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M. G. ...
D. Wright
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AMERICAN BASE ON ASCENSION

1. The United States forces constructed Wideawake airfield on Ascension in 1942 under an informal agreement between the British and American Governments. On 25 June 1956 an Agreement was signed to give the United States the right to establish certain installations on Ascension in connection with the extension of the Bahamas Long Range Missile Proving Ground. The Agreement ran until 20 July 1975 but remains in force thereafter on a year by year basis until either Government gives one year's notice of its intention to terminate the Agreement. m 1/5

2. The Americans do not have any form of sovereignty on Ascension which remains under British rule. Accordingly, the United Kingdom Government is entitled to exercise all rights as a sovereign in Ascension, including the right to operate its military aircraft, except in so far as this exercise would derogate from the rights specifically granted to the United States under the Agreement. There is nothing in the Agreement which gives the United States any exclusive rights over the areas, which we assume includes the airfield, which are the subject of the Agreement. Access to the sites is permitted to unauthorised persons only by consent of the British Administrator and the American Base Commander, but this provision, which is intended to deal with security, is not considered relevant to the use of the airfield by United Kingdom forces.

3. Article XXI requires the United Kingdom Administrator to liaise with the United States Base Commander on the execution of the Agreement in its application to specific situations, but this would not give the Americans the right to veto any operation where we wished to use the airfield.

West Indian and Atlantic Department
6 April 1982



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With the compliments of

F. N. Richards

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