

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 0455-14: FCO internal and external correspondence about the Cayman Turtle Farm with the Cayman Islands Government, their departments, politicians and the UK Governor, 1/1/2012 – 25/4/14.

DIGEST OF DISCLOSABLE MATERIAL

2012

1) Extract from email from Cayman Islands Governor's Office to FCO and DEFRA, dated 27 September 2012:

Cayman Islands - Environment Update

Turtle Farm – People blew hot and cold on this. The farm's difficulties had been highlighted in 2007 and some action had been taken (before the Director Joey Ebanks had had to resign). [Redacted], had come to audit the Farm. In the wild turtle eggs have a hatching rate of 80-90%. He found that in the Farm it was **7%**. He also said that the Farm had poor record keeping. The Farm then employed Dr Walt Mustin to take things forward. He had done some positive things, but there were longstanding issues which remained to be tackled. There was no consistent focus or follow-up. [Redacted] She thought the Farm itself worked well. There were some statistics regarding its impact on poaching, but not enough to prove beyond doubt that the Farm reduced demand for turtle meat and reduced poaching.[Redacted]

2) Email exchange between FCO officials about a draft Cayman Turtle Farm brief for FCO Orals, dated 25-26 October 2012:

FCO Orals briefing - Cayman Turtle Farm

Hi [Redacted] ,
Looks fine. A couple of suggestions in attached.
[Redacted]

From:[Redacted]
To:[Redacted]
Date: Thu, 25 Oct 2012 13:45:32 -0500
Subject: FW: FCO Orals briefing - Cayman Turtle Farm

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 October 2012 12:33
To: [Redacted]
Subject: FW: FCO Orals briefing - Cayman Turtle Farm
Importance: High

Dear all

Please find attached a slightly revised version, incorporating [Redacted] comments.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 October 2012 17:26
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: FCO Orals briefing - Cayman Turtle Farm
Importance: High

[Redacted]

As discussed, please find attached briefing on the Cayman Turtle Farm for FCO oral questions next Tuesday. With apologies for the short deadline, I would be grateful for any comments for our start of play.

■[Redacted] – Grateful for your comments too.

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Caribbean and Bermuda Section | Overseas Territories Directorate | Room K2.225 |
Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH

[Redacted]

FCO ORAL QUESTIONS, 30/10/12: “TOPICALS”

COUNTRY/ISSUE

CAYMAN ISLANDS: TURTLE FARM

KEY POINTS

- Aware that the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has conducted an investigation into the Turtle Farm, and that it has recently made its findings public.
- The UK Government places great importance on conserving the biodiversity of the Overseas Territories and takes seriously reports of animal cruelty throughout the world. We therefore welcome the work that non-governmental organisations such as WSPA undertake in support of international animal welfare issues.
- The Cayman Islands Government is responsible for the Cayman Turtle Farm. We understand the Farm has carried out a review of its operations and found no basis for WSPA’s allegations. The Farm itself has ordered that an independent assessment take place in December.
- We encourage WSPA, the Management of the Farm and the Cayman Islands Government to continue to engage constructively.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

- WSPA contacted the FCO and Defra in May 2012, to discuss their campaign and to request a meeting with Richard Benyon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs at Defra. Mr Benyon was unable to meet WSPA, but his reply encouraged WSPA to engage directly with the management of the Turtle Farm, and for the FCO to keep him informed of any developments.
- The Cayman Islands Government has shown willingness to engage with WSPA. WSPA visited the Cayman Islands in July to meet the s Government and the management of the Turtle Farm, and to present their findings.
- The campaign (www.stopseaturtlefarm.org) launched on 15 October and has attracted 58,000 worldwide supporters, including Sir Paul McCartney. There has also been parliamentary interest in this issue following the launch.
- In a statement on 12 October, the Cayman Turtle Farm refuted WSPA's findings and affirmed its commitment to sea turtle conservation and welfare.
- There is no doubt that the management and oversight of the Farm should be improved – the Cayman Islands Government is willing to take action on this.
- But the farming of turtles for meat is a different, more sensitive matter – this concerns heritage and the Caymanian identity, and it is unlikely that the Cayman Islands Government would agree to cease this activity.

MOST LIKELY QUESTIONS TO ARISE

Are you aware that WSPA has launched a campaign criticising the conditions that it found at the Cayman Turtle Farm and calling for the Farm to cease sea turtle farming?

- We are aware of WSPA's investigation and welcome the work that they do to raise awareness of international animal welfare issues.
- The Cayman Turtle Farm is the responsibility of the Cayman Islands Government, and we have therefore encouraged WSPA to engage directly and constructively with the Cayman Islands Government, and the management of the Turtle Farm.
- Understand the Turtle Farm is taking WSPA's claims very seriously but that it has refuted their findings. An independent assessment will take place in December.

Has the UK Government raised this issue with the Cayman Islands Government?

- We have not had formal discussions with the Cayman Islands Government on this issue.
- However, the Governor's Office in the Cayman Islands maintains a regular dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, Tourism and Development, which oversees the running of the Farm.

Given the UK Government's desire to conserve biodiversity, will the FCO ask the Cayman Turtle Farm to end sea turtle farming?

- We hope the Cayman Turtle Farm will be able to address the concerns raised by this campaign. Farm plays role in both conservation and turtle meat production which is a Cayman tradition.

Parliamentary Background

(Debates, Statements, Select Committees, Legislation, White/Green Papers etc)

- Two Early Day Motions (611 and 612) calling for action in response to WSPA's report and for the UK Government to condemn farming for turtle meat were tabled by Peter Bottomley MP on 19 October. They have been supported by Jeremy Corbyn MP, Mark Durkan MP, Mike Hancock MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP and John Leech MP.
- John Leech MP tabled two Named Day PQs, asking what discussions the FCO has had with the Cayman Islands Government since 2007, and on 24 October.

DEPARTMENTAL CONTACTS

DRAFTED BY: [Redacted]

AUTHORISED BY: [Redacted]

3) Extract of email from Caymans Islands Governor's Office to FCO, dated 9 November 2012

Grand Cayman Round-up: 13 October - 8 November 2012

Turtle Farm

As you are well aware, the Cayman Turtle Farm has come under international scrutiny after the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) went public with their campaign to close down the Farm, the last remaining sea-turtle farm in the world. The WSPA claim that it is impossible to farm sea-turtles in a humane way. They criticise the management of the Farm for its treatment of the turtles and claim that cannibalism and genetic mutation are common at the Farm. Although some of their points have merit, WSPA's sensationalist and somewhat underhand approach has led to a defensive response from CIG. (WSPA planned their campaign and gathered research without first speaking to anybody from CIG or the Farm. They began dialogue with CIG before the summer, but eventually ran out of patience and went public.) The Farm has refuted the WSPA's claims, but has ordered that an independent review take place in December. CIG is willing to work with WSPA to improve the management of the Farm, but is adamant that the commercial farming of turtles in Cayman will continue. The Farm is a cultural icon and turtling is part of Caymanian heritage. Although there is no data to back the claim, CIG claims that the Farm's existence reduces poaching by providing turtle meat to the market at reasonable prices.

