STATEMENT OF JAMES R. SCHLESINGER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 1975

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to clarify for you our reasons for proposing an augmentation of facilities on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. As I have indicated in previous appearances before this Committee and elsewhere, we believe this project is necessary to provide logistical support for our forces which operate periodically in the Indian Ocean.

Since my last appearance here, the President has signed the Military Construction Act of 1975 (Public Law 93-552), which authorized \$18.1 million to begin construction of these facilities, subject to certain qualifications. In response to Congressional request, as specified in Section 613(a)(1) of that Bill, the President certified to the Congress on May 12 that he had evaluated all the military and foreign policy implications regarding the need for United States facilities at Diego Garcia and concluded that the construction of such a project is essential to the national interest of the United States. In the absence of any negative action by Congress, it will be possible to commence construction of the support facilities this fall. An additional \$13.8 million in military construction funds has been requested in the FY 76 Budget.

At the present time we have a limited communications station on Diego Garcia. The purpose of the new construction would be to expand this station

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to include certain support functions beyond its present communications role. The proposed expansion would include the following:

- -- The runway would be lengthened to 12,000 feet from its present 8,000 feet to permit the operation of larger cargo aircraft as well as high performance tactical aircraft under a variety of circumstances in the tropical climate;
- -- The fuel storage capacity would be increased from the present 60,000 barrels of aviation fuel to a total of 380,000 barrels of aviation fuel and 320,000 barrels of fuel oil for ships;
- -- An anchorage would be dredged in the shallow coral lagoon which could accommodate the ships of a carrier task group, and a pier would be constructed to provide about 550 feet of berthing primarily for the rapid loading or unloading of fuel;
- -- Various airfield improvements would include additional parking aprons, an arresting gear for emergency use, and limited aircraft maintenance facilities;
- -- Additional quarters for approximately 300 officers and men would be constructed; and
- -- Storage, power, and other ancillary facilities would be expanded proportionate to the intended support functions.

The military construction funds required for this project would be approximately \$37.8 million, to be carried out by SEABEE units through FY 79. At the present time, there are approximately 600 SEABEES on the island completing previously authorized work on the communications



station and harbor, which is expected to be finished during this calendar year. There are about 430 U.S. military personnel currently assigned to operate the communications station and the airstrip. With the expansion program, this number would rise to approximately 600.

The total cost of the improvements we have requested on Diego Garcia, including the salaries of the construction personnel, their food and fuel, the replacement costs of equipment used in the construction process, the procurement of hardware for the communications station, and all other operating and maintenance costs would be about \$108 million, or roughly the cost of a single navy oiler. In view of the flexibility which the proposed installation on Diego Garcia will offer to our forces, and the operational economies it will make possible, we feel that this is a prudent investment.

Our principal objective in requesting this facility is to provide secure access to logistical support for our forces operating in the Indian Ocean. For example, our naval forces operating there today must rely either on local sources of fuel or else must be replenished by a chain of tankers stretching over 4,000 miles from U.S. facilities in the Phillipines. The additional fuel storage we have proposed would permit a normal carrier task group to operate for about 30 days independent of other sources of supply. That margin of time could spell the difference between the orderly resupply of our forces and a hasty improvisation which could place unwieldy demands on our support assets in other areas. The same is true of the repair and maintenance which could be performed on ships and aircraft.

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In short, the proposed facility would provide the assurance of U.S. capability to deploy and maintain forces in an area which has become increasingly important over the past decade.

Mr. Chairman, for nearly two centuries the Indian Ocean was the military preserve of Great Britain, which exercised control over the vital sea lanes to India and the many outposts of the British Empire. From the early 19th century, Britain opposed Czarist attempts to extend Russian rule into South Asia, just as it later cooperated in countering postwar Stalinist efforts in Azerbaijan to extend Soviet influence in the direction of the Persian Gulf.

In the economic environment of the 1960s the British were forced to reorient their priorities toward Europe and away from Asia and the Indian Ocean. It is an interesting coincidence that 1968—the year the British announced their intention to withdraw—was also the year when the USSR first established what has now become a permanent naval presence in the northwest Indian Ocean.

