

NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMINUTES OF PROCEEDINGSOF THE 20TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (1986) OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELDAT 14:00 HRSON WEDNESDAY 1986-07-30IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWNMEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (73)Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., S.C., J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (61)

Ministers in the Cabinet (10)Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P., Prime Minister

Other Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P., Vice-President, First Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General (Absent - on leave)

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P., Vice-President, National Mobilisation, and Deputy Prime Minister (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Viola V. Burnham, O.R., M.P., Vice-President, Education and Social Development, and Deputy Prime Minister

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and Development (Absent - on leave)

Cde. R.H.U. Corbin, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Agriculture (Absent)

Senior Ministers (4)

Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs

*Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P., Minister of Finance

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P., Minister of Transport

*Cde. W.S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Trade (Absent - on leave)

Other Ministers (11)Senior Ministers (3)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Minister of Manpower, Housing and Environment (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P., Minister of Health

Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P., Minister of Information and the Public Service

Ministers (4)

Cde. Urmia E.H. Johnson, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of National Mobilisation

*Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P., Minister of Youth and Sport within the Ministry of Education (Absent)

Cde. C.G. Sharma, A.A., J.P., M.P., Minister within the Office of the President

*Cde. D.M.A. Bernard, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Education

*Non-elected Member

Ministers of State (4)

- *Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Manpower, Housing and Environment
- Cde. J.T. Kissoon, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. D. Sawh, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Forestry
- *Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Planning and Development (Absent - on leave)

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.K. Habibulla, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the President
- Cde. Stella Odie-Ali, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Home Affairs
- *Cde. Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Education (Absent - on leave)

Government Chief Whip (1)

- Cde. Jennifer A. Ferreira, M.P., Government Chief Whip

Other Members (24)

- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. Agnes W. Bend-Kirton, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
- Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.
- Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
- Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad-Rayman, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.
- Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
- Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. Amna Ally, M.P.
- Cde. L.R. Arthur, M.P.
- Cde. J.R.L. Bovell-Drakes, M.P.
- Cde. N. Calistro, M.P.
- Cde. G.W. Chin, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. F.M. Cumberbatch, M.P.
- Cde. M.I. Deen, M.P.
- Cde. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.
- Cde. Edith Deygoo, M.P.
- Cde. Clarice A. Edwards, M.P.
- Cde. C.L. Geddes, M.P.
- Cde. G. Marshall, M.P.
- Cde. B. Persaud, M.P.
- Cde. E.W. Trotman, M.P.

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

- Cde. E. Mohamed, M.P.
- Cde. Rose I. Semple, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

- Cde. Nellie R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
- Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
- Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
- Cde. Y. Khan, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
- Cde. Enid E. Abrahams, M.S., J.P., M.F. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
- Cde. K. Ally, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. Patricia A. Daniel, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)
- Cde. B.L. Domingo, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
- Cde. S.I. McGarrell, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)
- Cde. M. Stephens, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)

*Non-elected Member

/...

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P., Minority Leader (Absent - on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (6)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P., Minority Chief Whip (Absent)
Cde. H. Nokta, M.P.
Cde. I. Basir, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Absent - on leave)
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P. (Absent)

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

Mr. E. Kwayana, M.P.

OFFICERS

Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A., Clerk of the National Assembly
Cde. M.B. Henry, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) Leave

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to Cdes. Chandisingh, Parris, Persico, Bend-Kirton and Mr. M.F. Singh for that day's sitting.

(ii) Acknowledgement of Resolution of Sympathy

The Speaker informed Members that he had received from Mrs. Crum Ewing and family an acknowledgement of the Assembly's Resolution passed at the sitting on 4th June, 1986, and in which the Assembly expressed its deep regret at the death of Cde. Alexander Irving Crum Ewing, A.A., Honorary Officer of Parliament and a former Clerk of the Legislature. Mrs. Crum Ewing had asked that her grateful appreciation for the very kind and thoughtful expression of sympathy be conveyed to the Members of the National Assembly.

(iii) Explanation on the Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker, referring to the debate on the 16th July, 1986 on the motion moved by Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud seeking to make subject to the approval of the National Assembly all upward variations by those in the charges by those Corporations which provide services to the Community, and on his ruling on the question of whether or not a mover of a motion had the right to move an amendment to his motion when replying, informed Members that, as both Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud and the Minority Leader had expressed their disargeement with his ruling, further research had since been done on the matter and advice on the Parliamentary practice had also been sought from the British Parliament.

In support of his ruling, the Speaker pointed out that while paragraph 3 of Standing Order No. 31 had stated that an amendment to a motion might be moved and seconded at any time after the question on the motion had been proposed by the Chair and before it was put at the conclusion of the debate, nevertheless, the provisions of Standing Order No. 33 (which gave the mover of the motion the right to reply at the end of the debate on a motion) must be read in conjunction with Standing Order No. 31(3). He explained that Standing Order No. 33 stipulated that after the mover of the motion had replied, no other Member could speak on the motion except a Minister, who could conclude the debate on a motion which was critical of the Government or reflected adversely on or was calculated to bring discredit upon the Government or a Government Officer. On account of that stipulation it would be out of order for the mover of a motion to move an amendment when replying. The advice received from the British Parliament had confirmed his ruling to be correct.

He further said that he did not refer to the matter only to satisfy Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud and the Minority Leader, but also on account of an article which had appeared in the Mirror Newspaper of Sunday, 20th July, 1986. He quoted excerpts from the article and expressed his dissatisfaction with that type of reporting. He also expressed the hope that the Mirroe Newspaper would give a fair and proper report on the matter and report other Members of the Assembly fairly in the future.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

By the Prime Minister:

Annual Report of the Guyana Fire Service
for the year 1985.

(HA: 1/1/3^{TJ})(Circulated)

TAKE

14:00 – 14:10 HRS

MISSING

14:10 hrs

(The Speaker continues)

There is, however, one and only one exception to this rule stated in the Standing Order and that is, only if a Motion is critical of the Government or reflects adversely on or is calculated to bring discredit upon the Government or a Government officer. Then, and only then, can a Minister be the last speaker and be allowed to conclude a debate on a Motion.

