

### **ANNEX 3**

**“British Indian Ocean Territory” 1964-1968, Chronological Summary of Events  
relating to the Establishment of the “B.I.O.T.” in November, 1965 and  
subsequent agreement with the United States concerning the Availability of the  
Islands for Defence Purposes, FCO 32/484**

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Reference.....

British Indian Ocean Territory 1964-1968Chronological Summary of Events relating to the  
Establishment of the B.I.O.T. in November, 1965  
and subsequent agreement with the United States  
concerning the Availability of the Islands for  
Defence Purposes.Purpose of the Paper

This paper gives a chronological summary of the history of the B.I.O.T. from the time when it first began to take shape as an idea, up to the end of 1968 approximately. The aim is to provide a convenient reference paper on questions relating to the B.I.O.T. and on the arrangements for joint defence facilities made with the United States. Throughout the paper references are given, where necessary, to the relevant F.O., C.O., and other sources. Annexed is a list of basic documents and reference papers under various headings.

Introductory Historical Note.

The British Indian Ocean Territory was established by Order in Council on 8 November, 1965. It comprises the Chagos Archipelago (the principal island of which is Diego Garcia), formerly administered by the Government of Mauritius; and the Farquhar Islands, Aldabra Group and the Island of Desroches, all formerly administered by the Government of Seychelles.

The B.I.O.T. was established primarily on the prompting of the United States because of its lack of bases or support points between the Mediterranean and the Pacific. The American idea of using British islands in the Indian Ocean for defence purposes goes back at least to 1962. The Chinese attack on India in 1962 had shown a need for facilities in the Indian Ocean area, and the impending British departure from Aden and elsewhere reinforced this need. In 1963 American proposals began to take definite shape.

In creating this new territory the intention was to make available for joint British and U.S. defence purposes islands with few or no permanent inhabitants, under direct British administration. In this way maximum security of tenure and freedom from political pressures could be expected. The U.K./U.S. Exchange of Notes, constituting an Agreement for the availability of the islands for defence purposes by both Governments, was made on 30 December, 1966.

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- 23 April 1964. In recommendation to Ministers that the proposals resulting from the U.S./U.K. meetings of February 25-27 should be approved, it was emphasized that the cost of defence arrangements in the Far East were out of proportion to the British stake in investment and trade in the area. Our effort was deployed less in defence of British interests than in support of the U.S., the Commonwealth and the free world. By persuading the United States to associate themselves more with Britain by using existing strategic facilities or developing new ones in places where there was no anti-colonial bias, or better still no inhabitants, our burden might be reduced. U.S. initiative in the Indian Ocean should be welcomed.
- Z 3/119 G -  
D.O.(O)(64)23 of  
23 April 1964,  
Memo. by F.O., C.O.,  
and M.O.D.
10. 27 April 1964. Conversation at State Department between Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State. Mr. Rusk confirmed U.S. agreement to establishing defence facilities in Indian Ocean, and expressed readiness to go ahead on Diego Garcia as soon as British approval received.
- Z 3/119/G
11. 6 May 1964. Ministers approved in principle proposals for development of joint facilities on lines set out in memorandum agreed at U.K./U.S. talks in February (see Item 5 above). Further decisions would be taken when the results of the survey were known and an estimate of costs made. Agreed that, after consulting the U.S. Government, Mauritius Ministers and Seychelles Executive Council should at suitable time be informed in general terms about proposed detachment of islands.
- Z 3/146/G -  
D.O.P(64) 20th  
Meeting.  
Z 3/160/G.  
(U.N.Considerations)
12. 29 June 1964. Mauritius Governor on instructions consults Premier and finds him favourably disposed to provision of facilities but with reservations on detachment. Dr. Ramgoolam expressed preference for long-term lease, and right to benefits from any minerals which might be found. He had no objection to the survey.
- DEF 127/123/03 No.191 -  
Mauritius telegram 83  
of 1.7.64.
13. <sup>13</sup>  
~~27~~ July 1964. Governor informs Mauritian Council of Ministers (Mauritius telegram No. of 15 July, 1964) of proposed survey (but does not mention detachment) following U.K./U.S. discussions about facilities in the Indian Ocean. Governments of Mauritius and Seychelles would be consulted after the survey. There was no significant reaction from the Council of Ministers.
- DEF 127/123/03  
No.233

