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Establish a US Military Base in Essequibo

December 10, 2023

A month ago, I wrote, "As we attempt to forge a national unity to counter the (Maduro) on our Essequibo border, we should be reminded that, as a much smaller nation than Venezuela by almost all criteria, we need to deploy a strategy that checkmates those advantages. And that raises the question as to the available options in such a situation."

Now that Maduro has thrown caution to the wind and has launched a de facto annexation of our Essequibo, the time for Hamlet-like existentialist questions are long past.

We noted that, with the gradual diminution in effectiveness of the UN and other multilateral institutions..., while we must continue to utilise the UN system — as we have done by taking the Venezuelan border controversy to the ICJ and the UN Security Council (UNSC) — we must recognize that Maduro will not be deterred by the admonitions of either. While, through Articles 24 and 25 of the UN Charter, the UNSC can use collective force against a threat to international peace and security, the veto power of Russia and China, which are engaged in their own annexation adventures, will defang that option.

For the longest while, starting with our active involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), we attempted to be neutral between the then two competing hegemons, the USA and the USSR, but we were accused of running with the hares and hunting with the hounds. In the new, evolving "multipolar world", we have tried neutrality in the rivalry between the US and China, but it should be clear by now that, notwithstanding the latter's grandiose claims about seeking non-hegemonic relationships with other states, it is pursuing its own interest vis-a-vis the USA in working very closely with Maduro. It has not denounced Maduro's "expulsion" of the ExxonMobil condominium from our Stabroek Block, even though its CNOOC owns 25%.

We must make a realistic decision to protect our own interests, which, in the present brouhaha precipitated by Maduro for his own political survival, is not too difficult to identify: protecting our sovereignty over our Essequibo. As we identified last month, "there are two options available at our conjuncture — balancing or bandwagoning". In the former, we would buy the line touted by China that it is only interested out of the goodness of its heart to balance the world hegemon — the USA; or we could bandwagon with the USA, whose interests coincide with ours.

Their interests are not aligned with ours. They are "expelled" by the USA's overall interests, which are "front yard". Richardson has noted that we require more time to become a "reserves and resources" nation, and had succinctly aligned our interests to those of the USA. "This region, with its resources and the Triangle which it contains, is the world's lithium-rich region."

Bolivia, Chile, and Peru just had the largest oil reserves of light sweet crude discovered off of Guyana over a year ago. You have Venezuela's resources as well with oil, copper, gold. China gets 36% of its food source from this region. We have the Amazon, lungs of the world. We have 31% of the world's fresh water in this region too."

The US has been attempting to "do the right thing" to encourage democratic decision making in Venezuela by encouraging free and fair elections. But all attempts have been blocked by Maduro with various feints — especially lucratively rewarding military personnel with chunks of the economy. His latest was to appoint a General as "Governor" of Essequibo. With reference to the elections due next year, Maduro will almost certainly postpone them because of the "crisis" he created.

Our Government appears to have already given the go-ahead to establish a Southcom Military Base in our Essequibo region. Late last month, after a visit to the US, VP Jagdeo said, "We have never been interested in military bases, but we have to protect our national interest..." We must support this realpolitik decision to repel Maduro's adventurism.

