

---

## Interview: Former Guyanan Foreign Minister Frederick Wills

---

# 'Under the IMF, we produce less and earn less; how can we pay the debt?'

*The following interview with former Guyanan Foreign Minister Frederick Wills was conducted Aug. 11 by Franklin Bell.*

**EIR:** Fifty-nine million dollars is far less than what is used to put up a high-rise building in Manhattan. What does the loss of that money mean to Guyana?

**Wills:** One of the objectives pronounced by the government was to feed, clothe, and house the population with domestically produced resources by 1976. For various reasons not relevant now, none of those objectives has been met. In respect to food, the objective was to rationalize the rice industry—rice is a staple—so that Guyana would have enough production for domestic consumption, and surplus for export, primarily to Caribbean areas.

The loss of this means that you have domestic shortages, that you have less to export, and that the development process which you started in respect to agriculture has been arrested, with all that that entails—unemployment, lost hopes, shattered ambitions. It means that where people are already living below subsistence in respect to food, you remove the opportunity to come above subsistence in the future. Then take the IMF conditionalities and the general strategic doctrine that your acquisition of food from overseas depends on your ability to pay. The IMF makes sure by its conditionalities that you don't have the ability to pay.

America has the largest share of exportable food in the world, much larger than the share the Middle East has of exportable oil. Mind you, there are things happening in the U.S. economy which will tend to cut down that availability of exportable food. But taking the whole strategic context, this denial of the loans means hunger, malnutrition. It is a shortsighted gambit. It is aimed at punishing leaders for certain superficial strategic policies in non-alignment, pro-socialism, and all that. But the ultimate victim, of course, will be the people.

**EIR:** According to reports published by international agencies, seventy percent of the people of Guyana are currently living in sub-standard conditions and are already suffering from malnutrition. . . .

**Wills:** And there is an increasing infant mortality rate over the last few years since we have been under this iron grip of the IMF. Since 1979, there has been a decline in literacy, a decline in life expectancy, higher infant mortality rate, and higher incidence of malnutrition and disease. And to compound the thing, since you have to use foreign exchange to import drugs, hospital facilities have deteriorated badly. You either buy fewer drugs or you go on the [black] market and get the drugs which have many times been condemned by the FDA here and dumped by irregular sources into Third World countries like Guyana.

**EIR:** At the same time that these loans have been denied, Guyana has been forced to devalue its currency. What will be the effect?

**Wills:** The currency of Guyana has been devalued from the time I left office, Feb. 14, 1978. They went to the IMF in March. I opposed going to the IMF. There has been progressive devaluation of the currency. Sometimes it is called realignment—you know all the euphemisms used. The devaluation makes your imports dearer, and your debt increase automatically. So it is a vicious circle: you can't pay your debts, you can't pay interest on your debts, you have to pay more for necessary imports. Wheat flour, milk, eggs—all this is imported by Guyana. There is not sufficient domestic production. And these devaluations under IMF conditionalities have worsened the conditions.

**EIR:** It is not lost on a number of people that this decision has been mooted at the very time that Henry Kissinger is formally returning to the political scene.

**Wills:** It is very ominous that several things have happened:

the return of Kissinger to favor with this political gimmick of a commission to report in February of an election year; at the same time the hardening of attitudes and stances generally toward the policy in the Caribbean and Latin America, the desire to give sort of a synthetic attitude of not being soft on socialism. It means grief.

**EIR:** What role, if any, do you see the Soviet KGB playing in this?

**Wills:** The KGB naturally comes into Latin American and the Caribbean to exploit what is there. You have endemic problems based on a kind of East India Company, Malthusian economics that preceded independence. Independence comes along and this vertical connection under the Metropolis in Britain, under the same kind of East India Company economics, continues. All that happens is that you exchange indirect rule for direct rule. Right now you want to make a change—broaden development and bring your people forward. There is stress. The KGB comes to try to exploit the stress. The Americas will retaliate. And the whole issue of development is suddenly redirected to the questions of “Who is hard or soft on communism?”, “Who is hard or soft on capitalism?”

**EIR:** What do you propose that the United States do that would be both beneficial to itself and beneficial to Guyana?

**Wills:** Go back to the real meaning of America. The meaning of America is—as I understand it, and I have studied American history since I was a boy—that the condition of mankind and the planet can be changed for the better by mankind. And the message of America to the world is that by an insistence on a generalized technological progress, you can elevate mankind from below subsistence, to surplus, and to development.

Go back to that. Forget all the nominalism, forget all the semantics about who is supposed to be Marxist or Leninist—I don’t know if it is Groucho or Karl. Go back to the idea of [19th-century American System economist] Mathew Carey: if the price of your labor in the Caribbean is low, people migrate to where it is high. Therefore, you have to do something locally to improve the price of labor; therefore, you have to give a viable alternative to mere migration. That is the way of bettering America. After all, the first great anti-colonial revolution in modern times was the American revolution. It was the same basic problems of the accumulation of capital, the rationalization of agriculture, being frustrated. As Thomas Paine said, Britain ran America in British interests. Forget all the ideological niceties.