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/Dr. Ramgoolam

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| 14. | 13 July 1964                    | <p>Dr. Ramgoolam, in London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, informed of this action on 13 July; he told fellow Mauritius Ministers who were in London with him.</p> <p>Similar action was taken in Seychelles with the Executive Council, who raised no objection to the survey.</p>   | <p>DEF 127/123/03<br/>No. 231</p>   |
| 15. | Mid-July/<br>mid-August<br>1964 | <p>Survey by joint U.K./U.S. team in H.M.S. Dampier of Chagos Archipelago (includes Diego Garcia) Agalega, Coetivy, Desroches and Farquhar Islands.</p>   |   |
| 16. |                                 | <p>A report (dated 7 September, 1964) on the survey was subsequently submitted by Mr. Robert Newton, a former Colonial Secretary of Mauritius, who had been appointed by the Colonial Office as member of the survey team. Mr Newton concluded, <u>inter alia</u>:-</p> <p>(i) that no insurmountable obstacle existed to the removal, resettlement and re-employment of the civil population of any islands required for military purposes;</p> <p>(ii) that the life of the islands was more orientated socially and economically to Seychelles than to Mauritius;</p> <p>(iii) there was a need for closer administrative control of all the islands, administration in the past having been very tenuous.</p> | <p>DEF 127/123/05<br/>Z 4/134/G -<br/>Newton Report.</p>                                |
| 17. | 29 August 1964                  | <p>News break\$ in "Washington Post". Substantially accurate report appears, pinpointing Diego Garcia as site for base.</p> <p>Many reports elsewhere in world press commenting on proposals; some critical comment, particularly in African and Asian papers.</p>  | <p>Z 4/112 - Washington telegram 3049 of 29 August 1964.</p> <p>Z 4/116<br/>Z 4/117</p> |
| 18. | 8 October 1964                  | <p>Non-Aligned Conference in Cairo condemns Indian Ocean island bases. Hostile speech by Tanzanian and other representatives.</p>   | <p>Z 4/139</p>  |

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19. 23 November, 1964. In view of press reports appearing in Britain and Mauritius about defence facilities in the Indian Ocean the Officer Administering the Government in Mauritius informs Ministers on instructions that the results of the survey are still being examined, and that the Premier would be consulted before any announcement was made either in London or Washington.
- DEF 127/123/03  
No. 303.  
Z 4/147
20. 3 December 1964 Mr.E.H. Peck (F.O.) visiting Washington tells State Department that it is essential to know soon exactly what are U.S.requirements, since only one bite can be taken at the problem. State Department ascribe delay to the Pentagon.
- DEF 127/123/03  
No. 325.  
Z 4/153 -  
Letter from  
Mr.D.G.Forster, British  
Embassy, Washington, to  
Mr.C.M.Rose, F.O.  
No. 11911/64 of  
4 December 1964.
21. 14 January 1965 American proposals for use of islands received by Foreign Office. These comprised:-
- (i) Definite military plans for Diego Garcia; detachment should include the entire Chagos Archipelago, primarily in the interests of security and in order to have other sites available for future contingencies.
- Z 4/3/G.  
DEF 127/123/03  
No. 328 -  
Letter from Mr.George  
Newman, U.S. Embassy,  
to Mr.G.G.Arthur, F.O.
- (ii) Though nothing specific was yet planned for Aldabra, its obvious potential usefulness and the joint long-term U.S/U.K. interest recommended it for inclusion in any "detachment package".
- (iii) Coetivy, Agalega, Farquhar, Desroches and Cosmoledos should be included in the order listed on a "precautionary planning" basis.
22. 10 February 1965. In answer to F.O. request for clarification, U.S. proposals were elaborated. The main points now were:-
- (i) Diego Garcia was a definite requirement. Detachment of the rest of the Chagos was "not regarded as essential" but considered "highly desirable".
- Z 4/11/G  
DEF 127/123/03  
No. 358 E.
- (ii) Some potential for Aldabra (in view of previous U.K. interest) as a staging post.

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(iii) "No reason to re-locate population prior to Island coming into use to meet a requirement. This would apply to other islands of the Chagos Archipelago so long as our activity was confined to Diego Garcia."