If the mover of a Motion, in replying, that is, is concluding a debate, is to be the last speaker, other than a Minister in the cases to which I have referred, then how can an amendment by the mover of a Motion, in replying, be seconded, when no other Member can speak after him? How, also, would other Members be able to speak on the amendment? Surely, it cannot be in order for the mover of a Motion to move an amendment when replying. Also, according to Parliamentary practice, the mover of a Motion cannot move an amendment to his own Motion unless it is with the leave of the House.

The advice received from the British Parliament confirms that the mover of a substantive Motion cannot move an amendment to his own Motion either during the debate or when replying to the Motion at the end of the debate. Cde. Persaud's views and his opinion are therefore wrong and my interpretation of the Standing Orders and my ruling on the matter are correct.

I have referred to this matter not only to satisfy Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud and the Minority Leader, but also on account of an article which appeared in the Mirror newspaper of Sunday, 20th July, 1986. On the front page of that newspaper under a prominent caption "Speaker's Ruling Challenged", the article begins with the words "The Speaker's ruling is final, but is it always correct?" Although the Speaker had based his ruling on and had read the relevant Standing Order in the Assembly, nevertheless, the article failed to give the facts and, in relation to the Speaker, mentioned phrases made by him, such as : "I will not put the amendment", "The matter is closed", "Just a minute", "The matter is at an end".

I am dissatisfied with this kind of reporting and I hope that the

Mirror newspaper whose Editor is a Member of the Assembly and who is present here, would now give a fair and proper report on this matter and also report me fairly in the Mirror newspaper in future.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Report was laid:

Annual Report of the Guyana Fire Service for the year 1985. /The Prime Minister/

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Foreign Exchange Expended in 1985

QUESTION: Will the Minister say how much was lawfully expended by residents in the year 1985 in foreign exchange issued or sold by authorised dealers in Guyana for the following purposes:-

- (a) official travel by resident Government officials on Government business?
- (b) payments by Ministries in respect of travel to Guyana by non-residents to attend conferences?
- (c) artificial flowers?
- (d) spare parts for privately owned transport vehicles?
- (e) spares for manufacturing?
- (f) spares for agricultural equipment?
- (g) professional services, except medical, delivered within Guyana?
- (h) milk?
- (i) drugs for medical use?

The Speaker: As this Question requires a long reply, the answer will be

Vehicles Imported

- QUESTION:
- (i) Will the Minister say how many vehicles have been imported into Guyana to date, in each year since 1980, in exchange for bauxite sales in counter-trade arrangements?
 - (ii) What types of vehicles were imported under (i) and how many units of each type of vehicle were imported?
 - (iii) What is the total value of the vehicles so imported?

The Speaker: As this Question requires a long reply, the answer will be circulated to Members at the Sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTIONAGREEMENTS WITH IMF

"Be it resolved that before any other Agreement is signed with the IMF the terms and conditions be debated in the National Assembly." /Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud/

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, the Motion before the Assembly enunciates a simple principle, a principle which I am persuaded to believe is not and should not be controversial and that principle is very clearly and unambiguously stated in the words of the Motion which reads: "That before any other Agreement is signed with the IMF, the terms and conditions be debated in the National Assembly."

This Motion simply seeks to get all agreements with the IMF debated, ventilated fully, so that there will be full consideration of any agreement which definitely can have very adverse effects on the economy and the people of this country. In spite of the fact that we call for any other IMF Agreement to be debated first, this call must not be interpreted to mean that we favour entering the Government/into agreement with the IMF. I wish to clearly state that we are against any further agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

Our disagreement with any such action is based on facts and experiences and I do not think there is a single Member in this Assembly who can successfully argue against the hardships which the people of this country experienced and suffered as a result of the IMF prescription.

I want to say that the IMF prescription is very cruel to say the least, fundamentally because this institution is imperialist oriented. It always has certain interests to protect and to preserve and I do not think it will be correct to say that when the IMF has agreement with a country it does not interfere with the domestic operation of that country. In many ways it does and in many ways it has in the past and because of that very sensitive area of interference the working man has suffered in the past and we do not want to encourage it in the future. Even the late President described the IMF agreement

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14:10 - 14:20 hrs

as a recipe to riot. If the late President who headed this Government described the IMF agreement as a recipe for riot, you can imagine how cruel it can be. Thus, it is not only the voices of those of us in the Minority that are speaking out on the IMF, the Government has in fact spoken out. In fact, the Government has reached a point and I do not want to go into all the wrongs and utterances which led to this country being not credit worthy and other things, put among the poorest countries in the world in terms of the capacity to borrow and the capacity to pay back. So that there is no ambiguity in what I am saying. So we have this afternoon a situation where the Government itself has had great reservations about the IMF

The General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress Joseph Pollydore in his 1978 Report to delegates had this to say:

"It appears that there is not going to be a limit to the additional burdens which the workers of the country would have to bear to meet the very exceeding economic measures which the Guyana Government would have to satisfy in order to qualify for loans from IMF."

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY14:20 hrs

The telling words there are exacting economic measures. Once again this Government...this afternoon to dispute that element. We have experienced grade three – cuts or total removal in all subsidies, retrenchment, reducing employment opportunities. These areas are few but they are fundamental and are basic to the country and if an agreement or another agreement with IMP can lead to those consequences and effects, I say as a member of the P.P.P. and as a member of this House that it is not asking too much that those terms and conditions be brought before this House, examined, considered and debated so that the entire nation will be alerted as to what to expect because our experience have been that these agreements are entered behind the blanket of great secrecy and we have to wait and see what it involves and as I said what emerges out of those agreements can be more than telling, can indeed as in the past have adverse effects on the people. The areas which I pointed out to Cde. Speaker, indisputably and... in position. Every country almost that has had to deal with the IMR in the past has pointed out to its securities, even Jamaica. Former head of the Jamaican Government Michael Manley spoke of the severities of the IMF imposition. In fact, it was the considered view by experts that IMR perpetuates financial neocolonialism, intercourse with IMF can lead to serious consequences and probably can become infectious and more deadly than what the world is calling at the moment AIDS. We are talking about economic aid and IMF can have serious repercussions and effects on any country. The Government should tell us this afternoon whether it contemplates getting entangled with the IMF again. We would like to know that. Have you engaged with the IMF? Is there any agreement with them or any in the making? These are three specific questions we are really anxious to have answered.

