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“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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62

19 September
1966.

HMG agree to American survey of Diego Garcia; party will include two British observers.

63

30 September
1966

"U.S. position paper" defining American position on the drafts of the three agreements (See item 42 above).

ZD 4/77/G - Letter from J. Kitchen, State Department to G.C.Arthur, F.O.

64

15/16 November
1966.

U.K./U.S. talks between officials in London. Final agreement reached on text of Exchange of Letters, B.I.O.T defence arrangements, finance and Seychelles tracking facility. Americans agreed that while the original intention was to use islands for defence needs free of inhabitants, situations might arise when it was feasible to make use of islands without either partial or total removal of inhabitants. These cases should be decided on their merits at the time. Both sides also agreed to bear in mind the general interest in preservation of wild life in developing defence facilities.

ZD 4/107 - Agreed "negotiating record".

65

16 November
1966

In reply to Parliamentary Question Defence Secretary says:
"..... we have no programme for creating bases in the British Indian Ocean Territory. For so long as I have been Secretary of State there has never been a concept of island bases. There has been an idea of establishing certain staging and other military facilities in certain territories in the Indian Ocean".

66

14 December
1966

Meeting at Ministry of Defence with U.S. Naval C-in-C. Europe, Admiral Thach. Admiral Thach says that U.S. requirement in Diego Garcia is for aircraft stop-over and ship refuelling facilities. Progress with satellite communication had removed the need for a communications station. It was agreed that the American survey party for Diego Garcia in mid-1967 should be transported in HMS Vidal. The Admiral asked whether the Royal Navy were interested in sharing in the construction and use of facilities at Diego Garcia. Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sir Varyl Begg, replied that he was unable to say at this stage, but he was interested in the survey.

ZD 4/121/G.

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- 67 30 December 1966
- Following U.K.-U.S. Agreements signed:-
- (a) U.K./U.S. Exchange of Notes concerning the Availability for Defence Purposes of the British Indian Ocean Territory
 - (b) Secret Exchange of Notes covering agreement on financing ZD 4/128
 - (c) Exchange of Notes on Seychelles Satellite Tracking Facility.
- (Defence and Tracking Station Agreements were published on 25 January, 1967 - see item 74 below.)
- 68 27/28 February 1967.
- Defence Statement (Cmd. 3203) with exposition of East of Suez policy. Following end of "confrontation" "..... We are examining what benefits we would get from a new staging airfield in the B.I.O.T. These arrangements would offer us greater flexibility in our future defence planning, particularly in relation to the Far East" (Page 7 of Cmd. 3203).
- Followed by Defence Debate in Parliament, in course of which the Minister of Defence referred to the survey of Aldabra "..... to see whether we required it in order to increase the flexibility of our airforce. We have found that it will be suitable and the cost of developing it will be very small, although there are certain problems; for example the Royal Society are very concerned to preserve the wild population"
- Hansard
28 February 1967
Col. 393
- 69 28 February 1967
- Aldabra: Prior to release of a statement to the press on 23 February by the Royal Society and other scientific bodies, the Ministry of Defence assured the Royal Society that the scientific case will be fully considered before any decision is taken on defence work on Aldabra.
- QC 10/3 No. 13.
ZD 1/2/3 No. 13.
- 70 20 March 1967
- Purchase of freeholds of islands in B.I.O.T. completed. In answer to Written Parliamentary Question Minister of Defence stated on 17 April that after negotiations with the owners, the freeholds have been purchased outright for £1,013,200.

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- 71 March 1967
Diego Garcia. U.S. state that if survey by team on H.M.S. Vidal satisfactory, they planned to start work in second half of 1968. Facilities to be constructed included P.O.L. storage, 8,000 ft. airstrip and communications facilities. U.S. Government enquire if HMG. are interested in sharing these facilities.

HMG reply that they see "no over-riding U.K. requirement" on Diego Garcia at present.
- 72 3 March 1967. Aldabra. Campaign by scientific bodies and nature preservation organisations in U.K. and U.S. against use of Aldabra gathers strength. Letter received by Commonwealth Office from Royal Society enclosing detailed memoranda giving case for complete conservation; also enclosing report by Dr. Stoddard (one of the members of the 1966 expedition) and other documents.

