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P81A.

SECRET

DECL: March 1, 2013

RELEASED IN PART

B1, 1.4(A), 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

The Secretary's Meeting with FCO Director Dick Wilkinson

ISSUES TO DISCUSS

1. (U) Topic: Strategic Value of DGAR

- (U) The isolated location of Diego Garcia (unique among operating locations around the world) provides an unparalleled strategic defense value for our governments' military forces there.
- (U) Having military forces and capabilities at key locations (like Diego Garcia) will allow our governments to ensure national security interests are protected and, if need be, successfully defended without undue hindrance of any kind.
- (U) As your government is aware, current plans are that the tempo of operations of the U.S. air facilities on Diego Garcia could increase in future years.

2. (U) Topic: U.S. court case update

- (U) Displaced Chagossians and their descendants filed a civil suit on December 20, 2001 in U.S. District court. The defendants in the action are the United States, various current and former U.S. Government officials, and two corporations.
- (U) The 4,466 plaintiffs are seeking immediate return to Chagos Archipelago, limited commercial access of DGAR airstrip, equal access and employment opportunities on DGAR, and damages in excess of \$2 million each.
- (U) On September 30, 2002, the Court dismissed the plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction.
- (U) DOJ filed a motion to dismiss the case in March 2002, and briefing was completed on it in November. The Court has not yet ruled on the motion.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. R. LOHMAN, DAS, A/ISS
REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK H PEREZ
CLASSIFICATION: SECRET REASON: 1.4(A), 1.4(B), 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 1 MAR 2013
DATE/CASE ID: 04 DEC 2006 200503422

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Classified by: PM/ISO Director Charles Wilson
Reason: E.O. 12958 1.5 (b) and (d)

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3. (U) Topic: British law suit status

- (U) HMG lost a suit in 2000 filed in the British courts by the former residents of the Chagos Archipelago and their descendants. The British High Court ruled that the UK's original order to depopulate the islands was unlawful, and allowed the islanders to return to the outer islands of the Archipelago. The British High Court specifically exempted Diego Garcia in recognition of its strategic importance.
- (U) A current suit before the British courts seeks compensation.

4. (U) Topic: Return of former inhabitants

- (U) Re-population undermines the strategic value of DGAR. Re-population of the outer islands:
 - Violates the terms of the solemn agreements between our governments.
 - Compromises military operations due to the potential introduction of surveillance/monitoring/electronic jamming facilities-even on islands a considerable distance from Diego Garcia.
 - Would require significant Force Protection enhancements. Currently, our governments do not have to expend significant force protection personnel, resources or assets there to ensure the safety and integrity of main island military operations.
- (U) U.S. plans for future military uses of the outer Chagos Islands at some undetermined future time cannot be ruled out because of the dynamic nature of political, military and technological change we cannot currently foresee.

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5. (U) Topic: Government of Mauritius (GOM) sovereignty claim

- (U) The Government of Mauritius (GOM) has pressed its claim of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago with the UK and the U.S., and there are pressures from within the British Labour party to "do something" about the Chagossian islanders.
- (U) The GOM is delighted with the tone of NSC Advisor Condoleezza Rice's October letter to Prime Minister Jugnauth which concludes the USG is studying Mauritius' concerns and is confident a mutually agreeable solution will be found.
- (U) The USG does not wish to encourage HMG to pursue the idea of conveying sovereignty over part or all of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius. We do not want to open the Chagos to any activities that could degrade the strategic importance of Diego Garcia, especially as we continue to execute Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism.
- (U) U.S.-UK agreements require the UK to consult with the U.S. before making any decisions affecting the sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT). Nevertheless, sovereignty is an issue between the UK and Mauritius.

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8. (U) Topic: Expansion of Military Facilities

- (U) FY 2002 infrastructure upgrades included construction of:
 - A telephone communication remote switching facility
 - A permanent ammunition handling pad
 - An AMC squadron operations facility
 - Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) cantonment area quality of life improvements
- (U) FY 2003 infrastructure changes that have been agreed upon by HMG are to assemble, and construct necessary ramp infrastructure to support, four (4) B-2 bomber shelters.
- (U) These upgrades allow our governments to stage and operate potent military forces in a key location to cover critical contingencies



B1

IF RAISED ISSUES

9. (U) Topic: Ascension Island: Wideawake Airfield

- (U) Negotiations with HMG for opening Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island to civilian charter flights were completed on July 30, 2002.
- (U) The resultant draft agreement has received HMG Ministerial approval.
- (U) State Department (EUR/L) is drafting C-175 Authority and Memorandum of Law for internal clearances, after which we can move to signature as early as possible.

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Participants for the Assistant Secretary's February 7, 2003
meeting with FCO Director for Americas and Overseas Territories
Dick Wilkinson

Meeting (focus on the discussion of issues related to Diego
Garcia)

State
A/S Bloomfield

UK
Dick Wilkinson (FCO Director
for the Americas and Overseas
Territories)

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