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LETTER DATED 11 MAY 1982 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention a serious incident which recently occurred within the territory of Guyana.

At approximately 20.00 hours, GMT, on Monday 10 May 1982, a number of heavily armed Venezuelan troops crossed from the eastern half of Ankoko island - territory belonging to Guyana, but which Venezuela seized by force of arms in 1966 and continues to occupy illegally despite the protests of the Government of Guyana - onto the mainland of Guyana.

A small unit of the Guyana Defence Force patrolling the Guyana border in the Eteringbang area, where the Venezuelan incursion took place, repeatedly called on the Venezuelan soldiers to halt their advance, but to no avail. Instead, the Venezuelan unit took up a posture threatening to the Guyana Defence Force which, acting under orders to avoid a confrontation with Venezuelan forces, withdrew to their main party some distance away. It was only after two warning volleys by the Guyana Defence Force that the Venezuelans were seen to withdraw.

The Government of Guyana views this incident with gravest concern. It represents a clear violation of our national sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the United Nations Charter principle requiring States to refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations. It is also a blatant violation of the Geneva Agreement and the Protocol of Port-of-Spain, by which the Government of Venezuela has committed itself to a peaceful resolution of its differences with Guyana.

This incident causes all the more concern to the Government of Guyana since it took place a little more than a week after public statements by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela and by the Ambassador of Venezuela to the United Nations to the effect that Venezuela had no intention to resort to the use of force in the settlement of the dispute which it maintains with Guyana over territory. The Government of Guyana naturally finds it difficult to place any confidence in the expressions of peaceful intent on the part of the Government of Venezuela.

The Government of Guyana has lodged a formal protest with the Venezuelan Embassy in Georgetown calling upon the Government of that country to take immediate steps to prevent any further acts of armed aggression against our country.

This is only the most recent in a series of violations by Venezuela of Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a letter dated 24 February 1970 (S.C. document S/9663 of 25 February 1970) the Guyana Government drew the attention of the Security Council to several unprovoked attacks against our territorial integrity.

In May 1981, Venezuelan soldiers landed in an outlying village of Guyana, harassed the villagers and took away their property.

Apart from frequent incursions by units of the Venezuelan army into our territory, Guyana has suffered systematic violations of her airspace by reconnaissance aircraft of the Venezuelan Air Force. In 1981, there were 83 such recorded violations, some of which extended more than 300 kilometres into our national territory. By the end of March 1982, the Guyana Government had recorded more than a dozen of these violations.

These violations of Guyana's territory have been carried out not only by members of the Armed Forces. A Minister of the Government of Venezuela - the Minister of Youth - together with a party of fifty Venezuelans crossed the border into Guyana in April 1981 in utter disregard of the legal requirements for entry and of our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

These provocations have continued despite the repeated protests of the Government of Guyana.

The Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela are bound by the provisions of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain under which both parties are committed to actions which will improve relations between the two States. On 18 June 1982, this Protocol expires and the Government of Venezuela has informed the Government of Guyana that it does not wish to renew the Protocol.

Under the terms of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain, non-renewal automatically brings into operation the provisions of an earlier agreement the Geneva Agreement of 1966 which obliges both the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela to settle their dispute by peaceful means.

For its part, the Government of Guyana wishes to reiterate that it remains firmly and unequivocally committed to the maintenance of friendly and peaceful relations with the Government of Venezuela, while continuing in her resolve to

protect and preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana. The Government of Guyana also wishes to reiterate her determination to continue to abide by the letter as well as the spirit of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain and the Geneva Agreement arising out of the claim by Venezuela to over 70 per cent of Guyana.

I should be grateful if you would have this communication circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Noel G. SINCLAIR  
Permanent Representative

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