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SECRET

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Mauritius	£3,000,000
Land purchases (B.I.O.T)	1,013,200
Ship for use in administering B.I.O.T. (say)	116,000
Seychelles Airfield (say)	5,700,000
	9,829,200
Balance remaining (estimated)	170,800
	<u>10,000,000</u>

H.M.G. agreed to provide the airfield at Mahe in the Seychelles in return for the detachment from Seychelles of the islands of the western B.I.O.T.: Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches. The original estimate of £3 million was subsequently increased to the ceiling of £5.7 million shown in the above table and this largely accounts for the smallness of the balance of the £10 million now remaining for resettlement purposes. It is unlikely that any future for the population can be assured without some expenditure in excess of the present estimated balance remaining.

17. It is difficult to cost either of the solutions under discussion accurately. As stated earlier the firm who manage the plantations for H.M.G. consider that with adequate development, requiring an injection of capital, they could make the commercial operation of Peros Banhos and Salomen viable after the first five years. It must however be recognised that every year that H.M.G. continue developing these plantations they implicitly undertake continuing responsibility for these workers and they will increasingly be expected to provide social services to meet the rising expectations of the islanders whether or not the plantations show a profit. There will also be growing administrative costs.

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principle, subject to certain conditions set out below.

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4. I attach as an Annex a full account of the background to this proposal. From this you will see that the American desire to develop Diego Garcia in the manner indicated is no secret to us. Indeed it was one of the reasons why the island was included in the British Indian Ocean Territory. Nor is their wish to have us associated with the project anything of a surprise: it was first mooted by Mr. Kitchen, at that time Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department, in a letter to our Embassy in Washington on 10 August, 1966.

5. We have all along made it clear to the Americans that we could not envisage any expenditure from British funds on the project: British strategic needs in the Indian Ocean in the 1970s were not likely to be such as to justify a capital outlay of this sort. However, in May 1967 the Ministry of Defence, with the agreement of the Foreign Office (at Ministerial level), welcomed a suggestion from the U.S. Navy's Chief of Naval Operations that the British association so much desired by the Defense Department might take a form very similar to that now

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be put forward in the General Assembly that the interests of the local population are being ignored and this may receive appreciable support; but we have been able to resist such arguments by pointing out that the inhabitants consist mostly of migrant workers from Mauritius and Seychelles. We have not yet completed arrangements for resettlement of the inhabitants of Diego Garcia or for showing that they remain Mauritian or Seychellois, nor have we consulted the Mauritius Government. Resettlement will involve some small expenses but it is not expected that there will be any financial difficulty in this. When the arrangements are complete, and they may be complicated by a recently completed survey which found that 128 individuals (about 34% of the total population of 389) are now second generation inhabitants of Diego Garcia, we would propose, as agreed at the time of the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory, to deny, if necessary, the competence of the United Nations to concern itself with a territory which has no indigenous population. The island now has no ties with Mauritius, from which it was detached in 1965. It was, however, previously administered, for reasons of convenience, as a dependency of Mauritius before

/Mauritius

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have a first rate system of motor roads both round and across the island. When that to Misère, a beautiful spot in the highlands behind Victoria, is also brought up to standard it ought to be possible to provide a sanatorium and a good hotel which would do much to add to the attractions of Mahé both as a tourist and health resort.

7. Before dealing with the population it would perhaps be as well to give a very brief outline of the history of Mahé. It will account to some extent for their peculiarities. Discovered by some of the earlier Portuguese explorers Mahé does not seem to have been permanently occupied until it was taken over by the French in the middle of the eighteenth century. A few Colonists were then sent to the island from Ile de France, now Mauritius. It is probable that it had been visited in earlier centuries, for purposes of careening their ships, and establishing "caches" for their spoils by the pirates who haunted the Indian Ocean. Stories of the discovery of such "caches" are still prevalent though the finders have, not unnaturally, been reticent on the subject, but to this day the owner of Ste. Anne, the larger of the islands facing Victoria, has the greatest objection to any person landing on her property lest possibly he should be more fortunate than she has been in discovering the fortune reported to be hidden there.