QC 10/3 No. 27.

QC 10/8 No. 5.
- 73 6 April 1967 Indian Minister for External Affairs reiterates in the Lok Sabha Indian opposition to military bases in the Indian Ocean area. Concern is also expressed at the possibility of nuclear weapons in the area.
- 74 24 April 1967 Publication of:-

(1) U.K./U.S. Exchange of Notes "concerning the Availability for Defence Purposes of the British Indian Ocean Territory".

Cmd. 3231
Treaty Series
No.15 (1967)

(2) U.K./U.S. Exchange of Notes on the Seychelles Tracking Station and Telemetry Facilities in the island of Mahe in the Seychelles.

Cmd. 3232
No. 16 (1967)
- 75 22 May 1967 President and other representatives of Royal Society meet Minister of Defence to express their opposition to the Aldabra project. Mr. Healey replied that alternatives were being considered, but none seemed practicable.

ZD 1/2/3 No. 52
QC 10/3 No. 40
and 40 A.

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- 76 19 June 1967. U.N. Special Committee ("on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples") at its 537th meeting held at Bar-eg-Salass "deplore the dismemberment of Mauritius and Seychelles and declare that the establishment of military installations in the territories violates U.N. resolutions and constitutes a source of tension." ZD 1/2/2 No. 143
- 77 27 July 1967 Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy (Cand 3357). Malaysian and Singapore Bases to be wound up by the middle 1970s: "..... however we are therefore planning to maintain a military capability for use, if required, in the area" Cand. 3357
- 78 June/July 1967 Survey (engineering and hydrographic) of Diego Garcia by H.M.S. VIDAL, with U.S./Royal Navy teams, as well as four scientists. A continuation of work done by the survey team on H.M.S. DAMPIER in 1964.
- 79 28 July 1967 Aldabra. Ministers approve proposals for an airfield on Aldabra subject to satisfactory outcome of negotiations with U.S. on cost sharing. ZD 1/2/3 No. 79
QC 10/3 No. 49.
- 80 July 1967/
March 1968. Aldabra. Expedition organized by Royal Society begins work. Includes some American scientists. Some scientists to remain on island until March 1968. ZD 1/2/2 No. 217
Note dated 18 October 1967 by Commissioner, BIOT, on the expedition.
- 81 16 August 1967 Aldabra. Letter from Minister of Defence to U.S. Defence Secretary conveying HMG's decision to go ahead with staging post on Aldabra, and asking if U.S. are prepared to participate. QC 10/3 No. 74.

Followed by talks with U.S. officials.
- 82 19 August 1967 In United Nations, report of Sub-Committee I of Fourth Committee affirms the right of the inhabitants of the British Indian Ocean Territory, "whatever their origin, to choose their own form of government"; U.K. condemned for violating territorial integrity of Mauritius and Seychelles and planning the establishment of bases.

