

September 7, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR

Mr. U. Alexis Johnson
The Department of State

SUBJECT: British Guiana

I don't want to become a bore about cables on British Guiana; but I do not think that #1165, Eyes Only, to Bruce reflects Presidential policy as I understand it. I would have rephrased (1) to read: "We continue to have serious reservations about British assessment as set forth [etc.]. . . In our view, we should keep in mind possibly Jagan will move to establish Castro-style regime upon independence. Particularly ominous [etc.]. . . Nevertheless we see no alternative at this point to testing whether situation salvageable by exploring policies designed to tie an independent British Guiana politically and economically to hemisphere."

I would have omitted the bit about Jagan as a possible sleeper. Sleeper is a technical term meaning a disciplined agent who pretends to be one thing and then, at a given moment, tears off his mask and reveals himself as something entirely different. I have not heard this seriously suggested about Jagan, and I hope that David does not, on the basis of this cable, convey to the British the idea that our government seriously entertains this idea. Jagan is probably something more dangerous than a sleeper -- he is a muddlehead. Confused idealists have caused the world far more trouble than conspirators. Also I would have added the last sentence because the cable nowhere states what we are trying to achieve in British Guiana.

I think I would have omitted (2) or reduced it to a tactical point. Is it really our policy to keep Jagan dangling? My guess is that the President

JFK: Arthur M. Schlesinger Papers, b. 27, f. "BrGuine: Bkgrnd: Chedd, Jagan."

NLK-02-22
DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
By MAD/NARA Date 3/02

has been thinking in terms of a cordial try at bringing British Guiana into the hemisphere. Nothing is worse than a half-hearted courtship.

(3) - (6) seem to me fine.

I feel that the omission of any positive statement of our policy, of the sort suggested in the last sentence of my revised (1), plus the inclusion of (2), might give David Bruce a misleading impression of our present thinking on the subject.

Arthur Schlesinger, jr.
Special Assistant
to the President

as:ga

**NATIONAL
SECURITY
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu