

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 IO-14 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01

OES-09 MMO-01 SMS-01 HA-05 ACDA-12 /142 W

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R 280650Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1189

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PEKING

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

AFSCF AFS SUNNYVALE CA/CC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VICTORIA 00967/1

CINCUSNAVEUR, CINCPACFLT AND USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, EAID, SE, UK, FR, UR, CH

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT RENE'S SEPT 15 LONDON PRESS CONFERENCE

REF VICTORIA 946

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. POST HERewith TRANSMITS EXCERPTS FROM TEXT OF PRESIDENT RENE'S
SEPT 15 LONDON PRESS CONFERENCE, PORTIONS OF WHICH WERE CARRIED IN
SEPT 21 AND 22 ISSUES OF SEYCHELLES GOVERNMENT-RUN DAILY. QUOTE:
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Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE UK PRESS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CRITICAL
OF YOUR GOVERNMENT, AS OPPOSED TO THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT?

A. I WOULD SAY THAT IT HAS BEEN MORE CRITICAL OF MY GOVERNMENT
THAN OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT.

Q. YOU THINK THAT'S PARTLY EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT SOME MEMBERS ARE HERE IN BRITAIN AND ARE FEEDING THE PRESS?

A. THAT IS RIGHT, AT THE CORRECT TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT ONE HEARD THAT THE SEYCHELLES HAD RECEIVED RUSSIAN AID AND RUSSIAN ASSISTANCE, AND THIS WAS BECAUSE AT THAT PARTICULAR MOMENT PEOPLE WHO WERE IN BRITAIN ADVOCATED THESE IDEAS. TODAY EVERYBODY WITH ANY SENSE KNOWS THAT WE DID NOT RECEIVE ANY RUSSIAN AID AND THAT IN FACT WE ARE NOT ANY CLOSER TO RUSSIA THAN THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT.

Q. COULD YOU GIVE US SOME IDEA FROM WHAT COUNTRIES YOU DO RECEIVE AID?

A. YES, WE RECEIVE MOST OF OUR AID FROM BRITAIN AND FRANCE AND FROM THE COMMON MARKET. IN FACT, THIS IS ONE OF OUR POLICIES, TO RECEIVE AID FROM NATIONS OTHER THAN THE BIG POWERS, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY NEVER HAVE TO DO WHAT THE BIG POWERS WANT US TO DO.

Q. YET YOUR FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT ABROAD, I UNDERSTAND, WAS TO CHINA AS OPPOSED TO BRITAIN?

A. WELL I DO NOT CONSIDER CHINA TO BE ONE OF THE TWO BIG POWERS. CHINA IS, IN A WAY IN MY VIEW, A COUNTER-BALANCE TO THE BIG POWERS.

Q. DO YOU GET AID FROM CHINA?
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A. CHINA IS GIVING US SLIGHT AID IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SCHOOL.

Q. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF SEYCHELLES BEING THREATENED BY MERCENARY INVADERS. DOES THAT THREAT STILL EXIST?

A. I DO NOT THINK THAT THE THREAT STILL EXISTS BUT AS LONG AS THERE'S A THREAT SOMEWHERE TO SOMEONE, AND FOR THAT REASON WE CONTINUE TO REMAIN VIGILANT. I THINK IT IS TIME THAT THE FORMER COLONIAL POWERS, FROM WHOM MOST OF THE MERCENARIES COME, SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT TRYING TO ELIMINATE THE MERCENARY WORK.

Q. THE MERCENARIES ARE BRITISH OR FRENCH?

A. WELL, AS YOU KNOW, MERCENARIES COME FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES, BUT MOSTLY THEY'RE FRENCH AND BELGIAN AND, OF COURSE, SOME BRITISH AS WELL.

Q. DO YOU FEEL, MR. PRESIDENT, YOU MUST BE AT ALL VIGILANT ABOUT A COUNTER-COUP WITHIN THE COUNTRY ITSELF, APART FROM OUTSIDE?

