

The General and Regional Elections in Guyana

5 OCTOBER, 1992

The Report of the
Commonwealth Observer Group

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COMMONWEALTH



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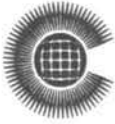
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Letter of Transmittal



Guyana Elections

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7 October 1992

Dear Secretary-General,

Pursuant to a request made to you by the President of Guyana, we were appointed by you to observe the Guyana elections which were held on 5 October 1992. Soon after the close of poll on 5 October, but before all the votes were counted and the results declared, an interim statement was issued by us and a copy sent to you in London. We now have pleasure in sending to you our Report.

It has been a great privilege for all of us to have been associated with this Mission and with what we believe will contribute to democratic processes not only in Guyana but throughout the Commonwealth as a whole. To this end, we wish to record our deep appreciation to the Government and people of Guyana for their assistance in facilitating our work.

David Peterson, QC, CST.J, DU, LLD
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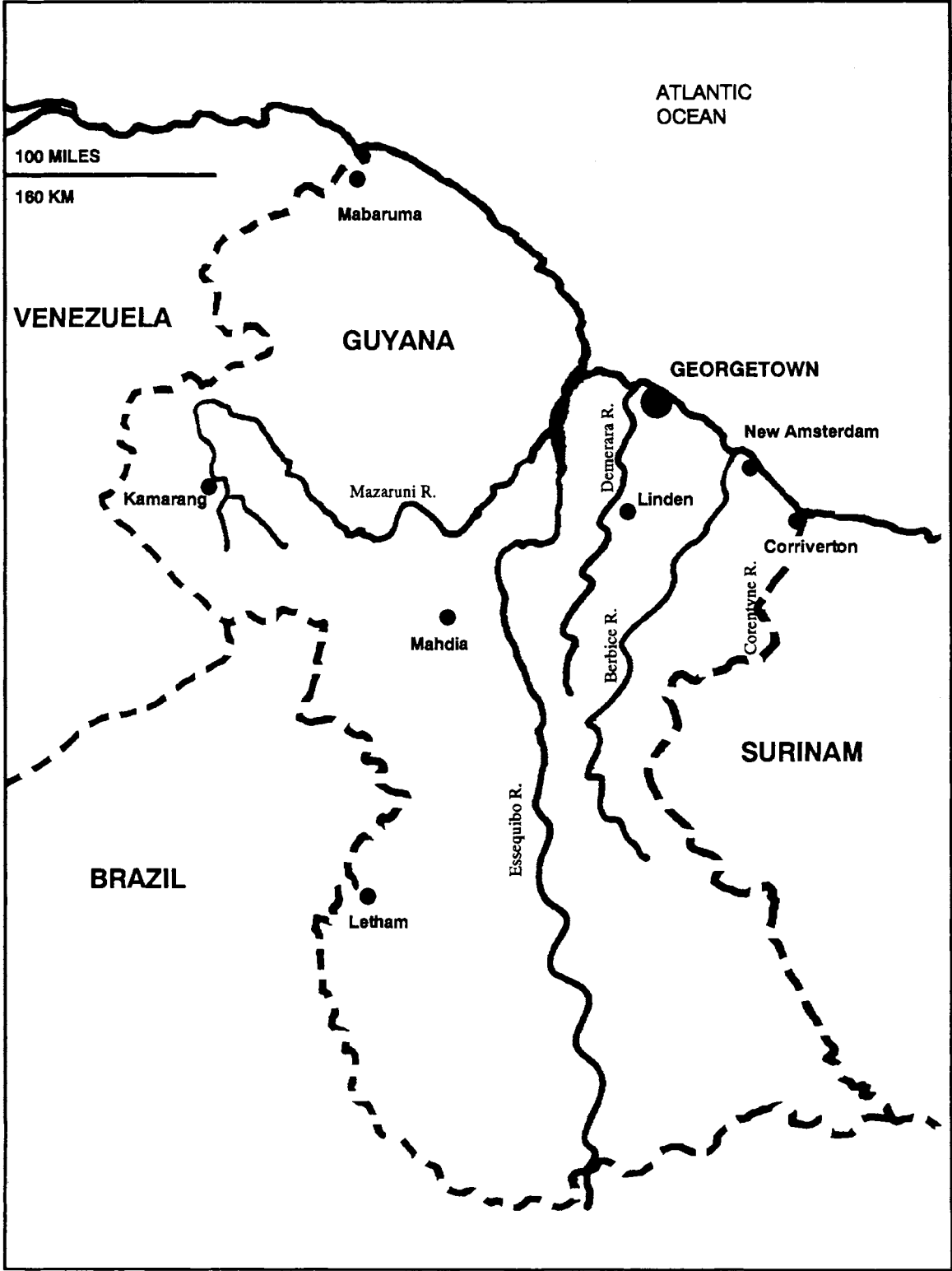
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Map of Guyana



Introduction

The renewed commitment by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 1989 Meeting in Kuala Lumpur to strengthen the democratisation processes in member states continues to be an important catalyst for political change in Commonwealth countries. Since then, a number of governments have formally requested the Commonwealth Secretary-General to provide assistance in a variety of ways, including the mounting of Commonwealth Observer Groups for their elections. Since 1989, the Commonwealth has sent such Observer missions to Malaysia, Bangladesh, Zambia and Seychelles, and preparations are in hand to observe national elections in Ghana, Kenya and Lesotho. Under the Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique, the Commonwealth has also assisted in preparations for multi-party democracy in that country.

The Commonwealth's involvement in the electoral process in Guyana began with a request in July 1990 from President Hugh Desmond Hoyte that a Commonwealth mission observe the conduct of the next general election. The request was made amid intense local and international pressure on the Government to ensure that such elections should be free and fair. In accordance with Secretariat practice, a Planning Mission, headed by Sir Anthony Siaguru, Deputy Secretary-General (Political), visited Guyana in September 1990 to consult with major political parties and a wide cross-section of interested groups. It concluded that the presence of a Commonwealth Observer Group, as well as other observer groups, would not only be welcomed but also be important in efforts to enhance public confidence in the electoral process as a whole.

The mission, however, noted widespread scepticism that free and fair elections could be held under the existing laws. It also noted that opposition parties and interested groups had greater expectations of the role and functions of an observer group. They emphasised the need for observers to conduct a thorough examination of the electoral laws and structures, including the procedures adopted at each stage of the entire electoral process, beginning with the registration of voters and continuing until the declaration of the results. They also considered it necessary for international observers to be present from the beginning of the compilation of the voters' list.

Subsequently, five Commonwealth missions visited Guyana in April, October and November 1992, and in March and July 1992 to assess the progress being made in the various stages of preparation of the voters' list. Some of the recommendations of these missions were reflected in a number of electoral reforms implemented by the Government.

Composition of Observer Group and Terms of Reference

It was against this background that our Group of 16 was constituted by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, to observe the 1992 general and regional elections of Guyana. The composition of the Group and our support staff from the Commonwealth Secretariat is set out in *Annex I*. We were given the following Terms of Reference:

The Group is established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the request of the Government of Guyana and supported by the political parties. It is to observe every relevant aspect of the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Guyana relating to the elections. Its function is to ascertain whether, in its impartial judgment and in the context of that law, the elections have been free and fair.

The Group has no executive role; its function is neither to supervise nor to act as a commission of inquiry but to observe the process as a whole and to form a judgment accordingly. It is to submit its report initially to the Secretary-General and to the Government of Guyana, and thereafter to the leadership of the parties taking part in the elections.

We were conscious of the challenging task before us, and especially of the fact that our Terms of Reference represented a wide range of the election processes that we were to observe and to report on. We were particularly conscious of the difficulties in transport and communications, especially in the interior regions, where access to most polling stations required air or boat charter. Guyana, with an estimated total population of 793,000 has an area of 214,970 sq km. It has three distinct areas – the coastal belt, the forest area and the savannah zone. The narrow coastal belt, which is generally about 16 km in width (though it runs inland for up to 64 km along the banks of the main rivers) accounts for only four per cent of the total area and contains 90 per cent of the population. As a result, about 85 per cent of the total electorate of 384,002 voters were in five regions in the coastal belt; the remaining 15 per cent were dispersed throughout the interior. We were confident, however, that adequate arrangements could be made to monitor an acceptably wide cross-section of the electorate. We were encouraged in this belief by the fact that some members of our Group, as well as some members of the Secretariat support team, had had previous experience in observing elections or had been members of one or more of the five Commonwealth missions that had previously visited Guyana.

Regional elections were held simultaneously alongside the general election. A combined colour-coded ballot paper was used in the two elections so that every elector was entitled to cast two votes, one in respect of each of the two elections. Apart from this, no separate arrangements were made for the regional elections. Votes were cast at the same time and the marked ballot paper was then placed, undetached, in one ballot box. The ballot papers were only separated during the count. We therefore observed the regional elections,

the results of which would eventually determine who would represent each region in Parliament in accordance with the existing constitutional provisions, as we did the general election.

Method of Work

Most of our Group assembled in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 21 September while en route to Guyana. There, we were briefed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General who emphasised to us the importance of our observation exercise for democracy in Guyana and the rest of the Commonwealth, and our responsibility to discharge our task in an impartial manner. He saw our role as part of a process of strengthening democratic institutions in the Commonwealth. We also had useful initial discussions with Mr Carl Dundas, the leader of the Secretariat support staff, and one of his colleagues, Mr Richard Nzerem, who had been a member of previous Commonwealth missions to Guyana.

Twelve members of our Group and six Commonwealth Secretariat support staff arrived in Georgetown on 22 September. Our Chairman, Mr David Peterson, and two other members arrived on 27 September, and the last member three days later. Until the arrival of Mr Peterson, Mrs Shirley Miller served as Acting Chair. Four support staff, who preceded us to set up our office and prepare for our arrival, had already made useful contacts, and we found a full programme of meetings awaiting us. From the outset, we recognised that detailed consultations with as many participants in the electoral process as possible would alert us to the concerns of political parties and in turn determine the scope and manner of our coverage of events on polling day. A letter had been issued on our behalf by the advance team to all political parties inviting them to discuss their concerns with us (*Annex II*), and we were able to meet with the leaders of nine of the 11 contending political parties. They all welcomed our presence and we kept in touch with them or their representatives throughout our stay. Wherever possible, we also attended some of the political rallies held in Georgetown and elsewhere at which we spoke freely with party officials, members and supporters. We met with President Hoyte, Commissioner of Police Laurie Lewis and senior officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and maintained frequent contact with the Elections Commission. We met with non-governmental agencies, including the Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB) and the Guyana Human Rights Association. A list of our more significant engagements is at *Annex III*.

We issued regular press releases (see *Annex IV*) to inform the media and the public of our activities. At all our meetings with officials and the media, we emphasised our impartiality and independence. We also liaised with the Observers from the Carter Center, especially on deployment of personnel, with the High Commissioners of Britain, Canada and India, and with the American Ambassador. We remained conscious at all times, however, of the need to preserve our independence as a separate Observer group and to form an independent judgment of the organisation and conduct of the elections.

Five days before polling day, Observers and support staff were deployed in teams of two to different parts of the country. Well in advance of polling day

we therefore had Observers established in Mabaruma (Region 1), Hampton Court (Region 2), the Corentyne (Region 6), Mahdia (Region 8), Lethem (Region 9) and Linden (Region 10). Four other teams covered the coastal belt, including Georgetown, and Region 7 was covered by a team which flew between the main population centres of that region. The objective was to cover as many polling stations as possible in each of the 10 Regions. A schedule of our deployment is at *Annex V*. Once deployed, we familiarised ourselves with the districts we were to cover on polling day, observed polling arrangements made by the local officials, and met political leaders and electoral officials. In our visits to the electoral areas and polling stations, both before and on polling day, we were guided by a Check List and Polling Station Report (*Annex VI*) in observing various aspects of the election process.

We were immediately recognised everywhere we went because of extensive media coverage of our arrival and activities. We travelled in vehicles which were clearly marked 'Commonwealth Observer Group' and we wore armbands similarly marked. Some of us wore specially made T-shirts embossed with the Commonwealth logo. We received the fullest possible co-operation from the public and the authorities and we were accorded complete freedom of movement and access to every aspect of the election machinery.

Relationship with other Observer Groups

We worked closely with Observers from the Carter Center and the Council of Freely Elected Heads of State under the joint leadership of former US President Jimmy Carter and Prime Minister George Price of Belize. We also met with unofficial Observers from the Guyana–Canada Friendship Association.

CHAPTER 1

Electoral Reform

We were impressed with the extent of the legal and other reform measures undertaken in Guyana between 1990 and 1992. Over a long period before that, the confidence of opposition parties, the Guyanese public and indeed the international community in the electoral process had suffered considerable erosion. Serious criticisms had been persistently made, specifically alleging lack of transparency and fraud in the organisation and conduct of overseas, proxy and postal voting. The reforms described briefly below were necessary to restore confidence and to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the renewed climate of multi-party democracy.

These reforms were far-reaching, though lacking a properly thought-out conceptual framework. Opposition parties, therefore, could see little practical improvement arising from them. The first reform measure was the Electoral Law (Reform) Act of 1990, which restored to the Elections Commission the responsibility for the compiling of the register of voters. It also transferred to the Commission the functions previously performed by the Ministry responsible for electoral matters under the Representation of the People Act and the National Registration Act. This was a step in the right direction as it gave back to the Elections Commission a measure of control over elections personnel and wide powers over the administration of all electoral matters.

A further measure, the Election Law (Amendment) (No 2) Act, 1990, consolidated the powers of control over the registration process by the Elections Commission. It laid down clear procedures to assist qualified persons to register as voters and political parties to scrutinise the transparency of the process. Enumerators would be appointed to conduct a house-to-house registration of eligible voters in each registration division. The Commissioner of Registration was required to act under the control of the Elections Commission in establishing a central register based on the originals of the registration cards of all electors registered. A divisional register was established for each registration division, using the duplicate registration cards of all the electors registered in that registration district.

The preliminary list to be prepared for each district was required to indicate each elector's full name, address, occupation and the serial number of the registration card. Standard safeguards were also provided for. Thus, the procedures allowed for claims and objections to be filed by electors, and for

corrections, revisions and certification to be made before the final list was settled. This enactment further assisted in the confidence-building process by introducing new procedures to govern the compilation of the non-resident (that is, overseas) electors' roll and by placing its preparation under the control of the Elections Commission. A further enactment, the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 1991, considerably reduced the scope of the overseas non-resident electors' roll by repealing the relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act. The new procedures which allowed scrutineers of political parties contesting an election to monitor the registration process until the register was settled, further served to enhance the confidence of the political parties in the reform process itself.

Despite the reforms already implemented up to that point, doubts persisted about the repository of ultimate control over the election machinery. With the passing of the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 1992, however, the process of transferring control over the election machinery to the Elections Commission and its Chairman was completed in a single stroke. This Act amended the Constitution to empower the Chairman of the Elections Commission to appoint the Chief Election Officer, the Commissioner of National Registration and all other officers and staff necessary for the conduct of the elections. At the same time, the Representation of the People Act was amended to make the Chief Election Officer and the Commissioner of Registration subject to the direction and control of the Chairman of the Elections Commission.

