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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET

December 16, 1970

TO : S/S - Mr. T. L. Eliot, Jr.  
FROM : PM - Ronald I. Spiers  
SUBJECT: Reactions to Diego Garcia Notifications

The attached memorandum, for your signature, provides to the White House a summary of reactions received to date to the notifications regarding the Diego Garcia facility made on December 15 to third countries.

Attachment

PM/ISO:JLfrom/ds  
12/16/70

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*Ref 15 Dec - 118*

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Attention *Mrs. Mullett*  
Keep this study together.



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December 16, 1970

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COPIES TO:  
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PM  
PM/ISO

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER  
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: *Reactions to Notifications Regarding*  
*Diego Garcia Project*

I enclose for your information a summary of  
reactions to notifications regarding plans for  
Diego Garcia.

*Theodore L. Eliot Jr.*

Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

Enclosure:

As stated.

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Summary of Responses to Notifications Regarding Plans  
for Diego Garcia as of 12 noon, 16 December 1970

1. In general, the responses were favorable or non-committal. There were, however, two countries, India and Somalia which responded in a strong negative fashion. A number of posts have not reported.

2. Favorable responses were received from -

Australia (expressed strong approval)  
Iran                      Singapore  
Malawi                  Japan

3. Unfavorable responses were received from -

India: Eric Gonsalves, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, expressed GOI regret since Diego Garcia "base" will increase tension in area and earlier decisions on BIOT had probably contributed to Soviet build-up in Indian Ocean. Gonsalves deplored manner in which US/UK decision reached in disregard of views of India, the non-aligned nations and UNGA resolutions. Gonsalves stated there was regrettable lack of consultations with India on a subject of direct concern to Indian security. He charged US had been taken in by the UK. Gonsalves stated the GOI would express its regrets and views in Upper House of Parliament on December 18 in response to a pending question. Gonsalves refused to accept Political Counselor's characterization of Diego Garcia as austere Naval communication facility. Gonsalves concluded that the facility will undoubtedly have some actual and more potential military capability and that other littoral states will also react adversely.

Reaction to UK High Commissioner: Similarly negative and disgruntled.

Somalia: Acting Head of Foreign Office was courteous in tone to the Ambassador but strongly disapproving in content. Somali official said he refused to believe there was any need for this facility, given other means of communications. Moreover, his government was strongly opposed to

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anything which involved additional big-power installations in the Indian Ocean, as, indeed, it was opposed to present installations.

4. Non-Committal responses were received from -

Indonesia		
Kenya (UK reported receiving response "It's fine with us")		
South Africa	Pakistan	Thailand
Malagasy Republic	Saudi Arabia	Uganda
New Zealand	Tanzania	Zambia

5. Unreported responses -

Burma	Kuwait	NATO (NAC)
Ethiopia	Malaysia	Portugal
France	Mauritius	

6. US Notification Delayed

Bahrein  
Ceylon (Ambassador to follow-up UK on December 17;  
Reaction to UK notification was non-committal)  
Maldives  
Seychelles

7. From among the nations responding favorably or non-committally there were questions as well as concerns or speculations on a variety of aspects including bearing of the project on Indian Ocean security, Soviet presence in the region, relationship to Vietnam, future claims to sovereignty over Diego Garcia, relocation of inhabitants and US/UK cost sharing, future Chinese missile tests, use of satellites for communications, arms to South Africa, the Heath visit to Washington and the January Commonwealth Conference. Posts report answers to questions were available from the guidance provided prior to notification.

8. With regard to the United Kingdom the following is pertinent.

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Parliamentary Reaction: The Commons did not get to Diego Garcia in the Prime Minister's oral Question and Answer period yesterday (December 15), so Heath submitted his announcement for the record. It is therefore too early to report on Parliamentary reaction.

Press Reaction: Almost all British papers today, December 16, carry the Diego story, for the most part on inside pages. In general, papers link the facility to the growing Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. They also note that the announcement comes shortly before the Prime Minister's visit to Washington. Some stories also refer to the issue of arms for South Africa, and differ on whether the Diego announcement supports the case for arms sales, or makes the sales less necessary.

9. With regard to the Soviet Union the following is pertinent.

Moscow has not yet reacted directly to the announcement on Diego Garcia. Prior to the announcement there was a limited amount of propaganda attention to Diego Garcia, based mainly on Western press stories.

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