This is a sensitive issue which will run and run. WSPA's campaign (www.stopseaturtlefarm.org) is professional and has attracted tens of thousands of supporters worldwide including Sir Paul McCartney and Sir Richard Branson (although the latter while visiting Cayman for the Alternative Investment Summit withdrew his support for the campaign after having spoken with the Premier). The hardworking Cayman Islands Desk Officer has had the task of responding to numerous PQs and letters from the public calling for action by HMG.

2013

4) Extract from Grand Cayman Round-up: 21 December 2012 - 18 January 2013

Environment

- Turtle Farm: The World Society for the Protection of Animals' (WSPA) campaign to close down the Cayman Turtle Farm is about to enter a critical phase. WSPA will be in Cayman at the end of this month when the results of an independent assessment into the operations of the Farm will be made public. The assessment will criticise the Farm's management for the standards of their animal husbandry, but will conclude that there is no evidence to support WSPA's more serious claims – that there is a risk to human health and that turtles have congenital birth defects. The assessment also sides with the Farm in agreeing that the Farm has a conservation role and that farming turtles for meat is acceptable. The latter point is the key issue for WSPA. It is likely that WSPA will dispute the assessment and may claim that it is biased. WSPA representatives are scheduled to meet the Governor on 1 February.

5) Notes of Meeting between Governor's Office & WSPA, 31 Jan 2013

[Redacted]

You met representatives of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) on 31 January to discuss their Cayman Turtle Farm campaign. Present were Campaign Manager Rachel Alcock, Dr Neil D'Cruze, Joshua Kaile [Redacted]

You welcomed the WSPA to Cayman. You explained that you considered this a private conversation. Environment was a devolved responsibility. As Governor you had the ability to influence but you needed to be careful about your comments.

Neil D'Cruze gave background to the WSPA campaign.

- WSPA had been conciliatory from the outset. They had reached out and wanted to engage.
- Supporters had told them about the Farm. They had gathered the evidence covertly because that was the only way to gather evidence. They had been shocked at what they had found.
- The reaction of the Farm had first been complete denial and then 'What can we do to improve things?'
- WSPA had tried to engage, but deadlines had slipped and the incident when 300 turtles died last summer had been the final straw. They had decided that they had to go public.

WSPA's approach was not emotional – it was rational and based on evidence. Neil queried the validity and rigour of the December report, which had been led by the same scientist who had led on the July report. The two reports had different conclusions. WSPA had met representatives of the Farm and the Ministry, as well as many Caymanians, during this visit. The meeting with CIG had been a step forward. The Farm had for the first time accepted that there were animal welfare issues. WSPA wanted to find a pragmatic solution but were finding it difficult to develop trust.

Tanya Streeter gave her Caymanian perspective. The response to the WSPA campaign had been predictable, either 'Who are these outsiders telling us what to do?' or disinterest in animal welfare. She had been in that position once, but after considering the evidence she had changed. She wanted Caymanians to be exposed to this evidence.

Neil D'Cruze clarified that WSPA did not want to close the Farm down and was not opposed to the consumption of turtle meat. It wanted the Farm to transition to a place of conservation. Turtles were solitary animals which travelled long distances. They could not be farmed commercially in a humane way. This was the nub of the issue which WSPA hoped that CIG would eventually understand. Discussions were currently at an impasse. WSPA would continue the dialogue, but CIG needed to acknowledge that commercial turtle farming could not be carried out humanely.

You asked about next steps. Neil D'Cruze said that they were not expecting change overnight. The case of Reunion was different but lessons could be learned from it. The management of that facility had realised that they needed to change. It had taken them 8 years to transition from a farm to a conservation site. A similar transition could be managed in Cayman. Consumption of turtle was declining. The young didn't want to eat it. Tourists didn't want to eat it or handle turtles. There was no need to hold 9,500 turtles. Only 700 had been slaughtered in 2010. 31,000 turtles had been released since 1968 and to date only 11 tagged turtles had returned to Cayman and been identified. Poaching was still going on now. It would be better to spend the farm subsidy on protecting turtles in the wild.

Joshua Kaile asked for advice on how to get their message across. He wondered whether you would be able to influence matters. You said that getting their message across would take time. It was a generational issue. [Redacted] But things could change following May elections with a new government. You said that you would be willing to use your influence to encourage the government to engage with WSPA and take action, but you would only do this in private. You suggested that Chief Officer Stran Bodden would be a useful ally – you encouraged WSPA to engage with him. I highlighted the issue of trust. I suggested the way that WSPA had gone about their campaign - producing their glossy campaign literature before consulting CIG - had led CIG to act defensively and view WSPA with distrust. I said that to overcome this distrust, they would need to continue with their low-key, non-sensationalist dialogue with CIG.

Comment: WSPA presented themselves well. They came across as informed, measured, rationale and keen to engage. It is helpful that they see this as a long-term process, but I think they underestimate the distance between where CIG is now ('There are animal welfare issues.') to where they want them to be ('Commercial turtle farming is inhumane.')

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | The Governor's Office | Suite 101 | The Government Administration Building | 133 Elgin Avenue | George Town
| Grand Cayman KY1 9000 | The Cayman Islands [Redacted]|

6) Cayman Turtle Farm Note in response to request from Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary, 31 January 2013 – 4 February 2013

Cayman Turtle Farm

[Redacted]

As requested by [Redacted] in his email below, please find attached a note on the Cayman Turtle Farm. As discussed, I am sending through you given Mr Simmonds' involvement in this issue. I would be grateful if you could pass on to the Foreign Secretary's Office, who have asked for the note for today's box.

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Caribbean Territories and Strategy Department | Overseas Territories Directorate | Room K2.225 | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 31 January 2013 09:41

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: Cayman Turtle Farm

[Redacted]

There seems to be something of a campaign getting going on the Cayman Turtle Farm – we've had five letters up from MSU so there are probably many more with officials or junior Ministers. [Redacted]

I'm going to hold on to the letters here pending some further information. Can you get me a note for Monday's box to answer the Foreign Secretary?

Many thanks

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London

SW1A 2AH

[Redacted]

7) Acknowledgment of Cayman Turtle Farm Note from Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary, 5 February 2013

[Redacted]

Many thanks for your note. The Foreign Secretary thinks that this is fine for now, but would like to discuss this issue with Mr Simmonds at the Ministerial meeting tomorrow.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London

SW1A 2AH

[Redacted]

8) Extract of email from Caymans Islands Governor's Office to FCO, dated 9 February 2013

Grand Cayman Round-up: 19 January - 8 February 2013

Turtle Farm slammed by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)

An independent assessment of the Turtle Farm, commissioned by the Farm in response to WSPA's campaign against the Farm, was published in late January. The report found that standards of animal husbandry were poor and that many turtles had lesions, but disagreed with many of WSPA's other claims – that there was a risk to human health and that turtles were born with congenital defects. The assessment concluded that the Farm had a role to play in conservation and that the commercial farming of the turtles was acceptable. A team from WSPA who had travelled to Cayman for the publication of the assessment met the Ministry of Tourism and the Farm and disputed the findings of the report. Some progress was made at the meeting, but any trust built up was shattered by WSPA's subsequent appearances on the TV and radio where they were damning in their criticisms of CIG. WSPA also met the Governor during their visit. He told WSPA that environment was a devolved responsibility and he therefore needed to be careful about what he said in public. He committed to privately encourage CIG to engage with WSPA. This is a difficult issue which will run and run as the two sides have incompatible goals – WSPA is seeking to halt the commercial farming of turtles, CIG is convinced that, while it could improve its standards, the Farm is carrying out a valuable role and is an important element in the Caymanian identity.

