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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Port Louis, Mauritius

January 5, 1972

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL  
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Herman J. Cohen, Esquire  
Country Director for AF/C  
Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Hank:

I do appreciate your thoughtful letter of December 23 (which arrived today) regarding Diego Garcia, BIOT and the impact of these areas on our relations with Mauritius.

Your comments are most useful in clarifying what was, for us here, a somewhat opaque situation. I had not realized, for example, the extent to which any transfer of jurisdiction for Diego would have involved the need to keep in touch with BIOT officials in the Seychelles. This, of course, we are not now in a position to do. And I do appreciate your assurance that our continued reporting and other activity relative to the area will not be taken amiss, as I would have normally sought to avoid commenting on matters within a colleague's jurisdiction. We nevertheless do have a special situation here and can, I am sure, cover developments on an ad hoc basis as in the past. Meanwhile, we are continuing to burnish the Diego public relations image by our monthly procurement flights. In December, the Commander there sent us some 3000 bags of candy prepared by his personnel, which we distributed widely to underprivileged and children's groups, a gesture particularly appreciated just before Christmas.

There is no question of any USG legal involvement in the alienation of Diego from Mauritius, nor has this point ever been raised with me here. As you say, however, questions can rightfully be asked about the impact of our station on the region, notably, I feel, in

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(signed) Bill  
William D. Brewer

Post  
Harris  
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connection with the inadequate and cavalier treatment so far accorded the Ilois. You will have seen our A-246 which goes into this aspect fully. As to the points you mention, there is no question of any such development as "a reciprocal Soviet station at Mahebourg". Berenger is unlikely for the present to level serious criticism at us over Diego, except on the Ilois issue. He never even called to discuss that one with me, despite advance billing that he would and the fact that he did take it up with Peter Carter.

On the general subject of the Russian naval presence in this part of the Indian Ocean, you will have noted from our A-4 that it actually declined in 1971 from the previous year. The much-touted fisheries agreement has produced precisely two fly-ins of Russian replacement sailors in eighteen months. Soviet efforts to establish satellite tracking camera facilities and regular Aeroflot flights have not come off. But we should continue to maintain a limited naval presence because that is, I believe, in our strategic interest no matter what the current appreciation may be of immediate Soviet (or anyone else's) actions or intentions.

Thanks again for your letter which gives us a hunting license to continue what we had earlier been doing with a bit of trepidation. We could use more current information on our Indian Ocean naval movements (see our A-11) but several recent messages have helped fill the gap. The trouble is that, when the Pentagon announces that a Task Force "is entering the Indian Ocean", this gets played here as if the ships were just over the horizon. Since the Enterprise has now left, we should hear no more about it, but perhaps we might get on distribution a little earlier next time.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Bill

William D. Brewer

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