The reforming legislation also dealt with the vexed question of ballot counting procedures. In the light of the widespread local perception that this process had been subverted in the past, the treatment of that issue was of particular importance and interest to us. An amendment to the Representation of the People Act in 1990 provided for the ballots to be counted at the polling stations and for that count to be deemed as the final count unless a recount was requested by noon of the day immediately after polling. A similar procedure was used in the counting of non-resident electors' votes at specially designated polling places. Counting had also to take place in the presence of all those persons, including party agents, who were entitled to be present in the polling place. At the close of the count, the Presiding Officer was required to prepare a certified statement of the poll for distribution to stipulated persons, including the Returning Officer, duly appointed agents of political parties and the Chief Election Officer. The counting procedure was thus considerably improved.

In the calculation and allocation of the number of seats to each list of candidates, the Chief Election Officer was required to take account of the votes of the disciplined forces, the non-resident electors and the electors on the official list. In terms of confidence-building measures, we took note of the enactment which permitted international observers to monitor the elections.

The reform process was accompanied throughout 1991-92 by other government measures, such as constitutional amendments, proclamations and a steady stream of election regulations and directives, some of which, we believe, merit a brief mention here. The Constitution was amended in 1991 to extend the life of the Parliament beyond the period of five years in order to facilitate the completion of the official list and the non-resident electors' roll.

A second constitutional amendment that year reconstituted the Elections Commission. Under it, the Chairman of the Commission was appointed by the President and had to be a person who held office as a Judge of a Court having unlimited jurisdiction in civil or criminal matters in some part of the Commonwealth, or a court having jurisdiction in appeals from any such court; or a person who was qualified to be appointed as any such judge, or who was otherwise a fit and proper person. In addition to the Chairman, there were to be six members of the Commission, three of whom were to be appointed by the President, acting in his own deliberate judgment, and three others to be appointed by the President, acting on the advice of the minority leader, tendered after consultation with other opposition parties. The procedure for removal of the Chairman and members of the Commission was provided for in the enactment which was a transitional measure (expiring three months from the date of the election). It also terminated the appointments of the persons who held the offices of Chairman and other members of the Elections Commission immediately before the date on which that enactment took effect.

In 1992, another constitutional amendment was passed to deal with a number of issues arising from the recall of Parliament and to smooth the path of implementing the reform measures. One such issue related to the appointment of all the election officers from the Chief Election Officer to the polling clerks and the conferment solely on the Chairman of the Elections Commission the power to appoint, remove and discipline such officers.

As it turned out, halfway through the programme of electoral reform measures outlined above, the election date was set for 16 December 1991. But the elections had to be postponed because the Elections Commission, as then constituted, was unable to compile a proper register. Parliament, which had already been dissolved, had thus to be recalled in order to approve the postponement of the elections, and once recalled was in a position to further accelerate the process of reform. It passed the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 1992, requiring the Commissioner of Registration to prepare a new 'preliminary' voters' list and deemed the preliminary list which would have been used for the December 1991 elections to be a 'provisional' preliminary list (see Chapter 4 below).

In discharging our mandate to observe every relevant aspect of the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Guyana, we were at the same time witnessing the interpretation and application of the recent enactments which created the electoral framework whose purpose was to deliver free and fair elections. We formed the view that the new legislative scheme, as a whole, considerably enhanced the renewal of confidence by injecting a substantial measure of transparency into many of the election processes. Although the law empowered the President, in his own deliberate judgment, to appoint the Chairman of the Elections Commission, it was noted that the present holder of that office, Mr Rudy Collins, was appointed from a list of names submitted to the President by the opposition parties. We formed the view that the new legislative and procedural electoral framework had the potential to deliver free and fair elections in Guyana.

CHAPTER 2

Administrative Framework

The foregoing reform programme did not alter the substratum of the electoral process of Guyana which rests on a simple system of proportional representation, under which the whole country forms a single constituency. Parliamentary seats are allocated in proportion to the votes cast for each party. Votes are cast in favour of lists of candidates submitted by each party and every election is conducted by secret ballot. Notwithstanding that the electoral system is a proportional representative one, the procedures of the major electoral processes closely resemble those of many Commonwealth countries whose electoral systems are based on the first-past-the-post model.

Although the whole country forms a single constituency, it is divided into polling districts, each of which may contain a number of polling divisions. In turn, each polling division may contain several polling places designated by the Returning Officer. Each polling place is usually given a numerical designation approved by the Chief Election Officer. Polling places are required to be published in the Gazette not later than the twentieth day before an election.

The system of lists of candidates is governed by stipulated procedures which must be observed if the list of candidates submitted by a political party is to be accepted as valid. The Elections Commission is required to appoint a day, within a stipulated time before election day, for the submission of the lists of candidates. On this day, the date of which is published in the Gazette, the Chief Election Officer receives the lists of candidates. Each list is required to be supported by a stipulated number of persons (between 200 and 220) whose names appear on the preliminary list of voters. The list of candidates must also be presented in accordance with the form prescribed for the purpose. It must set out the names in alphabetical order by surname, one below the other, and must contain no fewer than 53 and no more than 65 persons who are qualified to be elected to the National Assembly and who have consented to the inclusion of their names in the list as candidates for election. Their addresses and occupations must also be stated. Each list of candidates must be accompanied by a statutory declaration in the prescribed form by each person who is named therein as a candidate. The declaration shall state the person's qualifications and consent and be made before a Justice of the Peace or any person authorised by law to administer such an oath in the place where the declaration was made.

Each list of candidates is required to bear a title selected by the persons by whom it was submitted. Where a list of candidates appears to the Elections Commission to be defective, corrections may be allowed to rectify the defect within a specified time.

To be valid, a list of candidates must be approved by the Commission not later than the twenty-eighth day before election day. The Commission is required to allocate a symbol, as it sees fit, to each approved list of candidates. If the Commission refuses to approve a list of candidates, the representative and deputy representative of the list, or any person named, may appeal to the High Court no later than the twenty-sixth day before election day against the refusal. The Commission is required to publish all the approved lists of candidates in the Gazette, stating their title and symbols.

In order to fully appreciate the nature of the organisation that was in place for the election and the chain of responsibility within that organisation, we looked at the management structure of the electoral system. In general terms, the structure of the Guyanese electoral management and administration is not dissimilar to that found in some other Commonwealth countries, save for a few details which are significantly different. The Elections Commission, for example, consists of six members and a Chairman, but we noted that one of the reform measures altered the Constitution to confer the powers to appoint the Chief Election Officer, the Commissioner of National Registration and other election staff on the Chairman of the Commission rather than the Elections Commission as a whole. The Commission's control over all matters relating to elections, and particularly its ability to direct the Chief Election Officer and the Commissioner of National Registration, has served to simplify the administration of the election activities. The administrative structure was completed by the provision for each region to have a Returning Officer and an election clerk; each polling place a Presiding Officer and a poll clerk; and, where required, deputy returning officers, assistant presiding officers and other staff. An illustrative diagram of the structure of election tasks is set out in *Annex VII*.

CHAPTER 3

Political Parties and their Manifestos

During the two weeks before the elections, we met and had wide-ranging discussions with, among others, most of the political parties who were contesting the elections. Two of the parties, however, could not be contacted and there was no response to written invitations to meet us. We gained the impression from our discussions with party leaders that in Guyana, no less than elsewhere in the Commonwealth generally, politics was conducted in a lively and competitive atmosphere even though the ruling political party had held the reins of government for more than two decades.

We were aware that the run-up to the 1992 elections had generated intense political passions which were immediately apparent on our arrival in Georgetown. Although we were unable to observe the nominations – which took the form of submission by political parties of their respective lists of candidates to the Chief Election Officer – we ascertained that 11 political parties had filed their lists and that the process of approval of these lists by the Elections Commission was entirely uncontroversial. Ample evidence of the vigour of political activity was not far to seek, with 11 political parties seeking the endorsement of an electorate of fewer than 400,000 voters. While there appeared to be widespread concern among some opposition parties over whether the election would be free and fair, it seemed at the same time that the two dominant political parties, the People's National Congress (PNC) and the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic), were striving to maintain their traditional support bases.

In the week of our arrival in Georgetown, the political parties were either officially launching their manifestos or explaining their implications at public meetings in areas of the country considered strategically important. From our discussions with the leaders of the opposition parties it was clear that despite some lingering concerns, they believed that for the first time there was a possibility that the elections would be genuinely free and fair. More important, they were prepared to give the process a chance – a prospect not thought possible by many when the normal life of the last Parliament was ending in 1991.

Not surprisingly, all the parties we spoke to were supremely confident of doing well in the elections, a confidence encouraged, we believe, by the nature

of the system of proportional representation for determining the composition of parliament and the party that would form the government. With the whole country forming a single constituency, votes are cast throughout the country in favour of any one of the lists of candidates. Each elector has two votes, one vote on the General List and one vote on the Regional List, and seats in Parliament are allocated between the lists in proportion to the number of votes cast in favour of each list.

Because of the small size of the electorate and the changing political climate which some believed increased the prospects of no one party securing a clear majority at the elections, an attempt was made to form a broadly based coalition by a group of six opposition parties, including the PPP. However, the group collectively called the Patriotic Coalition for Democracy foundered even before the elections initially called for 16 December 1991 and then postponed because of a badly flawed voters' list. By nomination day in September 1992, however, dormant political parties were being revived and at least one new party was formed to contest the elections.

An assessment of the electoral prospects of each of the eleven political parties does not form part of our terms of reference and it would suffice to merely sketch the package of measures each party offered in its manifesto.

- **The Democratic Labour Movement (DLM):** *Leader: Paul Tennasse (Party symbol – an open palm implanted with a red star in the middle).* The party manifesto first issued in 1991 in anticipation of the postponed 16 December 1991 elections, was re-issued in 1992 without any changes. Claiming to represent a new hope, new vision and new blood for a new Guyana, the DLM billed its manifesto as an alternative to dictatorship and under-development. It projected as the basic and guiding principles of the party the philosophy that “those who have more should pay more, those who have less should pay less and that for those who do not have, a hand of solidarity should be outstretched”. Among its commitments, if elected to power, it would initiate constitutional reform, promote and respect an independent judiciary and the rule of law, and initiate an urgent plan for enhanced economic development along capitalist lines but with social justice. It would accept responsibility to contribute to the building of a new world order based on respect for human rights, the right to self-determination, solidarity, freedom and justice.
- **The National Democratic Front (NDF):** *Leader: Joseph Bacchus (Party symbol – a factory).* All our endeavours to secure a copy of the party's manifesto failed. We were also unable to meet the party leadership for any discussions.
- **The National Republican Party (NRP):** *Leader: Robert Gangadeen (Party symbol – the elephant).* The campaigning slogan of the party was ‘together we move, forever we achieve’. The party's manifesto highlighted the preservation of freedom and personal liberty; the reduction of presidential powers

and immunities; the rehabilitation and restructuring of the industrial and other infrastructures and the introduction of an open door immigration policy based on the belief that in a revived and booming economy, Guyana would be faced with an inadequate work force.

- **The People's Democratic Movement (PDM):** *Leader: Llewellyn John (Party symbol – the spoon).* Formed in 1973, the party said in its manifesto that it came into existence with a crusading mission to achieve electoral purity. The party did not seem to have any rallying cry of its own but was content to join in what it considered to be the general public mood of wanting a change of political direction. Like its opponents in the battle for votes, it planned a review of the Constitution and of a wide range of other matters including the economy which it said had crumbled or was in decay. The party was also committed to giving meaning to the fundamental rights and freedoms which it claimed had been eroded.

- **The People's National Congress (PNC):** *Leader: Hugh Desmond Hoyte (Party symbol – the coconut palm tree).* President Hoyte officially launched his party's manifesto at a public meeting on 15 September. The manifesto, issued as a glossy publication, constructed its message on the central theme of development, social harmony and prosperity, devoting a substantial space to the gains achieved through an economic recovery programme based on economic liberalisation and divestment of state enterprises.

In a direct personal appeal to the electorate in a foreword, the manifesto listed the achievements of President Hoyte since assuming leadership of the party and asked the voters not to take risks which might turn the clock back economically and politically. It sought to draw a picture of an environment of peace, tranquillity and racial harmony which the party believed would be put at risk if not returned to power. The manifesto affirmed the commitment of a PNC government under the leadership of President Hoyte to a free, open and democratic society and to the removal of the State from ownership and management of business enterprises while retaining a role in development. A PNC government, the manifesto proclaimed, was also committed to convening, as a matter of priority after the elections, an all-party constitutional review conference. Among its other commitments were the maintenance of the independence of the judiciary and bringing Amerindians into the mainstream of national life.

- **The People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic):** *Leader: Dr Cheddi Jagan (Party symbol – the cup).* The PPP decided, after the breakdown of the Patriotic Coalition for Democracy of which it was a leading member, to broaden its appeal by presenting a slate featuring individuals from various walks of life and who were not formal members of the party. It submitted its list of candidates under the PPP/Civic to demonstrate its commitment to bringing together Guyanese of every walk of life, race, political view and religion to work in partnership. The PPP/Civic adopted the campaign

slogan of 'Time for Change and Time to Rebuild'. Like a number of its opponents, it pledged urgent constitutional reform, one element of which would be reduction of the powers of the President. It professed in its manifesto a commitment to democracy and free and fair elections managed by an independent Elections Commission. It also pledged its support for the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Among its other manifesto promises were a commitment to the promotion of sustainable development, a flexible approach to privatisation, infrastructural rehabilitation, financial accountability and the provision of accelerated development for Amerindian communities.

- **The United Force (TUF):** *Leader: Manzoor Nadir (Party symbol – the sun).* The party chose as the theme of its package of promises 'Highways to Happiness' which it categorised as a Mark II version, having used the same theme in all the previous elections it had contested. In developing the theme, the manifesto emphasised the party's belief in people as the *raison d'être* of government. Accordingly, it included among its priority concerns, issues affecting women, youth and culture. Like its opponents, it was committed to constitutional and electoral reform as well as guaranteeing to the indigent Amerindians control over their own affairs.

- **The Union of Guyanese International (UGI):** *Leader: Lindley Evan GeBorde (Party symbol – the Harpy Eagle).* Both the leader and his party made their entrance into the Guyana political scene with the slogan 'the Eagle has Landed'. Dr GeBorde billed himself as the most outstanding candidate ever in Guyana's history and the best qualified man for the job of President. Among the objectives of his party were the achievement of democracy; racial harmony; respect for the rule of law and an independent judiciary; and an accountable, responsive, honest, and fair government.

- **The United Republican Party (URP):** *Leader: Dr Leslie Ramsamy (Party symbol – the cow).* The URP launched its manifesto, prepared by its supporters in the United States, under the title 'Programme for Reconstruction and Development – the New Beginning'. The two central themes of the manifesto were that political freedom within a democracy is imperative for economic progress and that the market economy is the only economic system compatible with personal freedom and constitutional government. The URP joined with other parties in promising a review of the Constitution. Among its other promises were education for all by the year 2000 and the empowerment of people to take control of their lives. In particular, the party claimed to have established priorities for women and children. 'New Beginning' also promised special attention for infrastructural development and appeared to be alone in stating what its programme would cost over the life of one parliament.

- **The United Workers' Party (UWP):** *Leader: Winston Payne (Party symbol – the*

shield). As in the case of the National Democratic Front, all our best endeavours to contact the party were to no avail. Nor were we able to secure a copy of the party's manifesto.

