

Authority NND969023  
 EV 11/17/05 NARA Date

Subj - Am 70-73, 59/150/67/1/5  
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 Classification

202722

**Department of State**  
**TELEGRAM**

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ACTION: Amembassy LONDON ~~IMMEDIATE~~ FLASH  
~~INFO~~ USNATO  
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Subj - Diego Garcia

See esp. pt 1  
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migrant workers

202722

DRAFTED BY: Capt. [Signature]  
 From: PM/ISO 12/12/70 28688-  
 AF-Mr. R. S. Smith NEA-Mr. Van Hollen  
 EUR-Mr. Goldstein EA-Capt. Long  
 P/PG-Mr. Hurd ~~5/16/71: [Signature]~~  
 PM/ISO-Mr. Stoddart EUR/PM-Mr. McGuire  
 PM-Mr. Spiers OASD/ISA/FMRA-Mr. Barringer  
 OASD/PA-Capt. Barber OASD/ISA/AF-Capt. Hilscher  
 White House Mr. Sonnenfeldt  
 DRAFTING DATE TEL: EXT. 12/12/70 28688-  
 APPROVED BY: The Under Secretary  
 OSD/PA-Mr. Freidheim (Qs & As)  
 OSD/LA-Mr. Capen (timing)  
 OSD/I&L-Mr. Shillito (Qs & As)  
 OP 614-Capt. Leddick  
 SecDef-Mr. Laird (timing) Pr. Rel  
 S/PRS-Mr. King (info)  
 H + Amb. Symmes (info)  
 S/S - Mr. Curran  
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SUBJECT: Diego Garcia

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

REF: A. STATE 200310 C. LONDON 10243 E. LONDON 10247  
 B. LONDON 10242 D. LONDON 10244 F. LONDON 10248  
 G. LONDON 10249 H. LONDON 10250

1. We tentatively agree to public release on

Tuesday, December 15 at 10:00 a.m. Washington time

(4 pm London time). ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Press

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ release, notification

statement and Q's and A's provided herein in entirety ~~we~~ have

formulated after taking into consideration refs ~~we~~ A

H (Notal)

through ~~we~~ /and further reflections here. ~~Subsequent~~

Posts are authorized to

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to IMG agreement, we would ~~authorize~~ posts ~~xxx~~

approach third countries as close as possible to

~~the~~ public release time, in accordance with information contained herein.

2. Joint US/UK Public Announcement

The Government of the United Kingdom and the

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FORM D: 4-68 FORM DS-322 4-68

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Page ~~two~~ of telegram to LONDON

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## ACTION:

Secretary of Defense of the United States announced today (<sup>15</sup>~~16~~ December) 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 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 ~~YANAK~~ Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) available to the U.S. and U.K. governments for defense activities for 50 years. The facility will consist of communications, and minimum necessary support activities, including an air-strip. Construction of the facility will be accomplished by the United States. Units of the U.S. Naval Construction Force will build it. Both the British and American flags will fly over the

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## DISTRIBUTION

## ACTION:

facility and the United Kingdom will assist in its  
manning.

The facility will close a gap in the U.S. Naval  
Communications System. It will provide communications  
support to U.S. and U.K. ships and aircraft in the  
Indian Ocean. It is expected to be <sup>completed</sup> ~~completed~~ in  
less than three years.

3. List of Anticipated Questions and Approved Answers -  
(Unclassified when authorized for use <sup>only</sup> in response to  
query).

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

A. To close a gap in our worldwide communi-  
cations 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?

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ACTION:

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

3. Q. Will ships be able to use the/Diego  
 Garcia?

A. No decision has been made on harbor  
 accommodations.

4. Q. What will be the depth of the channel?

A. No decision has been made on harbor  
 accommodations.

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. Construction of the facility might  
 ultimately cost about \$19 million.

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

A. No. The principal requirement lies with the U.S. and U.S. is funding the project.

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.

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

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ACTION:

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~~ Is this part of 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

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ACTION:

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?

A. About 275 , including a small number of U.K. personnel. ~~(See 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-third of its 5,700 acres.

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

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ACTION:

A. The population consists of a small  
number of contract laborers from the Seychelles and  
to  
Mauritius engaged/~~was~~ work on the copra plantations.  
Arrangements will be made for the contracts to be  
terminated at the appropriate time and for their  
return to Mauritius and the Seychelles.

17. Q. Will this facility be used to support  
operations in Vietnam (Indochina)?

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.

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