

UNCLASSIFIED

E100

UNCLASSIFIED

PTQ0042

RELEASED IN FULL

PAGE 01      PORT L 02498 01 OF 02 090738Z  
ACTION PM-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	DOEE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-01	FBIE-00	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00	ADS-00	AC-01	NEA-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SA-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	LBA-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/010W	

-----191A19 090738Z /38

R 090736Z DEC 99  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4783  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO  
SECDEF WASHDC//ISA//  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J33/J5//  
CNO WASHINGTON DC//N33/N/POLAD//  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J/J5//  
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N3//  
HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//J3//  
NAVSUPPFAC DIEGO GARCIA  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA//N3//  
USCINCTrans SCOTT AFB IL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT LOUIS 002498

SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02      PORT L 02498 01 OF 02 090738Z

LONDON AND PARIS FOR POLMIL AND AFRICA WATCHERS  
DEPARTMENT FOR PM AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL, MARR, MOPS, KTIA, IOC, MP, UK, US  
SUBJECT: INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION SUMMIT ACCORD ON  
RESOLVING ISLAND SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTES COULD INFLUENCE  
ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS OVER CHAGOS ISLANDERS' RIGHT OF  
RETURN

(U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT  
ACCORDINGLY.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

1. (U) SUMMARY: THE INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION (IOC) SUMMIT, HELD IN REUNION ON DECEMBER 3, AGREED THAT ISLANDS WHOSE SOVEREIGNTY WAS DISPUTED BY IOC MEMBERS WOULD BE "CO-ADMINISTERED" BY THE RESPECTIVE CLAIMANTS PENDING THE OUTCOME OF TALKS ON THE ISLANDS' FINAL STATUS. WITH RESPECT TO MAURITIUS, THE AGREEMENT DIRECTLY AFFECTS ITS DISPUTE WITH FRANCE OVER TROMELIN ISLAND (LOCATED NORTHEAST OF MAURITIUS AND REUNION), BUT LOCAL POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE ACCORD COULD BE USED BY MAURITIUS AS A PRECEDENT IN ITS DISPUTE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM OVER THE CHAGOS ISLANDS, INCLUDING DIEGO GARCIA. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM PROVIDED A USEFUL SUMMARY OF HIS VIEWS ON THE CHAGOS ISSUE IN A RECENT INTERVIEW (SEE PARA 6). END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE PERTINENT PROVISION IN THE IOC FINAL DECLARATION READS (UNOFFICIAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION):

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 PORT L 02498 01 OF 02 090738Z

"IN THE ABSENCE OF CONSENSUS BETWEEN SOME MEMBER-STATES CONCERNING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CERTAIN ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, AS WELL AS THE DELIMITATION AND CONTROL OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ), THE SUMMIT HAS DECIDED THAT THESE ZONES OF CONTROL WILL BE CO-ADMINISTERED BY THE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE CLAIMED SOVEREIGNTY OVER THEM, UNTIL CONSULTATIONS END. THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE CO-ADMINISTRATION WILL BE FINALIZED BY THE CONCERNED MEMBER-STATES IN THE SHORTEST TIME FRAME."

3. (SBU) DETAILS OF HOW THIS "CO-ADMINISTRATION" WOULD BE HANDLED ISLAND-BY-ISLAND WERE LEFT VAGUE BY THE SUMMITTEERS. ONE MAURITIAN DIPLOMAT WHO ATTENDED THE SUMMIT TOLD CHARGE THAT THIS ISSUE PRESUMABLY WILL BE WORKED OUT IN THE VARIOUS CONSULTATION PROCESSES.

4. (U) FOR MAURITIUS, THE AGREEMENT DIRECTLY AFFECTS ITS CLAIM TO TROMELIN ISLAND, WHICH IS LOCATED NORTHEAST OF MAURITIUS AND REUNION. ACCORDING TO MAURITIAN SOURCES, TROMELIN (UNINHABITED BY MAN, BUT A FAVORITE HAUNT OF TURTLES) WAS HANDED OVER BY FRANCE TO BRITAIN IN 1810, ALONG WITH MAURITIUS AND RODRIGUES. IN THE 1950'S FRANCE SET UP A METEOROLOGICAL STATION THERE AT THE REQUEST OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION AND REMAINED THEREAFTER. MAURITIUS MADE ITS CLAIM TO THE ISLAND IN 1976, EIGHT YEARS AFTER OBTAINING INDEPENDENCE.