Cde. Speaker, it is no secret and all developing countries have been complaining and are on record as saying that the IMF wishes to retain the old economic order. This Government is on record to retain the old economic order. This Government is on record too as supporting the new economic order. Intercourse with IMF embodies that kind of limitation. It is a backward step which I cannot and will not help. I looked at the Budget speeches of the past and the Government in spite of the fact that it had agreements with the IMF boiled down to the fact that ultimately and finally what would have to solve our economic problem is production. Let me quote from the 1982 Budget speech of the then Minister, Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, Cde. Desmond Hoyte who is now President talking about the International Monetary Fund. Last year Guyana entered into an extended Fund facility with the IMF. Under this term, the country would have qualified for five hundred million Guyana dollars. Within a time after the agreement had been agreed arrangements which had been made indicate clear that the... which form the basis of the programme were being invalidated... which have been projected and based on that production. In that IMF agreements envisages production at its maximum and that is set targets,

Government cannot deny that because the Government itself has said on record that it would have been unable to reach our targets. These words are attributed to the Minister of Economic Planning in the 1980 budget speech. At the end of 1977, we had fallen into arrears of payment due to external transactions in the amount of \$102m. We are not paying our debts and we are becoming neglected...to put it bluntly we are living above our means. Whenever we find ourselves in a serious economic crisis, the major complaint has been and that is really the area that needs to be envisaged, production and so borrowing has never been and can never be the solution to our problem, particularly borrowing with harsh conditions, borrowing with conditions that impose on the Government certain measures which sometimes the Government probably finds it difficult to impose but they have imposed those to which I have referred to already. In view of all of that Cde. Speaker, I wish to reiterate that we do not think that the government should enter into any other agreements with the IMF. The IMF I did say earlier seeks to retain the old economic order so that transnational companies can benefit. In spite of the harsh measures in the past at the World Bank meeting in Washington in September 1981 US Treasury Secretary Ronald Regan said IMF has been allowing a lot of laxity in its conditionality and not strictly enforcing those agreed to. US, he said was going to insist on more discipline from IMF beneficiaries taking a tough flight.

TAKES

14:30 – 14:50 HRS

MISSING

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY14:50 hrs

It is my own belief that the guidelines of conditionality are sufficiently general to leave room for substantial discussion in individual circumstances but as the management of the bank has seen it fit to exercise that discretion it has often been exercised to the disadvantage of many developing countries but the substance of the point I am making is that the developing countries as a whole has agreed that conditionality as applied by the fund is inappropriate and I refer you to a document called 'Towards a new...' and it is subtitled 'Challenges to the world financial and trading system' published in 1983 in which it says that conditionality means to be more appropriate to the situation. We in fact subscribe to this view. The guidelines that are used by the International Monetary Fund should pay due regard to the domestic, social and political objectives and also the economic priorities and circumstances of members and the fund's failure to recognise this need has led to many problems with borrowers. I am quoting from the document.

Cde. Speaker, the fact is that Guyana, since this report was supported by Guyana and many other countries, so the types of pitfalls that have been outlined and highlighted by comrades on the other side do not need to be brought to our attention as far as the standby and extended fund facility have been established are concerned. We are aware of these pitfalls and as a responsible and competent government we know what is to be done when faced by proposals that contain these conditions which we regard as undesirables, but to make a blanket attack on the fund is a matter that the comrade this I think is a failure to recognise that there are many members of the fund which include most of the developing countries as well as types of the United States and other developing countries to which he has referred. Whilst the observations made are still fresh on our minds it might be useful to remind ourselves of the reality of Guyana's harsh relationship with the International Fund. We joined the Fund in September, 1966 and between that time and now we had something like twelve one year standby agreements, actually only four of those agreements were utilized in any respect, so the fact that the agreement is signed does not mean it would have any consequence on the country because you do not have to draw the resources from the fund if an agreement is signed. It is optional depending upon whether the Government thinks that sometime down after the agreement is signed it needs to draw upon the resources of the fund. Most countries are in this situation, and they sign more agreements than they actually utilize and in 1974, we benefited from a compensatory financial facility. We did the same in 1982. I mention this to show that there are other dimensions of the fund, which are of use to use and from which we have benefitted without any outcry from the Opposition, probably they are so busy at looking at one dimension of the funds' operation that they missed the fact that these other events may have occurred. We have also received three allocations from the Special Drawing Account.

The 1982 programme was terminated in July 1982 because of Guyana's concern about the inadequacy of the accounts, management if you like of the conditionality requirements and it is for this reason that we have continued to refuse to sign any additional standby agreements.

Cde. Speaker, I go to the trouble of setting these brief historical facts before the House so that we can impress upon our colleagues that this Government is not in the habit of indiscriminately committing itself to agreements which it cannot satisfy or which it deems undesirable. It is well established I think that the Government can take care of its national interests and in this context I might draw to your attention the fact that the penultimate agreement signed in the fund in 1979/1980 package has been considered a precedent incorporation between the IMF, the World Bank and a borrow country. Many people feel that we were able by devices unknown to secure conditions that were far less onerous than most other countries were able and have since been able to secure from the fund. Perhaps, the member from the Opposition is unaware that Guyana has certain obligations as a member of the Fund because I heard references to a comment about intercourse, social exchanges with the Fund being undesirable. As a member of the Fund, article 1 obliges us to collaborate on international monetary purposes both with the Fund and with other states and under article 8 Guyana and other members are required to furnish national data. Even though we do not have an agreement with the Fund, we continue to honour our obligation as required by these articles and I heard comments about the Fund being unprogressive and so forth. It might interest the colleagues to know that only two weeks ago the Government of Poland applied to the International Monetary Fund for membership and this was approved so when we are talking about the radical stances, when we talk of the impact of these policies on member countries, I don't think we should be too carried away about ideal concepts that we step up in our mind. There are many countries which find membership of the Association useful for a variety of reasons. This motion is inappropriate not only because of the policy as set out but because in the Comrade's argument, he contended that as regards the IMF, he says the IMF is very cruel, the IMF's prescription is very cruel and he quoted the Founder Leader who had stated that the prescription of the fund maybe a recipe for riot. Now, the point made here is that if one starts off from the position that the Fund and this seems to be the tenor that the Fund who per say is an undesirable institution then the motion before us ought to be a motion for withdrawal, not a motion for whether or not agreements should be made because it seems to be on a prior assumption on our colleagues that the membership of those institutions and its activities are undesirable. He might like to give thought to wording the motion so that it conforms with the tone and the direction of the undesirables. I don't. In fact as a member of the Fund, Guyana can draw upon it for specific instances which in fact we have done in recent times ask them to have a look at the compilation of the cost of living index and to look at fiscal efforts. These are general areas in which assistance can be secured, so Cde. Speaker, what I am trying to draw to the colleagues' attention is that there are many facets of our membership of this institution, the argument so far focuses on one dimension and is based upon an erroneous misconception as to our own ability and our intentions. One of the reasons why Guyana is not in a position to sign any agreements tomorrow or in a months' time is that it is currently indebted to the IMF to the tune of about \$38B SHRs and as a result of this indebtedness

