to *Priority Area 7 - Operational Capacity Building* - We see here the provision for three people and I would be pleasantly surprised if any of them come from Guyana. The second one speaks about the services of an experienced and professional Police Organisational Development Specialist. I can bet the little that I have, that that person will again come from out of Guyana and may well tell us things that we already know, but for some reason we are not prepared to implement it unless somebody else tells us we should implement it.



Sir, *Priority Area 8 - National Security Policy Management and Legal Framework*. Again it comes back to speaking about existing legislation. What we need in Guyana is a permanent Law Revision ... [*Interruption: 'Reform!'*] Thank you, Hon AG ... a permanent Law Reform Commission on an ongoing basis, which not only acts in dealing with crime or policing or security matters; any Act will be under constant review and we change. That is what we need and we hope that that is the kind of thing that we will, in the very near future see the Government having the courage to step out of the box without waiting for someone to put them out of the box.

Sir, *Priority 9 - Security Sector Financial Management*. That is good with oversight. We will never quarrel with oversight.

Sir, *Area 10* is more or less the same - *Accountability and Oversight*. But, just to give you an idea of the *foreignness*, if I may use that term of this summary or of this Action Plan, because we know there is no summary - Summary and Plan are the same. It says:

*Creation of a specific Parliamentary Oversight Standing Committee within the life of the Ninth Parliament and in the meantime, proxy Parliamentary arrangements will be enacted.*

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Now, what could that possibly mean - *proxy Parliamentary arrangement*?

Mr Speaker, we have four Sectoral Committees that were established by Article 119(b) of our Constitution and in fact, is referred to in our Current Standing Order - Standing Order No. 86. The four Committees as we all know:

- Natural Resources;
- Economic Services;
- Foreign Relations; and
- Social Services.

The Guyana Police Force kind of straddle the Economic Services Sectoral Committee and the Social Services Sectoral Committee and we of the PNCR-1G would be more comfortable because these Sectoral Committees have been set up to work. They are set up by our Constitution. We would be more comfortable and we think it would be more fitting that accountability and oversight goes not through a proxy Parliamentary arrangement and then a Special Standing Oversight Committee. That the Security Sector Reform Action Plan goes to our Sectoral Committees that are already in existence.

Sir, they have large and extensive oversight and that is what we want and I think that is what

Priority Area 10 speaks about. So why go and set up a new Committee, because you see, this Committee, I do not know

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what they are afraid of. They do not want to rotate Chairmanship, because the Sectoral Committee speaks about that. The Sectoral Committee speaks about you can bring in Ministers. My Honourable colleague Minister Jeffrey spoke about being summoned to one of the Committees. I am not sure which one he spoke about ... [*Interruption: 'Foreign Relations!'*]... but that is the kind of oversight that our Sectoral Committees have. Is the Government going to close this Committee with all those oversight responsibilities? And if they are, we still say that it is a waste of time, money and energy. Put it where it is; put it where they already exist - oversight that can handle it.

Sir, in the second RESOLVED Clause and this is the Motion I have gone back to. It speaks about:

*This House appoints a Special Select Committee on Security Sector Reform Action Plan to receive and examine official Annual Report from the administration and provide a final Report.*

But we are saying that oversight must go way beyond just receiving and examining official Annual Report. There may be things happening within the year that is current. Why can't they be summoned, why can't there be proper oversight on a continuous, ongoing basis as conditions require? The Sectoral Committees are being set up by our Constitution, which is our Supreme Law that gives that kind of oversight. So, I truly hope this is not a back-of-the-hand attempt to diminish oversight while at the same time, speaking about it so laudably in Priority Area No. 10.

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Mr Speaker, in conclusion, let me say and I heard Mr Rohee admonishing, near to almost threatening that we had better support this Plan, because if we do not support this Plan, et cetera. I have already said and I repeat that we welcome the assistance of the British Government and the injection of ~~£5~~ million or almost £3 million into our Security Sector. We, however, say to the Government and we are asking them for a commitment, not in words but in action, are you going to play your part?

*Priority Area 11* speaks about *Improved Human Rights Record* and *Gender and Ethnic Sensitivity of the GPS and the GDF*. Improved Human Rights Record, Minister Rohee, includes no, no and no to any form of torture. Sir, I see a picture of Mr Rohee, it is not the most flattering picture; he looks much better in real life. It is the Kaieteur News. I am sorry I do not have the date. [*Interruption: 'Is it the Chronicle?'*] No, it is not the Chronicle and it is not the Stabroek News, so you see, I am toeing the Government's line, I am not quoting from the Stabroek News. This is what he says:

*The Home Affairs Minister opined that the PNCR-IG is using the recent alleged torture of two Buxtonian men by Members of the Joint Services to gain political points.*

Mr Rohee, there was nothing alleged about the torture. They were tortured. If you want to say, we cannot say definitively or you cannot say definitively, who tortured them, I might give you some credit, but you cannot say they were not tortured.

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Anyone with eyes to see can see that they were tortured. You do not have to be there. The lady who was killed by her abusive husband stabbed seven times, that was domestic violence. You do not have to be there to know it and you cannot dispute. You may dispute whether it is him, but she was subject to domestic violence so she died. The eleven people who died on the Linden Highway... [*Interruption: 'That is an allegation.'*]... Right, that is not an allegation as Sharma would say, that is a fact. And to juxtapose Minister Rohee, it is disingenuous of you to juxtapose an allegation - what you are saying is not torture - what we are saying is torture with the forces worldwide right to interrogate. Interrogation and torture are so far removed from each other. You should not speak about them, even in the same presentation. I am breaking my own rules, because I have to. Investigation and interrogation - lively interrogation, fine. Torture, burning of people, beating people in indescribable places and ways is not interrogation - it cannot be interrogation. If the PPP/C thinks that we are seeking political mileage by saying the two Guyanese citizens were tortured, then so be it, because we will continue to say to anyone that they were tortured and we make no apology for that.

Sir, even in this Plan, (and I should not say *even*, I take it back) they speak about *Improved Human Rights Record*. Mr Williams mentioned just now about Donna Herod. When is that inquiry going to start? When is that inquiry going to complete? Will it take five years/ten years like some of the cases in the High Court? By that time their children have grown and have gone away as the brain drain continues. Are we not going to bring closure to these heinous acts?

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So, Mr Speaker, I am sorry, I became a bit emotional there, but I was very disturbed by Mr Rohee seeking to suggest that interrogation and torture may be interchangeable; that cannot be so in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In closing, Mr Speaker, the PNCR-1G since I have been a Member and I have been a Member of this House, is consistent. [*Interruption: 'You will get throw out.'*] I will be here to see the end of Mr Neendkumar. [*Laughter*] In fact, Sir, I was even offered his place, but I refused. I am comfortable where I am. But, the PNCR-1G has been consistent in calling for the modernisation of the Guyana Police Force and in fact all the Disciplined Forces. No-one can doubt that. We have been consistent in our call. We will always support any 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond approach to policing in Guyana, because we feel that that is the way to go. We will continue to frown and to condemn and to take appropriate action wherever we feel and whenever we feel that there is a move backwards towards torture, towards archaic policing practices, we condemn the continued low salaries of the Guyana Police Force. We urge the Government to find a way to increase their salaries. It cannot continue to remain at that level.

So, Sir, we are disappointed in the fact that Mr Rohee has not sought to move an Amendment, because as I said, the Honourable Member Ms Teixeira, has said to us, the summary is the Plan and we expect an amendment will be moved. If not, Sir, we will have to move it, because, as it is, we will have difficulties supporting it wholly. But, if the Amendment is moved then we will look favourably on it. I thank you, Sir. [*Applause*]

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**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Ms Teixeira

**Ms Gail Teixeira:** Mr Speaker, while I am on the floor, I want to say to Honourable Member Mrs Backer, welcome back. We had doubts whether you would have been on this floor in the House when we started back in this Session. I notice your colleague, Honourable Member McAllister is missing and so is the Honourable Member Mr Corbin. So, I am wondering what is going on sitting on this side of the House, but welcome back, Mrs Backer.

This is a very important and very historic Meeting of House today, because certainly Public Safety and Law and Order issues concern all of us as Guyanese living here. We all want to live in safety and security, but we also have to live in our real world in terms of the fact that crime, all over the world has its characteristics, its profile, the challenges it faces, Government and Police Forces, Security Forces generally and the ordinary population has gone through tremendous changes between when I was growing up as a child or even twenty years ago when we were in the opposition and we did not give you guys a hard time. So, things have changed in the nature of crime and the sophistication of it and all over the world, Police Forces and Security Forces are going through major changes, some faster than others.

Obviously, I am requiring Governments and Parliaments and Legislation to go through major changing and if we look at the International Legislation, to do with Aviation Safety, Maritime Safety, Anti-Terrorism and all these things, they have gone

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through amazing changes, some of which can make ordinary people and us in Government and Members of Parliament, sometimes feel uncomfortable, because some of them, in terms of Human Right issues, are being questioned all over the world and even in the countries that we are appalled in terms of the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Security Forces.

But, I think we have to deal with our reality. I mean, we are a poor developing country, an emerging democracy, our revenue generation has increased and we have to make choices and so when my colleagues across the House talked about mendicancy and looking for foreign dollars and foreign expertise, as a Government and as a country, based on the money we make and the revenue we collect, do we remove the free education and free health and therefore, buy more weaponry and increase salaries? Do we buy more weaponry and increase salaries in certain areas and reduce the amount of investment in the Housing Programme? It is not that wishes were horses. We are dealing with the real world and if you are being fair and being good Parliamentarians, you would also look at the dollar figures and see that we cannot just magically past a one dollar over the place and presto, we have the money before us.

The issue of the Security Forces and the Reform are very, very important. There is no doubt about it and I want to say that the reference that was made to the Simmond's Report, the Disciplined Forces Commission, 2004 - the Simmond's Report obviously was a major document that came into force and in the Disciplined Forces Commission which was done, not come into force, but, you know what the problem with the Simmond's Report was that it required an analysis of the



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Police Force which was so in depth and required major such interventions and also cost major dollars to be able to make changes. And we could and I challenge you to go into and find out why were there such slothfulness in terms of dealing with the Simmond's Report, part of which was in relation to the reluctance of the International Bodies, Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral Agencies and at the Government to Government level of lending money for the Security Sector Reform in many countries of the world at that time.

The philosophy and the response of Governments and Multi-lateral Agencies changed after that and it began; when you saw the British being more helpful with the Jamaicans; with the changes in Trinidad just nearby, in terms of police-to-police co-operation at a much more direct level than ever before and also in terms of funding.

Where we are today in relation to what happened specifically in 2006, which helped to change the tide in terms of opening doors for Guyana to get technical support and financial support of the magnitude that would be required to make a total overall change. We have been getting technical support, the British has been giving us technical support of training our Police Force, of creating a SWAT Team that had to be disbanded, of training our people and I was there and I saw the simulation exercise. I was the Minister of Home Affairs then when I saw them dealing with simulation exercises, trained by the British where there were bandits in a house and the police could get in and deal with them.

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The genesis of what led to the change was not only recently globally and regionally by bi-lateral and multi-lateral Agencies and countries, but also what happened in 2006 in Guyana.

In April 2006, a Minister of Government was murdered, assassinated and his members of family were assassinated. Unheard of! Unheard of! It has never happened in our society before. The only other Minister to have been killed was Minister Teekah in 1978 in a very strange, mystical type of thing that has never been explained up to today. And what happened? The one with Minister Sash Shaw was so grotesque it shocked not only the Guyanese public, it shocked the world, it shocked our friends and allies and Government and friendly Government with us.

There was also the Kaieteur News massacre, there was also the blocking of the Agricola embankment - the Highway, twice, where people were murdered and that happened between April and further on. The AK 47s were missing and also by August the Rosehall robbery. We must not be convenient in our memories.

What happened as a result of that is that people who are friends of Guyana, in other governments, in other countries, took steps to be able to bring the different parties together. Lord Treedsman in his letter to the President approached the Guyana Government prior to the Elections to be able to try to bring the President and the Leader of the Opposition to agree in relation to comprehensive Security Sector Reform. That was around June 2006.

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In August 2006, the President accepted the five overarching areas in relation to Security Sector Reform and we understood and it was understood and factually backed up by the Leader of the Opposition, so agreed to this same things. They both agreed that regardless of what the results of the Elections were, that they would both uphold this agreement. And so began, after the Elections October 2006, the first teams coming in to look at what we were going to do. *[Interruption: 'Kerick!]* No, I did not talk about Kerick. The members of the team - if you wish, I can give you the members of the team, as my doubting Thomases, on the other side of the House. We have nothing to hide; there is nothing to hide. The members of the October Group were:

Ebil Hutchfil - Chairman of the African Security Sector Network

Veniack Patankar - Lt General (Rtd) from the Indian Army,

Andre Bhoutsay - Acting Police Officer in South Africa,

Jonathan Stanley - National Security Coordinator of Sierra Leon; and

Malikah Joseph - New Delhi Institute for Security Sector Reform for Asia.

These persons came in and what the Government of Guyana said clearly to the British and to the Team is hat we did not want another big, long Report. What we wanted was an actionable Plan, and we would build on the Simmonds Report,

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the Disciplined Forces Commission, et cetera. Therefore create prioritised areas and actionable, measurable areas that we could work on. The consultations with the Police, the Security Forces, various bodies including of the opposition parties, went on in the months that went into 2007. In 2007, we also then sat down and pruned what were all the ideas coming forward into what is a summary of the eleven years.

We can split hairs on the word *summary*. What does this document reflect? This document reflects the summary of all the issues that came into the Security Sector Reform Action. This is the template that we are going forward on. As each area 1 to 11 is developed and worked on, those would become enlarged. For example, the issue of protocols between the civilian police and the armed forces; what kind of protocols; what is the architecture of the State Security Sector? How should that be designed? Those are things that under the eleven areas based on what are the priorities will evolve. So the summary is in fact the Reform Action Plan at this stage and as each of the eleven areas is developed those documents are submitted. The growth and evolution of those areas will then be able to be carefully seen and over-sighted by the Parliamentary Select Committee over the next four years. So, rather than coming with a magnum opus in which I know the Opposition on the other side of the House will say this is another document, this is fluff; *you all come again with another big, fat document and you all not gun implement nothing*. I know that, I can hear that in your head. I have been here long enough; I can hear Mr Vieira saying that on his television channel. Isn't that correct, Mr Vieira? So what you come with now; you can never win. When you are in

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Government, you damned if you do and damned if you don't. So instead of coming with a huge Report, because there isn't one, what we have come with to this House is the negotiated summary of the Action Plan as it is now as a work in progress. And therefore, this is what we have come with. It is built on the Simmonds Report, the Disciplined Forces Commission Report and it is also building on a number of other issues.

We have now some other funding and some other areas of comprehensive Security Sector Reform. This is not the only one and my friend on the other side of the House, Mrs Backer, is very well aware of this.

We have now the Justice Sector Project which is US \$25 million over five years that is now beginning. It was signed earlier this year. It deals with the issue of the Judiciary, the Magistracy, the rehabilitation of the Prison Systems, the DPP's Office and so on. It is dealing with the issue of the movement of the justice administration system from a point at which a person may be apprehended, including issues to do with rights, Police Complaints Authority, and so on. That is one end of the Law and Order programme.

The beginning end of the Law and Order Programme is the Citizens Security Project which I know, Mrs Backer was at a Meeting in 2006 when the Scottish Police and Centrex presented to the National Commission on Law and Order, the 168 recommendations for the reform of the Police Force, Fire, Prison and Trafficking.

So, the Opposition as Members of the NCLO, as Members of other consultations, have taken place on all security issues;

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have knowledge of all these things going on. So, you have the Justice Sector - \$25 million; the Citizens Security Project - \$20 million over the next few years; you have the British coming now with the funding of almost £2.7 million approximately. Under this Project you have the Guyana Government that has been putting, in for the last two years alone, and I am not talking about years before, but it has increased the Police Budget and the Home Affairs budget to over \$4 billion in 2006 and 2007 and therefore building the capacity. We are not dependent, but we do recognise that we have to work with other countries in fighting crime and we need the expertise and we also need the dollars. We are not selling our souls for it; we are not agreeing to things that will not be acceptable.