23	22 March, 1965	Foreign Secretary meeting with Mr. Rusk at State Department. Mr. Rusk said U.S. would like to go ahead, and detailed talks were needed.	Z 4/22.
24	5 April 1965	P.Q. (Mr. James Johnson) asking what approaches regarding facilities for "Anglo-U.S. bases" have been made to the Mauritius Government. Answer given was that "the Premier of Mauritius was consulted in July last about the joint survey of possible sites for certain limited facilities that was then about to begin. In November the Council of Ministers, who had been kept informed, were told that the results of the survey were still being examined and that the Premier would be consulted again before any announcement was made in London or Washington."	<p>PAC 93/892/01 No. 24</p> <p>Hansard Vol. Cols.</p>
25	12 April 1965	Ministers accept general lines of U.S. proposals, but decide to seek an American contribution to the cost of detaching the islands.	<p>Z 4/27 - American proposals set out in OPD(65)68 of 7 April 1965.</p>
26	15 April 1965	Prime Minister tells Mr. Rusk in Washington that HMG wishes to press ahead, despite possible political embarrassment in U.N. and elsewhere. But heavy expenditure was involved not only in compensating local interests, but in compensating Mauritius and Seychelles Governments for detachment; HMG would wish to discuss this and other questions further with the U.S. Government.	<p>PAC 93/892/01 No. 38.</p>
27	30 April 1965	Formal request to U.S. Government to help over cost of detaching the islands (memorandum delivered to State Department by British Embassy). State Department point out that this request was a departure from the understanding reached in February 1964 (see Item 5 above).	<p>Z 4/44/G - F.O. telegram 3582 to Washington and Washington telegram 1166 of 30 April to F.O.</p>

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28. 9 May 1965 News leak. "Washington Post" publishes rather accurate report of proposals for "bases in Indian Ocean" including names of islands, amount of compensation, etc.
29. 14 May 1965 Official U.K./U.S. talks in London. Explanation given to Americans that because of defence review obliged to ask for contribution to cost of detachment. Americans agreed to explore possibility of contributing to this by offsets in U.S./U.K. Research and Development programmes. Great secrecy was essential since Congress would be unlikely to agree to any appropriation of funds. Z 4/62/G  
PAC 93/892/01  
No. 82 E -  
Record of conversations headed by Mr. E.H. Peck (PO) and Mr. J. Kitchen. (Smt. Depr.)
30. 24 June 1965 U.S. Government agree to contribute up to half of estimated cost of £10 m. of detaching islands by offsets on R and D. programmes. (See Annex for main references to Secret Financial Agreement with United States) Z 4/89/G  
PAC 93/892/01  
No. 145 E -  
Memorandum delivered to F.O. by U.S. Embassy.
31. 5 July 1965 Instructions sent to H.M. Representatives in Commonwealth and certain other countries to approach Governments and inform them of detachment proposals (following securing agreement by Mauritius and Seychelles to detachment).
32. 19 July 1965 Governors Mauritius and Seychelles instructed to communicate proposals for detachment, full details of compensation, etc., to the Council of Ministers and Executive Council respectively. Z 4/116/G.  
PAC 93/892/01  
No. 186 -  
C.O. telegram 198 to Mauritius:  
219 to Seychelles.
33. 23 July 1965 Governor Mauritius (Sir J. Rennie) reports first reaction of Ministers to detachment of Chagos. Reaction guarded and time asked to consider further. Z 4/123  
PAC 93/892/01  
No. 193
34. 26 July 1965 Seychelles Executive Council response to detachment lukewarm but reasonably satisfactory: would accept if generous terms offered (airfield on Mahe and adequate compensation to land-owners, inhabitants, etc.) Z 4/12/G  
PAC 93/892/01  
No. 202
35. 26 July 1965 New agreement signed by HMG with Maldives covering Gan.

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36 30 July 1965

Governor informed that Mauritius Council of Ministers sympathetically disposed to defence facilities proposals, but object in view of likely public opinion, to detachment and prefer long-term lease of islands. Also asked for safeguards for minerals, oil and fishing rights, meteorological, air and navigational facilities and provision for a defence agreement with U.K. as well as British help in obtaining trade (sugar) and other concessions from U.S.

PAC 93/892/01  
No. 205 -  
Mauritius telegram  
No. 175.

37. 13 August 1965

Governor on instructions explains objections to lease to Mauritius Ministers, who say they would like to pursue discussions in London during the Constitutional Conference.

PAC 93/892/01  
No. 225 -  
Mauritius telegram  
No. 188.

38 14 August 1965

Indian Government express to High Commission in New Delhi their opposition to foreign military bases in the Indian Ocean as likely to lead to international tension; they would not object to arrangements freely entered into, but object to detachment of islands unilaterally before Mauritius and Seychelles have achieved independence.

Z 4/152

39 7 September 1965

Mauritius Constitutional Conference opens in London. Time-table fixed for independence; question of defence agreement and British aid in internal security problems also discussed.

