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# Rethinking Guyana's National Defence and Security beyond 2020

This certifies that the student is solely responsible for the work submitted.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>The Security Landscape</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Regional and International Security Constructs .....	8
Guyana’s National Defence Strategy .....	10
<b>Chapter 2</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Security threats now and beyond 2020</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Current Threats .....	15
New and Emerging Threats.....	21
<b>Chapter 3</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Oil Revenues and National Security: Lessons for Guyana</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Lesson #1- Balance social development with fiscal discipline. ....	27
Lesson #2- Practice Economic diversification to avoid the resource curse.....	28
Lesson #3-Extensive military capabilities no longer guarantee national security. ....	29
Lesson #4- Oil Revenues must benefit all citizens.....	31
<b>Chapter 4</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Rethinking National Security beyond 2020</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Safeguarding Guyana’s Patrimony.....	32
National Security Imperatives .....	35
Guyana rising: An alternative scenario .....	37
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>39</b>

## Executive Summary

Internationally, natural resources are becoming important drivers of national security. Guyana, or the Cooperative Republic of Guyana as it is officially known, lies in the north-east of South America and is well endowed with sizeable reserves of natural resources which generate revenue for the economy. However, despite its significant natural resource wealth, Guyana has remained relatively underdeveloped. The World Bank's 2014 World Development Report rated Guyana as the second poorest country in CARICOM on the basis of per capita income,<sup>1</sup> and a UNICEF situation analysis in 2016 noted it as the third poorest in the western hemisphere after Haiti and Nicaragua.<sup>2</sup> Further, its defence policy has been historically driven by the need to defend its sovereignty and deter external threats, especially from its western neighbor Venezuela. While successive governments have outlined the broad focus for Guyana's defence, a detailed overall strategy has not been finalized to date.

In November 2014, Guyana's parliament was prorogued, and general elections were held in May 2015.<sup>3</sup> A new coalition government won the election and took office, replacing the previous administration which had been in power for 23 years. While Guyanese were still adjusting to the change in government, United States oil company ExxonMobil and its partners Hess and CNOOC Nexen, announced a major oil discovery 123 miles offshore Guyana, in what is known as the Stabroek Block.<sup>4</sup> The announcement attracted international attention due to its size and potential to significantly improve the country's economic prospects. To date,

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<sup>1</sup> "On Basis of per Capita Income... World Bank Ranks Guyana Second Poorest in Caricom," *Stabroek News* (blog), December 30, 2013, <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2013/12/30/news/guyana/basis-per-capita-incomeworld-bank-ranks-guyana-second-poorest-caricom/>.

<sup>2</sup> "UNICEF\_Situation\_Analysis\_2016.Pdf," accessed October 26, 2019, [https://www.unicef.org/guyana/UNICEF\\_Situation\\_Analysis\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/guyana/UNICEF_Situation_Analysis_2016.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> "President Issues Proclamation to Prorogue Parliament - Speaker," *Stabroek News* (blog), November 10, 2014, <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2014/11/10/news/guyana/president-issues-notice-prorogue-parliament/>.

<sup>4</sup> "ExxonMobil Announces Significant Oil Discovery Offshore Guyana," ExxonMobil News Releases, accessed October 26, 2019, <https://news.exxonmobil.com/press-release/exxonmobil-announces-significant-oil-discovery-offshore-guyana>.

fifteen (15) discoveries have been made by ExxonMobil and oil production, which was scheduled to begin in early 2020, commenced on December 20, 2019, catapulting Guyana into the ranks of oil producing nations. During 2019, UK based oil company, Tullow Oil, also made two (2) discoveries offshore, adding to de-risking of the Guyana basin<sup>5</sup> and bringing total discoveries in Guyana to seventeen (17).

It is in context of this rapidly developing environment, that the importance of a comprehensive National Security and Defence strategy comes to bear. Further, considering its impending wealth from oil production, Guyana's rise can become a gamechanger regionally and internationally. The changing geopolitical constructs in the Caribbean and Latin America, the increased interest of China and Russia in the region and the crisis unfolding in Venezuela, provide a ripe environment to solidify Guyana's position. This paper aims to examine the current national defence landscape of Guyana and identify considerations for "Rethinking Guyana's National Defence and Security beyond 2020". It is envisioned that the contents will contribute meaningfully to available research on national security and defence for Guyana, to ensure its natural resources are protected now and for future generations.

Chapter 1 will review the current security landscape including regional security constructs and Guyana's participation and integration into the regional security apparatus. It will also examine Guyana's current defence policy. Chapter 2 will identify the most pressing current and future security threats facing Guyana. Chapter 3 will focus on case studies from Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, in an attempt to understand their experiences and garner lessons from their successes and failures with managing security, in tandem with natural resources development. The final chapter will delve into future considerations for Guyana as

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<sup>5</sup> Svetlana Marshall, "Tullow Strikes Oil," *Guyana Chronicle* (blog), August 13, 2019, <http://guyanachronicle.com/2019/08/13/tullow-strikes-oil>.

it embraces massive development and a green economy model, while simultaneously moving towards sustained oil production.

## Introduction

Guyana is bordered by Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname on the west, south and east respectively, and extends North to the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>6</sup> Guyana is the third smallest country on the continent of South America, and is the only country where English is the official language. It is known as a land of six (6) peoples because of its ethnic composition of Africans, East Indians, Europeans, Chinese, Portuguese and Indigeneous Amerindians<sup>7</sup>. The last census conducted in 2012 recorded a population of 746,955.<sup>8</sup> Synonymous with its name which means “land of many waters”, Guyana has many rivers and waterfalls including the famous Kaieteur Falls, which drops to 741ft, and is one of the largest single drop waterfalls in the world.

Guyana’s resource rich portfolio includes gold, bauxite, precious and semi-precious minerals, sand, stone and extensive forests that cover more than 87 percent of its landmass. Natural resources and agriculture are the two main sources of economic activity for Guyana and account for almost one third of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>9</sup> The Ministry of Natural Resources provides oversight of the natural resources sector except for oil and gas, which currently receives oversight from the Ministry of the Presidency. The Ministry of Natural Resources manages the sector through three (3) agencies, namely the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and the Guyana Gold Board (GGB). The GFC is responsible for the forestry sub-sector, while the GGMC and GGB focus on mining and the sale of gold respectively. Mining is part of the fabric of Guyanese

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<sup>6</sup> “Guyana | The Commonwealth,” accessed October 26, 2019, <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/guyana>.

<sup>7</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, “Final 2012 Census- Compendium 2,” July 2016.

<sup>8</sup> “Bureau of Statistics - Guyana,” accessed October 26, 2019, <https://statisticsguyana.gov.gy/census.html#comp>.

<sup>9</sup> “Guyana First Voluntary National Review High-Level – Ministry of Finance,” accessed October 26, 2019, <https://finance.gov.gy/publications/7498/>.

society and began with the Indigenous Peoples who first inhabited the Guiana's. It evolved into formal mining in the 1870's.<sup>10</sup> Though gold mining is predominant, alumina and manganese were produced between 1960 to 1982. Significant deposits of sand and stone are used mainly for local markets but Guyana's large gold, diamond and bauxite reserves, have allowed it to enjoy the reputation as a favourable location for mining.

Another of Guyana's valued resources is its forests which cover more than 87 percent of its landmass. Guyana is also one of the four regions of the world that make up the Guiana Shield<sup>11</sup>, which represents some 18 percent of the world's tropical forest.<sup>12</sup> With historically low deforestation rates of approximately 0.1 percent to 0.3 percent per annum, Guyana is classified as a High Forest Cover Low Deforestation Rate (HFLD) country.<sup>13</sup> Apart from logging, Guyana's forests also have potential to offer carbon sequestration,<sup>14</sup> ecosystem services including biodiversity and ecotourism, watershed protection, production of food and water as well as disaster prevention from floods and soil erosion. Over the years, Guyana has received international recognition connected to its environmental management and in March 2019, Guyana was named as the world's #1 "Best in Ecotourism" and one of the Top 10 Sustainable Destinations by the Green Destination Foundation and ITB in Berlin. Recognition was also received for the best destination video at the Golden City Gate Foundation at ITB. Again, in June 2019, the Latin American Travel Association (LATA) recognized Guyana as

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<sup>10</sup> "Mining\_Information\_Kit\_for\_Guyana\_2012.Pdf," accessed October 26, 2019, [https://www.goldsourceminers.com/\\_resources/guyana/Mining\\_Information\\_Kit\\_for\\_Guyana\\_2012.pdf](https://www.goldsourceminers.com/_resources/guyana/Mining_Information_Kit_for_Guyana_2012.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> "Guiana Shield Facility," UNDP in Guyana, accessed December 21, 2019, [https://www.gy.undp.org/content/guyana/en/home/operations/projects/environment\\_and\\_energy/project\\_sample\\_2.html](https://www.gy.undp.org/content/guyana/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/project_sample_2.html).

