

A collection of items including a chessboard, medals, a compass, and glasses. The chessboard is in the top left, with several pieces visible. A red ribbon with a circular emblem is in the top center. A silver star-shaped medal is in the middle left. A blue ribbon with a circular emblem is in the bottom left. A silver star-shaped medal is in the bottom left. A compass is in the bottom left. A pair of glasses is in the bottom center.

Guyana's Existential Threat

Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith
Fellow, Caribbean Policy
Consortium & Global Americans

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CPC-GBJ Webinar on  
Transforming Guyana Episode IV  
September 14, 2022

# Introduction

- ❖ Congrats to GBJ & CPC for valuable series
- ❖ Thanks to Terrence & David for invitation
- ❖ Will offer my contribution to today's discussion by pondering two questions:
  1. Why is Venezuela's claim an existential threat to Guyana?
  2. What are some local-global imperatives that warrant pursuit as Guyana manages this existential threat? ... **On to Q1**

# Remember Voltaire



❖ “An existential threat is a threat to a people’s existence or survival.” --  
*Britannica Dictionary*

# Four Fundamental Factors

❖ Venezuela's claim undermines four key factors of nationhood

- ✓ Land
- ✓ People
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Identity



# Claim's Land Implications

- ❖ Everything west of Essequibo River
- ❖ 61,600 sq miles; some 74% of Guyana
- ❖ 6 of 10 Regions (1,2, part of 3,7,8,9)
- ❖ Could hold JA  $14\frac{1}{2}$  times; 88% size of United Kingdom
- ❖ Left: 21,400 sq miles; half size of Cuba; SUR?



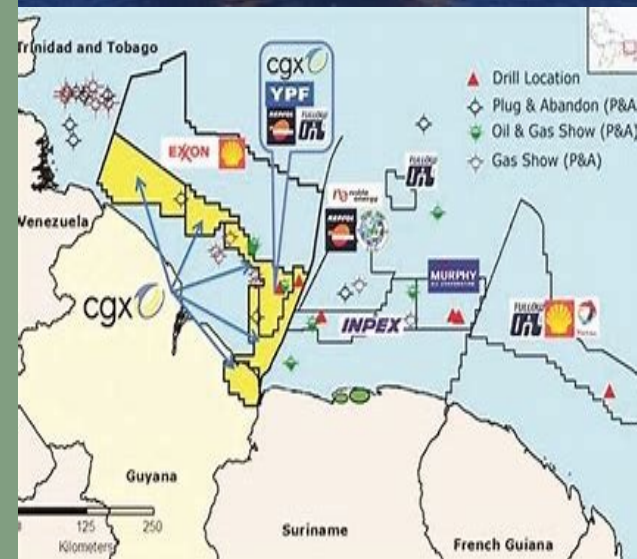
# Claim's People Implications

- ❖ About 300,000 of country's 808,948 (World Population Clock)
- ❖ Most of country's nine First Peoples are there: the Wai Wai; Macushi; Patamona; Lokono; Kalina (Carib); Wapishana; Pemon; Akawaio; and Warao.



# Claim's Resource Implications

- ❖ Offshore oil and gas
- ❖ Gold, diamond, bauxite
- ❖ Manganese, uranium, and other minerals, and timber.
- ❖ Part of Guiana Shield; rich biodiversity; rich agri lands



# Claim's Identity Implications ...

Born in the land of the mighty Roraima  
Land of great rivers and far stretching  
sea

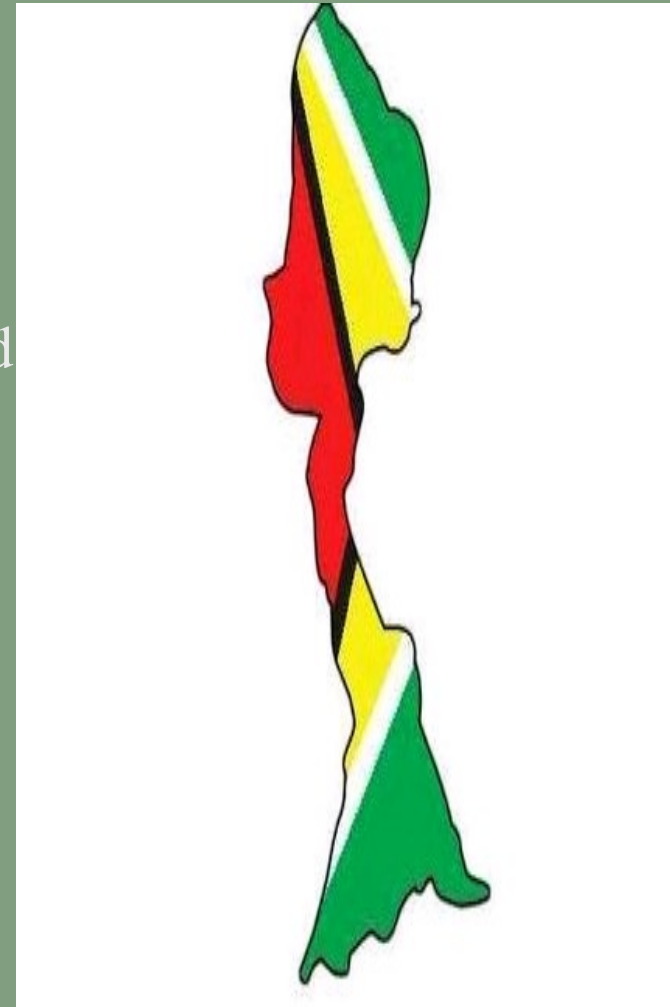
So, like the mountain, the sea and the  
river