40 13 September 1965

Mauritian Premier in conversation with Colonial Secretary (Mr. Greenwood) again expressed preference for lease as against detachment.

PAC 93/892/01  
No. 255 - Record  
of meeting at  
Colonial Office.

41 16 September 1965

Ministers, receiving report of Colonial Secretary on discussions with Mauritian Ministers, agree that provision might be made for reversion of Chagos islands to Mauritius if at some future time no longer required by the U.K. and the U.S.

Z 4/173/G  
PAC 93/892/01  
No. 260 -  
OFD(65) 39th Meeting.

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		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SECRET</b></p> <p>Reference .....</p> <p>42. 16 September, 1965</p> <p>American Embassy hand P.O. three draft texts of agreements covering:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) use of defence facilities in the Indian Ocean;</li> <li>(2) U.S. financial contribution (secret<del>ed</del> — see item 30 above);</li> <li>(3) Seychelles Satellite Tracking Station.</li> </ol> <p><u>NOTE:</u> The Seychelles Tracking Station began operations in 1963 under an interim working agreement. British help in obtaining Seychelles acceptance of this station was regarded by the Americans as part of a package deal for U.S. financial assistance towards cost of detaching islands.</p>	<p>PAC 93/892/01 No. 251 E.</p>
	<p>43. 23/24 September, 1965</p>	<p>Official U.K./U.S. talks in London. Mr. J. Kitchen made it clear that Americans wanted an "Ascension-type" agreement with once-for-all compensation. Texts of three agreements were considered.</p>	<p>Z 4/190 Final amended record of meeting.</p>
	<p>44. 23 September, 1965.</p>	<p>Meeting at Lancaster House between Mauritian Ministers and British representatives led by Colonial Secretary. (At previous meeting on 20 September Mauritians did not give way on question of detachment) Agreement reached, subject to consent of full Council of Ministers being secured on return of Premier to Mauritius, on detachment of Chagos Islands, subject to eight conditions of which the principal were:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a defence agreement with Mauritius;</li> <li>(b) undertaking to consult together in the event of a "difficult internal security situation" arising in Mauritius;</li> <li>(c) compensation up to £3 m. over and above direct compensation to land-owners and cost of re-settlement of others affected;</li> <li>(d) navigational, meteorological, and emergency landing facilities in Chagos Islands "to remain available as far as practicable";</li> <li>(e) reversion of the islands to Mauritius if need for facilities disappears, and reversion to Mauritius Government of benefits for any minerals or oil discovered "in or near the islands";</li> </ol>	<p>Z4/181/G PAC 93/892/01 No. 276 - Final version of record of meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">/NOTE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SECRET</b></p>

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NOTE: Mauritian agreement to the record of the meeting of 23 September, with its enumeration of conditions, was not secured until 4 October. Final version incorporated Mauritian amendments and additions.

45	23 September 1965	Ministers consider terms of the agreement with Mauritius. The Mauritians must be reminded that the decision whether or not to retain the islands (see (e) in item 44 above) was one for the U.K. and U.S. Governments, and that it was not open to Mauritius in any way to raise the matter nor press for their return.	Z 4/173/G PAC 93/892/01 No.266 - OPD(65) 41st Meeting.
46	6 October 1965	Instructions sent to the Governor, Mauritius, to secure formal agreement of the Mauritius Government that they would take the necessary legal steps to detach Chagos on the conditions agreed on 23 September.	Z 4/181/G. PAC 93/892/01 No.278 - C.O. Despatch No. 423 to Mauritius.
47	20 October 1965	Instructions to Governor, Seychelles, to confirm agreement of the Executive Council to detachment of Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches.	Z 4/189/G. PAC 93/892/01 No.292 - C.O. telegram No. 338 to Seychelles.
48	1 November 1965	Seychelles Executive Council confirm their agreement to detachment of islands, in return for promise of an airfield on Mahe, compensation to land-owners and resettlement of inhabitants.	PAC 93/892/01 No.308 - Seychelles telegram No. 306.
49	5 November 1965	Mauritius Council of Ministers confirm agreement to detachment of Chagos islands.  <u>NOTE:</u> On 12 November three Ministers of PMSD (Franco-Mauritians <i>party</i> ) resigned, not over principle of detachment, but because they considered compensation inadequate.	PAC 93/892/01 No. 314.  Z 4/228 - Mauritius telegram No. 229 of 18 November.
50	8 November 1965	The British Indian Ocean Territory Order 1965 promulgated by Order in Council. Establishes the new territory consisting of the Chagos Archipelago, Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches, and provides for its administration by a Commissioner (presently the Governor of Seychelles) and an Administrator with power to make laws, etc.	British Indian Ocean Territory Order 1965 (1965 No. 1920)