- **The Working People's Alliance (WPA):** *Leader (rotating): Clive Thomas (Party symbol – the bell)*. The WPA manifesto was launched under the banner of justice, opportunity and security for a multiracial Guyana. Its campaign slogan was 'When WPA wins, all races win', in veiled reference to a charge it had levelled against one of its opponents accusing it of being a racially based party. Its party emblem, the bell, was chosen for its symbolic significance as an instrument of mass mobilisation. The party claimed it drew its membership from all age groups and was committed, through its collective leadership, to the pursuit of freedom and growth of the human personality. It identified hunger and homelessness, and one-party and one-race rule as the two main election issues. It set out the principles that would guide its approach to the reconstruction of Guyanese society. Among these were the satisfaction of basic needs, ethnic security and justice.

Along with many of its political opponents, it was committed to a review of the Guyana Constitution and to the reduction in the powers of the President. It pledged that if elected to power it would lower the age for local franchise to 16.

Relationship between the Parties

A number of the parties, while insisting that they would be victorious on their own account, said they would be prepared to work with other parties in a coalition, in the event that no single party won a working majority. A core of some parties, however, said they would not be prepared to work with the PNC.

CHAPTER 4

Registration and the Voters' List

The concept of free and fair elections implies not only that every eligible voter who wishes to vote is registered and has the opportunity to exercise the right to vote but also that the voters' list is as accurate as possible and does not contain the names of persons ineligible to vote. In the case of Guyana, this was the subject of considerable controversy leading to a delay of over one year in holding the elections which, constitutionally, were due to have been held in early 1991. A preliminary voters' list (PVL) published, as required by law, in October 1990 was rejected by all the political parties as being so grossly inaccurate that they were not prepared to accept it as a valid basis on which to proceed to an election. In the face of a public outcry, the Government agreed that a new voters' list, prepared on the basis of house-to-house enumeration of voters, was the best way forward rather than the established practice of extracting the list from the general register. This required a change in the existing electoral law dealing with the registration of persons for the purposes of elections.

Accordingly, the Election Laws (Amendment) (No 2) Act, 1990, was passed which annulled the 1990 PVL and provided the legal basis for a fresh voters' list to be compiled from source documents prepared in a house-to-house enumeration of qualified voters. The registration process was attended by much controversy ranging from allegations of bias in favour of a particular political party on the part of some enumerators to general dissatisfaction with the arrangements for the elections. The enumeration exercise which began in February 1991 was duly completed in May 1991 and the Elections Commission produced and published another PVL that October. This PVL was also rejected by all the political parties as being too flawed to form an acceptable basis on which to hold an election. Demands for a fresh house-to-house enumeration of qualified voters were rejected in favour of the newly reorganised and expanded Elections Commission preparing yet another PVL from the original registration documents generated by the house-to-house enumeration. This was done notwithstanding the provisions of the Election Law (Reform) Act, 1990, as amended by the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 1992, which provided that the 'preliminary' list prepared with reference to 31 October 1991 as the qualifying date, together with its supplementary list would be deemed as the 'provisional' preliminary list. The Commissioner of Registra-

tion was then required to prepare a new preliminary list by revising the 'provisional' preliminary list which would be subject to the normal procedure of claims and objections. In due course, after delays which gave rise to yet more controversy, a new computer-generated PVL was produced and posted at the end of July 1992. Prior to its official publication it had undergone a rigorous purging in the form of an in-house cleaning-up operation.

The Final Voters' List

Against the background of two aborted PVLs of October 1990 and 1991, the period of claims and objections which followed publication of the July 1992 PVL proved to be a period of intense activity for the political parties, some of whom complained that it still contained minor irregularities. Although this PVL was put to the severest scrutiny by all the political parties, resulting in further delay in its publication, it was given an accuracy rating of well over 90 per cent. Furthermore, by the end of the claims and objections period, an even higher degree of accuracy was claimed. One notable consequence of the delay in the publication of an acceptable final voters' list was that voters who had in the meantime come of voting age had the opportunity to take advantage of the extension of the qualifying date, and to have their names included on the final list.

The Non-Resident Electors' Roll

A further source of controversy related to the arrangements for voting by eligible voters who were resident abroad. Pursuant to the Representation of the People Act, as amended by the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 1991, the non-resident electors' roll prepared by the Commissioner of Registration in accordance with the National Registration Act constituted the preliminary list of electors not resident in Guyana. Among the often heard allegations by some opposition parties was that the overseas vote was used by the ruling party to pad the voters' roll. As part of the programme of electoral reform, and in an attempt to address these and other allegations of electoral malpractice in the conduct of the overseas vote, the provisions of the Representation of the People Act dealing with the non-resident electors ballot were amended to restrict the overseas vote to Heads of Guyana Missions abroad and their staff. This has had the effect of drastically reducing the number of potential overseas voters, in this case, we were advised, to 183.

The Disciplined Forces

Although special arrangements were made for the disciplined forces to vote a week earlier than the general public, no corresponding special arrangements were required to be made for registering eligible voters among them. This meant that members of the police, defence force and the prison service – collectively referred to as the 'disciplined forces' – who were eligible to vote were registered along with other eligible members of the general public and included in the preliminary as well as the final voters' lists. To enable them to vote separately, however, special arrangements were made which allowed the

names of the members of the disciplined forces to be extracted from the final voters' list. These were then placed in separate lists and the individuals named therein were allocated specially designated polling places at which to vote on 28 September.

When errors were discovered in the printed ballot papers prior to polling day, the fact that the non-residents' vote and the disciplined forces' vote were conducted in advance of the 5 October polling date played some role in the decision of the Elections Commission not to reprint the papers (see Chapter 5).

The Supplementary List

A supplementary list which was compiled after the determination of claims and objections was provided for in addition to the 'provisional' and preliminary lists discussed above. In essence, the purpose of the supplementary list was to permit the inclusion in the official list of voters persons who had, in the meantime, become qualified for registration as voters since the preparation of the 'provisional' preliminary list by reference to 31 July 1992 as the cut-off date. It also allowed further additions to be made to the list where names had been inadvertently omitted, and it was explained to us that in genuine hardship cases, names could be added to the list at a later stage. We were to learn that as a result of the claims filed following the publication of the preliminary list and at the conclusion of the hearings of the claims and objections raised, a total of 18,895 voters were included in the supplementary list.

The result of this process was that the elections were being held on the basis of an electors' roll that was broadly accepted by all the contesting political parties. In the event, the total number of voters on the final list increased to 384,195 from 365,300 recorded in the PVL.

Complaints

Although all the political parties, and indeed the general public, generally accepted the final voters' list as one which they would be prepared to contest the election with, and which they believed offered the possibility of a free and fair election, estimates varied as to the degree of its accuracy and it had ceased to be a live issue by the time we arrived in Georgetown. It was commonly accepted that the list was more than 90 per cent accurate, but one political party sought to impress upon us that available demographic statistics appeared to suggest that the list had been inflated. This did not, however, seem to be a view shared by other political parties.

Associated with registration were the two related issues of the distribution of identity cards to registered voters and the method of identifying persons who turned up to vote on polling day without identity cards. We had been aware that this was a subject of widespread concern and different estimates of the numbers involved were cited to us, but we understood that the Office of the Commissioner of Registration was issuing and would continue to issue identity cards up to the day of the elections. We were also assured that to further alleviate the situation and to minimise the incidence of disenfranchise-

ment, Presiding Officers had received instructions to accept alternative forms of identification, including passports and driving licences. Failing these and as a last resort, provision was made for the administration of an appropriate form of oath to enable such a person to vote. We observed instances, both during the disciplined forces' and the general vote, where these alternative forms of identification were employed and which contributed in some measure to delays in processing voters.

CHAPTER 5

Preparations for Polling

In preparing for the election, a number of practical steps had to be taken to give effect to the new regulatory and procedural system introduced by the reforms. The election date was set by the President soon after he was advised by the Chairman of the Elections Commission that the final voters' list was ready. With this basic phase of the process having been completed, the Elections Commission turned its attention to the acquisition of election materials and supplies. These included such items as ballot boxes, ballot papers, voting ink, voting screens, tilly lamps, seals, etc. Some of these were supplied by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a US-based organisation, to meet widespread concern about the integrity of the existing stock.

The Elections Commission shared with us some of difficulties they faced in deciding on appropriate supplies and their acquisition. We learnt, for example, that there had been a lively local argument over whether metal ballot boxes should replace wooden boxes which had been used in the past. The argument in favour of metal boxes prevailed. Similarly, local opinion was divided as to whether the ballot papers should be printed locally or abroad. Eventually, it was decided that the ballot papers should be printed in the United States of America, a decision made, it was thought, to enhance the confidence of opposition parties and the general public in the electoral process.

Despite all the precautions over printing the ballot papers abroad, when they were delivered to Georgetown errors were found in the titles of two of the lists of candidates: the title of the PPP/Civic list of candidates was printed only as PPP, and the title of the list of candidates of the UGI was printed as United Guyanese International instead of Union of Guyanese International. As might have been expected, the first error triggered considerable controversy among the opposition political parties, particularly in the PPP/Civic, and at one stage threatened to derail preparations for the elections which were already at an advanced stage. The ruling party, the PNC, also expressed concern, and another opposition party, the WPA, called publicly for the ballot papers to be reprinted. The EAB, a local independent body, also publicly expressed its dismay over the errors and called for a reprinting. It expressed the view that, since the Commission could not give a guarantee that its decision to treat the flawed ballot paper as valid in law could not be challenged subsequently, legal difficulties were very likely to arise after the elections.

In an effort to ascertain the facts that led to the errors in the ballot paper, and to assist the Commission in the search for a solution, we made contact with the Chairman of the Commission as soon as we learnt of the error. The Group, represented by the Acting Chair, Mrs Shirley Miller, and Mr Carl Dundas, leader of the Secretariat's support team, met the Chairman of the Commission twice on 24 September. The following day the Group as a whole met the full Commission to discuss the matter.

The sequence of events, particularly the precise date when the political parties were informed of the errors remained unclear, however. This may have been due to the apparent approach taken by the Commission that by the time the errors were discovered, the question of who was responsible and the relevance of reprinting the ballot papers had become largely academic. Indeed, the Chairman of the Commission stated that the most immediate question was how to deal with the problem.

He informed us that he first became aware of the mistake on the afternoon of Saturday, 19 September, and that he informed two other members of the Commission on Monday, 21 September. He further stated that the three opposition members on the Commission went to see Dr Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the PPP/Civic, to tell him of the error. We were told, at our meeting with the Commission, that they held extensive discussions on the matter on Thursday, 24 September. A range of possibilities had been considered, including reprinting of the ballot papers and postponement of the elections. The Commission informed us that there were several reasons why it decided to proceed with the elections. Among these was the fact that the overseas voting had already started, that a reprinting of the ballot papers would necessitate a postponement of the disciplined forces' vote set for 28 September, and that when the error was first discovered the agency that assisted with funding for the printing of the original ballot papers told the Chairman that the papers could not be reprinted and delivered in time for the 5 October elections.

The Chairman of the Commission explained to us that among the other options examined was a proposal that the British Government might be prepared, if requested, to fund reprinting the ballot papers in the light of assurances given that the firm of Thomas De La Rue could print and deliver the papers by Tuesday, 29 September. Alternative printing opportunities in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago had also been considered.

We were told that in order to pursue the option with the British Government, a formal request by the Guyana Government was required. However, members of the Commission felt that any option where the Government would be required to initiate a request was not realistic because of the likelihood of delay and uncertainty inherent in the procedure for making such a request. They explained that the Government had not been in favour of having the ballots printed overseas in the first place.

The Commission further explained that Dr Jagan, as the leader of the party most likely to be disadvantaged by the error, had put forward a number of proposals for the Commission to consider. First, he indicated that reprinting the ballot papers was the preferred solution. Second, he proposed that all the political parties should agree that the error would not be an issue regardless

of the outcome of the election. Third, a declaration should be sought from the courts that the error would not invalidate the election. If these last two conditions were met, he would not press for a reprint and the Elections Commission's preparations for the election could continue but should include a vigorous nationwide publicity campaign to let voters know that the PPP and PPP/Civic were one and the same party. The PPP/Civic was not in favour of postponing the elections.

Although the Commission recognised the importance of publicising the position of the PPP/Civic, there seemed to be some reluctance to go as far as Dr Jagan would have liked for fear of being accused of highlighting any one political party. Therefore, in its public statement on the matter, the Elections Commission merely stated that any elector who wished to vote for the PPP/Civic list could do so and that a properly marked vote for the initials 'PPP' would count as a vote for the PPP/Civic list of candidates in both general and regional elections. A sample of the ballot paper with the party symbols is at *Annex VIII*.

In an attempt to address the issue of multiple voting, the Elections Commission purchased new stocks of ink that would be used to mark a person who had voted. This was of a different colour from ink used in the past and had been tested and found not easy to remove. The new ink was acquired because of suspicions that the old stock could be easily removed. The new ink would make it difficult for people to vote more than once.

We placed importance on the transparency of the process under which election officials were selected, screened, appointed and trained. It was the task of the Commission to recruit and train about 4,000 of these officers. Five categories of persons who might contribute to the election process at all levels had been identified, including teachers, divisional registrars and members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Considerable difficulties, however, appear to have been encountered in the training of these officers. Part of the problem was the difficulty in informing everyone in good time where training sessions were to be held. The situation was not helped by reliance on volunteers – some of whom could not be contacted at the last moment or declined to take up their posts at short notice.

Judging from our own limited experience gained while travelling around the country, the logistic difficulties for the timely delivery of election materials to every one of the approximately 980 polling places, particularly those in the remote parts of the country, must have been considerable. It would therefore not be out of place to comment favourably on the generally satisfactory level of preparedness of the polling places that we visited during the disciplined forces poll and on polling day itself.

CHAPTER 6

The Campaign

When we arrived in Georgetown, we were struck by what appeared to be an apathetic approach to the elections. We were told that Guyanese were 'election weary', having come through two years of wrangling over electoral reforms, voters' lists and having the elections postponed from a year previously. Accustomed as we were to passionate and colourful campaigning in other Commonwealth countries, we were surprised at the lack of party posters and bunting. Party public meetings were, however, being staged all over the country. Depending on who the speakers were, these drew audiences of varied sizes.

We were given two reasons for the paucity of posters. We were told that posters were not part of the election culture in Guyana and were, moreover, expensive to produce. Parties also told us that 'armies' of their workers put up posters, especially in Georgetown, only to have 'armies' of workers from rival parties tear them down before dawn. It was outside Georgetown that posters were more noticeable. We noticed that parties therefore used newspapers, radio and television to promote their leaders, instead.

We attended as many party public meetings as we could in and outside Georgetown (see list at *Annex IX*). All passed off relatively peacefully. The WPA did complain that 'ganda' (rotten) eggs were thrown at its speakers at one rally, and minor incidents of stone throwing and heckling were reported. One party activist was stabbed on the Corentyne but it is not known whether the attack was politically motivated. Meetings of rival parties were often held within a few hundred yards of each other and though supporters of one side, bearing symbols of their party, sometimes passed through their rivals' ranks there was little evidence that this led to violence.

We paid particular attention to the presence of police at these meetings and noted that there was always at least one police officer at even the smallest of meetings. Some opposition parties complained early in the campaign that police officers stood by while PNC supporters heckled them and threatened to disrupt their meetings, but others said they had been reassured by the presence of the police. In any event, except for normal crowd control, no one drew our attention to any instance during the campaign when the police had to quell a major disturbance at a meeting. TUF leaders did complain to us that police permits given to them for such meetings were often cancelled at the last

moment to accommodate visits by the President. It was their view that this was a deliberate disruption of their schedule of meetings.

