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UNITED KINGDOM MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
845 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y.

10510/G15/64

May 30, 1964.

Dear Rose,

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Please refer to my letter G/10510/14/64 of May 28 about defence interests in the Indian Ocean.

2. I now enclose a revised memorandum jointly agreed between the Americans and ourselves. This discusses three possible courses of action:-

- (a) the "step by step" course recommended in the original draft enclosed in my letter under reference, which remains our preferred course;
- (b) a variation of (a) if the risks of demaging publicity are considered too great and
- (c) going ahead regardless of the consequences.

3. As stated in my letter of May 28, I should be glad to discuss this question during my impending visit to London.

4. I am sending a copy of this letter with enclosure to Trench in Washington.

Yours sincerely,

C. E. King

(C.E. King)

O.M. Rose Esq.,
Permanent Under-Secretary's Department,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

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INDIAN OCEAN FACILITIES

1. The implementation of joint US-UK plans for the establishment of military facilities in the Indian Ocean on one or a number of the following islands -- Chagos Archipelago, Agalega, and Aldabra--should be undertaken in such a way as to minimize adverse reaction at the UN and throughout the world. The initial steps under consideration are:

- a. a survey of the islands to determine suitability,
- b. the necessary administrative arrangements for those islands selected, and
- c. the repatriation or resettlement of persons currently living on the islands selected.

2. These steps should be ordered and timed to attract the least attention and should have some logical cover where possible worked out in advance. Even if these steps are undertaken with the utmost discretion and careful planning, we must anticipate that they will become known and arouse suspicions as to their true purposes. Already, the USSR, in a general attack on the UK bases in the Indian Ocean, has mentioned Aldabra. Our objective should be to avoid giving sufficient substance at any one time to provide the grounds for a full-scale campaign which the Afro-Asian nations would feel obliged to support. A gradual implementation of these plans with little attendant publicity will also make it easier for those nations who do not genuinely object to the establishment of US-UK military facilities in the Indian Ocean to remain silent.

3. Preferable Course of Action

3. Any step which clearly reveals the true intentions should be taken after other preliminary steps, in order to reduce the interval before the final steps during which Assembly pressures can be put on the US and UK to desist from establishing the facilities. While there is no reason to foresee giving in to such pressures, resistance to them will, of course, cast US and UK in an unfavourable light in world opinion.

4. The first logical step would be the survey to determine which islands are required. We presume that such a survey could be set up that its military intent would not be revealed and that it could be executed without publicity. Administrative separation and resettlement would be undertaken after the precise needs are determined. Inasmuch as the administrative steps are likely to be politically expensive it would be unfortunate to take them and find out later that some or all of the sites were not suitable. Presumably a pre-planned statement could be prepared to explain such surveys in



5. Problem of administrative separation of dependencies of Mauritius would be the second step. This takes one degree of urgency because of the possibility Mauritius may achieve independence within the next few years. The administrative separation which would attract the least attention, and could be presented on the most logical and reasonable grounds (geographic, demographic and economic) would be to transfer these dependencies of Mauritius to the Seychelles. If, however, Ramgoolam, Chief Minister of Mauritius, should raise strong objections to such transfer and appeal to the UN, we must anticipate major opposition to the detachment at the UN. It is, therefore, essential that the consent of the Mauritian authorities be obtained for such detachment. Final detachment of all the required territories from the Seychelles, should it prove necessary, could best take place at a fourth stage after the removal of populations as the third step.

6. The transfer of populations no matter how few, as the case of Nauru has proved, is a very sensitive issue at the UN. It should be undertaken on the basis that the populations must be induced to leave voluntarily rather than forcibly transferred. This may necessitate a readiness to spend more funds and energy than might normally be expected.

7. In order to attract minimum attention, discreet timing and spacing of various steps is essential. The Committee of 24 is now for the first time considering Mauritius and Seychelles. Their consideration should be concluded before the Committee recesses for the summer (tentatively July and August). However, any noticeable administrative steps or activity could stimulate the Committee to reopen its consideration before the 19th GA. Therefore, no administrative steps should be undertaken until the completion of the Committee's work this year, probably in October. If the Mauritian authorities are in agreement, administrative steps taken while the Assembly is in session will attract less attention. However, the survey, undertaken discreetly, could go forward immediately or preferably during July and August when the Committee is recessed.

Alternative Course

8. The preceding gradual approach is, in our view, much the optimum approach for minimizing adverse reactions. It is predicated on being able to carry out the survey without revealing our true intentions. We assume this can be done. If, however, it should turn out that this is highly unlikely, and if the UK can obtain the consent of the Mauritius and Seychelles authorities, it might be wiser to undertake the administrative steps first in order to avoid pressures being generated on the UK and US, if the fact of surveys revealed our intentions, to desist from implementing the plans. If it is not highly probable that the local authorities would /consent,

consent, we would recommend that our preferred course be followed even if the risk of discovery is fairly high, as the political cost of trying to get consent, being turned down, and then acting anyway, would be very great. In this second alternative we would recommend that the administrative transfer should be directly to the UK for all three dependencies.

9. In such an approach the statement made at the time of the action would be quite important. An announcement could be made for example that in order not to impede political developments in the territories and in order to continue to be in a position to meet future technical and defense needs in the area, the islands in question, with the consent and approval of the local governments, were being taken directly under UK administration. The line taken with regard to those persons now living and working in the dependencies would relate to their exact status. If, in fact, they are only contract laborers rather than permanent residents, they would be evacuated with appropriate compensation and re-employment. If, on the other hand some of the persons now living and working on the islands could be considered permanent residents, i.e., their families have lived there for a number of generations, then political effects of their removal might be reduced if some element of choice could be introduced in their resettlement and compensation. It would probably be desirable to include some statement on this in the announcement.

10. The timing of this approach would be guided by the factors set forth in paragraph 7 and the administrative step should preferably be undertaken after the completion of the Committee's work this year, thus minimizing the chances of an unfavourable resolution being submitted by the Committee of 24 to the General Assembly.

Consequences of Early Detachment Without Consent

11. Our objective in this paper has been to minimize adverse reaction at the UN and in the areas. Another course of action would be to seize the bull by the horns, detach Chagos, Agalega, and Aldabra and place them under direct UK administration, without consent of the local authorities, and then brave the storm. It is difficult to forecast with precision just how strong and emotional the UN reaction would likely be. We could almost certainly expect condemnatory resolutions in the Committee of 24 and the General Assembly, and possibly reference of the matter to the Security Council with both the UK and the US being subjected to political attack. Such a procedure would make it extremely difficult to defend convincingly our claim to be pursuing progressive colonial policies for the benefit of the inhabitants of the territories, in accordance with the principles and

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purposes of the UN Charter. Our partition of colonial territories against the will of the populace for UK-US strategic purposes would give the Soviet bloc a golden opportunity to attack us with Afro Asian support. Major damage would also be done to our general reputation vis-a-vis the Afro Asian world; and we should have given the Communists an opportunity to damage our reputation very seriously indeed.

12. It would be desirable, in any necessary publicity about the proposed installations, to avoid as far as possible the use of the word "base". It would also be desirable to consult US-UK Missions to the UN in advance about the form and timing of any public statements which might eventually be contemplated.

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