

Sub-Nom 59/150/84-65 BX 1551
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Department of State

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9820
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LIMDIS

SUBJ: BIOT: EVACUATION OF CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

1. THOMAS (DEFENSE POLICY DEPT, FONOFF) HAS TOLD US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT MEMO PREPARED BY HIS DEPARTMENT, SETTING FORTH VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEM OF EVACUATING CHAGOS, WENT TO FONSEC STEWART JUST BEFORE EASTER WEEKEND. MEMO RECOMMENDS THAT SHORTLY AFTER HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARINGS BEGIN ON DIEGO GARCIA PROJECT, HMG OPEN DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVT OF MAURITIUS TO NEGOTIATE FATE OF COPRA WORKERS ON CHAGOS ISLANDS, AND TO DETERMINE WHAT FINANCIAL COMPENSATION GOM WOULD REQUIRE TO REABSORB ALL OR PART OF THEM.

2. INCLUDED IN MEMO IS PROPOSAL TO DISCUSS WITH GOM RELOCATION OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF CHAGOS WORKERS, AND POSSIBLY UNEMPLOYED ILOIS NOW IN MAURITIUS, ON AGALEGA ISLANDS ABOUT 350 MILES SOUTH OF SEYCHELLES. AGALEGA ISLANDS ARE MAURITIAN TERRITORY AND HAVE COPRA PLANTATIONS, PRESENTLY WORKED BY SEYCHELLOIS, WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF DEVELOPMENT TO ABSORB SUBSTANTIAL PART OF CHAGOS WORKERS. DEPLACED SEYCHELLOIS WOULD BE RETURNED TO SEYCHELLES, WHICH WOULD CAUSE SOME HEADACHES BUT WHICH FONOFF THINKS CAN BE HANDLED WITH MINIMUM POLITICAL FALLOUT.

3. IF STEWART APPROVES, RECOMMENDATION WILL GO TO PRIMINI AND THOMAS THOUGHT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AT CABINET LEVEL BY DEFENSE AND OVERSEAS POLICY COMMITTEE. IF THIS HAPPENS, ISSUE COULD RAISE HACKLES

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OF SOME POLITICIANS WHO UNFAMILIAR WITH AREA, GENERALLY ASSUME BIOT ISLANDS UNINHABITED, AND WILL NOT WELCOME POLITICAL AND ETHICAL DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSPLANTING POPULATION TO MAKE ROOM FOR DEFENSE INSTALLATION. *ethic*

4. IF RECOMMENDATION APPROVED, FONOFF WOULD PLAN TO DISCUSS MATTER FULLY WITH USG BEFORE EMBARKING ON ANY NEGOTS WITH GOM.

5. IN MEANTIME THOMAS ASKED US NOT TO REPORT TO WASHINGTON, AT LEAST UNTIL HE KNEW WHAT STEWART HAD DONE WITH MEMO. SOURCE SHOULD THEREFORE BE CAREFULLY PROTECTED. KAISER

NOTE: LIMDIS CAPTION ADDED PER SYS-O. MR. RYERSON. 4/14/69.

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