

AIRGRAM

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FILE DESIGNATION

CA-6087

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Amembassy LONDON

INFO: CINCLANTFLT-NAVY (3)
CINCUSNAVEUR-NAVY (3)

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Dec 7 11 00 AM '70

FROM : Department of State

DATE:

SUBJECT : Joint US/UK Actions in Support of Reindeer Station

REF : A. Embassy London A-4507, September 5, 1968
B. State 197203 (DTG 242304Z), November, 1969
C. Embassy London A-1951, November 18, 1969

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION

1. Senate approval of the FY 71 Military Construction Appropriations Bill on November 25 completed congressional action on funding the first increment of construction of a naval communications facility on Diego Garcia Island in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). Executive Branch formalities are expected to be completed in time to permit construction to begin in mid-March 1971. You should therefore reopen discussions now with HMG on the several issues on which US/UK action is necessary to prepare for actual operations on the island.

2. The Embassy should point out that the installation is now described as an austere naval communications facility. It was previously called a logistics support facility but in refining the concept of the project for presentation to the Congress for FY 71, it was

3 Enclosures:

1. Plan for Notification of Third Countries
2. Suggested Notification Language
3. Public Affairs Plan

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TO:	Action	Info	Initials
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Action Taken:

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FORM 10-64 DS-323

For Department Use Only

Drafted by: OP614:Mr. Dillery

Drafting Date:

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Contents and Classification Approved by:

PM/ISO: Capt. From

12/4/70

28638

PM/ISO: J. Stoddart

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NEA: Mr. Van Hollen

EUR/BMI: Mr. Burns

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decided to limit the function of the facility to communications with only those minimum facilities necessary to make the installation self-sustaining. The POL storage capacity was reduced from the original concept and the anchorage has been modified to be a turning basin only. The new terminology should be used in all communications regarding the project.

3. In our view, the first priority action is for USG and HMG to proceed to inform interested third countries about the project on a confidential basis. The US proposes that the notification be accomplished along the lines of the plan at enclosure 1. Proposed language to be used in the notification procedure is at enclosure 2.

4. As a second action item, the project should be declassified very shortly after the third countries are informed. A public affairs plan including a suggested joint press release, questions and answers, etc. is at enclosure 3. The package has the concurrence of all interested USG agencies. We would welcome HMG comments on any aspect of the plan. Any differences which arise should be resolved before notification of third countries. Our final decision as to the timing of notifications and press release will not be made until we have reviewed the results of your discussions with IMG.

5. The third action item is for the UK to accomplish relocation of the present residents of Diego Garcia to some other location. We understand that resettlement cannot be completed before construction is scheduled to begin. However, all local personnel should be moved from the western half of the island before the arrival of the construction force in March 1971. We hope that complete relocation can be accomplished by the end of July 1971 when aircraft begin using the air strip and the tempo of construction activities reaches its full scale. We recognize that this will not allow the UK the nine months lead time previously requested but it does represent a valid requirement for unhindered construction activity. In previous discussions of this subject, HMG has inquired whether USG has other requirements in the BIOT which would affect the relocation of Diego Garcia residents. We have no present plans for use of other parts of the BIOT nor do we have objection to relocation of residents in them.

6. As a fourth action item, we are prepared to work out details of British participation in the operation of the facility. This subject was discussed by Secretary of Defense LAIRD and Lord CARRINGTON on November 24, 1970 and it was

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agreed that Secretary LAIRD would send a letter to Lord CARRINGTON conveying an invitation to participate. The letter will identify specific billets that could be filled by British personnel. The number of 25-30 personnel was mentioned as a feasible and desirable contribution by the UK in such activities as communications, maintenance, meteorology and station support. Royal Navy personnel would substitute for US Navy personnel on a one-for-one basis in the concept under consideration. Action on the other items discussed in this airgram should not be delayed because of pending action on this matter.

