

DECLASSIFIED

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BX 1715**SECRET**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

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January 10, 1972

Dear Dave

I was quite shocked to see Port Louis, A-246 dated December 20, 1971, captioned "The Ilois of Diego Garcia: A Preliminary Report on Their Condition and Recommendations for Assistance." It manifests a complete lack of understanding of the arrangements which led to the removal of the so-called Ilois from Diego Garcia. If this is not corrected, I am afraid the Embassy will inadvertantly make substantial trouble for us. We have also been seeing the British at least appearing to renege on the agreements that were reached with them.

When the British Indian Ocean Territories was developed as a program of mutual interest to the UK and the US, we had certain clear understandings which have been substantially altered by the changes resulting from the rapid disappearance of the remains of the Empire and the successor "Commonwealth." The British have not only lost interest but their economic situation precluded their carrying out their intentions to remain a major power east of Suez.

The origin of this program was a recognition by the British some years ago that they would soon grant independence to Mauritius and were very likely to do so for the Seychelles. Among the islands comprising those two colonies were a number which had no fixed population. Keep in mind that none of these islands were inhabited before the French and British settled them and brought in African slave labor to work them. Thus, the indigenous population is really very young historically and it was still non-existent on a good many of them when there were only temporary workers brought over to operate plantations distant from the seat of their owners.

The British conceived the BIOT and proposed to us that some of those islands, which had no indigenous population, be separated out into a new colony on which no one would be allowed

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