While this transition from British dominance to a more diffuse power structure has been in progress, the interests of the United States in the Indian Ocean region have been growing. We have become increasingly dependent on the oil which is constantly moving in tankers along the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean, and our allies are even more dependent. We have an immediate stake in the stability and security of this very large body of water where half of the world's seaborne oil is in transit at any given time.

Consequently, we have been concerned at the steady growth of Soviet military activity in the region. I would like to review briefly the sequence of events by which this increase of Soviet military presence has developed.

The first Soviet deployments to the Indian Ocean in 1968 were small and tentative in nature. Lacking any shore facilities, the original contingents of Soviet ships were satisfied to remain mostly quiescent, spending most of their time at anchorages in international waters, with only occasional brief port visits to break what must have been a monotonous existence. This cautious probing of unfamiliar waters is very reminiscent of Soviet initial deployments into the Mediterranean some five years earlier.

When the Soviet Navy began to deploy to the Mediterranean in 1963, following an abortive earlier attempt to introduce submarines into Albania, there were very few ports open to them and they spent most of their time this out they grew more confident with time, and when sitting idly at anchor. But they grew more confident with time, and when Egypt made port and airfield facilities available to them after 1967, they were quick to increase the scope and intensity of their operations. By the time of the Arab-Israel War of October 1973, they were able to introduce and sustain an armada of more than ninety ships, including the most modern in their inventory.

As early as 1962, the Soviets agreed to assist the government of Somalia in constructing port facilities in Berbera, a small port overlooking the entrance to the Red Sea. The harbor was completed in 1969, and by 1971 sixteen Soviet ships paid visits to the port. In 1972, Marshal

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Grechko visited Somalia for the signing of a Soviet-Somali Agreement, and this was soon followed by an increase in Soviet use of facilities at Berbera, including the establishment of a naval communications site and the arrival of a barracks and repair ship which has remained as a permanent feature ever since. In late 1973, the USSR began initial construction of what has subsequently been identified as a missile storage and handling facility at Berbera, suggesting that the Soviets had plans for such a facility even before the events of the October 1973 war and the introduction of a more frequent US presence.

In July of last year, the USSR signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Somalia, similar to those signed with Egypt, Iraq and India. Several months later, approximately coincident with a visit by the Commander of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Gorshkov, we noted the beginning of a significant expansion of Soviet facilities at Berbera, including expansion of the POL storage, construction of additional housing ashore, and the beginning of a very long airstrip. The emerging configuration of a missile storage and handling facility became apparent. It is evident that the USSR is in the process of establishing a significant new facility capable of supporting their naval and air activities in the northwest Indian Ocean.

The USSR has also provided assistance to the Government in South
Yemen in managing the former British port of Aden, which was the fourth
largest bunkering port in the world when the Suez Canal was in operation.
This port lies directly across the Gulf of Aden from Berbera and commands
the northern side of the entrance to the Red Sea. In addition, the USSR

PADALEGEY TLOW CSRALD I YORU LIBRARY is assisting Iraq in the construction of a port, Umm Qasr, at the northern tip of the Persian Gulf. However, Soviet development and use of these two facilities has been much more modest than at Berbera.

The Soviet Union has become a major sea power only in the last decade. The first display of Soviet global naval power — the so-called OKEAN Exercise in 1970 — was intended to demonstrate Soviet capability to conduct coordinated naval operations in every ocean of the world. A similar worldwide exercise was held in April of this year. For this event, the number of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean was approximately doubled. Activity was centered in the northern Arabian Sea, at the crossroads of the tanker lanes from the Persian Gulf. The exercise was supported by long range aircraft operating from the Soviet Union, and, for the first time, by maritime patrol aircraft operating from airfields in Somalia.

It is worth remembering that the entire Soviet buildup in the Indian Ocean which now averages approximately 19 ships on a regular basis, has occurred during the period since the Suez Canal closed in 1967. We anticipate that, with the canal once again open as of last week, we will see an increase in the level of Soviet merchant ship traffic and commercial activity with South Asia. We will be watching very carefully for any change in the pattern of their naval deployments. As you know, the opening of the canal reduces the distance from the Black Sea to the Arabian Sea from 11,500 miles to only 2,500 miles — a difference in sailing time of 24 days. It also reopens to the USSR a warm water transit

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route from European Russia to the Soviet Far East, which will undoubtedly be important for the transfer of naval units between eastern and western fleets. Whether this will mean an increase in Soviet naval presence on a regular basis is not certain, but it will certainly increase Soviet flexibility in supporting or reinforcing its units in the Indian Ocean.