the Executive Board of the IMF declared Guyana ineligible to draw on its resources on the 15th May 1985 and the rules and regulations of the Fund prohibits the management of the Fund from undertaking the negotiations as a prelude to any one of the category five agreements that I referred to.

TAKES

15:00 – 15:20 HRS

MISSING

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:20 hrs

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The Comrade Minister this afternoon attempts in his own words to extend what he thought a lecture by the Attorney General with the functions of the Executive as those against the Parliament. The Minister was all marked. This motion does not suggest by any stretch of imagination that it will interfere with the Government's right to formulate, to prepare, to discuss conditionality and to work towards what the speaker who preceded me said but what he is saying. He is saying this House is an important place and he also says further than that, he says that the June 1978 stand by IMF agreement rigged the economy and wrecked sections of it. In fact, it was that agreement which finally struck the nail on all subsidies and brought serious hardships to the people of this country. Any Parliamentarian is not worth his salt if he does not stand here and warn you before you enter into any such agreements in the future, not to do it without consulting the people. You are talking about consultation. Let me read you the constitution. I want to quote article 13 of this constitution:

“the principle objective of the political system of the state should attend socialist democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens in the management and decision making process of the state.”

I am only asking you for debates. That is all I am asking. The Government states categorically and unambiguously in its own sacred constitutional document Cde. Speaker, that we must not only be involved in management but in the decision making process. If IMF prescription have in the past proven so adverse that it wrecks this country, wreck the people, brought untold hardships, resulting in a... that the prescription may be a recipe for riot. Isn't it necessary for us in this parliament to say if you are going to enter into any future agreements, when you would have formulated, when you would have discussed and reached all kinds of conclusions in your negotiations, before you commit us finally or sell us out, bring us here let us talk. That is the contribution. I don't know why we can't understand it. I don't see how. I fail to see Cde. Speaker, there can be no logic, there can be no reason, there can be no constitutional impediment to obstruct this motion from being passed. If you are bothered about what is the function of the executive...

The Speaker: I have heard what you said just now Cde. Persaud that there is no constitutional impediment from allowing this motion from passing.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The AG lectured on what is the role of the Executive, the Cabinet and what is the role of the Parliament. I am saying that this motion does not in any way interfere with the functions of the Executive. It does not by implication or otherwise. In fact, it allows that, I see the contrary. The motion allows that because what the motion is saying and what the motion has envisaged and anticipated and this is logical and reasonable, that when you would have discussed, negotiated and looked at it on further reading of the motion bring it here before you sign it. That is what the motion says, bring it again if you read the motion, there

would have been no motion so clear. This motion does not indulge in any degree of ambiguity. It is pellucidly clear and you can see it, that before any other agreement for any of the five categories or any category for that matter for that matter, before you tie up with the IMF let us know how much you are tying us up. Further, allow us an opportunity of ventilation, not only the House. Why! I think this is an extension of democracy if a matter is raised and ventilated in this House and it is enough and it warrants the response and reaction of the populace, whether to come on the streets and demonstrate or by way of petition to tell the Government, well look do not sign that, you are going to bury us further. In fact, I say that right is not implied, but that right looks to be in article 2 if you want to call it, it is not but it is clearly stated in your constitution that we must not only be involved in the administration but the citizens will be involved in the decision making process. Citizens have expressed and demonstrated their views in various ways, in different parts of this country, Guyana in no exception and I go on further to say that if a matter is made known to the citizens, the citizens are alerted and if the citizens are satisfied that that issue will affect their very sustenance, their very lives, this is a life and death matter then the citizens have a right to give support to those who have been battling their cause, those who have been trampling their cause and those who have been speaking in their language and all I say to the Minister, to the Government, we say in this House that look... and we did not say that the Government will not enter into any further agreement, I stand corrected. What he said, it looks like that to me and I hope I am right that the Government will not enter into any further standby agreements. That is how I understand it and I am referring to the June 1978 agreement which was intended in August 1969 to show that those agreements have been disastrous and they have brought unprecedenced and suffering to the people of this country and the people have not... up to the this moment that I am speaking in this House. Why do you want secrecy? Why do you want to tie us up, why don't you want to bring matter off that kind to the House so that you should get an opportunity of saying why you are engaged in the agreement, what kind of agreement you are entering and what would be the conditions of the agreement you are entering? So that there will be no misrepresentation. In fact, both sides would have been given an opportunity to express their views on a particular matter. For that reason, I think the Opposition has brought this motion...

The Speaker: Both the Government and the Minority benches have been referring to Opposition. Under the constitution it is Minority.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I have a very good motion here, a motion which the Government will find great difficulty to defend and a motion which is premised on article 13 of this constitution, I am sure that the Government as the Speaker says, any motion we bring, it is irrelevant, inconceived, I have heard those words used thousands of times, nothing they have brought, although they have wrecked the country, nothing they have done including closing down the railway is inconceived.