9) Extract of email from Caymans Islands Governor's Office to FCO, dated 1 March 2013

Grand Cayman Round-up: 9 February – 1 March 2013

Turtle Farm

- Low-key interaction between CIG and WSPA has continued. Encouragingly, WSPA has provided documents to CIG without going public over their contents. The Turtle Farm has an action plan and is committed to improving animal husbandry through the recruitment of a vet and the establishment of a scientific advisory board, but this will not be sufficient for WSPA. CIG's current thinking is that there is no point in engaging in further discussion with WSPA – a line needs to be drawn in the sand. A paper may be submitted shortly to Cabinet asking Ministers whether they want to explicitly state that the farming of turtles for meat in Cayman is not open to negotiation. Our current line is to encourage the two parties to engage, but I have sympathy for CIG's position - WSPA and CIG have two irreconcilable goals.

10)CTF request dated 2 April 2013.

Morning [Redacted]

I am doing my regular report back to Cayman on UK Parliamentary interest in the CTF. That generally means reporting on EDMs 611 and 612 and any PGs.

The Minister said when we met in January that he had had lots of letters from MPs. I get the feeling that has dried up a bit.

Is it possible to give me please a rough numbers count on how many letters he has had from MPs on the CTF and if the numbers are diminishing.

I gave [Redacted] a pile of briefing on this farm; I hope that you have found it useful.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

The Cayman Islands Government Office in the United Kingdom

6 Arlington Street, London, SW1A 1RE

[Redacted]

**11) Discussion at Wildlife & Conservation APPG – CTF dated 21 March 2013 –
9 April 2013**

[Redacted]

I'm just trying to find out what's going on and who's refusing to talk to whom.

<http://www.caymannewsservice.com/science-and-nature/2013/04/08/animal-charity-and-farm-fail-agree-report>

I'll try and call you tomorrow.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 08 April 2013 09:53

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Discussion at Wildlife and Conservation APPG - Cayman Turtle Farm

Hi [Redacted]

I've just returned from leave and aim to deal with this by mid-week. Happy to chat if that would be easier than an email.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 03 April 2013 23:00

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Discussion at Wildlife and Conservation APPG - Cayman Turtle Farm

[Redacted]

Have you already replied to this? I'm just back from leave/illness, but could give you a call tomorrow if you want.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 25 March 2013 11:34

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: FW: Discussion at Wildlife and Conservation APPG - Cayman Turtle Farm

Hi [Redacted]

Despite the Minister's recent reply to WSPA declining a meeting (attached), they spoke to him after an event last week at which he was speaking, and followed this up with the email below. The Minister needs to reply to this latest request for a meeting – I don't suppose that there's any update is there? For example, do you know if it's true that the CTF are "refusing to work with us (WSPA) unless we acknowledge the claims that we have made in our campaign "have been incorrect, and to stop propagating such statements"? Sorry to bother you about this again so soon but I'm scratching around for something to put in another short letter declining to meet?

Any suggestions/update gratefully received.

Thanks

[Redacted]

From: PS/Richard Benyon (Secretariat)

Sent: 25 March 2013 12:12

To: [Redacted; PS/Richard Benyon (Secretariat)]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Discussion at Wildlife and Conservation APPG - Cayman Turtle Farm

Hi [Redacted]

Thanks for this (and apologies for not picking up on the recent letter...clearly juggling too many things at the moment!).

Would you be able to put a response together for RB to send to WSPA, which refers to the letter he recently sent, but gives a bit of an update (if there is one)? (Even if it simply something along the lines of 'My officials have spoken again to FCO officials following your email/last week's APPG and they are working closely with the Cayman Govt etc. etc....')

Thanks, and let me know if any probs.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

12)Agenda for new Cayman Premier meeting with Minister dated 27- 29 May 2013

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 27 May 2013 18:19

To: [Redacted]

Subject: Agenda for new Cayman Premier meeting with Minister.

Dear [Redacted]

It is fairly certain that Mr. McLaughlin will be the next Premier of Cayman and he has already said that a meeting with the Minister will be top of his agenda. The best opportunity may be just before the 15th June if he comes for the G8 event.

[Redacted]

Without holding you to it would I be correct in assuming that the following might be on the Minister's agenda.

[Redacted]

Unlikely to be raised ??

The Environmental Audit Committee visit to Cayman 17th June on

The Turtle Farm

[Redacted]

With best wishes,

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

The Cayman Islands Government Office in the United Kingdom

6 Arlington Street, London, SW1A 1RE

13)Cayman Turtle Farm WSPA visit to lobby DofE again dated 11 July 2013

Hi [Redacted] – thanks for the heads-up. The Minister, Chief Officer and I will be meeting with Josh Kaile of WSPA on the 22nd July so it useful to know what their current issues are.

I will correspond with you separately on the legislation issue.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] **Department of Environment**

Cayman Islands Government

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10202, Grand Cayman KY1 -1002, Cayman Islands.

Street Address: 580 North Sound Way, Grand Cayman



**DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT



Save Our Tomorrow - Today
Celebrating 25 Years of Marine Parks

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2013 3:47 AM

To: [Redacted] Bodden, Stran

Cc: Basdeo, Dax; [Redacted]

Subject: Cayman Turtle Farm

Dear [Redacted] and Stran,

I've been talking to [Redacted] in the Governor's Office about the Cayman Turtle Farm and he suggested that I should contact you directly about WSPA's latest campaigning.

WSPA has continued to lobby Defra about conditions at the Farm, the welfare of the turtles, and asking that UK Government call for the Farm to move away from the ranching of turtles for their meat. We continue to receive Ministerial correspondence and Parliamentary Questions on issues relating to the Farm, most recently about the importation of 20 turtles from the Farm to the UK in 2006 and the issuance of CITES permits to facilitate the importation. I know that you're familiar with WSPA's ongoing campaign so I won't repeat all of their concerns here.

However I wanted to alert you to a couple of specific issues raised by Rachel Alcock and Josh Kaile from WSPA in recent emails to Defra. Firstly, they allege that the CTF is breaching environmental regulations in relation to its waste pipes and does not have the correct permits to discharge waste water from its tanks. Secondly, they are interested to know whether there would be any appetite within the Cayman Islands Government to identify the level of demand for turtle meat by the local

population rather than tourists. Rachel states “We would like to see the CTF begin to help in the understanding of the true demand by selling meat to local people for local consumption only, and see an end to it being sold in restaurants that predominantly serve people who visit Cayman on holiday. Would it be possible for you to mention this to your contacts in Cayman to, to see if there is any sort of desire for this type of initiative?” It would be inappropriate for me to answer these questions on behalf of CIG and so I’ll direct Rachel and Josh to raise these issues directly with you. I trust that’s okay. I understand from [Redacted] that a delegation from WSPA is visiting the Cayman Islands soon to discuss the Farm and so I wanted to give you a heads up that they’re likely to want to discuss these topics with you.