7. As a fifth action item, the Embassy is requested to explore whether HMC could be of assistance in staging for construction operations. The present concept involves personnel being airlifted from the United States to a location (or locations) in the Indian Ocean and then for transfer to ships for further travel to Diego Garcia. The first contingent will be a small, eight (8) man, reconnaissance party which will go to Diego Garcia in January 1971 to survey the beach, construction areas, etc. This team should remain on the island for a few days only, then return to the United States for last minute consultation with the actual construction personnel.

8. About March 10, 1971, an advance party of about 20 personnel will be landed at the island by amphibious ship to accomplish the tasks required to prepare for an over-the-beach landing of main force personnel and materials.

9. The first contingent of the actual construction force is scheduled to arrive at Diego Garcia on March 20, 1971. The present plan is for this group of 150 personnel to proceed to Cocos Island by aircraft and transfer to ship for the final leg of the trip. They will prepare living facilities for the main body and accomplish clearance of material storage areas.

10. About April 20, 1971, a second group of about 200 personnel will arrive at the island by the same route as the first large group. The last large group of 265 personnel will arrive at Diego Garcia about May 15, 1971, again by the Cocos route.

11. The construction schedule is now being planned as follows:

Construction forces on site	March 1971
Establish emergency C-130 airfield capability	July 1971

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Completion of construction of communication operations building and first increment of personnel support facilities July 1972

Establish operational communications capability March 1973

Complete all construction, less dredging March 1974

12. The scientific aspects of the facility have become more important with the interest in general environmental questions in the US and UK. Reference (a) reported that the Royal Society had made a study of conservation at Diego Garcia and had made recommendations regarding the scientific aspects of the facility. By reference (b) HMG was notified that the USG accepts the recommendation that the three islets at the mouth of the lagoon be kept unoccupied except for navigational aids. We have not yet responded to the recommendations in reference (c) that provision be made for occasional visitors to study marine flora and fauna and that an entomologist visit the atoll to collect specimens before construction is too far advanced. The USG is now prepared to accept these recommendations in principle and will be pleased to cooperate with the Royal Society in their accomplishment. The USG cannot promise funds for these projects but can provide a limited amount of transportation and accommodation on a space available basis when it is feasible to do so. We concur that HMG notify the Royal Society in confidence of our acceptance of the recommendations just before the public release is made. A supplement to enclosure (3) is being prepared to provide a statement on the environmental aspects of the facility to be used in response to inquiries. This statement along with a set of questions and answers on the same subject will be sent by separate telegram as soon as possible. The Embassy should not delay its approach to HMG pending receipt of the environmental material.

13. Following the consultations directed by this airgram, there will be a large number of technical problems related to staging, logistic support, etc. on which the US may wish to consult appropriate UK authorities. If the Embassy concurs, CINCUSNAVEUR is authorized to establish direct liaison with MOD to meet this requirement. The Embassy would, of course, continue to be responsible for discussions with HMG on copra worker relocation, third country ratification, public affairs and other matters which require action at the government-to-government level.

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ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES:

AF/C: Mr. McKesson *m* AF/E: Mr. Coote *m* AF/P: Mr. Barr *m*
OSD/ISA/FMRA: Mr. Barringer *m* OP61: Admiral Small *m*
AF/S: Mr. Crosby *m*
EA/RA - Capt. Long *m*

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Enclosure 1
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DECLASSIFIEDPlan for Notification of Third Countries

In view of the need to inform interested governments as quickly as possible we agree the USG and HMG should divide up the task of advance notification of interested governments.

Listed in three categories below are the interested third countries who should be notified. It is assumed that the diplomatic missions of the USG and HMG in each country will consult prior to approaching their host governments and concur in these arrangements, as well as the general proposal for follow-up by the non-leading power.