5. (U) MAURITIAN POLITICAL ACTORS AND OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, ARE SUGGESTING THAT THE IOC ACCORD COULD SERVE

UNCLASSIFIED

## UNCLASSIFIED

AS A PRECEDENT FOR PUSHING MAURITIUS' CLAIM TO THE CHAGOS

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 PORT L 02498 01 OF 02 090738Z  
 ISLANDS, INCLUDING DIEGO GARCIA. PRIME MINISTER  
 RAMGOOLAM AND OPPOSITION LEADER PAUL BERENGER MET  
 DECEMBER 8 AND EXPRESSED RARE AGREEMENT OVER THE  
 IMPORTANCE OF THE ACCORD. BERENGER CONTRASTED THE IOC  
 ACCORD WITH WHAT MAURITIUS VIEWS AS U.K. AND U.S.  
 INTRANSIGENCE OVER THE CHAGOS ISLANDS, TELLING THE PRESS,  
 "WE ARE FED UP WITH OUR GOOD BRITISH AND AMERICAN FRIENDS  
 WHO TAKE US FOR GRANTED ON THE WHOLE ISSUE." (NOTE:  
 BERENGER DID CRITICIZE RAMGOOLAM FOR SUGGESTING THAT  
 MADAGASCAR HAD A CLAIM TO TROMELIN. BERENGER POINTED OUT  
 THAT HE, AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1992, REACHED AGREEMENT  
 WITH THE MADAGASCAR GOVERNMENT, IN WHICH THE LATTER  
 RETIRED ITS CLAIM TO TROMELIN IN RETURN FOR MAURITIUS'  
 SUPPORT FOR ITS CLAIMS TO OTHER ISLANDS. END NOTE).

6. (U) THE ONGOING LAWSUIT IN THE U.K., FILED BY  
 OLIVIER BANCOULT ON BEHALF OF THE CHAGOS REFUGEES GROUP,  
 WHICH SEEKS THEIR RETURN TO THE CHAGOS ISLANDS, IS  
 RECEIVING HIGH-PROFILE ATTENTION IN THE LOCAL PRESS.  
 PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM PROVIDED HIS GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS  
 ON THE SUBJECT IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED BY THE WEEKLY  
 "WEEKEND" ON NOVEMBER 21, FROM WHICH THE FOLLOWING  
 STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN SELECTIVELY EXTRACTED BY POST:

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PTQ0045

PAGE 01 PORT L 02498 02 OF 02 090738Z  
 ACTION PM-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	DOEE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-01	FBIE-00	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00	ADS-00	AC-01	NEA-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SA-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	LBA-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/010W	

-----191A22 090738Z /38

R 090736Z DEC 99  
 FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4784  
 INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
 AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO  
 SECDEF WASHDC//ISA//  
 JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J33/J5//  
 CNO WASHINGTON DC//N33/N/POLAD//

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J/J5//  
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N3//  
HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//J3//  
NAVSUPPFAC DIEGO GARCIA  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA//N3//  
USCINTRANS SCOTT AFB IL

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 PORT LOUIS 002498

SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 PORT L 02498 02 OF 02 090738Z

LONDON AND PARIS FOR POLMIL AND AFRICA WATCHERS  
DEPARTMENT FOR PM AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL, MARR, MOPS, KTIA, IOC, MP, UK, US  
SUBJECT: INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION SUMMIT ACCORD ON  
RESOLVING ISLAND SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTES COULD INFLUENCE  
ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS OVER CHAGOS ISLANDERS' RIGHT OF  
RETURN