In the meantime, I’m happy to respond to WSPA again to explain the UK Government’s position (ie that the Farm is the responsibility of the Cayman Islands Government) and to advise them about CITES’ provisions relating to the importation into the UK of captive-bred turtles.

With kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Defra | WSC3, Zone 1/15, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB | UK

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

14) Extract from Grand Cayman Round-up: 6 June - 17 July 2013 dated 22 July 2013

Environment

- Ahead of the DEFRA and OT Ministers' appearance before the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC), Chair Ms. Joan Walley MP and member Matthew Offord MP visited Cayman as part of an inquiry into HMG's oversight of Overseas Territories on environmental matters. Their visit included visits to the Turtle Farm and the Botanic Park, a 3-hour hike through the mangrove along the National Trust Mastic Trail, a boat trip on North Sound to view Cayman's successful marine protected area system, a dive, a visit to Little Cayman, which has one the most unspoilt marine environments in the Caribbean, a visit to the port and the site for the proposed cruise ship terminal, a tour of the George Town dump, as well as various meetings and a reception at Government House. The visit focused mainly on the constitutional relationship, with the MPs finding it difficult to accept that HMG could not force CIG to take action on environmental issues, a devolved responsibility. I understand that the EAC pushed this point during the Ministers' appearance before them earlier this month.
[Redacted]
- We await a visit at the end of the month by representatives from the World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA) who are campaigning to have the Cayman Turtle Farm closed down and converted to a turtle sanctuary. WSPA has been maintaining a dialogue with CIG, but this dialogue is likely to hit the buffers shortly when CIG refuses to move in the direction that WSPA wants it to. This will likely mean a more aggressive campaign by WSPA.

15) Meeting with WSPA 25 July - 'cautious optimism' dated 22 to 26 July 2013

Many thanks, [Redacted] .

The atmospherics are much better and the prospect of ugly confrontation has receded. I was impressed by Mike's rational and sensible approach. But we should, as you suggest, continue to press CIG/the Turtle Farm to address the most serious concerns.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 26 July 2013 11:54

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: Meeting with WSPA 25 July - 'cautious optimism'

[Redacted] |

You met Mike Baker, CEO, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and Neil D'Cruze, Wildlife Adviser to the WSPA on 25 July. The pair were coming to the end of their week-long visit to the Cayman Islands, during which they had met four ministers, visited the Cayman Turtle Farm and spoken to the media. For the record, I have included the exchange below between Dax and Stran which explains CIG thinking on future handling of relations with WSPA.

You welcomed WSPA and asked for their impressions. Mike Baker described WSPA's mood as 'cautiously positive'. He had made the trip with some foreboding. He recognised that WSPA's campaign had not got off on the right foot and had become confrontational. But he now had some hope because of the new government. He described his meetings with ministers as 'constructive and positive, characterised by honesty and clarity'. WSPA was being treated seriously for the first time.

Mike Baker described the details of the discussions:

- Ministers had given a clear message that the commercial farming of turtles for meat was not up for negotiation.
- WSPA was willing to work with CIG in the medium term provided that turtle welfare was paramount. WSPA's main concern was overcrowding. It was quite shocking how many turtles were being packed into the Farm's tanks.
- CIG had outlined its priorities re the Farm: (i) the economic viability of the Farm (ii) to ensure that it met the demand for turtle meat and (iii) conservation.
- Minister Panton committed to carrying out a survey into turtle consumption habits in Cayman.

WSPA's view was that if consumption was reduced e.g. turtle was not sold to tourists and releases were stopped, the population of the Farm could be lower. It was currently around 9,000 and could be as low as 2,000. If this was the case, conditions for the turtles would be far from ideal, but WSPA would accept them.

Mike Baker said that his worry was that things could be kicked into the long grass. He asked for advice about how to stop this from happening. You said that [Redacted] In your view Minister Panton was the person they needed to maintain relations with. WSPA would have to be somewhat

patient and allow for Caribbean time. The turtle consumption survey would be the first test of the new government's mettle. You advised WSPA to wait and see how this went. You were glad that WSPA was seeking to work cooperatively with CIG. WSPA was more likely to meet its objectives this way. I suggested that they make contact with CIG in the margins of the JMC in London in December.

Comment: A very different tone to the previous meeting with WSPA. This was partly down to there being a [Redacted] but also down to WSPA CEO Mike Baker's strategic nous and balanced, measured attitude. I am hopeful that CIG will continue to engage with WSPA in a meaningful way – it would be tempting to use this thaw in relations to do nothing for a while. This would be a mistake.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | The Governor's Office | Suite 101 | The Government Administration Building | 133 Elgin Avenue | George Town | Grand Cayman KY1 9000 | The Cayman Islands [Redacted]

Please visit our website www.gov.uk/world/cayman-islands and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/ukincayman

From: Basdeo, Dax [Redacted]

Sent: 23 July 2013 08:38

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: FW: WSPA briefing

[Redacted] |

Just as FYI, I've included below two emails regarding WSPA that indicate the extent of the discussions yesterday and the position that I believe Ministers will support.

Dax

Dax Basdeo, Ph.D., JP | Chief Officer | Ministry of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment

[Redacted] Suite 126, Government Administration Building, Grand Cayman, KY1-9000, Cayman Islands

From: Basdeo, Dax

Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2013 8:35 AM

To: Bodden, Stran

Cc: Kirkconnell, Moses; Panton, Wayne

Subject: FW: WSPA briefing

Stran,

Following two meetings with WSPA yesterday, there are two potential action points that you would be better positioned to take forward.

1. First, there should be communication with WSPA on the positive steps that have been taken since the independent assessment report was produced. A coordinated message from the CTF and Ministry would be ideal. This would help them to better manage expectations of their membership, and continue to 'stand down' from any further action for the time being.
2. Second, there should be some discussion at Cabinet level on the way forward for the CTF, and in particular, perhaps using the Independent Oversight Committee to drive the necessary changes with a clear mandate from Cabinet. In other words, removing this committee from the CTF so that it is given a truly independent status to drive change.

The DoE has proposed, and will be moving forward with research on the demand for turtle meat locally, and will be engaging with WSPA to get their feedback on this project. There are also further discussions to be had on statistics / reporting from the farm and other issues relating to the wild turtle population that DoE can address with them.

I've included some notes from my first meeting with WSPA below, and would add that the meeting with Ministers yesterday afternoon appeared productive. I believe WSPA is clear that we will be addressing their animal welfare concerns, but will not be moving away from the commercial farming aspect of the CTF.

I am sure that the Acting Premier can clarify any further points from his perspective, and while he did have to leave before the conclusion of the meeting, I don't recall any other issues being raised.

Happy to discuss further and assist in any way that I can.