<sup>12</sup> "The Guiana Shield, the 'Greenhouse of the World,'" Mongabay Environmental News, October 19, 2016, <https://news.mongabay.com/2016/10/experts-warn-more-monitoring-needed-for-the-guiana-shield-the-greenhouse-of-the-world/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Guyana | The REDD Desk," accessed October 27, 2019, <https://theredddesk.org/countries/guyana>.

<sup>14</sup> Environmental Protection Agency Guyana, "State of the Environment Report," 2016, <http://www.epaguyana.org/epa/downloads/epa-reports/download/18-epa-reports/280-state-of-the-environment-report>.

the “Best in Sustainable Tourism”.<sup>15</sup> Water is also increasingly gaining recognition as a resource for development, preservation and investment and Guyana’s many rivers and waterfalls have considerable hydroelectric potential.<sup>16</sup>

As if gold and precious stones, forests, unlimited water, rich biodiversity and eco-tourism are not enough, oil and gas discovered in commercial quantities offshore Guyana has significantly increased Guyana’s economic and developmental prospects. Guyana is surrounded by oil producing nations including Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname and has long been seen as a country with huge potential. The Liza discovery in 2015, which was considered one of the largest of the decade,<sup>17</sup> confirmed this belief. ExxonMobil and its partners went on to make fourteen (14) more discoveries bringing the estimated gross recoverable resource for the Stabroek Block to more than 6 billion oil equivalent barrels.<sup>18</sup> The size of Guyana’s discovery is comparable to that of Angola, a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the second-largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> Industry expert, Wood McKenzie noted that with oil production expected to be around 350,000-400,000 b/d by 2026, Guyana will become one of top oil producers in Latin America”.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “In Guyana, Sustainability Is the Journey and the Destination,” *Guyana Tourism* (blog), October 16, 2019, <https://www.guyanatourism.com/in-guyana-sustainability-is-the-journey-and-the-destination/>.

<sup>16</sup> “Water Resources Assessment of Guyana,” accessed October 27, 2019, <https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/military/engineering/docs/WRA/Guyana/Guyana%20WRA.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> “Guyana: ExxonMobil Capitalizes on Largest Oil Find in 10 Years,” accessed October 28, 2019, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Guyana-ExxonMobil-Capitalizes-on-Largest-Oil-Find-in-10-Years-20170624-0004.html>.

<sup>18</sup> “Guyana Project Overview,” ExxonMobil, accessed October 28, 2019, <https://corporate.exxonmobil.com:443/Locations/Guyana/Guyana-project-overview>.

<sup>19</sup> Clifford Krauss, “With a Major Oil Discovery, Guyana Is Poised to Become a Top Producer,” *The New York Times*, January 13, 2017, sec. Business, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/13/business/energy-environment/major-oil-find-guyana-exxon-mobile-hess.html>.

<sup>20</sup> “ExxonMobil’s Guyana Deepwater Discovery Could Total 2 Bbbl, WoodMac Says,” accessed July 9, 2019, <https://www.worldoil.com/news/2017/10/6/exxonmobils-guyana-deepwater-discovery-could-total-2-bbbl-woodmac-says>.

# Chapter 1

## The Security Landscape

### Regional and International Security Constructs

Though Guyana is geographically located in South America, it is considered a part of the Caribbean, since its history and culture are more interconnected with countries in the region than with its South American counterparts. As part of its integration into the Caribbean region, Guyana is a member of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CARICOM), a grouping of twenty countries: fifteen-member states and five associate members.<sup>21</sup> CARICOM is the region's premier regional integration mechanism and is headquartered in Georgetown, Guyana.

CARICOM's quest to create a collective security mechanism for the region dates back to 1962, in response to threats faced by its member states. However, these attempts saw measured success for various reasons until 1990, when a group of militant insurgents tried to overtake the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. This led to the Kingston Declaration,<sup>22</sup> which included a commitment by CARICOM members for the establishment of a regional security mechanism. The mechanism began to materialize in July 2005, when CARICOM Heads of Government recognized "crime and security" as the fourth pillar of the Caribbean Community<sup>23</sup> alongside the traditional three pillars of foreign policy, trade and economic development and functional cooperation. The decision meant that security would be incorporated into the provisions in the revised treaty of Chaguaramas, which is considered the community's constitution. CARICOM Heads of Government agreed on a protocol to amend the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to incorporate the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement

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<sup>21</sup> "Who We Are — Caribbean Community (CARICOM)," accessed October 28, 2019, <https://caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are>.

<sup>22</sup> "THE KINGSTON DECLARATION — Caribbean Community (CARICOM)," accessed November 9, 2019, <https://caricom.org/communications/view/the-kingston-declaration>.

<sup>23</sup> David A. Granger, "Guyana Review: Security, Stability, Sovereignty in Small States," in *Caribbean Geopolitics: Security, Stability and Sovereignty in Small States*, Guyana Review, 2008.

(CONSLE) as an organ of the community, and the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) as an institution. However, though the protocol was opened for signature since March 2009, it was not until February 2016 that Trinidad became the first country to sign the protocol.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, Caribbean forces do work together and participate in standing plans that are activated annually, to support disaster relief efforts through the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Relief Agency (CDERA). CDERA deploys troops in support of host countries when needed. The Coast Guards of the region work together by facilitating the free passage of intelligence, assistance in search and rescue operations and free passage in regional waters. There has also been cooperation in sport, medical assistance, and training. For example, the annual Caribbean Nations Security Conference (CANSEC) brings together Caribbean military leadership with partners in the United States to discuss issues of mutual concern, and to exchange ideas and knowledge and synchronize action where possible.

The United States has played a significant role in regional security because of the region's strategic importance, as well as the perception that the size and weakness of Caribbean states make them unable to safeguard their own security and in turn create problems for the US. As a result, the US has pursued security related agreements with the region and facilitated collaboration, equipment transfers and training courses. One such effort is the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), which was established in 2010 to “support efforts to reduce illicit trafficking, increase citizen security, and promote crime prevention”.<sup>25</sup> Though well meaning, the effectiveness of the CBSI has been called into question notably by David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. In his book titled “Caribbean Geopolitics:

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<sup>24</sup> “COMMUNIQUÉ Issued at Conclusion of 27th CARICOM Intersessional Meeting,” *CARICOM Today* (blog), February 19, 2016, <https://today.caricom.org/2016/02/19/communique-issued-at-conclusion-of-27th-caricom-intersessional-meeting/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Caribbean Basin Security Initiative,” *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed October 28, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/caribbean-basin-security-initiative/>.

security, stability and sovereignty in small states”, he opined that “the initiative more or less seemed to have little to do with the contemporary concept of CARICOM security and, the Merida Initiative from which it was conceptualized, has had the unintended consequence of diverting narco-trafficking away from Central America and into the Caribbean”. He further noted that in “the form proposed by the US Department of Defence, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative will be of limited usefulness, especially to the larger states”<sup>26</sup>.

Nonetheless, Guyana has been keen to support regional security by establishing itself as a reliable partner. It also recognizes that it needs the assistance and cooperation of other states to combat the combined challenges of transnational organized crime and internal criminal violence.<sup>27</sup> The country has provided assistance to its neighbors during disasters, supported humanitarian missions and also participate regularly alongside other Caribbean Defence and Police Forces in ‘Exercise Tradewinds’, a programme sponsored by the United States Southern Command. Guyana is a signatory to the Treaty of Security Assistance among Caribbean States<sup>28</sup> and the protocol to the Treaty which established the Caribbean Operations Planning and Coordinating Staff (COPACS), an associate of the Regional Security System (RSS). It is also a signatory to the Maritime Cooperation and Airspace Agreements. Further, Guyana has expanded its diplomatic relations with a number of regional and international organizations including UNASUR, CELAC, MERCOSUR, the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

### Guyana’s National Defence Strategy

Article 197 A (1) of the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, outlines the scope of Guyana’s defence strategy by noting that “the State’s defence and security policy shall be to defend national independence, to preserve the country’s sovereignty and integrity,

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<sup>26</sup> David A Granger, *Caribbean Geopolitics: Security, Stability and Sovereignty in Small States* (Ministry of the Presidency, Government of Guyana, 2015).

