Conflict Diagnostic:

GUYANA

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Based on CIFP Methodology

BACKGROUND

Guyana's present state of affairs exists upon a backdrop of ethnic polarization, political tensions, poverty, economic instability, rising crime and drug trafficking. The ethnic tensions rest on a historical foundation that began as early as the 1600's, when the Dutch introduced African slaves to Guyana. In the 1800's the British gained control of the colony and slavery was abolished by 1838 (Mars 2001). As Afro-Guyanese moved to the cities or established their own collective farms, Chinese, Portuguese and East-Indian indentured servants were brought in to fill the labour gap (CIDCM 2000). In 1953, the popularly elected People's Progressive Party (PPP), supported and comprised by both Afro and Indo-Guyanese, was dissolved by the British government because it believed its leader, Cheddi Jagan, was communist and imposed an appointed government. Three years later, the party split with Burnham creating the People's National Congress (PNC) starting off political rivalry based on ethnic lines, with the mostly urban Afro-Guyanese supporting the PNC, and the mostly rural Indo-Guyanese supporting Cheddi and the PPP (Encarta). Self-government was restored to Guyana under a Cheddi government in 1961 but by this time the two sides were becoming polarized and violence culminated in 1962-64 to a "near-genocidal" episode: 150 died and 800 were injured (Mars 2001). In 1964, the British, still fearing Cheddi as a communist, introduced a proportional representation voting system. Due to the change, the PPP could not gain a clear majority so the British asked Burnham (PNC) to form a coalition with the United Force (TUF). Under his rule Guyana gained Independence in 1966 but an era of authoritarian rule, economic ruin, and increased ethno-political violence that was carried out via wage strikes by politically backed unions, began (Encarta) (Mars 2001). Through the elimination of political opposition and rigged elections, his regime lasted for 21 years until his death in 1985. Hoyte succeeded him and the PNC stayed in power after another rigged election and continued economic decline. Electoral violence, heightened ethnic tensions, and demonstrations due to harsh IMF policies also plagued the Hoyte administration. However with international pressures, Hoyte worked to provide more free and democratic elections, which saw Cheddi Jagan and the PPP elected by popular vote in 1992. Although international monitors were stationed in Guyana, the PNC rejected the legitimacy of the election, starting off another wave of ethno-political violence (Mars 2001). Cheddi Jagan died in 1997 and his wife, Janet, took over the leadership of the PPP. By December of that year, the PPP was elected again but electoral violence continued with the PNC claiming electoral fraud and refusing to take their seats in Parliament (Encarta). Riots amongst workers occurred a year later (1998-1999) over low wages and the rising cost of living (Mars 2001). By 1999, Janet Jagan stepped down as President due to ill health and the Finance Minister, Bharrat Jagdeo was selected as President; in 2001 he won the elections in his own right. The elections were supervised by international monitors, including the Organization of American States and the Carter Centre, and were deemed to be free and fair; however racial tensions continued and violence broke out again (Caribbean Net News, July 2004). Ethnic tensions and violence between the two main groups continues today and is exacerbated by poor economic conditions (aggravated by the recent flooding of January 2005) and lack of political will by the leaders to engage in serious commitment to overcome the racial divide. Due to the trend of violence occurring following political elections in Guyana, the upcoming election scheduled for 2006 warrants international attention and concern.

STAKEHOLDERS

Internal

Stakeholder	Composition	Grievance/Interests
People's Progressive Party (PPP)	Indo-Guyanese support; in power at the moment under leadership of Bharrat Jagdeo	Feel picked on by Afro-Guyanese; urban violence targeting Indo-Guyanese (Mars, 2001)
People's National Congress (PNC)	Afro-Guyanese support; opposition party lead by Robert Corbin	Feel are not represented in government and East Indians monopolize economic advantages (wealth and land) (Mars, 2001)
United Force (TUF) Working People's Alliance (WPA)	Smaller parties, multi-ethnic	Alliance in coalition with one party or the other
Amerindians	Indigenous peoples	Want autonomy of indigenous land
Other	Mixed Races, Portuguese, Chinese	Want to live in a stable country