The Member of Parliament is playing with words. These are the eleventh points, these are what we are working on between now and 2011 and it is deliberately created in this way so as not to have duplication with the Citizens Security Project and the Justice Sector Project. It is an attempt to make sure that there is synergy between the different areas of technical and financial support. Historically, this is the first time in the history of Guyana, even under the British system, even under colonialism that the Security Sectors of this country have ever had this kind of financial and technical priority ever in the history of this country. *[Applause]* So, we can titivate on a number of issues. *[Interruption: 'Cost on crime or cost in crime?']* You know, old people have a thing about when you get your words caught between your tongue and your teeth, you all getting caught between your tongue and your teeth, because you do not want things to move. Basically, you are damned if you do and you are damned if you don't. The

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Government has worked hard, the Police Force of this country have worked hard. The various experts we brought who have a lot of experience in other countries are also trying to help Guyana.

When we look at the eleven areas ... I am sorry Mr Corbin, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is not here today... because these issues have gone through quite a long period in which there has been knowledge about them.

I think we have to recognise something about this Action Plan and this is what the Motion also is very clear about and the description that is here. To come to these eleven areas was part of the process in which the Police, the Prisons and other Security Sector Agencies have been involved, because the recognition is that if they do not buy into this, if they do not agree with it, if this is not where they want to go, there are going to be problems in implementation. Therefore, a critical part of this has been the ongoing, through Minister Rohee and his team, working with the various entities under him to be able to bring this to this point.

We have seen crime in this country where persons have used AK47s and very high powered rapid fire, as well as even used grenades. Therefore, a Special Firearm Support Team is desperately needed and proper training. This is dealing with the Security Sector. My colleague on the side has the right, as a Member of Parliament to raise questions to our Minister on all these issues to do with traffic. She is actually right, but that is not the only issue we are dealing with. The issues here are not the only issues we are dealing with. Therefore, the Anti-crime Unit, in order to hold the skills of the Security Forces

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and the Police to be able to more adequately and effectively respond in a rapid way to crime situations, because our people have complained that it sometimes take too long for the police to come. The police are not properly equipped. You send a guy from a Police Station; he does not even have a weapon and therefore, the whole issue of having a uniformed Rapid Response Team.

*Crime Intelligence* is one of the clear things in the Simmonds' Report, the Disciplined Forces Commission Report, in the Citizens Security Project and all other assessments. It has been the weakness of intelligence capabilities. Therefore it is critical. In this, No. 3 talks about developing the intelligence capability of gathering, of filtering and also of other modalities, not just human, physical, electronic and so forth. Obviously, that would have to require, in many cases Legislative Reform, because certain laws would have to be brought in.

The area of *Forensic Capacity*, the issue of finger prints, body fluids, of DNA and all these issues are critical to solving crime. It is my hope as a MP that many of the unsolved crimes in this country - the cold cases - [*Interruption: 'Now you wake up.'*]. It is not a question of waking up, Sir. If you do not have the technical tools, you cannot do it. Stop living in paradise. We have never had the level of forensic capability in certain areas, because some of the skills are so highly sophisticated that even some countries in the Region do not have it either. We have to develop a Regional Crime Fighting Capability in many areas. Just like in Health, it has had to be done in the Region.



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The most important aspect of this document has been and is the issue of the management and the policy and the legal framework. Instead of what has been bandied some times, we have had to do what we had to do, because we have to do it; we have money for this, we have to do it. This is the comprehensive approach, which allows us probably to really do some serious revamping, re-working and radical changes that are required. You can do a post mortem; you can say what was not done before and what is not done. That is your right, but what I am saying is that this document and where we have reached now in 2007, we have leaps, and bounds and quantum leaps and bounds ahead in where we were even when the Simmonds Report was done. [*Interruption: 'What about the Police?'*] I want to take one thing with Mrs Backer. I did not come from Bishop's or Queen's and I do not think I am any less than anybody coming from any other high school in this country. [*Interruption: 'I can see that.'*] I really do not believe so. So I caution Mrs Backer, this old time 1950s, 1960s approach to people who come from certain educational institutions that this level of discrimination has to stop. It is elitist, because some of the top students of this country come from parts of this country that years ago, people would have looked down on those areas. So just stop this ... [*Noisy Interruption*]

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, this is not the kind of debate we want; do we? Would please allow Ms Teixeira to continue her presentation without interruption?

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**Ms Gail Teixeira:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. No. 8 is really critical, because this is where you are looking at policy, management, the architecture, and the challenges you have faced with. Some of these challenges are not easy, because they are dealing with human beings. It is not all about systems and structures; it is also dealing with people in the system. But, I think from a Parliamentary point of view, the most interesting aspect is that this Plan allows us ... and if you read it, because Mrs Backer talked about... [*Interruption: 'I now see why you do not want to leave.'*] ... Well I do not think your side has anybody to put on the issue. That is the problem. The interesting thing on Priority Area 10, on the issue of Parliamentary Oversight, when you read ... I think it is the second bullet ... it talks about identification and mechanism to enable the transition from a proxy Parliamentary Oversight arrangement to the Standing Oversight Committee. This goes back to Honourable Member Mr Franklin, who brought the Motion to do with the Standing Committee on the Oversight. This allows us to do two things at one time and that is, the actual eleven areas as developed and their Annual Reports are submitted to a Special Select Committee. That dedicated Committee would be monitoring all of that and be able to say whether the performance is being met, the performance is not being met and therefore, it says within approximately two years, we would be moving then to the Standing Committee, which will oversight the police. I hope the Opposition will be as strong in their advocacy as they have in relation to the oversight of the police, that they will be strong when we come with the oversight proposal for Parliamentary Oversight of the Judiciary. I hope you will be as vigilant and strong on this issue. I just said I hope.

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The second issue is proposal by the Honourable Member that this matter should be at the Sectoral Committee level ... I think she has missed the boat on that ... in a sense that the Sectoral Committees have to oversight many State Agencies on their annual performance. This is not an annual performance; this is a working progress. This is specifically dealing with the Security Sector Action Plan and therefore as for those of you who are Sectoral Committees of which I am one, Mr Ramjattan is, Mr Murray is. You know how much work we had in this last year of the Parliament. We have had eighteen meetings of the Economic Services Committee between January and August and we have not even completed the Finance Sector - we have not completed it. All I am saying is that you are creating a logistical nightmare, because either the Sector Committee would have to put aside the oversight work on the other State Agencies which it is supposed to deal with and/or it would have to then put aside the work on this issue. It is an unwieldy situation and therefore you are having a dedicated group that will oversight the Implementation Plan that would report to Parliament, can raise problems and concerns, can interview people after the Report is examined. Also, there is an arrangement, an understanding that we are moving towards a Standing Committee that would oversight the Security Forces. That is an important issue. We know in this Parliament that the Constitutional Reform being made and the Parliamentary Reform being made have been wonderful, but that it has been a devil to deliver and to implement many of them. I would not go into the Constitutional Reform issues and I would leave out the problems of appointments in various Committees on Constitution Human Rights Bodies, based on not being able to get two-thirds majority in this House.

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Let us learn as we go in all these reform process that we are evolving and that this is at least giving us a timeframe that is lodged in this House that any Members of Parliament including more particularly the Opposition, can say to the Government, if you have not done it, here is the timeline, why have you not done it and be able to challenge the issue. Therefore, there are measurable goals and measurable issues on all these issues.

I hope, Mr Speaker, that the issues to do with the evolution of how we got to this point, I hope I have quelled the fears and the concerns of the Opposition ... [*Are you moving the Amendment?*] I am not the mover of the Motion.

I therefore, ask the Opposition that we have been able to reach the summary that is before you, guides us and will become the template for the Special Select Committee in monitoring how the Plan is being implemented.

We hope that the Parliament, on this our first Sitting after a long Recess, will show that we are in a mode to work and to support what are good initiatives; initiatives that are positive to our country and would help to make change. Therefore, I am calling on the Opposition to support the Motion so that we would be able to move quickly in setting up the Special Select Committee and to be able to study this document in greater detail. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member, Mr Raphael Trotman

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**Mr Raphael GC Trotman:** Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Alliance For Change I rise to support this initiative and to say that it is indeed a pleasure to be back in the House.

It was a pleasure to listen to Minister Rohee slip and slide through something he obviously knew very little about.

It was, however, somewhat displeasing to hear the Honourable Member Ms Teixeira tell us that we should give support to this initiative, we should be responsible, we should be nationalistic in our approach, while in the same time, we are being denied, access to the full document. You cannot and I find it rather insulting that we are given a summary with eleven bullet points, when the larger document is out there and we are asked to support it in the interest of Guyana. It means that you do not trust us, you do not respect us and you do not believe that we are capable of providing the oversight which we are asked to do later. *[Applause]*

Fortunately, due to my IT skills I have been able to get a copy of the complete Action Plan and I will add that there is nothing within it which gives rise to any cause of concern. We are impressed with certain aspects of it and we came here today, expecting to support it fully, but we are disappointed by the disingenuous argument being put up as to why the entire document could not be laid before us.

I go on to say, Mr Speaker, that the history of Security Sector Management by the PPP/C Government has been a history of failure and that is why today, we are left with yet another Report.

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I go back, Mr Speaker, to a Report coming in 2001, known euphemistically as the *Border on National Security Report*, a Report Mr Speaker, Chaired by yourself and then Retired Brigadier General Granger of which I was a Member and others. That Report had been lauded by many and aspects of it can be found on a website of the PPP/C Government referred to in a publication entitled of all things *TOWARDS GREATER INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN GUYANA - BUILDING TRUST TO ACHIEVE GENUINE POLITICAL CO-OPERATION*. Mr Speaker, that was a document dated 8 February 2003. Alas, in November 2007, the trust that we seek is still not there.

Referring to the Report on the *Border on National Security Committee*, the PPP/Civic website claims:

*The Committee met on a number of occasions and produced a Report. President Jagdeo and Mr Hoyte met with Members of the Committee and agreed that the Report will be tabled in the National Assembly for the consideration of the Sectoral Committee on Foreign Affairs when it is formed.*

Firstly the Report was tabled in August 2001, the work was completed.

Secondly, the Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations has been in existence for at least five years and still to date, we are waiting the tabling of that Report.

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I turn next to a Report which was produced in 2002 entitled the *CARICOM REGIONAL TASK FORCE REPORT ON CRIME AND SECURITY* submitted to the Heads of Government at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting in Georgetown, Guyana, 03 - 05 July 2002. Again, we are still waiting for that Report of 2002 - the *CARICOM REPORT ON REGIONAL TASK FORCE ON CRIME AND SECURITY* to find its way to this National Assembly.

I turn again, to the Discipline Forces Commission Report and I read, specifically from a Resolution passed in this House - Resolution No. 44, 19 March 2004 and the *RESOLVED* Clause says:

*We resolve that this National Assembly approves of an extension of the deadline to the submission of the Final Report of the Disciplined Forces Commission.*

Mr Speaker, again that Report did come but alas, it never was completed.

I refer to the Simmonds or Simon's Group Report, which Honourable Member Mrs Backer has in her possession for me for the last four years, but which again has not made its way to this august Assembly.

I refer to a Report which was unveiled with much fanfare on 21 June 2005, entitled the *NATIONAL DRUG STRATEGY MASTER PLAN* at the Pegasus Hotel, no less ... again we await the implementation of that Report and if I may, just as the

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Honourable Member Rohee spoke about where is the Plan, these are all Plans through the years, have been planned.

Going back again, to a publication on the 2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report coming out of the U.S. Government, referring in particular to Guyana, I wish to cite some of what is written for the benefit of the Honourable Member Teixeira and the Honourable Member Rohee:

*Government counter narcotic efforts are undermined by the lack of adequate resources for law enforcement, poor co-ordination among law enforcement Agencies and a weak judicial system.*

And let us hear what they say about Government's action against drugs in 2006:

*The Government of Guyana announced no new drugs policy initiatives in 2006. Guyana has not yet implemented its ambitious 2005 to 2009 National Drugs Strategy Master Plan.*

Guyana has not yet implemented its ambitious 2005; we are now in 2007, almost to the end of it - the National Drug Strategy Master Plan that was launched in 2005.

*The Financial Investigations Unit remains handicapped by the lack of effective Legislations to deal with money laundering such as the absence of Regulations to allow to receiving access.*



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### Accomplishments in 2006

*Guyanese Law Enforcement Agencies seized less than sixty kilograms of cocaine with no publicly reported seizure in excess of ten kilograms. This represents a miniscule portion of the cocaine that is transited through Guyana.*

Mr Speaker, I can go on, but I do not this afternoon, intend to embarrass, just to lay the facts before this House. Of course, there are other Reports about the lack of implementation of this Master Plan and so, whilst we readily do our duty as patriotic citizens and Members of this Assembly as we are expected to do, we ask the question which I believe was asked by the Honourable Member Mrs Backer, will you, if you get out our support, implement this Report and this Action Plan and do you promise to do so?

Mr Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, the Honourable Member Mr Rohee used famous words *it is not business as usual*. He has been known to make these statements and I immediately consulted my internet facilities and found the very words used by him, then as Minister for International Trade and Co-operation, and I will quote, GINA Release of 22 July 2004, Minister Rohee:

*However, there is no room for complacency and it will not be business as usual at regard our relationship with the EU and the sugar situation.*

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Mr Speaker, there is little wonder our Honourable friend had to give a statement earlier this afternoon about the true state of affairs? If that boast is to be held to be true, the point is, whenever you make this loud statement about *business as usual*, things collapse as has happened with the sugar and the rice situation when you are around and we are actually afraid, but because I know Minister Rohee well and I know he has good intentions, even though resources are not given to him when he asks for them and there are mischievous efforts afoot to tort his efforts in that all important Ministry, to frustrate him and to embarrass him. You know you can count on the AFC to support you, Sir, [Laughter] even if it means going out on patrol some evenings, even if, because I know there are those who want you to fail but we do not want you to fail.

And so, Mr Speaker, we are going to support this Action Plan, we expect that when the Special Select Committee is established that all that has been referred to in terms of the capacity building for the three-year capacity Building Plan for the National Security Committee in Parliament, that all of this is brought to us - not to eleven point thing that is brought and the rest hidden. There is much here, which I should say, I need to applaud and at the time when the Government of Guyana signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the representative, His Excellency on behalf of the Government of United Kingdom. This in my view was a perfect plan. Why? Because indeed, it is a synthesis of all the different Reports which have passed before. It is an Action Plan. The time for talking is over. And so, Mr Speaker, as people are dying, we continue to fiddle. We pass legislation, we fail to enact it. We have reports; we do not see them through. It is time for action,

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we support this document, but we expect correspondingly that we see some seriousness and some dedication on the other side, if not, we on this side, are ready to take over as of tomorrow morning. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, we are unfortunately constrained by rules, so we have to apply the edict *business as usual*. It is now 4.00 pm and we are to suspend for half an hour.

### 16:00H - SUSPENSION OF SITTING

### 16:40H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING

Honourable Members, we will now resume the Debate

The Hon Minister of Trade

**Hon. Manzoor Nadir:** Mr Speaker, I stand to lend my support and the support of my Party to the Motion that is before us that was so admirably laid by the Hon Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Clement Rohee.

Mr Speaker, I listened quite attentively to the two speakers from the Opposition and what I got from them was that apparently nothing has happened in the last fifteen years in Guyana with respect to crime fighting. When you listen to them and one of the Members said the Government seems to

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now be awakening with respect to the issue of public safety and security of which crime fighting is just a small part.

When one looks at the record of the Government prior to 1992, clearly zero happened and what the strategy then was, do nothing was an option, because when you did nothing, of course you had no successes. But then, of course there were no failures because you did nothing, so do nothing was an option for you.

We heard Mrs Backer speak of still paying peanuts or if you pay peanuts what you will get and I quickly had to ask our hard working Staff at Parliament to get me some of the Budget Estimates to just make some quick comparisons and we have gone through this thing over and over and over again, budget debate after budget debate. We understand in the House there are new people and some of them while they have IT skills to do searching; they seem to have little skills in reading. So, the Minister of Education will have to do some literacy programmes for them. I will come back to the Leader of the AFC shortly on that.

