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RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION PM-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AF-00 AMAD-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 EUR-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5792
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSNAVCENT

UNCLAS PORT LOUIS 001613

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR PM:A/S NEWSOME, AF:A/S RICE AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: MARR, MP, UK
SUBJECT: MAURITIAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHES EXTRACTS FROM
"CONFIDENTIAL LETTER" ON DIEGO GARCIA PURPORTEDLY WRITTEN
BY PM A/S NEWSOM

(U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT
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ACCORDINGLY.

1. (U) DAILY "L'EXPRESS," IN ITS SEPTEMBER 14 ISSUE,
CARRIED A FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE REFERRING TO A LENGTHY
ARTICLE BY ONE RYAN COOPAMAH, CONTAINING EXTRACTS FROM A
"CONFIDENTIAL LETTER" PURPORTEDLY WRITTEN BY PM A/S ERIC
NEWSOM TO AN UNIDENTIFIED ADDRESSEE IN THE BRITISH
FOREIGN OFFICE ON JULY 21. ACCORDING TO "L'EXPRESS," A/S
NEWSOM WROTE THAT:

-- THE UNITED STATES OPPOSES RESETTLEMENT OF THE
ILOIS ANYWHERE IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO AS THIS, "WOULD
SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADE THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF A VITAL
MILITARY ASSET UNIQUE IN THE REGION."

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-- RESETTLEMENT WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON "DELICATE MILITARY OPERATIONS" THAT "WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHIN AN INHABITED AREA" (TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH; SOME QUOTES FROM THE LETTER ARE IN ENGLISH, WHILE OTHERS ARE IN FRENCH, A COMMON PRACTICE IN THE MAURITIAN PRESS).

-- THE U.S. IS PARTICULARLY OPPOSED TO REPOPULATING THE ISLANDS PEROS BANHOS AND SOLOMONS, AS TERRORISTS COULD USE THESE TO CARRY OUT SURVEILLANCE THAT COULD "INTERRUPT, COMPROMISE OR PUT IN PERIL VITAL MILITARY OPERATIONS." (TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH)

-- DIEGO GARCIA IS "AN INDISPENSABLE PLATFORM" AND "FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION" IN THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS THAT "ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR TWO
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STATES."

2. (U) EMBASSY HAS NOT/NOT BEEN CONTACTED BY THE MAURITIAN MEDIA REGARDING THIS STORY. NOR HAVE WE MADE ANY STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO ITS PUBLICATION OR CONTENTS.

3. (SBU) COMMENT: THERE IS NO INDICATION WHERE MR. COOPAMAH OR "L'EXPRESS" OBTAINED THEIR INFORMATION. BRITISH ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHN TAYLOR TOLD DCM THAT HE RECALLED SEEING SIMILAR LANGUAGE USED IN OTHER ARTICLES AND OPINED THAT IF THE QUOTES ARE ACCURATE, THE LETTER COULD HAVE BEEN AMONG THOSE DOCUMENTS PROVIDED TO THE ILOIS PLAINTIFFS IN THEIR ONGOING LAWSUIT AGAINST THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. END COMMENT.
ERWIN

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