By and large, however, the campaign was a fair and peaceful one and the parties were able to get their messages across to the electorate.

The Role of the Media

From early in the electoral reform process, the media's co-operation and assistance was sought by the Elections Commission. The media was thus uniquely involved in the development of the Commission's public information policies. The Guyana Press Association (GPA) was represented on the Commission's media sub-committee which discussed voter education, equal access to the media for contending parties, issues of public concern, and disseminating information on electoral reforms and arrangements for polling. The GPA was also asked to arrange a series of televised debates among the leaders of the 11 contending parties.

In August 1992, the Election Commission issued *Guidelines for Media and Political Parties* during the campaign period. This document (see Annex XI) included general guidelines on fair and factual news reporting, and fairly representing controversial public issues. It also included specific guidelines on access to the media by political parties, paid political advertisements and messages, correction of media errors, use of questionable material, and disclaimers.

Access by political parties: Radio and television would make available at no cost a minimum of five minutes prime time weekly to each party; the daily print media would make available at no cost 10 column inches of space weekly to each qualified party.

Paid political messages: Political parties would be allowed to pay an advertising rate if they wished additional time and space, with each party being charged the same rate; the media was to ensure that all parties and candidates would have equal access to broadcast times; no political party or candidate would be allowed to block access by other parties or candidates by purchasing all available time and space.

Correction of media errors: Broadcasts or publications carrying errors would be corrected in accordance with existing procedures.

Questionable materials: The media would reject a message which was not in good taste or contrary to the public interest.

Disclaimers: A disclaimer would be inserted or broadcast when any free or paid political messages would be carried.

The Election Commission also granted the media what, in our opinion, was a major concession: permission to enter a polling station under certain conditions. Journalists, photographers and camera crew were to enter only in the company of the heads of the Commonwealth and Carter Center Observer Groups, the heads of diplomatic missions, party leaders and with designated party candidates. Although traditional guidelines required that the media be kept some distance away from the polling stations, the Commission chose to

'bend' them after protracted arguments that such access would assist the transparency process and enhance public confidence. GPA leaders assured us that they recognised the elections as a "turning point in the history of Guyana" and would advise accredited journalists against disrupting proceedings.

The Print Media

The newspaper industry in Guyana is a robust, though often highly partisan, one. There are two daily newspapers. The *Guyana Chronicle* is state-owned and reflects government activities and views in both its news and editorial columns. The much younger *Stabroek News*, on the other hand, is independent and often critical of the Government. In addition, weekly and bi-weekly newspapers, such as the *Mirror*, *New Nation* and *Day Clean*, are published by or for the various political parties. Unique among the weeklies is the *Catholic Standard*, which began as a Roman Catholic parish newsletter in 1905. Two other newspapers, the *Weekend Herald* and the monthly *Guyana Times*, began publishing just before the elections.

Taken together, all the newspapers reflect opinion across Guyana's political spectrum. In the absence of a newspaper audit system in Guyana their circulations are not known, but the *Guyana Chronicle* is acknowledged to have the widest circulation and is often the only newspaper available in parts of the interior.

Radio and Television

Radio is by far the most important medium of communication in Guyana. The vast interior, difficult terrain and near inaccessibility, except by boat or on foot, of many settlements make penetration by newspapers virtually impossible. It is in these areas that the Voice of Guyana and Radio Roraima radio stations, run by the state-owned Guyana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), are the sole sources of public information.

Public broadcast television, which is so important for the dissemination of information in many developing countries, is only in an experimental stage. The Guyana Television Channel 10 (GTV-10) is still trying to overcome teething problems of a technical nature and telecasts for only a few hours a night. Moreover, its signal is weak and reaches not much further than a 12-mile radius of Georgetown.

Apart from GTV-10, there is the private Channel 12 which primarily telecasts Indian films, and at least three private 'pirate' stations in the Georgetown area which pull down television signals from communication satellites. These mainly telecast American news, entertainment and sports programmes and raise revenue by accepting local advertising. They, too, serve Georgetown and the coastal area. We were told that other local 'pirate' stations are located up the Demerara River at Linden, on the Essequibo River at Bartica, and on the Berbice River. We were also told that television was received by a relatively small percentage of homes.

The relationship between the various state-owned media agencies is not a straightforward one. The function of the Ministry of Information was taken over by the Guyana Public Communications Agency (GPCA) some years ago. Its board of management is appointed by the President and its function, according to its Executive Chairman, Mr Kester Alves, is to facilitate access by the public to information, and greater access by journalists to public policy. Although it says it has no control over other state-owned or controlled media, its public information unit has journalists on its staff and is in constant touch on news matters with the GBC.

The GPCA's Video Production Centre produces news bulletins and other local programmes for GTV-10 and offers recording facilities on a commercial basis. Private stations take the Centre's news bulletins. A separate board of management, also appointed by the President, runs the GBC, which is responsible for the production of radio programmes.

Access to the Media

Despite the guidelines to the media issued by the Elections Commission, the issue of fair and equitable access by political parties to the media gave rise to some of the most bitter complaints of the campaign period. The state-owned media came especially under attack from opposition parties for allegedly ignoring, distorting or fabricating their activities or utterances. At one point, the *Guyana Chronicle* and *Stabroek News* waged a war of words with each other through their editorial and news columns over which of them was biased and unprofessional.

The *Guyana Chronicle* dwelt almost exclusively on the President's activities and speeches, as party leader or Head of State, as well as on articles claiming success for the Government's Economic Recovery Programme and other aspects of the economy. Leaders of opposition parties, particularly Dr Cheddi Jagan of the PPP/Civic, came under direct personal attack several times.

We noted, however, that despite the sometimes excessive zeal for the affairs of the PNC and the President in the state-owned print and broadcast media, all the main contending parties had no difficulty getting their activities reported in one newspaper or other. A relatively fair coverage of the issues and personalities involved in the elections was available if one looked through all the newspapers.

Most of the criticism of the media was aimed at the state-owned radio and television. Parties complained, for example, that the popular 'Viewpoint' radio programme, broadcast immediately after the main 7 a.m. news bulletin, was dominated by what they described as pro-ruling party speakers. They also alleged that radio and television news bulletins were dominated by news on the President's official or party activities, though some information on opposition parties was included. That said, the GBC eagerly welcomed a suggestion that the Chairman of our Group address the nation on 'Viewpoint' on the importance of voting and of making the process free, fair and transparent. The talk was broadcast the morning after it was recorded and repeated in the afternoon.

Adherence to the Media Guidelines

We paid particular attention to how media houses were adhering to the guidelines issued by the Elections Commission. We had thought the guidelines extremely liberal when we first read them and were disappointed, therefore, to learn that up to two weeks before the elections, no party had yet taken up its allotted weekly free party political broadcast time. Some parties claimed that the guidelines had been modified – they could not say by whom – to just one free party political broadcast before the elections. Others interpreted the guidelines as allowing them a total of five minutes of free air time which could be taken up by 30-second or one-minute slots for short messages and political advertisements. Still others wanted to be allowed more than one free broadcast in the week prior to the elections.

The situation vexed our members considerably until at meetings with the GPA and the Elections Commission we were shown evidence that in August and September 1992, parties had been informed of their right to free broadcast time weekly. They were to contact the Visual Production Centre which would, at its own cost, film the party broadcasts. The parties were then to contact television stations and the GBC and arrange for these broadcasts to be scheduled. The Visual Production Centre and the GBC informed us that though they had personally reminded parties of this facility several times since nomination day some five weeks previously, they had had little success. This was confirmed to us by the President of the GPA, Mr Cecil Griffiths, and by several independent journalists who claimed that the parties had simply not been interested in the offer early in the campaign.

As the parties began freely booking paid political advertisements on a number of radio and television stations two to three weeks before the elections, we concluded that they had simply preferred airing the party political broadcasts in the last few days before the elections when 'election fever' would be at its highest. We received some complaints from political parties about the cost of these advertisements on radio, television and in newspapers, but noted that those which appeared were carefully planned and in many cases produced with considerable thought, sophistication and even wit. Calypso, reggae and rap singers sang catchy tunes that praised this party or that, and imaginative special effects were used in eye-catching television advertisements.

The PNC produced and booked for broadcast more advertisements than any other party, though PPP/Civic and WPA advertisements were also numerous. These were aired on radio, on GTV-10, and at least two other television stations. The party political broadcasts of the leaders of the PNC and the PPP/Civic were aired at their request in the 48 hours before the elections. On the evening before the poll, however, the balance of party messages abruptly changed. Apart from repeatedly broadcasting the President Hoyte-Dr Jagan head-to-head debate (see next section), which had already been aired the night before, GTV-10 and to almost as great an extent, station WRHM, continually aired a mixture of PNC-paid advertisements and repeated the President's party political broadcast. Normal programming was suspended completely. This continued to well after midnight, which was, we understood, the deadline for all public political campaigning.

The Debates

The television debates, with journalists acting as moderators, were eagerly awaited by the public. Never before had such debates between political leaders been held in Guyana. The format was straightforward: the leaders of the three smallest parties would meet in the first 30-minute debate, and two other such debates of three leaders each would also be recorded. The one-hour head-to-head debate between President Hoyte and Dr Jagan would round up the series and be aired on the Saturday night before the elections. Although all the parties did not participate, these debates were acclaimed a great success because the personalities of the leaders and a variety of election issues were aired and held up to public scrutiny.

Voter-Education Programme

Given the newness of voting procedures under the various electoral reforms of the previous two years, we had expected to see a vigorous voter-education programme from the Elections Commission about the rights, processes and implications of the new system. We were disappointed, therefore, that voter-education was confined to a single film clip on voting procedures at a polling station. This was unimaginatively filmed and presented, of poor quality and did not convey much information on the rights of voters or what they could do if told by a Presiding Officer they could not vote for one reason or other.

We also did not see any film clip which told voters how to check which polling station they were to vote in. The Elections Commission told us that it had run out of time to prepare and mail registration and polling station advice slips, and it was the EAB, a private independent body, which undertook to prepare and distribute these slips. We had some reservations about the wisdom of a private body undertaking such a task because of the possibility of error and subsequent accusations of deceit. In the days before the election, our concerns grew as reports filtered in that in some cases errors had been found on EAB slips and, further, that some slips had not been delivered.

Intimidation

When we first arrived, fears had been expressed to us of the possibility of civil disturbances aimed at disrupting and possibly postponing the elections, and of the security services being used to intimidate the public. A meeting with the Police Commissioner, Mr Laurie Lewis, and the Elections Commission assured us that only the police would be deployed to ensure public order and that police personnel stationed at polling stations would be unarmed. The Guyana Defence Force, we were told, would not be deployed on election day.

The most serious instance of assault and intimidation of the entire campaign was the attack on the TUF leader, Mr Manzoor Nadir, and some of his party members as they were putting up posters on the night of 12 September in Georgetown. Mr Nadir complained to us that though he could identify at least four of his assailants and had the registration number of a vehicle involved, the police in his view did not move quickly enough to detain the suspects. The

delay attracted criticism in the media and about 10 days after the incident, the police announced that they had detained some persons in connection with the case. The matter was sub judice at the time of writing this report. There were otherwise very few complaints of intimidation or overt threats.

On balance, we came to the conclusion that despite the highly partisan use of the state-owned media, most parties were able to put their views across in one forum or another. Issues and grievances could be, and were, effectively aired.

CHAPTER 7

Was the Poll Properly Conducted?

Independence and Effectiveness of the Elections Commission

In discussing the composition and organisational structure of the Elections Commission, we noted that the Government nominated three persons as members and the opposition parties another three members. The Chairman was appointed by the President, but the current holder of that post had actually been appointed from a list of names proposed by the opposition parties. The question of the independence of the Commission therefore has to be seen against the background of its composition, and its independence assessed not only with respect to the Government but also to the ruling and the opposition parties. In a formal sense, only the Chairman of the Commission could be said to be independent of any political party.

The record of the performance of the members of the Commission (other than the Chairman) suggested to us that their strong party affiliations impacted adversely on the consensual decision-making process adopted by the Commission. Indeed, so strong were the differences among the members on critical issues which affected the organisation and preparation for the elections, that an amendment had to be made to the Constitution (Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 1992) to enable the Chairman of the Commission alone (and not the whole Commission) to appoint all election officers. The inability of the Commission to reach important decisions on a timely basis often resulted in a stalemate and in an erosion of general public confidence in its independence and effectiveness.

We received several complaints from political parties and individuals about the manner in which the Commission's decisions were implemented. There were persistent criticisms from opposition political parties that there were still too many of the 'old guard' in the electoral machinery – a reference we understood to mean employees who had been in the Electoral Office before the reforms were introduced and who were believed to be sympathetic to the ruling party.

The public perception that the Commission did not pay sufficient attention to the implementation of their decisions was strengthened by the occurrence of a number of serious errors in major election tasks, such as those mentioned in previous chapters in connection with the compilation of the register, the

printing of the ballot paper and some aspects of the voting of the disciplined forces (particularly the police at the Police Sports Club polling station). Each of these events generated headlines in the national newspapers alleging a serious lack of competence and impartiality on the part of the staff serving the Commission.

The effectiveness of the Commission, as the body responsible for the organisation and control of the elections, came under close scrutiny during the preparation for the polls. Reports which we received from several political parties and other interested bodies, suggested that the Commission did not take a timely lead in the selection, training and appointment of presiding officers, their deputies, as well as poll clerks and counting assistants. Two days before the elections, it was not certain that all the presiding officers had been appointed and allocated to specific polling stations or were guaranteed to be in place on polling day. We also received complaints from at least two of the opposition parties that their ability to monitor events on polling day would be frustrated because the Commission had delayed issuing accreditation documents to their polling agents. In the last days before the election, therefore, suspicions arose and public confidence was eroded. The Commission also failed to play a leading role in assisting voters to identify their voting place and preferred to leave that task to a voluntary body, the EAB.

There has been speculation that some of the errors and omissions of the Elections Commission would be susceptible to challenge in the courts. Whether this was so or not, it has to be said that the Commission did succeed in excessively trying circumstances, under intense pressure, and with a fragile national infrastructure, in organising an acceptable electoral process. We believe that Guyana owes an appreciable debt of gratitude to the Chairman of the Commission

Professionalism of Election Officers

In observing election officers at work, there was clear evidence in a number of cases of ineptitude perhaps due to lack of proper training and/or incompetence, although the majority performed commendably well. This problem manifested itself in the very slow rate of polling, particularly in the early hours of the day when we found that the average voter took between three to four minutes to be processed. A few election officers were reportedly removed by the Chairman of the Elections Commission; in other cases the Elections Commission arranged for additional assistance to polling stations where the problems appeared to be overwhelming. One particular problem with the election officers was the fact that appointments were made late and many appointees withdrew, and volunteers had to be brought in a couple of days before polling and given a crash course in procedure. On polling day itself, however, most of the polling stations were fully staffed and run, particularly as the day went on, at a remarkably high level of competence overall.

The Disciplined Forces' Vote – 28 September 1992

In Guyana, the military (the Guyana Defence Force), the police and the prison

service are collectively known as the disciplined forces. Provision is made in the Representation of the People Act to allow the disciplined forces to exercise their right to vote at an election without affecting the performance of their duties on election day.