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- 83 August/September 1967
Aldabra. Pressure by Royal Society, supported by American Academy of Scientists, Smithsonian Institution and other learned bodies, continues, and uncompromising opposition expressed to military use of Aldabra. It is argued that the ecology of the island has already been disturbed by humans more than was realised, and that the island was a unique natural laboratory.
QC 10/3. No. 134 - Letter to Commonwealth Office from Royal Society.
- 84 19 September 1967.
Aldabra. Mr. Kitchen of State Department visiting London has talks with officials. U.S. interest in Aldabra project apparently continues, but U.S. authorities wished to know what the British strategic requirement was, and why no other island was considered suitable. He mentioned Farquhar.
QC 10/3 No. 85.
20/1/2/3 No. 150
- 85 29 September 1967
Minister of Defence meets Mr. McNamara at Ankara. Mr. McNamara agreed that though there was no overriding case for constructing facilities on Aldabra, its use would give "a useful additional option" to both Governments at reasonable cost. Mr. Healey undertook to let Mr. McNamara have a note on the latest situation regarding the opposition by scientific bodies. He said that a decision regarding Aldabra would be made about 12 October.
QC 10/3 No. 101 - Record of meeting.
QC 10/3 No. 106 - Note on the attitude of scientific bodies.
- 86 25 October 1967
Aldabra. Adjournment Debate in House of Commons. The interest by scientific bodies and others was ventilated. The Under-Secretary of State (RAF) said:
"As to the 'base' question, there would be no intention of stationing strike or operational forces there. Facilities would not be adequate for this. Therefore it would not be a base any more than Gan. A base is a place where operational forces are resident, and from which the logistic support they need for operations, which is important in the amount of land required, can be provided. Aldabra would not be in this category"
Hansard
Vol. 751. No. 245
Cols. 1829/1852.
- 87 18 November 1967
Devaluation of the Pound.
- 88 23 November 1967.
Prime Minister (Mr. Wilson) in Economic Debate announces defence cuts, including decision "not to proceed" with the Aldabra project, the estimated cost of which was £16 m. with completion early in 1971.
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| 89 | 27 November
1967 | Defence Secretary states in House of Commons decision not to proceed with Aldabra. He said cost in 1968 would have been about £4 m., and more in later years. Other factors (not mentioned in the House) were apparent wavering of interest on the part of the Americans, partly due to wrangle with Congress about defence expenditure, the mounting scientific opposition in both countries, and evidence of bird strike hazard. | Hansard 27 Nov
Cols. 65-66. |
| 90 | 23 November
1967 | Mr. McNamara informed that because of defence economies, HMG were unable to go ahead with Aldabra, which was "a marginal option". | QC 10/3 No. 153 -
Letter from
Minister of Defence,
Mr. Healey, dated
18 November 1967. |
| 91 | 10 January 1968 | Americans request permission to conduct survey of Farquhar to study feasibility for airstrip and small naval facility. British participation welcomed. American interest in Farquhar seems to have developed owing to decision not to go ahead with Aldabra. | ZD 1/2/7 - No. 33
and 34
QC 10/16, No. 2. |
| 92 | 26 January 1968 | The British Indian Ocean Territory (Amendment) Order 1968 made (1968 No. 119). This Order corrected certain minor inaccuracies in the description of the Chagos Archipelago (omission of Nelson Island), and the Aldabra Group in the British Indian Ocean Territory Order, 1965. | |
| 93 | 5 March 1968 | Agreement given to U.S. request for survey of Farquhar. HMG would like to participate. Agreed that survey involved no follow-on commitment on either Government. | ZD 1/2/7 No. 42. |
| 94 | 12 March 1968 | Mauritius becomes independent. | |
| 95 | 29 March 1968 | 120 'Ilois' (i.e. adults and children of Mauritius origin born in the Chagos Islands) wishing to return to the Chagos find no employment offered on the plantations. Mauritius authorities maintain that they should be resettled in the Chagos at HMG's expense. | |

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- 96 ⁵ July 1968
Diego Garcia. U.S. Government inform HMG that they wish to proceed with establishment of facilities there and hope, if Congress approves appropriations, to begin work on the site in late Spring 1970.
The question of removing and re-settling the approximately 400 inhabitants of Diego Garcia and the question of the national status of the 'Ilois' under study in London.
2D1/2/8 No
HPN 18/1 No 9
Note on the problem by East African Dept dated 24 Oct. 1968
- 97 1 August 1968
Commissioner of BIOT expresses his views on problem of the inhabitants of Diego Garcia and their resettlement.
QC 10/16. No. 46.
- 98 13 August 1968
United States still interested in survey of Farquhar, but trouble over transport arrangements for the survey group, (which would include British representatives).
2D1/2/7 No 72.
- 99 September 1968
HMG agrees to U.S. request to set up geodetic satellite tracking station on Diego Garcia. Equipment due to arrive in November.
- 100 23 September 1968
Farquhar. Americans decide to cancel survey. Among reasons given political embarrassment of staging through Mombasa and transport difficulties. Question of reviving project later left open.
ZD 1/2/7
No: 81-82.
- 101 ³ 31 September 1968
Formal approval given by HMG to U.S. construction of facilities on Diego Garcia. *Reply refers to resettlement problem. A. Nois & others here, & to British ships & aircraft having full right of access on terms to be agreed.*
ZD 1/2/8 No 75
Letter from Mr A. Brooke-Tunnar, F.O to Mr R. I. Spiers, American Embassy.
- 102 2 October 1968
Signal (Australia) Petroleum Co., of Sydney, N.S.W., a subsidiary of Signal Petroleum Co. of Los Angeles, apply to Commissioner, BIOT., for permission to explore for hydrocarbon in the Chagos Archipelago and to undertake preliminary geophysical work, an aerial magneto-meteorological and marine seismic survey.
HPN 12/1