Dax

Dax Basdeo, Ph.D., JP | **Chief Officer** | **Ministry of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment**

[Redacted] Suite 126, Government Administration Building, Grand Cayman, KY1-9000, Cayman Islands

From: Basdeo, Dax

Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 12:49 PM

To: Panton, Wayne

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: WSPA briefing

Minister Panton,

The main points arising out of the WSPA meeting are as follows:

- WSPA is proposing a change in the model for the Turtle Farm so that over a 10-15 year period its focus shifts to a regional centre for rehabilitation and conservation of turtles. This would entail a reduction in turtle numbers at the farm from roughly 9,000 now to 100-200 turtles, achieved primarily through humane euthanasia; they are offering to use their international contacts and network to support such a proposal;

- WSPA would like to see the sale of turtle meat to meet tourist demand phased out, with consumption solely for the local market;
- They feel it extremely unlikely that a model can be found that appropriately balances the commercial farming of turtles and their concerns with animal welfare;
- They have expressed an interest in working with the CIG to address the issues that have been identified. They would appear to prefer a collaborative versus combative approach, but did admit that they are under pressure from their stakeholders to provide an update on progress or to take further action.

In terms of positive discussion points, it may be important to highlight the following:

- The DoE is proposing to undertake research to better understand the demand for turtle meat. External funding may be possible for this, and they are open to agreeing the terms of reference for the study with WSPA;
- Following the independent review of the Turtle Farm, the Board established an 'Independent Oversight Committee'. Some progress has been made, but it would be appropriate for this Committee to be 'owned' at a Ministerial level to ensure that steps are being taken in a timely manner. WSPA involvement through this committee can be debated, but there is certainly a need for better coordinated communication with this group so that they are apprised of the positive steps that are being taken

A few general concerns for Ministers to be aware of:

- WSPA does not believe that commercial turtle farming is economically viable, and are focused on overcrowding as a welfare issue;
- They are aware of the limits to DoE's budget and the capacity of the department to curtail poaching;
- Embracing their offer of assistance to sourcing either technical or donor support to address the farm's issues will bring about expectation of progress towards their objectives for the farm. While they have offered to lend their support or endorsement to the farm once their issues are addressed, this would likely come with high expectations.

Apologies for the late report, but I would invite [Redacted] to add additional points or clarification.

Dax

Dax Basdeo, Ph.D., JP | Chief Officer | Ministry of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment

[Redacted] Suite 126, Government Administration Building, Grand Cayman, KY1-9000, Cayman Islands

16)Extract from Grand Cayman Round-up: 17 July - 7 August 2013

N is for Nvironment

- CEO of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) Mike Baker visited the Cayman Islands 21-25 July. He met representatives of the new government, including four ministers, and left with a mood of 'cautious optimism'. In his meeting with the Governor at the end of his visit, he acknowledged that WSPA had got off on the wrong foot with their Cayman Turtle Farm campaign. He described the meetings with ministers as 'constructive and positive, characterised by honesty and clarity'. Ministers had given the clear message that the commercial farming of turtles was not up for discussion, but had agreed to engage and to carry out a survey of Cayman's turtle consumption habits. WSPA's focus was on the turtle welfare, especially the overcrowding at the Farm. The two sides have different objectives, but it seems that they are willing to work together in the medium term. We will encourage CIG to continue to engage.
- Some of the fine environmentally-related projects which we have supported this year with our delegated fund:
 0. Turtle nest research. This project carried out by the DoE and interns will give us data about turtle returns to Cayman. This will be helpful in relation to WSPA's claims about the Turtle Farm. We have received plenty of positive media coverage about this project. <http://caymannewsservice.com/science-and-nature/2013/07/31/special-funding-helps-doe-help-local-turtles>
 1. National Trust Summer Camp. Our support for this annual camp will allow disadvantaged kids to attend.
 2. Endangered Brac Rock Iguanas. We have funded construction of some enclosures for injured rock iguanas on the Brac.
 3. The Botanic Park. We have funded the manufacture of some signs along the Woodland Trail detailing flora.

For pictures and more info on all of the above, please see our Facebook page

www.facebook/ukincayman - now accessible through Firecrest.

17) Update from DEFRA on CTF dated 6 September – 19 October 2014

To add a little context:

- The Turtle Farm is the recipient of quite a large subsidy. With the pressure CIG are now under to manage their public finances sustainably they will need to start looking at ways to remedy the Farm's deficit.
- WSPA's enterprise risks making the farm's financial situation worse, particularly if it starts resonating with tourists. This is unhelpful. I would hope that CIG can manage this risk properly, including by developing sound proposals for reforming the entirety of the farm's commercial offering.
- My understanding is that prior to its enthusiastic transition into a (now loss making) visitor attraction the Turtle Farm was financially sustainable and adequately managed (from a welfare perspective).
- Part of the financial problem seems stem from the fact that the place doesn't seem to be fit for purpose – people have commented that the farm probably needs to downsize and return to its core profit making business - I suspect they probably means protein production. Apparently the domestic revenue base for turtle meat is pretty stable.
- Given the UK's concerns over Cayman's public finances we will need to be cautious how we engage CIG on any plans for wholesale reform of the farm. That said, I suspect an MBA study would find that wholesale restructuring is needed. But a public sector solution could have implications for public debt.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 19 October 2012 12:41

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Cayman Turtle Farm

Many thanks for the update [Redacted]. I received the attached from WSPA letting me know that they'd launched their campaign and their reasons for doing so. I plan to simply acknowledge the email without commenting on WSPA's decision to launch the campaign.

When you speak to the DoE and Chief Officer, it might also be worth reminding them that if the CTF has any plans to re-apply to become an approved CITES commercial, captive-breeding facility in the future, it will need to demonstrate, among other things, that the Farm's turtle husbandry practices are humane. [Redacted]

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 15 October 2012 17:51
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Cayman Turtle Farm

[Redacted]

Please see link about the Cayman Turtle Farm

<http://www.compasscayman.com/story.aspx?id=109039> – WSPA has at last gone public.

WSPA's claims and their request that the farming of turtles for meat should be stopped was to have been discussed in Cabinet last month, but this has not yet happened. I assume that WSPA got fed up of waiting. As I have said previously, CIG is prepared to engage and take action on management issues - hygiene, standards, etc. but they will not budge on the farming of turtles for meat. This is an emotive subject to do with Caymanian identity and heritage.

[Redacted] I will:

- speak to the Chief Officer to get more info;
- consult the DoE to see if in their view any of Cayman's/the UK's international treaty obligations are being breached by the practices of the Turtle Farm.

Regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 12 September 2012 06:58
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Cayman Turtle Farm

Many thanks for this [Redacted] .