The disciplined forces voted on Monday 28 September, one week in advance of the general and regional elections on 5 October. They voted in 29 polling stations of which 16 were in Region 4, four in Region 6, three in Region 3, two each in Region 7 and 10, and one each in Region 2 and 5. In addition, four aircraft were used to enable disciplined service voters in the interior to exercise their franchise by means of mobile ballot boxes.

As required by law, separate voters' lists were prepared for each of the disciplined forces, for each polling station. The forces supplied their own lists with names, ranks and serial numbers to the Elections Commission which then had to reconcile this information with the official voters' list. Names appearing on the disciplined forces' list would be deleted from the general list. This exercise was completed on Wednesday 23 September, five days before the disciplined forces' vote. The total number on the disciplined forces' roll was 6,066 – 1.6 per cent of the electorate. Approximately 200 of this number had the opportunity to vote through the mobile ballot box.

On the day of the vote we broke into small groups and visited 20 polling stations. However, because Camp Stephenson provided for all three services and Brickdam and Ruimveldt Police Stations for two, the Group covered 24 of the 29 polling stations. In addition, one member of the Group was on the Skyvan aircraft to Mahdia and Lethem, and another on an aircraft to Mabaruma, Matthews Ridge and Eteringbang. The Group observed the opening of the poll and its closure; made random visits during the day, and, in some cases, travelled with the sealed ballot boxes to the Elections Commission where they were stored. The disciplined forces' ballot papers were counted only after the closure of the polls on 5 October, at which time they were allocated regionally and not returned under the heading of each force. In this way, the political affiliation of the forces would not be made known.

Of the 6,066 registered on the disciplined forces list, the Elections Commission stated on Wednesday 30 September that approximately 4,100 had voted, which represented 67.6 per cent of those eligible to vote.

A number of difficulties were experienced in the execution of the disciplined forces vote. Prior to the election, and admitted by the Elections Commission, the finalisation of the location of polling stations and the release of the forces' list was delayed. In discussions with the political parties, we were told that the release of this information at the last minute greatly hindered the ability of parties to organise the attendance of agents at each station. In the event, we found that the main political parties were well represented on polling day.

Among other complaints, it was alleged that a substantial number of forces' voters were unable to exercise their franchise because of the inefficiency of the arrangements in polling stations. In fact, it appeared that the shortcomings were largely confined to the Police Sports Club at Eve Leary in Georgetown. This station had an electorate list of 1,855, and voting went on late into the night

because the election officials could not process voters quickly enough. Extra officials were called in but while many voters waited for several hours, others gave up and did not vote. On Wednesday 30 September, Police Commissioner Laurie Lewis was reported as requesting that up to 400 officers who had not been able to vote should be allowed to do so on 5 October. He suggested that these officers be issued with certificates of employment for election day and allowed to vote where they could. The PNC argued similarly. The Elections Commission accepted responsibility for the shortcomings but insisted that voters' who had not cast their ballots could not be given a second chance. The Chairman of our Group suggested to the Commission that it explore any legal means which would enable 'disenfranchised' disciplined forces' personnel to vote on 5 October. In the event, means were found and the persons affected enabled to vote.

The experience of the disciplined forces' vote was widely regarded as a trial run and provided a number of important lessons for 5 October. It highlighted the problems of processing voters at stations with large voters' lists and a high turnout. On Wednesday 30 September, the Elections Commission announced that on 5 October no single group of polling officials would be expected to service a line of more than 600 voters in any one station. Additional ballot boxes were to be made available and stand-by personnel would be on call to meet the needs of stations experiencing difficulties.

In part, the pressure on officials during the disciplined forces' vote was brought about because of the surprisingly high percentage of service personnel without identification – up to 20 per cent at some stations. There were also instances of personnel finding that they were not on the forces' list and the checking process also took up time.

There were a number of irregularities in the disciplined forces' vote. These were due in part to the election officials and in part to the circumstances of conducting a vote in military, police and prison premises. From a technical point of view, the correct procedure for stamping the back of the ballot papers with the polling station number was potentially the most difficult. A late addendum to the *Elections Manual* stated that the number should be stamped twice, once on that part of the ballot paper which related to the National Assembly election and once on the back of that part of the ballot paper which related to the regional election. In practice, some papers were only stamped once. Election officials stated that this was how they had been trained or that was what was stated in the *Elections Manual*. We urged the Commission to issue a clear instruction for 5 October.

Other irregularities which were observed in specific stations included the failure to post election lists outside the polling station; instances of where polling agents could not see and hear all the procedures; splitting the National Assembly ballot paper from the regional ballot before handing the ballot paper to the voter; the appearance of a box of 25 ballot papers which were not included in the tally of ballot papers provided for a station; an insufficiency of ballot papers relative to the total list of eligible voters; the use of the same witness to facilitate identification of more than the legally permitted number of voters; and chaotic arrangements for transporting ballot boxes to the

Elections Commission after the count at the polling station.

A different set of irregularities, probably peculiar to the disciplined forces, arose in some stations where senior military or police personnel were seen entering and leaving the stations at will. In part this was to ensure the regular movement of their personnel in an orderly manner through the station but more serious were instances of talking to soldiers in the queue, a senior officer checking the names of military personnel inside the polling station and asking for the names of all officials and party agents who were present. These irregularities were not common to all polling stations, but where they occurred they represented a breach of election procedures. Presiding officers were unwilling to challenge these activities.

Three political parties wrote to the Elections Commission to draw attention to irregularities which their agents had witnessed during the disciplined forces vote. On the evening of 28 September, the PNC provided a list of cases where it was alleged that people had effectively been disenfranchised, and sought assurance that these voters would be allowed to exercise their franchise on 5 October. On 30 September, the PPP/Civic drew the Commission's attention to its view that there were serious organisational shortcomings arising from inadequate training for election officials and a shortage of officials at the Police Sports Club. It also drew the Commission's attention to specific irregularities in particular stations. The WPA agent at the Police Sports Club wrote to the Commission on 29 September complaining about the layout of the station and the limitations that this placed on party agents. While these formal complaints drew on the reports of party polling agents, the experience of the Observer Group was that they received relatively few complaints from party agents who by and large seemed satisfied with the arrangements and the procedures.

While there is little doubt that the disciplined forces' vote suffered from a number of serious difficulties and some irregularities, most especially the inability of some service personnel to vote, confusion over ballot stamping and the unwarranted intrusion of service personnel, the vote was conducted in most stations in an orderly and good-tempered way. Lessons were learnt about the realities of implementing a new system and some of these lessons were translated into improved practice on 5 October.

The election officers at most of the polling stations which we observed were efficient. Generally, the voting procedures were followed, despite the observation above concerning the confusion surrounding the stamping of the ballot papers by the Presiding Officers. There were also some cases of incorrect procedures being employed in administering the oath to persons without identity cards. The chaos at the Police Sports Club was due more to poor organisation and bad planning than to the incompetence of the election officers at that polling station. Overall, we would rate the conduct of the disciplined forces voting as adequate.

Events on Polling Day – 5 October, 1992

Our teams were deployed in all 10 regions of the country five days before the poll. In nine of these regions, we were able to observe commencement of

polling, which generally started on time although reports received from some observers indicated that some stations were opened late. Save in a few places, the voting outside of Georgetown and its immediate environs was peaceful. But in some places, there were very long lines and a considerably tense atmosphere. Some stations were also overcrowded, thus presenting an atmosphere of confusion.

Many voters complained that their names were missing from the list although they had received notices (from the EAB) indicating the polling station at which they should vote. This problem led to serious difficulties in Georgetown where large numbers of persons who claimed that their names were on the preliminary list but had been removed from the final list of voters, gathered outside the office of the Elections Commission demanding that they be given the right to vote. The situation deteriorated quickly, stones were thrown and the premises of the Commission were severely damaged by stone throwing. Disturbances also broke out in neighbouring parts of the city where shops were smashed and looted. The police were called in to protect the Elections Commission's building and to contain the disturbance. Gun shots were fired in the process.

Outside Georgetown, polling was proceeding well until about 2 p.m. when people heard radio reports about riots in Georgetown. Disturbances then broke out in Anna Regina, Linden and New Amsterdam. These radio reports were inaccurate and irresponsible, and may well have contributed to the occurrence of these incidents.

The major difficulty in the country as a whole centred on inaccuracies in the voters' lists. In many stations, the list posted outside the door of the polling station did not tally with the revised lists which had been received from the Elections Commission a couple of days before the elections. Thus, the lists which some presiding officers used did not contain the names of some voters. At one polling station, a new list was posted outside the door of the polling station at around the middle of the day. The word was spread that those who had been turned away could return and vote, but only a fraction of them came back.

The experience of the disciplined forces vote and the events of 5 October suggested that insufficient attention had been given to the actual physical arrangements that were expected to be in place on polling day. At a number of polling places which had multiple polling booths and ballot boxes, unnecessary delays and queuing for long hours could have been avoided by a more even distribution of voters between the polling stations.

Another problem related to the speed with which voters were processed at polling stations. The procedure prescribed the means of identification of voters which included checking their national identity cards. When the voter was properly identified by checking the details of the voter's card against the information on the voters' list, the polling clerk crossed out the name from the voters' list and recorded the number on the ballot stub. A ballot paper with an official number stamped on it was then issued to the voter, who went to the booth, marked it, folded it and then deposited it into a ballot box in full view

of the Presiding Officer and polling agents as well as independent monitors. Acceptable standards suggest that with properly trained polling officers, one voter could be processed in about two minutes. However, in a number of polling stations we visited it took six to seven minutes to process one voter. In many cases, the creation of two lines of voters would have eased the problem, as would have a greater degree of flexibility on the part of Presiding Officers. This pointed to the need for better training.

We also recorded instances, mainly in some urban areas and particularly in Georgetown where there were irregularities and inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of the relevant laws, which we were content to ascribe to either incompetence or inadequate training or both. Among such inconsistencies was the manner in which the index finger of the voter was inked after he or she had voted. In a number of cases, the voting instructions were either absent or were posted at the wrong place. Despite the experience of the disciplined forces' vote, some officials seemed unaware that the ballot paper had to be stamped twice (thus technically rendering the ballots they had issued vulnerable to being rejected). Some officials were seen pre-stamping whole books of ballot paper in advance.

We saw evidence of failure to distribute the Election Commission's *Manual of Instructions for Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Counting Assistants*. We found ourselves on occasions being asked to explain the voting procedures.

There were also problems arising from the allocation of too many voters to individual polling stations. Despite the guidelines by the Elections Commission that polling stations with lists of more than 600 voters should be given additional officers, there were cases where one group of polling officials was required to service a list of between 600 and 700 voters. At such polling stations, there were long queues of 100 people or more at a time. Additional officers were provided in some of these stations but at others, the long queues continued into the afternoon resulting in some voters leaving the station in frustration without having voted.

On the whole, polling stations, most of which were in schools, offered adequate accommodation for the staff, equipment and other materials. The physical arrangements inside the polling stations were also generally adequate, but after the close of polling inadequate lighting forced the count to take place by candlelight at some stations.

Despite the constraints under which presiding officers and their staff had to work, they carried out their duties. The shortcomings that we have detected in no way reflect on the integrity of the officers concerned.

While the disturbances in Georgetown caused a cloud to descend over the conduct of the elections, in general, they and the shortcomings to which we refer did not seriously affect the polling process. In the great majority of polling stations, most voters were able to cast their votes in acceptable conditions. Accordingly, after the close of the poll, and before the final results were announced, we issued a Press Statement of our findings and conclusion. The text of that statement is at *Annex XI*.

The Count

One of the most critical and fundamental electoral reform measures introduced by the Government was the decision to allow the counting of votes to be conducted at the place of poll and not at counting centres which was widely believed to have been grossly abused in the past. By virtue of Section 6(2) of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1982, if before twelve noon the following day after the election results had been declared at a station, no counting agent for the district had requested the Returning Officer to conduct a final count for that station, that declaration of the votes would be final. This change was immediately hailed as a major breakthrough in the revival of public confidence in the transparency of the electoral process.

It had been expected therefore that all the political parties, particularly the opposition parties, would pay particular attention to the count and we had planned for each of us, or groups of us, to observe the opening as well as the close of at least one polling station or of other stations. The count was incident-free apart from delays in its commencement at some stations caused largely by the slowness of the processing of voters and the extension of the voting hours to enable persons already in the queue at the normal close of poll at 6 p.m. to vote. The delays were particularly found in the Georgetown area where we had received many complaints from voters who claimed that their names were missing from lists at the polling stations although they had been on the preliminary list.

Notwithstanding this, at all the stations at which we were present counting began within a reasonable time of the close of the poll. The requirements that polling officers and polling agents should have the opportunity to see each ballot, and that ballots had to be counted for both the national and the regional lists meant that counting took an inordinate length of time. But the count was universally conducted with great thoroughness and no significant problems arose.

The Result

Announcements of the results were made by the Chairman of the Elections Commission from his office in Georgetown as returns were received from the Returning Officers throughout the country. No clear signs of a decisive result emerged until Wednesday, 7 October when the Chairman of the Elections Commission made an announcement after approximately 95 per cent of the vote had been accounted for. He announced that because the PPP/Civic had received the majority of the votes that had so far been counted, it was not statistically possible for the PNC to win the election, even if it won all the votes still to be accounted for. Figures released by the Commission left little doubt that the PPP/Civic had won the elections and would form the next government.

On the evening of 8 October, the final figures released by the Commission confirmed a PPP/Civic victory. A turnout of 81 per cent, representing 310,048 votes, was recorded, with the two major political parties, the PNC and PPP/

Civic, securing 44 per cent and 52 per cent of the votes respectively. We were to learn subsequently that Dr Cheddi Jagan, the presidential candidate of the PPP/Civic, was to be sworn in as President on the afternoon of Friday, 9 October.

Conclusion

Our conclusion arrived at in the light of our observations was that, taking the country as a whole, the organisation and conduct of the poll were properly and impartially carried out. This conclusion was based on detailed observation of the run-up to and of the conduct of the elections themselves.

In the process of examining all aspects of the election process, we met the Elections Commission, political parties, including the PNC and PPP/Civic, police and security officials, election officials and other interested parties, as well as voters. We learnt of certain errors on the ballot papers shortly after our arrival in Georgetown, and promptly took up the matter with the Elections Commission with a view to seeing what steps were being taken to satisfactorily deal with the matter. In all the circumstances, we felt that the Commission took a pragmatic approach which enabled the elections to be held on the appointed day.

On polling day for the disciplined forces we observed the polling at several stations and, despite delays and some confusion at a few of them, we found no evidence of attempts to manipulate the process, and concluded that the procedures were conducted in a free and fair manner.

We visited several polling stations on 5 October at the opening of the polls in order to satisfy ourselves that the proper procedures for the opening were followed. We made random visits to polling stations throughout the day, observing the conduct of the poll, examining the performance of the election officers, making contact with party agents on duty at the stations and speaking to voters outside polling stations. Although we encountered a significant number of persons who could not find their names on the voters' lists used at the polling stations, there were only a few complaints of intimidation of voters by party officials. At the conclusion of voting, we observed the count in a number of polling stations.

The majority of election officers demonstrated their commitment to observing that the prescribed procedures were followed in respect of every voter. The problems which we noted were, in our view, largely due to lack of insufficient training and ordinary human error.