<sup>27</sup> David A. Granger, “The Securitization of Regional Integration,” in *Caribbean Geopolitics: Security, Stability and Sovereignty in Small States*, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> “Treaty on Security Assistance among CARICOM Member States,” accessed November 10, 2019, [https://www.rss.org.bb/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/treaty\\_security\\_assistance.pdf](https://www.rss.org.bb/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/treaty_security_assistance.pdf).

and to guarantee the normal functioning of institutions and the security of citizens against any armed aggression”.<sup>29</sup> Further, the Defence Act, which is a part of Guyana’s Constitution, empowers the Guyana Defence Board to carry out the mandate of the constitution. Under the act, the President is Minister of Defence and Chairman of the Guyana Defence Board, which is responsible for “the command, discipline and administration of and all other matters relating to the force”.<sup>30</sup> The Defence Board operationalizes its activities through the Guyana Defence Force (GDF). It is on this foundation that national defence policy has as its two objectives ‘defence and maintenance of order in Guyana’.

Beginning in the 1970’s, reduction in public expenditure, removal of subsidies on food items and retrenchment of state employees, fueled an economic crisis in Guyana. The tension from the economic crisis, accelerated a political crisis partly due to dissatisfaction with the results of elections held in 1968 and then in 1973.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Guyana’s defence policy in the 1980s was characterized by a two-track approach, focused on consolidating the internal security system, which sprang up after independence,<sup>32</sup> and responding to external geopolitical events that influenced its security. These included the assertiveness of Venezuela and the North Atlantic powers (US, UK, France and the Netherlands) as well as a growing wave of radicalism in the Eastern Caribbean. Further, worsening relations between Venezuela and Cuba, and between Guyana and Venezuela that were fueled by the perception that Guyana was a Cuban surrogate, are also notable.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “Constitution | Parliament of Guyana,” accessed January 11, 2020, <http://parliament.gov.gy/constitution>.

<sup>30</sup> “Laws of Guyana - Ministry of Legal Affairs,” accessed January 11, 2020, <https://mola.gov.gy/information/laws-of-guyana?limit=1000&limitstart=1000>.

<sup>31</sup> David A. Granger, *National Defence: A Small State in the Subordinate System* (Georgetown, Guyana: Institute for Security and International Studies, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> David A. Granger.

<sup>33</sup> David A. Granger.

Guyana's defence priorities have changed through the years in tandem with the change in successive leadership. Upon assuming office, then President, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, announced the reformulation of Guyana's defence policy to what he called 'Defence in Depth': a strategy that emphasized the need for economic, psychological and political measures to complement military defence.<sup>34</sup> Upon his death in 1984, his successor, Hugh Desmond Hoyte, embarked on a policy to drastically align the Defence Forces in keeping with his vision to have an efficient force with high standards. In 1987, he introduced the concept of 'affordability' suggesting that expenditure would be kept within strict limits to make the force 'compact', efficient and highly mobile.

In 1992, his successor, President Cheddi Jagan, adopted a policy focusing less on the need to improve the force's defence capacity and more on the need "to embark on economic revenue-earning enterprises".<sup>35</sup> This saw the role of the GDF expanding beyond its traditional tasks of supporting the preservation of internal peace and protecting the territorial integrity of the country, to take on a more income generation role. This general direction did not divert significantly from that of previous administrations and seemed to have been adapted in its main forms by the new PPP-Civic administration from the 1990s into the new millennium.

Defence doctrine continued to shift away from national defence issues to public order after the death of Dr. Cheddie Jagan in 1997. When Janet Jagan, became president, her administration's position was that the fundamental threat to Guyana was not one of territoriality and sovereignty but our tenuous socio-economic stability".<sup>36</sup> Her own vision of the GDF was one "evolving to perform a substantial and committed role in law enforcement"<sup>37</sup>. This led to the operational integration of the army into the national law enforcement sector".<sup>38</sup> However,

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<sup>34</sup> David A. Granger.

<sup>35</sup> Francis Ferriera, "Rice of Rifles. Defence Policy for the 1990's," *Guyana Review*, no. 1.2 (1993): 20–21.

<sup>36</sup> Francis Ferriera, "Which Way to the Front," *Guyana Review*, no. 7.94 (1999): 34–35.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Ferriera.

<sup>38</sup> Francis Ferriera.

though funds allocated to the GDF were increased in support of this directive, it was still insufficient to procure or replace the resources necessary to perform the force's operational role. Her successor Bharrat Jagdeo was elected to the Presidency in 1999, and announced his Administration's commitment to the concept of a small well-equipped, professional army supported by a larger reserve. This seems similar to the defence policy adopted by former president Hugh Desmond Hoyte during his time in office; however though the army was assured of the Government's commitment to its improvement, the new President proceeded to close several key defence organizations.<sup>39</sup>

Elections held in May 2015 saw the ascension of a coalition Government, led by Brig. David Arthur Granger, himself a former commander of the Defence Force and National Security Advisor. President Granger favoured a doctrine of "Total National Defence" based on a Singaporean concept that every citizen plays a part in the nation's defence as individuals and collectively, to build a strong, secure and cohesive nation.<sup>40</sup> The President's pronouncements have pointed out that for Guyana, "all the elements and instruments of national power need constantly to be employed in order to protect our territory".<sup>41</sup> He sees the long-term objective as ensuring that Guyanese can depend on defence forces to assure the safety of the citizens and the security of the country. Therefore, Guyana's current national defence policy is founded on the four pillars of military, civil, social and environment defence. However, though the general trust of Guyana's defence policy has been announced, Guyana does not currently have a well-developed defence strategy.

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<sup>39</sup> David A. Granger, *National Defence: A Small State in the Subordinate System*.

<sup>40</sup> "MINDEF Singapore," accessed December 18, 2019, /web/portal/mindef/defence-matters/defence-topic/defence-topic-detail/total-defence.

<sup>41</sup> "President Granger Outlines 'Total National Defence' Policy -at Meeting with GDF Officers," accessed January 24, 2020, <https://motp.gov.gy/index.php/2015-07-20-18-49-38/2015-07-20-18-50-14/376-president-granger-outlines-total-national-defence-policy-at-meeting-with-gdf-officers>.

Historically, Guyana's defence priorities have been shaped in response to internal and external threats. External threats have come from its neighbours to the west and east; Venezuela and Suriname respectively. A long-standing dispute with Suriname over the New River Zone in southern Guyana was partly settled in 2007<sup>42</sup> however, the country's territorial dispute with Venezuela has continued through the years, and was reignited in 2015, after the announcement of significant petroleum reserves in Guyana's territorial waters. Guyana has opted to use diplomacy as its primary line of defence. For all intents and purposes, this is not unacceptable by international standards however, as Guyana moves swiftly into oil production, public pronouncements need to be translated into definitive, workable strategies to truly secure the national patrimony.

## Chapter 2

### Security threats now and beyond 2020

Traditional definitions of 'national security' have emphasized the state as the main unit of analysis, and hostile external action as the main threat. Military prowess was seen as a measure of a nation's ability to protect itself from threats, and states were perceived as rational actors pursuing their national interest. However, it is now accepted, that both non-state actors and non-military threats, can seriously undermine national security. Guyanese regional security expert Professor Ivelaw Griffith, noted that "non-military developments can pose genuine threats to long-term security and quality of life; that traditional concepts of sovereignty cannot cope with torrential trans-border flows of narcotics, money, arms and immigrants; that no single country can combat these threats alone; and that new regional and international rules

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<sup>42</sup> "Frontiers: The Guyana-Suriname Maritime Boundary Award," *Stabroek News* (blog), October 30, 2007, <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2007/10/30/guyana-review/frontiers-the-guyana-suriname-maritime-boundary-award/>.

and institutions will be needed to cope with the non-military threats facing most countries”.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, while the importance of the economic, political and environmental tenets of security remain serious, internal security challenges have become almost as important as external threats. More often, internal issues aggravate external ones causing the lines differentiating the two to become blurred. Further, states are no longer the primary actors and non-state actors who wield considerable powers have emerged.

## Current Threats

As a small developing state in the Caribbean region, Guyana has experienced many of the threats faced by its Caribbean counterparts and has also been the victim of violation of its maritime zone and the illegal occupation of its territory. This is partly due to its long coastline, land and river borders, expansive hinterland and extensive network of waterways, which limit its ability to control its territory effectively.<sup>44</sup>

Firstly, and paradoxically, Guyana’s Defence Force, the primary vehicle through which Guyana defends itself from aggression, is also the basis of one of its foremost internal threats. The force is mandated to protect the nation from external attacks, yet lacks adequate resources to perform its duties effectively. Further, under successive governments, the role of the Defence Force shifted away from its defence and security responsibility. As a result, the military is ill-equipped to protect against a sustained attack on Guyana, thus posing a threat to national security. While efforts have been made under the current government to increase defence spending, the small size of the economy constrains its ability to equip the Defence Force to respond effectively to internal and external threats. Budgetary allocations increased by more than 75 per cent from G\$8.0B in 2014 to G\$14.02B in 2019 and the Force is working to

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<sup>43</sup> Ivelaw L Griffith, “Caribbean Security on the Eve of the 21st Century,” n.d., 91.