But when I look at the allocations for the Guyana Police Force in the Budget of 1992, the Guyana Police Force had a current Budget of \$292,042,000. Today, the current Budget is \$3.6 billion. G \$135 to US\$1.in 1992 and if you are going to buy, it is G \$202 to US \$1. Do the math; the math speaks for itself.

Then, we can also go to the issue of the Capital Budget for the Police Force.

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In 1992, the Police Force got \$200,000 to buy equipment and they had \$10,000,000 to buy land and river transport. Only two or three weeks ago, they were approved for no objection to Cabinet for over \$50,000,000 in buying vehicles for the Guyana Police Force.

In 1992, the budget for equipment - \$200,000, today over \$30 million; repairing of Police Stations, we can do the comparison. But what I found even more comical - in 1992 a Constable made \$3,821. The Police Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, they were on salary scale GS16 that started at \$14,274 and the high point of that scale was \$20,857.

Mr Speaker, the comparison today is that the Commissioner of Police, his pay scale, A14 starts at \$200,000 Honourable McDonald and the high point is even better than a Cabinet Minister, \$388,000 and a Constable is at \$37,000.

Mr Speaker, last year over this year there was a \$500 million increase in the allocation to the Guyana Police Force. That \$500 million is over US\$2.5 million, which is only half of the money we are going to be getting from Her Majesty Government and thank you, High Commissioner - a small fraction? The point is the Government of Guyana has been spending so much of its own money - our won money; we did not have to come kicking and screaming to do this; we are spending our own money.

I remember a time, in 1988/1989, where a certain President had to be dragging, kicking and screaming to come to the table to give us some democratic Reforms - kicking and screaming. We are doing this, because we know it is right. *[Applause]*

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We are doing this, because we are concerned about public safety and security. And so, we hear these comments about the Government doing nothing; we hear about we have to wait on the kind gifts from donors.

Mr Speaker, the other issue that I had with Mrs Backer's presentation was the lack of information that she has at her disposal. Because we have had some horrific accidents over the past two weeks and we have had more than two dozen persons dying on our roads in horrible accidents, she said that today, we have unprecedented high levels of road accidents. What is the reality? The Police have very good records. In a former position I had the opportunity to peruse accidents. Guyana peak in terms of road deaths is about 250 per year, when we kill over 150 children in the late seventies. That was the unprecedented and we only had half of the vehicles on the road. We did 5,500 fender benders every month then. The issue is that this unprecedented high level of accidents she is speaking about is untrue. I do not want to fight over the facts. Let us establish what the facts are then we will fight with the facts to provide solutions, we fight with the facts to provide solutions. And we all accept that is why we are spending over US \$40 million to provide for public safety and security.

The Honourable Member Ms Teixeira spoke about the IDB Programme. What we are going to get from Her Majesty's Government and I said is just a fraction of that and you know we have to be very grateful to Her Majesty's Government and I trust that the High Commissioner will convey this, because prior to the monies, Mr Speaker that we had from the U.S Government for the AIDS Programme, Her Majesty's Government, up to then, was the single largest donor to

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Guyana and we are very grateful for that and very thankful that they are also signing on to this Security Sector Reform Programme for us. This is just a small part of what we are doing and it pleases us to bring to the National Assembly this Motion, to also ensure that there is some level of reporting to the highest decision-making body of this land. There are different forms of reporting and since we have one Political Leader here who is very astute with internet browsing, I am sure he can pull down all the different security... *[Interruption: 'That is the website']* ... yes, check the Australian, check the British and so forth.

So, Mr Speaker, the US \$2.5 million spent to install traffic lights, we did not have to be kicking and screaming to do that. That is teaching our citizens something else and if you notice, a few months after the installation of that US \$2.5 million Programme, our citizens are learning to be orderly, they are respecting some of the signs on the roads and that has done a good thing for us - the installation of traffic lights - after decades of seeing posts without wires or without lamps throughout our country. I think the initiator of that Programme was no less a person than the Honourable Member Gail Teixeira when she was Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr Speaker, we are talking about new types of crimes; we are talking about crimes using new technology; we are speaking about crimes with high power weaponry; we are speaking about crimes committed by criminals, who were deported to Guyana, who learnt the modern ways of crime, criminality and brutality and came back to us. That is what we are fighting. We are also fighting criminals who were lauded by Members of the Opposition as Mr Douglas stood with his rifle and called

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himself a freedom fighter four or five years ago on a television. Certain television stations glorified that; certain leaders of certain political parties stood up with them; certain former President of this country marched with some at their funerals. That is what we have in our hands today. We never had that before. We have in 2002, after the jail break and some of our brave officers went after arresting them. Certain Members of the Opposition creating the atmosphere of getting certain police people and they did get them, encouraged, and certain Political Leaders encouraged the citizenry to wear red bands on their shoulder, because a certain police officer was killed by criminals. That is the nature of the crime we have today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and so we have to enlist all supporters.

One Political Leader said, because of his certain technology skills, he was waving a document calling it the *Plan*, that he had the Plan in his hand and it was available. He does not have the Plan. The Plan is before us, what we have tabled in the National Assembly. What we waved before the National Assembly was the preliminary report done by the group and some of the Members are here and we want to thank them also for the work they have done. That is why the Motion says in the second WHEREAS Clause:

*The Administration has achieved consensus among Law Enforcement entities on the implementation on a specific number of activities labelled the Security Sector Reform Action Plan.*



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After we got that initial Report, we took that Report, we did our consultation and then we came up with this working document and this is why we are so pleased about it, because as somebody said it was not just talk as usual. But these are the action things. I did not credit you with saying so, my dear love... [*Interruption: 'I do not want you to credit me.'*] I did not credit you. These are the action things, which we are now implementing and we have no problem being bound to that by reporting annually to the National Assembly, as is called for in the *RESOLVED* Clause - none whatsoever. So we want to do that and this particular support that we are getting from the British Government, I am confident it is not the end of the support we're going to get from all of our friends, locally and overseas. It is not the end to all of it, but we are giving here the commitment to transparency; we are giving here the commitment to good governance; we are giving here the commitment to consensus building with respect to the issue of our public safety and security.

When I look, Mr Speaker, at the eleven priority areas and one particular Member of Parliament once again, try to make a mockery out of it, they have very detailed objectives. The accompanying actions that we are going to undertake to achieve those objectives, we have a timeframe within which we will do it and we also have a way of evaluating how successful we are. The monitoring and evaluation aspect of this Programme here is as transparent as what we have tabled here today. And so, if things are not going right as we monitor the evaluation, we will have the capacity to change our tactics while keeping the objectives in focus.

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Mr Speaker, anyone today, who will object to this Motion, is in fact objecting to the eleven-point objectives of this Plan, which are going to help our people and restore confidence to them that those who have been trying to destabilise; those who have been criminalising in our society, here we have part of the massive Plan to stop that and restore public confidence, not only in Guyana, but also in our Police Force.

Mr Speaker, I could not agree more with my Honourable colleague Mr Rohee, when he mentioned about giving unanimous support for this document and calling for the equivocal voice of Parliament to support this Plan.

Those who have said that they are committed to putting country before party and before persons, once again the Government is presenting you with the opportunity to match action with your words. Once again, we are presenting you with the ability to put action where your words are.

Mr Speaker, we have, the Government has no problem whatsoever with giving commitments. I am very confident that Minister Rohee will effectively deal with all those Reports raised in this National Assembly only a short while ago to ensure that he can effectively put to rest some of the, some of the uninformed statements made in the House.

With respect to the National Drugs Strategy Master Plan, I know only this morning that he wrote to several persons, including our Ministry, inviting us to review, on November 26, after two years, how far we have gone. Only this morning, I saw his personal letter coming to our Ministry, setting Friday, 25 November for a review of what we have done so far; what

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we have achieved and what we may need to and what we may need to revisit.

Mr Speaker, in all of this, we are ensuring once again that Guyanese have trust in the Security Forces that Guyanese are going to feel very safe at home in terms of our investments. Some of our people abroad have been our worst enemies, because some of them, who have left here under a regime that was brutal, still feel that is how it is today. So, whenever you see some issues appearing in the newspapers, they look at that as reflective of the entire society.

So, Mr Speaker, it is my honour to stand and support the Motion Tabled by my good friend, Minister Rohee and urge that all of us in the National Assembly show the nation demonstrate to our nation that we are united in the issue of public safety and security. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member Mr Everall Franklin

**Mr Everall N Franklin:** Mr Speaker, firstly, I would like to congratulate the Government for sticking to a promise made with regard to the bringing forth of a Motion of this nature. *[Applause]* I did not hold my breath, I must honestly tell you that, but I am pleasantly surprised to see that it has been tabled. However, I am very interested in the oversight aspect and unlike my colleague the Honourable Member Mrs Deborah Backer, I do believe that we need a dedicated Committee to deal with crime and security.

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The Government has once again promised that within twelve to forty-eight months, - twenty four months - a more permanent arrangement may be made, but I do believe that waiting one year to review the findings of any Committee is too long. I think we need to shorten that period so it could make operational trend. I think we need to be more proactive and therefore if by the admission of the Government, this is an outline, this is not a Plan, a working progress, then I do believe that input into this job at hand has to be made at the earliest stages and the entire Parliamentary Representatives should be a part of that.

Therefore, I look forward to us speeding up the process and cutting that time of review. You cannot wait a year to review a working progress. By the time you review that, I mean, we have lost a year. It has to be done on a continuous basis. What I found and probably the Honourable Minister may help us here, is that when dealing with crime and security, I fail to see one of the big areas that we have had problems with and I think the Government itself has admitted that I see no direct intervention dealing with drugs. The Master Plan is finished already: 2005-2007. I have not seen it here. Do we honestly believe that we can fight crime and not deal with the situations with drugs and ammunitions smuggled in just the other day? We are exporting now; you normally export when you have a surplus. It is frightening. I have looked, but I have not found where in the eleven- point skeleton plan where that was specifically fitted. We need to open our eyes; some of you need to drive the streets late at night; do a little patrol and you will see what drugs - (do not just drive to go and sport - drive to go and see what is happening. I know somebody who

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drives late at night, but go and see what effect the drugs are having on our society.

Mr Speaker, I believe also that there a lots of things that we could do, waiting on the Sector Reform. You need the money to do certain things, certain expertise, training, we all agree with that. But, there are things that we can do that are so simple that it makes us sometimes we lose faith in ourselves. Simply, take the 911 number - if you call 911for help, we have a problem. That we cannot fix. In fact, we are patrolling an area where there are no signs on the houses to show the house lots. Police cannot even find you. These are things that we can fix. We need to be able to respond; we need to be able to fix those things that we have the capacity to fix. Right now, we are talking about traffic. Buses are refusing to pick up children, especially on the East Bank and certain on the East Coast and we cannot deal with that? That is a breach of the road service licence; take it away.

Why can't we do those things that can be done? I think, yes, we can get the public's opinion and get an involvement in dealing with noise nuisance and dealing with reporting to the police certain things, but it is the Government's responsibility to carry the charge and to use the resources that are available. Sometimes it is just a matter of how you think - a little vision can solve some of these problems.

Mr Speaker, we talk about the responsiveness of police, but right now, if we have an emergency and it is after five o'clock the police has hell to mobilise, because there is nowhere to go and get money to buy ration to move along. These things we need to fix; these things we could fix and I feel also the

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Government need not fear the Opposition with regard to crime and security contrary to what some Members on the other side have said.

Crime does affect us all. It may not affect you now, but it will affect you if it goes on like this. It has affected you already, but we are still looking at it as if it is affecting us; it is us and them. We are still in that mode. The people of Guyana, I think, deserve so much more and they deserve all of us to work toward helping them in some way, not just waiting until twenty-four months are over, there are things that need to be done now.

Public confidence - The Honourable Minister Rohee spoke about public confidence. A few weeks ago, police responded and Minister Rohee commended their swift action, but this is the danger where a Minister gets on the ground - I think, you should leave some space. Three weeks after that commendation you are jailing the people who did the shooting, because money was missing. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about public confidence in the Police Force. Of course, it brings into question, why these men or if these men could not have been brought in alive. Those are the things that make the public lose confidence in a Police Force and the Minister should be advised to hold his commendation a little while and still be sure of what the actual facts are.

Therefore, I would like to support this Motion with a little reservation that the Government does at the end of the process and that would go in the record, form that Special Select Committee on National Security, which I think we will always need, because we will never be on top of all crimes. Crime

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will change and therefore it is the flexibility and the nimbleness that we have to build to confront crime in all of its guises.

So, to recap very, very quickly I am disappointed that I have not seen anything about a direct confrontation of the drug scourge in this eleven-point Plan. It is that our Government is afraid to tackle drug lords? The Honourable Minister can probably answer that. The little junkies whom we jail for three years for *spliff* are not going to solve our problem. The guns that are sold in our streets... I understand young children going to school now, you can rent a gun. These are things I think we need to be able to deal with. And sadly, today's paper had, and I would not mention his name, but a prominent Police Officer, who gave years of service crashing his car and trying to shoot himself, according to the report. I hope that is not true and therefore, it brings into question, how we train, how we deal with people who are supposed to push the Honourable Minister's Agenda. Therefore, we have a serious human resource problem that we need to address parallel to some of the other interventions.

There is no way you can speak about forensic capacity and not talk about five to seven years University education and probably three years after that in practice. So, it is either we are going to import some of that or in the meantime and train our own and, I think, the Honourable Member Mrs Backer was very concerned about building our own capacity, because with two weeks your £3 million will be spent back in Britain. Not that we have anything against Her Majesty's Government. If we need to build capacity here then we have to look at bringing our professionals, our young people in line and you

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have to pay them. I agree with the Honourable Member Mrs Backer. Who are you going to have stay here, go to forensic for the paltry sums that are paid? We are looking at falsification of evidence and we need to do better for our people in that respect.

And therefore, Mr Speaker, I look forward to seeing the work in the Special Select Committee starting as soon as possible and we would like to monitor; help to put flesh on that skeleton that has been presented. It is a skeleton, but I think with will and a little bit of understanding, I think we can put some serious flesh on this. Our people deserve it. Thank you, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

*(Continued in Part II of II)*



# National Assembly Debates

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32<sup>ND</sup> Sitting

14:00h

Thursday 1 November 2007

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*(Con't fr Pt I) Part II of II*

**The Speaker:** Proceed Honourable Prime Minister

**Hon. Samuel AA Hinds:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to support my colleague, the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs on this Motion for this House to note the Administration's Security Reform Action Plan and to fully support its implementation.

Mr Speaker, I think we have had quite a bit of debate already on this subject and there is maybe not much more for me to say, but maybe just to recognise again that we are all concerned about security. And for this reason no doubt, we have heard even from Members on the Opposition that they are generally supportive of this SSRP, but with some caveats.

I think it is important that we proceed; we work to improve the ability of our Police and other Security Forces to overcome crime and to turn back the increase that we have been seeing in crime. I say this, because I think all of us would have been very put out on a number of occasions, when the public had taken action in their own hands and in some cases, fatally beat and injured some persons, who were alleged or thought to have committed some crime.

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The presentation of this Security Sector Reform Action Plan at this time, I think that it is timely. We have heard speakers on both sides talk about a number of preceding studies the Honourable Member Mr Raphael Trotman, the Honourable Member Mrs Backer and Honourable Member Ms Gail Teixeira, they all spoke about a number of preceding studies and this Security Sector Reform Action Plan is obviously being turned and arose out of the considerations of all of those preceding studies.

I want to refer to the way some of the Members on the Opposition have taken to the fact that the Government is accepting here support from United Kingdom. I recall the Honourable Member Backer in her presentation, admitting, saying on the one hand that there have been great increases in the amount of monies spent so, even though later she went on the ask -What is the Government going to do from its own pocket? We do not do anything from our own pockets. We do from the revenue we collect from the people of Guyana in taxes. That is what we do to increase. But, the Honourable Member Mrs Backer, you could not on the one hand be saying that yes, you are spending more money, but what are you getting for it and then on the other hand later saying that we are only waiting to get assistance from other people.