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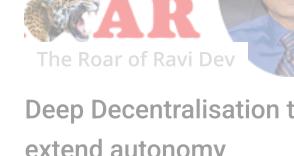
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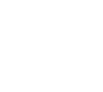
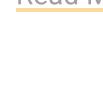
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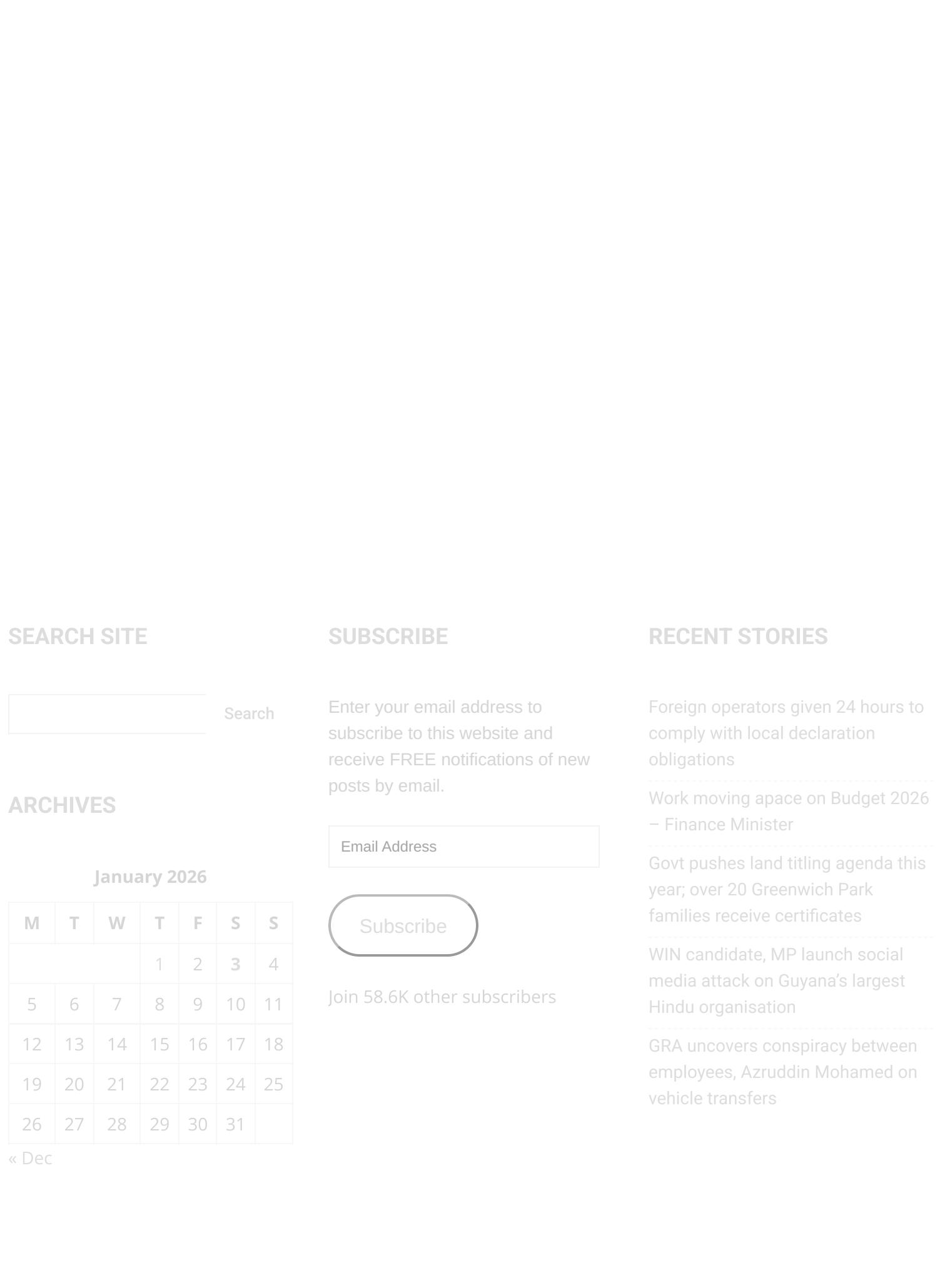
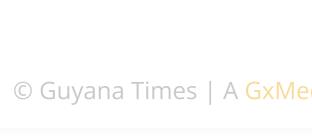


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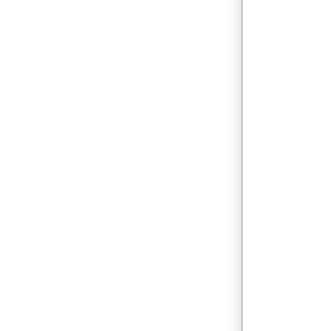
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