In all our visits, election officers and party agents were, in the main, ready

to be helpful, and to give information and access to their documents. The process at the polling stations was open, but the voting was secret.

Having accomplished our mission in accordance with our mandate, the majority of us left Guyana on the morning of Friday, 9 October as originally scheduled. Some had left the previous night after we issued a Departure Statement announcing the end of our stay in Guyana. The text of that Statement is at *Annex XII*.

The organisation and conduct of these elections provided the people of Guyana with an opportunity to freely choose the political party of their choice. The results should therefore be seen as a reflection of the genuine will of the Guyanese people. The election process as a whole has shown that the restoration of the democratic process in Guyana is possible and indeed that there is a basis for the strengthening of multi-party democracy in that country.

Acknowledgements

We wish to record our profound appreciation to a number of people who in a variety of ways assisted us in carrying out our mandate and without which our task would have been extremely difficult.

We would particularly like to thank His Excellency President Hoyte who found time to personally welcome us. We also wish to pay warm tribute to the Chairman of the Elections Commission, his colleagues on the Commission and their staff who worked tirelessly and under the severest pressure, especially in the final week preceding the elections.

We wish especially to acknowledge the very generous assistance given to us by the diplomatic representatives of Britain, Canada and India. In particular, we wish to thank His Excellency the British High Commissioner who loaned us three vehicles fitted with radio communications equipment which greatly facilitated our work. Our thanks also go to His Excellency the Canadian High Commissioner and the Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Caribbean Centre in Georgetown who helped to ease our transport difficulties at a critical time.

We would also wish to record our satisfaction with the level of co-operation achieved with other Observer Groups.

It would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the assistance and wise counsel of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, and we are indebted to those members of the Commonwealth Secretariat who accompanied us to Guyana for their herculean efforts in particularly difficult conditions.

Our final words of appreciation must go collectively to the political leaders and the people of Guyana who gave their time in the most demanding circumstances during the election campaign to share their concerns with us. We would like to express to them our deep appreciation for the warm hospitality and welcome accorded to us and wish them well in their quest for the strengthening of their democratic institutions.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

Composition of Commonwealth Observer Group

Mr David R Peterson, QC, CSt.J, DU, LLD (*Canada – Chairman*)

Mr David Peterson is a partner in the Toronto law firm of Cassels, Brock & Blackwell practising corporate/commercial law as well as international trade law and constitutional law. He is a director of a number of public companies and charitable, cultural and environmental organisations and also an adjunct professor at York University. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario and a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Toronto. He was called to the Bar in Ontario in 1969 and was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1980. He has received honorary doctorates from the University of Ottawa and the University of Tel Aviv. In 1975 Mr Peterson was elected as a Member of the Ontario Legislature, and became the leader of the Ontario Liberal party in 1982. He served as Premier of the Province between 1985 and 1990.

Mr Anthony Frederick Dingle (*Australia*)

Mr Anthony Frederick Dingle is a retired diplomat. Of his 36 years as a member of the Australian Foreign Service, 15 were spent at posts in Commonwealth countries. Mr Dingle served in both Malaysia and Tanzania during their periods of transition from colonial status to independence. After India and Pakistan and whilst High Commissioner to Ghana, he became Australia's first High Commissioner to Sierra Leone and The Gambia. He has also served as Ambassador to Denmark, Iceland, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama. Mr Dingle was educated at King's Grammar School, Sydney, and holds a Bachelor of Arts (1st Class Honours) degree from Sydney University.

Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed (*Bangladesh*)

Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed's long public service career began in Pakistan where he had reached the rank of Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before Bangladesh attained independence. Thereafter, his career included service as Ambassador to several countries culminating in 1986 as Foreign Secretary. In 1991, after the fall of the Ershad Government, he was appointed as Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Interim Government. Mr Ahmed has a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from Dhaka University and trained in diplomacy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in the US. In recent years, he has served on several observer groups in elections in South and South-East Asia and was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group to the Zambia presidential elections in October 1991.

Mr James Cliviston King, OBE (*Barbados*)

Mr James Cliviston King topped a distinguished public service career by serving as Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Deputy High Commissioner of Barbados in London and Deputy Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN. He was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, London, England, in 1971. He is Chairman of the National Petroleum Corporation of Barbados and was a former Director of the Central Bank of Barbados. Mr King holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and Political Science from London University. He received his OBE in 1966.

The Hon Pelokgale Seloma, MP (*Botswana*)

The Hon Pelokgale Seloma was elected a Member of Parliament representing the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in 1989. On behalf on his government, he has handled trade negotiations with Rumania and has been part of a national overseas campaign on foreign investment. He is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Botswana, and has served as a member of the Law Reform Committee, Public Accounts Committee and the House Committee in the National Assembly of Botswana.

Sir Martin Ewans, KCMG (*Britain*)

Sir Martin Ewans is a retired diplomat. His diplomatic career commenced in the Commonwealth Relations Office and his service abroad has taken him to Afghanistan, Canada, India and Pakistan and to several African countries culminating in his posting as High Commissioner to Zimbabwe from 1983-85 and High Commissioner to Nigeria from 1986-88. He is currently a Director of Casalce S.A. and a Chairman of the Civil Service Selection Board. Sir Martin Ewans was educated at St Paul's School, London, and has a Master of Arts degree from Cambridge.

Lord Carmichael of Kelvingrove (*Britain*)

Lord Carmichael became a Life Peer in 1983 after a long public service career serving as Labour MP for Glasgow, Woodside, and Glasgow, Kelvingrove. He served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of Technology and as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Technology. He was also Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Department of Employment and Department of Industry. Lord Carmichael has been a member of the Select Committee on Transport and Honorary Secretary to the Scottish Labour Group of MPs. He was educated at Eastbank Academy and the Royal College of Science and Technology in Glasgow.

Mr Robert Bruce McCaffrey (*Canada*)

Mr Robert Bruce McCaffrey is a businessman and former senior public servant. After a period in the investment business, he was elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1977 and appointed to the Cabinet by the Provincial Premier in 1981. He held several portfolios, including Minister of Citizenship and Culture and Provincial Secretary for Social Development, and served as Vice-Chairman of the Manage-

ment Board of Cabinet. He was also a member of the Policies and Priorities Board. He returned to the investment business in 1987 and is currently Managing Director of Kingwest and Company. Mr McCaffrey holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto.

Alhaji Mamadou Cham (*The Gambia*)

Alhaji Mamadou Cham is Chairman of Air Gambia. As a member of the People's Progressive Party, he held Cabinet posts between 1972 and this year, during which he served as Minister for Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, Minister of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, Minister of Finance and Trade, and Minister of Works and Communications. He was first elected to Parliament in 1962 and since then has served as Regional Representative of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Mr Samarendra Kundu (*India*)

Mr Samarendra Kundu was Minister of State for External Affairs in India (1977-79), during which he visited Guyana. He now contributes to newspapers and periodicals and is the President of the India-Africa Centre in New Delhi. He is an eminent lawyer and has been returned three times to Parliament (Lok Sabha), in 1967-70, 1977-79 and 1989-91. While in Opposition, he was detained from 1975-77 with other Janata Party leaders for pro-democratic activities. Mr Kundu is also an able trade union leader and was President of Hind Mazdoor Sobha (1990-92), the second largest trade union centre in India.

Mrs Shirley I. Miller, CD, OC (*Jamaica*)

Mrs Miller, the Director of Legal Reform, Jamaica, has previously served in various legal posts in the Attorney General's Department of her country, including that of Senior Assistant Attorney General. She was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn (London) in 1961 and was appointed Queen's Counsel (Jamaica) in 1971. Mrs Miller holds an LLB (Hons.) degree from LSE, London University, an MA in Spanish from the University of the West Indies (UWI), and a post-graduate diploma in translation, also from the UWI. She is a member of the General Legal Council (Jamaica) and has served as an independent member of the Electoral Advisory Committee of Jamaica since its establishment in 1979. In early 1991 she was an observer at the elections in El Salvador and in Panama and in October 1991 was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group at the Zambian Presidential and National Assembly elections. She was also a member of two Commonwealth missions, in November 1991 and earlier this year, looking at preparations for the 1992 Guyana elections.

The Hon Dame Ann Hercus, DCMG (*New Zealand*)

Dame Ann Hercus is an international consultant. As a consumer law expert, she was a member, then Deputy Chair of the Commerce Commission, a statutory body with jurisdiction over monopolies, mergers and takeovers. She was elected in 1978 as a Labour Member of Parliament and served as Minister of Police, Minister of

Social Welfare and Minister of Women's Affairs. On her retirement from politics, she was appointed as New Zealand's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Dame Ann holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Auckland University and an LLB from Canterbury University.

Senator Charmaine Gardner (*St Lucia*)

Senator Charmaine Gardner is Deputy President of the St Lucia Senate. She is also managing director of Carasco & Son, Ltd, St Lucia. Senator Gardner has also been a member of the Advisory Task Force to Caribbean Heads of Government on 'Caribbean Development to the Year 2000', President of the St Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Board Member of the St Lucia Broadcasting Corporation, Private Sector Representative to ACP Meetings, Lomé II, III and IV, and member of the Prime Minister's delegation on several missions/conferences. Senator Gardner was educated at Jarvis Collegiate, Toronto, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree (Sociology and Philosophy) from the University of Western Ontario. Senator Gardner is presently also on the Board of Governors of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, the Caribbean Association Institute of Commerce (CAIC), and the School of Management Studies, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

Ms Jocelyn Lucas (*Trinidad and Tobago*)

Ms Jocelyn Lucas is Chief Election Officer of Trinidad and Tobago. After a short period as a teacher, she was appointed in 1982 to the Elections and Boundaries Commission, rising from the position of Research Officer to her present post. Ms Lucas has supervised elections in Namibia as part of the UN Transition Assistance Group in 1989 and was a member of a Working Group of CARICOM senior electoral officials established to co-ordinate and offer assistance to Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council in 1990-91. She has been a member of three Commonwealth Observer and technical assistance teams who in 1991 and early 1992 monitored the progress of electoral arrangements for the elections in Guyana. She holds a Bachelor's degree in political science and two masters' degrees in international relations and social sciences from Columbia University, New York, and Long Island University respectively.

Mr Stephen Ramsumair Seepersad (*Trinidad and Tobago*)

Mr Steven Seepersad retired as Principal of Hillview College, Trinidad and Tobago, after serving 42 years in the teaching profession. He has held many positions in the community as member/chairman/president of various educational and church organisations and has worked as Presiding Officer at local and general elections. Mr Seepersad was educated at Naparima Training College for Teachers, Mount Allison University, New Brunswick, Canada, and received a government scholarship to the University of the West Indies for post-graduate studies. He was given a National Award, Medal of Merit (Gold), for long and meritorious service to Trinidad and Tobago in Education and Community Service.

Mr Eustace Seignoret (*Trinidad and Tobago*)

Mr Eustace Seignoret is a retired diplomat. Having served in the Civil Service since 1953, he was one of the first members of the diplomatic service of newly independent Trinidad and Tobago in 1962. His first posting was for three years at the UN in New York before he was posted to Geneva and then to London. He served as Trinidad and Tobago's Permanent Representative to the UN from 1971-75, during which time he was Vice-Chairman of the UN Committee against Apartheid and led a high-level delegation of the Committee to Latin America. He returned home to become Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs. In 1977, he was appointed High Commissioner to Britain where he served as chairman of the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa from 1978-82. His last posting before retirement was as High Commissioner to Guyana. Mr Seignoret was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group to the Malaysian general election in October 1990.

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT STAFF

Mr Carl Dundas (*Jamaica – Team Leader*)

Mr Richard Nzerem (*Nigeria*)

Mr Gurudas Bailur (*India*)

Ms Cheryl Dorall (*Malaysia – Press Officer*)

Dr Ursula Barrow (*Belize*)

Mr Nestor Rweyemamu (*Tanzania*)

Mr Steve Packer (*Britain*)

Mrs Christine Wright (*Britain*)

Mr Wayne De Four (*Trinidad and Tobago*)

Mrs Betty Kiwanuka (*Uganda*)

ANNEX II

Letter to Political Parties Requesting Meeting



Guyana Elections

Commonwealth Observer Group

Telephone: 592-2-52856
Facsimile: 592-2-60532
Telex: 0295-312 2234

Forte Crest Georgetown
P O Box 101147
Georgetown
Guyana

20 September 1992

I am writing to you on behalf of the Commonwealth Observer Group which will arrive in Georgetown on 22 September to observe the elections due to be held on 5 October.

The Group is coming to Guyana inspired by the commitment to strengthening democratic institutions in Commonwealth member countries recently reaffirmed by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1991. This commitment has clearly been given expression by the invitation to us to observe your elections. Despite their diverse backgrounds and experience, members of the Observer Group are all from Commonwealth democracies, and they come in a constructive and open-minded spirit. All will be serving in their personal capacities and not as representatives of their governments.

To discharge their task effectively, the Group attaches great importance to establishing personal contact with you and the leaders of other political parties and you are therefore warmly invited to contact us at the Forte Crest.

A list of the members of the Group is attached.