In the case of salaries and I wanted to get on to salaries, the Honourable Member Mr Nadir spoke well to this and he showed how over the last fifteen years the pay for Constables have increased maybe ten times in terms of actual dollars, but five times in terms of US dollars, it has increased by a factor of five times. Comrades, the issue has been referred to by a preceding Member on our side, I think Honourable Member,

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Gail Teixeira, when she called on us to be realistic. Today, you are calling for the increases in the Police Force; tomorrow big increases on teachers and nurses. We all want huge increases in pay, but how do we get huge increases in pay? We made an attempt, our country tried after independence to increase pay without any regard to production and productivity. That is why today we have had inflation, such a high inflation rate during the years that your side was in government. We had a huge inflation rate so that today things are five hundred times the price they were and more at the time of independence.

So, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think that my speech that I have here, more or less all the points have been addressed already. I do not want to be repetitive and therefore I would end by calling on all the Members of this House to support this Motion without any reservation. I thank you.  
*[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Member

The Hon Minister of Home Affairs

**Hon. Clement J Rohee:** Mr Speaker, as I said when we started out this debate that it would be quite understandable when Members from the Opposition Benches would seek to cast their arguments in a political context in order to score political points as they do in the House as well as they do outside the House. I said that from the beginning and that is

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what came to past. It is not unlike the Opposition, when talking about crime and crime fighting and security, they seek to introduce political nuances in order to keep their supporters mobilised, whoever they might be, because I understand they are reducing significantly. As I said, Mr Speaker, that is exactly what transpired.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member Mrs Backer asked the question - What is the rush to get this Plan through to Parliament and that we seem to be working with someone else's Agenda. [*Interruption: 'I didn't say that'.*] Well that is what I understood you to have said and you cannot backtrack on that. So, I remember when we brought a series of Bills here in relation to Cricket World Cup the same question was asked -Why are we rushing these Bills to the Parliament? Now, I am trying to understand; I am trying to get into the psyche of these Opposition frontbenchers, particularly. They seem to be in a gear which is stuck somewhere between reverse and first gear; they seem to be stuck somewhere there ... [*Interruption: 'Neutral!' ... they are in neutral.*]

Mr Speaker, as someone said, if we do not bring these Bills here, they make a hue and cry. Where are the Bills? Where are the Bills? When we bring the Bills, they asked us why the rush? You cannot have your cake and eat it at the same time? [*Interruption: 'Why not?'*] You see, that is why you are where you are today, because you always try to have your cake and eat it. You do not strategise.

Mr Speaker, we were told in the course of the debate that the document woefully falls short of what is expected of an Action Plan. Mr Speaker, I want to posit for the benefit of the

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Members' understanding of an Action Plan that without a Plan that is actionable it is no point having a plan. You need to have actions of a plan that are not only actionable, but realisable and that is why I would wish to reassure the Honourable Member Mr Trotman, when he sought some assurance as to whether the Government would be committed to the implementation of this Plan. I would wish to assure him and his Party as well as those who have a vested interest in ensuring that this Plan is implemented, that the Government of the PPP/C is committed to the implementation of this Plan.

*[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, you know crime prevention can be a theoretical pursuit and we have been hearing a lot of this in this House this afternoon, but I want to say that the evidence of crime prevention can mostly be found in the streets. Let us not get involved or begin to advance theoretical postulates about why crime must be fought, how it must be fought, on whose behalf it must be fought. We know all those things already. We need not engage in those theoretical postulations in respect to crime fighting. Let us recognise what is happening in the streets and how effective the Law Enforcement Agencies have been on the streets of Georgetown and other parts of the country. Let us talk about that.

Mr Speaker, the question has been asked and I think my colleagues on this side of the House have effectively dealt with this question. Are we getting value for money? That is a fair question; it is a fair question, but let us try to answer this question objectively.

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Mr Speaker, we are now, after many years, embarking on the creation of an architecture; *[Laughter]* constructing the architecture that has several components that are quite costly. Fighting crime cannot be done on the streets especially when we take into consideration the changing phase of crime in these modern days. Therefore, crime prevention may appear to be very costly at the beginning as we are seeing now, but over the long term it is less expensive than the alternative in terms of quality of the life and the directive expenses on crime. So, we have to consider what we are doing now as an investment in our future. This is an investment in our future in the long term. And that is how we have to understand when we enter whether bilateral or multi-lateral engagements, either contracting a loan, a soft loan or a letter of credit, as I would point out later on, it is all aimed at drawing up an architecture in order to make an investment in the future so that the likelihood of our citizens could be safeguarded. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, we all know and I do believe that we agree that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure - an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure - and that is why we have to take the steps now to ensure that those who are bent in accumulating wealth by criminal means, that is to say through greed, in order to use that power to perpetrate their wickedness and their ill gotten deeds in society, it is because of investments like this that we are committed to ensuring that that does not happen.

Mr Speaker, I was very disappointed, when I heard the Honourable Member Mrs Backer and some of her colleagues on the other side of the House who spoke, denigrate the ranks in the Law Enforcement Agencies by coming to this

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Honourable House and telling us that we do not get the calibre within the Law Enforcement Agencies, because of the argument that was advanced of either some eliteness approach to fighting crime or for monetary reasons. That is what we were told in this Honourable House, that we do not get the returns because we are not adopting an eliteness approach to fighting crime and bringing the people in the ranks ... *[Noisy Interruption]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, you are getting a bit... *[Noisy Interruption]*, Mrs Backer we have another Motion and a large number of speakers. We need to get this one through so please allow Mr Rohee to continue.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mr Speaker, the Guyana Police Force - the Special Branch - the CID - the Guyana Defence Force, the history of these organisations, it is replete with examples of acts of heroism and acts of sacrifice by many who did not go Queen's College and Bishop's, they are putting their lives on the line when many of us are sleeping; and they did not go to Queens College and Bishops, but hey were dedicated Policemen and women and they had a passion. That is what is important: having a passion for Law Enforcement. That is what is key.

Mr Speaker, we were given views about the priorities, that the priorities are misplaced and the Government has a wrong understanding of what the priorities of fighting crime in this country should be. But only recently, a couple of days ago, we saw a case at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, where

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someone was seeking to take hand grenades on weapons on a plane - on a flight. Mr Speaker, investigations are still continuing. We do not know as yet whether there was an attempt of some sort where these weapons would be used. We do not know. But, again I say, because of the changing nature of crime, one cannot take chances because a chance could cost the lives of an entire family.

Mr Speaker, we were told that the Government does not have the capacity to do things on its own and we are depending on donor funds. I am amazed to hear some of these things being bandied about so irresponsibly. How can responsible people in this Parliament, the highest law making authority of this country, come here and make statements that are so highly irresponsible and expect it would get into the Press?

Mr Speaker, on the one hand they admit that budgetary allocations have been on the increase, but on the other hand, they say that we are depending on donor help. What is the reality?

Mr Speaker, this Action Plan in US dollars approximately cost US \$8 million. The IDB Citizenship Security Programme, which will amount to about US \$22 million and incidentally, that is a loan, the Government is contracting US \$22 million to fight crime. This money that we are debating here this afternoon is a grant, but we are contracting a loan of \$22 million, \$19 million of which is coming from the IDB and the \$2 million in counterpart funding from the Government of Guyana.



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Mr Speaker, we see the Traffic Lights - US \$2 million in the agreement with the Indian Government - a line of credit. That has to be repaid. You asked what is our part, what contribution are we making?

The Justice Sector Strategy - US 17 million is a loan; it is not a grant that is a loan that the Government is contracting to ensure that the Criminal Justice System is modernised. The Government itself, Minister Nadir gave the figures in a very illustrative way, which is almost US \$18 million and the National Drug Strategy Master Plan is approximately US \$3.2 million. On this question of the National Drug Strategy Master Plan, I have spoken ad nauseam on this matter, but some people are reading the newspapers and reading that part of the newspapers they would like to read in order to make propaganda, cheap propaganda. I have made the point, I do not understand what they mean by implementation of National Drug Strategy Master Plan. What are you looking to see? How do you expect this Plan to be implemented? Do you expect to see buildings go up and then you will say this Plan is being implemented? Mr Speaker, this National Drug Strategy Master Plan is already being implemented and Minister Nadir has just said that in a couple of weeks' time we will have a mid-term review of this National Drug Strategy Master Plan, where we will bring all the stakeholders together to analyse where we are in respect of the implementation of the Plan. But, I want to believe, that again I want to say that my colleagues on the opposite side of the House must stop playing political football with these matters. I do not know whether they are saying this to please somebody inside Guyana or outside Guyana. So, when they shout from the roof top that

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the National Drug Strategy Master Plan is not being implemented; who are you saying that to please, because the reality on the ground is quite to the contrary.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I want to just refer to the Honourable Member Mr Franklin who spoke about a recent incident involving a Police Officer and I think I need to take this opportunity to correct it, where he was involved in an accident somewhere around Nelson Mandela Highway and then he attempted to shoot himself. That is a total... I do not know where the reporter got that information from. A couple of months ago ... *[Noisy Interruption]* ... listen and learn ... a policeman was involved in an accident in Queenstown. In the course of the accident, his body went up in the air and when he landed and looked around for his firearm, it could not be found. *[Interruption; 'How you know this?'* ... *You ask me how I know this; you want to know too much]* In this case, this policeman made sure he held on to his firearm, because you (Mrs Backer, the Honourable Member) have said that they got too many guns in the town and if the police don't hold on to their firearm, it might fall into the wrong hands. So the police held on to his firearm; some reporter interpreted that act as though he was going to shoot somebody or shoot himself. This is the kind of irresponsible reporting we have in this country and people pick it up and bring it to this House and sell it just as how they bought it.

Mr Speaker, I want to say that this Security Sector Reform Action Plan is to be commended. It does not matter, that is an argument that has no basis. It does not matter whether it is a summary or whether it is an Action Plan. The point that matters is that we get the Plan on the road and have it

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implemented. That is what matters. We do not want to get into intellectual debate and a hypothetical discussion on whether this is that or whether this is so. You can argue those precepts and those notions in Congress Place; we do not have the time for that here, Mr Speaker, with due respect, to this Honourable House, but I am saying that this is unprecedented. I have not read in any other part of CARICOM Member States (maybe the Honourable Members would know) where such an action has been taken by the Government to bring an Action Plan of this type to fight crime to the House in order to seek support on a matter that is not only of great concern to us on this side of the House but the entire country. And, since the People's National Congress Reform whatever it is now, keep saying that they represent so much percent of the electorate; they keep saying in their propaganda that they represent so much percent of the electorate and they must be taken seriously and now is the test to see if you are going to take yourself seriously by supporting this Plan and taking the plan forward. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Members.

Honourable Members, allow me to put the Motion, please.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion carried**

Thank you very much, Honourable Members.

We can now move to the next matter.

**2. INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL OF THE LAW  
OF THE SEA - ARBITRAL AWARD**

WHEREAS Guyana initiated proceedings conferring the delimitation of its maritime boundary with Suriname on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2004 and among the submission made by Guyana in initiating the arbitration proceedings was that the Tribunal should find and declare that Suriname breached international law by use of or threat to use force against the CGX rig in June 2000;

AND WHEREAS Guyana brought these proceedings pursuant to Articles 286 and 287 of the 1982 United National Convention on the Law of the Sea and in accordance with Annex VII to the Convention;

AND WHEREAS Guyana and Suriname ratified the Convention on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1993 and 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1998, respectively;

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AND WHEREAS in its Notification and Statement of Claim, Guyana stated that the Parties deemed to have accepted arbitration in accordance with Annex VII of the Convention by operation of Article 287 (3) of the Convention;

AND WHEREAS Guyana noted that neither Party had made a declaration pursuant to Article 287 (1) of the Convention regarding their choice of compulsory procedures and that neither Party had made a declaration pursuant to Article 298 regarding optional exceptions to the applicability of the compulsory procedure provided for in Section 2;

AND WHEREAS in its Notification and Statement of Claim, Guyana appointed Professor Thomas Franck as a Member of the Tribunal in accordance with Article 3 (b) of Annex VII, and Suriname appointed Professor Hans Smit in accordance with Article 3 (c) of Annex VII;

AND WHEREAS by joint letter to the Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration dated 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2004, the Parties

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noted that they had agreed to the appointment of the remaining three Members of the Tribunal in accordance with Article 3 (d) of Annex VII, headed by H.E. Judge L Dolliver M. Nelson (President);

AND WHEREAS once constituted, the Tribunal commenced its work immediately and the final pleadings of the Party were heard by the Tribunal during the month of December, 2006 at the Headquarters of the Organisation of American States;

AND WHEREAS the Arbitral Tribunal unanimous Award on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 was favourable to Guyana and finally and forever settled the maritime boundary between Guyana and Suriname;

AND WHEREAS the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal established under the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea in the matter of Arbitration between Guyana and Suriname has been tabled in this Parliament;

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**NOW BE IT RESOLVED;**

That this National Assembly acknowledges with appreciated the Government of Guyana for having the courage and wisdom to take the Guyana Claim to the Arbitral Tribunal;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That this National Assembly places on record its appreciation and recognition of the work done by the Guyana team of distinguished Agents and Counsel and the support of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Archives, the Guyana Land and Surveys Commission and many researchers and friends and supporters of Guyana;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That this National Assembly unanimously notes with approval the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal and order that it be incorporated

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into the official records of the  
Guyana Parliament.

Hon Minister of Home Affairs, you may proceed if you still have your voice.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mr Speaker, I think this is a Motion that we should have very little Debate about, because in essence when His Excellency the President announced the ruling of the Arbitral Tribunal, there was so much jubilation in our country that even those who had doubts - even the Doubting Thomases, whether this is something that should have been done that they themselves joined in the euphoria, in welcoming the decision of the Arbitral Tribunal.

Mr Speaker, the road has been long and difficult, but in the final analysis - in the end - good sense prevailed.

The Government, after having consulted far and wide, and extensively, I must say; after having engaged our Surinamese friends with the ejection of the CGX rig, and where it was carrying out its lawful activities, meetings in Trinidad, meetings in Suriname, meetings in Guyana, meetings in Jamaica, meetings in Canawan, St Vincent and the Grenadines; the matter was also taken to the CARICOM Heads of Government, all with the aim of reaching a settlement within the context of CARICOM. No, no, no, we tried at the bi-lateral level and we felt that since our home is CARICOM, we should seek to use that community as a



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medium to bring some resolution to this matter and that was done. In fact, the Hon Prime Minister of Jamaica, former Prime Minister of Jamaica played a very important role in trying to do some trouble shooting in order to find a solution to this issue.

Mr Speaker, the Government of Guyana persevered, it mobilised some of the best brains that we have in the country, knowledgeable on the issue. They worked within the walls of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked very closely with the Office of the President, brought in some of the best brains that we could think of from the International Community, including our own Sir Shridath Ramphal and I think that the course was set for the filing of the request for a settlement with the maritime boundaries with Suriname. It has been a long outstanding dispute and as the President himself pointed out, we wasted almost seven years. Had we found a solution at the beginning we probably would have gone a very far way, because one way or the other the solution probably would have been what it is today, seven years ago.

M Speaker, all Guyanese need to be proud of this, because all Guyanese would benefit. The future generations to come will benefit. There is a national consensus that has emerged on this issue. As far as I can recall, all the political Parties have supported the action of the Government and the ruling. A high degree of patriotism and nationalism emerged and as the Motion points out, on 17 September 2007, the Arbitral Tribunal unanimously awarded a decision that was favourable to Guyana and finally and forever settled the maritime

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boundaries between Guyana and Suriname. I think that is something we all must be proud about.

This Motion seeks to bring to this Honourable House, this same spirit of nationalism, patriotism that manifested itself in the wider society so that the Parliament could endorse and give what the Diplomats would refer to as its imprimatur to this ruling.

Mr Speaker, I would not wish to say much at the beginning in introducing this Motion. I certainly, however, would look forward to contributions from our friends on the Opposition side of this House that would reflect that spirit and in fact use this as an example of the course which this country must go as a nation in order to lay the basis for future generations to come. Thank you, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member, Mr Norton

Before you commence your presentation, Mr Norton, Honourable Members, I mentioned about the photographs we are asking you to take, fifty-two persons have taken and I do not know how many persons are present here, but if there is anybody who has not taken his/her photograph, you could quietly... unless when Mr Norton is finished, you can quietly go out and have your photographs taken.