External

Stakeholder	Composition	Grievance/Interests
Venezuela	The government of Venezuela	Does not accept 1899 arbitration decision and lays claim to all of Guyana west of the Essequibo River (62% of Guyana's territory) (US Department of State);
Suriname	The government of Suriname	Disputes over land and maritime borders (oil deposits are believed to exist off the two countries' coast)
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	Caribbean states of which Guyana is a member	Want economic and political stability in the region to create a stronger Caribbean community; are involved with settling disputes between Suriname and Guyana; also economic help with the floods.
World Bank (WB), United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	International Community	Debt relief, Structural Adjustment Plans, and loans to this Heavily Indebted Poor Country (most recently loan of US$14.1 million from IMF in January 2005 (Reuters).
Oil Exploration Companies	E.g., CGX Energy Inc (Canada)	Involved in exploration of oil off coast of Guyana & Suriname

HISTORY OF ARMED CONFLICT

Peace factors	Conflict factors
→Political willingness since 1985 to resolve internal ethnic conflict.	→50-year history of interethnic tensions in the form of sporadic violent uprisings, protests, riots, general strikes.
→ May 2003 Political leaders agree on a "constructive engagement" and various constitutional/ parliamentary/ electoral reforms (AI 2004)	→Elections (1992, 1997, 2001) have been marred by low level violence (less than 100/year) (HRI 2003) - next elections are planned for 2006.
→Active civil society groups in mediating the conflict (Bar Association, Private Sector and Labour Unions) and addressing crime wave (USAID 2004a)	→Issuance of gun licenses for citizens who are qualified (GINA)
→The Carter Centre and Commonwealth members (UK, Canada) have been involved since 1992 in observing the national elections and monitoring the conflict (Carter Centre 2004; USAID 2004a)	→In 2002 waves of violent crimes: (1) murder rate of 160/year, four times higher than the previous year (BBC 2005); (2) police brutality (HRI 2003)
→January 2005 Transformation workshop headed by the Ethnic Relations Commission; all parties' have committed (Starbroek 16 Jan); currently postponed due to flooding.	→Allegations of extra-judicial killings of criminals by 'death squad': Home Affair Minister suspected (BBC 2005; FAC 2004)
	→Deteriorating security situation largely due to drug trafficking activities (WB 2004)
	→In 2004, 1,500 people sought refuge abroad, mainly in Canada and US (US Committee for Refugees 2004)

GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Peace Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→Change from a one-party system to multi-party system in 1992 under International monitoring (CIDCM 2004).	→Ethnic polarization of the political system since 1957: tensions between the 2 groups are reproduced on the political scene with ethnically based political parties (PNC representing the Afro-Guyanese and PPP the Indo-Guyanese)(HRI 2003).
→Independent Disciplined Forces Commission (DFC) created to investigate the Guyana Police Forces' composition, pay and structure (AI 2004).	→Nascent democratic system (since 1992) that builds on a legacy of 21 years of authoritarian rule under Burnham's regime (CIDCM 2003)
→Ethnic Relations Commission appointed by the Parliament to investigate complaints of racial discrimination (AI 2004).	→ Elections (1992, 1997, 2001) have been marred by violence (although less than 100/year) (HRI 2003) - next elections are planned for 2006.
→In 2003, Guyana passed anti-crime legislation to stop the wave of violence (AI 2004)	→Since 1992, the Indo-Guyanese dominated PPP has remained in power – criticism expressed via general strikes by labour unions, parliamentary boycotts (CIDCM 2003).
→Considered by Guyanese as having voice and being accountable (69% according to surveys led by the World Bank in 2002).	→1980 Constitution grants most of the executive power to the President (CIDCM 2003).
→Rights of association, freedom of press and expression are respected (although 2 journalists have recently been arrested and originally faced death sentences on "conspiracy charges" against the government) (Amnesty 2004).	→Parliament has low checks/balances on the executive; this has led to various parliamentary boycotts by the opposition (CIDCM 2003).
→ Rule of law (legitimacy of government is contested in High Court) judged elections as relatively fair (BBC 2001; CIDCM 2003)	→"Winner-takes-all" electoral system in which one ethnic group dominates; since 1992, the Indo-Guyanese PPP has remained in power (Carter Centre 2004)
	→Strong labor union force aligned on ethnicity and very politicized (US Department of State 2003).
	→Public service institutions are dominated by the party which is in power (CIDCM 2000).
	→The 3 last elections were suspected as fraudulent and contested (in 1992, 1997, and 2001) (BBC 2001)
	→Government is perceived at slow in implementing military and government reforms. (Stabroek 2004)
	→Evidence of corruption in the public service institutions (WB 2000)