The level of U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean has been prudent. We have had a small permanent presence in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea since 1949, consisting of the command ship and two destroyers of the Middle East Force centered in Bahrain. In addition, since October 1973, we have conducted more frequent and more regular deployments to the area from our Pacific Fleet. Over the past 18 months, there have been seven such deployments, including five visits by carrier task groups and two visits by major surface combatants. Over the past year, we have had an augmented presence in the area approximately one-third of the time.

Although we would strongly prefer to see no Soviet buildup of military presence in this region, it appears that the USSR intends to undertake such a buildup. Since an effective military balance is essential to the preservation of regional security and stability in this area of great importance to the economic well-being of the industrialized world, we feel we should have logistical facilities which will permit us to maintain a credible presence. In a period of historical transition toward a new set of power relationships, only the United States among the Western nations has the stature to insure that the balance is maintained.

on which whom tended.

Mr. Chairman, that completes my remarks. However, since the question has been raised about the ongoing activities at the port of Berbera, I have here some photos and charts which should illustrate for you the source of our concern.



STATEMENT OF GENERAL GEORGE S. BROWN, USAF, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 10 JUNE 1975

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to respond to the Committee's request for my comments on the issues raised by S. Res. 160 and President Ford's certification that the construction of the Diego Garcia facility "is essential to the national interests of the United States."

Strategic Importance

Any rational analysis of this issue must begin with an appraisal of the strategic importance of the area. The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean is derived, not only from its relationship to oil and minerals resources, but also from the air and sea lines of communication running through it.

Oil from the Persian Gulf area is critical to the industrialized world. Seventy-five percent of Western Europe's oil requirements and eighty-five percent of Japan's must be imported from the Middle East. These requirements cannot be met from any other known source. Thus, these major U.S. allies, and to a significant extent the U.S. as well, will continue to be dependent on Middle East oil for the foreseeable future. The energy needs of the industrialized northern hemisphere dictate a profound concern with

access to these resources, particularly those of the Persian Gulf, which has more than sixty percent of the world's proven reserves and with the security of the tanker routes through the Gulf and across the Western Indian Ocean in time of war or political crisis.

While the primary emphasis on the Indian Ocean area has to do with oil, it should be remembered that the Indian Ocean constitutes the principal route for access to other strategic materials and minerals in Africa, including chrome, antimony, asbestos, copper, lead, nickel, and uranium. Access to strategic minerals will be an increasingly serious national concern in the latter part of this decade. The same situation applies to the NATO countries since Africa has been a source of crucial minerals for Europe, especially with respect to the movement of copper. Access to the resources of the region is indispensable to the survival of both NATO and Japan, and we must demonstrate to both allies and would-be adversaries U.S. resolve to deter threats to the vital lines of communication in the area and to prevent closure of these lines of communication if deterrence fails.

The United States also has other important interests in the area even beyond the self-evident needs for access to oil and mineral resources. While the Indian Ocean area is remote

from major centers of power, it nonetheless has great potential for unrest which could involve the major powers on short notice.

First, we have friends in the area who look to us for support. We are related to Iran and Pakistan, for example, through the committees of the Central Treaty Organization; and we maintain good relations with the moderate regimes in the Arabian Peninsula and along the east coast of Africa. Second, political stability in a number of countries is likely to be a continuing problem during the mid-range period as a result of the increasing popular expectations of economic advancement and the inability of existing governments to satisfy many of these aspirations, and newly emerging states, so subject to turmoil, look to us to assist them.

A moderate U.S. air and naval presence provides a counter to adventurism from any source. Those who would be our adversaries must not question either our resolve or our capability to ensure that our interests are served. We seek to demonstrate our interests in the area and our concern that it not be dominated by any outside power. As you have recently said, Mr. Chairman, "It is clear that, for the present at least, no nation is too new, too small, too weak, or too remote to challenge the United States if the proper opportunity presents itself."