[USG lead/
HMG follow-up

Saudi Arabia
Thailand
Indonesia
Japan
Portugal
France
Kuwait
Iran
Bahrein
Ethiopia
Zambia
Somalia
Malagasy Republic

HMG lead/
USG follow-up

Kenya
Tanzania
Uganda
Pakistan
Seychelles
Maldives
Ceylon
South Africa
Malaysia
Singapore
Malawi
Burma

[Confirmation of countries
previously informed
HMG lead/USG follow-up

Mauritius
Australia
New Zealand
India

After the opening statement along the lines of the statement attached the press guidance could be drawn upon to answer specific host government questions.

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Enclosure 2
A- "to London

SUGGESTED NOTIFICATION LANGUAGE

In 1965, the British Government organized the administrative entity entitled the British Indian Ocean Territory. Shortly afterwards, in 1966, the British and American Governments signed a bilateral agreement which makes the islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) available to the UK and US Governments for defense purposes.

Since the signing of the BIOT agreement in 1966, the USG and HMG have had under nearly continuous review various plans for meeting existing requirements. In particular, there has been a longstanding need for a communications facility to close a gap in the United States Navy's worldwide communications system and to provide for communications links to US, Royal Navy and merchant ships and aircraft transiting the Indian Ocean. To meet that need, we have decided to construct a modest communications facility on the island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, one of the BIOT islands. Construction work on the facility, which will cost approximately \$19 million, will begin in March of 1971. Due to the remoteness of the location and the limited number of personnel to be assigned to the project, it is likely that construction will have to be phased over a two to three year period.

The facility is in no way intended to be inimical to any other nation's interest, nor is it being constructed in response to US or British security agreements with any other country. It is, in fact, designed to meet an important worldwide existing need in naval and aviation communications. Moreover, the meteorological data gathered in conjunction with the US/UK operation of the facility will be available to the World Meteorological Organization thereby contributing to improved weather forecasting, aviation flight safety, safe passage of shipping, etc.

The US and UK communications technicians and the entire supporting staff assigned to the facility will probably total less than 275 personnel. The facility will have an associated airstrip, turning basin and limited fuel storage for emergency purposes. These capabilities are fundamental to providing for replenishment of supplies, changeover of personnel, and similar activities related to the operation of the facility.

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DECLASSIFIEDEnclosure 3
A- _____ to LondonPublic Affairs Plan for Project REINDEER STATION

1. (U) Purpose. To promulgate public affairs policies and responsibilities for Project REINDEER STATION.
2. (S) Background. Project REINDEER STATION provides for the construction of an austere naval communications facility on the island of DIEGO GARCIA, Chagos Archipelago, British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). The facility will include communications, an airstrip, and minimum necessary support activities. The facility will be developed and operated primarily by the United States, with some degree of British participation yet to be determined. The facility will jointly fly the British and United States flags. Construction ashore will be accomplished by the US Naval Construction Force. The estimated time sequence for actions connected with this project is:
 - a. Congressional approval and funding - December 1970;
 - b. Apportionment of DOD funds - mid-December 1970;
 - c. Public announcement - as soon as interested governments are notified.
 - d. Commence construction - mid-March 1971.
3. (S) Policy.
 - a. There will be no public affairs actions concerning this project before general concurrence has been obtained from the British Government.
 - b. There will be no public announcement concerning the project until Congressional approval and funding has been obtained and apportionment completed.
 - c. After the project has been approved, funded, monies apportioned and when authorized by OASD(PA), public affairs activities will be conducted within the following guidelines:
 - (1) A low-key, joint US/UK news release will be made simultaneously in London and Washington, announcing that

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Enclosure 3.

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construction on the project will commence in March 1971. Annex A is the proposed news release.

(2) Following the joint US/UK release, local, low-key releases will be made in the homeport of the Naval Construction Force unit involved, announcing its deployment.

(3) Except for the above, all public affairs activities will be passive and only in response to query. Annex B contains questions and approved answers for use by designated commands in responding to queries when authorized. Queries which cannot be answered within the context of the approved answers contained in Annex B will be forwarded in the Office of Information, Navy Department for coordination with OASD(PA).

