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RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION L-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	EUR-00
	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	VCE-00
	DCP-01	NSAE-00	PER-00	PM-00	SP-00	TEST-00	PMB-00
	LBA-00	PRM-00	SAS-00	/001W			

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R 110834Z JUN 02
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8087
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//

UNCLAS PORT LOUIS 000637

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KTIA, MARR, MOPPS, UK, MP
SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA - ILOIS TO VISIT GRAVESITES?

REF:

1. (SBU) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARAGRAPH 6.

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2. (SBU) SUMMARY: GOM DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PAUL BERENGER APPEALED TO THE USG TO ALLOW THE PARTICIPANTS IN A UK-SPONSORED VISIT TO THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO ONTO DIEGO GARCIA ISLAND TO VISIT FAMILY BURIAL PLOTS. END SUMMARY.

3. (SBU) AT A MEETING (6/10) WITH THE AMBASSADOR REQUESTED BY MAURITIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PAUL BERENGER, BERENGER RAISED THE PROPOSED (OCTOBER 2002) VISIT OF "ILOIS" DESCENDANTS TO THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO. HE NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (HMG) AGREED TO CHARTER A BOAT TO CARRY AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF "ILOIS" TO TWO ISLANDS IN THE ARCHIPELAGO. HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BOTH HMG AND USG POLICY WAS THAT NO VISITORS SHOULD BE ALLOWED ONTO THE ISLAND OF DIEGO

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GARCIA.

4. (SBU) NONETHELESS, CASTING HIMSELF AS SPOKESPERSON AND ADVOCATE FOR THE ILOIS, BERENGER REPORTED THAT THE ILOIS GROUP WANTED TO VISIT ANCESTRAL GRAVESITES ON DIEGO GARCIA ISLAND. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ILOIS WERE "NOT CONCERNED WITH THE (U.S. MILITARY) BASE ISSUE ON DIEGO GARCIA" AND WERE "PREPARED TO COLLABORATE FULLY" WITH USG AUTHORITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA REGARDING WHERE THEY COULD AND COULD NOT GO. HE IMPLIED THAT THE GROUP SHOULD BE ALLOWED ONTO THE ISLAND BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF ILOIS IN MAURITIUS WERE DESCENDANTS OF THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA, AND THE IDEA OF VISITING THE AREA WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO VISIT FAMILY MEMBERS' GRAVES WAS PERCEIVED AS A "BREAK IN SOLIDARITY" (WITH THE ILOIS CAUSE). BERENGER SAID THAT THE ILOIS WOULD RATHER NOT DO THE TRIP AT ALL IF THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO VISIT THE GRAVESITES. HE APPEALED TO

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THE USG "TO MAKE AN EFFORT" TO ACCOMMODATE THE SPECIAL REQUEST OF THE ILOIS TO ALLOW SUCH A VISIT TO OCCUR. HE STRESSED THAT SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE "TOTALLY DISASSOCIATED FROM THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY" OVER THE ARCHIPELAGO (WHICH BERENGER CONSIDERS A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ISSUE).

5. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE CONSIDERED BERENGER'S REQUEST VERY DIFFICULT. HE PROMISED TO RELAY THE APPEAL TO WASHINGTON, AND AT THE SAME TIME CAUTIONED BERENGER THAT, BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME IMPORTANCE OF THE ONGOING WAR EFFORT AGAINST TERRORISM, THERE WAS A HIGH PRIORITY NEED TO KEEP THE ENTIRE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA SANITIZED AND OFF-LIMITS.

6. (SBU) ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE.
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