[Redacted] – to see the exchange below about the Cayman Turtle Farm, following a visit by [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Caribbean and Bermuda Section | Overseas Territories Directorate | Room K2.225 | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 10 September 2012 16:22
To: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Cayman Turtle Farm

Good that there were positive outcomes from the trip – the Farm definitely needs to be managed better. See [link](#) to report of how 299 turtles died in July following a systems failure. But the crucial issue is the farming of turtles for meat. This is about heritage and is an emotive issue. I doubt very much that the Government would agree to stop this. I will speak to the Chief Officer to get his thoughts.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | The Governor's Office | Suite 101 | The Government Administration Building | 133 Elgin Avenue | George Town | Grand Cayman KY1 9000 | The Cayman [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 10 September 2012 10:11
To: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Cayman Turtle Farm

Just in case anyone else is about to do the same I have asked [Redacted] for further information on his visit and recommendations.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Defra | Zone 1/15, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 10 September 2012 15:29
To: [Redacted]
Subject: Cayman Turtle Farm

Dear All,

You might be interested to see the update below on the CTF for your info. I haven't seen anything else about [Redacted] visit or the resulting recommendations for improvements at the Farm.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 06 September 2012 10:34
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Catch up

Dear [Redacted],

[Redacted]

As to the developments on the Turtle Farm, [Redacted] went to Cayman and met with the DoE and CTF and Tourism the WSPA delegation. [Redacted] helped to write up an action plan to improve the Turtle Farm.

They also plan to form an Expert Advisory panel to help the TF, this would include an expert vet and others.

In the meantime WSPA is pushing for a decision on the stopping the commercial production of Turtle meat. This decision will be made by the Cabinet in Cayman. They have been very much occupied, (as we have) in getting the budget approved. However that is now achieved successfully. The Cabinet will now have the time to debate the Turtle Farm. WSPA wanted a decision by the 7th September. Cayman are preparing in the meantime for a negative campaign just in case.

[Redacted]

Do you know if [Redacted] is still in CITES ? Or is he moving as well? I would like to tell him the progress re the Turtle Farm as well.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

18) Email from DEFRA official to FCO Official about New Scientific Research article, dated 28 Oct 2013

Thanks for the heads up on this [Redacted] . If we get more letters in, we'll want to tweak the standard reply to make specific mention of this paper but I'm happy to wait and see what comes in for now.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

CITES & International Biodiversity Policy

International Biodiversity, Ecosystems & Evidence

19) Extract from Grand Cayman Roundup: 9-28 Nov 2013 dated 29 Nov 2013

Environment

- Turtle Farm: The World Society for the Protection of Animals' (WSPA) campaign to close the Cayman Turtle Farm continues. Following the Farm's annual turtle release which took place during Pirates' Week, WSPA issued a press release and a photo claiming that a number of the 250 turtles which had been released had been injured. The Farm disputes this, claiming that only one turtle was injured. As stated previously, this issue will run and run. The next significant development is likely to be the results of the independent review of the Farm which will take place next month.

20) Extract from Grand Cayman Roundup 29 Nov – 21 Dec 2013 dated 21 Dec 2013

Environment

- Turtle Farm: The World Society for the Protection of Animals' (WSPA) campaign to close the Cayman Turtle Farm continues. They have launched a letter-writing campaign and the FCO and DEFRA have received numerous letters calling for the closure of the Farm. An independent assessment into the operations of the Farm (which the management of the Farm agreed to after pressure from WSPA) is underway and is expected to report in January. CIG expects the report to be critical of some aspects of the management of the Farm and is committed to taking action to improve things. CIG will not, however, agree to stop the farming of turtles for meat.

2014 (1 January – 25 April)

21) Meeting with WSPA about the CTF dated 17 January 2014

Governor

On Wednesday 15 Jan, you met with the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) to hear their concerns about the Turtle Farm. The WSPA representatives were: Josh Kaile, Public Affairs Manager, Neil D'Cruze, Wildlife Campaign Leader, Rachel Alcock, UK Campaign Manager and Elizabeth Hogan US Campaign Manager. Below is a note of the meeting.

- 1) Josh Kaile gave an overview of WSPA; they have 18 offices worldwide and work on a number of areas including disaster management and human/animal conflict. They are aware of the issues in Cayman with the invasive lionfish and the green iguana.
- 2) They first communicated their concerns to the Cayman Turtle Farm (CTF) in mid-2011 but did not receive acknowledgment from the farm that there was a problem. Following the incident in 2012 where 300 turtles died at CTF, WSPA decided to engage their supporters and in January 2013 the CTF initiated an independent inspection, however WSPA feel that the CTF are addressing the symptoms rather than the cause.
- 3) WSPA had grave concerns about keeping turtles in captivity, not least because they are undomesticated animals which travel thousands of miles in their natural life and are unsuited to living in confined spaces. They stressed they are not an extreme organisation and aim to support humane farming methods of other animals.
- 4) Farming turtles for human consumption
WSPA would like the CTF to stop selling turtle meat to tourists and raised a number of issues here:
 - Cayman is the only Caribbean island that sells turtle meat to tourists. They feel they are creating an artificial market in selling turtle meat to tourists via the restaurants here.
 - A preliminary study of 400 tourists who visited the turtle farm from the US found that most were a) unaware that turtles were farmed for meat at the CTF and b) unwilling to eat turtle meat.
 - There were around 8 restaurants in Cayman offering turtle meat on the menu. WSPA were pleased with the approach taken by Grand Old House who had taken it off the menu but would serve it to Caymanians if requested.
 - In a previous meeting, Premier McLaughlin had said that because it was generally older Caymanians who ate turtle meat, it was something we would start to see a decline in. You agreed this was the case and you thought that while turtle was popular with Caymanians, it was mainly consumed by the older generations. Everyone in the meeting acknowledged that the extract from the Environmental Audit Committee Report stating that turtle meat was something that 'the majority of indigenous people now shun' needed to be backed up with evidence.
 - WSPA said that Nicaragua had successfully stopped selling turtle meat to tourists and in the Reunion Islands they had turned around a similar set-up to the CTF by stopping the farming element and concentrating on a rehabilitation and visitor centre for tourists which had been successful.

- WSPA did not want to stop Caymanians from eating turtle meat but thought that the CTF could put in place a programme whereby they gradually withdraw it from the market. They thought that the turtle farm could be a potentially viable business without the rearing of turtles for meat.

5) Releasing turtles into the wild

- WSPA were concerned about the CTF's turtle release programme, primarily because of the risk of disease from the farmed animals impacting on the natural turtle population, but also because it was expensive with little evidence of success (NB: The turtle farm has only tagged hatchlings in recent years who are released into the sea and as it can take as long as 20 years for them to return to nest there is an argument that the CTF would need more time to monitor the results before this concern could be confirmed).
- WSPA thought beach protection was a much better use of funds and there was a good programme in Costa Rica which had focussed on beach protection and had managed to turn it into a successful tourist attraction. Everyone agreed the DoE were doing good work in this area already.

[Redacted]

Governor's Office

Government Administration Building Box 101

133 Elgin Ave

Grand Cayman KY1-9000

CAYMAN ISLANDS

22) Extract from Grand Cayman Round-up – January 2014 incl SPL Legislation dated 4 Feb 2014

Turtle farm

The Cayman Turtle Farm was in the spotlight last month, firstly a visit from the World Society for the Protection of Animal (WSPA), including a meeting with the Governor, drew significant press attention. The WSPA are pushing the Turtle Farm to scale down its farming of turtle meat for human consumption, starting with selling it to tourists. Secondly, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (commissioned by the Turtle Farm in May last year), was published on 31 January and states that the farm is very unlikely to ever become profitable without a massive increase in visitor numbers and it should scale back its operations. The consultants said their research indicated that a reduction in scale wouldn't hurt existing visitor numbers but would help reduce overheads and losses.