TAKES

15:30 – 16:55 HRS

MISSING

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:55 hrs

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, this Motion raises before us the whole question of human rights which is a modern movement at which many of us are free to scoff if we like. But in the end it offers not only to communities but to each individual the right to feel justified about any punishment that might be handed down or any right perceived to be denied or actually denied. It is a very important thing in the whole nature of the consciousness of modern humanity and I am a little surprised at the levity with which, at times, it is approached. Human rights are not a gimmick. Of course, anything can be made into a gimmick if people want to. But it is not basically a gimmick. It is because of human rights – whether they call it that or not – that a lot of progress has come about. The whole question of the right to differ from those in power is an important aspect of this question and I say it is an important aspect of this question regardless of the ideology and I am stating this as a university fact. So that every individual can have the right to feel justified and correctly treated because mechanisms exist to bring this about.

When we think of some of the great inventions from which modern life has benefited and modern knowledge ... imprisoned and treated as rebels. Very often, the rebel of today is the genius or the reformer of tomorrow and I am making a very serious appeal to the Government benches to look again at this question of the Protocol. The hon. Member who spoke for the Government did not say, but implied that there is some perhaps loss of dignity, perhaps loss of sovereignty in exposing oneself – I repeat he did not say so, but this was the inference – to signing this Protocol. Hence, why would he oppose it? I hope I interpret it to his credit. Will he please pardon me if I am wrong?

We have been told of situations in Asia where countries have not rushed to sign this Protocol. But that is not the question. Where we live we must seek to establish the best possible conditions. We must strive to be the example and not point to others as the example and not always point to others as the example. That may be another fault of the colonial mentality. I want to ask whether the United Nations in their majority – I would assume that this instrument

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of the United Nations was approved by majority vote. I can hardly think of countries that would abstain, except South Africa and Chile, of course. I would assume that the Protocol was approved by the United Nations Assembly, at least by a majority. And I cannot see the United Nations Assembly acting under the inspiration of the United Nations Charter of universal declarations of human rights, which is more directly connected here, providing for states that have just freed themselves from colonialism to re-enmesh themselves to anything close to a colonial relationship.

TAKES

17:05 – 17:25 HRS

MISSING

17:25 hrs

(Mr. Kwayana continues)

The second point I wish to deal with is the whole question of the distinction between the private interest and the public interest as regards to the press. We are often told when we are discussing the press that other people have papers under whatever conditions. That is not the point of this Motion. The point is that we have a private interest and a public interest and that the media of Guyana represent a public interest. The Government is certainly part of that public interest but is not the sole factor in that public interest. That is the point we are making. The private newspaper may in the present conditions decide how it will publish its news. I do not agree with the censorship of news because of narrow factors, but it is clear that a private interest has that inherent right. A public interest, however, cannot claim the right to do that on behalf of one specified group such as the ruling party of this country because the resources are not owned by that party. They are generally owned by the taxpayers. They are financed by the taxpayers. If there are shortfalls and deficits, it is from the taxpayers that these things are paid. So we have to make that distinction.

This Motion might not have been brought had it not been that this distinction is basic to my own approach. This Motion will wish the entire field of media to observe certain practices such as the right of reply. The fact that citizens and organisations should have the right to reply in the very organ, the very publication which published a previous report which they want to correct or modify. The people running it will, of course, wish to have the last word. But it is a very civilised approach and I am commending it for acceptance in this Assembly. I am not discussing whether 'X' or 'Y' can have a paper. I am not even discussing whether 'X' or 'Y' wishes to deny newsprint at this point in time. I am discussing the subject of publicly owned media and media council which will have some influence on . . . generally both on the press and radio. If we publish something about another political party and that party wishes to

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make a correction, we shall be most willing to publish the essence. We cannot publish anything of length because our publications are very small. But we can guarantee that. If we say something about the Government which they feel is unjustified and they make a response, we will carry that response in substance and that applies to every citizen in this country. We do that not because we have paper to waste, but because we wish to attempt, at least, to practise what we preach and what we demand of others.

State institutions, when it comes to the up-holding of fundamental rights, have what they call coercive power, and we know of cases in the past which have been argued. I want now to turn to the 1985 Report of the Ministry of Information and support some of the claims I make. Paragraph 1.3 of that Report states:

"The policy position in terms of the operations of the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation and Guyana National Printers Limited still remained the responsibility of the Ministry of Information . . ."

The rest does not concern us. Another quotation comes from page 7 of the same Report, paragraph 3.3. It states:

"Besides its primary responsibility for Public Information, the Guyana News Agency Ltd and Film Censorship, the Ministry was ultimately responsible for Public Broadcasting and the Printing Industry, thus the following Government Agencies - Guyana Broadcasting Corporation, the Guyana National Newspapers Limited and Guyana National Printers Limited, fell within the policy jurisdiction of the Ministry of Information."

I have quoted those to show that as I understand it, the language, the Ministry of Information claims responsibility for controlling the policy of the state-owned media. That is how I understand it. This policy also includes political decision-making, what should be published, what should not be published and so on. Those are the arguments in favour of the Motion.

Briefly, we should bear in mind the difference between a private interest and a public interest. They are not the same thing. To begin with, a publicly owned media should have no affairs - especially when the Motion recognises that any Government in office should enjoy enough space to publish its information and its opinion but not as a monopoly of supplying information or supplying all information.

TAKE
17:35 – 17:55 HRS
AND
BEGINNING OF
TAKE
17:55 – 18:05 HRS
MISSING

printed something that was obviously not researched. It took you this afternoon to set the record straight.

Some points were mentioned about some instances that have taken place. There is ample evidence. Why do people say that there is some furtive motive that somebody has been shot or something else happens. because they do not see something today in the newspapers, I said last week and I say it again, and I wish they will give us the benefit of some sense. There is no point in us hiding from the public because the public knows. Our credibility would be at stake. What virtue would there be for us to hide it when the whole country knows? We print when we have the facts, when we have prepared, when we are thorough, when we cannot be faulted on the grounds of irresponsible behaviour. As I said, the taxpayers are not worried because they know that we are serving their interests.

We have people here who seem to feel that they are the repository of all wisdom, of all knowledge, and then they go on in their opinionated and dogmatic way and print things that show arrogance. They are just plain wrong. We do not do that. We cannot afford to do that.