MILITARIZATION

Peace Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→2002/03 additional funding was added to the Police Force budget after a series of crime waves to improve and strengthen capacity (GINA)	→Armed forces is made up of: Guyana Defense Force (GDF; includes Ground Forces, Coast Guard, and Air Corps), Guyana People's Militia (GPM), Guyana National Service (GNS), Guyana Police Force (Nationmaster.com)
→Disciplined Forces Commission of 2004 was made up of a bi-partisan committee of PPP and PNC in which a number of important recommendations regarding the military; the House unanimously approved the 164 recommendations but initiatives have not been implemented (Haynes Stabroek News, December 2004).	→Under Burnham regime (1964-85), GDF became political tool; soldiers had to pledge oath of allegiance to PNC (Afro-Guyanese Party) (Library of Congress)
	→Military expenditure is only 0.8% of GDP (6.5mil) (CIA WF) and has been declining by -.76% (Nationmaster)
	→Total military personnel: 3200 active, 2170 reserves; Navy has one patrol and coastal combatant; Air Force has no combat aircraft, no armed helicopters (Alertnet); small size plus internal problems (corruption, accountability, extra judicial killings) have serious consequences for the country's internal security, as well as external borders (re: Venezuela and Suriname).
	→ 2.84 military personnel / 1000 people (Nationmaster)
	→Lack of military presence on the borders, the country acts as a transit way for illegal drugs from South America to Europe and the U.S.

POPULATION HETEROGENEITY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Peace Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→Religion: 50% Christian, 35% Hindu, Muslim 10%, other 5% (CIA); although religiously diverse, religious tolerance is generally adhered to with different schools and churches affiliated with many religions; religious festivals celebrated. →Political leaders are open to external mediation (Carter Center) and have publicly made pledges to work together. →In his New Year's Day speech, Robert Corbin of the opposition called for a renewal of the May 6 2003 communiqué (Stabroek 2003). →In February 2005 consultations will begin on new law drafted which will give Amerindian communities more responsibilities and more control over land as well as profit sharing over resources (i.e. mines) (Stabroek Jan 4).	→Population of 767,000 (BBC) divided along ethnic lines: 50% East Indian descent (Indo-Guyanese), 36% African descent (Afro-Guyanese), 7% Amerindian, 7% Chinese, European & other (Nationmaster.com) →Scores high on ethnic (7.0) and religious diversity (8.0) (CIFP) →90% of the population live on the coastal strip (only 5% of the total land mass) (Country Studies - CS). →Urban population is 37.1% set to go up to 44% by 2015 (UNDP HDR 2004); 80% of the urban population lives in the capital Georgetown and is predominantly Afro-Guyanese (CS). →Population under 15 is at 30% but decreasing (UNDP HDR 2004). →Growth rate is low at 0.44% (Nationmaster) →Public agreements are not followed by concrete commitments (i.e. May 6 2003 communiqué) little progress as Opposition walks out of Parliament. →both sides feel threatened by the other; lack of trust →Small group of Afro-Guyanese militants who conducting struggle against Indo-Guyanese (Caribbean Net News, July 2004) →Amerindian way of life is being threatened by environmental stress (i.e. mining and logging tactics).