A. NO, I THINK IF THERE WAS NO INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDE THERE

WOULD BE NO COUNTER-COUP IN SEYCHELLES AT ALL. THERE IS AT THE MOMENT A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING BY THE PEOPLE; EVERYBODY IS WORKING VERY MUCH TOGETHER, AND PEOPLE, FOR THE FIRST TIME PERHAPS IN THE HISTORY OF SEYCHELLES, ARE TAKING PART IN THEIR GOVERNMENT AND IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. ANY THREAT AT ALL WHICH MAY EXIST AND WHICH, OF COURSE, TODAY IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN IT WAS AT THE BEGINNING WHEN WE WERE LESS READY, COMES ACTUALLY FROM OUTSIDE AND NOT FROM INSIDE. THE PEOPLE WHO INSIDE MAY HAVE COLLABORATED WITH SOME OUTSIDE PEOPLE WERE FEW IN NUMBER.

Q. ARE THERE ANY PROSPECTS THAT YOU WILL BE HELPED BY RUSSIA WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY THAT YOU MENTIONED?

A. NO, OUR MAIN ASSISTANCE WILL COME FROM BRITAIN AND FRANCE, IN
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FACT, IN A JOINT PROJECT WHERE THE FRENCH WILL BE BUILDING FOR US THE VESSELS AND THE BRITISH WILL BE BUILDING THE SHORE INFRASTRUCTURE. THE RUSSIANS MAY, LIKE THE KOREANS AND THE JAPANESE, BE PERMITTED TO FISH IN OUR WATERS, BUT WE HAVE STATED QUITE CATEGORICALLY THAT NOONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO ESTABLISH ON SHORE ANY FISHING BASE, NO MATTER OF WHAT NATIONALITY.

Q. DID YOU RAISE THE QUESTION OF DIEGO GARCIA IN YOUR TALKS HERE?

A. NO, I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF DIEGO GARCIA. WE FEEL THAT ALTHOUGH WE ARE WORKING VERY HARD TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A ZONE OF PEACE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, WE BELIEVE THAT DIEGO GARCIA IS VERY MUCH A MAURITIAN PROBLEM AND WE CAN ONLY ASSIST THEM IN TRYING TO GET THEIR ISLANDS BACK. THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE ONCE THE BIG POWERS HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE SOONER THE INDIAN OCEAN BECOMES A ZONE OF PEACE THE BETTER IT WILL BE FOR ALL OF US.

Q. DOES YOUR NON-ALIGNED POLICY, AND YOUR ATTITUDE THAT THE US AND RUSSIA ARE BIG POWERS THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO GET TOO MUCH INVOLVED WITH, MEAN THAT YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING MORE CONTACTS WITH CHINA IN FUTURE?

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VICTORIA 00967/2

A. NOT NECESSARILY SO. I THINK OUR CONTACT WITH CHINA NOW IS ON A GOOD LEVEL. OUR AIM CLEARLY IS TO DEVELOP OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNTRIES WITH WHICH WE HAVE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS FROM BEFORE, EITHER HISTORICALLY OR LINGUISTICALLY. WE THINK THAT IT IS SUFFICIENT FOR US TO DO THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF AID.