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3
102

September

Mauritius Government make representations on resettlement of Ilois - claim cost of "resettlement" was agreed to by HMG at Lancaster House meeting 25 September 1965 (see Item 44 above).

QC 18/2 No. 32.

104

November 1968

Consideration being given to establishing 100 Ilois and their families from Mauritius to the Chagos to maintain the viability of the copra plantations.

HPN 18/1 No. 6.
Analysis of the problem by Administrator, BIOT, 17.10.68

U.S. Government told that we saw no objection in the medium term to maintaining and expanding plantations in Peros Banhos, and Salamon Islands, which are 120 miles distant from Diego Garcia.

105

22 November 1968

U.S. "would interpose no objection to use of Peros Banhos and Salamon Islands for resettlement of workers on Diego Garcia, with the understanding that any similar persons elsewhere in the Chagos Archipelago can also be transferred to Peros Banhos and Salamon Islands the U.S. has no current plans for the use of those two islands..... Currently our planning is limited to a most austere facility on Diego Garcia"

HPN 18/1 No. 25

106

25 November to
18 December 1968

Official visit by Foreign Secretary (Mr. M. Stewart) to Pakistan and India.

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List of Useful References

These references are listed under the following headings:-

General papers
 United Nations
 Secret Financial Agreement with the United States
 Diego Garcia
 Aldabra
 Farquhar
 Status of BIOT Inhabitants (Nationality)
 Reversion of Chagos Islands
 Compensation: Purchase of Islands and
 Resettlement of Population.
 Civil Aviation: Use of BIOT.
 Diego Garcia Meteorological Station
 Fishing Rights in Chagos Islands.

General Papers.File Reference

19 February 1964	DP 24/64 (Final) "Defence Interests in the Indian Ocean" by the Defence Planning Staff. Includes detailed descriptions of each of the islands.	DPW 121/24
23 April 1964	D.O.(O)(64)23 "U.S. Defence Interests in the Indian Ocean". A copy of the paper prepared by the Foreign Office, Colonial Office and Ministry of Defence.	DEF 127/123/03 No. 112
7 September 1964	Newton Report (on the 1964 survey of Chagos Archipelago, Agalega, Coetivy, Desroches and Farquhar Islands). Examines problems of compensation, resettlement, administration, etc.	PAC 93/892/01 No. 1. and Z 4/134/G.
7 April 1965	OPD(65)68. "Defence Facilities in the Indian Ocean". Useful memorandum by Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary examining U.S. proposals for use of the islands.	PAC 93/892/01 No. 28
16 December 1966	U.K./U.S. Agreements on BIOT - Submission to the Foreign Secretary.	ZD 4/107
14 June 1967	"The BIOT - Links with Mauritius and Seychelles". Paper prepared by Research Department (Africa Section)	QC 10/9. No. 64
	<u>BIOT and the United Nations.</u>	
10 November 1965	Brief for the handling of BIOT in United Nations.	F.O. telegram to UKNIS, New York 4361.