Great, wide and deep in our lives would  
we be ....

Born in the land of Kaieteur's shining  
splendor

Land of the palm tree, croton and fern  
We would possess all the virtues and  
graces

We all the glory of goodness would  
learn. (Song of Guyana's Children) Q2





# Four Key Imperatives

- ❖ Judicial Engagement
- ❖ Defense Diplomacy
- ❖ Public Education
- ❖ Security Investment



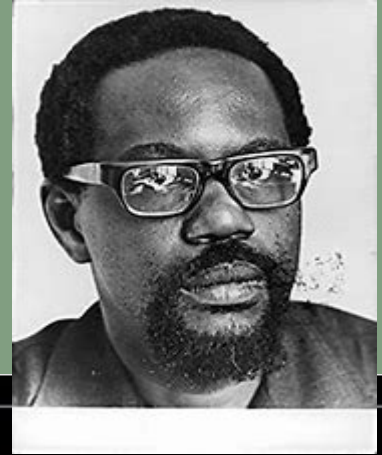
# Judicial Imperative

- ❖ Calls to Mind *Waiting for Godot*; milestones
- ❖ March 29, 2018: Application
- ❖ December 18, 2020: ICJ Decision on jurisdiction
- ❖ March 8, 2021: order about Memorial (GUY > March 8, 2022); Counter-memorial (VEN > March 8, 2023)
- ❖ June 7, 2022: VEN files preliminary objection to admissibility of GUY's case



# Diplomacy Imperative

- ❖ In relation to VEN, foreign policy pursued along “*parallel tracks, one requiring vigilance for the defense of Guyana’s territorial integrity and a search by diplomatic and political means for a resolution of the controversy by peaceful means, and the other the promotion of economic and functional cooperation between different sectors of the Guyanese and Venezuelan society. In this enterprise, diplomacy was the first line of defense as well as an important vehicle for promoting cooperation.*” Rashleigh Jackson



Guyana's Diplomacy:  
Reflections of a  
Former Foreign  
Minister

Jackson, Rashleigh E.

Note: This is not the actual book cover

# Public Education Imperative

- ❖ Unlike Venezuela, Guyana has not undertaken a consistent civic education campaign about the territorial controversy.
- ❖ Still recall 1<sup>st</sup> visit to Caracas in 1981 & being surprised at frequency with which national anthem was played on radio and television.
- ❖ Quickly learned this was part of VEN's national patriotic education campaign. Official maps, school educational material, and other documents all showed & discussed Essequibo as zona en reclamación. They still do so.
- ❖ Current efforts necessary but not sufficient
- ❖ GUY must launch & sustain comprehensive public education campaign about history of dispute, value of the territory, & implications of losing it, as remote as that possibility is.
- ❖ Campaign should use popular culture & social media, & cater for citizens at home & abroad.
- ❖ Should go beyond ENG & include native lang



Resources on  
**Guyana/Venezuela**  
Controversy



**ICJ Documents**



**Historical Context of  
Guyana-Venezuela  
Controversy Pamphlet**

# Security Investment Imperative

- ❖ GDF no match—and doesn't need to match—VEN security establishment
- ❖ But GUY needs to enhance its security capability in all areas
- ❖ President Irfaan Ali has pledged to make investments
- ❖ Began last year ... Ω

## Metal Shark building new patrol vessel for Guyana Defense Force

VESSELS

August 10, 2022, by Fatima Bahtić

Louisiana-based boat builder Metal Shark has revealed it is building a welded-aluminum monohull patrol vessel 115 Defiant for the Guyana Defense Force (GDF).



# Final Words

(that point to existential essence of claim)

*“No word of introduction from me can be adequate, Mr. President and Eminent Judges, without impressing, at the outset, the singular importance of this Case to all the people of Guyana – whose collective patrimony is at the centre of this Hearing, and who are united in defense of their sovereignty and the territorial integrity of their Homeland.”* –Sir Shridath Ramphal, Co-Agent, June 30, 2020, Oral Hearing, ICJ