Required Capabilities

Should any of these special problems require a military presence, U.S. forces other than the small Middle East Force must come from the Atlantic or Western Pacific. Aside from the obvious considerations of distance and cost, two other factors suggest themselves in determining our support requirements. First, if we are obliged to rely totally on long range capabilities such as B52s, airborne divisions on C5s, or an amphibious task force embarked from North Carolina or Hawaii, we will lose the ability to contain our reaction by a measured and discreet application of force. We will be confronted with an all or nothing at all circumstance in which the only available reaction may be in excess of that necessary.

Second, the United States was disappointed, but not surprised when some of our allies did not perceive their national interests as being identical to ours with regard to the most recent Middle East War. Without the cooperation of Portugal, which consented to the use of Lajes, the resupply operation which made Israel's survival possible could not have been conducted without great hazard and almost prohibitive cost. A similar restraint could limit our response to a crisis in the Indian Ocean area.

If we are to be able in the future to respond to a call for help of the nature and magnitude of, say, the Israeli operation, or implement a decision to act in the interests of the U.S., we must continue to develop and invest in secure facilities where we can operate as free of foreign political constraints as possible while still maintaining our alliance system. The best runway, storage facilities, geopolitical location, or deep water port is of little utility if political constraints preclude its use. Thus, the communications facility at Diego Garcia, being owned by the United Kingdom, a country with whom the United States has a historical special relationship, offers us the opportunity to construct a modest installation on an unpopulated speck of land under the sovereignty of a nation whose interests are generally, if not almost universally, identical to our own.

The proposed construction on Diego Garcia would enhance our capability to provide support to U.S. Forces operating in the Indian Ocean. However, there is no intent to permanently station operational forces there of any kind, and the installation would not imply an increase in the level of U.S. Forces deployed in that region. The only permanent personnel will be those required for communications and logistics support. As a refueling and resupply facility,

Diego Garcia will provide us with the capability of responding to air or naval requirements in the area either in terms of logistics or surveillance. The modest expanded facility of Diego Garcia will give us an enhanced capability to respond to the requirements of U.S. foreign policy. It will not be an operating base nor will it constitute a significant increase in U.S. military presence.

We have seen how the Soviet Union views the increasing importance of the Indian Ocean to them. While we have been debating the modest expansion of our facility at Diego Garcia, the Soviet Union has nearly completed their development at Berbera in the Republic of Somali. Whether or not this installation is called a "base," is of little importance. It is a significant facility. They have pier facilities, a large fuel storage area, a complete missile storage and preparation facility (remarkably similar to those in the USSR), a shore berthing and recreation area, and are now surfacing the airstrip, which is three miles in length. I view this as a clear signal of an increasing Soviet interest in the area; a capability to support such an interest with a military force, if desired or required, and a sign of permanency.

Even after the Diego Garcia expansion, our closest comparable capability to that which the Soviets are building at Berbera will be at Subic Bay. The charter of their naval

contingent has hardened into that of a permanently stabilized force with an embarked flag officer commanding a cruiser, two destroyer escorts, two minesweepers, two amphibious ships, a submarine, and six to eight auxiliaries. The Soviets let me emphasize will see to their interests without regard to what we do at Diego Garcia.

Our development of a capability at Diego Garcia to more economically and efficiently support our forces in a contingency does not signify our intent to deploy additional forces. This capability does signify that we have an interest in freedom of the seas and the airways above them, that we have an interest in protecting the vital air and sea lines of communication, and that we have a commitment to ensure that we are able to respond wherever and however our important interests are challenged.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would simply state that the Indian Ocean area is of major strategic importance, that the United States has significant interests in the area, and that the most feasible and economical way to support those interests is the modest program for expansion of the Diego Garcia facility that the President has proposed. I fervently urge your support for that program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

POINT PAPER ON DIEGO GARCIA

- What it is

- -- Coral Atoll in Indian Ocean
 - --- 6x13 miles, 6700 acres
 - --- 1000 miles south of India
 - --- Part of British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)
 - --- Joint US-UK agreement (1966) permits use for defense purposes
- -- Communication station under construction by U.S.
 - --- Authorized by Congress FY 71
 - --- To be completed this year
- -- Island has 8000' airstrip
 - --- 60,000 barrels POL storage
 - --- 430 U.S. personnel assigned
 - --- Plus 600 SEABEEs for construction
 - --- Quarters for personnel