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16 November 1965	Fourth Committee debates of 16 and 25 November 1965.	U.N. Documents A/CL/SR 1558 A/CL/SR 1570
16 December 1965	General Assembly Resolutions 2066(XX) and 2069(XX)	
26 April 1966	U.N. Secretariat Working Paper on "Mauritius, Seychelles and St. Helena".	U.N. Document A/AC.109/L.279.
29 April 1966	F.O. comments on A/AC.109/L. 279.	ZD 4/41
8 September 1966	IOC(66)136. Brief, prepared by Foreign Office with Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence on "Presentation of the BIOT in the U.N." A useful basic paper.	IRD 140/456/01 ZD 4/69
7 October 1966	Committee of 24 consider Subcommittee I's report A/AC 109/L 335 dealing with Mauritius and Seychelles.	
19 June 1967	Committee of 24's tour of Africa: Resolution adopted in final form deploring dismemberment of Mauritius and Seychelles.	ZD 1/2/2 No. 143
23 June 1967	U.N. Special Committee: Resolution on Dismemberment of Mauritius and Seychelles.	U.N. Document A/AC 109/L. 191.
30 November 1967	Notes ^{insert} on 1966 Brief IOC(66)136 up-to-date. (Letter from Mr. N.D. Matthews, Commonwealth Office to Mr. B.L. Barber, URMIS, New York.	ZD 1/2/2 No. 220
<u>BIOT Secret Financial Agreement with the United States.</u>		
14 May 1965	U.K./U.S. talks to explore in what way the Americans could contribute.	Z 4/62/G.
24 June 1965	Americans indicate how they might contribute.	Z 4/89/G.
16 December 1966	Submission to Ministers on U.S./U.K. BIOT Agreements. (Annexed to this paper is a very useful list of the main references to the secret financial agreement).	ZD 4/123

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14 August 1967	Formula agreed with the Americans about their financial contribution in the event of leakage or disclosure of the arrangement.	ZD 1/2/2 (Letter from Mr.R.A.Sykes, P.O. to Mr.A. Campbell Ministry of Defence)
August 1967	Submission to Ministers on risks of disclosure of the financial agreement.	QC 10/4 No. 3. and following papers.
	<u>Diego Garcia.</u>	
4 September 1964	Report of survey (covering P.O.L. storage facilities) by Mr. Pollock, Department of Supply (Navy)	Z 4/121
11 Sept 1967	<i>Project Red Step - Long range Report in 25 by National Public Contract & Admin Policy Dept (1967) during</i>	<i>ZD 1/2/8 Annex 10.88</i>
11 September 1964	Communications survey (by A. Kravis of Marconi Co. Ltd.) co-opted team by Ministry of Defence.	Z 4/132
8 Aug '68	<i>Wild Life Conservation - Report by Dr. D.R. Stoddart</i>	<i>ZD 1/2/8 No 81 E</i>
1967	M.P.B.W. feasibility study (based on 1966 Survey)	QC 10/8 No. 1.E.
1967	Aldabra: Report on further studies on construction of facilities.	QC 10/8 No. 81
3 March, 1967	Scientific interest in preservation of wild life. Letter from Royal Society to Commonwealth Office enclosing memorandum stating the case for conservation, report by Dr. D.R. Stoddart (member of 1966 expedition) and other documents.	QC 10/8 No. 5. <i>ZD 1/2/7 No. 1 (Dr. Stoddart's report)</i>
26 July, 1967	OPD(67)57. Aldabra: Plan to develop airfield facilities.	<i>ZD 1/2/3 No 74</i>
26 July, 1967	OPD(67)58. Memorandum on "Scientific implications of proposed Aldabra development".	QC 10/3 No. 46 B. <i>ZD 1/2/3 No 75</i>
18 October 1967	Note on Royal Society expedition to Aldabra 1967/1968 (prepared by Commissioner, BIOT, and annexed to his despatch No. BIOT/D/7).	ZD 1/2/2 No. 217
27 September 1967	Draft U.K./U.S. agreement on Aldabra (defence facilities) prepared by Ministry of Defence, in consultation with other Departments. Owing to the decision not to proceed with Aldabra, no agreement has been made.	ZD 1/2/3 No.159

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Farquhar.

10 January
1968

American request for feasibility survey.

ZD 1/2/7
Nos. 33 and 34

4 April 1968

Report by Commissioner, BIOT, (BIOT/SD/18) on facilities etc., on Farquhar, and notes on the islands based on a visit by the Commissioner in March, 1968.

ZD 1/2/7
Nos. 51 and 53

29 July 1968

Informal U.K./U.S. meeting to discuss matters regarding proposed survey, and scientific representation in the team.