<sup>44</sup> “GDF Must Always Be Ready to Secure State,” *Stabroek News* (blog), January 25, 2019, <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2019/01/25/news/guyana/gdf-must-always-be-ready-to-secure-state/>.

improve its physical infrastructure.<sup>45</sup> Drones have been acquired for border surveillance and inshore patrol vessels and engineering and transport equipment are to be acquired. Development of Guyana's military capabilities is especially important considering Venezuela's military strength and alleged nuclear proliferation through its ties with Russia.<sup>46</sup>

Secondly, Guyana's tenuous political environment has been historically polarized along racial lines. The passing of a no-confidence motion against the current government in December 2018, and subsequent calls for early elections alongside preparations for oil production, create a difficult political environment. Elections are expected to be held in March 2020, and their outcome will influence the future development of Guyana for decades to come. Additionally, internal strife and acts of sabotage by disgruntled sections of the population can lead to incidences of civil protest.

Thirdly, while benefits from oil production will allow the population of approximately 750,000 people to experience unprecedented wealth, by the same measure, Guyana lacks the human capacity at present to support the emerging sector. Initial development will heavily depend on the help and support of external experts and consultants while Guyanese become better equipped to play a more meaningful role in the management of the sector. Lack of capacity to adequately manage its resources, can result in significant loss of benefits for average Guyanese if not properly monitored. As a result, calls for strong local content policies have become predominant in the conversation about development of the sector.

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<sup>45</sup> "Address of His Excellency Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the Guyana Defence Force Annual Officers' Conference 2019.01.24," accessed January 24, 2020, <https://motp.gov.gy/index.php/2015-07-20-18-49-38/2015-07-20-18-50-58/3357-address-of-his-excellency-brigadier-david-granger-president-of-the-cooperative-republic-of-guyana-to-the-guyana-defence-force-annual-officers-conference-2019-01-24>.

<sup>46</sup> "Address of His Excellency Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the Guyana Defence Force Annual Officers' Conference 2019.01.24."

A fourth threat is crime and violence. CARICOM's 2013 Crime and Security Strategy noted that "most CARICOM member states have high rates of homicide and violent crime which has reduced citizen security, impeded socio-economic development, eroded confidence in nation building and heightened fear among the population."<sup>47</sup> The US Overseas Security Advisory Council in its 2019 Crime and violence report on Guyana, painted a bleak picture of crime and security when it issued a travel advisory to US citizens. The report cited the UN Office on Drugs and Crime report which noted Guyana's 2016 homicide rate as 18.37 per 100,000 people, the fourth highest murder rate in South America behind Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil.<sup>48</sup> A 2017 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) report titled "Understanding and Combating Crime in Guyana" stated that high crime rates are known to impede growth by deterring foreign investment, stem development by diverting scarce resources towards security, and contribute to migration of the highest skilled professionals."<sup>49</sup> The report also highlighted the impact of crime and violence on Guyana specifically when it noted that "if the change in homicide rates in Guyana had been the same as the global average, from 1995–2011 (years of most data), GDP growth could have been an estimated 0.4 percent higher per year."<sup>50</sup>

The Caribbean region including Guyana, has also become notorious as a transit zone for criminal networks supporting illegal drug shipments, human trafficking, money laundering, and corruption. The increase in illegal activities associated with criminal networks has been the catalyst for a significant increase in criminal activity to include an alarming rise in the murder rate throughout the region. Criminal organizations also tend to seek out weak governments and corruptible officials in the region to facilitate their activities. Further, piracy

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<sup>47</sup> "CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2013," accessed November 9, 2019, [https://www.caricomimpacs.org/Portals/0/Project%20Documents/CCSS\\_STRAT.pdf](https://www.caricomimpacs.org/Portals/0/Project%20Documents/CCSS_STRAT.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> "OSAC," accessed November 28, 2019, <https://www.osac.gov/>.

<sup>49</sup> "Understanding and Combatting Crime in Guyana | Publications," accessed November 23, 2019, <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Understanding-and-Combatting-Crime-in-Guyana.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> "Understanding and Combatting Crime in Guyana | Publications."

on Guyana's waterways can become a serious threat to its offshore development. Considering the distance to Guyana's reserves offshore, supply vessels moving between the oilrig and onshore facilities may become targets for pirate attacks. These in turn, disrupt supply and production or put lives at risk. Other threats include migration as well as illegal mining, illegal logging, wildlife-trafficking and the smuggling of precious minerals.<sup>51</sup>

### The Venezuela Question

The Guyana-Venezuela Border controversy continues to pose the single most serious threat to Guyana's national security due to its potential effect on Guyana's long-term development. Venezuela has become bolder in its assertions of ownership over Guyana's territory, evidenced by several incidences dating back to 2013. In October 2013, a petroleum exploration vessel – RV Teknik Perdana – was conducting a survey in an area offshore Guyana when it was intercepted by a Venezuelan Navy frigate and ordered to cease its activities. In May 2015, right on the heels of President Granger's ascension to office and the announcement of large oil reserves offshore Guyana, Venezuelan President Nicholas Maduro issued a decree titled "Presidential Decree 1.787 of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" seeking to renew the claim, which now included all the Atlantic waters off the Essequibo Coast of Guyana. Venezuela then proceeded to issue an altered map of Venezuela's territory inclusive of the area being claimed, as well as the areas of the oil discoveries offshore. The decree was revised in June 2015, since it not only affected the maritime space of Guyana, but a number of other states as well. Also in 2015, President Maduro assigned a retired Army Colonel, Pompeyo Torrealba, to lead a new government agency, the "Essequibo Rescue Office," with plans that included issuing 200,000 Venezuelan identification cards to Guyanese living in the area.<sup>52</sup> This was followed by a third incident in December 2018, when an unarmed vessel undertaking seismic

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<sup>51</sup> "Address of His Excellency Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the Guyana Defence Force Annual Officers' Conference 2019.01.24."

<sup>52</sup> "Venezuela Planning to Offer E'bo Residents ID Cards," *Kaieteur News* (blog), July 11, 2015, <https://www.kaieteurnews.com/2015/07/11/venezuela-planning-to-offer-ebo-residents-id-cards/>.

surveys lawfully within Guyana's territory offshore, was forced to discontinue its operations after a Venezuelan military helicopter attempted to land on the vessel.

The area that Venezuela is claiming is larger than Cuba and represents about 60 percent of Guyana's territory. Venezuela describes it as the "Zona en Reclamación" and is contending that an International Arbitral Award of 1899 which effectively settled the boundary between the two countries, is null and void<sup>53</sup>. This is so despite Britain and Venezuela agreeing to the Treaty of Washington on February 2, 1897, which provided for the territorial controversy to be submitted to arbitration, the award of which would be a "full, perfect and final settlement."<sup>54</sup> In 1962, Venezuela declared that it would no longer abide by the 1899 award because it felt that the decision had not been based on a fair arbitral process. Efforts were made to resolve the controversy from 1966 to 1982, but with little success. In 1990, the parties sought the Good Offices of the UN Secretary General in another attempt at resolution but by 2016, there was still no resolution.

Thus, the UN secretary General (UNSG) announced that absent significant progress towards a solution of the controversy by the end of 2017, and unless both parties jointly request that he refrain from doing so, he would choose the International Court of Justice (ICJ), as the next means of settlement. Again, engagements were unsuccessful, and the Secretary General announced his decision to submit the dispute to the ICJ in January 2018. Venezuela objected to a joint application leaving Guyana to file a claim unilaterally. This also saw objection from Venezuela on grounds that the ICJ lacked competence to hear the dispute, along with a suggestion that diplomatic negotiations be resumed towards a resolution, and to evaluate

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<sup>53</sup> "Guyana/Venezuela Controversy — Caribbean Community (CARICOM)," accessed November 23, 2019, <https://caricom.org/guyana-venezuela-border-dispute>.

<sup>54</sup> "The Trail of Diplomacy-Part 3," accessed January 12, 2020, [http://www.guyana.org/features/trail\\_diplomacy\\_pt3.html](http://www.guyana.org/features/trail_diplomacy_pt3.html).

whether the UNSG's Good Offices should continue. Guyana has insisted that both parties submit to the jurisdiction of the ICJ and abide by its decision.

