

# Cheddi Jagan revisited

by **HZ Ally**

The opposition forces have used the Venezuelan border issue to whip up anti-government sentiments in recent times. The following is the edited text of a broadcast Dr Cheddi Jagan did during his premiership in 1964. Once again the vision and wisdom of Dr Jagan is relevant today and then:

The government has been perturbed by the misleading and erroneous statement published on the British Guiana-Venezuela boundary question. We have attempted to correct the mis-representations. But our releases have not been given the same publicity that has been given the inaccurate and mis-

leading statements made by Venezuela spokesmen.

The boundary between British Guiana and Venezuela was in dispute for the greater part of the 19th century. On 2nd February 1897, a treaty, the Treaty of Washington, was concluded between the Venezuelan and British Governments. This Treaty provided for an arbitral tribunal to be set up to decide upon the common boundary between the two countries.

The Arbitration Tribunal commenced its sittings on 21st June, 1899, and gave its decision on 3rd October 1899. The decision was substantially in favour of British Guiana, but Venezuela got the territory between the Wenuma and the Upper



*"We are struggling today to construct tomorrow." Cheddi Jagan*

Cuyuni, and also the territory between Point Playa and Point Barima, both of

which had been claimed by Britain as part of British Guiana.

Venezuela accepted the award and has always in the past shown that she regarded adherence to the decision of the Arbitration Tribunal as part of her international obligations. And then in 1962, 63 years after the award, the Venezuelans raised the matter again

at the United Nations. The British Representative pointed out then that the boundary had been finally settled and that the British Government could not agree to re-open it. I wish to emphasize that there are no substantive talks on the revision of the frontier.

I hope the Government's stand is quite clear. The 19th century frontier dispute with Venezuela was settled more than sixty years ago by a Tribunal, whose award the Venezuelan Government agreed to accept as a "full, perfect and final" settlement. The Government of British Guiana is not prepared to yield to Venezuela or to any other country a single rivulet or creek. We are not prepared to surrender a single inch of the soil of this country.

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