(4) The fact that a naval communications facility is being constructed on DIEGO GARCIA will become unclassified when release of the joint US/UK announcement is authorized.

(5) Queries related to Project REINDEER STATION received prior to the authorization of the joint US/UK announcement will be referred to CHINFO for coordination with OASD(PA).

4. (U) Execution.

a. Concept of Operations. Except for the joint US/UK announcement and the local news releases provided for in paragraph 3.c(1) and (2) above, public affairs activity for this project will be only in response to query.

b. Responsibilities.

(1) Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) OASD(PA)

- (a) Provide additional policy guidance as required.
- (b) Provide coordination with other U.S. Agencies at the seat of government.

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Enclosure 3

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(c) Provide for the simultaneous release of the joint US/UK announcement at the seat of government.

(2) Chief of Information, Navy Department, CHINFO

(a) Effect liaison with OASD(PA)

(b) Provide coordination with the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, the Office of the Chief of Naval Material and Fleet Commanders-in-Chief.

(3) Office of the Chief of Legislative Affairs, Navy Department, OLA.

Effect Congressional notification on the joint US/UK announcement.

(4) Commander-in-Chief Atlantic - CINCLANT

(a) Act as point-of-contact for public affairs liaison with Project REINDEER STATION.

(b) Coordinate local release of the announcement of the deployment of Naval Construction Forces for construction of REINDEER STATION.

(c) Respond to queries within the context of Annex B after joint US/UK announcement (Annex A) has been released in London and Washington.

(d) Queries that cannot be answered within the context of Annex B will be forwarded to OASD(PA) for resolution.

5. (U) Declassification. This plan and the annexes thereto are declassified when the joint US/UK announcement is authorized for release by OASD(PA).

Annex A - Joint US/UK News Release

Annex B - List of Anticipated Questions and Approved Answers

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(Unclassified when authorized for release)

ANNEX APROPOSED JOINT U.S./U.K. RELEASE FOR PROJECT
REINDEER STATION

The Minister of Defence of the United Kingdom and the Secretary of Defense of the United States announced today (Date) that construction will commence in March 1971 on an austere naval communications facility on Diego Garcia Atoll in the Chagos Archipelago, British Indian Ocean Territory. The facility will consist of communications, an air-strip, and minimum necessary support activities. Construction of the facility will cost about \$19 million and will be funded and accomplished by the United States. Units of the U.S. Naval Construction Force will build the facility. Both the British and American flags will fly over the facility and the United Kingdom will assist in its manning. 7

The facility will close a gap in the U.S. Naval Communications System; will provide communications support to U.S. and U.K. ships and aircraft in the Indian Ocean and eventually will reduce operating expenditures elsewhere. It is expected to be completed in less than three years. US

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(Un)classified when authorized for use
in response to queryANNEX BLIST OF ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS AND APPROVED ANSWERS

1. Q. What is the purpose of the facility?

A. To close a gap in our worldwide communications system and to provide communications support to U.S. and U.K. ships and aircraft in the Indian Ocean.

2. Q. What is meant by a communications facility?

A. An activity outfitted to provide communications support to military ships and aircraft.

3. Q. How many and what kinds of ships will this turning basin accommodate?

A. Turning basin accommodations will be sufficient to provide for sea-borne replenishment of the facility.

4. Q. What will be the depth of the channel and turning basin?

A. The depth of water will be sufficient to accommodate the replenishment ships.

5. Q. How long and what is the purpose of the runway?

A. The 8,000 foot runway is for support of logistic aircraft.

6. Q. How much will the facility cost?

A. As currently planned, construction of the facility will cost about \$19 million.

7. Q. Is the U.K. sharing the cost?

A. No. The prime interest/utilization requirement lies with the U.S. and the U.S. is funding the project.

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8. Q. Who will command the facility, an American or British Officer?