-- (ON THE STATUS OF SOVEREIGNTY TALKS WITH THE UK)  
"WHEN I CAME TO POWER, I GOT IN TOUCH WITH THE ENGLISH TO  
FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF CHAGOS. I MET MR.  
ROBIN COOK WHEN HE WAS NEWLY APPOINTED AS FOREIGN  
MINISTER IN 1997 AND WE DISCUSSED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE  
MAURITIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LONDON, SIR SATCAM  
BOOLELL. I MADE SOME PROPOSALS TO MR. COOK WHILST  
POINTING OUT VERY CLEARLY THAT THE MAURITIAN SOVEREIGNTY  
OVER THE CHAGOS WAS NOT TO BE QUESTIONED, BUT THAT, ONCE  
AND FOR ALL, THERE IS A NEED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE  
INHABITANTS OF THE ARCHIPELAGO. MR. COOK WROTE TO ME  
AFTERWARDS TO GIVE ME THE ASSURANCE THAT HE WAS STUDYING  
THE PROPOSALS I MADE AND THAT HE WAS WORKING ON THEM. I  
ANSWERED TO HIS LETTER AND ASKED HIM TO START  
NEGOTIATIONS AND THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, HE REMAINED  
QUIET. AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, I MADE STATEMENTS AT  
THE UNITED NATIONS AND MADE OTHER STRONGER ONES AT THE  
NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT IN DURBAN. THE STATEMENT I MADE IN  
DURBAN HAD NOT BEEN WELCOMED BY THE ENGLISH, AND THEY

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 PORT L 02498 02 OF 02 090738Z  
SENT ME A "SPEAKER NOTE" TO ASK ME TO RECTIFY WHAT I HAD  
SAID. I MADE THEM UNDERSTAND THAT I WAS GOING TO IGNORE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

THIS NOTE BECAUSE I DID NOT AGREE. THEN THINGS COOLED DOWN. BUT NOW, WITH THE CASE LODGED BY MR. BANCOULT, I MUST SAY THAT THINGS HAVE STARTED MOVING. CREDIT MUST BE GIVEN TO MR. BANCOULT. RECENTLY, WHEN I TOOK PART IN THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN DURBAN, I MET THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, MR. TONY BLAIR, AND THE FORELGN MINISTER, MR. ROBIN COOK, AND WE STARTED PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS. I REITERATED MY PROPOSALS AND INSISTED THAT THEY SHOULD START TO ACCEPT THAT IT HAD BECOME NECESSARY THAT THE CHAGOSSIAN RETURN TO THEIR NATIVE ISLANDS. THEN WE WILL DISCUSS OTHER ASPECTS."

-- (ON DISCUSSIONS WITH THE USG REGARDING DIEGO GARCIA): "BEFORE MY MEETING WITH BLAIR AND COOK, WHEN I WAS IN THE UNITED STATE, I DISCUSSED TWICE WITH THE AMERICAN STATE DEPARTMENT TO EXPLAIN THE STAND OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS AND ITS GOVERNMENT. THE STATE DEPARTMENT TOOK NOTE AND I COULD NOTICE THAT THEY HAD CHANGED ATTITUDE IN RELATION TO THE CHAGOS PROBLEM. THE AMERICANS APPEARED MORE FLEXIBLE, BUT AFTERWARDS EVERYTHING STAYED AS IT WAS BEFORE."

-- (ON WHETHER MAURITIUS DESERVES SOME OF THE BLAME FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE ILOIS, MOST OF WHOM ARE LIVING IN POVERTY IN MAURITIUS): "NO! I BELIEVE THAT THE BIG CULPRITS ARE THE COLONIAL POWERS. EVERYTHING HAS BEEN IMPOSED ON US AND WAS DONE BEHIND OUR BACKS. THEY SHOULD APOLOGIZE."

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 PORT L 02498 02 OF 02 090738Z  
7. (SBU) COMMENT: WHILE WE DO NOT EXPECT THAT THE IOC ISLAND SOVEREIGNTY ACCORD WILL HAVE A DRAMATIC IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON THE CHAGOS ISLANDS SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTE, WE DO EXPECT THAT IT WILL SURFACE AS AN ISSUE DURING THE ONGOING TALKS ON THE SUBJECT. CONSEQUENTLY, WASHINGTON AGENCIES SHOULD BE AWARE OF THIS ADDED SPICY INGREDIENT TO THE ALREADY PUNGENT CHAGOSSIAN STEW. END COMMENT.  
MARGULIES

UNCLASSIFIED

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

UNCLASSIFIED