

Transcript of the address by Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, at the Investiture Ceremony: Conferral of Prime Minister of Barbados, the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart with the insignia of the Order of Roraima

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President David Granger: Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, Prime Minister of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana; The Right Honourable Freundel Jerome Stuart, O.R., Prime Minister of Barbados; the Right Honourable Baroness Scotland, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations; Chancellor of the Judiciary; Speaker of the National Assembly; Vice Presidents; Ministers; members of the Cabinet; members of the National Assembly; distinguished ambassadors; members of the Diplomatic Corps; representatives of Foreign Heads of State and Government; Secretary-General of the CARICOM Secretariat; Your Excellencies; Her Worship, Mayor of Georgetown; distinguished guests; special invitees; ladies and gentlemen:

I welcome you here to State House and thank you for attending our simple celebrations to mark the 50th Anniversary of our Independence.

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana is happy today, on this auspicious observance of its 50th Anniversary of Independence, to induct into the distinguished core of officers of the Orders of Guyana, the Right Honourable Freundel Jerome Stuart, Prime Minister of Barbados.

National awards are ordained by the Constitution of the Orders of Guyana. The award of national honours is statute-based. This investiture ceremony today, however, is not a legalist or ritualistic formality. The conferral of Guyana's Order of Roraima - and I don't think any Guyanese, Venezuelan or Brazilian could miss the significance of the fact that Roraima is the point under international law where the three countries touch.

The conferral of this order, therefore, on Barbados' Prime Minister exemplifies the essential values which exist between the two States - Guyana and Barbados - and these values underpin the existence of the entire Caribbean Community. Today's ceremony is richly symbolic for Guyana, Barbados and the Caribbean.

Ladies and gentlemen, the two States, Guyana and Barbados, both gained their independence from Britain in 1966; this is our jubilee year.

The two States pioneered the founding of the Caribbean Free Trade Area, CARIFTA, in 1965, even before they became independent.

The two States uniquely established the Joint High Commission in London soon after their independence.

The two States Prime Ministers, Forbes Burnham and Errol Barrow, were among the four

founding fathers who signed the Treaty establishing the Caribbean Community in Chaguaramas Trinidad in 1973.

The two States lamentably were to become the only CARICOM States which were obliged to erect monuments to the victims of the Cubana de Aviación terrorist attack of the 6th October, 1976. On that day 11 Guyanese were blown out of the sky off of the coast of Barbados.

So, ladies and gentlemen, our two countries, Barbados and Guyana, have long-standing ties.

Prime Minister Stuart particularly combines his country's legendary leadership in regionalism with the international activism necessitated by the changing circumstances of the 21st century.

Prime Minister Stuart has distinguished himself as an ardent advocate for environmental security in the small island and low-lying coastal development States, many of which are located in the Caribbean.

Prime Minister Stuart has distinguished himself as a resolute warrior in the battle for reparative justice for Caribbean citizens, the descendants of the victims of the greatest crime against humanity - human enslavement.

Prime Minister Stuart is a doughty defender of the territorial integrity of Guyana and Belize and the maritime space of all Caribbean States.

It is for these reasons, ladies and gentlemen, that we applaud Prime Minister Stuart's leadership and stewardship. We commend him for his commitment to the Caribbean community and we invite you to applaud the award of this Order of Roraima to Prime Minister Stuart.