May 11, 2000

Honourable Clement Rohee
Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
South Road & New Garden Street
Georgetown

Dear Minister,

Newspaper Article - Oil Exploration

Further to my last communication on the above-referenced subject please find another article which has appeared in the local media.

Since my last report, the HPP has been relentless in its quest to show that the Government is treating lightly with the issue and members of the party are utilizing all means to drum up support to embarrass the Government. Many of the other parties have studiously avoided offering a comment. However, it is instructive to note that a senior member of the National Democratic Party (NDP) at a recent economic forum was quoted as saying that the Government should seriously examine the matter and must not allow Guyana to continue with its plans to drill oil in Suriname’s territory.

This issue is slowly beginning to gain momentum and it is instructive to note that a senior Member of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Jenny Gerling-Simmons, reportedly accused the Government of allowing Guyana to continue its plans to drill oil in Suriname’s territory. Furthermore, I was advised by the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Errol Alibux, that he would soon be summoning me to his Office concerning the matter.

For your information and necessary actions.

Best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Karanlal Yajun
Ambassador
OIL DRILLING IN DISPUTED AREA
NORMAL MATTER, SAYS GUYANESE
VICE PRESIDENT

According to the Guyanese Vice President
Samuel Hinds, looking for oil fields in the
eastern part of the disputed area between
Suriname and Guyana is a normal matter, in
which his country has been involved for
years. Although attention will be paid to the
Surinamese protests, the drilling will take
place normally at the end of this month.

Hinds said in an interview with a regional
research bureau of the Oil & Gas Journal
that Suriname has never before made any
objections against the oil drilling and that it
has almost become a Guyanese tradition to
give the area in concession, however he is
aware that it is a disputed area. This matter
was brought to the public’s notice two weeks
ago by the scientific bureau of the Renewed
Political Party (HPP), which includes
Staatsolie experts. Natinder Mohan of the
scientific bureau of the party says he doubts
the reaction of Minister Errol Allbus of
Natural Resources that Suriname has
already protested by letter to the Guyanese
Embassy six months ago. In the interview
with Hinds that was taken last Wednesday
and can be read on the Internet, nothing is
said about this. He thinks that a formal
protest should be made to the Guyanese
government. The HPP, which has assigned
a team to this matter, also proposes to send
an urgent invitation to Guyana to
immediately negotiate the issue and come
with workable solutions. A formal protest
should also be made to the Caricom and it
should be asked to mediate in this matter.

Suriname itself should ask advice from its
experts of Staatsolie to map the situation.
Mohan calls it remarkable that Allbus knows
little of the activities by the Guyanese in
Suriname territory and the state it is in.

An official letter from the management of
Staatsolie to the government concerning
this issue was never received upon. The
impression is created as if the government
has a one-sided point of view, seeing the
company only as a money machine. The
area where the drilling is taking place is
15000 km². Guyana has deviated 20
degrees from the borderline. The estimated
crude reserves in just one of the wells is
1250 million barrels, ten times the amount
of the Tambarojo field. It has been learned
that experts of Staatsolie are eager to start
developing the area themselves.