

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE
HON. THE PRIME MINISTER

Offers to establish Diplomatic Relations

Since independence formal offers to establish diplomatic relations with Malta have been received from the following countries:-

Belgium
China (Taiwan)
Czechoslovakia
Israel
Japan
Hungary
South Korea
U.S.S.R.

In addition, informal soundings were made by Holland, Switzerland and Denmark in the same sense.

2. At present there are in Malta missions of the United Kingdom, France, Italy and the United States of America. In addition, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany (who had also, on the occasion of independence, offered to establish relations) have signified their intention to open an Embassy in Valletta, and the name of their proposed ambassador has been submitted for the Queen's agreement. Canada has appointed a High Commissioner resident in Rome. Present plans for Malta's diplomatic service envisage the establishment of Maltese missions (in addition to the present offices in London and Australia) to Italy (embassy), U.S.A. (embassy combined with representation to U.N.) and Libya (consulate). To these there will eventually have to be added an office in Paris, both to relieve the High Commissioner in London from diplomatic work with certain countries which are more easily accessible from Paris, and also to provide Malta's representation on the Council of Europe. The French Government (as also the United States and Italian Governments) have been informed of the intention of Malta to open an embassy in their capital in due course. It is of course to Malta's advantage that as many countries as care to should be represented in Malta, provided reciprocal Maltese missions are not necessarily opened in each case.

3. Of the countries listed in para 1, Israel and China (Taiwan) have been treated as special cases. In the case of the former a decision has been taken to delay the establishment of diplomatic relations until such time as the Maltese mission in Rome is in being. The latter is also being considered separately in connection with the offer of the Taiwan Government to accredit their Ambassador in Madrid as non-resident ambassador to Malta, and in the light of possible repercussions in future relations with Communist China. This leaves Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Japan, South Korea, Hungary, U.S.S.R., Switzerland, Holland and Denmark. Of these, South Korea's and Hungary's are recent offers that have still to be replied to.

4. The nine countries mentioned above will be seen to fall into three distinguishable categories, as follows:

- Group A - European and other neighbouring countries
(Belgium, Switzerland, Holland and Denmark)
- Group B - Far Eastern and other distant countries
(Japan, South Korea)
- Group C - Communist countries (U.S.S.R.,
Czechoslovakia, Hungary).

Falling into a group of its own is the Vatican with which it is intended to establish diplomatic relations at Nuncio level. In this case a formal approach to the Vatican is to be made by Malta (in accordance with Vatican procedure). The Vatican's Nuncio will automatically be the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps.

5. In the case of countries in Group A, because of their geographical proximity and their traditional ties with Malta, it will be understood (more than in the case of other countries) that an offer to establish a mission in Valletta will lead to the expectation of a reciprocal Maltese mission. Except for a very few instances, it is unlikely that Malta will be able to reciprocate to that extent. It was therefore considered important that the reply to an offer by countries in this group to establish diplomatic relations should be carefully worded so as to leave the door open to the country concerned either (i) to open a mission in Malta or (ii) to conduct its relations with Malta through the two countries' representatives in London (or elsewhere), with or without the formal accrediting of a non-resident ambassador: at the same time making it clear, as diplomatically as possible, that no Maltese mission is contemplated in the capital concerned at least for the foreseeable future.

6. The reply given to Belgium sought to bring out the above points. It expressed Malta's pleasure at the offer and accepted in principle the establishment of diplomatic relations. It went on to "look forward to the day when it will be possible to arrange for an exchange of missions" but added that as Malta was not yet in a position to establish her own mission in Brussels, relations between the two countries might be conducted through the Maltese and Belgian representatives in London. It is necessary to suggest London as the channel of communication so that if the other country decides to establish a mission in Valletta no trace of any obligation to reciprocate will remain on Malta.

7. As regards Group B, the same desiderata as for Group A broadly apply although in the case of countries in Group B the distances involved constitute a plausible enough reason for a small country like Malta not to establish a mission in the other country concerned. The only difference indicated from the form of reply described in para 6 would be to omit the reference to mutual relations being conducted through the London representatives of both countries and merely to state that Malta is not yet in a position to establish her own mission in the country concerned. This leaves it to the country in question to suggest what channel

of diplomatic communication should be established, in the full knowledge that a Maltese mission will not be established. Such a reply was in fact sent to Japan (copy enclosed at annexure A). Subsequently, information received through the British Embassy in Rome indicates that the Japanese Government propose to accredit their Ambassador in Rome as non-resident Ambassador to Malta.

8. Regarding Group C countries, there is no intention at present to establish Maltese missions at their capitals. Nor is it felt desirable that they should open missions in Malta. The replies sent to the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia accepted the offer in principle but regretted that Malta was not yet in a position to open its own mission abroad or adequately to cope with the establishment of further missions in Malta at this stage. It added that mutual relations might be conducted through the Maltese and Soviet/Czech representatives in London (A copy of the reply sent to the U.S.S.R. is enclosed at Annexure B). As Hon. Ministers will be aware from the publicity given to this matter, the Soviet Government has accepted the Maltese proposal to conduct relations via London.

9. Replies have now to be sent to the offers received from South Korea and Hungary, and it is proposed that these should follow the terms described above for Group B and Group C respectively.

10. Hon. Ministers are invited to endorse the action already taken, and to approve that the replies to South Korea and Hungary should follow the lines of the replies sent to Japan (in the case of South Korea) and the U.S.S.R. (in the case of Hungary). Hon. Ministers are also invited to approve the issue of a formal approach to the Vatican for an exchange of missions at Kuncio/ Ambassador level.

2nd January, 1965.

24th October, 1964

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and people of Malta, and also on my own behalf, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for the inspiring message of congratulation which you were kind enough to address to me on the occasion of the independence of Malta. I am also grateful to the Government of Japan for according formal recognition to Malta as a sovereign state.

I look forward to greater and increased contact between our two peoples and feel assured that the bonds of friendship between our two countries will continue to grow stronger.

The Government of Malta readily accepts in principle Your Excellency's offer to establish diplomatic relations and looks forward to the day when it will be possible to arrange for an exchange of missions. In the meantime, however, it is regretted that Malta is not yet in a position to establish its own mission in Tokyo.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest consideration,

Monsieur le Ministre,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

(Sd) G. BORG OLIVIER
Prime Minister

His Excellency
Etsusaburo Shiina,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Tokyo.

3 st October, 1964.

I am grateful to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for according formal recognition to Malta as a sovereign state.

I am confident that the friendly relations which happily exist between our two countries will continue to flourish, nurtured by the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Government of Malta readily accepts in principle the offer of the Soviet Government to establish diplomatic relations, and looks forward to the day when it will be possible to arrange for an exchange of missions. In the meantime it is regretted that Malta is not yet in a position to establish its own mission in Moscow or adequately to cope with the establishment of further missions in Valletta at this stage. In these circumstances, I have the honour to propose that for the present our mutual relations may be conducted through the Soviet and Maltese representatives in London.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.

(Sd) G. BORG OLIVIER
Prime Minister

His Excellency
Mr Alexei N. Kosygin,
Chairman of the Council of Ministers,
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.