**EIR:** Do you have specific proposals?

**Wills:** Yes. Export technology. Go down, rationalize agriculture, export technology. The best strategic guarantee is if the people are grateful to you for helping them with their aspirations. If you frustrate their aspirations, then you don’t make a friend. Identify with their aspirations and use the fact of your abundance of technology to assist with the process of

development, putting in infrastructure, diversifying agriculture, not cutting it off.

If you associate yourself with their frustrations, if you associate yourself with leaving them imprisoned in history, and not even in the 20th century, but the 14th century, then you alienate them entirely. If it is true that you seek to make allies and friends around the world, you don’t make them that way. But it may not be necessary: they may not exist to be allies or friends, because you depopulate them. I am not talking about spectacular depopulation as is happening in Chad, but the kind of depopulation that comes from lowering life expectancy, increasing infant mortality rates. When America goes on a diet, plenty of people in Guyana and the Third World are wondering where the next meal will come from; and the next meal is often a below standard meal, a mere conspiracy of carbohydrates.

**EIR:** What is the present life expectancy in Guyana?

**Wills:** There are two figures. One is official: 59. The unofficial figure is 48. As you know, statistics are gathered not only by Guyana, but by world organizations with a very tendentious view. We all know in politics, especially in the Third World, that places like Nigeria, Guyana for that matter, India, always have a problem with tendentious statistics. The life expectancy, I have been told, is 59. I will cite one statistic, not to destroy what has been said, but just to prove. I am 54. Of the more than 40 guys who were in my class at school, there are three of us alive today.

That is normal. My son died last year.

**EIR:** What effect do you think this U.S. decision is going to have on the current administration in Guyana?

**Wills:** The problem with Guyana is that the U.S. administration does not want a socialist who is pro-Russian to take over. Now this guy [Prime Minister Forbes Burnham] is not pro-Russian. At the same time, they don’t want Guyana to succeed because they interpret that as meaning the success of socialism. So they need the guy to survive but to do badly. And worst of all, it has given ammunition for some of the irrational thinkers we have in Guyana who are saying—I put it in their case, because I don’t accept their case, but I am telling you what they say—“Guyana is 96 percent black and Indian. They refuse loans to Guyana and give them to Peru and Bolivia and Chile. Their action is racist. The world is therefore racist. We have all this racism.”

It seems to me that for the administration in Guyana, the first order of business is to survive, and they identify their survival with the existence of Guyana, and it will survive. But it will degenerate—economically, politically, and above all, morally. The moral equations are all haywire now.

**EIR:** And with the continued degeneration you think the irrational forces will be enhanced.

**Wills:** I haven’t heard rationality come out of Guyana for the last five years, from the opposition or anywhere else.



NSIPS/Smart Lewis

*Fred Wills at a U.S. conference of the Club of Life, February 1983.*

They are living in a closed psychological climate where they think *their* struggle defines the issues—their struggle against the administration, and so on. But those are the pseudo-issues. Those are merely corollary to the whole depopulation problem in Guyana. There are bigger issues, bigger strategic issues. Involved in all this is “Does mankind have a future? If so, what future? Where are we going?”. Guyana is a microcosm of that.

**EIR:** You mentioned that the United States should be expanding its exports of technology to Guyana. What role do you think the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations could be playing in this issue?

**Wills:** First of all, the export of technology is always done bilaterally. At the U.N., it is multilateral diplomacy where you get into groups of Third World countries, non-aligned countries, and take decisions, recommendations on a general level. Mrs. Kirkpatrick has not done that. I think she ought to. There ought to be discussions, there ought to be negotiations on a New World Economic Order. But she has not done that. The general attitude you pick up from those who oppose the New World Economic Order is that “the Third World is ungrateful that we give them relief checks,” and that kind of shortsighted, narrow attitude.

**EIR:** You are familiar with the proposals Lyndon LaRouche has laid out in Operation Juárez. If they were carried out, how would that affect the relations of Guyana and the United States?

**Wills:** If there is some sensible treatment of the debt problem (which is the crushing problem—you can’t have develop-

ment because you can’t pay, and you can’t pay because you are underdeveloped, as in all Third World countries), if Operation Juárez is implemented, it will free monies for internal development, survival of the population, development of the population, and it will also increase the ability to pay the very debts that are owed. That is what it will do.

**EIR:** One of Guyana’s major exports is bauxite. What has happened with those exports?

**Wills:** First of all, there are two kinds of bauxite in Guyana. They have calcide bauxite, a very rare kind of bauxite which is very good, and then they have ordinary bauxite. In the 1970s Guyana nationalized its bauxite from Alcoa and Reynolds. But, of course, they had no control over marketing and shipping, and Phibro, which has Swiss connections, has control over marketing.