Yes, Mr Norton!

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**Mr Aubrey C Norton:** Mr Speaker, today the responsibility devolves on me on behalf of the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana to address this Motion which we think is a timely one, but before we actually address the Motion, I want to express the Party's thanks, appreciation and to congratulate those who worked to make this a reality. I want to single out for a special treatment Ambassador Elizabeth Harper who is here and Mr Keith George, *[Applause]* because they are the epiphany of professionalism and in that regard would have contributed significantly to us having an approach that reflects the nation rather than partisan politics. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, 17 September 2007, was of significance in the history of Guyana. That was the day when the award was made. However, I wish to submit that we must not see the award as an event, but a culmination of a process that started from the time Guyana became independent and even before *[Applause]* and to point out that historically Guyana has attempted and I think successfully, to deal with this issue in a very professional manner and the infrastructure (I do not want to use Rohee's architecture), the diplomatic infrastructure was established to be able to address this issue in a proper way. I want to recall that from the inception, Guyana believed that crucial to the Resolution of this issue, was the equidistant principle in this whole process of delimitation. May I add as well that we should note that the 1977, before the Law of the Sea Convention, which was signed in 1982 and came into force after, Guyana had developed the Maritime Boundaries Act and this Act defines *Guyana's Maritime Boundaries as those determined by an Agreement with the adjacent States or in the absence of Agreement by means of the equidistant line.*

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So, I am making the point here that work was done before that created conditions propitious to the decision we obtained. That is not to say credit should go to any Political Party. The point I am emphasizing here is that these matters are better dealt with if we take a national approach in a continuous way [*Applause*] and that is why we were glad.

In the early post-1992 period, when my friend Clement came to the Ministry, we thought he did not start good, but then he changed and he consulted and involved the likes of Mr Rashleigh Jackson, Dr Bartley Scotland, et cetera, and for that we congratulate you, [*Applause*] because we believed it placed Guyana back on course to being able to resolve this issue with a national united consensual body. But the point must be made that we must learn the lessons of history that on matters of foreign policy, it is important to seek a consensus and for us to all agree and that creates the kind of condition we need to ensure we succeed. [*Interruption*] Cheddi Jagan had one before in 1979. Go and read little boy! No, he cannot disturb, he is perturbed. [*Laughter*]

Mr Speaker, I am suggesting here, even against the grin of my friend Neil that we need to approach certain matters nationally; take into consideration the national interest. And so, I want to attenuate his hostility for a while.

Mr Speaker, I want to turn to the Resolution itself. The Resolution as proposed, I think it is the penultimate WHEREAS Clause states:

*AND WHEREAS the Tribunal in its Report unanimously ruled in Guyana's favour on 17*

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*September, 2007, and finally and forever settled the Maritime Boundary dispute between Guyana and Suriname.*

Mr Speaker, while we would support the Resolution, we want to suggest to the Members of the House over there that they should take their guide on this issue from President Jadgeo and I want to quote what His Excellency the President had to say on the day that this Award was issued:

*As I explained when I announced the filing of Guyana's claim on February 25, 2004, Guyana saw the proceedings before the Tribunal not as an adversarial process, but one designed to establish a sound basis for economic development in the Maritime Regions of both Suriname and Guyana.*

It continued:

*Throughout the Proceedings, Guyana conducted itself in that manner and now that they are ended we look to the future as a new era of co-operation with Suriname.*

He continued:

*Both in CARICOM and bilaterally, both Guyana and Suriname are pledged and obliged by International Law to accept and respect the Tribunal's Award.*

He continued:

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*As I have already explained how satisfied Guyana is with the Award on every one of the core issues before the Tribunal.*

Importantly he went on to say:

*I have deliberately not spoken of winners and losers. That would not have been appropriate, because in a very important sense both Guyana and Suriname are winners for having participated responsibly and peacefully in this historic process and for having emerged with a common Maritime Boundary that put an end to this long standing source of tension between our two great countries.*

Mr Speaker, this Resolution does not reflect the spirit of President Bharrat Jagdeo's pronouncement and therefore, the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana finds it strange. It sounds kind of ... what is the young man's name that put up the billboard? [*Interruption: 'Kwame Mc Coy'*] Oh yes, it sounds McCoy-like, that we will go down this road of talking about unanimously ruled in Guyana's favour.

Mr Speaker, this is an issue of foreign policy and as I understand it, when the Head of State outlined the framework, the Government apparatus will operate within the confines of that except there are discussions and agreement that there is need for change. And therefore, I find it not the best language for us to talk about winners and losers to quote directly, *ruled*

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*in Guyana's favour.* And may I point out that the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana, while supporting this Motion, we have serious problems with the wording there and we have tabled an Amendment which I think has been circulated.

And so, Mr Speaker, I want to suggest that we have to be very, very, careful, because the future of Guyana is at stake and we do not want to do anything that will jeopardise the relationship and I recommend therefore, that we amend this particular Clause in keeping with the Amendment circulated.

Mr Speaker, I want to turn to the first Resolve Clause:

*That this National Assembly acknowledges with appreciation the Government of Guyana for having the courage and wisdom to take the Guyana Claim to the Arbitral Tribunal*

Mr Speaker, I want to tell you what the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana suggests here. Minister Rohee himself pointed out that there was consensus and there was agreement. It would appear to me therefore, if there was consensus and there was agreement then, in essence what you had was not solely the courage of the Government of Guyana, but you had a situation where the Government of Guyana, Opposition Political Parties and the people agreed that this was the way forward.

Mr Speaker, I want to warn against transforming necessity into virtue. We ended up in large measure at the Arbitral Tribunal, because we had exhausted the diplomatic process at both the

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bilateral and the multi-lateral level and as a consequence, we had to choose an option. This option was opened long before we actually sent it to the Arbitral Tribunal.

Permit me to turn to Mr Rashleigh Jackson's book, *Guyana's Diplomacy to Cope*. Mr Jackson said this in 2002 in the Stabroek News and then it was published in this book in 2003 and I thought the Arbitral Award went some time after that. And this is what he said:

*Whilst efforts ...*

and he was referring to Suriname and Guyana

*... at the bilateral level are being pursued, the country should, in my view begin to recognise that at some time, maybe sooner rather than later, there may be the need to seek third party involvement in order to reach a conclusion satisfactory to both sides. In other words, the two sides should begin to contemplate, making use of existing international machinery and mechanism to find a solution to the boundary problem.*

He continued:

*As regards the boundary in the Maritime State both countries are signatories to and have ratified the UN Law Convention. That Convention contains mechanisms for the settlement of dispute such as the one between Guyana and Suriname over Maritime State.*



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*It would therefore seem eminently reasonable and logical for the two countries to consider utilising the Provision of the UN Convention for the settlement, determination of the Maritime Boundary*

Mr Speaker, I quote that to point out that there was a natural evolution of the process and that a former Minister who was a Consultant at the time and I know was involved in the process, had analysed the situation and recommended a direction that we should go.

And therefore, Mr Speaker, I want to suggest that this Resolve Clause be reworded to take account of the consensus we talked about, the involvement of other forces and to ensure that at the end of the process all who would have contributed are recognised rather than be seeking to create some kind of virtue from a situation of necessity.

Mr Speaker, this is important, because as a nation we would have to transcend many more boundaries and if we are to transcend them as a nation, we must be just with ourselves. We should give due credit where it is due and we should be critical when there is need for criticism. The point that should be established here is that Guyana, its peoples at all levels agreed that there was a consensus and we went the route. And so, Comrades, we must be clear in our minds that we are focusing on nation, a national development and the Resolution must reflect that.

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Mr Speaker, I turn to the final RESOLVE Clause which says that this National Assembly unanimously notes its approval the findings of the final Report from the Arbitral Tribunal Award and orders that it be incorporated into the Official Record of the Guyana Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I want to suggest that this National Assembly must unanimously accept the findings not *notes with approval*. I believe *notes with approval* do not give us the right we need to be able to use it in the future. All of us must be able to say that this National Assembly accepted this Award and for all of us, it is legal and binding. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, I therefore find it strange that on this occasion, when the Government should use strong language, when it would get the support of the Opposition for that strong language, it resorted to the weak, innocuous *notes with approval*. I want to suggest a change.

Mr Speaker, having said all of that we must recognise that this Arbitral Award is only one element of the diplomatic work that is ahead. We should take cognisance of the fact that we are still to deal with the issue of the sovereignty of the Corentyne River and the sovereignty of the New River Triangle and we must not fool ourselves; they are real, important and emphatic issues and I want to quote from a book on Caribbean Security in which the author, (I want to give you his name) Raymond Nicey, in an article called *Territorial Dispute and Regional Security in the Caribbean Basin*, he noted:

*The purported South American bickering over lands in Suriname and Guyana comes from*

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*diversion, interpretation of colonial treaties and serve as a vehicle for Regional States to search Regional power and to compete for potential oil resources on and off shore.*

And so, underpinning all of this is economics. It has to deal with this country being able to use its resources to develop and therefore we have to develop strategy taking that into consideration. The way forward must be for us to increase our co-operation with Suriname and to ensure that we progress rather than retreat.

Mr Speaker, this is a case of the illustration of the use of International Law to the advantage of small countries. We must recognise that and we must ensure that that is part of our foreign policy posture as we move ahead.

Mr Speaker, we must not miss that this Award, while positive in large measure, will result in thinking in Suriname, in Venezuela and in other countries. And so, we as a people must sit down, study the situation and draft the plan forward so that in the final analysis we can promote and protect the interest of the people of this country. Mr Speaker, all of us: Government, Political Parties in Opposition, the people, celebrate this victory. I urge this National Assembly (wrong word, wrong use of words) all of us celebrate this outcome and I want us to recognise (that's one of the things about diplomacy; you will have to cultivate the use of the correct language or else you will miss it and so be led by this Resolution but as you see, I will correct it). We need to be very, very careful and utilise this opportunity to take Guyana forward to ensure that we develop a foreign policy that is

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national in nature and reflects the interest of the people of Guyana. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member

The Honourable Prime Minister

**Hon Samuel AA Hinds:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it gives me great pleasure to speak to the Motion that is currently before this House. It has taken Guyana years of sometimes agonising discussions, negotiations and sustained efforts to reach to point at which we arrived at on 17 September 2007. That date will go down in the annals of our history as the date on which our patient efforts at arriving at a Maritime Boundary with our neighbour to the East, was finally vindicated.

It may be argued that the efforts that culminated in the final Award by the Arbitral Tribunal started in 1929 and that is true; it is true that it started a long time ago. My notes state that it started since 1929. Therefore, when the Government and people of Guyana made that collective sigh of relief on the afternoon of 20 September 2007, when the Award was made public. It was because of the fact that some seventy to eighty years of burdensome labour had finally been resolved in what we believe was a just settlement and a judgement favourable to us.

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Previous speakers spoke as if we in the Government have been trying to take all the glory for this. We recognise and we do not grudge, recognising the work that was done before 1992 and we accept, we expected that everyone in this House, every political party would have taken this national approach to the question of our Maritime Boundary. That is why we were therefore astonished and to some extent pained, when the Leader of the Opposition stayed away from the consultation to which he had been invited in February 2004, and even more so, when there were references to us announcing that we are going to Arbitration as one of trying to create diversion from local issues.

So, Honourable Members, we accept that in matters of our boundaries, we should adopt the national approach and we were disappointed and grieved at the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition and the PNCr in February 2004.

His Excellency, President Bharrat Jagdeo, in announcing the Award on 20 September 2007, thanked the distinguished Members of the Tribunal for the erudition and justice of the Award. Anyone reading it and conscious of the voluminous documents and arguments that the Members of the Tribunal had to work through would agree with the sentiments expressed by His Excellency the President. I too, therefore, wish to record before this House, my admiration for and gratitude to:

Judge L D'Olliver;

N Nelson, President of the Tribunal and the other four Arbitrators:

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Professor Thomas Frank;

Dr Kamal Hussein;

Professor Ivan Sheara; and

Professor Hans Smith;

as well as our team of overseas experts, including Guyanese born Sir Shridath Ramphall, and those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we too want to extend recognition to the Director General Mrs Harper and Mr Keith George and all of them in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs who supported this effort. I, being the Minister responsible for the GGMC, I want to get also recognition of the contribution of Members of the Petroleum Unit of the GGMC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, every Guyanese is cognisant of the fact that the award makes it possible for Guyana and for the exploration Companies who have obtained leases from us to resume exploration and with certainty, certainty about where the boundary is and to what extent they can search for hydro-carbon resources in the eastern sector of our Maritime space.

Every Guyanese is eagerly anticipating the return of the CGX and their exploration equipment to the area to which they were forcibly removed by Suriname on 3 June 2000. Our expectations and the expectations of all Guyanese of some success in finding economic quantities of oil and gas are not without foundation. They often referred to Guyana/Suriname Basin is regarded as one of the largest remaining unexplored areas on earth with potential deposits, large deposits of oil and

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natural gas. Once there are discoveries, there would be significant employment opportunities for Guyanese and there would be significant, additional new revenue flow to our treasury. But as we were reminded by one of our co-agents who appeared before the Tribunal, our very own Sir Shridath Ramphal, oil has been a mixed blessing where its gains are not affectively managed. It is the solemn promise of this Government that should hydro-carbon resources be found in Guyana, in commercially exploitable quantities, those resources will be properly managed, not only for the present generation, but for the benefit of future generations. This Government will ensure that the proper mechanisms, legal and otherwise are in place to ensure that the revenues from such exploitation are used to develop Guyana as a whole. *[Interruption: 'Speak to the Motion' "Yes, Sir, I am speaking to the Motion"]*

Mr Speaker, the Motion before us acknowledges that it was a courageous act on behalf of this Government to take the Maritime dispute to Arbitration. A dispassionate perusal of the fact and the issues leave no doubt that while this was a wise decision, it required some courage. Those who have thrown themselves at the mercy of the legal system know only too well that in spite of how confident one is about the strength of their case, there is always a level of uncertainty with respect to the result. For Guyana's Government, it was no different. We, however, proceeded and persevered based on the conviction that an end to the dispute could have only redounded to the benefit of both Guyana and Suriname, notwithstanding our conviction with regard to the justness of our case, our argument and our position. The Award has

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vindicated our action to seek Arbitration and the position that we held as a country since Independence and as a colony before that, that the equidistant methodology was the appropriate principle by which to arrive at an equitable Maritime boundary with Suriname.

So, Honourable Member Mr Norton, we are recognising the work done in this regard since Independence. As His Excellency the President said in his address to the nation on this issue, the Tribunal Award also confirmed the Rule of Law in CARICOM Maritime areas, a vindication of Guyana's argument before the Tribunal and a vindication too that we were holding our hands after Suriname moved against the CGX drill rig ... I think there were some hot heads who wanted some things to happen. We were patient.

A second issue in this Motion is the expression of the appreciation of this House for the work done by the legal and technical Team that appeared before the Tribunal and the support rendered to both by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Archives, the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission and the many researchers and friends of Guyana who supported our efforts. It is a fact that Guyana was able to put together a Team of lawyers and technical people who were permitted to ensuring that Guyana's interests in the matter were attained.

I wish to thank the legal and technical Team that represented Guyana for their commitment to the task we undertook on behalf of all of us. We are discussing this Motion today with a feeling of vindication, because of their hard work and astute advice. I must of course, mention our Co-Agents, Sir Shridath



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Ramphal, Mr Paul Reichler, and Professor Payam Akhavan for they led the way ... they were of course, ably assisted by a battery of lawyers and technical experts; and as I mentioned before, the hard work, commitment and dedication of our own Ministry of Foreign Affairs to this issue and also the GGMC.

