A 37 Confidential

Subject: Suriname - British Guiana Boundary.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to refer to your telegram No. 73 of May 16th and your letter 60013/36 of May 19th 1955 and to inform you that, as a result of a meeting of the Netherlands, Brazilian and British Commissions at Paramaribo between 21st and 29th June, a satisfactory agreement has been reached with Netherlands Commissioners regarding the River Rutari.

A report on the Tri-junction Point has been signed by the Heads of the three Commissions. This report includes a reference to the identification of the river Rutari which reads as follows:

6. Identification of the river Rutari.
(a) On a previous expedition Admiral Kuyper had been shown the junction of the river Rutari with the river Spirituini by local Indians. The astronomical observations of the Netherlands Commission at this point make the latitude agree very closely with that given by Sir Robert Schomburgk in his Report.

The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Colonial Office.
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to the British Royal Geographical Society.
Schomburgk did not state the longitude very
definitely.
(b) This river Kutari has been surveyed from
its junction with the river Sigaliwin to the
sources of its main branches. Its junction with
the Aramanau, its general direction and its
main characteristics below the point where
Schomburgk embarked are all in agreement with
his description, except that his estimate of
the width below the Aramanau junction is
excessive.
(c) The river Aramanau has also been surveyed,
but its course and character are both very
different from the description of the Kutari
given by Schomburgk. Moreover it is about 20
kilometres shorter than the Kutari, and therefore,
even if considered to be a branch of that
river, it could not be the longest one branch.
(d) Although the exact point where Schomburgk
first joined the upper reaches of the river
Kutari has not yet been identified, further
survey work to be carried out by the Brazilian
Commission may provide information as to where
he crossed the watershed. The Mixed Commission
agree that there could be no doubt that he
travelled down the lower part of this river and
that it is Schomburgk's Kutari.
(e) The Mixed Commission, being satisfied
that this is the only river which in any way
answers to Schomburgk's description of the
Kutari, agreed that the boundary between Suriname
and
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and British Guiana, as defined in the instructions issued to the Mixed Commission, should follow the left bank of its longest branch.

3. Admiral Kayser has also signed the minutes of the conference in which it is recorded that he is satisfied beyond doubt that our River Kutari is the same river which Schomburgk named the Kutari.

4. While discussing the subject at Paramaribo it was discovered that the Netherlands Commission were referring to Sir Richard Schomburgk's account of the journey made by his brother, Sir Robert Schomburgk. Whereas the British section were using a copy of the Report which Sir Robert Schomburgk made to the Royal Geographical Society on his own travels. The two accounts differ considerably in details, and particularly as regards certain geographical Co-ordinates. It was agreed that Sir Robert Schomburgk's own official Report was more likely to be correct than his brother's second-hand and very much shorter account in an ordinary travel book.

5. Incidentally the Netherlands Commissioner inadvertently confirmed my suspicion that he wished to leave the Kutari boundary uncertain in order to provide an excuse to re-open the New River Question. He explained that the question whether we had found the correct Kutari was, in his opinion, of little importance, because he himself and many other people in Holland were convinced that the New River was the boundary. However, his instructions were to fix the Trijunction Point at the source of the Kutari and he was prepared to do so and to leave the question of the New River to the Dutch Parliament.
4. Parliament to decide.

6. Unofficial conversation in Paramaribo certainly seemed to confirm Admiral Kuyser's remarks that it was generally believed that the New River should really be the boundary.

7. I have laboured this point because, as you will see from the map of British Guiana, all our future work on the Brazilian Boundary will be wasted if later on the New River becomes our boundary with Surinam.

8. I realise that it is a somewhat delicate question to raise with the Netherlands Government. It does seem however very desirable that we should have some guarantee that the Dutch are not merely persuading us to demarcate a considerable length of their boundary with Brazil, by means of an unratified agreement that the River Kutari is the Boundary between Surinam and British Guiana.

9. I regret that it will not be possible to send you the full report and completed maps of the Tri-junction Point area for some considerable time because certain minor details, dimensions etc., have still to be confirmed by the Brazilian Commission regarding neighbouring Boundary Marks. Also as a result of the conference at Paramaribo it has been decided to redraw some of the maps on different scales in order to illustrate the report more efficiently. There is also a small gap in the general map between the headwaters of the Aremanie and the Kutari. This can be filled in from the Brazilian surveys this coming season.

10. With regard to the Northern Terminal of the Boundary between Surinam and British Guiana, we have now fixed this point with the Netherlands Consul. It was found, however, that the bearing of 29° from the
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...site selected for the Northern Terminal Pillar would intersect the line of the Navigation Channel which is on a bearing of about 10° E. I did not know of any specific reason why the boundary should continue out to sea on a bearing of 26° and therefore, in order to avoid international complications about buying the channel, we have placed the direction pillar so that it indicates the boundary on a bearing of 10° E, i.e. parallel to the line of the channel.

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I trust that this amendment will meet with your approval. If there was any particular reason for the bearing of 26° E it is a comparatively simple matter to rebuild the direction pillar to indicate this bearing instead of the 10° E bearing. It would however be necessary to refer the matter to the Netherlands Government first, presumably, as the Netherlands Commissioner was very insistent that it was of vital importance from a navigation point of view to have all the buoys under one control.

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It is impracticable to build the boundary mark further west along the coast owing to the nature of the ground, and in its present site it is as nearly as possible in the position indicated by the co-ordinates given as the proposed site in the draft treaty. The actual co-ordinates (59° 52' 55.5" N. 57° 08' 61.5" W.) are somewhat different because even the latest (1927) chart of the Courantyn Mouth is considerably out in longitude. Consequently the proposed co-ordinates (60° 00' 35" N. 57° 08' 10" W.) are actually in the sea, but the pillar has been placed at the point on the ground which the co-ordinates indicate on the chart.
In my opinion British Guiana loses nothing by the alteration of the bearing from 280° to 100° except a small area of extremely shallow water which becomes a low isolated bank of mud or sand at the lowest spring tides only.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

[Signature]
Major, R.E.
Chief British Commissioner.

P.S. The question of the amended bearing has since been referred to His Excellency the Governor of British Guiana, who has signified his approval of the 100° bearing.