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Do you have any comment on former Ambassador Moynihan's reactions and comments?

1/7/75

Guidance: At the time of the Administration's request for funds for the construction of this base, ample justification was provided the Congress and the public and I would refer you to the record on that. I would have no specific reaction to Ambassador Moynihan's comments and it would be appropriate for the State Department to comment on U.S. contacts with the countries bordering the Indian Ocean with regard to Diego Garcia.

FYI: If asked whether the President will provide Congress with the necessary ^{de} termination that Diego Garcia is vital to the security of the United States, you should say that you expect he will but have no information on when he might do so. End FYI.

September 10, 1975

DIEGO GARCIA

The Washington Post reports 9/9 that more than 1,000 inhabitants of the Island of Diego Garcia were forcibly removed before 1972 to make way for a U. S. Naval Base there. The Pentagon told the Congress in 1972 that the Island was virtually uninhabited. The U. S. Government (State Department) has said that the fate of the islanders now living in poverty on Mauritius is the responsibility of the United Kingdom and Mauritius.

Q. Would you comment on the Post story on the inhabitants of Diego Garcia? Will the U. S. do anything to help them or to repay them for their losses and displacement?

A. I would refer you to the Department of State and also the Department of Defense. I understand they are prepared to address this issue.

Q. Is the Island of Diego Garcia independent territory?

A. The island is British.

FYI ONLY: We want to keep this issue away from the White House and the President since it would involve putting the British out front on this. The State Department will refer to the British jurisdiction on Diego Garcia and to their responsibility for administration of the island. They will probably direct most queries to the British government.

April 15, 1976

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON DIEGO GARCIA

The Indian Ocean Report being sent to the Hill today is in response to a Congressional request for a summation of the Administration's efforts to reduce tensions with the Soviets in the Indian Ocean area. Funds for the construction of Diego Garcia were to be held up until April 15, 1976, by which time the report was to be submitted. Construction for Diego Garcia has proceeded on schedule with FY '75 funds and '76 funds will be released as of tomorrow.

This report was not a prior requirement to the release of the funds. Basically, it asserts that we will continue to act with restraint in the area and while we hope the Soviets act similarly, we shall watch the progress of their build-up in Somalia very closely.