Guyana and all of us Guyanese owe all those who worked so hard in this case a tremendous debt of gratitude. In the end, I do believe that this is the culmination of a truly national effort of citizens at home and the Diaspora, including corporate citizens who gave of their best to ensure that Guyana obtained its legal entitlement from this case. There were those who gave unselfishly of their resources in time toward making sure Guyana's team has the best and most up-to-date information to prepare its case.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we envisage the return of various companies to prospecting for oil and gas in the very interesting Guyana/Suriname offshore area, I think it falls to me, I think it may be my duty to provide this House and indeed, the nation with some history and framework in which oil and gas exploration has been proceeding in Guyana.

The historical evidence of oil and gas in Guyana goes back a century with the first shallow well in 1970, prospecting has been vigorously pursued on the coast and offshore from 1950 onwards in various cycles or bursts of exploration, which have involved more than a dozen international companies, notably Shell, Mobile, Total, CGX, Esso and Rexon. To date, we have had about thirteen exploration wells drilled offshore, about a dozen onshore near to the coast, along the coast and three in the Rupununi/Takatu Basin, whilst the accumulated money

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spent at the time totalled US\$100 million. At today's cost, the investment so far would be upward of US\$500 million. True, there has been no economic discovery so far, but many find the results tantalising. Obviously so, in the Takatu Basin where we know that oil came up by Home Oil and also a well referred to as a Bardy Wall off the coast of Guyana which indicated the presence of good quality crude.

We have referred before to the US/GS World Petroleum Assessment of 2000, which rated the Guyana/Suriname Basin as one of the most promising remaining unexplored areas for oil and gas. Let me say too that our licensing arrangement, our petroleum prospecting licence has continued to be based on a form of contract, which was developed in the mid-1980s with the assistance of the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat. I am giving you this information, because soon people may be asking the question. I am trying to pre-empt some of the questions as my learned colleague, the Hon Minister of Home Affairs said earlier this afternoon, that we are trying to pre-empt some of the questions which may be asked soon. So, we have a standard, we are using a standard production sharing type of petroleum prospecting licence, which was set up in the mid-1980s and which arose from assistance given to us at the time by the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat. I know that everyone is looking forward to when activity will resume again in the offshore area and even earlier this year I have been speaking with the companies who hold leases in that area and they have made commitment to certain minimum work programme. I must say, however realistically in this time, the high oil prices have been driving exploration all over the world and obtaining

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signing-up exploration shifts at this time has entailed a long waiting period. So, without pushing as much as we could realistically, we may not see in the area resuming work on the ground, as it were, until maybe a year from now in the last quarter of 2008. In the meantime, however, as has been happening since 2000, the remodelling of the data already acquired will continue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by our support today to the Motion that is before us, we are making good and best of gratitude of which we have been speaking. Our future generation, whenever they would revisit this issue, they should also take note of the gratitude they too owe to the men and women who gave yeoman service to the attainment of Guyana's core objective in the just concluded case. In our interventions today, we call for prosperity, the contribution of our President, Government, our lawyers, technical people, officials and ordinary Guyanese to the success that we are celebrating. It is my hope as it is the hope of all Guyanese that in time, in the not too distant future, we will be seeing tangible benefits flowing from this settlement of the boundary at sea between Guyana and its neighbour to the east. I thank you.  
*[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Member.

Honourable Member, Mr Ramjattan

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** Mr Speaker, at once I wish to do the necessary protocol of congratulating the entire legal team,

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the Hydrographic Team I understand, the Diplomatic Team and of course, our own Mrs Elizabeth Harper and all those other Guyanese who made inputs into a very successful advocacy of this award.

It is important, however, that for a certain other reason that the point be made that almost every political party and even a broader spectrum of organisations have already done the praising, already done that which was celebratory a couple days after and has continued thereafter for about a week or so. The declarations were made after 20 September 2007, when we actually got it. The Tribunal Members were also praised at the national level. The Rule of Law had won. In the Alliance For Chance Press Release, we made it quite clear indeed that this is not the time to celebrate, because a neighbour of us might not want to have that kind of feeling of despair that say, we are celebrating over here and they are in desperation over there, because they got fish and water and we got oil, as was said by a Parliamentarian in the Suriname Parliament.

For that reason then, I thought it was very good on the part of the President to indicate that we must not be jumping and dancing with jubilation, neither should we be celebratory and very expressive about that to the extent that it could be of a negative effect across Suriname. We were of the view then, that that being a Presidential dealing, that it would be implemented, that the President's authority on the issue as to how then this ruling will be handled in Guyana, will then be implemented at all the other organisational levels and so there will not be any celebration activity. But was that well meaning, because we started seeing a whole lot of erections and then withdrawals all over the place. That is what we call a

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billboard, Mr Lumumba, if you do not get my point and then they had to blame it on McCoy. We once tabled in this Parliament how much money was misspent on that stupid exercise, how much money was misspent as a result of that and then you go and give the President: Oh, the President was not so celebratory, he is a magnanimous guy. He has ordered the withdrawal. *[Interruption: 'Good leadership!']* Good leadership after the erections went up? Yes, that is how they operate. They do not come straight in the regard as to how this thing happened, but they blame it on somebody; they make a scapegoat; misspend tax payers' money and then against the grain of what the President wanted, they wanted to celebrate. I want to say that this is typical, very much typical. What then do we have here? In view of the fact that they could not celebrate, they want to bring it in Parliament to make a big jump and dance about it. We could have had the award tabled here, but no, we have to now come to state that the Government of Guyana, although as Mr Aubrey Norton just mentioned, there were some other people apart from the Government of Guyana, who were instrumental in getting the initiation going but no, they come and say that the Government of Guyana must be rewarded and given publicity for the courage and wisdom. That is what is in the air.

*Now Be It Resolved that this National Assembly acknowledges with appreciation the Government of Guyana for having the courage and wisdom for taking the Claim to the Arbitral Tribunal.*

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They could have used the other language to say, the good sense, courage - what courage they had? Tell me honestly. What courage brought this initiation? There was no courage in the very thing; but they were frightened much to go to court. It was fright. No, I am saying now that that is the kudos. They cannot get it out there. What Gina did throughout a four-week period, they are only talking about the great thing about the President, putting him on a pedestal that is undeserving and when they had to stop they come now and say, yes, Government of Guyana has courage and wisdom.

We also, in the Alliance For Change, would want to express our concern that this thing is not reflecting the magnanimity it ought to. Nothing is mentioned about any Opposition Party here. Government did not, as if we were not involved, as if we did not support the process of carrying it to Court. Oh my goodness! Everything about this Award that they have done here is as if it is the Government. Nothing, absolutely no kudos, for anybody else. Nobody else absolutely existed and it is so in that sense ... the magnanimity, the magnanimity is not shining through. Yes, but what's wrong with other Parties? Were not other players around? But no, you do not want that ... you do not want that. Just now you were reflecting the attitude so you did not want to give the whole Plan but you want Parliament to have oversight of a Plan that you don't even want to share. That is my argument with you always. You know that, Donald. You do not want to share information but you want to take the kudos. I wonder if you will take the lash and the negatives that will come with the European Economic Partnership Agreement. I hope you come here to

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say with courage and wisdom, we lost. No, we do not understand, only you understand.

I want also to make a point that they were giving the impression that in the Gina, and in the Channel 65, and if it is not in 65 they zero back to Channel 11, Oh, President, President and then they put back to Channel 69 I think. The thing is going as if, you know, the President is our greatest advocate. He knew nothing about it literally so when the result came he ... When you were asking questions about, when questions were being asked on it ... Oh we do not know yet, we were listening on ... They could not have given updates ... nothing. No, no, no, I am telling you that. We will ask him about it. You get the impression after that ... and that is what Odinga said ... about after ...; he's there primarily to praise that and to give him all the *courage and wisdom*. Yes that is exactly the point. At least it has brought me here. How much you get from where you came?

I want also to indicate that what has been said, as against what was regarded as a wind, is not necessarily the whole truth. They gave this impression through all these Gina Reports that the claims that they made were exclusively won. They were saying that ... the Gina. I am getting it right. [*Interruption: "You'd better watch you mouth there, Bheri, about getting it right" 'Who you calling Bheri? Mr Ramsaran!'*]. It is important that we understand that one of the main claims for damages was not won. Did you know that, that we did not win that? Did you talk to Gina about that? And indeed, the impression was given that everything here in relation to the area that was sought, was given. Yes, well then, that is what you have to go and do but you patched up the thing. You went

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and said we want ... No, there are statements ... We got the Report on the Statement of Claim in relation to the four Claims made ... is literally something in which you lost and won. You lost in relation to cost and you lost in relation to the 100% that you wanted. Let the people know that. But, typical of what you do, you indicated, no, no, no, we're doing it.

*[Interruption]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, please allow Mr Ramjattan to continue his presentation.

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** They want to give the impression ... it is not paranging, Donald, it is essentially to get the thing right, get it right. You Donald, never went to the Press and indicated we didn't win the US\$33 million in car, in damages. That is what is wrong. They did not pursue damages in the Third Claim but in the Fourth Claim which they pursued to the hilt, they make ... The point is that you must be honest ... you must be honest. You give the impression here as if it's basically something that you went for and you got the whole Claim. You come back home and you're behaving as if, you know, you got it. I want to make this point because it must be recorded here ... recorded here: *"I, as a Member of the PPP/Civic supported this, alright?"* Now, this is what the Claims have. The Claims have it, as I understand, that they were arguing for a Declaration, they were arguing also for what is called damages under Claim No. 3. *[Interruption: "You wanted us to lose?" "No, we didn't want you to lose but we wanted you to tell us the true result"]* ... just like the seat



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arrangement with GECOM. We got six seats, not five and you know that, but you're going to say to this Report here that we won, you know? And, it is so important that we understand that because a lot of people don't understand that.

Page 58: I wish to make a ... this is what, Bheri ... because I saw you on the television, you just couldn't get it right ... There were three ... the Party's Claims. The Party's Claim was one, Page 34. It's now I get it ... it's now I get it ... Suriname ... *[Interruption]*

**The Speaker:** Would you stop talking to each other? Please address the Chair or else you're going to attract disruption in the House. Address your remarks to the Chair. Honourable Member, Mr Ramsaran, Honourable Members, please allow Mr Ramjattan to continue without shouting across.

**Mr Khemraj Ramjattan:** Mr Speaker, let me just turn to Page 34 of this Report: *Arbitral Award*. It indicates Guyana's Claims.

*Claim No. 2: From the point known as Point 61 ... and then it says up to the point where they would like to see the Award be granted to them. They did not get that; we didn't get the impression from all this propagandistic thing that they were doing through the Press that they got that.*

Secondly, and this is Claim No.3:

*Suriname intentionally violated Guyana's territory and peaceful ... (what was it, the oil rig and all of that?) ... to the extent then that we should get \$33 million damages.*

We didn't hear that.

No. 4 ... They asked again for Reparation to be provided in a form in relation to an amount to be decided. What was decided at the Arbitral Award by Guyana was that they were not going to pursue the Reparations under Statement of Claim No. 4, so they pursued to the hilt their damages. Now, how they will get that, it must be recorded, because you would get the impression here, you know, that you did magnificently. I want it to be clear in the air that you did not, and that word in a sense is something that ought to be recorded. They don't want that and that is the propagandistic value of all these Channels that they have, even on Mr Vieira's Channel and I understand, they ensure that is the Statement.

What we need in this Parliament, Mr Speaker, is the real deal, the real McCoy, not the false one that was setting up the erection. We must have the real McCoy, that is, the deal that was made. If my understanding of information is correct, that shareholder value of 10 cents when they started some time ago went up to \$3.40 so when they paid the \$9 million legal bill, they made about \$90 million in a week. It's \$3.40. You're probably sharing in that now, too. But, my information is that it is \$3.00 and more now and it is prognosed that it will be \$15.00 at the end of this year. We don't have a problem with that. But, you know, the impression is sometimes given, even the fact ...

I want it to be laid on the Table here that indeed, a lot of times when I had asked personally some of the questions about how

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could you all be allowing the crime to sell and not Guyana dollars? Well we didn't have the money. Okay, I can understand that but do you know what can happen here? It is like a conditional pre-arrangement. In law we call it ... you could very well be breaching certain ethics. These are some of the issues we should be talking about and being more frank and up-front with but, no, we don't want that. We want to praise the Government for its wisdom and courage. Gosh, man, look at the courage of the people over there and look at the wise men and women over there! Yes!

I want to also record ... By the way, I missed a name to praise, Mr George's Foreign Affairs Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Affairs, thanks very much, but this is it, I would wish that we do the necessary thing that could straighten out this thing to the extent that all the truth behind it be brought out and not necessarily just coming and taking the kudos. *There wasn't a public document ... [Interruption: "Yes, there wasn't a public document ..." "We know that, we know that but what was your propaganda before the Award came to Parliament?" "We rely on what we're told ... 'Yes, and very many of you probably didn't read it either; you didn't probably know that half the Claims failed and then the damages were also not granted. Yes, you get what big one! Oh, yes, and that is all that matters!].*

That is all that matters, Mr Speaker, in the context whenever things like these, positive for Guyana, very positive for Guyana, come to the fore. When it's positive, even if a whole lot of people argued and won the case ... No ... the Government of Guyana, and that is the approach that is outrageous; it's unfair now ... so obscene, about the

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administration. It doesn't want to give anybody, it doesn't want to be large-hearted, it doesn't want to be magnanimous. No, but they take all the kudos as though it is very difficult. As a matter of fact the AFC is supporting the Motion that all these persons that went there and argued the case and the Tribunal itself and so on, we're supporting them; we find the nature. You know there is a lot of manner in doing things and that's the manner they bring here. They don't understand the form and substance and substance and form ... and they used to teach that at a College to me and a host of other people.

So, I want to just make those points in record and hope that at some point in time this administration can evolve into being something more magnanimous than it has reflected here in this Motion. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, we'll suspend for half an hour. Mr Odinga will resume when we come back.

**18:58H - SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

**19:30H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member Mr Odinga Lumumba

**Mr Odinga N Lumumba:** Mr Speaker, Members of this National Assembly, I am very happy to speak in support of

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this Motion and indeed it represents an historical day for all of us, all Guyanese. It is also important that we understand and recognise this ... and my friend, a Member of Parliament, Aubrey Norton, I think in many ways I must agree with him, that this is a Guyanese thing but at the same time, we have to deal with realities. I was hoping that the gentleman who has probably had a problem with erection would have been here today but he seems to have disappeared.

I want to make the point that, in Arbitration, sometimes there are winners and sometimes there losers. In Arbitration sometimes you ask for fifteen things, Mr Speaker, eighteen things, but the central issue is what's important. I think Member of Parliament Ramjattan assumed that this issue was something like you have in court, therefore you must have damages, therefore you must have compensation. I think, Mr Speaker, the compensation for us at the end of the day, is that we now have access to territories and that is the fundamental issue; that is the only fundamental issue ... [*Applause*]. Forget all the other nineteen or twenty things. At the end of the day, we now have access to territory. We can now ask Shell, Esso, to come in and participate in that venture and that is what is important. It is not important whether we buy a train and ask for \$30 million or \$40 million. If we, whether in the Shell or Esso, find oil tomorrow, the question of compensation with Suriname becomes irrelevant because we are talking about billions of dollars already.

Secondly, he speaks about losing. To press the issue of compensation against Suriname would be losing. Suppose, Mr Speaker, Suriname reacts and says our fishermen must not enter a certain sector or all areas of the Corentyne River. I

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think the President, in his wisdom, has done the correct thing. We've had access to the territory, full stop! Full stop!

Mr Speaker, both Messrs Norton and Ramjattan have raised some very interesting issues and I think both Parties, to some degree, in particular Mr Ramjattan and to a lesser extent Mr Norton, apparently want to, in some way, take credit away from the President of Guyana. Mr Speaker, you know that we don't have a problem with Ambassador Harper and her colleagues, and the work they have done but someone has to bend the can. Ambassador Harper could not file a claim or acclamation or any international Body of Guyana unless Cabinet or the President has pronounced. And it had to be the wisdom of the President who is elected to lead this nation; it had to be that he believes that when a twenty or thirty million dollars, whatever it costs ... and he has to make, change his initiatives. So, we have no apology for giving the President of this country credit. So I understand from a political sense, the Opposition's refusal to accept the fact that the President was critical to this.