On the question of the Media Council, we feel that there is enough institutionally to enforce press responsibility as far as we are concerned. I do not know, I cannot speak for the others who can jump into print and do anything, but we feel that there is enough to enforce press responsibility and, of course, that does not stop them from libelling people and when they are libelling people they are taken to court. Our experience has been that in many cases the very Council limits the press freedom. We take our responsibility very seriously. We are prepared to listen to any views by the Members of the Minority for the improvement of the press. Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud can subscribe to that, I always listen to him. As I said, we are always prepared to listen to views that will contribute towards making the media better to serve the people of Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, on the policy for the media, it is a state-owned paper. It must be formulated by us with consultation, if necessary. But it is a state-owned paper. The hon. Member read from a Report in which we said we

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look after the policy. Of course we do. What is wrong with that. The Member spoke about the right of reply, we observe that right. Mr. Kwayana talked of one instance. But nobody in the country is thinking now, based on what corrections we made, that he went there. He said he did not go. We accept that a mistake had been made and we hastened to correct it lest the wrong information was given. Nobody feels he was there anymore. We made a correction promptly.

The Government is prepared to accept ideas and opinions which serve to improve the image of Guyana and our national development. We have never said we have a monopoly of information. Sometimes, you know, information appears in the Opposition press which we do not have and I do not think there is any need to legislate to have a right of reply.

TAKES

18:05 – 18:35 HRS

MISSING

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY18:35 hrs

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continuous)

This is the Act before me. If the Minister is going to bring new rules for debate, is the Minister suggesting this afternoon that chapter 28 will be repealed in totality – he did not say that, so I make that point that chapter 28 is in operation because you will recall Cde. Speaker, when I debated my motion on local Government, the Minister who replied then got up and relied absolutely on chapter 28 and said what I am talking about rules, there is law and this law will be operative and the Cde. Prime Minister then said when all the mechanisms are put in place local government elections will be held. That is bringing to memory what happened then which means that chapter 28 is in force. I hope you get me very clearly now, so I proceed, Cde. Speaker, to look at the second resolve clause which says ‘that the rules of conduct for elections for local authorities and the conditions under which they shall be held be debated in the National Assembly and be subjected to unanimous vote.’ That second resolve clause deals with local authorities elections. I was posing again based on that a simple question, when the Government intends to put into effect because you cannot separate this thing constitution, Local Democratic Organs Act, Local Authority Act, Municipality, all these are governed by different Acts and in the white paper on Local Government presented by the Government, it clearly stated in that what will happen and municipality will be retained more or less as a separate entity with some working relations with the region, so all I am trying to do in giving total support to the motion in that the P.P.P. is not opposed to examining the rules. The P.P.P. is not opposed to having the matter fully ventilated but I proceed to make the point that in any case the Government would have had to bring laws, had to make laws or regulations to give effect to section three of the Local Democratic Organ Act and this afternoon we were only repealing postponement of election of Local Government which will create a condition whenever that – this is only a motion. I want to post another question. How early will the Government bring a bill to repeal this Act?

The Speaker: That is not relevant.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: If the Minister tells us this afternoon if he will repeal the Act, is it not pertinent to say when that will happen.

TAKES

18:45 – 19:05 HRS

MISSING

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY19:05 hrs

(Cde. C. Greenidge continues)

Again just to clear the air factually the rule of exchange of the Guyana dollar to the US dollar at this moment is 4.3 and not 4.15 and I think that sort of inaccuracy is a sort of reflection of the misconception that...

The Speaker: No. Cde. Greenidge, at the time the motion was put, the motion reads from US 3.03 at the 10th of January 1984 to 4.15 at the 8th of April, 1986.

Cde. Greenidge: Thank you Cde. Speaker, I was not referring to the motion. I was referring to the delivery by the member of the Minority who said that the last devaluation took place two years ago and the rate is 4.15. As far as the substance of this matter we are debating is concerned, the Government has never said and I have never said either now or in the course of the last debate that we are not prepared to discuss these matters. Why is it that we cannot listen and get things straight? I said that the subject of prior discussion will create difficulties. All the nonsense we have heard about discussions, members of the Opposition cannot cite a single example in a Parliament within the western hemisphere or elsewhere where any devaluation measure has been discussed prior to its implementation. It is not a question of technicality. It is one of common sense Cde. Speaker and if it is a fact that that common sense is lacking on the other side of the House, it certainly cannot be lacking on the part of a Government that has an economy to run. You cannot debate an impending change in an exchange rate in a Parliament. It just is not done. It is not even done between national Governments and say the International Monetary Fund, outside of an agreement, you notify them after the change has been affected. So clearly, the colleagues on the other side don't know what they are talking about and the attempt to cast this particular explanation as being technocratic or miggling is merely an excuse for ignorance.

Cde. Speaker, we have before us an argument that devaluation is an undesirable thing and for that reason is so far as it is undesirable, it has undesirable effects. If you look at the wording of the motion, I am sorry I always have to refer to what might have been quite... but they are reflective as I said earlier of symptomatic and fundamental carelessness on the part of the members of the Minority who take up our time unnecessarily, we can discuss the matters of substance, I don't have a difficulty with that but if matters are formulated properly then we can spend our time as members of Parliament discussing things. In relation to the preamble to the resolution we are told that devaluation of the Guyana dollar is to be condemned because the Guyana dollar moved from a certain figure to a certain figure. That association is practically nonexistent. The fact that the Guyana dollar moves from three to four is in itself the devaluation, so it is not undesirable because that movement has taken place. That is what devaluation is, a change in the rate. It is a price of currency. It does not have the sorts of automatic consequences

that one is unaware of. One decides to change the price of the Guyana dollar for specific reasons. There are certain circumstances under which a change in the rate between any currency and any other may be inappropriate. It may lead to adverse consequences throughout the economy. It may lead to adverse as well as favourable consequences and there is probably no time in which a change in the value of a currency only has beneficial consequence, so one has to make a decision as to whether the net change in the last analysis is beneficial overall. Price of currency is just like the price of anything else, you don't want to move that price up unnecessarily and so therefore to say that the devaluation is to add increase in the price of commodities that consumers buy is really a meaningless sort of comment, that is the essence of the rate change. One can make that change and then ameliorate it as in fact was done during the course of these rate changes that have been referred to, when these rates were changed and the time that the rates were changed, you also had discussions and subsequent implementation in movements in the prices of labour, if you like wages in 1984, 1985 and 1986 there were changes in the rates of the labour, there were also that is the minimum wages and there were also at the same time a variety of measures put in place to ameliorate the impact of price increases that may have been associated with the rate change.