Q. MR. PRESIDENT, CAN YOU GIVE US ANY SORT OF STATEMENT ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION?

A. IT IS QUITE CLEAR FROM CONSULTATIONS WE'VE HAD WITH PEOPLE FROM THE DISTRICTS AND THE OTHER ISLANDS, THAT THE PEOPLE ARE FED UP WITH POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN A COUNTRY OF SO FEW PEOPLE, AND WHAT THEY WANT IS TO HAVE A SYSTEM WHERE THEY COULD HAVE CONSTRUCTIVE
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DISCUSSIONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE EXCHANGES OF VIEWS ON VARIOUS IDEAS, BUT WITHOUT IN FACT, HAVING TO FIGHT AGAINST EACH OTHER, AS IT WAS IN THE PAST, ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS. IT LOOKS OBVIOUS THAT A ONE-PARTY STATE WILL EMERGE OUT OF THIS, BUT WE ARE PUTTING TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION, WHICH WILL BE UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF SIR TELFORD GEORGES, ALL THE VARIOUS TAPES OF THE VARIOUS MEETINGS, AND HE HIMSELF, OF COURSE, WILL BE MEETING PEOPLE FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, IN ORDER FOR HIM TO PRODUCE A REPORT WHICH WILL THEN FORM THE BASIS OF THE NEXT CONSTITUTION. WE ARE HOPING THAT THIS WILL BE DONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BECAUSE WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN JUNE NEXT YEAR AND WE INTEND TO STICK TO IT.

Q. WILL THOSE POLITICAL LEADERS WHO HAD TO DEPART FOLLOWING THE COUP OR JUST BEFORE IT, BE ENCOURAGED TO RETURN TO HELP PREPARE THIS NEW CONSTITUTION, OR WILL THEY ENDANGER THEMSELVES IN SO DOING?

A. I THINK THE WORD YOU USED WAS IF THEY'D BE "ENCOURAGED" TO RETURN. I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT ENCOURAGE THEM TO RETURN, BECAUSE I DO NOT THINK THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS EITHER OF THEMSELVES OR OF THE COUNTRY, FOR THEM TO RETURN. ON THE OTHER HAND, APART FROM THE FACT THAT IN CERTAIN INSTANCES JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COULD BE TAKEN AGAINST SOME OF THEM FOR CERTAIN ACTIONS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE, THEY'RE QUITE FREE TO COME BACK.

Q. DO YOU FIND THAT THERE IS INTEREST BY VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS IN BUNKERING FACILITIES FOR WARSHIPS IN THE SEYCHELLES, AND IF SO, ARE YOU PERMITTING ANYBODY'S WARSHIPS TO USE THE SEYCHELLES FOR SUPPLIES AND SO ON?

A. WELL, THE WARSHIPS OF ALL COUNTRIES ARE NOW CALLING AT SEYCHELLES, MOSTLY EITHER ON COURTESY VISITS OR FOR THE SAILORS TO HAVE A COUPLE OF DAYS ASHORE. WE ARE MAKING SURE THAT IT IS WELL CONFIDENTIAL

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DISTRIBUTED AMONG ALL COUNTRIES WHO ARE IN THE AREA. OTHER THAN THAT, THEY DON'T COME TO SEYCHELLES FOR ANY OTHER REASON.

Q. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF SUPPLIES, FUEL, FOOD AND WATER?

A. I THINK THEY DO TAKE FUEL AND WATER WHEN THEY COME, WHICH IS NOT VERY OFTEN, ON RARE OCCASIONS.

Q. AND YOU HAVE RUSSIAN SHIPS AMONG THESE VESSELS THAT ARE CALLING?

A. OH YES, BUT THE SHIPS THAT CALL MOST, OF COURSE, ARE THE FRENCH, THEN THE AMERICANS, THEN THE RUSSIANS, IN THAT SORT OF ORDER.

Q. AND ARE YOU DEFINITELY TRYING TO MAKE OF SEYCHELLES A SOCIALIST COUNTRY AS FAR AS THE SOCIETY IS CONCERNED-BECAUSE AT THE BEGINNING YOU SAID, I THINK, THAT YOU WANTED TO BUILD "SOCIALISME DE LA JOIE" OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

A. WELL, I HAVE HEARD THIS EXPRESSION "SOCIALISM DE LA JOIE" QUITE OFTEN. I MYSELF DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS; I NEVER SAID IT. WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IS TO BUILD A SOCIALISM WHICH GIVES TO OUR PEOPLE A BETTER EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, WHICH OPENS THE DOOR FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ON AN EQUAL BASIS TO EDUCATION AND WHICH ENABLES EVERYBODY TO ACHIEVE A CERTAIN STANDARD OF LIVING. THE SOCIALISM WE ARE TRYING TO BUILD WILL EMERGE FROM THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES AND WILL EMERGE OVER THE YEARS. WE DO NOT THINK THAT ONE HAS TO COPY THE RUSSIANS, OR THE CHINESE OR ANY OTHER MODEL. WE FEEL THAT PEOPLE BY NATURE ARE SOCIA-

LIST AND WE THINK THAT IN DUE COURSE A SOCIALISM ADAPTED TO THE COUNTRY WILL, IN FACT, EMERGE.