Yours sincerely,

R.C. Nzerem
(Deputy Team Leader, Commonwealth
Secretariat Support Staff)
for Chairman, Commonwealth
Observer Group

This letter was sent to:

Mr Paul Tennessee
Democratic Labour Movement
Foesinsky House
Robb & Ming Streets
Georgetown

Mr Joseph Bacchus
National Democratic Front
22 Trotman Alley
Linden

Dr Leslie Ramsamy
Leader, United Republican Party
Liberty House
43 Croal Street
Georgetown

Mr Llewellyn John
Leader, People's Democratic Movement
10 Croal Street
Georgetown

Dr Clive Thomas
Leader, Working Peoples' Alliance
45 Croal Street
Georgetown

Mr Manzoor Nadir
Leader, The United Force
Robb and New Garden Streets
Georgetown

Mr Robert Gangadeen
Leader, National Republican Party
29 East Half
Hadfield Street
N'burg, Georgetown

Dr Cheddi Jagan
Leader, People's Progressive Party / Civic
Freedom House
Robb Street
Georgetown

Mr Malcolm Parris
Chief Executive Officer
People's National Congress
Congress House
Sophia
Georgetown

Dr Lindley E GeBorde
Union of Guyanese International
27 Wren Avenue
South Ruimveldt Gardens
Georgetown

Mr Winston Payne
The United Workers' Party
72 Wellington & Robb Streets
Lacytown
Georgetown

H E Mr Hugh Desmond Hoyte, S C
Leader, People's National Congress
Congress House
Sophia
Georgetown

ANNEX III

List of Significant Engagements

Monday 14 September

- 11.00 a m Advance team meets with Elections Commission officials
- 1.30 p m Attended launch of PNC Manifesto
- 4.00 p m Meeting with PPP officials
- 5.00 p m Meeting with WPA officials

Tuesday 15 September

- 10.30 a m Meeting with Elections Commission Officials
- 11.00 a m Attended Elections Commission Media Sub-Committee Meeting
- 11.45 a m Meeting with British High Commissioner
- 4.30 p m Attended launch of PPP Manifesto

Wednesday 16 September

- 7.00 a m Meeting with Mr Dennis King, Mission Co-ordinator, Carter Center
- 11.00 a m Meeting with PDM officials
- 11.30 a m Meeting with URP officials
- 12.10 p m Meeting with Elections Commission officials
- 12.50 p m Meeting with NRP officials

Thursday 17 September

- 6.50 a m Visits by air to regional locations at Hampton Court, Mabaruma, Kamarang, Bartica
- 4.00 p m Meeting with GPCA Executive Chairman

Friday 18 September

- 11.00 a m Attended URP Press Conference
- 11.15 a m Meeting at British High Commission
- 3.00 p m Meeting with Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 7.00 p m Meeting with Heads of British, Canadian, Indian and US Missions

Saturday 19 September

- 6.30 a m Visits by air to regional locations at Mahdia, Kato, Lethem, Aishalton
- 10.00 a m Attended media briefing by Elections Commission
- 8.00 p m Meeting with Mr Dennis King, Carter Center

Sunday 20 September

- 11.00 a m Meeting with Mr R Collins, Chairman Elections Commission

Monday 21 September

- 11.00 a m Meeting with Director-General and Chief Protocol Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tuesday 22 September

- 3.00 p m Press Conference by Observers on arrival
- 4.00 p m Meeting with PDM leader Mr Llewellyn John

Wednesday 23 September

- 10.30 a m Meeting with Mr Dennis King, Carter Center
- 11.00 a m Meeting with Chairman of Elections Commission
- 11.45 a m Meeting with URP leader Dr Leslie Ramsamy
- 3.00 p m Meeting with WPA leaders Mr Rupert Roopnaraine and Mr Eusi Kwayana
- 5.00 p m Meeting with Mr Clairmont Lye of Electoral Assistance Bureau
- 7.00 p m Meeting with TUF leader Mr Manzoor Nadir

Thursday 24 September

- 10.00 a m Accreditation of Observers by Elections Commission
- 11.45 a m Meeting with NRP leader Mr Robert Gangadeen
- 2.00 p m Meeting with UGI leader Dr Lindley GeBorde

Friday 25 September

- 10.30 a m Meeting with PPP/Civic leader Dr Cheddi Jagan
- 3.00 p m Meeting with PNC officials
- 4.30 p m Meeting with Elections Commission

Saturday 26 September

- 10.30 a m Meeting with GPCA Executive Chairman Mr Kester Alves
- 11.30 a m Meeting with DLM leader Mr Paul Tennessee
- 4.00 p m Meeting with Guyana Press Association officials

Sunday 27 September

- 7.00 a m Observer visits by air to regional locations at Mahdia, Kato, Letham, Aishalton
- 10.00 a.m Observer visits by air to regional locations at Hampton Court, Mabaruma, Kamarang, Bartica
- 9.55 p m Arrival of Observer Group Chairman

Monday 28 September

- 5.45 a m OBSERVATION OF DISCIPLINED FORCES' POLL
- 11.00 p m Meeting with H E President Hugh Desmond Hoyte

Tuesday 29 September

- 11.30 a m Press Conference by Chairman

Wednesday 30 September

- 7.00 a m Deployment of Observer teams to Regions 2 and 9
- 10.00 a m Chairman meets WPA leaders
- 4.00 p m Chairman meets Elections Commission

Thursday 1 October

- 9.00 a m Chairman records radio message for national broadcast on *Viewpoint* programme
- 10.00 a m Observers meet various Returning Officers and visit polling stations in areas where deployed
- 3.00 p m Meeting with PPP/Civic leader Dr Cheddi Jagan
- 4.00 p m Meeting with Canadian-Guyanese Election Watch
- 5.00 p m Chairman and Mr Carl Dundas meet heads of British, Canadian, Indian and US Missions

Friday 2 October

- 7.00 a m Deployment of Observer teams to Regions 1, 6, 8 and 10
- 5.30 a m Chairman and journalists visit Mahdia, Linden and Skeldon by air
- 1.30 p m Observers attend Disposal Ceremony of old stock of voting ink

Saturday 3 October

- 10.00 a m Attended briefing by Carter Center Observer Group
- Visits to polling places as appropriate

Sunday 4 October

- 2.30 p m Chairman meets Police Commissioner Laurie Lewis
- Visits to polling places as appropriate
- 4.00 p m Chairman meets Chief of Staff Brigadier Joe Singh

Monday 5 October

POLLING DAY

- 6.00 a.m Observe polling throughout the day
- 6.00 p m Observe the close of poll and counting at selected polling stations

Tuesday 6 October

- 10.00 a m Observers consider Draft Report
- 4.00 p m Press Conference by Chairman, Statement on Elections issued
- 5.00 p m Observers continue consideration of Draft Report

Wednesday 7 October

- 10.00 a m Observers continue consideration of Draft Report
- 3.00 p m Finalisation of Draft Report

Thursday 8 October

- 10.30 a m Agreement and signature of Report
- 9.00 p m Chairman leaves Guyana

Friday 9 October

- 1.45 p m Observers leave Guyana

ANNEX IV

Press Releases Issued by Observer Group



Guyana Elections

Commonwealth Observer Group

News Release

COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP TO GUYANA ELECTIONS: A STATEMENT

We are here in Guyana to observe the October 5 election at the invitation of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, following a request for a Commonwealth Observer Group from the Government of Guyana - a request supported by all parties involved in the elections.

Each of us will serve as Observer in our personal capacities and not as representatives of our countries, governments or organisations to which we may belong. Our broad task will be to observe every relevant aspect of the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the law of Guyana. To this end, in the last two years, Commonwealth Observers and election experts have already visited Guyana at various stages of preparations for these elections, including the enumerating of voters. They have met political and other interested parties, spoken to people and offered suggestions for improving arrangements in the election process.

We have not come to act as a commission of enquiry but to observe the process as a whole and to form a judgment based on those observations. It is our belief, from experience, that our presence will also enhance the transparency of the process. Our conclusions will reflect our independent collective judgment and will be submitted in a report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General who will make it available to the Guyana Government and all political parties, and subsequently to Commonwealth Governments.

As part of our work, we will meet all the contending political parties who wish to meet us and will be visiting all the ten administrative regions of the country both before and on election day.

We are delighted to be here in Guyana at this historic time and it is our sincere hope that the elections will be free, fair and peaceful.

22 September 1992

Forte Crest Georgetown ♦ P O Box 101147 Georgetown, Guyana
Telephone: 592-2-52856 ♦ Facsimile: 592-2-60532 ♦ Telex: 0295-312 2234



Guyana Elections

Commonwealth Observer Group

News Release

COMMONWEALTH TO OBSERVE 28 SEPT. SERVICES VOTING

The Commonwealth Observer Group to the Guyana elections will observe the balloting of the disciplined services on Monday 28 September. The Group will be led by its chairman, Mr David Peterson, a former Premier of Ontario, Canada, who arrives in Georgetown on Sunday night.

The Observers will split into small groups and spread out from Georgetown to as many polling stations as possible. Because these are intended to be surprise visits, the location of the stations to be visited will not be disclosed beforehand. Observing will start with the opening of polling and will continue until the ballot boxes are sealed and delivered to the Election Commission where they will be stored unopened until the close of polls on 5 October.

Tomorrow (Sunday), the eve of the disciplined services vote, some of the Observers will fly into the interior for a day-long survey of polling stations. This will be their first trip out of Georgetown since their arrival on Tuesday. One group will fly to the north-west and the other to the south.

The Observers have had useful discussion with the Chairman of the Election Commission, Mr Rudy Collins, and other Commission members on the Commission's preparations for the elections. On Wednesday, they also met officials of the Electoral Assistance Bureau to seek their views. They have also attended several party public meetings to observe for themselves the conduct of campaigning.

By the end of this week, the Observers would have met leaders from nine of the eleven political parties contesting the elections - People's Democratic Movement, United Republican Party, Working People's Alliance, The United Force, National Republican Party, Union of Guyanese International, People's Progressive Party/Civic, Democratic Labour Movement and People's National Congress. The Observers have listened to their views on all aspects of the electoral process, including preparations for the polling, arrangements for Monday's voting by the disciplined services, allegations of electoral abuses, access to the media, and their fears and concerns during the campaign period and for voting.

In the coming week before the elections, the Observers will continue to seek views from the public, and from other parties, agencies and organisations. Some will also begin to move out of Georgetown and take up station in interior locations. On election day, they will observe polling at stations in and around these locations and travel to stations further away. They intend to cover as much ground as possible so as to better come to a judgement at the end of the elections as to whether the entire process has been free and fair.

26 Sept 1992



Guyana Elections

Commonwealth Observer Group

News Release

**COMMONWEALTH DEPLOYMENT FOR ELECTIONS: STATEMENT BY
MR DAVID PETERSON, CHAIRMAN, COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

Yesterday, the Commonwealth Observer Group observed the voting by the Disciplined Services. To cover as wide an area as possible, the Group split into nine teams. One left Georgetown in the early hours of yesterday morning in order to be at New Amsterdam for the opening of polling at 6 a.m. It thereafter observed voting at stations on the Berbice and Corentyne. Another team was in Linden. Two Observers boarded the Skyvans which carried the floating ballot boxes. The other teams covered Georgetown, the West Bank and East Bank Demerara, and the East Coast Demerara down to West Berbice. I personally visited the stations at the Eve Leary Police Sports Club, Brickdam Police Station and Camp Ayanganna in Georgetown. In all, about 20 polling stations were visited from the opening of polling through most of the day to the closing.

By and large, the election officials knew their work and the party agents we met were positive about the process. We did observe a number of technical and procedural problems, including substantial delays in voting, and we believe that there are lessons to be learnt for the Election Commission to fine-tune the implementation of their various procedures before next Monday.

In the next few days, the Group will be splitting up again and moving out of Georgetown. By election day, the Commonwealth will be represented in all 10 regions. They will be in Georgetown, the East and West Bank Demerara, and East Coast Demerara, Mabaruma, Hampton Court, Madhia, Kamarang, Lethem, the Corentyne, Mahaica and West Berbice, and Linden. They will meet and speak to election officials, political leaders and voters in these areas, and will travel to as many polling stations as possible on Monday to observe the opening of the polls, voting through the day, the closing of the polls and the count.

Thereafter, the Group will return to Georgetown where they will work on their report which will be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General. He will make it available to the Government of Guyana, all political parties and to other Commonwealth Governments.

As soon after the close of the polls as possible, I will issue an interim report of the Group's judgement of the conduct of the elections as a whole.

The Commonwealth hopes that these elections will be free, fair and peaceful, and that the process will be as transparent as the people of Guyana obviously wish it to be.

29 Sept 1992

ANNEX V

Deployment of Observer Group for Polling

Deployment for Observation of the Disciplined Forces' Voting, 28 September 1992

AREA	POLLING STATIONS	OBSERVERS
Georgetown	Police 7 and 8	Mr David Peterson Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed (Mr Dundas / Ms Dorall)
	Defence 2	" "
	Prisons 1	" "
	Police 9	Mr Robert McCaffrey / Sen. C Gardner (Dr Barrow)
	Defence 3	" "
Linden	Police 24	Sir Martin Ewans / Mr S Seepersad (Mr Rweyemamu)
	Defence 6	" "
West Bank Demerara	Police 5	Mrs Shirley Miller / Lord N Carmichael / Hon. P Seloma
East Bank Demerara (Timehri)	Police 10	Mr Samarendra Kundu / Mr James King (Mr Packer)
	Defence 4 & 5	" "
	Prisons 2	" "

East Coast Demerara	Police 11, 12, 13, 14	Dame Ann Hercus/ Alhaji Mamadou Cham (Mr Nzerem)
West Coast Berbice	Prisons 5	" "
Berbice/Corentyne	Police 15, 16, 17	Mr Eustace Seignoret/ Mr Anthony Dingle (Mr Bailur)
	Defence 11, 12	" "
	Prisons 3	" "

**Deployment of Observers for Polling Day
5 October 1992**

AREA	OBSERVERS	DURATION
Region 1 (Mabaruma)	Lord N Carmichael (Dr Barrow)	2-6 Oct
Region 2 (Hampton Court)	Mr Eustace Seignoret Mr Anthony Dingle	30 Sept-6 Oct
Region 3 (West Bank Demerara)	Sir Martin Ewans Mr James King	
Region 4 (Georgetown/ East Bank Demerara/ East Coast)	Mr David Peterson (Mr Dundas Ms Dorall)	
	Dame Ann Hercus (Mr Nzerem)	
Region 5 (Mahaica/West Berbice)	Mrs Shirley Miller Mr Stephen Seepersad	
Region 6 (Corentyne)	Mr Samarendra Kundu Sen. Charmaine Gardner	1-5 Oct

Region 7 (Kamarang, etc.)	Mr Robert McCaffrey (Mr Rweyemamu)	To polling stations by plane
Region 8 (Mahdhia)	Mr Fakhruddin Ahmed (Mr Packer)	2-6 Oct
Region 9 (Lethem)	Alhaji Mamadou Cham (Mr Bailur)	30 Sept-6 Oct
Region 10 (Linden and environs)	Ms Jocelyn Lucas Mr Pelokgale Seloma	1-6 Oct
Base (Forte Crest Hotel, Georgetown)	(Mrs C Wright Mr W De Four Mrs B Kiwanuka)	

ANNEX VI

Check List and Polling Station Report

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS Some of the things to look for

PART A

The Observers may focus particular attention on the following aspects of the conduct of the election:

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

1. The nature of access to the electronic media (TV and radio) available to the opposition parties.
2. The procedure for the allocation of time for political broadcasts and advertisements (free or on payment), on the radio and television as provided in the guidelines of the Elections Commission and the extent of their observance.
3. The nature of access enjoyed by the political parties to the print media; allegations of misreporting and how the complaints were dealt with.
4. The tone and contents of political broadcasts, advertisements and posters put out by the political parties.
5. The conduct of political meetings.
6. The conduct of house-to-house canvassing of voters.
7. The voter-education programme on radio and television conducted by the Elections Commission, EAB and the parties.
8. Permits for public meetings.
9. Role of police at public meetings.
10. Access to printing facilities.
11. Access to funds and sources of funds.
12. Access to state services; instances of misuse of state resources.

Questions that may be put before polling day

1. Is electoral register full and correct? People missed off? Are there names of dead people/people who have moved away included?
2. Are election officials confident about arrangements? Are political parties and local notables (priests, lawyers, etc.), satisfied?

3. Is the man in the street satisfied with arrangements? Will he vote? If not, is he afraid to do so? Why?
4. Has the campaign been free of intimidation, etc? Have all parties had full access to media?
5. Is advertising (posters, leaflets, etc.), free?
6. How will voters' IDs be checked? Will it be possible to vote twice?
7. How will those away from home or ill in bed be able to vote?

PART B

CONDUCT OF THE POLLS ON POLLING DAY

1. The siting of polling stations.
2. Seating arrangements in the polling stations.
3. The accuracy of the list of electors at the polling stations.
4. Distances travelled by voters to polling stations in rural areas.
5. The length of time voters waited to cast their votes.
6. The state of readiness of polling stations.
7. Availability of adequate supplies, e.g. ballot papers, sealing wax, etc.
8. Security of ballot papers prior to elections.
9. The steps (if any) taken to ensure that the secrecy of the ballot is assured.
10. The performance of the elections officers at the polling station visited.
11. The procedure followed at the opening of the poll.
12. The adequacy or otherwise of polling stations' facilities.
13. Comments of polling agents on the arrangements.
14. The procedure for use of indelible ink.
15. The incidence of loss of registration card.
16. The number (if any) of persons without identity cards but with other evidence of identity who were not allowed to vote.
17. The procedures in place to ensure the proper security of ballot papers, ballot boxes and official seals.
18. The general electoral environment that prevailed at the polling stations visited.
19. Intimidation of voters by security officers and others, if any.
20. Likely percentage of potential voters denied registration through early closure of polls.
21. Procedures for voters to challenge their exclusion from the rolls.