8. The first French settlers seem to have been of the better classes though a number of "poor whites" appear to have arrived later. In order too to obtain labour for their plantations cargoes of African slaves were imported by the earlier colonists. The result in so comparatively small an area has been that interbreeding has been considerable and very

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very few of the old French families can now claim unmixed European descent, and in many instances where such a claim is made its weakness is only too apparent. The outcome is an anti-African feeling which shews itself at most unsuitable moments as, for instance, the reluctance of many of the young French planters to serve side by side in the Defence Force with men of African descent, a difficulty to which allusion was made in the last Seychelles budget speech.

9. The feeling is not I think due so much to colour antipathy, from which the French are usually free, as to a hereditary dislike to association with the descendants of slaves. Curiously enough it is a phenomenon which is also to be found on the continent of Africa where the feeling between the so-called freeborn and those of slave descent has often caused much trouble in, for instance, Nigeria. In Seychelles it has resulted amongst the French section of the population in what seems to me a deplorable disregard for the welfare of the poorer classes most of whom, though by no means all, are definitely of African descent. The better placed members of the community cannot in fact be relied on to accept with any enthusiasm schemes such as those designed by the present Governor for ameliorating the extreme conditions of poverty which are to be found in the island. Such absolute want has not previously come within my experience in those colonies with which I am best acquainted, and it is one of the most depressing of the problems in this Colony. It seems also to lie at the root of most of its evils. No one for instance could be more enthusiastic in the cause of education than the present Director of Education, Mr. C. B. Smith, but, as he very justly observed, the question of nutrition is in Seychelles even more important. Little intelligence can be expected from a child who is suffering from the effects of chronic underfeeding.

10. In addition to this it is felt that the problem is increased by the fact that the food consumed by the poor seems highly unsuitable. Only the cheapest fish for instance are only too often eaten and it seems probable that a visit to the island by an expert on nutrition at the cost of the Colonial Development Fund would

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ANNEX B

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POPULATION OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

1. There are approximately 800 inhabitants in the Chagos Archipelago, 380 of whom are Ilois; the rest are Seychellois (i.e. citizens of the UK and Colonies) and non-Mauritian citizens. The Ilois are an embarrassment to us in their present position. They are dual citizens of the UK and Colonies and of Mauritius, born, or whose parents were born in the Chagos Archipelago, many of them being second or third generation. The name "Ilois" literally means "people of the islands, i.e. of the Chagos Archipelago". They belong in a real sense to Chagos and thus of the British Indian Ocean territory despite the fact that they are, with the exception of one or two pensioners, all on contract to work on the copra plantations.

Ilois

2. Prior to 1965, the position was clear; the Ilois were UK citizens resident in Chagos which was part of the Colony of Mauritius. Then in November 1965 BIOT (which included the Chagos Archipelago) was created. In March 1968 Mauritius became Independent. The combined effect of the Mauritius Independence Constitution 1968 and the Mauritius Independence Act 1968 is to make all those born in Chagos before it became part of BIOT in 1965 Mauritius citizens; whilst at the same time not depriving such persons of their UK citizenship.

3. It was not considered possible to legislate to take away UK citizenship from

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5. An analysis of the financial implications is attached. It is not possible at the moment to make a realistic estimate of the cost of resettlement but it is unlikely to be less than £750,000. Officials have agreed that this money should be found by

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6. Our expectation is that the return of the Seychellois to the Seychelles will not prove difficult or expensive (The Commissioner of BIOT is also Governor of Seychelles), but we shall have to persuade the Mauritius Government to accept the return of Ilois and Mono-Mauritians on reasonable terms. Similarly, we must try to come to reasonable agreement with Moulinie & Co. for the resettlement on Agalaga.

7. In July 1969 Mr. Michael Stewart informed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam the Mauritian Prime Minister, that we shall be consulting him about resettlement when the Diego Garcia facility got under way. Mauritius already has a formidable unemployment problem; at present there are at least 40,000 men there unemployed. Our High Commissioner in Mauritius has reported that failure to tackle this unemployment soon will lead almost

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