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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B6

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	EUR-00	VC-00
	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OMB-00	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DRL-00	G-00
	SAS-00	/000W					

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O 191339Z JAN 05
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0965
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
SECDEF WASHDC
SECNAV WASHDC
JCS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 000049

LONDON FOR TREMONT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2015
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, MARR, MP, IO, UK
SUBJECT: MAURITIAN PM UPENDS UK PLANS FOR CHAGOS TRIP

Classified By: POL JLIDDLE for reasons 1.4 d

B1

2. (U) The political sparring between HMG and the GOM over Diego Garcia (DGAR) hit the front pages after two simultaneous and connected events. British Undersecretary of State Bill Rammell, while visiting Chagossian families in Mauritius January 14, reiterated HMG position that the claim of sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos archipelago is

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"invalid." He also said that the living conditions of the Chagossians was not the result of their removal from the Chagos archipelago (NOTE: HMG removed the roughly 1500 inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago in 1965 and relocated them to Mauritius and Seychelles. END NOTE.) Rammell was in Mauritius as part of HMG's delegation to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) conference. Rammell also expressed publicly his disappointment that the GOM had canceled arrangements being made by the UK High Commission to rent a ship to transport Chagossians to visit the Chagos Archipelago in April.

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4. (SBU) [redacted] at the British High Commission in Mauritius, told Poloff January 18 that the High Commission received a letter two days before Rammell arrived in Mauritius from the MSC stating that the boat the High Commission had planned to use for the journey was no longer available. The letter indicated that the boat was unavailable indefinitely. Although in a one on one conversation, [redacted] denied to [redacted] that he was involved in the MSC's decision to cancel the availability of the vessel, [redacted] took responsibility in a later meeting.

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5. (SBU) The Mauritian government does not want to have Mauritian citizens (Chagossians) or a Mauritian flagged boat "ask" for permission by having to get proper travel documents, entrance permits, etc. to enter a territory over which Mauritius claims sovereignty. These concerns were confirmed to Poloff January 18 by [redacted]

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[redacted] He said the GOM surmises that the High Commission purposely chose a Mauritius carrier to transport the Chagossians in order to strengthen HMG's claims that Mauritius does not have a rightful claim to the archipelago. They also believe that the HMG chose the Mauritian carrier in

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an attempt to place Berenger in the politically embarrassing position of having to decide between canceling the ship (thereby looking as though he was thwarting efforts to have the Chagossians visit DGAR) or appearing acquiescent to HMG's sovereignty claims.

6. (SBU) [] explained that HMG had been transparent from the start. A letter dated December 13, 2004 from Undersecretary Rammell to Minister Cuttaree (and shared with the USG) states that HMG was "about to enter into negotiations with the Mauritius Shipping Corporation to charter the MS Trochetia." Nor could Rammell's comments, which were in effect a reiteration of long-standing HMG policy with respect to the Chagos issue, be considered

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particularly controversial or provocative. [] told [] they will discuss the matter again in late January after the PM returns from China.

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7. (SBU) COMMENT: There is also a political angle to [] stance. It is an election year (elections are expected in August or September) and [] has had a long standing position in support of the Chagossians and Mauritian sovereignty over Chagos. [] is eager to prove that he is a strong world leader standing up for Mauritian interests on the international stage. END COMMENT.
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