ZD 1/2/7
No. 62.

13 August 1968

Survey of Farquhar. Informal U.K./U.S. discussions on political and other problems.

ZD 1/2/7
No. 72

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	<u>Status of BIOT Inhabitants (Nationality)</u>	
February/March 1966	The question of the 'Ilois' (Views of Commissioner, BIOT, telegrams No.2 Saving of 25 February and No. 4 Saving of 28 March).	ZD4/17
29 September 1967	Governor Mauritius (Sir John Rennie) gives his views on the status of the 'Ilois'.	QC 18/3
14 November 1967	Minute by Mr. D.G. Gordon-Smith, Legal Counsellor, C.O. on definition of 'Ilois'.	QC 18/3 No. 8.
5 March 1968	Further Minute by Mr.D.G. Gordon-Smith on status of 'Ilois'.	QC 18/3
4 June 1968 and 19 June 1968.	Commissioner, BIOT, reports on number of Ilois and their status, in Chagos Islands (BIOT/SD/24 and BIOT/SD/26).	QC 18/6
4 September 1968	Minute by Mr. J.H. Lambert (U.N. (Political) Department) on status of inhabitants and presentation in United Nations.	OP 4/580/2
23 October 1968	Minute by Mr. A.I. Aust, Assistant Legal Adviser, on status of inhabitants.	HPN 18/3
16 September 1965	<u>Chagos Islands: Reversion.</u> OPD(65) 39th Meeting	Z 4/173 G PAC 93/892/01: No.260
23 September 1965	OPD(65) 41st Meeting	Z 4/173 G. PAC 93/892/01: No.266
23 September 1965	American views on reversion sought.	PAC 93/892/01: No.272
25 February 1965	<u>Compensation - Purchase of Islands and Resettlement.</u> Letter from Mr. A.J. Fairclough, Colonial Office, to Mr. E.H. Peck, F.O., giving figures and estimates for purchasing islands and resettling population.	PAC 93/892/01: No.7.

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June 1965	Letter from G.P. Lloyd, DAG., Seychelles to Colonial Office, estimates cost of compensation and resettlement of BIOT inhabitants.	PAC 93/892/01. No.11
8 September 1966	IOC(66) 136. Brief on presentation of the BIOT in the U.N. This Brief also covers compensation and resettlement.	
3 June 1968	<i>On BIOT's proposals for Resettlement of Camps</i> <i>Population</i>	QC 18/2 No. 19, 20.
	<u>Civil Aviation: Use of BIOT.</u>	
15 December 1965.	Note by Ministry of Aviation on use of BIOT by civil air services.	Z 4/237/G
15 December 1965.	Note of inter-departmental discussions on use of BIOT by civil aircraft.	Z 4/239/G
25 March 1966	OPD(O)(I.O.)(66)6. Note by Ministry of Aviation.	ZD 4/2/G.
10 November 1966	Board of Trade memorandum on legal aspects of use of BIOT airfields by civil aircraft.	ZD 4/104
	<u>Diego Garcia Meteorological Station</u>	
11 February 1965	Views of Governor, Mauritius, on the work of the Meteorological Station.	PAC 93/892/01 No. 2
11 February 1965	Minute by Mr. Terrell, C.O., on the functioning of the Meteorological Station.	PAC 93/892/01 No. 4.
23 February 1965	Inter-departmental meeting to discuss Meteorological Station.	Z 4/13/G
24 May 1965	United States' views on operation of the station (letter from Mr. Barringer, U.S. Embassy to Mr. Morland, F.O.)	Z 4/71
1 November 1965	Note of meeting at Ministry of Defence to discuss work done by station for W.M.O.	Z 4/214

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Fishing Rights in the Chagos Archipelago.

17 November
1965

Views of Governor, Mauritius, on
general question of fishing rights.

Z 4/217

March 1966

Ministry of Defence and F.O. views
on fishing rights in BIOT.

Z D.4/14/G.

June 1966

Letter from Mr. A.J. Fairclough,
C.O., to Governor, Mauritius, on
arrangements for access to Chagos
Islands by fishing boats.

ZD 4/30

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