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Authority NND 989000By DA NARA Date 11/16/05Subject 87-67, 59/150/64-65

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

Def 15 Ind - 225

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*to Sec, 3 Mauritius*

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INFO: OCT 01, CIAE 00/1071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 942

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INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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LIMDIS

DDI FOR OSD/ISA

SUBJ: BIOT

REF: (A) STATE 92342

(B) LONDON 4446

(C) LONDON 4304

*Def 15 Ind - US to Sec 13 Mauritius*

1. WE MET TODAY WITH HONSTONE (ASST. HEAD, DEFENSE POLICY DEPT) AND REPS OF OTHER INTERESTED FONOFF DEPTS FOR EXTENDED SESSION ON BRITISH PROPOSAL TO DISCUSS CHAGOS EVACUATION WITH GOM AT EARLY DATE. JOHNSTONE LED OFF STRESSING POINT THAT PROPOSED TALKS WOULD NOT CENTER ON RELOCATION AT AGELEGA ISLAND, RATHER BRITS WERE PROPOSING GENERAL TALKS TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES AMONG WHICH AGELEGA ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY. UK EMBASSY WASHINGTON HAD REPORTED DEPT HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT NON-AGELEGA SOLUTION. FONOFF NOW UNCERTAIN WHETHER US CONCURS GENERAL TALKS AND THEREFORE WISHED TO REVIEW BACKGROUND OF BRITISH POSITION.

2. POLICY DECISION TO CONDUCT EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH GOM HAS

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BEEN APPROVED AT HIGHEST LEVEL OF HMG INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER. UK ACCEPTS THAT RELOCATION IS THEIR PROBLEM, HOWEVER FEELS CLOSE COOPERATION AND US ASSISTANCE WILL BE REQUIRED TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL DAMAGING EFFECTS ON BOTH US AND UK OF EVEN BEST OF AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES.

3. NONE OF THE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES ARE IDEAL. AS BRITS SEE IT, THEY NARROW TO TWO:

(A) RELOCATION OF CHAGOS WORKERS TO PEROS BANHOS AND SALOMAN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TWO ISLANDS AS FAIRLY LONG-TERM VENTURE;

(B) GRADUAL EVACUATION OF CHAGOS BY RETURNING WORKERS TO SEYCHELLES AND MAURITIUS.

4. PRIMARY REASON FOR REJECTING ALTERNATIVE (A) WAS US INABILITY TO GUARANTEE SECURITY OF TENURE FOR TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD. WITHOUT SUCH GUARANTEE, THIS ALTERNATIVE HAD FATAL DISADVANTAGES: IT WAS UN SOUND INVESTMENT WHICH UK TREASURY REFUSED TO ACCEPT AND IT MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED SECOND RELOCATION WITHIN SHORT PERIOD WHICH GREATLY INCREASED POLITICAL RISKS.

5. EVEN WITH US TWENTY-YEAR GUARANTEE, ALTERNATIVE (A) HAD FURTHER DISADVANTAGES: DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN ISLANDS TO SAME LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTION AS DIEGO WOULD REQUIRE VERY LARGE INVESTMENT. FONOFF ALSO WORRIED ABOUT GROWTH IN NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WITH CLAIM TO CITIZENSHIP OF UK AND COLONIES, WHICH WOULD POSE EVEN GREATER PROBLEM IF EVACUATION EVENTUALLY NECESSARY. CHILDREN BORN OF PARENTS WHO WERE THEMSELVES BORN IN BIOT AFTER MAURITIAN INDEPENDENCE WOULD POSE EVEN GREATER PROBLEM, SINCE THEY WOULD HAVE EXCLUSIVE ATTACHMENT TO ISLANDS AND COULD NOT BE DISGUISED AS MAURITIANS. HMG WISHES TO AVOID LATER PROBLEM AT ALL COST.

6. FOR ABOVE REASONS BRITISH OPTED FOR ALTERNATIVE (B) WHICH REQUIRES THEY PERSUADE GOM TO TAKE ISLANDERS BACK. FONOFF CONTENTS THIS WILL NOT CREATE NEW CRISIS WITH GOM, SINCE BIOT ESTABLISHED GOM HAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED THAT PEOPLE MIGHT BE DIS- PLACED. PROBLEM IN FACT ALREADY EXISTS IN FORM OF 400 ILOIS IN MAURITIUS FOR WHOM GOM NOW PRESSING BRITISH FOR COMPENSATION.

