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The Secretary's Meeting with
Mauritius Prime Minister Paul Berenger
May 11, 4:30 P.M., 20 Minutes

CONTEXT

Paul Raymond Berenger will meet President Bush and other senior USG officials for the first time as Prime Minister of Mauritius, a post he assumed on October 2003 as a result of an agreed rotation in the position. He is combining his Washington visit with an orientation trip to the Boeing Aircraft facility in Seattle, where he will look into possible purchase of aircraft for Air Mauritius. Mauritius faces a growing unemployment rate and a declining gross domestic product. With these factors in mind, Berenger will seek to discuss the status of the African Growth and Opportunity Act III (AGOA III), the United Nations Small Island Developing States Conference, and the impact of the Department of State Travel Advisories on tourism in Africa. He will also register his position on the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. Your objectives for this meeting are:

- To demonstrate interest in building stronger ties with Mauritius
- To encourage purchase of six (6) Boeing 777 aircraft by Air Mauritius
- To thank Mauritius for its interest in counter terrorism efforts and encourage future cooperation

ISSUES TO RAISE

1. Keep strong ties. Emphasize USG desire for strong ties and good working relationship. Applaud coalition building that resulted in 2003 democratic transition and Berenger's ascension to PM.
2. Consider buying Boeing. Serious consider of Boeing package; Boeing purchase gives superior replacement fleet and creates jobs in United States and Mauritius.

The Boeing company is in the late stages of a two-year campaign to get the air fleet renewal contract for Air Mauritius, a \$1.8 billion deal for six (6) to eight (8) Boeing 777 aircraft, which could create 20,000 U.S. jobs. Boeing's final proposal is set for early June with a decision by Air Mauritius

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coming in the fall. Air Mauritius currently flies Airbus, which is competing, with Boeing for the sale; the Mauritian government has signaled, however, that it will actively consider Boeing. US interests includes the deepening of U.S. business penetration in the East African region.

3. Counterterrorism. Solicit continued support of CT efforts and future cooperation and expansion of programs; considering request for inclusion in Terrorist Interdiction Program.

Mauritius is concerned about the penetration of intolerant extremist Islam into its culture and recently sent two observers to the Counter Terrorism conference held in Kampala. At that time, Mauritius was enthused by the prospect of broader inclusion in counter terrorism activities, and particularly integration into the "Terrorist Interdiction Program." S/CT has action.

IF RAISED ISSUES

4. AGOA. Pleased with partnership in promoting African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); pending AGOA III legislation supported by Administration

AGOA III amends the AGOA to expand certain trade benefits to eligible sub-Saharan African countries and extends duty-free treatment for AGOA articles to FY2020. Mauritius Foreign Minister Cuttaree, Ambassador Price and private sector entities have lobbied Members for consideration of Mauritius for "third country fabric" eligibility. Mauritius believes that the decline in its textile industry in the last two years has been caused by its exclusion from the benefits of the third country fabric provision of AGOA, which allows African exporters to use non-African sourced fabric in their export apparel.

5. Congratulations on hosting UN conference on small islands; look forward to working with you but no funds for conference now. Acknowledge importance United States place on Mauritius hosting the United Nations Small Island Developing States (UN-SIDS) Conference and 10-year review of process. Encourage partnership to reach compromise on plan.

Mauritius will host the ten year assessment of the implementation of the Plan of Action from the UN Conference on the sustainable Development

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of Small Island Developing States (UN-SIDS) in August. . UNSY Kofi Annan, on behalf of the Government of Mauritius, requested financial support from the international community to help fund the conference. The U.S. declined to contribute but has appointed principals to participate in negotiations to which President Bush received a letter of appreciation from PM Berenger.

6. Chagos Archipelago: Understand your concerns, but issue has to be resolved with the United Kingdom.

Berenger has stated that he "can not miss this opportunity" to share his vision of Diego Garcia with the White House. The Chagos issue is a bilateral one between the UK and Mauritius.

7. Travel Advisory for East Africa: Will revisit decision to include Mauritius in East Africa Travel Advisor.

In mid March, the Department issued a Travel Advisory on East Africa, which included Mauritius as an East African country. The Mauritius government protested its inclusion, complaining about damage to tourism (12 percent of GDP). Consular Affairs and the African Bureau have agreed to revise the advisory.

PARTICIPANTS

United States

Secretary of State Colin Powell
United States Ambassador to Mauritius John Price
DAS Don Yamamoto
Mauritius Desk Officer Helen Reed-Rowe (notetaker)

Government of Mauritius

Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger
Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ambassador V. Makhan
Permanent Secretary Mrs. V. L. Ramsamy
Ambassador Usha Jeetah

Attachment: Bio

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Drafted: AF/E: Helen Reed-Rowe, ext. 6-4644
I/2004Working/Mauritius/Checklist S Berenger Visit

	AF:	C Snyder
Cleared:	AF:	D Yamamoto
	E:	C Alsurp
	AF/E:	G Colvin
	AF/E:	J Gaffney
	EB:	D Winstead
	IO:	J. Shannon
	OES:	K. Bentley
	P:	A Gordon
	D:	E Young
	S/P:	M James
	AF/EPs:	S. Bundrage
	EUR:	E. Ewing
	PM:	B. Nichols/C Wilson
	CA:	L. Howell
	AF/RSA:	J. Nay
	AF/RSA:	K. Moody
	M:	L Gamble-Barker
	AF/PD:	A Johnson
	G:	V Turekian
	PA:	M Sofen
	S/CT:	R Parent
	EB:	J Davis
	PM:	J Doumitt

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