

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 228592

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 228592

FOLLOWING REPEATS SECSTATE 228592 ACTION

LONDON BANGKOK INFO CANBERRA

TEHRAN CINCPAC HONOLULU HI SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC 17 OCTOBER 1974. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 228592

E.O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, MARR, MOPS, TH, US, UK, XO

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION TRIP TO DIEGO GARCIA

REF: LONDON 11321

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. IN CONNECTION WITH CHATCHAI VISIT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH
HMG'S DESIRE (REFTEL) TO HAVE AGREED CONTINGENCY PRESS
GUIDANCE, WE AND DOD FORMULATED FOLLOWING Q'S AND A'S.

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

2. Q: DO U.S. AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY USE THE FACILITIES AT
DIEGO GARCIA?

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 228592

A: YES, DIEGO GARCIA IS USED BY U.S. AIRCRAFT OF VARIOUS

TYPES, PRIMARILY FOR THE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF THE LIMITED COMMUNICATIONS STATION AND THE SEABEE CONTINGENT WHICH IS CURRENTLY WORKING THERE. THIS IS WITH BRITISH AGREEMENT.

3. Q: DO P-3 AIRCRAFT USE THIS FACILITY?

A: YES, P-3 AIRCRAFT LAND THERE AS WELL AS C-130, C-141,

C-1 AND OTHER TYPES OF AIRCRAFT. THE AIRFIELD AT DIEGO GARCIA WOULD ALSO BE AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCY DIVERSION OF CARRIER AIRCRAFT AS REQUIRED WHEN A CARRIER IS OPERATING IN THE AREA.

4. Q: ARE U.S. AIRCRAFT BASED AT DIEGO GARCIA?

A: NO, THERE ARE NO AIRCRAFT OF ANY TYPE BASED ON THE ISLAND, NOR ARE THERE PLANS TO BASE AIRCRAFT THERE.

5. Q: WHAT AGREEMENTS GOVERN U.S. AIRCRAFT USE OF DIEGO GARCIA?

A: DIEGO GARCIA IS PART OF THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY AND AS SUCH IT IS BRITISH SOVEREIGN TERRITORY. CONSEQUENTLY, U.S. ACTIVITIES ON THE ISLAND ARE CARRIED OUT WITH THE EXPRESS KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE TWO AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE US AND THE UK GOVERNING USE OF THE FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA: A 1966 AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR THE AVAILABILITY OF THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY TO EITHER GOVERNMENT FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES, AND A 1972 AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE US NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION THERE.

6. Q: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE P-3 FLIGHTS FROM DIEGO GARCIA?

A: DIEGO GARCIA IS USED AS A TRANSIT POINT FOR ROUTINE LOGISTICAL AND OPERATIONAL FLIGHTS BY P-3 AIRCRAFT AS WELL AS OTHER TYPES OF AIRCRAFT.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 228592

7. Q: DO P-3 AIRCRAFT CONDUCT RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS FROM DIEGO GARCIA?

A: WHEN IT IS NECESSARY TO CONDUCT SEA SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, DIEGO GARCIA IS ONE OF THE AIRFIELDS AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR SUCH FLIGHTS.

8. Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY "SEA SURVEILLANCE"?

A: „SEA SURVEILLANCE" IS THE SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION OF SURFACE AND SUB-SURFACE SEA AREAS PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF LOCATING, IDENTIFYING AND DETERMINING THE MOVEMENT OF SHIPS, MERCHANT OR NAVAL, FRIENDLY OR OTHERWISE, PROCEEDING ON OR UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE WORLD'S SEAS AND OCEANS.

9. Q: WILL B-52'S BE ABLE TO OPERATE FROM DIEGO GARCIA?

A: THE AIRFIELD CANNOT AT PRESENT AND WILL NOT PHYSICALLY BE ABLE TO HANDLE B-52 AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS.

END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

10. FOR LONDON: REQUEST YOU SECURE HMG AGREEMENT TO FOREGOING PRESS GUIDANCE.

11. MATTER OF VISIT WAS RAISED BY CHATCHAI DURING RECENT DESECDEF TRIP TO BANGKOK, AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE: THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER STATED HE WANTED TO VISIT DIEGO GARCIA AS A FURTHER STEP IN HIS ATTEMPT TO EDUCATE THE THAI PEOPLE ABOUT THE SOVIET THREAT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA FROM THE WEST. CLEMENTS EXPLAINED TO CHATCHAI THAT ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON DIEGO GARCIA COULD BE MOST EMBARRASSING TO THE UK AND SAID THAT THE BRITISH WOULD GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE VISIT ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT THERE BE NO PUBLICITY. CHATCHAI SAID HIS REASON FOR WANTING TO VISIT THIS ISLAND WAS TO BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN TO HIS PEOPLE THE NATURE OF THE FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA AND HOW THEY SERVE THAILAND'S

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 228592

INTERESTS. HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE REQUIRED UK PERMISSION FOR HIM TO VISIT OUR ISLAND. THE CHARGE EXPLAINED THE STATUS OF DIEGO GARCIA AND TOLD CHATCHAI THAT A DECISION WOULD NOT BE MADE BY THE UK UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS, AND THAT WE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM AT THAT TIME. END QUOTE.

12. FOR BANGKOK: WHILE SECOND UK CONDITION THAT CHATCHAI AVOID PUBLIC STATEMENTS MAY THEREFORE BE UNREALISTIC, YOU SHOULD IMPRESS ON HIM NECESSITY FOR HEWING CLOSELY TO AGREED PRESS GUIDANCE ONCE VISIT IS FIRM. WE UNDERSTAND CHATCHAI WILL BE OUT OF THAILAND. PLEASE ADVISE WHEN HE IS EXPECTED TO RETURN. WE WOULD PREFER TO AGREE ON PRESS GUIDANCE BEFORE THAT DATE

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