7. HMG RECOGNIZES THAT RESETTLEMENT IN MAURITIUS WOULD INVOLVE MONETARY COMPENSATION. ONE PURPOSE OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE TO DETERMINE PRICE. EVEN IF ACCEPTABLE AMOUNT AGREED UPON, BRITISH POLITICIANS ARE CONSCIOUS OF HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVING

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## WIDE-SPREAD UNEMPLOYMENT.

8. AGELEGA PROPOSAL WOULD BE MOST ATTRACTIVE WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEM IF IT IS PRACTICABLE. BRITISH HOPE THAT SOME OF COMPENSATION WOULD BE USED TO DEVELOP AGELEGA PLANTATIONS (WHICH ARE ONLY COPRA PLANTATIONS ON MAURITIAN TERRITORY.) OWING TO SECRECY OF DIEGO PROJECT, THEY HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DO DETAILED STUDY TO ASSURE FEASIBILITY OF THIS IDEA. RELIABLE ESTIMATE OF FEASIBILITY CAN ONLY EMERGE AFTER THEY HAVE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL WITH GOM, AND LATER WITH MOULINIE. AT BEST, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE ONLY PARTIAL PALLIATIVE SINCE SEYCHELL IS NOW IN CHAGOS AND AGELEGAS WOULD MOST LIKELY BE RETURNED TO SEYCHELLES.

9. FONOFF IS MOST CONCERNED TO GAIN OUR ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSED TIMING OF APPROACH TO GOM. BRITISH ARE CERTAIN THAT MAURITIANS WILL IMMEDIATELY ASK ABOUT FATE OF WORKERS WHEN THEY ARE TOLD OF DIEGO DECISION, AND ANY ATTEMPT TO EVADE QUESTION WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN FUROR WE WISH TO AVOID. ON OTHER HAND, FONOFF IS CONFIDENT IT CAN HOLD THEM OFF BY STATING THAT (A) RESETTLEMENT WILL BE NECESSARY, AND (B) BRITISH WISH TO HAVE DETAILED TALKS IN NEAR FUTURE.

10. FONOFF NOTES THAT RAMGOOLAM WILL BE IN LONDON FOR TWO WEEKS BEGINNING JULY 1, AND THE ROUTINE ANNUAL AID TALKS SCHEDULED BEGIN IN LONDON JULY 22. EITHER OF THESE TWO OCCASIONS WOULD BE IDEAL TIME TO BROACH EVACUATION QUESTION IF TIMING OF CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS PERMITS.  
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11. FONOFF ALSO STRESSED NEED FOR OUR COOPERATION IN REMOVING DIEGO WORKERS GRADUALLY. THEY FORESEE CHAGOS EVACUATION SPREAD OVER SEVERAL YEARS. WITH DIEGO CLEARED FIRST IN STAGES. THEY ARE STILL HOPEFUL THAT SOME OF DIEGO WORKERS CAN REMAIN AT LEAST IN INITIAL STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION. MOST DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE FOR US TO DEMAND CLEARING ISLAND IN ONE FELL SWOOP. IN THIS CONNECTION BRITS WOULD APPRECIATE LATEST ESTIMATE OF CONSTRUCTION TIMETABLE. IDEAL ARRANGEMENT FROM BRITISH POINT OF VIEW WOULD BE TO PERMIT GRADUAL REMOVAL WITH ALL WORKERS OUT BY TIME INSTALLATION OPERATIONAL.

12. FONOFF NOTED IT IS NOT CLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT GOM IS AWARE OF

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CLAIM OF ILOIS TO DUAL CITIZENSHIP. IT IS THEREFORE MOST IMPORTANT THAT NO REFERENCE BE MADE TO DISTINCTION BETWEEN ILOIS AND MAURITIANS. FOR ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH OUTSIDERS, THEY ARE ALL MAURITIANS.

13. RE PARA 5 REF (C), 50 OF 90 DIEGO WORKERS DUE FOR REPLACEMENT HAVE ALREADY RETURNED TO SEYCHELLES AND GOVERNOR HAS AUTHORIZED RECRUITMENT TO REPLACE THEM. BRITS HOPE TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM BY CUTTING NORMAL TWO-YEAR CONTRACTS TO SIX MONTHS OR YEAR.

14. COMMENT: FONOFF IS GIVING RELOCATION PROBLEM MOST SERIOUS AND CAREFUL ATTENTION. OPTIONS ARE LIMITED AND ALL POSE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. UNLESS DEPT CONSIDERS DANGER OF POLITICAL FALLOUT FROM EVACUATION SUFFICIENT TO RECONSIDER OUR REJECTION OF 20-YEAR SELF-DENYING AGREEMENT FOR PEROS, BANHOS AND SALOMAN, IT SEEMS TO US THAT BRITISH PROPOSALS ARE ONLY SOUND ALTERNATIVE.

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