



Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

You could do talks and

London SW1A 2AH

level in July. Agree that

17 February 1984

Mr. Jugnauth should be invited

to pay an official visit then?

for John.

A. & C. 207/2.

Yes not

Official Visit of Prime Minister of Mauritius to the UK

We have been considering how we might best consolidate the pro-Western pragmatism of the present Mauritius Government and our own better bilateral relations with it since Mr Jugnauth decided to turn down, if not extinguish, the heat on his claim to Diego Garcia. The Secretary of State believes that one effective move we could make would be to invite Mr Jugnauth to pay an official visit to Britain as a guest of the Government. Mr Jugnauth's Deputy, Sir Gaetan Duval, has intimated that such an invitation would be greatly appreciated.

The last official visit by a Mauritian Prime Minister was by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (now Governor General) in August 1981. Mr Jugnauth became Prime Minister of an MMM (Mouvement Militant Mauricien) Government in June 1982, and in this capacity he called on the Prime Minister in London on 11 October 1982. Following a Cabinet split in March last year, Mr Jugnauth formed a new party (Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien) and, in alliance with the Labour Party and Social Democrats, won a convincing victory in new elections held in August.

The new government have shown themselves to be pro-Western, and moderate in the manner in which they have pursued their claim to the British Indian Ocean Territory. They could exercise a moderating influence on other governments in the Indian Ocean, notably the Seychelles, which has at times been more exposed to Soviet influence. Notwithstanding underlying communal rivalries, the democratic manner in which Mauritius has accomplished two dramatic changes of political power has been exemplary. The Government are following orthodox economic policies and have given precedence to economic realities rather than political aspirations. We are trying to capitalise on this change of emphasis. When

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Mr Alex Fletcher visited Mauritius last September he concluded an agreement to provide a line of mixed credit worth £12.3 million (£3.0 million ATP) to be spent on British exports over the next three years. Plessey still expect to win a sizeable portion of the Plaisance Airport contract (with a UK content value of up to £17.6 million). Mr Rifkind hopes to visit Mauritius in the late spring.

Although Mauritius has considerable economic problems, mainly on account of the poor price for sugar on the world market, she is protected to some extent by her substantial EC quota under the Lome agreements (we import the bulk of this). We do not believe that the proposed visit will give rise to significant pressure for an increase in British aid, which currently runs at around £2 million per year.

Sir Geoffrey Howe hopes that, if the Prime Minister agrees in principle to the issue of an invitation, the visit might take place before the summer holidays, with the exact date to be worked out in the light of the Prime Minister's and Mr Jugnauth's existing commitments.

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 February 1984

Official Visit of Prime Minister
of Mauritius

Thank you for your letter of 17 February.

The Prime Minister agrees that Mr. Jugnauth should be invited to pay an official visit to Britain as guest of the Government. We should like to aim at suitable dates in July when the Prime Minister could offer talks and lunch.

A.J. COLES

R.B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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