While Venezuela's aggression continues externally, it is experiencing a major economic downturn internally because of the drop in global oil prices. Since its economy is heavily dependent on oil, the fall in oil prices have significantly reduced Venezuela's foreign currency reserves and resulted in increased debt. The country's annual inflation is now the highest in the world. The economic crisis has triggered a humanitarian crisis as well, resulting in thousands of Venezuelans fleeing to neighbouring countries to access basic health services and food supplies. As of December 2019, 4.7 million Venezuelans have fled the country and data from the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants show, that by the end of 2020 the number is expected to reach 6.5 million.<sup>55</sup> Migrants fleeing economic distress in Venezuela have crossed into Guyana as well and though the Government of Guyana does not foresee any significant spillovers from the crisis at present, the influx of migrants into the hinterland and rural areas of Guyana could put socio-economic pressures on public services in these areas.

It may be considered curious that Nicholas Maduro would choose to focus so intently on Guyana while facing an economic and humanitarian crisis internally. A political crisis is also ongoing and has led to calls for him to step down in favour of opposition leader Juan Guaido, who has been endorsed by international leaders as the President. Many believe that President Maduro's actions are being used to deflect attention away from the challenges unfolding internally in Venezuela, especially in light of elections expected in early 2020. A Washington Post Article from 2015 that referenced the border controversy with Guyana, included a quote from Maduro telling Venezuelans that "We are going to take back what our

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<sup>55</sup> "Misery for Venezuelans Continues Ahead of 2020 Elections: UN Rights Chief Bachelet," UN News, December 18, 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/12/1053791>.

grandparents left for us,”<sup>56</sup> Venezuela also has a long-running dispute with ExxonMobil stemming from previous president Hugo Chavez's nationalization of the company's properties in 2007. Exxon sued Venezuela for \$1.6 billion at the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes, but Venezuela was ordered to pay back only \$188 million. While Venezuela's objections will not halt development in Guyana immediately, Exxon's development of Guyana's oil reserves and Venezuela's aggressive stance regarding the area being developed, has the potential to bring the two into conflict.

This dynamic context has been well noted by Guyana as reflected in President David Granger's address the Guyana Defence Forces' Annual Officers Conference in January 2019 and reiterated again in January 2020. He noted, “The Defence Force has been, and must always remain, ready to deter aggression, defend national sovereignty and ensure the development of our country as a safe, secure and strong state....the Guyana Defence Force therefore, must maintain itself in a state of readiness to secure our entire country and protect it from present and future dangers.”<sup>57</sup>

## New and Emerging Threats

While Guyana's petroleum reserves have gained it international recognition and positioned the country to become an influential global player, it also becomes more susceptible to new threats experienced by oil producing nations globally. Some of the threats unique to Guyana's context are outlined below.

### The Dutch Disease

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<sup>56</sup> Nick Miroff closeNick MiroffReporter covering immigration enforcement, the Department of Homel, and SecurityEmailEmailBioBioFollowFollowReporter, “Why Venezuela Wants to Annex Two-Thirds of the Country next Door,” Washington Post, accessed December 22, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/07/13/venezuela-guyana-essequibo-maduro-granger/>.

<sup>57</sup> “Address of His Excellency Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, to the Annual Police Officers' Conference 2019 January 10, 2019,” accessed December 22, 2019, <https://motp.gov.gy/index.php/2015-07-20-18-49-38/2015-07-20-18-50-58/3349-address-of-his-excellency-brigadier-david-granger-president-of-the-cooperative-republic-of-guyana-to-the-annual-police-officers-conference-2019-january-10-2019>.

One of the first cautions to Guyana, has been for the country to beware of the resource curse. Also known as the “paradox of plenty”, it refers to the failure of resource-rich countries to benefit fully from their natural resource wealth, and governments’ inability to respond effectively to public welfare needs.<sup>58</sup> Research done by the Natural Resources Governance Institute (NGRI) among countries with huge oil reserves, found that the resource curse has “threatened democracy, provoked and sustain internal conflict, facilitated overspending or inefficient spending and borrowing, promoted patriarchy and gender-based challenges, perpetuated social and environmental problems, weakened institutional development and resulted in limited government capture of benefits.”<sup>59</sup> Susceptibility to the Dutch disease is a real threat for Guyana considering that its’s GDP can triple in the next 10 years.<sup>60</sup> The effects of the resource curse and associated pitfalls can undermine its national security.

Guyana’s economy has been heavily dependent on agriculture and mining and both industries stand to be affected if not properly transitioned. Guyana’s Minister of Natural Resources has reinforced that Government does not envision that the country will completely escape the effects of the resource curse considering the massive transformation expected, but is keen to ensure the effects are minimized as far as possible. A manifestation of the resource curse can have devastating effects on Guyana’s development and its national security capacity by extension.

### Emigration and Population growth

Guyana has historically struggled to retain its population and its emigration rate is among the highest in the world. A 2016 World Bank report on Migration and Remittances

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<sup>58</sup> “The Resource Curse: Political and Economic Challenges of Natural Resource Wealth,” accessed November 28, 2019, [https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/nrgi\\_Resource-Curse.pdf](https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/nrgi_Resource-Curse.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> “The Resource Curse: Political and Economic Challenges of Natural Resource Wealth.”

<sup>60</sup> Morgan D. Bazilian Mahdavi Paasha, “New Oil Finds Could Mean a Tripling of Guyana’s GDP,” *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed November 29, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/26/new-oil-finds-triple-guyana-gdp-avoid-resource-curse/>.

noted that 93 percent of highly skilled persons born in Guyana live outside the country.<sup>61</sup> The US State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, reported that Guyana has the highest percentage of "brain drain" of any country and its net emigration rate, estimated at 9.67 percent, is the seventh highest in the world.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the beginning of oil production has found Guyana without the skilled population needed to support the new industry. Guyana has to depend on foreign expertise to initiate the industry until more Guyanese are trained to support and manage the sector.

While emigration has left Guyana with a paucity of skilled Guyanese to support the country on one hand, its rapid ascension to the ranks of oil producing countries has caused an increase of immigrants on the other. Immigration records show a spike in nationals entering Guyana from countries and companies around the globe, keen on taking advantage of new opportunities that are emerging. While this is a positive development, the rate at which immigrants are arriving, and the speed at which the economy is developing are not consistent. This raises questions about the country's ability to absorb the new influx of immigrants as it can eventually put strain on the provision of services. For Guyana, emigration and population growth have implications for national security and economic development, by undermining its ability to respond effectively to threats in an increasingly unpredictable security environment.

#### [Exposure to volatile Global Oil Market Prices.](#)

Once Guyana begins earning revenue from oil production, it becomes open to volatile oil prices on the world market. Price fluctuations diminish expected revenue, which in turn affect annual budgets and overall development. A European Commission report from 2016 titled "The impact of Low Oil Prices on Oil Exporting Nations" analyzed the exposure of the

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<sup>61</sup> "The Reasons Guyanese Migrate," *Kaieteur News* (blog), July 24, 2016, <https://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2016/07/24/the-reasons-guyanese-migrate/>.

<sup>62</sup> "Guyana's Brain Drain at Worrying Levels ...US State Dept. Highlights Shortage of Even Semi-Skilled Individuals," *Kaieteur News* (blog), October 20, 2018, <https://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2018/10/20/guyanas-brain-drain-at-worrying-levels-us-state-dept-highlights-shortage-of-even-semi-skilled-individuals/>.

main oil exporting countries to the oil market and found, that in Sub-Saharan African and North African countries, where GDP and government revenue are closely correlated, there was high exposure to the oil market which made countries more vulnerable. Guyana does not have to look far for examples of the negative effects of dependence on oil revenues, as Venezuela experiences provide ample proof. Conversely, high oil prices will have the opposite effect.

### Potential for Environmental damage

Though Guyana's discoveries have been offshore, questions have been raised about the environmental risks that may arise once production begins. With current reserves at over 6 billion barrels of recoverable oil, Guyana can potentially face a new threat from environmental damage associated with offshore production or an oil spill. A recent study conducted by consultants from Environmental Resource Management (ERM), sought to map Guyana's coastal biodiversity potential ahead of oil production. The study recorded 230 species of birds including nine, which are of global and regional conservation interest, and seven not previously documented in Guyana. It also found several species of fish never before recorded in Guyana's waters.<sup>63</sup> Though direct environmental risks to these species are primarily associated with oil spills, there are potential risks from emissions from the operations and seismic activities.

Concerns have also been raised about the impact on sea turtles and sperm whales, as well as risks for communities that live along the coastline. In response, Guyana has begun to strengthen its internal mechanisms, which include drafting an oil spill contingency plan to respond to a potential crisis. Oil spill readiness training in partnership with both local and overseas stakeholders is ongoing, and ExxonMobil has committed to handling cleanup costs in the event of a spill.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> "Case Study: ExxonMobil," ERM, accessed November 30, 2019, <https://www.erm.com/projects/exxonmobil/>.