THE COUNT

1. The process of reconciling the number of people that voted with the number of ballot stubs received.
2. The determination of invalid ballots which were stamped and rejected.
3. The conduct of the presiding officers and their counting assistants at counting.
4. The preparation of the Declaration of the Result of the Poll.
5. Inspection of seals.

Questions that may be put on the polling day:

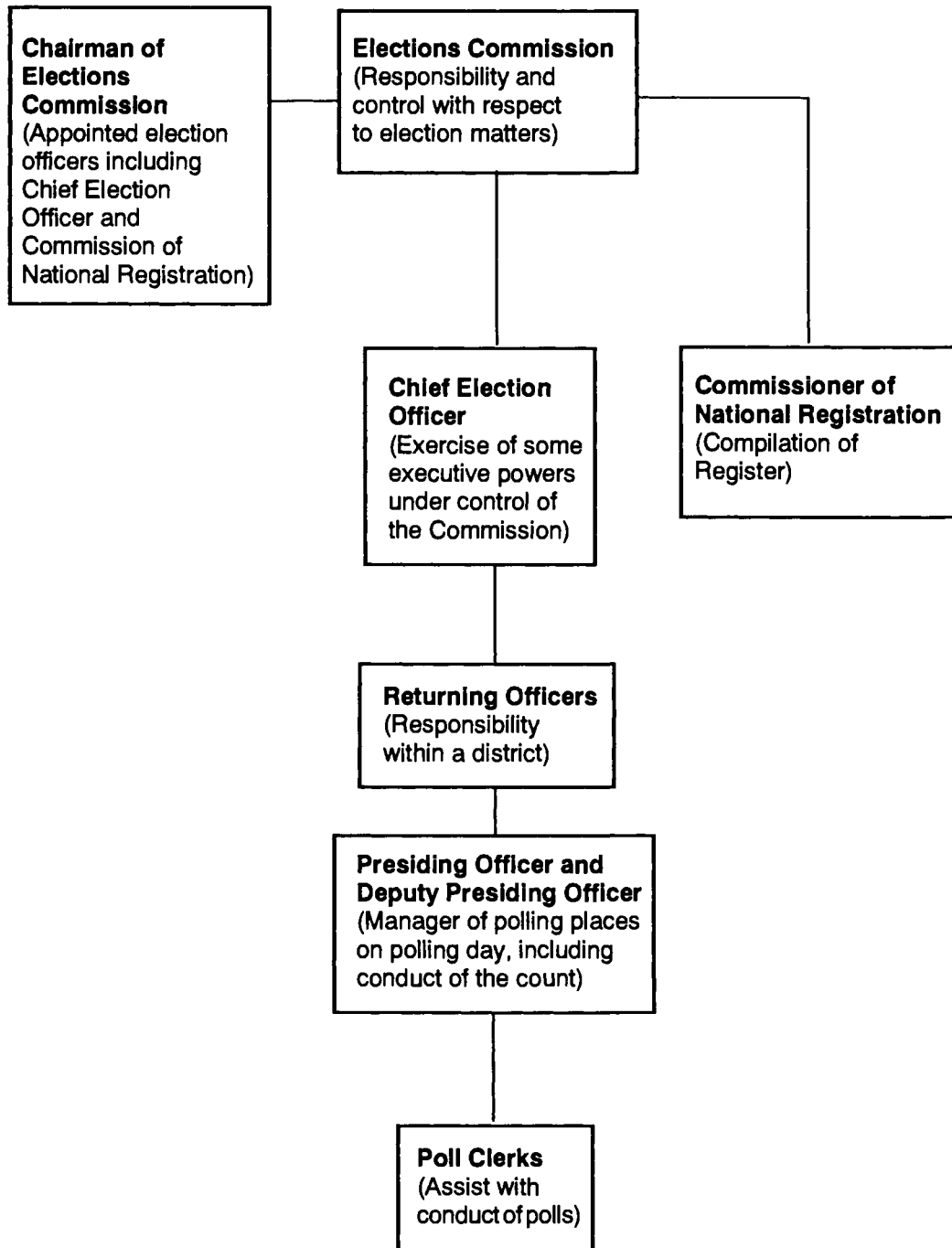
1. Were all procedures agreed beforehand being adhered to?
2. Before polling starts, were the ballot boxes empty? Were they properly sealed?
3. Were all parties represented at polling stations? Were they satisfied with the process?
4. Were IDs being properly checked? In the absence of ID cards, was other evidence of identity taken into account and voters allowed to vote?
5. Were voters apparently voting freely? Were they enthusiastic? Did they talk freely? Did they exhibit signs of fear or intimidation?
6. Did voters understand procedures properly? If not, were they being explained fully and impartially? Were attempts being made to suggest how people should vote?
7. Was only one person at a time allowed into the voting booth? Did their ballot papers go straight into the sealed box?
8. How long were voters waiting to vote? If a long time, were some being put off?
9. Who were the elections officers? Were they ex-Party people? How were they chosen? Were they trained by EAB?
10. Were all parties present at polling stations throughout voting and counting?
11. Did foreign observers have free access to all stages of the process?
12. Were voters asked suspicious questions after leaving the ballot box?

After Voting

1. Were all parties/observers present at opening of the boxes?
2. Did the number of used ballot papers tally with the record of those who had voted?
3. Were the ballot papers counted properly? Were any valid ones spoiled during counting, intentionally or otherwise?

















ANNEX VII

Structure of Tasks for Elections Officials



ANNEX VIII

Sample Ballot Paper

		GENERAL ELECTIONS		
Counterfoil No 307223 Elector's No In Official List	1	D. L. M. DEMOCRATIC LABOUR MOVEMENT Candidates' List		
	2	N. D. F. NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT Candidates' List		
	3	N. R. P. NATIONAL REPUBLICAN PARTY Candidates' List		
	4	P. D. M. PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT Candidates' List		
	5	P. N. C. PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS Candidates' List		
	6	P. P. P. PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY Candidates' List		(CORRECT TITLE- PPP/CIVIC)
	7	T. U. F. THE UNITED FORCE Candidates' List		
	8	U. G. I. UNITED GUYANESE INTERNATIONAL Candidates' List		(CORRECT TITLE- UNION OF GUYANESE INTERNATIONAL)
	9	U. R. P. UNITED REPUBLICAN PARTY Candidates' List		
	10	U. W. P. UNITED WORKERS' PARTY Candidates' List		
	11	W. P. A. WORKING PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE Candidates' List		
		REGIONAL ELECTIONS FOR REGION No. 1		
Counterfoil No 307223 Elector's No In Official List	1	P. N. C. PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS Candidates' List		
	2	P. P. P. PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY Candidates' List		
	3	T. U. F. THE UNITED FORCE Candidates' List		
	4	U. R. P. UNITED REPUBLICAN PARTY Candidates' List		
	5	W. P. A. WORKING PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE Candidates' List		

ANNEX IX

List of Party Public Meetings Attended by Observers

Thursday 24 September

WPA meetings at:

- 5.00 p m Sophia Square Area North/South Middle Dam (Georgetown)
- 6.30 p m Punt Trench Dam, Albouystown/La Penitence (Georgetown)
- 6.30 p m MMZ Tarla Dam (West Coast Demerara)

PPP meetings at:

- 6.00 p m Covent Garden (East Bank Demerara)
Butcher Shop Street
- 6.30 p m Durban & Louisa (Georgetown)

Friday 25 September

PPP meeting at:

- 6.30 p m Enmore Log Wood

PNC meeting at:

- 6.30 p m Industry, Railway Line

WPA meeting at:

- 6.00 p m Georgetown, John Forde car park

Friday 2 October

PPP meetings at:

- 5.30 p m Leonora Market Square, Georgetown

PNC meetings at:

- 6.30 p m Leopold & Breda Streets, Werk-on-Rust

TUF meetings at:

- 5.00 p m First and Cress St. Alexander Village

Saturday 3 October

PPP meeting at:

- 5.30 p m Kitty

TUF meetings at:

- 4.00 p m South Ruimveldt (Mandela Avenue & Shopping Plaza Turn)
- 5.30 p m Annandale (Market Square)

WPA meeting at:
6.00 p m Vissengen & Laing Avenue

Sunday 4 October

WPA meetings at:
6.00 p m Kitty

PNC meeting at:
5.00 p m Mandela Avenue and Vissengen Road, Roxanne Burnham Gardens,
Georgetown

PPP meetings at:
5.30 p m Herstelling, East Bank

ANNEX X

Guidelines for Media and Political Parties

GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTIES

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Freedom of expression by the media - radio, television and print - is a symbol of democracy. The manner in which the media use their freedom carries an obligation to serve the society and public as a whole. Because of this need to serve the public, the media inherit a public trust. The media have a responsibility to conduct their operations at all times in a professional manner and to exercise critical and discerning judgment which respects and advances the rights and dignity of all people and maintains standards of good taste as reflected by the society and public served. The media must enrich the daily life of the people they serve through information, education and entertainment; they must provide for the fair discussion of matters of public concern; engage in works directed toward the common good; and volunteer aid and comfort in times of stress and emergency.

2. GENERAL GUIDELINES DURING THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD *

(a) News

News reporting should be factual, fair and without bias. Professional care should be maintained in the use and selection of news sources. News analysis, commentary and editorials should be clearly identified as such, distinguishing them from straight news reporting.

(b) Controversial Public Issues

Expressions of responsible views on public issues of a controversial nature should give fair representation to opposing sides of issues. Requests by individuals, groups or organizations to present their views on controversial public issues should be considered on the basis of their individual merits and in the light of their contributions to the public interest.

* The official campaign period for these Guidelines is defined as that time between Nomination Day and Election Day.

3. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD

(a) Access by Political Parties

During the Campaign Period, the media have a special responsibility to the public to encourage participation by the electorate in the democratic process and to ensure they have the opportunity to be informed on the candidates and issues. To enable this, the Guyana Elections Commission requests that the broadcast media--radio and television--make available at no cost a minimum of five minutes of prime time weekly to each political party with candidates for national office, and also requests that daily publication print media make available at no cost 10 column inches of space weekly to each qualified political party. The Chairman of the Elections Commission shall notify the media of the Parties that qualify for this free coverage. All such programs and columns should be clearly identified as a public service political message prepared by the (name) political party and unedited by the (media). The (name) political party is solely responsible for its content. Programs and messages exceeding the free time and space allocations may be rejected or returned to the Party. The media may establish reasonable deadlines for submission of the materials in order to fit their broadcast or publication schedules. The media shall ensure all Parties are given equal treatment and access as to time and location of these messages. Concerning access to radio broadcasts, in order to provide complete geographic coverage, it may be necessary to repeat the programs at a different time and frequency.

(b) Paid Political Messages

Political Parties or candidates who wish additional time and space should pay for all messages or advertisements at current established rates - preferably the lowest published rate - but each Party should be charged the same rate.

Further the media must ensure that all Parties and candidates have equal access to the broadcast times and schedule for broadcast media; and similar equitable access, space and location, for print media. One political Party or candidate should not be allowed to block access by other Parties or candidates by purchasing all availabilities of time or space.

Equitable and fair treatment of all Parties and candidates must be the standard adhered to by all media. While the above addresses equitable treatment concerning broadcast or publication of the messages, the same standard must be applied to any production in preparation for broadcast or publication.

Payment terms for political advertisements should be the same for all Parties utilizing the industry standard of cash in advance. All paid political messages should carry a statement that they are a "Paid Political Advertisement."

(c) Correction of Media Errors

Broadcast or publication errors beyond the control of the medium, i.e. mechanical failure or act of God, should be corrected in accordance with standard broadcast or publication policies or procedures for correction of mistakes. The media may not censor, change or alter in any manner any of the materials presented by the Parties or candidates for broadcast or publication by the media.

(d) Questionable Materials

In the event any of the media believe a political message not to be in good taste, or contrary to the public interest, security, peace or morality, the questioned political message may be rejected by the media. However the media must provide specific details to the Party as to the reason for rejection and allow the material to be changed to meet broadcast or publication standards.

(e) Disclaimers

The media shall insert or broadcast a disclaimer daily when any free or paid political messages will be carried published by their medium. For example: "The political messages or advertisements published in today's newspaper are prepared by the Political Party or candidate without editing or change and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper." One insert anywhere in the newspaper should be sufficient. A similar statement shall be made by the broadcast media at least once during the broadcast day and not necessarily immediately preceding or following broadcast of political material.

ANNEX XI

Statement on Elections by Observer Group



Guyana Elections

Commonwealth Observer Group

News Release

**STATEMENT ON THE GUYANA ELECTIONS, ISSUED BY THE
COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

In the period up to the 5 October elections and on Election Day itself, the Commonwealth Observer Group was deployed in all 10 regions in Guyana. Our task was to observe every relevant aspect of the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Guyana. We talked to interested parties and observed both the run-up to the elections and the electoral process itself. On Election Day, we visited a substantial number of polling stations throughout the country.

We did observe a range of procedural and technical problems, but our present judgement is that they do not, in themselves or in total, undermine the outcome. In the interests of strengthening democracy in Guyana, we will draw attention in our final report to imperfections which came to our notice. However, our conclusion is that, taking the country as a whole, the organisation and conduct of polling were properly and impartially carried out. We were impressed with the dedication shown by a large number of the electoral officials, who tackled their tasks with a commendable sense of public duty.

At the present moment, we understand that results are being received in the Election Commission and that a final outcome is still to be announced. In terms of our mandate from Commonwealth governments, our concern is only with the organisation and conduct of the elections. We thank the people of Guyana and their political leaders for the many kindness which we have received and trust that, like us, they will accept that the outcome is the democratic expression of their will.

6 October 1992

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ANNEX XII

Departure Statement by Observer Group



Guyana Elections

Commonwealth Observer Group

News Release

8 October 1992

DEPARTURE STATEMENT BY THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP

The Commonwealth Observer Group leaves tomorrow after nearly three weeks in Guyana during which we made many friends and developed a great respect for the people of this country. Our mandate was to observe all relevant aspects of arrangements for the elections as well as the conduct of the poll itself, and to form a judgement as to whether, in our independent view, the election process as a whole was free and fair. Our mission is now ended and we leave proud and honoured to have been part of a historic democratic process.

We would like to express our admiration for the Elections Commission which has had to formulate and implement new electoral procedures under the weight of enormous pressure and tremendous public expectation. In particular, we express our thanks to the Chairman of the Elections Commission, Mr Rudy Collins, on whose shoulders fell much of the responsibility for steering these elections through to a successful conclusion.

The Commonwealth presence in Guyana, of course, does not end here. This country has had a long and valued membership of the Commonwealth and we look forward to Guyana's continued and respected presence in the association's many forums. We hope that on-going and future technical and other assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat, particularly through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), will go some way to helping Guyana develop into the strong and vibrant democracy its people obviously wish for.

We thank the government and people of Guyana once again for their hospitality, and we each of us take back to our countries a greater knowledge of a fellow Commonwealth member and warm memories of our stay here.

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