23) Environment Press Lines dated 28 Feb 2014

Turtle Farm

If raised

- The Cayman Turtle Farm is the responsibility of the Cayman Islands Government, but the UK continues to take a close interest due to the animal welfare concerns (alleged by the WSPA).

Background

The Cayman Turtle Farm has recently been subject to much media attention, following a visit from the World Society for the Protection of Animal (WSPA), including a meeting with the Governor. The WSPA are pushing the Turtle Farm to scale down its farming of turtle meat for human consumption, starting with

selling it to tourists. Secondly, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (commissioned by the Turtle Farm in May last year), was published on 31 January and states that the farm is very unlikely to ever become profitable without a massive increase in visitor numbers and it should scale back its operations. The consultants said their research indicated that a reduction in scale wouldn't hurt existing visitor numbers but would help reduce overheads and losses.

24) Extract: Cayman Trip – Environment Issues – dated 6 March 2014

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 06 March 2014 16:50

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: Cayman trip - environment issues

[Redacted]

I thought it would be helpful to let you know about the environment issues that came up doing [Redacted] and my visit to Cayman this week.

Turtle Farm. [Redacted] and I went to the farm as ordinary visitors to see for ourselves the breeding pool and the tanks for various ages of turtles; and visitors handling the younger turtles. We approached one of the members of staff looking after the tanks and ended up having a long and interesting talk. We asked about local consumption of turtle meat which he said was a continuing cultural issue. He noted that having the farm sell meat in a controlled way (giving detailed receipts which need to be shown to authorities on demand) meant it was less likely that turtles would be poached in the wild; saying that a family might consume about 50lbs of meat, but as a turtle could weigh about 300lbs, which means any fishing of turtles would have to be for commercial gain (even if on the black-market) because no one family could consume so much. Once you've taken into account the fact there is high unemployment amongst the unskilled and that there are no welfare benefits in CI, then poaching becomes an attractive option. The arguments between conservation vs exploitation are not new, nor confined to CI's Turtle Farm; and our role is limited to encouraging the local government, who has responsibility for environment, to take into account views of concerned parties.

Yours

[Redacted]

**25) Email from an FCO official to colleagues about a meeting with WSPA,
dated 17 March 2014**

All,

[Redacted] has asked me to meet Josh Kaile, WPSA to discuss the Cayman turtle farm this week (4.15pm, Weds). Mr Kaile wants to particularly focus on WPSA's work with the Cayman Islands Government.

It would be useful to have an update on the Cayman Farm ahead of the meeting, details of any recent meetings with CIG/Governor's Office, together with anything I should know about Mr Kaile and handling.

Regards,

[Redacted] | Overseas Territories Directorate | Room K225 | Foreign and Commonwealth Office |
King Charles Street | London SW1A 2AH

Visit the Government's website to find out more about the [Overseas Territories](#).

26) CTF discussion – 17 March 2014

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 March 2014 21:31
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Cayman Turtle Farm discussion
Attachments: Meeting with the WSPA about the Cayman Turtle farm
Security Label: UNCLASSIFIED

Dear [REDACTED]

We have not had any discussion with or about the Turtle Farm since the WSPA came here in January, meeting note attached. There have been a few articles in the Compass about the losses they continue to incur, most recent example below.

[http://www.compasscayman.com/caycompass/2014/03/13/Turtle-farm-subsidies--\\$63-million-since--06/](http://www.compasscayman.com/caycompass/2014/03/13/Turtle-farm-subsidies--$63-million-since--06/)

When the Governor met with the WSPA, they were polite, fairly reserved and constructive. They explained that their main focus was to try to stop the selling of turtle meat to the local restaurants here and that their long-term goal for the farm would be to transform it into some kind of turtle rehabilitation centre (as in other Latin American countries), with no farming of turtles for meat. They claim to have undertaken research which shows that the majority of tourists are not interested in eating turtle meat and most are surprised to find that the farm breeds them for this purpose.

When [REDACTED] and I visited the farm a couple of weeks ago, in an unofficial capacity, we were told that many Caymanians, young and old, still eat turtle and it is ingrained in the culture here. There is a thriving market for the meat, which is expensive, and if it was not sold here, many people would poach and sell it as it can yield potentially large profits. At the Farm, there is a short film you can watch where they do explain that turtles are bred for human consumption there, so we cannot suggest that the farm is hiding behind the issue.

Please do give me a call if there is anything else, and I will try to help.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

\

27)Record of FCO meeting with WSPA on 19 March 2014 – email dated 20 March 2014

All,

1. I met Josh Kaile, UK Political Consultant, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), and his colleague, Rachel Alcock, yesterday at their request. They wanted to talk about the Cayman turtle farm and how they might work with UK Government on the issue.
2. WSPA's primary concerns were the intensive farming of a wild, migratory animal; handling and welfare; and biodiversity. They were supportive of the Darwin Plus project that the Cayman Islands Government and Exeter University were working on to look at turtle meat consumption. However, the study was a three year project and they were keen for their other concerns to be addressed in the meantime. WSPA will be launching its second version of its report on the turtle farm at the House of Commons on 13 May. They were seeking high-level attendance from DEFRA and the FCO. Invitations to Lord Demaulay, DEFRA and Mark Simmonds, FCO, were to be issued soon. To that end, WSPA sought to flush out the UK Governments' position on the turtle farm. They knew environmental issues were devolved, but said WSPA's supporters were looking to the UK Government to set out its position. In addition, WSPA were keen for UKG to lobby CIG to make reforms, such as those recommended by PwC to reduce the size of the operation, with a view to moving the farm towards turtle rehabilitation rather than consumption. I undertook to consider.

COMMENT

3. WSPA is clearly seeking to turn up the heat a little on us to accelerate progress on their issues of concern. They want us to be more forthright in our position, particularly on the intensive farming of turtles for their meat and associated welfare concerns, and not hide behind the fact that the turtle farm is a devolved issue, because the Cayman Islands were, ultimately, a UK Overseas Territory. We can address this by taking the line we used with the HoC Environmental Audit Committee:

It would be inappropriate for the Government to take greater ownership of environmental issues in Cayman by commenting on the turtle farm operation. This would be in stark contrast to the objective set out in the 2012 White Paper of working in partnership with the Territories to help them meet their environmental obligations. Instead, we encourage WSPA and CIG to deepen their cooperation and work together to bring about reform.

[Redacted].

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Overseas Territories Directorate | Room K225 | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | King Charles Street | London SW1A 2AH

28) Email from the Governor's Office about the Cayman Turtle Farm and the FCO meeting with WPSA on 19 March 2014, dated 20 - 21 March 2014

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 March 2014 19:38

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Cayman Islands Turtle Farm - meeting with WPSA, 19 March 2014

[Redacted]

Thank you for this. A useful read-out. As expected, the WSPA were a little less reserved with you than they were with the Governor back in January.