- U.S. intentions

- -- Expand facilities for limited but more efficient/flexible use of
- forces in area
 - --- Lengthen runway from 8000' to 12,000'
 - -- Construct additional fuel storage capacity (640,000 barrels)
 - --- Dredge larger basin for ships (for normal carrier task group)
 - --- Build pier for alongside berthing
 - --- Enlarge aircraft parking aprons
 - --- Expand repair shops and utilities
 - --- Additional quarters and storage facilities

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- --- Club (addition)
 --- Hobby shop (addition)
 --- Warehouse
 --- Special services facilities
- Current Congressional Status
 - -- President signed PL 93-552, Dec 1974 (Mil. Construction Authorization Act, 1975)
 - --- Sec. 613 required Pres. certification to Congress that request was essential to U.S. Nat. Security Interests
 - ---- Did so, 12 May 1975, and sent to Congress (see Atch 1)
 - --- Act requires no funds be obligated until two conditions met
 - 1) Sixty days of continual Congressional session have elapsed
 - 2) During which neither House disapproves the project
- The need for facilities on Diego Garcia
 - -- Detailed White House justification is at Atch ${\bf 1}$
 - -- Main points
 - --- Important interests in Indian Ocean area
 - ---- Stability of area, freedom of oil routes
 - --- Demonstrate capability to operate forces in area
 - ---- Exercise right to navigate freely on high seas, show continued free access to area by all nations
 - --- Demonstrate credibility of US military force
 - ---- Flexibility, efficiency, effectiveness of US forces
 - ---- Provide hedges/options in face of political uncertainties
 - --- Diego Garcia facilities not to support permanent, large force
 - ---- Support limited force plus periodic visits of additional forces when required
 - --- Nearest logisitcal facility to western Indian Ocean is Phillipines, 4000 miles distant
 - ---- Alternative to D.G. is costly/inefficient increase in naval tankers/mobile logistics force

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- Attitudes of Littoral countries/UN
 - Survey of official public reactions to D.G. expansion is at Atch 3
 - -- Additionally, IOPZ proposal has been made in UN every year since 1971
 - --- Will be made again this year and probably will pass
 - --- U.S. abstains
- Chronology of U.S. actions
 - -- See Attachment 2 (SECRET)
- Arms Control Factors
 - -- US approached Soviet Union on subject in 1971. No response.
 - --- Would prefer Soviets to limit their own buildup in area
 - -- Soviets are continuing buildup
 - --- Installation at Berbera
 - --- U.S. has nothing comparable
 - --- U.S. ability to negotiate from such position is poor
 - -- Should not link D.G. construction to prior discussions on arms
- 3 Attachments
- 1. White House Construction Justification (U)
- Attitudes toward D.G. Expansion (U)
- 4. Map of D.G. (U)

JUSTIFICATION

In 1966, the United States signed an agreement with the British Government providing that the islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory would be available for 50 years to meet the defense purposes of both governments. In this context, we concluded in 1972 an Administrative Agreement providing for the establishment of a limited communications station on the small atoll of Diego Garcia in the central Indian Ocean. In February 1974, an agreement was negotiated ad referendum to replace the 1972 agreement and to provide for the construction and operation of a proposed support facility. The British Government announced in December 1974 its agreement with our proposal to expand the facility.

The United States has an important interest in the stability of the Indian Ocean area. In particular, the oil shipped from the Persian Gulf area is essential to the economic well-being of modern industrial societies. It is essential that the United States maintain and periodically demonstrate a capability to operate military forces in the Indian Ocean. Such exercise of our right to navigate freely on the high seas communicates to others the importance we attach to the stability of the region and to continued free access by all nations.

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The credibility of any US military presence ultimately depends on the ability of our forces to function efficiently and effectively in a wide range of circumstances. Currently, the US logistics facility closest to the western Indian Ocean is in the Philippines, 4,000 miles away. At a time when access to regional fuel supplies and other support is subject to the uncertainties of political developments, the establishment of modest support facilities on Diego Garcia is essential to insure the proper flexibility and responsiveness of US forces to national requirements in a variety of possible contingencies. The alternative would be an inefficient and costly increase in naval tankers and other mobile logistics forces.

Objections have been raised to this proposal on the grounds that it will prompt an increase in the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean and give rise to an arms race in the region.