<sup>64</sup> "ExxonMobil Commits to Handle Costs to Clean up Spills from Guyana Operations That Affect T&T, Venezuela & Others," *Georgetown Chamber of Commerce & Industry* (blog), October 22, 2019, <https://gcci.gy/exxonmobil-commits-to-handle-costs-to-clean-up-spills-from-guyana-operations-that-affect-tt-venezuela-others/>.

## Cyber Security

A 2016 joint report by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Organization of American States (OAS), noted that the vast majority of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are not yet prepared to counteract cybercrime, even though the region has seen an increase in these types of attacks. Cybersecurity has become a major concern especially for oil producing nations, because oilrigs and oilfields are incredibly lucrative targets for cybercriminals. Oil-producing countries continue to be vulnerable to serious cybersecurity breaches since, apart from attacks on oilrigs; hackers can initiate remote changes that disrupt communications of key infrastructural systems. These attacks can cut off the supply of electricity to hospitals, homes, schools and factories, as have been seen in the 2010 attack on Iran's nuclear plant and the March 2019 attack on the US Power grid, which left 93 million without electricity and caused a national crisis.

Locally, in March 2019, the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) Incorporated, which supplies power to most of the capital city Georgetown, was the victim of an attack on its information systems. The attack disrupted the provision of several services and resulted in delays in processing transactions. Since 2013, Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean region have seen an increase in cyberattacks and considering the expected rapid growth of Guyana's infrastructure development, major upgrades are already being planned. In August 2013, the Government of Guyana established its National Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT.Gy), under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The CSIRT provides on-site collaboration, incident coordination, incident analysis, technical support, and literature and tips on cybersecurity. In 2019, a consultation process was launched for the development of a National Cyber Security Strategy for Guyana.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> "Govt. Launches Consultations for Cybersecurity Strategy," *Kaieteur News* (blog), July 3, 2019, <https://www.kaieteurnews.com/2019/07/03/govt-launches-consultations-for-cyber-security-strategy/>.

## Terrorism

Every sector of the oil and gas production cycle is vulnerable to terrorist threats of varying degrees, and neither intelligence services, nor military forces have been able to prevent them from happening. According to Aon’s Terrorism and Political Violence map, 2016 brought a 14.2 percent increase in the number of terrorist attacks with many of the attacks being against the oil and gas industry – the commercial sector most targeted by terrorism worldwide.<sup>66</sup> This is due to its important role in driving government revenues and the often-remote locations of its key infrastructure. For the economies of countries with a large oil and gas sector, terrorist incidents can cause significant disruption across multiple industries, pushing up costs and driving down economic growth.<sup>67</sup> The Caribbean remains vulnerable not only to terrorist attack but to the recruitment of terrorists since countries are small, borders porous and resources inadequate. Incidences of terrorism based in or originating from Guyana have been low, but the development of the oil sector can trigger an increase in such occurrences. According to the Global Terrorism Index which measures the direct and indirect impact of terrorism, Guyana decreased to 0.04 in 2018 from 0.08 in 2017 on the index. Terrorism in Guyana averaged 0.65 from 2002 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 2.94 in 2008 and a record low of 0 in 2013.<sup>68</sup>

# Chapter 3

## Oil Revenues and National Security: Lessons for Guyana

History is replete with examples of how countries with major oil reserves have used the revenues to the benefit or detriment of their economies. The conversation regarding how

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<sup>66</sup> “Political Risk, Terrorism and Political Violence Maps - 2018 | Aon,” accessed January 12, 2020, <https://www.aon.com/2018-political-risk-terrorism-and-political-violence-maps/index.html>.

<sup>67</sup> “Terrorist Attacks And Political Violence: How Oil Is Impacted,” The One Brief, April 6, 2017, <https://theonebrief.com/terrorism-political-violence-risk-impact-to-oil-energy-industry/>.

<sup>68</sup> “Guyana Terrorism Index | 2019 | Data | Chart | Calendar | Forecast | News,” accessed December 1, 2019, <https://tradingeconomics.com/guyana/terrorism-index>.

Guyana's oil revenues will be used is still ongoing, but the Government has signaled its intention to initially use incoming revenues to fund infrastructural development in Guyana, improve connectivity of its ten regions and establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF).<sup>69</sup> The vision of the current President of Guyana is that the country follows a green development pathway and a significant portion of the revenues, will be used to catapult Guyana on its journey to becoming a green economy. While infrastructural development and conservation are important, it is also paramount that Guyana integrate a strong national security policy and framework into its development plans to ensure the protection of its vast resources.

Countries are increasingly using their vast oil wealth to enhance and safeguard their security position. The experiences of Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Brazil will be examined to provide lessons for Guyana as it moves toward transformational development and greater energy security. The specific countries were selected because they provide a wide cross section of experiences for Guyana along the range of oil production activities. Venezuela has been producing oil for over a hundred years; Brazil is still relatively new but has made strides in alternative energies and diversification, while Saudi Arabia mirrors Guyana as a small country, with a small population that experienced record transformation because of oil revenues.

#### Lesson #1- Balance social development with fiscal discipline.

While Guyana can look to Venezuela, the fifth largest oil exporting country in the world, for an example of transformational development with revenues from oil, Venezuela has completely failed to adopt fiscal discipline to manage its revenues. Poor management, insufficient investment and a series of economic reforms that should have revived the economy have led to even deeper crisis and hurt Venezuela instead. Further, successive governments failed to prioritize the creation of foreign reserves or set up a Sovereign Wealth Fund. The

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<sup>69</sup> "Green Paper – Managing Future Petroleum Revenues and Establishment of a Fiscal Rule and Sovereign Wealth Fund," *Ministry of Finance* (blog), August 10, 2018, [https://finance.gov.gy/sdm\\_downloads/green-paper-managing-future-petroleum-revenues-and-establishment-of-a-fiscal-rule-and-sovereign-wealth-fund/](https://finance.gov.gy/sdm_downloads/green-paper-managing-future-petroleum-revenues-and-establishment-of-a-fiscal-rule-and-sovereign-wealth-fund/).

country chose to increase the supply of its national currency, the Bolivar and borrowed heavily on the expectation that oil prices would remain high. Instead, oil prices fell, Venezuela defaulted on its external debt and the Bolivar has continued to suffer, losing more than 99 percent of its value since 2013.<sup>70</sup>

Guyana can look to Brazil, which has been able to successfully pursue strict fiscal discipline policies that provided a solid starting point for optimizing the use of the oil revenues for development. For example, the Brazilian Government has established limits for personnel expenditures and indebtedness at all levels of government. Permanent spending mandates are only allowed if they are based on permanent revenue increases. Strong government balances at the federal and subnational levels reduced the net public sector debt-to-GDP ratio from 57 percent in 2002 to below 40 percent at the end of 2011 and targeting the poor for social expenditures and improving the quality of public spending are already priorities in Brazil. The country also has an excellent record of targeting its conditional cash transfers (CCTs) program.

*Lesson #2- Practice Economic diversification to avoid the resource curse.*

Both Saudi Arabia and Venezuela have struggled to diversify their economies away from petroleum revenues especially after a decline in oil prices in 2014. Saudi Arabia's challenges relate to its inability to expand its private sector and adequately respond to growing demographic pressure to properly educate, employ, and support over 500,000 young people, who have reached the age to enter the labour force. The Saudi government has issued 10 development plans since 1970, each covering five years, and economic diversification is a main objective of all of the plans.<sup>71</sup> However, it continues to struggle to address this challenge in a meaningful way. Venezuela, Guyana's western neighbor, offers a stark example of the dept of

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<sup>70</sup> "Nicolás Maduro: Corruption and Chaos in Venezuela," *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed January 12, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/nicolas-maduro-corruption-and-chaos-in-venezuela-2/>.

<sup>71</sup> Bassam A. Albassam, "Economic Diversification in Saudi Arabia: Myth or Reality?," *Resources Policy* 44 (June 1, 2015): 112–17, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2015.02.005>.

economic, political and social disaster that can spin off from ineffective diversification of one's economy. Venezuela's dependence on revenue from petroleum has initiated the 'Dutch Disease' and concomitant humanitarian crisis. Global price fluctuations alongside internal political upheaval and an inordinate dependence on the state for provision of all resources has facilitated Venezuela's decline. The state in turn, has used the revenues from oil to maintain power by giving direct support to the military in exchange for support of the current regime.

