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PTQ1640

RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION AF-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	ACQ-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	DOEE-00
	ANHR-01	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00

/019W

-----B3DBC2 261041Z /38

R 261027Z MAR 99
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3855
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
JICPAC HONOLULU HI
SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS E F T O PORT LOUIS 000660

NOFORN

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL, MARR, UK, MP
SUBJECT: "NEW" MAURITIAN POLICY ON DIEGO GARCIA?
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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) DURING AN HOUR-LONG DISCUSSION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON MARCH 25TH, MAURITIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS KAILASH PURRYAG BROUGHT UP THE ISSUE OF THE MAURITIAN CLAIM TO DIEGO GARCIA. HE STATED THAT THE GOM APPRECIATED THE VALUE OF DIEGO GARCIA AS A MILITARY BASE WHICH PROMOTED PEACE, PROSPERITY AND STABILITY IN THE REGION AND IF MAURITIUS WERE EVER TO CONTROL THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO, MAURITIUS WOULD WANT THE BASE TO REMAIN. HOWEVER, IF THE BASE WAS EVER CLOSED, MAURITIUS WOULD WANT THE ARCHIPELAGO BACK.

2. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR SUBSEQUENTLY COMPARED NOTES WITH THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER. WHAT APPEARS TO

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NEW IS A POSITIVE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE BASE'S IMPORTANCE. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SPECULATED THAT THE MAURITIANS HAVE HOPES THAT THE USG MAY ONE DAY PAY RENT TO THEM. NOTE: BOTH AMERICAN AND BRITISH DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENTS IN MAURITIUS HAVE OFTEN TOLD MAURITIAN OFFICIALS THAT THE USG DOES LEASE DIEGO GARCIA BUT DOES NOT PAY "RENT." THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER NOTED THAT PURRYAG'S COMMENTS ABOUT HAVING AN INTEREST IN CHAGOS IF THE BASE WAS CLOSED WERE REDUNDANT BECAUSE BRITISH AGREEMENTS WITH MAURITIUS ALREADY PROVIDE FOR REOPENING THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE IF THE BASE IS NO LONGER NEEDED.

3. (SBU) COMMENT: PURRYAG'S THINKING PRETTY MUCH
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REFLECTS THE PRIVATELY EXPRESSED OPINIONS OF LEADERS FROM ALL THREE MAJOR MAURITIAN POLITICAL PARTIES. IT JUST GOES FURTHER IN ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BASE TO THE REGION. HOWEVER, WE DOUBT THAT ANY MAURITIAN POLITICIAN WOULD EVER HAVE THE COURAGE TO DEPART FROM THE PRESENT PUBLIC RHETORIC WITH RESPECT TO THE "SUFFERINGS" OF THE ILOIS AND THE "SOVEREIGNTY" OF MAURITIUS.

GEISEL

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