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7 February 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William C. Burdett

On 7 February 1964 we received the following message addressed to you from the Embassy in London:

1. In response to your request on 31 January for comments on the latest British thinking on British Guiana, the following is our assessment on current HMG thinking: Our principal conclusion is much the same as that reported to you on 12 December 1963: While HMG is proceeding with the modalities for implementing Sandys plan, it hopes to avoid a showdown with Jagan or at least postpone it as long as possible. The latest status report on these modalities was given in EMBTEL 3667. HMG would undoubtedly maintain that the complexities of the matter, as well as broader considerations, have made it impossible or inadvisable to move more rapidly, but it is perhaps significant that three months after the London Conference, the legal foundation has not yet been completed for any portion of Sandys plan. Piper comments not only has Sandys been almost overwhelmed by other problems, but that Sandys deliberates interminably over minor details except in fast moving crises. We concur with these comments, but wonder if this bottleneck is the major reason for the relatively slow pace. It seems more likely that HMG's reluctance to force an early showdown with Jagan has been heightened by the flurry of crises involving former colonies (Malaysia, East Africa, Cyprus); it would be understandable if HMG thinks its plate of such problems is full. Despite Ambler Thomas' disclaimer (EMBTEL 3069) the current stretching of British military resources may also contribute to their desire to avoid a crisis in BG.

2. Second factor of increasing importance in HMG thinking is Labor Party opposition to Sandys plan. As the election draws closer, it would be only natural for HMG to

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E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
NLJ 04-217
By Sj, NARA, Date 4-6-05

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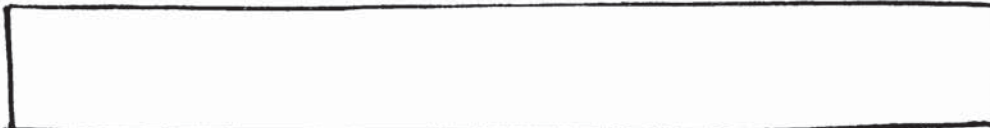
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try to avoid actions on BG which the Labor Party could exploit. HMG may not project this idea to the point of thinking that BG is one problem HMG would gladly pass on to a Labor government, but it is most unlikely that HMG feels it is obligated to move ahead so rapidly as to prevent any Labor government from changing the course.

3. We have not sensed that HMG has been toying with the idea that some solution other than Sandys plan can be found. Piper's concern over Ghanaian activity was genuine, but HMG apparently doubts that much will result from recent William-Bustamente-Barrows-Jagan meeting. Sandys plan thus remains basic for HMG thinking and action, even if scenario has not yet been expanded into full script (e.g., Timing of elections apparently still undetermined). Perhaps Hucks return to BG to start electoral registration will bring the matter to head, but if Jagan tries to avoid a showdown, HMG is likely to reciprocate.

4. If this assessment is correct, it might be advisable to explore further Secretary Rusk's suggestion to Sandys that the U.S. and U.K. look for some way other than direct rule for coping with some of the problems direct rule would solve (MEMCON sent with 20 Dec to Burdett). We do not know how HMG would respond to concrete proposals along these lines, although comments above on avoiding a showdown with Jagan would probably be relevant.



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