Cde. Speaker, it is perhaps worthy of mention that one changes the rate and I am taking the time, I know that we are late, but I am taking the time to just mention this quickly because I would not like to see this particular item come up under another guise. An appropriate exchange rate is necessary because it sets the relationship between an economy and its trading partners, if the rate is wrong or if it is inappropriate to use a less majorative word, it is not that you will avoid those prices increases but that those price increases will be uncontrolled. The intention of a rate change is that if you find that your rate is inappropriate you change it in a manner that leads to an agreeable or an accepted or less adverse set of consequences but it is really unwise to tell that by any move up that the consequences by way of price increases and whatever other demands depressing effects it may have can be avoided altogether. The devaluation is supposed to do a set of things and some of these are positive. If you change the rate in relation to Guyana as we said in the budget speech, if the colleagues had looked they would have seen that in the budget speech, in the case of a commodity like sugar for example, the rate increases that took place in these instances had a favourable impact upon the receipts of the sugar industry and part of the reason why the sugar industry will at the end of 1987 show an about turn from the large deficits that it has was because of the rate change, that was one of the expected and deliberate consequences that was associated with these rate changes, so they were not random, they had a purpose behind them and the general intention is that a rate change can allow exporters to earn more Guyana dollars for any given quantity of exports, that is the intention and so for some industry, those industries that export and are never... hard currency, their Guyana dollar position will increase, it may allow them either to make more profit, to reduce their external prices and do be able to sell if their circumstances are right a bit more, so it might enable us to increase export earnings and if you look in these particular instances export earnings during the course of 1984 and during the course of 1985 improved so the general blanket comment about an exchange rate merely increasing the price of goods to consumers is not accurate. It has other consequences

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and we are able to demonstrate as in fact was shown in the budget speech that part of the consequences of these rate changes include increase export earnings and increased revenues for export earning industries.

As far as the adverse consequences are concerned, I did mention earlier that we took measures to ameliorate those consequences including measures on the income front to deal with those lowest income groups the question of trying to ensure that the bunching took place or that the groups at the bottom, the lowest rounds of the income ladder were given increases that is proportionally larger than the other categories, this indeed took place in 1984 and there were other measures which took place in 1985 as a consequence of discussions with the representatives of labour.

TAKES

19:15 – 19:35 HRS

MISSING

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY19:35 hrsMotion proposed.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs: (Cde. R. Jackson) Cde. Speaker, I would like to pose an amendment to the motions, which is being proposed and the amendment which I have in mind has been circulated to all members of the House, and I wonder whether I can get your dispensation not to read it seeing that it is available to all members of the House and it is very legible.

Cde. Speaker, before I begin to speak on my amendment I would like to deal with an issue which the honourable Janet Jagan raised in terms of the time of presentation of the motion, which stands in the name of the Minority Leader. It is correct that we did have contact in terms of the timing of the debate on this motion but as I explained to him we were following systemic procedure, one about which there could be no doubt and that is that the motions in the House would be taken in accordance with the time of their receipt and it so happens that the way in which this House has conducted its business, that this is the first occasion in a logical way in which the motion could have been debated, but as I think the honourable Janet Jagan observed that the climate and the atmosphere maybe are not the same in terms of time when the action took place but nevertheless the issue remains irrelevant.

Cde. Speaker, I would like to initiate my own presentation by highlighting because I think it is important, there is a lot of misconception and misperception of abroad and sometimes I see it reflected in the Mirror which I have for sometime taken as a paper that provides the thinking of the People's Progressive Party, therefore I read it with a certain care and when I see misperceptions, I am not talking now about wrong facts but I see misperceptions and therefore Cde. Speaker, I think I would like to use this occasion to reaffirm some of the basis on which Guyana's foreign policy is conducted, has been conducted, is being conducted and will be conducted. First of all, we stand fully in respect for international law. We are unflinching advocates for the respect of the principle and norms of international law because we think that international law is the basis for civilized and harmonious international order that without the law there is chaos and I don't quite like this concept of the law of the jungle, the jungle is a very... society, sometimes when I get into our jungle I feel very peaceful, much more peaceful than I find myself outside of Georgetown, so that I don't want to use the phrase the law of the jungle but to say that... harmonious civilized international behavior has a basis on international law. In accordance with that law, there are certain principles which are fundamental to us. I would not be exhaustive but for the purpose of this debate I think they need to be reemphasized. The first I would say is the avoidance of the nonuse of force or the threat of use of force in the settlement of disputes and in fact in international relations, the conduct of international relations generally. The second would be respected for the territorial integrity of the state and respect for

the inviability of its frontiers and I mentioned this particularly because I don't know if I heard the honourable Janet Jagan correctly but I think she said on the 6th... was Libyan waters, she did not mention the name but I think she was referring to the Gulf of Sedre, there is a dispute about that as to whether line is actual international waters or territorial waters and I would say that if there is a dispute then it should be settled by peaceful and legal means. This is why we are stressing that international law must be the basis for interstate action and the fourth principle that I would like to emphasize at this stage is the principle of self determination and sovereignty.

Utilising those and other principles for the purpose of discussion, I would like to remind this House that our foreign policy is conducted within a framework of nonalignment which itself embraces as part of its mechanisms as operational techniques some of the very principles, which I have mentioned. Having said that Cde. Speaker, I think it might be good for us to remind ourselves of the climate in which the event took place. This event is known, it cannot be contraverted, it is factual that is on a specific day on Tuesday April 15th, 1986 warplanes belonging to the United States bomb targeted Libya, that is not the dispute but I would like to record the climate in which the events took place. There was increasing international tension arising from a number of factors. One many countries including Guyana had resolutely spoken out against what appears to be stepped up militarization of foreign policy; that is the growing tendency to use the military as a necessary factor in the conduct of foreign policy. We have argued against that and I want to remind you that that was the part of the climate in which these events took place. There was also the growing frustration over the peaceful relations with the Middle East where for generations peoples aspirations have been frustrated, and I refer to the Palestinians and you had without trying to see a beginning and an end, you had cycle, a whole cycle of violence for the prevention of self determination. We recall the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982. You had the absence of credible peace forces so that you were dealing with a situation that was extraordinarily fragile and volatile, a situation which encouraged the most violent of passions and Cde. Speaker, you had a growing phenomenon where the distinction between a terrorist and a freedom fighter was becoming blurred. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. This is a reality that we have to consider, that is an area, a climate in which you are living. In fact, my recollection is that both heads of state referred to each other as a terrorist.

Cde. Speaker, for this reason, we felt it necessary to emphasize that the preamble is not with regard to the constitution, it demands to the position which we have take, the foreign policy position which we have taken, the principles that inform our policy, the opportunity should be used for reinforcing not only the validity but the importance of those principles in this resolution and this is why we make reference in the first part of the proposed amendment, reference to the Chapter refraining from the use of threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

19:45 hrs

We also think it is important in order to protect the genuine freedom fighters, that we should give recognition to the fact that the International Community has condemned all acts of terrorism whether perpetrated by individuals, groups or state. One does not need at this stage to have clear definitions. The thing is what we want to do is to give recognition to the fact that the International Community as a whole has made a clear distinction between a terrorist and a freedom fighter and we do not want ourselves to be caught in the confusion of those who seek to confront a situation.

And so similarly, Cde. Speaker, the third preambular position which is contained in the amendment gives cognisance to the to a resolution on which we worked assiduously at United Nations and which was adopted in 1984, dealing with the inadmissability of the policy of state terrorism and any action by state saying that undermining the socio-political system in other sovereign states. We were happy to be one of those countries voting in favour of this resolution though there were some who abstained, but none voted against it. Some were absent. But it was a resolution which commanded overwhelming support in the General Assembly and therefore I think we should regard it as being important when dealing with this issue.

Then we mention the first paragraph which is the substantive paragraph and also dealt with the assumption or assertion that the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter were being invoked which was the article on self defence and which says essentially that a state has the right to engage itself to take action in self defence pending any determination by the Security Council. There is nothing in the present Charter should impair inherent right as individual or collective self-defence. I think the next two paragraphs are rewording of the motion that is being put forward by the Minority Leader. And therefore, Cde. Speaker, when you come to the resolve section it clearly is necessary to have counter balancing resolve of which is or which will match the principles which we have enumerated in the preambular section.

Cde. Speaker, we have also been guided in doing this by taking account of a number of positions adopted by the nonaligned states over time. And Cde. Speaker, turning to the substance of the issue and I really do not want to get into the argument as to whether there is really evidence whether Libya was involved in the disco bombing or not. Let us deal with the

facts as we know that Libya was bombed. I was not in New York or United States at the time of the attack but I was in New Delhi attending a very important Non Aligned meeting which was being called to prepare the way for the summit which was to be held in Arrari from the 1st December this year. Our meeting was due to begin on 16th April but because of the nature of the situation we held an emergency meeting on 15th April and adopted a communique and took certain decisions that I would like to acquaint this Assembly with. These decisions were arrived at by consensus. One decision we took was to send a team of Ministers for Ministers in Tripoli in order to express solidarity with the Libyan people to express and to convey the feelings of the movement as as been decided at the meeting on 16th April. The Foreign Minister chosen was India's Chairman, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Ghana. Ghana and Congo because you remember it was in the Security Council.

The same team, Cde. Speaker, went to the United Nations to address the Security Council which was then the bearing on the issue to represent the feelings of the Non Aligned countries as expressed in New Delhi. Cde. Speaker, we have therefore framed our amendments to deal not only with the past, to take account of the climate that existed, to take account of the gap in time it was passed and therefore to plan for the future. And this was important because action is sterile if it is not linked to a programme of activities to prevent a repetition and therefore we have sought to invest the motion with a meaning that will enable the Government in the future to act in a manner which will seek to prevent the recurrence of situations of this kind. But there are difficulties, Cde. Speaker, and we are matured people. The Prime Minister has called for seriousness and approach and the Hon. Janet Jagan has echoed her support for this. We must take account also of the negative developments, even if those developments seem at the moment to affect our own interest. Cde. Speaker, I think we will be wrong if we ignore the fact that in the wake of the bombing the Members of OPEC rejected Libya's request for oil embargos. And if we are to be helpful in the future we have to take note of development of this kind. We have to take note also, Cde. Speaker, that Arab foreign ministers are brothers whose cause we passionately support we support with vigour, with commitment and unrelentingly, for peace in the Middle East based upon the restoration of the ailing rights of the Palestinian People for the ^{return} arable unoccupied land. Our brothers, Cde. Speaker, could

not agree of the holding of an Arab summit neither on the Agenda or on the venue to deal with this complaint. I think these are factors we should deal with. Cde. Speaker, I suggest therefore that our efforts should have two objectives in line but we should approach them with equal intensity. The first objective is to continue our efforts by ourselves and working along with like minded states for greater respect for international law and for the principles which I ameliorated. I would suggest Cde. Speaker, that within the Non Aligned Movement and other forums in which we are consulted and our voices listened to that we must demand the respect by example for strengthening internal cohesion of the movement and for ameliorating internal contradiction. Cde. Speaker, let us not be like the proverbial ostrich. The war between Iraq and Iran has done serious damage to the cohesion of the Non Aligned Movement and we are seeing reflections of this in an important part of the globe where the Non Aligned Movement is influential. We do not contradict this. I have a document here which is entitled two decades of Non Alignment and I selected three paragraphs to emphasize the concern of the movement. One for adhering to the principles; for promoting unity, solidarity and internal cohesion; and for ameliorating internal contradiction. Cde. Speaker, the first opportunity we will have our programmes in test will be in Arrari which I said would be meeting for the 1st of December. It will be the first major opportunity to promote action in these direction and Cde. Speaker, our amendments on the substantive side of the motion is framed having very much in mind to keep open the capacity to be influential, to be constructive and helpful in Arrari and beyond and therefore, Cde. Speaker, I would commend the Amendment to this Assembly.

**TAKE
19:45 – 19:55 HRS ENDING
TO
ADJOURNMENT PAGE
(20:12 HRS)
MISSING**