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SECRET

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

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DS-00	EUR-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00	NSAE-00	PM-00	IRM-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-02	SAS-00	/002W		
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O 150636Z NOV 00  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6019  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
COMUSNAVCENT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 PORT LOUIS 001965

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/15/10  
TAGS: MARR, PREL, MP, UK  
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER USING BRITISH COURT DECISION  
TO REITERATE HISTORIC CLAIM TO CHAGOS ISLANDS, BUT

[REDACTED]

B1

REF: PORT LOUIS 1955

(U) CLASSIFIED BY DCM ALEXANDER MARGULIES. REASON:  
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1.5(B,D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (S) THE AMBASSADOR, ON NOVEMBER 14, MET  
SEPARATELY WITH PRIME MINISTER SIR ANEROOD JUGNAUTH AND  
FOREIGN MINISTER ANIL GAYAN TO DEFINE MAURITIUS'  
POSITION ON THE CHAGOS ISLANDS, FOLLOWING PRESS REPORTS  
QUOTING THE FOREIGN MINISTER AS STATING THAT MAURITIUS  
WOULD JOIN WITH THE CHAGOSSIANS IN BRINGING CIVIL  
LAWSUITS FOR DAMAGES AGAINST THE U.S. AND U.K.

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[REDACTED]

THAT MAURITIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ARCHIPELAGO WOULD NOT/NOT THREATEN THE U.S. LEASE OF DIEGO GARCIA, AND THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS EXTENDING SAID LEASE. WHILE JUGNAUTH SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS RAISING THE CHAGOS ISSUE IN KEEPING WITH MAURITIUS' HISTORIC CLAIM TO THE ISLANDS AND DOES NOT EXPECT A RESOLUTION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY CLAIM FOR YEARS, GAYAN APPEARS TO WANT TO GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE FOREIGN MINISTER WHO REGAINED THE CHAGOS (A COPY OF GAYAN'S NOVEMBER 14 DECLARATION TO PARLIAMENT ON THIS ISSUE IS AT PARAGRAPH 9).

[REDACTED]

END SUMMARY.

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2. (C) THE AMBASSADOR, ON NOVEMBER 14, SOUGHT MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER JUGNAUTH AND FOREIGN MINISTER GAYAN, TO DETERMINE THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON PURSUING SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHAGOS ISLANDS AND COMPENSATION FOR ALLEGED DAMAGES SUFFERED BY THE CHAGOSSIAN ISLANDERS. THIS FOLLOWED SEVERAL PRESS REPORTS IN WHICH GAYAN WAS QUOTED AS STATING THAT THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD JOIN THE CHAGOSSIANS IN FILING CIVIL LAWSUITS FOR DAMAGES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. (REFTEL CITED RELATED MEDIA REPORTS THAT THE CHAGOS REFUGEE GROUP HAS RETAINED U.S. LAWYER MICHAEL TIGAR).

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MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER  
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3. (S) THE AMBASSADOR MET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER FIRST, AND OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY CITING THE PRESS ARTICLES, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE RAISING SIMILAR CONCERNS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER LATER THAT DAY.

4. (S) THE FOREIGN MINISTER ADDRESSED THE LAWSUIT ISSUE FIRST. [REDACTED]

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WITH RESPECT TO SOVEREIGNTY, GAYAN HANDED THE AMBASSADOR A COPY OF HIS SPEECH THAT DAY TO PARLIAMENT ON THE ISSUE (SEE PARAGRAPH 9). THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT, WITH THE COLD WAR OVER, CONDITIONS HAD FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED FROM THOSE THAT EXISTED WHEN CONTINUED BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHAGOS HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN AGREED TO, AND THAT NOW MAURITIUS WOULD SEEK TO ENGAGE WITH THE U.S. AND THE U.K. ON THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY TO MAURITIUS.

5. (S) THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES AT THE DIPLOMATIC LEVEL, NOT IN THE MEDIA, WHICH COULD STIR POLITICAL PASSIONS AND ADVERSELY AFFECT OUR EXCELLENT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. GAYAN AGREED.

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MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER  
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	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00	NSAE-00	PM-00	IRM-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-02	SAS-00	/002W		

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O 150636Z NOV 00  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6020  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE  
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 PORT LOUIS 001965

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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER USING BRITISH COURT DECISION  
TO REITERATE HISTORIC CLAIM TO CHAGOS ISLANDS, BUT

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6. (S) THE AMBASSADOR OPENED HIS PRESENTATION WITH  
THE PRIME MINISTER RAISING THE SAME CONCERNS AS WITH  
GAYAN.

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8. (S) THE PRIME MINISTER COMPLAINED THAT HE HAD MET  
THE PREVIOUS WEEK WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] TO REQUEST THE COMMENCEMENT OF A DIALOGUE ON  
SOVEREIGNTY WITH THE U.K., BUT THAT [REDACTED] HAD YET TO  
REPLY. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THIS WAS A COMPLEX  
ISSUE, INVOLVING POLITICAL AND DEFENSE CONCERNS, AND  
THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT  
SOME TIME BEFORE IT DEVELOPS A POSITION ON THIS ISSUE.  
THE PRIME MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO  
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SHORT-TERM RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE, AND THAT IT "COULD  
TAKE TEN YEARS."