It is to Brazil that Guyana can turn for an example of successful economic diversification. As the seventh largest economy in the world and possessing large reserves of oil, Brazil has successfully been able to diversify its economy away from oil revenues. In fact, oil revenue account for only 1.4% of the country's GDP and does not contribute heavily to the government's spending budget. In other words, oil is not as vital a resource to Brazil as it is in economies that rely almost exclusively on the energy sector. The country's energy independence was initiated following the 1973 oil crisis, which saw Brazil adopting a two-prong strategy for increasing domestic oil production and decreasing petroleum demand. By successfully developing sugarcane-based ethanol as a viable energy alternative, Brazil has significantly outpaced many countries, including more developed nations in terms of energy independence. Today, more than forty percent of Brazil's energy comes from renewable, alternative sources, which is far above the average of wealthier nations whose renewable energy accounts for only seven percent of energy supply.

### Lesson #3-Extensive military capabilities no longer guarantee national security.

Revenues from oil have been a catalyst for Saudi Arabia's security independence as the country has built up successful air and aid defense forces, effective counterterrorism forces, and key elements of effective ground and naval forces. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which produces directly comparable national estimates report that Saudi Arabia spent 12.51 percent of its GDP in 2015, 12.61 percent in 2016, and 11.30 percent in 2017 on

military expenditure.<sup>72</sup> A report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on global military expenditures for 2018 stated that Saudi Arabia was No. 1 in highest military spending as a percentage of GDP.<sup>73</sup> Both Brazil and Venezuela also have significant military capabilities. Brazil has steadily increased defense spending and its military expenditure averaged 13456.32 USD million from 1957 until 2018. It reached an all-time high of 30769 USD million in 2018 from 29,283 USD million in 2017, and a record low of 1946 USD million in 1964<sup>74</sup>.

Venezuela's military in particular has enjoyed a privileged status as the recipient of off budget funding that are exempt from oversight by the National Assembly.<sup>75</sup> This is facilitated through the Fondo de Desarrollo Nacional, FONDEN, a special programme set up to expedite the availability of foreign exchange to fund a range of activities and project and pay external debt.<sup>76</sup> The fund received very little oversight, and became the primary means of support for Venezuela's military modernization programme. SIPRI's 2017 review noted that since 2005, a substantial amount of the country's oil revenue and state resources were diverted to the military using FONDEN thus increasing Venezuela's annual military spending by 26 per cent for the period 2005–2015.<sup>77</sup>

However, despite massive investment in military capabilities, both Saudi Arabia and Venezuela still face challenges in responding to security threats. Saudi Arabia's impressive security portfolio, which developed as a direct result of revenues from petroleum production,

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<sup>72</sup> "Military Spending: The Other Side of Saudi Security," accessed January 24, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/military-spending-other-side-saudi-security>.

<sup>73</sup> "Saudi Arabia Ups Defence Spending in Face of Iranian Threats | Jareer Ellass," AW, accessed December 1, 2019, <https://thearabweekly.com/saudi-arabia-ups-defence-spending-face-iranian-threats>.

<sup>74</sup> "Arms Transfers and Military Spending | SIPRI," accessed December 2, 2019, <https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/arms-transfers-and-military-spending>.

<sup>75</sup> "El Poder Militar También Alcanzó a Las Empresas Estatales | Transparencia Venezuela," accessed December 5, 2019, <https://transparencia.org.ve/el-poder-militar-tambien-alcanzo-a-las-empresas-estatales/>.

<sup>76</sup> "Explota La Crisis y Venezuela Sin Un Fonden Buchón Para Recuperar La Economía," *TalCual* (blog), July 20, 2018, <https://talcualdigital.com/explota-la-crisis-y-venezuela-sin-un-fonden-buchon-para-recuperar-la-economia/>.

<sup>77</sup> "Arms Transfers and Military Spending | SIPRI."

has not been able to protect it from internal threats and it struggles with constant attacks on its oil industry infrastructure from terrorism. Further, Saudi Arabia is constantly threatened by ideological extremism and sectarian differences between its Sunni majority and Shiite minority. In the case of Venezuela, though its military has played a key role in keeping the Maduro government in place, its vast military capabilities have failed to stop the internal crisis that is unfolding. Brazil however, has chosen to rely on diplomacy to propel it onto the world stage, and maintains a policy of multilateralism and non-intervention in the affairs of other states, enabling it to maintain overall good diplomatic relationships.<sup>78</sup> Guyana can learn that as it expands its defence capabilities with revenues from oil, it is also critical that efforts are made to address any internal security threats that have the potential of destabilizing the economy and compromising national security.

#### Lesson #4- Oil Revenues must benefit all citizens

Venezuela's use of oil revenues reminds Guyana to use its resources to improve the lives of all citizens. Venezuela's record in this regard has increasingly leaned towards support for the military supported by a new constitution: the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, also known as the Fifth Republic. The provisions in the constitution provided the foundation for the military to play an expanded role in every aspect of Venezuelan society, by incorporating the armed forces into the maintenance of social order and the formulation of Venezuela's national development plans. As an ally of the President, the military in Venezuela has been prioritized and military personnel are given key positions in state-owned companies, ministries and funding agencies. Ransparencia Venezuela noted that at least 60 of the 576 state-run companies were led by the military including Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company. As of January 2019, 9 of 32 government ministries

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<sup>78</sup> "Brazil | Energy and Security," The Strauss Center, accessed December 2, 2019, <https://www.strausscenter.org/energy-and-security/brazil.html>.

were controlled by the military, including ministries of agriculture and energy.<sup>79</sup> Military spending is also prioritized over vital social needs such as education, housing and food. In 2018, when additional funding was needed for all government sectors in Venezuela, the military was one of the first to receive the additional resources. It was also among the sectors that received the highest allocations of the new funding. According to SIPRI's report, when money ran out, the military was given control over the country's food supply as a source of patronage. This allowed the military to import food at an advantageous rate of exchange and then sell it on the black market for much more than the government prices which is evidence of the long tradition in Venezuela of trading resources for political support.

## Chapter 4

# Rethinking National Security beyond 2020

### Safeguarding Guyana's Patrimony

Guyana's emergence on the global energy market comes at a time when some key developments are taking place globally. Increased global oil production and consumption is juxtaposed against efforts to reverse climate change through the expansion of renewable energy efforts that reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The World Energy Outlook, a leading source of strategic insight on trends in energy demand and supply, gives a good snapshot of the kind of global energy environment that Guyana is entering into in its 2019 annual report. It notes that without any changes to current policy "energy demand rises by 1.3% each year to 2040, with increasing demand for energy services unrestrained by further efforts to improve efficiency." The report also considers changes in the US Shale production that can have an effect on global markets and notes that "Shale output from the United States stays higher for longer, reshaping global markets, trade flows and security. In terms of revenues from hydrocarbons, the report

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<sup>79</sup> "Arms Transfers and Military Spending | SIPRI."

projects that “pressures on the hydrocarbon revenues of some of the world’s major producers also underline the importance of their efforts to diversify their economies.” Globally, the world still relies heavily on oil supply from the Middle East and 80% of international oil trade ends up in Asia. However, looking forward to 2040, the report predicts, “Africa becomes increasingly influential for global energy trends with the rise in Africa’s oil consumption to 2040 being larger than that of China, along with major expansion in natural gas use”.<sup>80</sup>

Guyana begun oil production in December 2019, after just four years from exploration and preparation to production, a record by industry standards. Its reserves are now set to be the biggest in South America after Brazil. Unlike the US’ mostly very light shale oil, Guyana’s oil is a medium-light crude closer to major Middle East grades. Further, with estimated low production costs well below current oil prices, and no major technical challenges to extraction, it is easier to shift in international markets. This will bring major benefits for Guyana, as the country is set to receive gross oil revenues of \$13 billion annually by the mid-2020s in contrast to its 2016 GDP of just \$3.4bn. According to Rystaad Energy, Guyana’s total oil production is set to surpass 600,000 barrels per day by the end of the next decade. In addition, with 17 discoveries and over 6 billion barrels of recoverable oil to date, Guyana has now shed its frontier status. The country has been listed by NASDAQ as the fastest growing economy in the world with a projected growth rate of 16.3 per cent from 2018-2021.<sup>81</sup> The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also described Guyana’s medium-term prospects as very favourable and the country’s long-term outlook is expected to improve significantly as well.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> “World Energy Outlook 2019 – Analysis,” IEA, accessed January 23, 2020, <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2019>.

<sup>81</sup> “Guyana, Fastest Growing Economy in the World – NASDAQ,” *Department of Public Information* (blog), June 28, 2019, <https://dpi.gov.gy/guyana-fastest-growing-economy-in-the-world-nasdaq/>.

