



**Statement of His Excellency, Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 29, 2015.**

**The security of small states in the international system.**

Mr. President,

The United Nations – established seventy years ago and a mere five months after the formal end to the Second World War – became the midwife of a new international order.

The new order of world peace was depicted symbolically and powerfully in the form of a bronze statue located on the grounds of this, the Headquarters of the United Nations. It embodies the vision revealed in Isaiah 2:4 of the Holy Bible:

*...And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

This prophetic verse became the philosophical basis of the United Nations. The U.N. became the organizational foundation for a global order which saw the emergence of a plethora of newly-independent states, resulting from the decolonization process after the end of the Second World War. One hundred and twenty six states have gained their independence in the years following the establishment of the United Nations.

The United Nations began in 1945 with a membership of fifty one countries but today it has almost quadrupled to one hundred and ninety three states. The majority of new states are mini-, micro- and small states. The undemocratic and warlike empires of which they had been colonies were dismantled after two World Wars.

The questions which small states ask of the United Nations at its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary are:

- How will our peoples be protected from foreign aggression?

- How will our territories be safeguarded from invasion?
- How will peace among nations be preserved?
- How will the independence of the new small states be sustained?

The Charter of the United Nations enjoins this organization with the responsibility to:

*“...to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes”.*

This responsibility is essential to the existence and survival of small states that are threatened by powerful states. Small states risk being subjugated unless the international community can demonstrate the capability and commitment to provide an effective deterrent against domination by larger, stronger states.

Mr. President,

The United Nations General Assembly, on May 9<sup>th</sup> 1994, in its 49<sup>th</sup> Session approved a Resolution (A/RES/49/31) which (inter alia):

- 2. Recognizes that small states may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs;*
- 3. Stresses the vital importance for all States of the unconditional respect by all States of all the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the peaceful settlement of disputes and their consistent application;*

4. *Stresses also the importance of strengthening the regional security arrangements by increasing interaction, cooperation and consultation;*
5. *Appeals to the relevant regional and international organizations to provide assistance when requested by small States for the strengthening of their security in accordance with the principles of the Charter;*
6. *Requests the Secretary-General to continue to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small States and to consider making use of Article 99 of the Charter;*
7. *Calls upon the Security Council and other relevant organs of the United Nations to pay special attention to the protection and security of small States...*

Mr. President,

Guyana is a small state. Guyana is a new state – a product of the post-World War II promise of peace. Guyana is a child of the United Nations. Guyana will, eight months from now, on May 26, 2016, mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its independence.

For fifty years, our small country has been prevented from fully exploiting our rich natural resources. Venezuela has threatened and deterred investors and frustrated our economic development

For fifty years our territorial integrity has been violated by Venezuela which has occupied a part of our territory, the most recent incident being on the 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 when it sent a naval corvette into our maritime zone and

expelled a peaceful, petroleum exploration vessel which was conducting seismic surveys.

For fifty years Venezuela has promulgated spurious decrees claiming our territory, the most recent being on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, our independence anniversary, when it issued Decree No. 1.787 with specified coordinates purporting to annex almost our entire maritime zone. That decree constituted a reassertion of its claim to five of Guyana's ten regions.

Guyana rejects the threats and claims by Venezuela which are in defiance of international law. Guyana resists Venezuela's acts of aggression in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations which prescribes the peaceful settlement of disputes and proscribes the use of armed force.

Mr. President,

Guyana's border with Venezuela was settled 116 years ago. The whole world, except the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, accepts our borders.

Guyana, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of this Assembly in 1968, explained to the world how, in 1897, a Treaty of Arbitration was signed between the United Kingdom and

Venezuela. That treaty provided for the establishment of an arbitral tribunal "to determine the boundary-line between the Colony of British Guiana" and Venezuela. That treaty committed the parties "to consider the result of the proceeds of the Tribunal of Arbitration as a full, perfect, and final settlement of all the questions referred to the Arbitrators."

The tribunal issued its award on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, 1899, giving Venezuela 13,000 square kilometers of our territory, an area bigger than Jamaica or Lebanon. Venezuela was bound under international law to respect that award, which it did for the subsequent six decades.

Venezuela, however, at the onset of Guyana's independence resorted to various stratagems to deprive Guyana of its territory. There has been a series of acts of aggression by Presidents of Venezuela against my country – from the time of President Raúl Leoni Otero's Decree No. 1.152 of 15<sup>th</sup> June 1968 to the time of President Nicolás Maduro Moro's decree of May 26<sup>th</sup> 2015.

Venezuela – more than four times the size of Guyana with armed forces that are more than forty times the size of Guyana's Defense Force – mindful of its superior wealth and military strength, and unmindful of its obligation as a member state of the United Nations, of the Union of South American Nations and of the Organization of American States, has pursued a path of intimidation and aggression. Venezuela is unsettling a settled border. It is destabilizing a stable region of the globe by the use of armed force against a peaceful, small state.

Venezuela has retarded Guyana's development by threats that are intended to force a small state to yield its birthright.

Venezuela's expansionist ambitions cannot be allowed to unsettle the principle of inviolability of borders, undermine the tenets of international law and unravel borders which have been undisturbed for decades.

Mr. President,

- Guyana recommits to preserving the Caribbean as a zone of peace.
- Guyana renews its pledge before this august General Assembly that it will pursue the path of peace for all time.
- Guyana reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

- Guyana reposes total confidence in international law.
- Guyana seeks a resolution of this controversy that is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The Geneva Agreement of 1966 signed between the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela and British Guiana on February 17, 1966 provides for the Secretary General to take action to bring a resolution to the contention occasioned by the claim made by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that the Arbitral Award of 1899 is null and void.

Mr. President,

Guyana has the fullest confidence in the judgment and capacity of the United Nations, through the Office of the Secretary General to identify solutions that will validate the 'just, perfect and final' nature of the award. We thank the United Nations and the Secretary General for appointing various Good Officers to help to resolve this controversy over the past twenty-five years. We feel that this process has now been exhausted.

Guyana does not wish that this obnoxious territorial claim should obscure the prospects of peace and obstruct the possibility of growth for the next fifty years. We need a permanent solution in order to avoid the fate of perpetual peril and penury. Guyana seeks a juridical settlement to this controversy.

Guyana reposes its faith and places its fate in the international system of peace that was promised by the Charter of the United Nations seventy years

ago. We want to bring an end to Venezuelan aggression. We want to develop our country, all of our country, in accordance with international law.

Guyana calls upon the United Nations to give real meaning to Resolution A/RES/49/31 of May 9<sup>th</sup> 1994 by establishing a collective security system not merely to “monitor” but, more so, ‘maintain’ the security of small states.

The United Nations remains our best hope. The United Nations is our best prospect of peace. The United Nations is our best assurance of security for a small state. The United Nations is our strength, support and succour in our time of danger. We pledge Guyana’s adherence to the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Guyana seeks nothing more than the solidarity of this international community, the assurance of the Charter and the safety of international law.

Thank you, Mr. President.

And thank you, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen for your attention.