Q. MR. PRESIDENT, CAN YOU PERHAPS COMMENT A BIT ABOUT ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY AND PERHAPS SAY SOMETHING ABOUT ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM USING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE?

A. YES WELL, WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENTS
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IN OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY AND IN OTHER INDUSTRIES RELATED TO TOURISM. WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE A FAIRLY CLEAR CODE OF INVESTMENT IN THIS

RESPECT. WE DO NOT THINK THAT FOREIGNERS SHOULD BE INVESTING IN SMALL PROJECTS. WE HAVE CLEARLY STATED THAT WHEN IT COMES TO SMALL RESTAURANTS AND BOARDING HOUSES, THIS SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR THE LOCAL PEOPLE AND THIS IS WHY WE HAVE SET UP A FEW MONTHS AGO, A DEVELOPMENT BANK, WHICH IS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE, AS YOU KNOW, FROM THE COMMON MARKET, AND FROM THE GERMAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, IN ORDER TO HELP OUR PEOPLE SET UP THEIR OWN SMALL BUSINESSES. BUT WITH RESPECT TO LARGER CONCEPTS, FOREIGN INVESTMENT IS VERY WELCOME. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE NO FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROLS IN SEYCHELLES; WE GUARANTEE THAT ANYBODY CAN TAKE THEIR PROFITS OUT, THEIR CAPITAL OUT. THIS WE HAVE SUSTAINED END WILL CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN. END QUOTE

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

2. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES RENE'S REMARKS REGARDING ASSISTANCE FROM BIG POWERS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS RULING OUT DEVELOPMENT AID FROM US. CHARGE WAS ASSURED BY MEMBER OF CABINET ON SEPTEMBER 26 THAT THIS NOT THE CASE. ON OCCASION HIS MOST RECENT VISIT HERE AMBASSADOR LE MELLE RECEIVED ADDITIONAL INDICATIONS THAT MODEST US DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE WOULD BE MOST WELCOME. RATHER, RENE'S COMMENTS SHOULD BE VIEWED IN CONTEXT HIS EFFORTS TO STAKE OUT MEANINGFUL NON-ALIGNED POLICY, AND TO DISTANCE SEYCHELLES FROM SUPERPOWER GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY. RENE EVIDENTLY DID INTEND TO PROJECT PRIMACY OF SEYCHELLES TIES WITH UK AND FRANCE AND TO SET THESE OFF AGAINST THOSE CONTEMPLATED WITH SUPERPOWERS. BUT, ACCORDING TO GOS MINISTER, PRIMARY MESSAGE RENE WISHED TO CONVEY TO SUPERPOWERS (AND SOVIET UNION IN PARTICULAR) WAS THAT DEVELOPMENT AID SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN WITH EXPECTATION OF EXTRACTING POLITICAL GUID PRO QUO. AMBASSADOR LE MELLE CONCURS WITH THIS ANALYSIS AND SHARES
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VIEW THAT IT NOT ADVISABLE TO PRESS RENE DIRECTLY FOR
CLARIFICATION OF HIS REMARKS. SUBJECT OF US BILATERAL AID PROGRAM
WILL BE RAISED WITH PRESIDENT IN NATURAL COURSE OF EVENTS ON
OCCASION AMBASSADOR LE MELLE'S NEXT VISIT HERE.

END CONFIDENTIAL
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Message Attributes

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