Clearly, both we and the Soviets are aware of the military presence of other nations, but it would be incorrect to assume that Soviet actions are determined exclusively by the level of our force presence. The growth of Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean from 1968 to the present can most convincingly be ascribed to the pursuit of their own -national interests -- including the continuing expansion of

the Soviet Navy in a global "blue water" role -- rather than to US force levels as such.

A distinction must also be drawn between facilities and force presence. The proposed construction on Diego Garcia would enhance our capability to provide support to US forces operating in the Indian Ocean. However, there is no intent to permanently station operational units there, and the installation would not imply an increase in the level of US forces deployed to that region. We have, on several occasions, expressed our willingness to consider constructive proposals for arms restraint in the Indian Ocean, but we do not believe that construction on Diego Garcia should be contingent upon the outcome of discussions on such proposals. In our view, these are two separate issues.

The Diego Garcia proposal has been criticized by a number of regional states which favor the concept of a special legal regime limiting the presence of the great powers in the Indian Ocean, as expressed in the several Indian Ocean Zone of Peace resolutions adopted in the United Nations General Assembly. United States policy has consistently been to oppose measures that would constitute an unacceptable departure from customary international law concerning freedom of navigation on the high seas.

ET - SY MINES I L SI SEPTE We are aware of the concern expressed by some states of the region, but we do not share their conviction that the construction of support facilities on Diego Garcia will result in an arms race or that these facilities will somehow represent a threat to their interests. On the contrary, it is our belief that such facilities will contribute to the maintenance of a healthy balance essential to the preservation of regional security and stability. It is our considered judgment that the legitimate differences in perspective between ourselves and certain other nations with respect to Diego Garcia are susceptible to reasoned discussion within a framework of mutual respect and need not inhibit the development of satisfactory relations with the states of the region.

SURVEY OF OFFICIAL PUBLIC REACTIONS OF LITTORAL STATES SPECIFICALLY TO U.S. DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PROPOSAL

Favorable:

Balanced: Iran

. Kenya Pakistan Singapore

Unfavorable: Australia

Bangladesh

Egypt India Indonesia Kuwait

Malagasy Republic

Malayria Mauritius Somalia Sri Lanka Tanzania

Unknown: Bahrain

Burma Ethiopia Maldives Mozambique

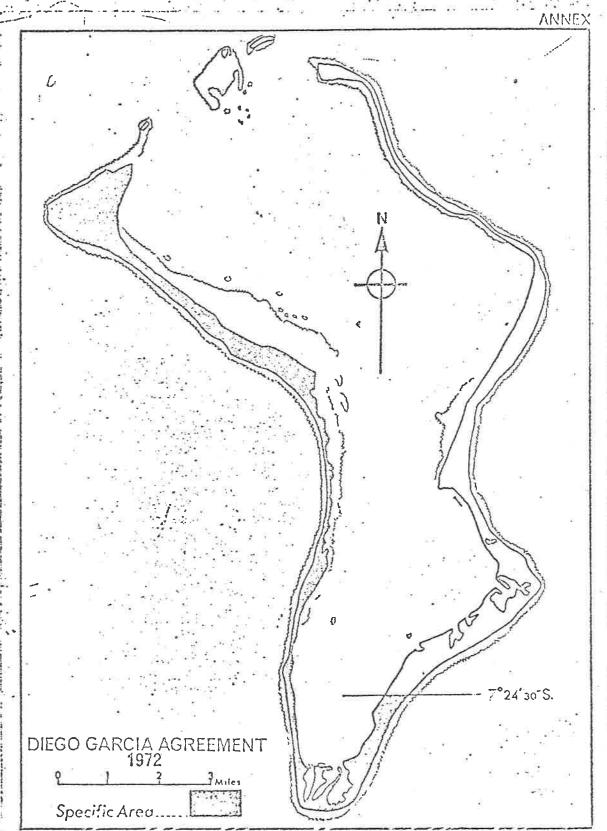
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Saudi Arabia South Africa

Sudan Thailand

United Arab Emirates Yemen Arab Republic

Note: we have heard from every post except Baghdad, which surely is unfavorable.



Research De J., FCO. Avgust 1971

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ISSUES S. RES. 160 (MANSFIELD)

SHALL THE SENATE DISAPPROVE PROPOSED

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ON DIEGO GARCIA?

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