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ANALYSIS BRANCH

FROM : American Embassy PORT LOUIS  
Withdrawal No. \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: May 2, 1972

SUBJECT : GOM Plan for Rehabilitation of Ilois

REF : Port Louis 0366

We enclose copies of the GOM Cabinet Committee Plan for resettlement of persons evacuated from Diego Garcia and other islands in the Chagos Archipelago. The Plan, which was obtained from the British High Commission (protect), has been submitted to HMG for financing.

A total of Rs. 8.56 million is requested for the scheme, with most of the money going for the construction of two housing estates for 460 families. 330 families are already in Mauritius, and 130 are eventually to be transferred from the Chagos. "Job Rehabilitation" for the heads of families is priced at less than Rs. 1 million and will mainly mean pig breeding. This idea is essentially the much-celebrated, never-implemented, pig breeding scheme of Foreign Minister Duval for increasing the income of poor Creole fishermen: Give them a certain number of piglets, subsidize the feed and you create prosperous pig farmers.

A relatively small sum of money has also been requested to reimburse the GOM for relief payments already made to the Ilois. Finally, compensation in cash is posed as an alternative to the housing and pig breeding scheme.

COMMENT: The Plan is a neat, sensible package, unless one takes into account the dismal GOM experience to date in undertaking projects in its National Development Plan. We have no way to gauge the speed of the proposal approval machinery of the British Government, but knowing the Mauritian pace, we would be surprised if many Ilois were tending pigs before the end of this year.

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Going beyond the issue of the disgraceful lassitude with which movement is being made to compensate the Ilois, there is the question will the present Plan work? We doubt it. First, the Plan is idealistic; no provision is made for anything going wrong. Second, only 28 of the 286 families interviewed selected pig breeding from among the three alternatives offered them. We suspect that only a small minority of Ilois know or care anything about rearing pigs. Third, entirely insufficient provision is made for technical assistance. Two members of the understaffed, ineffective GOM Extension Service are to supervise the project. We say flatly that the local Extension Service has a zero record of achievement and cannot hope to succeed with the Ilois. Essential to any hope of success for this project are a foreign supervisor who will assure that the funds are correctly and sensibly spent and specially-trained Mauritian personnel to support him.

Continuing our pessimism, we predict an unhappy scenario. The much dissatisfied Ilois will be installed in the two new housing estates, given pigs and after brief relative prosperity, for a variety of reasons, the project will fail. The then even more disgruntled, somewhat more self-confident, unemployed Ilois, concentrated in two areas, will become more than presently a target for political agitation.

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Enclosures:

The Plan (five copies)

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**Report of Ministerial Committee on Re-settlement of Persons Displaced  
from the Chagos Archipelago**

**MEMORANDUM BY THE MINISTER OF HOUSING, LANDS, AND TOWN &  
COUNTRY PLANNING**

At our meeting on the 24th December, 1971, my colleagues agreed that a Ministerial Committee under my chairmanship and with the Minister of Health, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, the Minister of Economic Planning & Development, and the Financial Secretary as members, should study the resettlement of persons displaced from Chagos Archipelago and report back to Cabinet.

2. The Committee met on three occasions. The Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, who had previously dealt with the matter, was co-opted as a member and the Principal Assistant Secretary of my Ministry was appointed Secretary. The Committee was assisted in its task by officials of various ministries and Dr. L. Junker, Social Development Economist, Ministry of Economic Planning & Development, who made useful suggestions and produced interesting papers containing alternative resettlement schemes.

3. As a preliminary exercise, a survey of the displaced persons was carried out. Of the 330 families (including single adults) reported to be in Mauritius, only 286 could be met and interviewed, the others having shifted to unknown addresses. A summary of the survey is given at Appendix A.

4. The Committee considers that the latest proposal made by the British Government, namely, to pay compensation in the form of severance allowance at the rate of Rs 3,000 for a single adult and Rs 4,000 for a married couple, was inadequate and should not be accepted as the actual problem was a more acute one, involving not only loss of job but the uprooting of families from their houses and their settlement.

5. After careful examination of the data made available by the survey and all the issues involved, and bearing in mind that the British Government has agreed to assume full responsibility for the resettlement of the workers affected in the Chagos Islands, the Committee makes the following recommendations under three heads: Housing Estates, Job Rehabilitation and Cash Compensation.

**Housing Estates**

6. The 330 families should be adequately housed and for that purpose the cost of a re-housing scheme in the form of two housing estates has been prepared, one at Roche Bois for 180 families and another at Cassis or Point aux Sables for 150 families. Rs 10,000-type houses and low density development (i.e., eight houses per acre) are suggested, the latter because it is considered more appropriate to enable each family to have enough space for a vegetable garden and for breeding. With the essential services such as water reticulation, internal access roads, school and sewerage works and amenities such as a play place and community centre on each estate standing on land to be acquired from private owners, the cost of the two housing estates is estimated at Rs 5,500,000.



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7. Alternative schemes for the development of the estates on a medium density basis (i.e., 10 houses per acre) or a high density basis (i.e., 15 houses per acre) have also been prepared, but these would leave very little land for gardening. Besides, two other types of houses costing Rs 7,500 and Rs 5,000 have been considered. Details of the costs involved in each of these alternative schemes are given in Appendix B.