The first problem was entirely the manipulations of strikes that caused production losses. Did you know also that before they left, the bauxite companies ran down the machinery? While you were negotiating for nationalization, they ran it down. They also attracted away your expertise; youngsters who could run the industry got attracted away to the fleshpots of Toronto, New York, London, and where have you. Then, the kind of weather you never had before—rains that hurt the [surface] mining production. Then, strategic stockpiles had been built up by the companies—and suddenly released; the prices fell. Also, you must understand that there are alternative supplies of bauxite—Indonesia, Haiti, Australia. So they merely took the loss in supply and production and went elsewhere. And in that condition, Guyana found itself earning less and less from bauxite.

We had two good years. We were blind to what the problems would be. We suddenly found we weren't making as much from bauxite as we should. Others were. By the empirical rule of thumb—which I always protested—the price of bauxite follows the price of steel because certain steelmaking processes require bauxite. Somehow that rule of thumb proved ridiculous because the price of steel went up at a certain time and bauxite came down.

So the net result of it is that when we had to go to the IMF, the IMF said, "You earn money from bauxite, you need to rationalize it, you need management, you need to return it to private hands, you need to produce less, cut overhead, cut production costs"—that nice phrase that often means misery.

Under the IMF regime, less bauxite is produced, you earn less money, and you still have the same number of strikes because they are striking over the other conditions—food, clothing, shelter. The last was that the government recommended a three-day week to satisfy the IMF conditionalities and they struck, saying they wanted a five-day week. Then the suggestion was to have five days but to compress the day. All of which means that you do not produce.

**EIR:** There is a population of 800,000 people in Guyana. . . .

**Wills:** That is the official population, as opposed to 560,000. There are a lot of Guyanese living in America.

**EIR:** Of that population, as you mentioned, all but 4 percent are black or Indian. Some people have likened the policies the IMF has taken toward Guyana to the one that is being imposed on U.S. inner cities by politicians who are dealing with municipal debt problems. Do you see a similarity of motive?

**Wills:** If you have a racially mixed population, whether in a country or a city, and you have a race problem, it is very useful to have a black chap there, because then the race riots that accrue from austerity and Schachtian economics are not as bad as if it were otherwise. There is less likelihood, say, in a place like Guyana, to overblame the administration, than if it were, say, British. So in that sense I see a parallel. But I am afraid it is much bigger than that. The kind of genocide we are talking about is such that regardless of who is in local control, you are reducing man to satisfy Bertrand Russell's equations that man is a mere bundle of passions and instincts. He has no reason or rationality to speak of. And when you reduce him to that, he doesn't give a damn who is running things. He's dying. What he calls survival and hustle requires he crawl on the backs of men, women, and children.

You must understand something: when you have adverse conditions like those existing in Guyana and some parts of the Third World, your wants and needs do not become Keynesian as Keynes would have it, economic demands. You're hustling for survival. Americans who have never lived below subsistence in a large way have to understand the psychologically conditioned climate of malnutrition, hunger, disease, and death, where you live with death, where you

celebrate death. One has to see that to believe it. And it wouldn't matter who is in charge, whether it is a black mayor or a black prime minister.

**EIR:** What would you suggest to the Americans who understand to some degree what is being done to Guyana?

**Wills:** Your question needs to be improved. They really don't know. They live in a private world—my television set, my car, my credit rating. And they are manipulated to live in this private world. So the first task is to educate them that these conditions exist and the existence of these conditions are relevant to their life.

After you have that done, and that is a monumental task, then it is obvious what you have to do, you have to do Operation Juárez. You have to get the debt problem under control. Moratoria, exchange of bonds, long-term loans. At the moment, immediately, you transfer the kind of generalized technology that will bring mankind back from the abyss. There are two kinds of holocaust going on. One is the North-South threat. The other is the East-West threat. The trouble with the North-South holocaust is that it is actually happening; the East-West is a potential. We are beginning with the actual. The energy levels in the Third World countries like Guyana in all aspects of the existence of man have been cut down by about one-tenth since the IMF regime began.

People have to think, first of all, beyond the boundaries of cultural relativism and separate religions, to the problem of why mankind is around. Are we here for survival and development based on generalized scientific progress? Then look at the globe. See where some people are trying to enter the 21st century, others are in the 14th. Therefore, you get together at international levels and look at the problems, and you push Operation Juárez. And after you get a commitment to scientific advance of mankind, diversification of agriculture, the introduction of infrastructure, the use of new methods of energy—not the Jurassic methods of solar power, windmills—you promote the divinity of man. But you have to do it globally. It is impossible in the modern world to do it in a specific location in an isolated way. That is the sense in which the world is interdependent.

And then we can satisfy the cultural optimism that man should have. And then we can look forward to the challenges of the future, knowing that our children and our children's children will inherit from us not a future mortgaged at the altar of Malthus, but rather a future infused with the bright vision of those like Plato, Jesus Christ, St. Augustine, and Kepler, who saw ahead and saw what the divinity of man can mean. Then we can satisfy the Biblical injunction to go forth, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Then we can take the challenge of not only our own solar system, but the colonization of space, from the discovery and interaction of other solar systems which await us. That is where the future lies. If we moor ourselves in antedeluvian commune-style living, and let mankind be reduced in those terms, then we not only resurrect the past, but we lose the future.