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RELEASED IN FULL

PAGE 01 PORT L 00931 01 OF 02 130534Z
ACTION L-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EUR-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SS-00	TEST-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	CRYE-00	EPAE-00	ECA-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	LBA-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/005W

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P 130534Z AUG 02
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8312
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5
CNO WASHINGTON DC//N3/N5
AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT LOUIS 000931

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KTIA, PREL, MARR, PREF, MP, UK
SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA - FORMER PRESIDENT UTEEM APPEALS
FOR CHAGOSSIAN VISIT

1. (SBU) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARAGRAPH
5.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 PORT L 00931 01 OF 02 130534Z

2. (SBU) FORMER PRESIDENT OF MAURITIUS CASSAM UTEEM HAS
WRITTEN TO PRESIDENT BUSH ON BEHALF OF AN NGO
REPRESENTING THE DESCENDANTS OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO TO
APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE ALLOWING THE CHAGOSSIANS TO VISIT
DIEGO GARCIA "FOR A FEW HOURS." THE LETTER NOTES THAT
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (HMG), IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE GOM, HAS ARRANGED FOR A DELEGATION
OF 100 CHAGOSSIANS TO VISIT SOME THE ISLANDS OF THE
ARCHIPELAGO AND THAT HMG REPORTED USG OBJECTIONS TO THE
DELEGATION STOPPING ON DIEGO GARCIA. THE LETTER ALSO
HIGHLIGHTS THE BRITISH HIGH COURT DECISION GRANTING A
"RIGHT OF RETURN" TO THE CHAGOSSIANS, AND ALLUDES TO
BRITISH-SPONSORED FEASIBILITY STUDIES "IN PREPARATION FOR

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(CHAGOSSIAN) PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT," AND TO PENDING LITIGATION IN U.S. FEDERAL COURT. FORMER PRESIDENT UTEEM APPEALS TO PRESIDENT BUSH TO FACILITATE A "SHORT, SOLEMN CEREMONY" TO ENABLE THE CHAGOSSIANS TO PAY RESPECT TO THE GRAVESITES OF DECEASED RELATIVES OF THEIR COMMUNITY, NOTING THE U.S. MILITARY FACILITIES ARE "MILES AWAY" FROM THE CHAGOSSIAN GRAVESITE.

3. (SBU) ORIGINAL LETTER HAS BEEN POUCHED TO AF/E FOR FORWARDING TO THE WHITE HOUSE. THE FULL TEXT OF THE LETTER IS CONTAINED BELOW.

BEGIN TEXT:

5TH AUGUST 2002

H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON DC.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 PORT L 00931 01 OF 02 130534Z

MR. PRESIDENT,

I AM WRITING ON BEHALF OF THE CHAGOS REFUGEES GROUP (MAURITIUS,), AN ORGANIZATION SET UP UNDER THE LAWS OF MAURITIUS TO LOOK AFTER THE INTERESTS AND DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF THE CHAGOSSIAN PEOPLE LIVING IN MAURITIUS, IN ORDER TO APPEAL TO YOUR HIGHER SENSE OF JUSTICE.

THE CHAGOSSIANS, AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, PRESIDENT, COMPRISE THOSE ORIGINAL RESIDENTS AND NATIVES OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WHO, IN THE MIDDLE AND LATE NINETEEN SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES, WERE EXPELLED IN THE MOST CRUEL AND INHUMAN CIRCUMSTANCES FROM THEIR LAND AND THEIR DESCENDANTS BORN SINCE IN MAURITIUS. THE ARCHIPELAGO, WHICH INCLUDES THE ISLANDS OF SOLOMON, PERHOS BANHOS AND DIEGO GARCIA, IS NOW COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY (BIOT).

IT HAS RECENTLY BEEN SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHED IN FRONT OF THE LONDON HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE THAT THE EXPULSION OF THE CHAGOSSIANS FROM THE SO-CALLED BIOT TO THE ISLANDS OF MAURITIUS AND SEYCHELLES WAS AN ILLEGAL AND UNJUSTIFIED ACT AND THEY HAVE ACCORDINGLY BEEN GRANTED THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO THEIR LAND.

WHILE FEASIBILITY STUDIES ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN TO PREPARE FOR THEIR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT THERE, IT WAS DECIDED, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND THEIR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, TO ORGANIZE IN THE MEANTIME AND AS

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THEIR TRADITION WANTS IT, A FLORAL CEREMONY ON THEIR
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PAGE 04 PORT L 00931 01 OF 02 130534Z
ANCESTORS GRAVES TO BE ATTENDED BY A GROUP OF SOME 100
CHAGOSSIANs.

TO THEIR UTTER DISMAY, THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES INFORMED
THEM THAT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WERE OBJECTING TO
THE INCLUSION OF THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA IN THE
INTENDED TRIP. THIS OBJECTION Baffles THEM ALL, SINCE THE
SOLE AND UNIQUE REASON OF THE VISIT - UNDER STRICT
CONTROL AND SUPERVISION - IS TO PAY TRIBUTE ON THEIR
ANCESTORS GRAVES SITUATED, I UNDERSTAND, MILES AWAY FROM
THE US MILITARY FACILITIES AND WHICH WOULD ONLY LAST A
COUPLE OF HOURS.

I AM THEREFORE APPEALING TO YOU, MR. PRESIDENT FOR YOUR
PROMPT INTERVENTION WITH A VIEW TO WAIVING THIS
UNWARRANTED OBJECTION AND THUS ALLOWING A PURELY
RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL BUT HIGHLY SYMBOLIC CEREMONY
SHORT, SOLEMN AND PEACEFUL TO TAKE PLACE ON THE ISLAND OF
DIEGO GARCIA.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS PENDING LITIGATION BOTH IN THE
FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT OF WASHINGTON D.C AND IN LONDON,
BUT I HOPE THAT WE FIND A WAY TO RESOLVE THESE MATTERS
QUICKLY AND AMICABLY. WITH YOUR PRECIOUS HELP.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ8046

PAGE 01 PORT L 00931 02 OF 02 130534Z
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WHILE HOPING THAT THE CHAGOSSIANS' REASONABLE REQUEST
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PAGE 02 PORT L 00931 02 OF 02 130534Z
WILL BE FAVOURED WITH YOUR SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION,
PLEASE ACCEPT, MR. PRESIDENT, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGH
REGARDS.

(SIGNED) CASSAM UTEEM END TEXT.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: EMBASSY SERIOUSLY DOUBTS PRESIDENT
UTEEM'S ABILITY TO PREDICT HOW LONG THE CHAGOSSIANS
INTEND TO REMAIN ON DG ONCE ALLOWED ACCESS, AND WE
RECOMMEND AGAINST FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF THIS
REQUEST. IT IS LIKELY THAT PRESIDENT UTEEM WILL PUBLICIZE
HIS LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH TO CONTRAST THE GOOD NEWS
FROM WASHINGTON ON AGOA WITH THE PERCEIVED "BAD NEWS" ON
THE CHAGOSSIANS ACCESS TO DG. END COMMENT

5. (SBU) ACTION REQUESTED: UPON RECEIPT, PLEASE FORWARD
THE ORIGINAL LETTER TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR ACTION.
EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING A COPY OF THE FORMAL
RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT UTEEM'S LETTER, SHOULD ONE BE
FORTHCOMING.
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