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By VAM NARA Cat. 11-17

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PP RUEHCR RUEKDA
DE RUEHLL 473C 15/1230Z
P 151217Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY (5537)
INFO RUEKDA/DOD WASHDC PRIORITY 654
STATE GRNC
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S E C R E T MAY 15
INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

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THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES KITCHEN-PECK MEETING AT FONOFF MAY 14 TO REVIEW UK DETACHMENT PLANS AND ANTICIPATED COSTS INCIDENT THERETO. OTHER UK PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED BURLACE (ASST. SECY, POLICY, MOD) AND MORLAND (FONOFF, PERM UNDER SE. DEPT) BUT NO REP FROM COLOFF.

PECK CONFIRMED EARLIER INFORMATION (EMBTel 5263) THAT AGALEGA, COETIVY AND COSMOLEDOS HAD BEEN DROPPED FROM LIST OF ISLANDS TO BE DETACHED, WHICH BURLACE INDICATED WAS ACCEPTABLE

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FROM UK MIL STANDPOINT. IF THESE INCLUDED, PRICE WOULD HAVE TO BE HIGHER AND ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON UK INCREASED. PECK NOTED CHAGOS LEGALLY PART OF MAURITIUS; ALDABRA, FAQUAHAR AND ILE DES ROCHES HAVE SAME RELATIONSHIP TO SEYCHELLES. HMG EVNISIONS UK APPROACH TO MAURITIUS (AFTER SETTLEMENT CURRENT UNRELATED FLAREUP BETWEEN HINDU AND CHINESE ELEMENTS THERE) AND TO SEYCHELLES, TO BE FOLLOWED VERY SHORTLY BY JOINT OR CO-ORDINATED US/UK CONSULTATION WITH LIMITED NUMBER OTHER INTERESTED NATIONS ON INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL, PARTICULARLY KENYA AND TANZANIA. INDIA AND PAKISTAN WOULD ALSO BE HIGH ON LIST.

UK MINISTERS HAVE AUTHORIZED DETACHMENT, PROVIDED COST OF COMPENSATION NOT TOO GREAT, BUT HAVE WITHHELD FINAL APPROVAL PENDING RECEIPT US VIEWS. PECK STATED HE WAS "RED-FACED" OVER INTRODUCING "SLIGHTLY UNPALATABLE" POUNDS 10 MILLION COLOFF ESTIMATE, BUT DID SO UNDER DIRECTION; UK DEFENSE REVIEW HAD FORCED PRESENT GOVT TO EXAMINE ALL PROJECTS MOST CAREFULLY, UNDER OVERALL DEFENSE EXPENDITURE CEILING OF APPROXIMATELY POUNDS TWO BILLION. HE RECAPITULATED BREAKDOWN OF ESTIMATE ALONG LINES REPORTED EMBTEL 5297, EMPHASIZING NEED FOR "PLATINUM HANDSHAKE" TO MAURITIUS. PECK ALSO MENTIONED DESIRABILITY OF "FINALIZING"

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 SEYCHELLES TRACKING STATION AGREEMENT AS PART OF OVERALL
 SETTLEMENT OF DETACHMENT.

IN ANSWER KITCHEN'S INQUIRY, PECK SAID TRANSFER OF COCOS
 TO AUSTRALIA IN 1947 NOT COMPARABLE TRANSACTION, SINCE IT WAS
 STRAIGHT SHIFT OF SOVEREIGNTY, AND OWNING FAMILY DESIRED IT.
 TO BEST HIS KNOWLEDGE NO COMPENSATION PAID TO SINGAPORE COLONY
 OR MALAYSIAN FEDERATION.

KITCHEN RECALLED STRONG US OPPOSITION TO US INVOLVEMENT IN
 CONSTRUCTION OF AIRFIELD AT MAHE EXPRESSED AT FEB 64 US/UK
 MEETINGS, AND POINTED OUT MAJOR ENGINEERING TASK REQUIRED.
 MOREOVER, PRESENT FUNDING PROPOSAL WAS MAJOR CHANGE FROM
 APPROACH ENVISAGED AT THAT TIME. DOD CONSTRUCTION BUDGETS
 PROBABLY ONLY POSSIBLE SOURCE US FUNDING. CONGRESS HAD BEEN
 APPROACHED ON DIEGO GARCIA SITE; FUNDS HAD LAPSED SINCE UK
 NOT READY TO DETACH, BUT WE EXPECT THEY WOULD BE REINSTATED.
 RE ALDABRA, DOD IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPING FIRM MILITARY REQUIRE-
 MENTS ON WHICH APPROPRIATION REQUEST COULD BE BASED.