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Peace Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→ Recipient of FDI amounting to US$43.6M (WB 2002); → Over US$250M of investments pledged for the private and state sectors for 2005 (E.g., bauxite, sugar, oil, forestry, and mining) (www.Guyana.org). → High in trade openness 147.2% of GDP (WB 2002). → The PPP government has introduced a series of wage increases, beginning in 1994, which may reduce future labor strikes due to low wages (WB 2000). → Debt forgiveness of US$256M in 1999 by the Paris Club; recently, Russia has written off US$16.3M and Germany has done the same (www.Guyana.org).	→ GDP growth rate is low at -0.6% per year, according to 2003 data (WB); ranking Guyana 8.6/10 from 3.2/10 in 1998 (CIFP). However, IMF (2005) data indicates that Guyana's growth rate improved in 2004. → GDP per capita is low at $4,260 US (UNDP HDR 2002). → Total debt service is extremely poor at 10.8% of GDP (WB 2002). → Inflation is problematic, with the Ave. increase at 5.8% per year (UNDP 1990-2002); however, the Consumer Price Index is currently at 3.5, according to the IMF (2005). → Income distribution is poor, with a GINI Index of 43.2 (UNDP 1999). → Ranks 6.71 out of 10 on economic performance (CIFP 2004). → The performance of projects designed to improve the private sector has been poor and unsustainable (e.g., Financial Sector and Business Credit, Private Sector Development Adjustment Credit, and Private Sector Institutional Development Projects) (WB 2004).

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Peace-Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→ 94% of the population has access to improved water source (UN HDR 2000), in part due to the Water Supply Technical Assistance and Rehabilitation Project (WB 2004). → Primary School Enrollment is high, at 98.4%; however, Secondary School enrollment drops to 70.3% (WB 1999). Improvements in the access and quality of education are expected with the Education for All (EFA) Fast Track Initiative (FTI) (WB 2004). → Literacy rate is high; 96.5% of individuals aged 15 and over (UN HDR 2002). → HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project approved in June 2001 (WB 2004).	→ HIV/AIDS is pandemic with 2.5% of ages 15-49 infected (UN HDR 2003). → CIFP ranking for HIV/AIDS control is extremely poor at 9.8/10 (2004). → The population under 15 years of age is projected to decline by 4.5% by 2015 (UN HDR 2004). → Infant mortality rate is poor at 54 deaths per 1000 live births (UN HDR 2002). → Maternal mortality rate is at 170 per 100,000 live births (UN HDR 2000). → State health expenditures per capita are low at $215 US per capita (HDR 2001); Disease is a key post-flood threat (www.guyana.com). → Guyana ranks 104 on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2004). → Human Development ranked at 5.15 out of 10 (CIFP 2004).

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS

Peace Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→As of 1999, there were 655 ha of cropland per 1000; compared to 341 ha per 1,000 in South America (WRI 1999). →Rainforest Conservation and Development initiative (UNDP 2002). →EU Cooperation Framework for 2002-2007 of €48M primarily to prevent further land erosion (EU 2002). →UNDP supported program for cooperation with regard to the conservation and sustainable biodiversity, land development, as well as, the Environmental Protection Agency, International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (UNDP 2002).	→ Flash floods due to heavy rains (most recently January 2005 leaving 120 000 homeless) (WRI 2003a). →Deforestation problem (Lehan et al. 2000): Rate of Deforestation 4.0 (CIFP 2004). →Water pollution due to mining practices (WRM 2001). →Arable land accounts for 2.44% of total in 2001. (CIA WF, 2001)

INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

Peace Generating Factors	Conflict Generating Factors
→ UNDP/WB – development of Country Cooperation Framework, includes Poverty Reduction and Democratic Governance initiative (UNDP 2002) →Venezuela Dispute: 1. Mediation under the United Nations Good Officer Process (GP 2000) 2. Debt relief cancelled US$12M (Danny 2004) 3. Flood assistance in 2005 for US$300 000 (MRE 2005, Guyana Diary Feb 2005, GINA, →Suriname Dispute: 1. Talks through the National Border Commission with oversight from a delegation of Trinidad & Tobago and supported by CARICOM (SDNP 2000) 2. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea – possible arbitration (SDNP 2000). →Group of 77; NAM; CARICOM; Commonwealth of Nations	→Ongoing boarder disputes with: 1. Venezuela – Essequibo Region (GP 2000) 2. Suriname – New River Triangle to Corentyne River (SDNP 2000). →Transnational Crime (i.e.-drug-trafficking) trans-shipment point in South America (USDS 2004). →Scores poorly on Military/Security Alliances Index 9.0 (CIFP 2004) →Historically foreign relations policy centers around political non-alignment with Latin American neighbors (LCCS 1992).

BEST CASE SCENARIO: SETTLEMENT OF ALL CONFLICTS

1. The Ethnic Relations Commission brings the two parties, PPP and PNC, back on the negotiation table: they engage firmly in reforming the electoral system for the next elections in 2006 as stipulated in the "Constructive Engagement" of May 2003. A power-sharing system is adopted rather than a majority system, which brings the two parties to govern together in 2006.
2. Reconciliation of the two ethno-political parties; decline in ethnic tensions and political violence.
3. This precipitates a favorable climate for getting the economy back on track: further debt forgiveness, wage increases, attraction of foreign direct investment, CARICOM countries invest in Guyana's mining and agricultural industries under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).
4. Chavez (Venezuela) and Jagdeo agree on a settlement over the long dispute of the 83,000-square-mile territory in the Essequibo region.
5. Guyana and Suriname agree with the UN Tribunal on sharing oil revenues in the disputed seawaters.

WORST CASE SCENARIO: 2 INTERSTATE DISPUTES THAT DESTABILIZE THE INTERNAL SITUATION

1. Oil is discovered in the disputed area with Suriname, which heightens the conflict between the two countries.
2. Further breakdown in talks between the PPP and PNC over the deteriorating situation; Corbin boycotts the Parliament and calls on massive labor union strikes.
3. Capital flight as well as government failure to provide stability (economic and political) and to bring about political reforms before the elections in 2006.
4. PPP is for the fourth time elected, thanks to its supporters among the Indo-Guyanese ethnic majority. Corbin's PNC rejects the election legitimacy and condemns the Indo-Guyanese PPP for its failure to bring about the promised reforms.
5. The waves of violence increase and general disorder is intensified. There is a further escalation of ethnic rivalries and extended access to small arms intensifies mutual fear.
6. Venezuela decides to take advantage of the weakened Guyanese government and unilaterally annexes the timber-rich 83,000-square-mile Essequibo region resulting in a militarized dispute between the 2 countries. The international community fails to intervene (in part due to Guyana's lack of stable allies).
7. A growing political instability leads the country into civil conflict drawn along ethnic lines and extreme measures are adopted by the PPP in an unsuccessful attempt to stabilize the situation. There is widespread political violence targeting both Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese.

MOST LIKELY SCENARIO: SLOW PROGRESS TO INTERNAL & EXTERNAL STABILITY

1. Electoral system is not reformed for 2006 elections; post-election activity will be marred by eruption of violence along ethnic lines.
2. Electoral win for PPP in 2006; PNC will proceed with current tactics of protest (e.g.-boycott of parliament).
3. Internal rhetoric of cooperation will continue, with failure to implement or operationalize reforms.
4. Extra-judicial violence and killings will continue for some time, and may even increase in the near term before declining. Crime wave will continue at the current rate, and may even increase (pending small arms availability).
5. External relations with Suriname will arrive at a stalemate with slow progressive talks through arbitration.
6. External relations with Venezuela will continue to be fostered along lines of community building, with slow progressive talks over disputed area.
7. Pressure will increase from U.S. Government to reform surrounding border control. Monetary incentives to aid in reform are likely.

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