A. An American officer.

9. Q. What are the terms of the agreement under which this facility is being built?

A. The facility is being built under the terms of a bilateral agreement between the U.K. and the U.S., signed in December 1966, which makes the islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) available to the U.S. and U.K. governments for defense activities for 50 years. H.M.G. approval is required for initiating any facility. U.S. tenure is not affected as long as the terms of the agreement are met.

10. Q. Will nuclear or CBW weapons be stored at the facility?

A. It is the policy of the United States neither to confirm nor deny the presence of such weapons.

11. Q. What are the possibilities of confrontation between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in this area, since the Soviets seem to be bargaining for bases elsewhere in the Indian Ocean area?

A. No more than any other location where units of both forces operate.

12. Q. Does this imply a U.S. build-up in the Indian Ocean?

A. No.

13. Q. What is the expected reaction from Arab, African and other states on the Indian Ocean littoral?

A. Neither the modest size of this facility nor the support activities planned there should provide grounds for concern among the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean, who have been informed regarding this subject.

14. Q. How many U.S. and U.K. military personnel will be permanently assigned to Diego Garcia?

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[REDACTED]
(Declassified when authorized for use in response to query)

A. About _____, including U.K. personnel. (Use latest available information).

15. Q. How large is Diego Garcia Atoll and how much of it will be included in the facility?

A. Diego Garcia is an irregular V-shaped atoll, roughly 14 miles in length and five miles in width. The width of the island surrounding the lagoon varies between 300 and 7200 feet. The facility will occupy approximately one-half of its 5,700 acres.

16. Q. What will happen to the population of Diego Garcia?

A. The island has no permanent native population. With the closing of the copra plantations, HMG is looking into and proceeding to relocate workers, who are contract personnel originally coming from other areas, to alternative locations of employment.

17. Q. Will this facility be used to support operations in SEA?

A. No such use is contemplated.

18. Q. When will the facility be in full operation?

A. Probably March 1974.

19. Q. Will other facilities be built in this area?

A. No others are contemplated.

20. Q. Will the facility be open to commercial ships and aircraft?

A. No. However, international law requires that assistance be given to ships and aircraft in distress.

21. Q. How will this facility be supported?

A. From CONUS logistic bases.

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(Unclassified when authorized for use in response to query)

22. Q. Will dependents be allowed to accompany U.S. personnel?

A. No. The tours of duty for U.S. military personnel, will be 12 months unaccompanied.

23. Q. What plans have been made for the defense of this facility?

A. Defense of the facility will be the responsibility of CIECLANT because it falls within his area of responsibility as defined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

24. Q. Why is this facility being built when we are closing bases around the world?

A. The establishment of this facility will provide a basis for eventually reducing operating expenditures elsewhere, make possible selective use of U.S. resources where they are most needed and fill a gap in the worldwide coverage of the Naval Communications System as exists in the Indian Ocean.

25. Q. Will there be any ship repair facilities?

A. No.

26. Q. What other facilities will be located at the air-strip? (Hangars, repair facilities, etc.)

A. Minimal aircraft parking area and modest air operations building.

27. Q. Does this indicate that an increase in tempo of operations can be expected in the Indian Ocean?

A. No.

28. Q. How many ships and aircraft will be based at this facility?

A. No ships or aircraft will be based at this facility.

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29. Q. If no ships or aircraft will be based at the facility, why do we need it?

A. There is a gap in the worldwide coverage of the Naval Communications System in the Indian Ocean. The facility will complete this communications link. Additionally, it can provide a measure of emergency fuel supply for transiting fleet units (ships and aircraft).

30. Q. Will the facility be used to communicate with POLARIS submarines?

A. The installation is not designed to support POLARIS submarine operations. The communications capability will provide ties with the Naval Communications System, ship-to-shore, air-to-ground, and weather communications within the Indian Ocean area.

31. Q. Will there be any restrictions with regard to U.S. actions and the use of the facility so far as the British are concerned?

A. The British have consented to the construction of a communications facility on the island.

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