Mr Speaker it is important that we make some important points here. In the great nation of the United States the democrats and the republicans have their internal battles in Congress, but at the end of the day, whether it is free trade, WTO, whatever the issues are, at the end of the day, President Bush will have a Press Conference and you will hear the President of America deliver the goods. The President of America does not, in his releases pronounce or announce on every Congressman or Senator. It's the Government of America.

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Mr Speaker, recently, presently and in the future the negotiations going on with the EU and the Caribbean as it relates to the Trade Agreement ... but at the end of the day, Mr Speaker he has directed some of the Leaders of Europe, he has directed the Leaders of Europe and when these issues are resolved the European Leaders will say: "We have resolved the problem with the Caribbean". A I say these things because we tend to play petty politics sometimes. We spend a lot of time determining whether we should call the President's name when he gives us credit. Let us give the nation credit. But, the nation has a Leader. Whether you like it or not, the nation has a Leader. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, if a man in 2002 decided that the way to resolve national issues is by teeth and not by gum and then in 2006 someone now resolved all the issues by meaningful mechanism, you don't go back in 2002 and give that man credit; it's the man who resolved it in 2007. That is the reality.

Mr Speaker, we like to talk about the economy, the opening up of the economy, the new initiative. Our friends on the Opposition are always saying the late President, (God rest the dead), the late President Hoyte is responsible for that, and many of us agree, to the opening up. I have never heard the Opposition say President Hoyte of the Opposition, so what's the problem? What is the problem? Mr Speaker ... *[Interruption: 'Speak to the Motion']* - you don't even know what speak to the Motion is. This is high level intellectualism; this is not selling wild meat or mutton. Mr Speaker, we must clearly understand what it means. I think the Prime Minister spoke of this. I think many of us don't understand the implication and ramification of this Award. Of course, some

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of us already start to smell the oil. Geology is a good thing to do; unfortunately you don't understand that. Some of us already smell the oil; some already want to spend what is supposed to come but that is not the issue here. The issue here, Mr Speaker, is that because of this ruling there is renewed confidence in the Leadership of this Government. *[Applause]* This ruling sets the stage for foreign investment, not only on oil but on every other factor or issue in this country. *[Interruption: 'Tell us how']*

Recently, dozens of Trinidadian businessmen came to Guyana because, yes, because they believe this is turf for investment. Mr Speaker, it was not by accident that this exchange was moved from thirty something cents to over three dollars; it's not by accident. That was because of confidence. Not only that but also confidence in our society, in our economic structure and our leadership. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, Mr Norton urged that we make an amendment. I disagree with him and I disagree with him because we don't have a problem saying that it ruled in our favour. It is our analysis that the ruling is in our favour. In Suriname he said that so I don't know why Mr Norton or Mr Ramjattan only behaving like a Member of Parliament of Suriname, you know what I mean? And that's important, Mr Speaker. We have no apology for what is written here. We are Guyanese. We have been abused in this process, Mr Speaker. We felt helpless where we couldn't stand up. We could have, but we decided to go the way of peace, we decided to go the way of intellectualism, we decided to allow the international world to rule and they have ruled in our favour. That is the assessment, so why speak here of something different? We will still work



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with our brothers in Suriname, but we have to let our people know that we have won because if we had lost, the same Opposition would have made a set of noise about the US\$25 or 30 million that was invested in the rig ...

So Mr Speaker, in closing I am asking my brothers on the other Side to support this Motion and let us be good Guyanese, let's be patriots, let's be patriots, let's support this. Nothing is wrong in giving President Jagdeo some credit. He has been the pilot on this, he has been the Leader on this, the Government has been the pilot and Opposition has been supportive particularly, after the announcement was made. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member, Mr Bernard De Santos SC!

**Mr Bernard DeSantos:** Mr Speaker, I too am very pleased to join in support of this Motion, standing in the name of Minister Rohee. This Motion which I expect at the end of today comes to find there is no difference whatever, but absolute support because, as we pointed out this is not a victory for the PPP but a victory for the people of Guyana. While our President has set the tone of the manner in which we will deal with the outcome of the Award, I think we ought to be able to silently pat ourselves on the back and take credit for all the hard work. I beg to differ from Mr Ramjattan when he said where is the courage and where is the wisdom.

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For many, many years this uncertainty has plagued us. It has been as Mr Norton said, a system evolving in which another Government played a part but ultimately, ultimately, Mr Speaker, it required the courage, the political courage to enter into a process, which was not without it. We were not bound to win this thing; we had a just cause but, Mr Speaker, you are in a good position to know that many a just cause was found in the arms of justice. And, therefore when this Government and Cabinet listened to their Advisors and had the wisdom, the courage and the determination to vindicate our cause, we couldn't do it. I am hearing about options; I don't know what other options we've been talking about for I don't know what years. The only option ... we couldn't go by force because we have no force. The only option we have is what is known as *Choice* and that was the choice to go by the mechanisms which the international law affords us and that is by the process of the non-confrontational procedures of Arbitration. That decision as I said, and the pilot of ship must have played no small part in bringing the other Members around to the view that this was the thing to do and I give the President and his Cabinet and Advisors full credit for it. *[Applause]* However, the carrying out of that, the execution of that process was not a matter for the President nor Cabinet and this is where the other players must also get the praise. I am happy to say that Mrs head is now bowed; she's probably feeling sleepy comes in for our gratitude and our praise. *[Applause]* The other gentleman from Foreign Affairs, I remember he is Keith but I don't remember the other name (*George*) Keith George, he also must be given credit for the work he has put in *[Applause]* and how many of us know that Mr Paul has been a friend of Guyana for as long as I can remember in my association with

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the PPP. Mr Paul has done a lot of work, free of charge because he is always associated with Labour Government, with the People's Movement, and he, I remember every single meeting that I attended in the preparatory stages, he was there with other Members of the Staff and they, I am sure, played a very significant part. So, Paul gets his kudos as well. *[Applause]* And, if I left out, well of course the Professors from Canada and elsewhere but if I've left out Sir Shridath Ramphall, a *died in the wood* Guyanese, it's because I think I keep the good wine for the last. That gentleman I think, Guyana owes him a great deal, not only for this, but we must never forget. I think he was Foreign Affairs Minister, he was Attorney General, he was everything we can think about in this country. He deserves a praise.

But, whilst we exalt about the outcome, not to celebrate a victory, the outcome we must now be mindful of the fact. It is said we now have access to oil and gas but as pointed out, oil has been a blessing to some but it could be a curse to others and therefore, we must exhort ourselves that, whilst we celebrate, we must cogitate on the other aspect, the negative aspect, which can flow as a consequence from our dealing with this Award.

The Award itself, Mr Speaker, has many implications and it depends, I suppose, on what perspective you apply to get several interpretations of the goodness and the negatives that can flow from the Award: more jobs, big investments. There are also other things too and for me, one of the most important things is the most intangible one and that is, that Award to me defines us as a people, it defines us as a nation. It says to the world that we, a little underdeveloped country can have the

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wisdom, the courage, the tenacity to pursue what we believe is ours and to do it in a manner approved by the international society. *[Applause]* We, we have made a Statement, we've made a Statement and that Statement to a larger extent, will decide who we are.

The economic benefits have been talked about by other Speakers and I am not going to go into that but, all in all, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007, will go down now in history as a very, very, important day. We ask our brothers and sisters on the other Side ... this is not a time for name calling, whose name was called and whose name wasn't called. In the final analysis, this Motion asks us to recognise the work of the Government, meaning the Party in power and indeed, all the other persons that have taken part in making this Award a reality, and to recognise it, enshrined in the records of this House so it forever will be a memorial long after we've all left this place. Thank you. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Ms Africo Selman

**Ms Africo Selman:** Mr Speaker, I rise to address the Motion entitled *National Tribunal Arbitrary Award*. Mr Speaker, the PNCR-1G accepts the decision of the Tribunal and is extremely glad it was settled within the confines of international law. It infers the fact that at times countries subscribe to the rules of international law. It further illustrates that both countries created the condition for the dispute to be

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settled within such confines since both the Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Suriname are Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. And hence, they are bound by the relevant Provisions of the Convention and for that, we wish to commend Guyana, Suriname and their peoples.

It is important to recognise Guyana for her part in starting the process of putting in place the requisite infrastructure well in advance of fifteen years ago under the PNC government. We welcome the decision too since it is in conformity with Guyana's position, which holds that the Parties have always been in agreement as to the status of Point 61 as the Land Boundary Claim as the terminus and the starting point of Maritime Boundary Claims as evidenced by the conduct of the Parties and their colonial predecessors over seventy years ago.

Mr Speaker, it is submitted that in the context of the changing nature of security and this era of safety concerns regarding international boundaries vis-à-vis Maritime issues, security and safety concerns would be viewed with greater significance and it follows therefore, that the world must, as a necessity, resolve boundary dispute to ensure progress and development hence, the WHEREAS Clause which reads:

*That this National Assembly acknowledges with appreciation, the Government of Guyana for having the courage and wisdom to take the Guyana Claim to the Arbitral Tribunal.*

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This seems to suggest that the Government had alternative avenues through which the dispute could have been resolved. If that is so, the question which arises is, what other option the Government had to resolve the dispute, given the fact that it wanted CGX to continue its operations?

Mr Speaker, this was no act of courage nor wisdom, but merely an act of necessity. Mr Speaker, we should accept that there is, at the national community level, the desire to find solutions to national problems and it is imperative that the Government takes account of this. Further, it appears at face value that this decision was made by the Government without the involvement of any other stakeholders in the Guyanese society, when on the contrary this decision was arrived at after consultation and sound recommendations by many stakeholders within the society.

I would like, on behalf of all Guyanese, to laud Mr Rashleigh Jackson, Dr Barton Scotland, Sir Shridath Ramphall, Mr Keith George and Ambassador Elizabeth Harper, since they would have contributed in a significant way towards the success we would have achieved.

We, the People's National Congress Reform - One Guyana, also take this opportunity to urge Guyana and Suriname and all their people to honour the outcome of the Arbitral Award and wish to further submit that we, the PNCR-1G fully accept the decision of the Tribunal, recognising that Suriname has always posed a security threat, which was manageable within the context of the country's security capabilities in the early independence years. However, in recent times, a sense of pervasive crisis and to some extent, the image of a nation

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under siege emerged as was evident when CGX was evicted from Guyana's territorial waters. Hence, we welcome the decision of the Tribunal.

Mr Speaker, it is essential to point out that the early efforts of forging a frontier diplomacy in relation to Suriname were reflected in the late President Burnham's visit to Paramaribo, a year after his assumption to Office. This visit, which was in response to the invitation extended by then Prime Minister of Suriname, took place in January, 1966 and aimed at exploring closer ties between the two countries. The summit meeting reached agreement on the procedures to deal with the frontier problem and on the mechanism of working groups of officials for the joint handling of common problems, including air, sea and road transport and economic co-operation matters. One of the assumptions which could be drawn from the foregoing fact is that the infrastructure was laid before 1993 for the peaceful resolution of the boundary dispute taking into consideration, too, that both countries have always sought to have some measure of bilateral co-operation.

The PNCR strongly recommends that both Guyana and Suriname be ameliorative and continue to act in good faith, thereby strengthening bilateral co-operation. Mr Speaker, we the PNCR wish to state that the Resolution of dispute which concerns exclusively the Maritime boundary between Guyana and Suriname should be regarded as a process which began in the post-Independence era with the then Prime Minister of Guyana, Mr Forbes Burnham and the then Prime Minister of Suriname.

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Mr Speaker, it is important too, that the National Assembly treats the Arbitral Award as an event that occurred in the process of the development of a diplomatic plan and strategy aimed at settling disputes. It is hoped, Mr Speaker that the Government would recognise there is need to view with greater concern other burning issues.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I wish to submit that the PNCR is glad that it has resolved the Guyana/Suriname Maritime problem within the confines of international law. This has opened new opportunities for both Guyana and Suriname. We must work together to ensure that, as two developing countries, we develop our resources in the interest of our two peoples. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member, Mr Winston Murray

**Mr Winston Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for your indulgence and I promise to be brief. Mr Speaker, 17 September 2007 is an important date in the history of the relation between Guyana and Suriname for on that date there was combination in the Resolution by peaceful means in accordance with international law of the Maritime boundary dispute between our two countries. This is to the credit of both countries and we look forward to our people in Guyana and Suriname working through their elected Representatives on both sides to co-operate as fully as it is possible in all areas so



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that both the people of Guyana and the people of Suriname could move forward hereafter and from strength to strength.

Mr Speaker, in introducing this Motion, Minister Rohee referred to those who had doubts and even to those coming on board after the Award was announced. Let me say that the People's National Congress Reform never had any doubts about subscribing to this process and in fact, Sir, it was acknowledged that the acceptance of the principle of equidistance was long recognised by Guyana and in fact, that principle was enshrined in the Laws of Guyana since 1977 in our Maritime Boundary Act of 1977 and we have been always guided by that conduct so that, this approach to the Resolution of our problem had a legal context which we had already recognised in Guyana.

Sir, the point I would really like to make is that unlikely from the Speakers who have just preceded me, to support the Amendment being proposed. I want to say this is most unfortunate if that were to turn out to be the case. In the second to last *whereas* Clause where the Government is saying that the Tribunal unanimously ruled in Guyana's favour, not only is this undiplomatic and unnecessary because the Arbitral Award is what it says and nobody can dispute that but the point is, and Mr Ramjattan made this very clear, that they did not unanimously rule in Guyana's favour on all issues, that there were some issues on which we did not get the judgement favourable to ourselves. But, to write it this way would suggest that they unanimously ruled in our favour on all counts and it was unnecessarily contentious. And so, I strongly suggest that the Government rethinks its position of not supporting this, apart from the fact of appearing gloting.

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After the *Be it resolved* Clause, Sir, I want to make this absolutely clear: we will not support the first *Resolve* Clause as it stands in the Motion and that is the *Revolve* Clause which says:

*That the Assembly acknowledges with appreciation the Government of Guyana for having the courage and wisdom to take the Guyana Claim to Arbitral Tribunal.*

I want to explain why our position is that way, Sir. First of all I don't agree with Minister Rohee when he talks about lost time in terms of the seven years or so that they have spent in trying to resolve the matter, bilaterally with Suriname or through the intervention of CARICOM, to which both Suriname and Guyana belong. That to me is a vindication of Guyana's approach to resolving issues which is, in trying to do so in the first instance, on a bilateral basis, with the country with whom we have the dispute and should not fear to put it in a broader international context or resolution and only if that fails, then we go to international law for a resolution. So, I don't see it as a waste of time. I see it as something that would have done Guyana's image very well and would favour us as a country that was interested in resolving matters with our neighbours by ourselves in the first instance, peacefully.

And Sir, what is the position of Guyana prior to going to Arbitration? The fact of the matter is that, having failed to resolve the matter bilaterally and even in the context of CARICOM, we had very little option. Mr Bernard De Santos was absolutely right, Sir. He said, were we going to take them

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on militarily that was a no-go. So, what did we have left with: just commonsense not courage. The status quo was that we were not going to be allowed to explore within what, we have defined as our law, the Maritime Boundary. We are not going to be allowed to explore there. We didn't have the military right to challenge them to assert our law. What is the option we had? Where is the courage? The option we had was to take it through an international forum under a Convention to which both Guyana and Suriname have subscribed. *[Applause]* Where is the courage? It is commonsense that we did that. And, I have no problem with congratulating the Government. I have absolutely no problem with congratulating the Government for showing good sense and commonsense in pursuing that course. But, don't come to me and tell me about courage *[Applause]* as a basis for congratulating you. Well, I will not subscribe to that. I would further think that if we want to congratulate people, and the Prime Minister made this point, and I thought all of this would have lead to an amicable resolution of this matter, that we must congratulate the people of Guyana for having supported this approach, but there is no mention in this Resolution about the people of Guyana. We acknowledge that the Opposition also supported the Government. Why is it that you want it to appear to hog (I'm sorry to have to use this word), but why is it you want to appear to hog the praise all for yourselves? You want us to support it; let us share the kudos, the kudos there are or let us share the reality of the fact that we all co-operate within and supported this effort to get the Resolution through the mechanism that was used *[Applause]* and that we got an outcome, that is, of which we are satisfied. Why is the Government so hard-headed in insisting in leaving mention of

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the Opposition and the people out of this particular *Resolve* Clause?