We agree with using the line we used in response to the EAC paper. Regarding the scaling down of the operation, the Deputy Governor announced at Cabinet (soon to be reported in the round-up), that the subsidy to the Turtle Farm is likely to be reduced by \$1m in the next year.

We too would appreciate sight of the DEFRA note when it is ready.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

29) Email from Governor's Office about the FCO meeting with WSPA on 19 March, dated 21 March 2014

41

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 March 2014 13:27
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Cayman Islands Turtle Farm - meeting with WSPA, 19 March 2014
Security Label: PROTECT

I agree with [REDACTED] view. We need to keep out distance.

[REDACTED] pointed out a positive development on the Farm's economic predictions earlier.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30) Extract from Cayman Round Up – 13 – 19 March 2014

Restricted email

- The Deputy Premier reported that he has attended the Sea Trade Fair in Miami and had had further meetings with the Cruise Ship lines. He went on to explain that his discussions with them about passenger numbers meant that the subsidy request from the Turtle Farm is likely to be reduced by \$1m in the next year.

31) Email exchange between DEFRA and FCO Officials, dated 9 April 2014

Includes: Consultancy report to Defra (15 November 2014)

[Redacted]

Thanks for the update. WSPA were in touch with me again earlier this week about the Cayman Turtle Farm (CTF). They reminded me that in their view the CTF is an inhumane facility and that DEFRA had signed the CTF off as a humane facility to CITES around 2002-2004. WSPA were pressing for this to be rectified. WSPA sent me the attached report commissioned by DEFRA on the CTF in 2002 and the [response](#) from the UK CITES management. [Redacted]

Separately, the main conclusions of the 2002 report appear to be similar to those of the recent independent investigation (skin lesions, some turtles suffering malnourishment, etc). Do you (or [Redacted]) know if there are plans to independently verify the changes implemented since the investigation have achieved the desired impact?

I am meeting Stran Bodden, Cayman Islands Chief Officer for Tourism and Transport, on Monday. I intend to ask about the CTF and raise my recent conversation with WSPA. I don't intend to promote WSPA's cause. However, I would be keen to know how close CTF are to fully addressing the investigation recommendations and are doing what they can to reduce scope for criticism. I would also be interested to hear to what extent they are acting on the PwC report, in particular the recommendation to downsize the operation. Do let me know if you have any particular points you would like raised.

Regards,

[Redacted]



Consultancy Report
to DEFRA.PDF

32) Email between DEFRA and FCO officials, dated 11 April 2014

Hi [Redacted]

I understand that Stran has postponed his visit so this is no longer time sensitive but I'll do my best to explain the position re the issue WSPA has raised. I've included a couple of questions (in bold) to raise with Stran once his visit's been re-arranged.

Background:

All marine turtles are listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This means that commercial trade in specimens of these species is prohibited, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

CITES allows trade if the Appendix I species concerned are captive-bred in a CITES-registered captive-breeding operation. The Convention lays down the guidelines and process for registration.

The CTF applied (via Defra as the UK CITES Management Authority) to register as a CITES captive-breeding operation in 2002. Registration would have enabled the Farm to conduct international trade in the by-products from the local trade in turtle meat (such as carapaces). Defra was satisfied that the CTF met the registration criteria and that the proposed trade would not be detrimental to the conservation of the species in the wild and so supported the proposal. The application failed.

The 2002 application:

The UK submitted an application on behalf of the Cayman Islands in 2002 to register the CTF as a captive-breeding operation. There were 2 objections - from the USA and Israel. Costa Rica also wrote to the UK voicing their concerns over the legal acquisition of the founder stock.

Due to the objections received, the application was referred to the 12th Conference of Parties to CITES (CoP12) in November 2002 for a decision but it failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority. The main concerns were (i) over the lack of proof of legality of the founder stock, and (ii) possible mixing with and contamination of wild stocks.

Following CoP12, the Farm was encouraged to address the concerns which emerged in debate, with a view to resubmitting this application under the CITES postal procedure. The Cayman Islands have not approached Defra since 2002 to discuss this or to submit a further application for registration.

CTF inspection:

Many NGOs were opposed to the CTF's 2002 application fearing it might facilitate illegal trade in turtles in the region. They were also concerned that the standards of husbandry on the farm were poor and asked that an independent inspection of the Farm be carried out. In addition, there is a requirement under CITES that registered captive breeding establishments must operate in a "humane (i.e. non-cruel) manner". Defra therefore commissioned an independent inspection of the Farm to determine whether this requirement was being met.

The inspection was carried out in September 2002 by [Redacted]. [Redacted] concluded that the operation in his opinion was carried out in a humane manner. Also that

management and husbandry at the Farm were compatible with what would be expected of a comparable livestock production facility in the UK. He did however identify areas for improvement which might lead to increases in both welfare and production. I do not know whether these were subsequently actioned but, like you, **would be interested to learn what follow-up action was taken to address these recommendations.** Presumably they've been superseded by the most recent report.

Application of CITES to turtle exports:

I understand that [Redacted] , Cayman DoE, advised an applicant for a CITES export permit in 2010 that it was CIG policy not to allow export of turtle products until such time as the CTF is recognised as a captive-breeding operation by CITES. He explained that this policy was in place because of the objections the CI received from the wider CITES community to the CTF and the goal of allowing trade in registered, farmed turtle products. He advised that only export requests to the UK or for scientific research were considered. **I would be interested to know whether this is still CIG policy.**

[The Cayman Islands are treated as a third country for EU trade purposes. So normal CITES permitting procedures apply and any export of turtles from the CI to the UK would have to comply with EU Wildlife Trade Regulations. Note that the EU has chosen not to implement the CITES requirement to restrict the import of captive-bred specimens of Appendix I species for commercial purposes to those produced by CITES-registered operations.]

I hope I've gone some way to answering your questions but with CITES, there's rarely a simple answer!

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

33) Environment Lunch Briefing for FCO Director, Peter Hayes, dated 25 April 2014.

[Redacted]

I understand [Redacted] has separately briefed you for a lunch discussion you are having on the Environment. To be aware that the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WPSA) has launched a letter campaign to Parliamentarians on the Cayman Turtle Farm (CTF), which it would be useful for you to be aware of, in case it is raised. Key WPSA points are:

- WPSA event in May at House of Commons to launch a report on the CTF (Mr Simmonds invited to speak, but not available to attend).
- Campaign letter asserts CTF inflicts intense suffering on turtles, impacts on biodiversity, threatens human health and costly for Cayman tax payer.
- Seeks support and views of Parliamentarians.

Our lines to deploy in response:

- UKG attaches great importance to conserving biodiversity in OTs
- Committed to raising standards of animal welfare (home and abroad)
- Responsibility for animal welfare and biodiversity devolved to OTs
- Ministers raised issue of CTF with CI Government on number of occasions seeking implementation of recommendations in previous WPSA report
- CI Government has given assurance that will take report findings seriously and was committed to making improvements at CTF
- We are encouraging continued dialogue between CTF and CI Government on reform.

Regards,

[Redacted]