8. The Committee feels that if the creation of the housing estates is agreed upon and implemented, the houses should not be given to the families, but let to them on a hire-purchase basis at a nominal rent to cover costs of repairs, insurance and management, it being understood that at the end of 25 years they would become the owners thereof.

9. Consideration was given to the rehousing of some of the displaced persons in about 50 empty C.H.A. houses at La Cure. However, certain points against this partial solution were brought out, namely, (i) the poor condition of the houses as compared with those proposed in the housing scheme in question, (ii) as the survey has shown, the Ilois tend to cluster together and would resist being split apart, (iii) the difficulties in practice in deciding which of the families should move to La Cure, and (iv) the C.H.A. houses, benefiting as they do from a grant element, should be left to Mauritians generally. For all these reasons the idea has been abandoned.

#### Job Rehabilitation

10. According to the survey, around 250 heads of household are either unemployed or only casually employed. This figure excludes those who are drawing Old Age Pension and therefore cannot be expected to do a lucrative job. The Committee recommends that job opportunities should be created for these 250 families and the best solution would be to start pig breeding on a full-time cooperative basis. Assuming that all the families would be prepared to undertake such a work and can be <sup>given</sup> adequate training, the capital outlay would be Rs 484,750:-

	Rs
Piglets (15 per family) @ Rs 65	- 243,750
Pens (one of three compartments for each family)	- 125,000
5 acres of land	- 100,000
2 stores/offices	- 8,000
2 Supervisors	- 8,000
	<u>TOTAL - 484,750</u>
	Say, 500,000

The Committee considers that this amount should be given as grant. Appendix C gives detailed information on the cost and expected yields of the project.

11. An additional Rs 750,000 would also be needed for the supply of feed to the members for a period of approximately seven months, after which date the first batch of pigs should be ready for marketing. This money should be given on loan and deducted at source by the co-operative societies in two equal instalments when the sale of the first and second batches has been effected. The average net profit per family is estimated at around Rs 2,000 a year.

12. On the land available around each house vegetable and herb cultivations could be encouraged as well as rabbit breeding. A member of the Extension Service of the Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources could be detailed for the necessary training. It has been reported to the Committee that there is an interesting export market in Europe and North America for herbs. This is a line of economic development which apparently does not require much land and which could be carried out by families as an

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additional source of income. In so far as rabbit breeding is concerned the present local market seems to be choked, but this development by the Ilois would provide additional protein in their diets and a source of income from sale of surplus rabbit flesh in the neighbourhood. The cost of 10 rabbits and a hutch would cost around Rs 100 and the total expenditure would be Rs 33,000.

13. From the foregoing the cost of resettlement would be:

(i) Housing Estates	Rs 5,300,000
(ii) Job Rehabilitation	
Pig breeding:	500,000
Rabbit " :	33,000
(iii) Refund of O.D.R., etc.:	225,000
	<u>6,058,000</u> =====

14. It has been reported that 130 additional families would be sent over to Mauritius from Chagos Archipelago. No information is available about these persons but assuming that they would have to be resettled in the same way as the other displaced persons, the additional cost would be approximately Rs 2.5 million, account being taken of the fact that all the heads of household in this new batch would be unemployed and job opportunities would have to be created for all of them, bringing the total cost of resettlement to Rs 8,560,000.

Cash Compensation

15. The calculations made in the two preceding paragraphs, except (iii) of paragraph 13, can be used as a guide in case it is decided that cash compensation would be the only alternative solution. In such an event the following recommendations are made:-

- (a) since the displaced persons would benefit from welfare services already made available by the Government free of charge, they should be given only a certain proportion of the compensation accruing to them;
- (b) payment should not be made as a lump sum, but on a monthly basis over a long period of time, to prevent squandering in the families' own interest.

16. I invite my colleagues to agree to the recommendations contained in this memorandum and to the figure of Rs 8,560,000 being used as a basis for negotiation with the British Government as the total cost of resettlement of the persons displaced from Chagos Archipelago.

A.R.M.



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The tables given below are in respect of 286 households who were interviewed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in their survey carried out in January 1972. 44 households could not be located.

Population Structure

Number of persons interviewed: 286

Number of persons in households covered by the interview:

Adults : 424  
Children : 562  
Total : 986

Ages of Children

<u>0-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>11-16</u>	<u>Over 16</u>
205	152	141	64

Thus about 150 children are of Primary School age now and a further 205 will become of school age in the period 1972-75.

Household Size

Size of Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No. of Cases	79	47	38	34	22	14	17	12	14	0	2	2

Almost 50% of the households are small (one or two people) about 30% are of medium size (3 persons to 5 persons). 20% of the households are large (6 persons or more).

Employment Structure

Of the heads of households 43 had full time jobs, 134 casual jobs and 86 were unemployed. It should be noted that 29 of the casual jobs were in the docks and pay was generally good, conversely some of the permanent jobs were in domestic service and were very poorly paid. Of the 86 unemployed many were single women, however these women had to support themselves and in several cases children as well. Old aged persons have not been included in the number of unemployed.

Welfare

- (i) Family Allowance: 58 households receive family allowance, of these 15 receive, in addition, outdoor relief.
- (ii) Old Age Pension: 26 households receive old age pension, of these 5 receive, in addition, outdoor relief.
- (iii) Outdoor Relief: 22 households receive outdoor relief as a sole form of Government allowance.

Attitudes