

LANGUE ANGLAISE

Traduction sans dictionnaire du texte ci-après

BRITAIN'S LAST TERRITORIES

There are rumblings in the colonies. Or rather, there are rumblings in the dependent territories, the term by which the patches of land still run from London are known.

All bar one are specks of colour on the map, where once whole swathes of continents were red. After the vast wave of decolonisation that began with India in 1947 and finished with Hong Kong on 30 June 1997, a mere handful of territories remain. Only British Antarctic Territory (BAT) is of any great size. The largest by population is Bermuda.

They are, apart from BAT and Gibraltar, islands; most are relics of the days when the Royal Navy ruled the waves. Only two (Ascension Island and Diego Garcia) have any military significance now, and that is mainly for the Americans, not Britain. Each has a governor, who will (from time to time) put on his plumed hat. He is the representative of the Queen; government is mostly run by him with a group of local representatives, with the precise balance of power different everywhere. Foreign affairs and defence rest with London, which can also use reserved powers to block, pass or supersede legislation.

None is likely to part company with Britain any time soon, which is why this probably is the end of Britain's long retreat from Empire. Yet that leaves the problem of ruling a very disparate and far-flung group of territories.

"The Independent", by David Usborne and Andrew Marshall, from *Vocable*.