We say, Sir, emphatically that we will not support it as a nation. We will ask for it to be separately voted on or we will not support it even though we support the Resolution as a whole. *[Applause]*

And Sir, I want to say one last thing before I take my seat and it is this: that this, the Prosecution of this Claim by Guyana was well done, excellently done and I join with all the colleagues who preceded me in congratulating all of the people who worked long hours, tirelessly and resolutely to bring us to the point of success and I think it is appropriate that each one who speaks refers to those persons' tireless efforts.

Sir, when Claims of this kind are prosecuted, the Attorney General of the country who is the Chief Legal Officer in the Government, in the Executive, is the one in whose name such Claims are made and I feel, the People's National Congress Reform feels that we are disappointed, and we feel wholly sad that in fact, our Attorney General was not, or his Office was not the one to play the lead role and take us along the course. We needed Advisors and we had them and thanks for all their efforts and we paid them well and that is as it should be, but I think it is most unfortunate that the Government could not find it possible to have our Attorney General as the one in whose name this Claim was prosecuted and on whose behalf we should stand to hear speak to us. *[Applause]*

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Mr Speaker, with those few remarks, I think I've clarified the position of the People's National Congress Reform and we stand ready to go on this Motion. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Minister of Home Affairs ...

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** Mr Speaker, I'm somewhat disappointed by the way the PNCR Opposition frontbencher concluded their contribution to this Debate. Well I don't know, is he the Opposition bencher? Mr Murray I think is the main spokesperson on behalf of the Opposition and in winding up the Debate, Mr Speaker, I was winding up the Debate from the Opposition Side. I would want to believe he is heckling his sentiment of all his colleagues and that is precisely why I made the point that I was very much disappointed with the note on which he ended the Debate from the Opposition benchers.

There are two aspects to this matter, Mr Speaker and these two aspects very fundamentally go to the heart of this issue. One is the rejection of the use of force to settle dispute between nations and coupled with that is the peaceful settlement of disputes. Now, we hear these terms bandied around by many persons so much so that there are people who give lip service to talk about peaceful settlement of dispute and rejection of the use of force.

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Guyana, I would say has always been on the path of seeking to settle problems or disputes, controversy with its neighbours by peaceful means. The country has always stood for that principle. Now in discussing this matter, the first principle of peaceful settlement of disputes I believe is what should be given primary consideration. And I don't think we need to engage in polemics over this principle and it is precisely because we're committed to this principle as a nation that, after the CGS was rejected, from what we consider to be our territory we took the position that we could not accept the use of force to settle a dispute which Suriname had introduced into this matter. So, the People's Progressive Party/Civic administration was not party to this practice that has been in existence over the years to settle dispute by peaceful means and rejecting the use of force as a means. We sought to give light to this principle.

The other point I would like to make Mr Speaker, is this. How do you recognise the significance of such an Award? My own view is that you recognise the significance of this Award by its absence, and you'd recognise the significance of this Award by the maintenance of the status quo. Because, had this Award not been made, had the administration, the current administration in this country not taken the position that peaceful settlement of dispute is a principle that should govern the relation between nations, we probably would have been where we were some time ago before this Award was given.

So, when I hear argument, Mr Speaker that it was only a question of commonsense and that we have no other alternative but to go the way of the Arbitral Tribunal, I ask myself the question, then how did the Party that now sits on

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the Opposition, after being in Government for so many years, not recognise, did not recognise that the way to go to settle this matter, the way to go to settle this matter was precisely the way the PPP/Civic administration went? *[Applause]* I am not going to, Mr Speaker, I am not going to, at this late hour get into the Debate on the question of the law, I am not going to get into fending and proving on that matter because I understand the experts sitting over there on this matter who should know these things quite well but, if we want to get into politicking, if we want to get into politicking on this issue then I think we should choose another forum to do so.

Mr Speaker, I don't support the view that it was simply a question of commonsense and no other alternative for the Government in pursuit of a Resolution of this matter to take the part that it's in. Why are our colleagues, on the opposite Side of this House getting so worked up, or flying into tantrums? Why are they getting so worked up, why are they flying into tantrums in respect of these two words, courage and wisdom? Why is this running again the ... Mr Speaker, we have sat here for the past hour or so and we have heard Members from the Opposition benches, unabashedly and unreservedly give praise, I was about to say, give thanks and praise, but give praise to those who they believed politically made a contribution to the building of good neighbourly relation between Guyana and Suriname. They said so unashamedly, unabashedly and unreservedly because obviously you were seeking to score political points and make political miles. We are not seeking to do as you did. We are stating a simple fact and as my colleague Minister De Santos said, we weren't sure that we were going to win this case, we

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weren't sure. Precisely! We're never sure about anything. Thank you! I'm glad to hear that there is an enlightened voice from the Opposition bench; I'm glad to hear that; and that is precisely where the uncertainty lies. In the centre of that uncertainty the Government was courageous to take this step [*Applause*] to take this of its own judgement and wisdom. And, incidentally, Mr Speaker, incidentally, incidentally, for the benefit of our friends, I've heard them talking a lot about one of the great minds in Guyana, Sir Shridath Ramphal, and quite in order but, it's left to them to do so. But it was the same Sir Shridath Ramphal who, a couple of days after the Award was given, met Leaders and stakeholders at the Foreign Service Institute in New Garden Street, opposite Office of the President and used these exact words, that it was on the basis of the courage and wisdom of the Government that, the decision was taken. [*Applause*] So, am I to understand, Mr Speaker, they want to praise Sir Shridath because they have political whatever with him but when it comes to the words that he used, which found some common resonance with what is in this Resolution, we have a difficulty with that, you have a difficulty. These are the exact words that Sir Shridath used with the Foreign Service Officers in the Foreign Ministry, put in this Motion. So, where is the incongruence? Where is the inconsistency? Mr Norton himself said, a former Foreign Officer of some distinction, Mr Norton himself said that in using diplomatic parlance and jargon and language, one has to be extremely careful less one gets mired in a sea of confusion. And our good Foreign Service Officer, the Director General for Foreign Service, as well as Mr Keith George, the Director of the Foreign Affairs Department, in keeping with good diplomacy, which was to use the language of well considered



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men, used that same language in a consistent way in this document. So, there is no contradiction, there is no contradiction.

Mr Speaker, we don't have a problem with all and sundry being praised, or gratitude being expressed to all and sundry but, we will not accept a position where, in extending our gratitude to all and sundry, we seek to make a special carve-out to leave the Government out from this situation. We're not going to agree with that.

Mr Speaker, Mr Ramjattan said that we want to take all the kudos and Mr Murray has some difficulty in regurgitating the terms or the words that were used in putting it forward. I'm not so sure whether this Motion seeks to do so. This Motion doesn't seek to do so, with all due respect. The language is quite simple and clear but if you have, if you made up your mind politically and you have a psychological block and if you inherently mentally and psychologically have a problem with the Government, obviously in every nook and cranny, in every sentence you look for nuances for which you can make an objection in order to either put the Government in a bad light or to isolate the Government and not give the Government credit. And this is precisely what you've been seeking to do.

Mr Speaker, I don't know, to tell you the truth, what relationship sovereign shares of CGX or those people who were associated with the Arbitral Tribunal ... what do they have to do? What relationships do they have with the Arbitral Award? That is a totally independent matter and here again, because of the invidiousness of the thinking; because of the

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conspiracy theory ... some deal cut hey, something happen hey!

Mr Speaker, to tell you the truth I don't really think this nation would get far if this kind of thinking proliferates and goes beyond this Parliament, so much so it becomes a permanent thinking in our society. We must move away, we must move away from this kind of thinking and shed ourselves of this kind of conspiratorial, blanket thinking and come clean. You're telling us we must come clean but the first thing to come clean is that your mind must be clean. *[Applause]* If you want to come clean, the first thing that must be clean is your mind. If your mind is corrupt, if your thinking is corrupt, if your sighting is corrupt, you're not going to get very far.

Mr Speaker, I want to make it very clear. Mr De Santos made this point in respect to Mr Reishler's contribution. Mr Reishler... *[Interruption: I have to take enough time to debunk the ... that ... [Laughter]* Excuse my language, Mr Speaker ...

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, you're here long enough to know.

**Hon Clement J Rohee:** That's why I withdrew it immediately. But I have to have enough time, Mr Speaker, with the courtesy of your ...

**The Speaker:** I determine the time, not you.

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**Hon Clement J Rohee:** ... to debunk some of the half truths that have been peddled. Mr Speaker, I am surprised that standing as it were on the pedestal of objectivity and so-called truths, we're being told that we must not only talk half and leave half but we must also say where we lost in the Tribunal. Leave that to the people on the east to say that, as they have said. You don't have to parrot what the people on the eastern side of our border have said. You're Guyanese, you're Guyanese and that comes first. And, that is why, Mr Speaker, the Tribunal, in its hearing, stated that Guyana did not pursue monetary compensation as a remedy for Suriname offence against the CGX rule but it contended itself, our country, dear land of Guyana contended itself with a request for the condemnation of the Tribunal issue which is the threat to use force. We're happy with that, we're not craven, we don't want to hog it all; we're content with that. Once we get a condemnation about the threat to use force, *we belly full*.

So, Mr Speaker, I want to conclude by saying this is a Guyanese affair, not only a matter for foreign affairs as an institution but it is a national affair, a Guyanese affair. All of us stand to benefit and in respect of the Amendment that was tabled, Mr Speaker I think my good friend, my learned friend, I should say, although he is not a lawyer, Mr Norton, was looking at the wrong document, because if he looked at the document that was circulated in replacement of the earlier Motion he would see that the objection he made today, section dealing with rule, that has been changed, and in its place you have:

*And whereas the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal  
established under the Tribunal of the Law of the*

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*Sea in a matter of Arbitration between Guyana and Suriname has been Tabled in this Parliament.*

That word *rule* does not appear anywhere. You were quoting from the earlier one; we're talking about what Ms Clarissa Riehl said. Yes, sorry:

*And whereas the Arbitral Tribunal's unanimous Award of 17 September 2007 was favourable to Guyana and finally and forever settled the Maritime Boundary between Guyana and Suriname.*

No, no, it has been changed; it has been circulated (*amongst all the papers?*). Yes, it was circulated.

Mr Speaker, the other amendment that was suggested, for example, in the first *now be it resolved* Clause where the Honourable Member, Mr Norton is seeking to insert after *Guyana, the Opposition Political Parties in Parliament and the people of Guyana for having been able to arrive at a consensus.*"

This is where the Debate was actually centred, on (Thank you). The removal of the words: *for having the courage and wisdom to take the Guyana Claim to the Arbitral Tribunal ...* We are not going to support, Mr Speaker, the removal of those words.

And finally, Mr Speaker, in the last *Be It Resolved* Clause, where it says the Honourable Member is seeking to replace the

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words *note with approval* with the words *accept the findings of*. We have some difficulty with it, Mr Speaker because again we want to faithfully reflect the language that was used in the Award in this document.

The other point is this, Mr Speaker ... no, we're saying *unanimously note with approval the findings of the final Report*. This is the diplomatic finesse. I would suggest that those who... Mr Speaker, I would respectfully, most respectfully ... I don't want to sound disrespectful to anyone, but we must be careful when we're changing around language here because those who are not acquainted with the formulation of the words used by the diplomats we could find ourselves, when this is published, some other country raising questions where we will spend months unravelling and exploring ... So, I would say, Mr Speaker, in the interest of just being on the safe side, and in the interest of being consistent with the language, with the language, and incidentally, Mr Speaker, Mr Norton among other Honourable Members, he himself has given praise to the Office of the Foreign Ministry. I have doubts, Mr Speaker, I have doubts Mr Speaker, whether the diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would not have given very serious, profound consideration to the language that has been inserted in this Motion before bringing this to Parliament and therefore we must give them credit, not benefit of the doubt, we must give them credit. We can't be inconsistent with the credit we're giving. No, this is a Foreign Ministry document, this is a Foreign Ministry document and we don't want to run afoul with the Foreign Ministry, do we?

Mr Speaker, I conclude by saying that I would like to commend to this Honourable House the Motion that was

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circulated, I think, today where there are certain amendments that could be seen in bold, and that we accept and adopt this Motion unanimously, unreservedly and in entirety as a nation. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Members.

Honourable Members, we will now take the amendments first. Honourable Members, you have the correct document before you. During the course of Mr Rohee's presentation I understood that there is some question as to whether the correct document was before you. If you all have this document, I'll, therefore, put the amendments first.

Honourable Members, in the first amendment ...

I propose in the first amendment that the words *proposed to be left out*, be left out of the question. I'm reading it from the Standing Orders; that's how it is supposed to be put - that the words *proposed to be left out* in the amendment, be left out of the question.

Yes ...

**Mrs Clarissa S Riehl:** Is this the thing with the Government Amendment, Sir?

**The Speaker:** No, I don't have the Government Amendment before me. I'm dealing with Mr Norton's amendment ... I'm dealing with Mr Norton's amendment ...

**Mrs Clarissa S Riehl:** Mr Norton's amendment, yes ...

**The Speaker:** ... moved by Mr Norton, seconded by himself. I haven't seen any amendments from the Government. I therefore propose the question that the words be left out of the question. Those in favour, say *Aye!*

*Aye!*

Those against, say *No!*

*No!*

The *No*'s have it. The amendment is defeated.

Now, I need not put the rest of the amendment for the substitution.

I move now to the second amendment that also proposes deletion and substitution of words for the deletion.

I propose, Honourable Members, that the word *proposed* be left out of the question. Those in favour, say *Aye!*

*Aye!*

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Those against, say *No!*

*No!*

The *No*'s have it. The amendment is defeated.

***Third Amendment***

I propose that the word *propose* be left out of the question.

Those in favour, say *Aye!*

*Aye!*

Those against, say *No!*

*No!*

The *No*'s have it. The amendment is defeated.

I now put the ***Motion***. Those in favour of the Motion ...

Yes Madam ...



**Mrs Clarissa S Riehl:** I think this first *Resolve* Clause ... You're asking to move the Motion to go because it has three different *Resolve* Clauses to be taken individually, the *Resolve* Clauses, yes, the first one, according to Order 33.

**The Speaker:** I have no experience of putting these things separately.

**Mrs Clarissa S Riehl:** Order 33, Rule 2: The promotion embodies two or more separate propositions. The proposition may be proposed by the Speaker as separate.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member. Thank you for that reminder. So, I'll put all the *whereas* Clauses and then put the *Resolve* Clauses separately. Is that what you wish? Honourable Members, please direct your attention to the ***Whereas* Clauses**. I'll put those separately. Those in favour of the ***Whereas* Clauses**, please say *Aye!*

*Aye!*

Those against, say *No!*

The *Ayes* have it. The ***Whereas* Clauses** are approved.

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We move now to the **first *Resolve Clause***. Those in favour of the first *Resolve Clause*, say *Aye!*

*Ayes!*

Those against, say *No!*

*No!*

The *Ayes* have it. The **first *Resolve Clause*** is accepted.

Those in favour of the **second *Resolve Clause***, say *Aye!*

*Aye!*

Those against, say *No!*

The **second *Resolve Clause*** is adopted.

Those in favour of the **third *Resolve Clause***, say *Aye!*

*Aye!*

Those against, say *No!*

The **third *Resolve Clause*** is adopted.

Thank you very much.

Honourable Members, this brings us to the end of our Business for today. I would like to thank Members who spoke and thank Members generally for the orderly conduct [*Laughter*], with some minor exceptions ... for the orderly conduct of today's Business.

Honourable Prime Minister ...

**Hon. Samuel AA Hinds:** I move that this House stands adjourned until next Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> November.

**The Speaker:** Mr Prime Minister, might I inquire if you have a date after 8<sup>th</sup>? Why have you signed on the date as well as after 8<sup>th</sup>?

Okay. Thank you very much, Honourable Members ... 8<sup>th</sup> November.

*Adjourned Accordingly At 20:45H*