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THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT

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9. (U) THE TEXT OF FOREIGN MINISTER GAYAN'S NOVEMBER 14 SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT FOLLOWS:

"I WISH TO ENLIGHTEN THE HOUSE ON A MATTER WHICH HAS BEEN WIDELY COVERED IN BOTH THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA AND TO RESTATE WHAT THE STAND OF THE GOVERNMENT IS ON THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO.

AS THE HOUSE IS AWARE THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WAS IN 1965 DETACHED BY THE THEN COLONIAL POWER PRIOR TO OUR INDEPENDENCE FROM WHAT WAS TO BECOME THE STATE OF MAURITIUS. MAURITIUS HAS NEVER RELINQUISHED ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO AND HAS NEVER ACQUIESCED IN THE CREATION OF THE BIOT, WHICH WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE OR ACCEPT. WHENEVER THIS MATTER HAS BEEN RAISED HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UK HAS MAINTAINED THAT SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WILL REVERT TO MAURITIUS WHEN THE MILITARY FACILITY ON DIEGO GARCIA IS NO LONGER NEEDED FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE WEST. THAT WAS THEIR STAND IN 1965 AND IT IS STILL THEIR STAND TODAY. WE CONSIDER THAT EVEN THIS STAND OF THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS TO BE REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN THE WORLD.

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THE HOUSE MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT IN 196 THE WORLD WAS IN THE THICK OF THE COLD WAR; THERE WERE TWO SUPER POWERS EACH ENGAGED IN THE ARMS RACE, THE BAY OF PIGS HAD HAPPENED FOUR YEARS EARLIER. PRESIDENT J. KENNEDY HAD BEEN SHOT TWO YEARS BEFORE, THE UK WAS IN NATO BUT NOT YET IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, OR THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AS IT THEN WAS. THE BERLIN WALL STILL DIVIDED EAST FROM WEST.

THE SOVIET UNION WAS THEN IN EXISTENCE. THE SOVIET UNION IS NO MORE. NATO WAS FACING THE WARSAW PACT. WARSAW PACT IS PART OF HISTORY AND MOST OF ITS FORMER MEMBERS WANT TO JOIN NATO.

THE USA AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD NOT YET SENT ANY MAN TO THE MOON AND THERE WAS FIERCE RIVALRY BETWEEN THEM AS TO WHO WOULD BE THE FIRST. TODAY THERE IS SPACE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND RUSSIA.

I COULD GO ON BUT I WILL NOT AS THE HOUSE IS CONSCIOUS

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INFO LOG-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 DS-00 EUR-00 FBIE-00  
VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00 NSAE-00 PM-00 IIRM-00  
PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-02 SAS-00 /002W  
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6021  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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OF THE MANY DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS WHICH HAVE SHAPED  
MODERN HISTORY. THE POINT I WISH TO MAKE IS THAT THE  
WORLD AS IT WAS IN 1965 IS NOT THE ONE WE KNOW TODAY.

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THIS CALLS FOR AN URGENT RE-ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION  
REGARDING THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO.

THE HOUSE IS AWARE THAT THE STAND OF MAURITIUS ON THE  
CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO IS AS FOLLOWS:

(1) THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISMEMBERMENT BY THE UK  
GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIAN TERRITORY PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE  
WAS IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND IS OF NO  
EFFECT.

(2) THE BIOT IS A CREATION WHICH MAURITIUS DOES NOT  
RECOGNIZE.

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- (3) MAURITIUS HAS NEVER RELINQUISHED ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO.
- (4) MAURITIUS HAS CONSISTENTLY RAISED IN INTERNATIONAL FORA THE RETURN OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MAURITIUS.
- (5) THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY IS NON-NEGOTIABLE.
- (6) MAURITIUS HAS EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN AT THE MANNER OF THE REMOVAL OF THOSE PERSONS WHO WERE LIVING ON THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO.
- (7) THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WAS ALWAYS PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE UNDER THE ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF MAURITIUS.

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- (8) MAURITIUS HAS ASKED THE UK GOVERNMENT TO START NEGOTIATIONS FORTHWITH ON THE MODALITIES OF THE RETROCESSION OF SOVEREIGNTY.
- (9) MAURITIUS CONSIDERS THAT THE POSITION OF THE UK TO THE EFFECT THAT SOVEREIGNTY WILL REVERT TO MAURITIUS ONCE THE MILITARY FACILITY AND BASE THE USA HAS ON DIEGO GARCIA IS NO LONGER NEEDED FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE WEST IS UNTENABLE IN VIEW OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES BETWEEN 1965 AND THE PRESENT TIME.
- (10) MAURITIUS PREFERS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BUT DOES NOT RULE OUT A RECOURSE TO OTHER MEANS.
- (11) MAURITIUS WILL SUPPORT ALL EFFORTS AT OBTAINING FULL COMPENSATION FOR ALL THOSE PERSONS WHO WERE SUBJECTED TO GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THE TIME OF THEIR REMOVAL FROM THEIR HABITUAL RESIDENCE TO THE PRESENT TIME.
- (12) IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN OUR REGION MAURITIUS IS NOT OPPOSED TO THE USA MAINTAINING THE MILITARY BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA ON TERMS WHICH ARE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE BUT MAURITIUS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DISCUSS WITH THE USA THE MODALITIES FOR THE UTILIZATION OF DIEGO GARCIA."

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COMMENT

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
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