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51. 10 November 1965. *Arranged*  
Parliamentary Question (Mr. James Johnson) on the use of the Indian Ocean islands for defence. Colonial Secretary replies: "With the agreement of the Governments of Mauritius and Seychelles new arrangements for the administration of certain islands in the Indian Ocean were introduced by Order in Council made on the 8th November. The Islands ..... will be called the British Indian Ocean Territory. It is intended that the islands will be available for the construction of defence facilities by the British and U.S. Governments, but no plans have yet been made by either Government. Appropriate compensation will be paid".
52. 17 November 1965 B.I.O.T. question discussed in Fourth Committee of the United Nations. Z 4/222-UKMIS, New York telegram 2971 of 16 November.
53. 23 December 1965 U.S. Government inform HMG that they see no foreseeable use for Diego Garcia in the calendar year 1966 calling for removal of the inhabitants. Z 4/236 See letter of 31 December from G.G.Arthur, F.O. to H.P. Hall, C.O.
54. 16 December 1965 U.N. General Assembly, at 20th Session in New York, passes:  
(a) Resolution 2066(XX) - this included a paragraph inviting the Administering Power to take no action to dismember the territory of Mauritius nor violate its territorial integrity;  
(b) Resolution 2069(XX) - this included Seychelles in the list of non-self-governing territories but made no reference to detachment of islands. (An attempt to include in the Resolution two short paragraphs calling for removal of bases from the islands and opposing any bases in the future, was defeated.)
55. 8 March 1966 Mr. Healey in Defence Debate said:-  
"..... we plan, when confrontation *[with Indonesia]* is brought to an end *[Note: ended in July 1966]* that it must be a major objective to reduce the level of our forces in the Far East to that once planned by the previous Government before confrontation began; ....."  
Hansard Vol.725  
8 March, 1966.  
Cols 2045-6.

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| 56       | 10 June 1966         | <p>Ministers decide that Aldabra is a suitable site for a staging post in the Western Indian Ocean and that the U.S. Government be approached to share the facilities and pay half the estimated cost of £18 m. Also decided that a further survey be carried out to find the best location for an airfield and make a more accurate costs estimate. Such a staging post was consistent with the Defence Review philosophy of having means of reaching trouble spots in an emergency rather than maintaining large forces in overseas bases.</p> <p><u>NOTE:</u> A two-months survey of Aldabra had previously been made in 1962 by an RAF/MOD Engineering party.</p> | <p>ZD 4/34/G -<br/>Memorandum<br/>OPD(66)65<br/>"Defence<br/>Facilities in<br/>the Western<br/>Indian Ocean".</p>   |
| 57       | 15 June 1966         | At meeting of Parliamentary Labour Party motion calling for reduction of East of Suez commitments by 1969/70 rejected by 225 to 54 votes.   |   |
| 58<br>59 | 15 July 1966         | United States Government asked to share construction costs on Aldabra and to join in survey of the island likely to take place in September.  | <p>ZD 4/45/G. -<br/>Letter of 15 July, 1966, from<br/>N.C.C. Trench,<br/>British Embassy,<br/>Washington to<br/>Jeffrey C. Kitchen,<br/>State Department.</p> |
| 59 58    | 22 June 1966         | In reply to Parliamentary Question Defence Secretary states that no investigations had been made into a site for a Polaris submarine base in the Indian Ocean. In Supplementaries he said there were no plans to put Polaris boats East of Suez.  |   |
| 60       | 12 August 1966       | United States Government accept in principle jointly financed staging facilities on Aldabra and agree to participate in survey. At same time U.S. Government request HMC's concurrence and participation in an early survey of Diego Garcia.  | <p>ZD 5/57 G. -<br/>Letter from<br/>J. Kitchen, State<br/>Department of<br/>12 August to<br/>N.C.C. Trench,<br/>British Embassy,<br/>Washington.</p>          |
| 61       | 19 September<br>1966 | Aldabra survey begins by joint Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Public Building and Works, B.B.C., and U.S. team. British members include scientific representatives from Royal Society and British Museum in view of interest in preservation of the fauna and flora of Aldabra (home of the Giant Tortoise, Frigate bird, etc.)   |   |

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