<sup>82</sup> “Guyana: Staff Concluding Statement of the 2019 Article IV Mission,” IMF, accessed July 9, 2019, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/06/17/mcs061719-guyana-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2019-article-iv-mission>.

Finding new conventional oil is important for the global industry since major oil reserves in OPEC countries and Russia have been mostly closed off to international firms by government policy, insecurity and sanctions. Guyana's emergence has the capacity to shift the geopolitics of the Caribbean and South American region even as both China and Russia have been making moves to expand their influence in the region. China, through its belt and road initiative, has been offering loans to many Caribbean countries for infrastructural projects in hopes of promoting its own political and economic model as an attractive alternative to the United States.<sup>83</sup> China has expanded investment in Cuba and trade between the two countries has increased since 2015 and now trails only Venezuela as the second largest exporter to Cuba. China has also increased its diplomatic and military outreach to the Caribbean. Russia is also keen to expand its reach in Latin America as a counter to US influence while at the same time, securing access to natural resources in the region. Its particular interest in Venezuela is connected to their reserves of crude oil and natural gas. Russia's oil company Rosneft, is the main supporter of the restructuring of Venezuela's declining oil industry and has become a strategically important military partner for Russia. Venezuela receives 73% of Russian arms sales in Latin America it is expected that by 2025, Venezuela will become the second largest recipient of Russian arms sales abroad, after India.<sup>84</sup>

The continuing decline of the Venezuelan economy has affected its regional power status even as Guyana develops closer ties with the US by virtue of ExxonMobil presence offshore. Further, lessening US interest in the Caribbean since the election of Donald Trump, the expansion of Russian and Chinese influence in the region as well as conflicts unfolding in Columbia, Ecuador and Argentina, are significant geopolitical events that can catapult Guyana

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<sup>83</sup> COHA, "Filling the Void: China's Expanding Caribbean Presence," accessed December 1, 2019, <http://www.coha.org/filling-the-void-chinas-expanding-caribbean-presence/>.

<sup>84</sup> Roberto Mansilla Blanco "Russia in Latin America: Geopolitics and Pragmatism," Global Americans, November 28, 2018, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2018/11/russia-in-latin-america-geopolitics-and-pragmatism/>.

as a regional force. As the Geopolitics evolve, and Guyana moves towards energy independence, both Russia and China have come offering support. However, for consideration there is the US, having already solidified its connections to Guyana via ExxonMobil, the increasing influence of Russia in Venezuela as well as ExxonMobil's history with Venezuela. Guyana has traditionally adopted a position of non-alignment, which will serve it well moving forward. It will also need a clearly defined national security strategy to ensure that it does not become a pawn in the unfolding power play but is able to assert itself in the best interest of the country and people.

### National Security Imperatives

Natural Resources and security are interconnected because the ability of a modern nation to defend itself or expand its territory in becoming increasingly dependent on reliable sources of energy which often comes from natural resources. Countries with large deposits of natural resources have sought to form strategic alliances with more powerful nations that depend on their reserves and visa-versa. Guyana's vast natural resource portfolio places it in a strategic position to benefit from new alliances and expand current ones. Thus, its natural resources are critical to the future of its national security and should be developed in tandem with it. Minerals, agricultural land and water are vital tenets for national security and countries with large amounts of arable land, favorable climates, and fresh water are less dependent on outside supplies than nations that lack one or more of those resources. Guyana has several comparative advantages in some areas that will allow it to develop energy security, which is also vital to its national security.<sup>85</sup> Firstly, its geographic location at the top of South America with easy access to the Atlantic Ocean is a strategic advantage. Additionally, as the only English-speaking country in South America, Guyana can forge alliances across the region to

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<sup>85</sup> "Natural Resources and National Security | Encyclopedia.Com," accessed December 7, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/politics/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/natural-resources-and-national-security>.

expand its influence. Guyana also falls outside of the “hurricane zone” which means that it is not prone to the seasonal climate disruptions faced by the Caribbean. Vast resources such as water and sun can provide increased options for energy generation in the region, while arable lands can facilitate mega farms to guarantee food security for itself and others.

Therefore, it is an imperative first step for Guyana to expand its current defence framework of Total National Defence into a comprehensive national strategy that supports the coordination and orchestration of institutions and instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic). This will allow Guyana to identify its advantages and disadvantages in pursuit of a favorable foreign relations position and defense posture, capable of successfully deterring hostile action. Since the development of a national security strategy is an inclusive process, all national defence institutions (National Intelligence Centre, the Defence Secretariat, Defence Board and National Security Committee), as well as local and national stakeholders will need to be aligned for the development of a representative strategy that responds to the its most pressing needs and concerns.

Secondly, considering the scope of Guyana’s natural resources portfolio and its impact on the economy, it is imperative that revenues be available to fuel growth and development in traditional sectors, namely mining and agriculture. This can cushion these sectors as the country transitions and ensure they remain viable pillars of support to the economy. Government officials have also pointed to Guyana’s plans to use the revenue from the oil and gas sector to diversify and transform the traditional sectors, as it pursues a green development model.

Thirdly, Synergies must be found among existing strategies and development plans. Guyana has launched the Green State Development Strategy in keeping with the vision of President Granger on assuming office in 2015. The model is a blueprint for transitioning

Guyana to a green economy. The concept of a green economy is not a new one and have been adopted by countries around the world. Further, President David Granger, recently launched the “Decade of Development: 2020-2029”, aimed at fueling growth in several areas across the ten regions of Guyana. The ‘Decade’ will include at least ten major sectors of development with heavy emphasis on education, to ensure that the system is more reflective of the needs of the new economy. It will also focus on access the promotion of social cohesion, food and energy security, transition to renewable and clean sources of energy as well as environmentally sustainable management of our natural resources among others. At its unveiling, the President assured that the objectives of the ‘Decade’ are aligned to the Green State Development Strategy (GSDS): Vision 2040, the Sustainable Development Agenda, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The vision is for Guyana to use its revenues from Petroleum to accelerate a green economy model that will support sustainable management of the country’s natural resources for future generations. In support of this plan, Guyana has already committed to transitioning to renewable energy by 2025, and has pursued national efforts to bring the natural resources sector in particular, in compliance with its commitment. Further, synergies among the strategies must be underpinned by a comprehensive security strategy that systematically aligns development with security. This is imperative since, even though resources are bountiful, they are finite and require prudent management to ensure that every Guyanese benefits.

#### Guyana rising: An alternative scenario

Some opponents of the decision to develop Guyana’s petroleum potential have posited that balancing a green pathway and resource development are not synonymous. In defence, they have pointed to internal and external threats that the country will potentially face on its development trajectory. While the warnings must be heeded considering the many examples of countries who have squandered their resources, development of Guyana’s oil resources

provides a unique opportunity to enhance its security portfolio and better protect its citizens from internal and external threats. Norway is identified as a prime example of developing one's resources while pursuing a green economy pathway. This is key for Guyana to look at, and evaluate what aspects to adopt to the local context to support its long-term growth and sustainability.

Judging from its accomplishments in four short years, as well as its current development trajectory, Guyana is poised to be an example of sustainable management in tandem with resource development to other nations and is well positioned to become a "big brother" to other Caribbean countries who are experiencing downturns in their economies.

## Conclusion

The business section of the Stabroek newspaper for January 24, 2020 carried an article titled: "Guyana's oil exports part of OPEC's price concerns: Oil Industry News". The article outlines OPEC's concerns about the impact of increased oil production specifically from Norway and Guyana that can potentially affect the supply and price of oil globally. While at a glance this may be of concern to some, it speaks volumes about the level of influence that Guyana can develop in the near future. Growing from a small, relatively unknown country in South America, to contributing to raising concern among the OPEC consortium by playing an important role in determining future oil prices, is quite a leap. However, this is the very kind of influence that the future holds for Guyana, and which should be incubated in an effective and well-planned security strategy. Guyana stands at a critical point in history as the coming decade will be a measure of the kind of economic, political and social existence its citizens will enjoy for generations to come. It is also the right time for Guyana to expand its security stance from territorial defence, to include strategic influence globally.

As Guyana rises, it will undoubtedly attract the envy of neighbours near and far and therefore should be careful not to underestimate the level and variety of threats that will be

directed towards it. Guyanese will need to become more security conscious to fully embrace the concept of Total National Defence in its current form. Total National Defence is not a new concept to Guyana and was explored in some form under President LFS Burnham. However, Guyana's current development presents the right environment for success as evidenced in the experiences of Singapore.

At its current juncture, Guyana can learn valuable lessons from nations at different stages of development to avoid any significant side effects from its impending wealth. A sound national security strategy will be key to safeguarding the patrimony as Guyana moves into its decade of development, with a green development focus and a view of rethinking its national security and defence.

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