

THE LORD COAKER  
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

MSU 4-2-7-4

8 January 2026

Dear Baroness Goldie,

I would like to express my gratitude for your continued constructive engagement with the *Diego Garcia Military Base and British Indian Ocean Territory* Bill. I am writing following our discussion on Monday at Report Stage, where you asked for further detail on how the Government has taken account of the Pelindaba Treaty in relation to the UK-Mauritius Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago.

As you have noted from your own study, while the UK is not a Party to the Pelindaba Treaty, it is a Party to Protocols I and II. Protocols I and II of the Pelindaba Treaty place obligations on the five nuclear-weapon States recognised by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (China, France, Russia, UK and US).

- Protocol I prohibits these states from threatening or using a nuclear explosive device against any Party to the Treaty or territory within the zone.
- Protocol II prohibits the testing of any nuclear explosive device anywhere within the zone.

Both the UK and Mauritius are satisfied that our existing international obligations are fully compatible with the UK-Mauritius Agreement.

Annex IV of the Pelindaba Treaty requires that a Party which considers another Party, or that a Party to Protocol II, is in breach of its obligations under the Treaty must first raise the matter with the Party concerned. Neither the UK nor Mauritius have received such a complaint.

All operations on Diego Garcia will continue to comply with applicable international law. The security provisions we have secured as part of the Agreement ensure that the UK has full operational control over Diego Garcia, including unrestricted access to and use of the military base.

In the unlikely circumstance that Mauritius has concerns about action taken from the base on Diego Garcia, it can raise them in the Joint Commission as provided for under Article 14 of the Treaty and there can be further consultations and negotiations right up to Prime Ministerial level. A difference of opinion on the legal basis for UK activity is not a ground for termination of the Treaty, and could not impact UK or US operational decisions once the treaty has entered into force.

Baroness Goldie  
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I wish to also draw your attention Article 7(3) of the Treaty, which confirms that the UK and Mauritius agree that nothing in the Agreement shall subject either country to any obligation under a treaty to which it is not a party or which is not applicable to the territory covered by this Agreement.

It is important to stress that the UK-Mauritius Agreement does not undermine the Pelindaba Treaty or other nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties – including the one to which Australia, our AUKUS partner, is Party – nor does it set a precedent for other countries. The United Kingdom remains supportive of the objectives of the Pelindaba Treaty.

Regarding the presence of nuclear weapons, the UK maintains its long-standing policy of neither confirming nor denying their location.

I hope that this response proves helpful to you. I have copied this letter to the noble Lord Lilley and I will also place a copy in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vernon Coaker". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Vernon" and "Coaker" being capitalized and prominent.

**THE LORD COAKER**