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WHAT GUYANA NEEDS TO KNOW

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The WikiLeaks cables on Guyana show the fall of US power

Sep 09, 2011 Features / Columnists, Freddie Kissoon

The cruel, psychic pain all supporters of President Desmond Hoyte have to live with may haunt them for the rest of their lives. Between 1989 and 1992, Mr. Hoyte faced intense pressure from the United States. So burdensome was the heat from the international community that it was only a matter of time before Mr. Hoyte caved in. And he did cave in.

When you juxtapose the nature of the Hoyte administration with the Jagdeo Government, there is nothing, absolutely nothing to compare. Hoyte strove for discipline in governance, compromise in the stakes of politics, and sincere attempts at democratization. With Mr. Jagdeo, we have lost all that we gained in the long years that caused so much sacrifice, including the death of Walter Rodney.

There are two remnants that still remain priceless from those long Rodneyite years. One was nearly tampered with, the other we have to wait and see.

There were definitive intentions about third term implorations. It didn't work, not because the PNC refused it. The conspirators backed down at the last moment out of fear that they were uncertain of the consequences of constitutional tampering. The commonly held view is that the third term journey came to an end because the PNC didn't embark on the bus.

Secondly, there is the definite feeling that the PPP leadership wasn't going to accept it.

Both of these theories are wrong. Investigations about getting around the two-thirds parliamentary majority were pursued, but they were abandoned in the end because of fears of rejection by the international community and anger from the total society.

The other remnant that still holds Guyana together is free elections. My contestation is that it is too early to say if the forthcoming national election will not be put to the test. I hope not. For now there is no cause for concern, except that there is the graphic use of state resources for party campaigning on the part of the PPP.

Back to Hoyte. Hoyte was pressured by the US, but where is the similar energy with the Jagdeo regime? The answer lies in the WikiLeaks cables. For me, the most important of all the cables came from the pen of the Ambassador at the time, Roland Bullen. He wrote that Roger Khan may have compromised the Government of Guyana. Nothing is wrong with this statement by itself. It is when you read how the US Embassy perceived Khan and the interpretations and analyses that the Embassy personnel sent back to Washington about Khan that you see most graphically that the US as the world's superpower, is fading.

The Embassy's assessment of Khan was that he was a ruthless drug baron that must be arrested. Yet the US Government stood by and did not lean on the Guyana Government into either ending its relationship with Khan or have him arrested. You read the cables and it is clear that the Embassy knew and accepted that the Guyana Government was not interested in curtailing the reign of the powerful narcotics shippers. Yet there was no leverage exercised against the Guyana Government. Let us play a game of International Relations, with Guyana as the joker in the pack. Using GNP, GDP, reliance on international funds, and influence in the international system, Guyana is a total non-entity in the global system. Using some of those very criteria, Barbados (with its financial system that stretches into the US, plus the kind of people that have real estate there) and Jamaica are more influential players in the world. Guyana has zero influence in the world system (social, political and economic).

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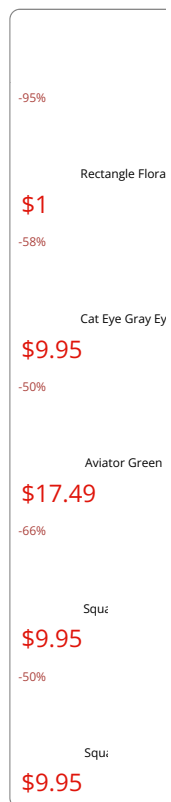
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If the US wanted to teach a small country how to practice good governance and feel no effect from the UN and the international community from the exertion of pressure, then Guyana could and should have featured in the game. Here was a country (as the Jamaican PM says that goes out in the world and begs all the time) that relies on foreign assistance for its livelihood, is entangled with deadly drug traffickers, and the US Government couldn't do anything about it.

Over dinner at the Pegasus a few years ago, one of the Embassy's senior diplomats told me that if the Guyana Government continues to refuse the establishment of a DEA office in Georgetown, then influence will come to bear on the World Bank, IMF and IDB to send a strong message. It never happened. It was Henry Kissinger who once said of the US during the Vietnam War, "Power has never been so great yet so useless."

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Weekend Cartoon



Bridge Watch

Demerara Harbour Bridge

Today **Wednesday, July 13** 

Wednesday, July 13	
2:30am	02:30
Thursday, July 14	
02:00	02:00

Events shown in time zone: Guyana Time Calendar

> Berbice Bridge [...]

Kaieteur News

- GUYANA
- 24 Saffon Street, Charlestown, Georgetown, Guyana
 - Editor-in-chief Kaieteur News:
 - Tel: +592-225-8482.
 - Switchboard: +592-225-8491, +592-225-8452.
 - Email: kaieteurnews@yahoo.com
 - Radio Dept.: +592-225-8465, +592-226-8210, +592-226-7455
 - Radio Whatsapp/SMS: +592-622-2222
 - Email: radiokaieteur@gmail.com

- USA
- Teshawna Lall: (347) 247-3198

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M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

« Aug Oct »

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