

PRESS STATEMENT

GUYANA/SURINAME RELATIONS

Today, June 3, 2000, the Government of Guyana lodged a strong protest with the Government of Suriname for violating Guyana's airspace and territorial waters.

The protest was contained in an official note handed to the Surinamese Ambassador to Guyana H.E. Mr. Humphrey Hasrat who was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 3.15 this afternoon.

The Government of Guyana has also protested Suriname's intimidatory and hostile actions against CGX Resources Inc. a Canadian based Petroleum Company preventing them from carrying out their legitimate drilling operations within Guyana's maritime boundary and forcing them to relocate to another prospecting area within their concession.

2.

The violation of Guyana's airspace and territorial waters took place on Friday, June 2, 2000 at 09:50 hours and 15:00 hours respectively and today Saturday, June 3rd at 00:25 and 12:00 hours respectively at the site of CGX's oil drilling operations.

These hostile and intimidatory actions by the Surinamese Navy posed a serious threat to the lives of CGX's personnel and property while they were conducting their legitimate activities within Guyana's Maritime boundary.

The Government of Guyana has called on the Government of Suriname to desist from committing further hostile activities within its territorial jurisdiction.

The Government of Guyana finds unacceptable the lack of good faith on the Suriname side since these actions actually took place even while consultations were taking place at the highest political level with a view to defusing the situation and finding a mutually acceptable date and venue for a meeting between the two sides.

3.

Today, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana Police Force and the Geology and Mines Commission met for a second round of consultations with His Excellency The President. Later, Foreign Minister Clement Rohee together with the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana Police Force, Geology & Mines Commission at separate encounters, briefed representatives of political parties as well as representatives from the United States Embassy, Canadian High Commission, the European Delegation and the British High Commission.

The Government of Guyana has reaffirmed its support for the activities of CGX Resources Inc in Guyana. It has also pledged to do its utmost to ensure that no harm comes to the personnel and property of the Canadian Petroleum company while they are carrying out their legitimate activities in Guyana's territorial waters.

4.

The Government of Guyana takes this opportunity to reiterate the position declared by His Excellency The President Bharrat Jagdeo at the Guyana Defence Force's Annual Officers Conference in May that "Guyana will maintain a strong diplomatic offensive and will be prepared, at the military level to protect its borders"

As a member of the Group of 77 and Caricom, Suriname's actions are in gross contradiction to the position reflected in the Declaration adopted at the South Summit held in Havana which called inter alia; "for restraint in international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State as one of the principles which continue to be the foundation for friendly and peaceful relations among States and for the solution of disputes and conflicts by peaceful means."

The Government of Guyana is committed to promoting friendly and good neighbourly relations with Suriname as with all its neighbours.

5.

In this regard, meetings of the Guyana-Suriname National Border Commissions, and the Guyana Suriname Cooperation Council must be immediately reconvened and reinvigorated with a sense of dynamism and purposefulness.

It is hoped that the high level meeting to be convened in Trinidad and Tobago within a few days will lay the basis for a constructive approach to a resolution of the current controversy and put back on track the tried and tested mechanisms for the promotion and enhancement of Guyana-Suriname relations:

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

JUNE 3, 2000