AFTER PECK HAD CONFIRMED THAT ANY US CONTRIBUTION NEED NOT BE
 PUBLIC EVEN IN UK, SINCE BETTER FOR "POOR OLD BRITAIN" TO
 MAKE PITCH TO MAURITIUS/SEYCHELLES, KITCHEN NOTED TWO POSSI-
 BILITIES FOR US ASSISTANCE. FIRST ALTERNATIVE MIGHT TAKE FORM
 OF ACCELERATED CONSTRUCTION ON BOTH DIEGO GARCIA AND ALDABRA,
 TO ANTICIPATE BRIT REQUIREMENTS THERE, SUCH AS ADDITIONAL
 FUEL STORAGE, ETC. SECOND ALTERNATIVE, WHICH KITCHEN EM-

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PHASIZED WAS ON PERSONAL NATURE, MIGHT BE THROUGH OFFSETS IN
 R AND D FIELD. EMPHASIZED THESE STILL ONLY EXPLORATORY
 SUGGESTIONS, AND HE NOT AUTHORIZED MAKE ANY COMMITMENTS. AS
 MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, US HAD NEVER PAID "RENT" FOR BASES, AND
 IN ANY EVENT WOULD BE MISTAKE TO PUT PROPOSED MAHE AIRFIELD
 IN SAME CATEGORY.

BURLACE SAID HE NOT SURE EITHER SUGGESTION WOULD HELP, BUT
 AGREED TO CONSIDER FROM UK STANDPOINT. AS WOULD BE MADE
 CLEAR BY PM IN COMMONS WEEK AFTER NEXT, ENTIRE INDIAN OCEAN
 ISLANDS PROJECT IS SUBORDINATE TO OVERALL UK DEFENSE REVIEW.
 ACCORDINGLY, MOD COULD MAKE NO STATEMENT ON USE OF ALDABRA
 FOR RAF.

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-3- 5537, MAY 15, FROM LONDON

PECK OUTLINED DETAILS OF DRAFT UK INSTRUCTION TO COLONIAL GOVERNORS MAURITIUS AND SEYCHELLES ON DETACHMENT, AND UNDERTOOK TO PROVIDE COPY THROUGH BRIT EMBASSY WASHINGTON BEFORE TRANSMITTAL TO GOVERNORS. WAS AGREED THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD MENTION POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE AIR AND NAVAL DEVELOPMENTS OTHER THAN ON DIEGO GARCIA, BUT WITHOUT MAKING SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO ALDABRA. KITCHEN NOTED HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK INTO QUESTION OF WHETHER TO REFER TO POSSIBLE USE OF LOCAL LABOR, WHICH US MIGHT NOT WANT ON ISLANDS EVEN DURING CONSTRUCTION PERIOD. PECK CONTINUED THAT NO LEASES OR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS WITH MAURITIUS OR SEYCHELLES WOULD BE CONTEMPLATED. INQUIRIES RE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD BE MET BY STANDING US/UK RESPONSE OF

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REFUSING TO CONFIRM OR DENY THEIR PRESENCE, ALTHOUGH KITCHEN STATED WE COULD DENY, IF PRESSED, ANY INTENTION TO DEVELOP AS "POLARIS BASE". ANOTHER UK PROVISION IN THIS DOCUMENT WAS THAT UK MIGHT BE PREPARED CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED IMMIGRATION AND SUGAR EXPORT QUOTAS.

IN ANSWER US INQUIRY, PECK STATED UK DID NOT DESIRE TO PROPOSE ANY MERELY NOMINAL OR TOKEN SUM TO MAURITIUS AND SEYCHELLES; FIGURE OF POUNDS 500 THOUSAND, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE "LAUGHED AT", AND UK PREFERRED TO WORK FROM "TOP DOWN". RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, IMPORTANCE OF INTIMATING TO MAURITIANS AND SEYCHELLOIS THAT IF THEY HELD OUT TOO LONG FOR TOO HIGH A PRICE, FUTURE TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS MIGHT MAKE ISLANDS LESS ATTRACTIVE IN FUTURE.

AT PECK'S REQUEST, WAS AGREED TO DELETE WORD "ADMINISTRATIVE" FROM SECOND SENTENCE PARA 3 OF JOINT PRESS GUIDANCE (DEPTEL 7191), IN ORDER ASSIST UK EXPLANATION OF DETACHMENT PROCEEDINGS IN COMMITTEE OF 24.

KITCHEN UNDERTOOK REVIEW UK PROPOSALS ON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK, SAW NO NEED FOR "FINANCIAL WIZARDS" TO COME TO LONDON FOR THIS PURPOSE.

IN ANSWER TO KITCHEN'S COMMENT, PECK AGREED THAT US AND UK SHOULD INFORM AUSTRALIA AT AN EARLY DATE, SOON AFTER CONSULTING MAURITIUS AND SEYCHELLES.

FULL MEMCON WILL BE POUCHED. GP-3.

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