

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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you requested -
i handed letter to
Stennis on 9-11-74.

September 10, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER HK
SUBJECT: Diego Garcia

there should be
NO release of
letter until
Stennis dies.

TBK

As you know, included in this year's budget submission was a request for funding to provide for a modest expansion of the naval facility on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The purpose of this expansion is to provide more economical support for the program of limited naval deployments in the area than would be possible if we are constrained to rely on a long supply line based in the Pacific theater. The funding (\$29 million) is included in the military construction authorization bill which has passed the House. The Senate Armed Services Committee reduced the figure to \$18 million and added a provision that precludes any expenditure without your determination that it is in the national interest to do so. It further requires that your report to this effect must be approved by both Houses of Congress. The bill will come to the Senate floor on Tuesday.

John K
said
Stennis
does not
want letter
released.
9/11/74
AKS

Senator Stennis has expressed willingness to support the proposal on the floor against efforts he anticipates will be made to reduce the funding further. He believes, however, that the strength of the opposition is such that a particularly strong effort will be necessary. In this context, he has requested a letter from you which states the Administration's rationale for the expansion.

Regardless of the outcome on the Senate floor, we believe that the House conferees will strongly support the \$29 million level and will also insist that there be no requirement for submitting a Presidential Determination to the Congress prior to going forward with the expansion. Nevertheless, out of respect for Senator Stennis' views in this regard, it is recommended that a letter be sent to him in accordance with his wishes.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

*Delivered to Sen. Stennis
by Tom Korolagos 9/11/74*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear John:

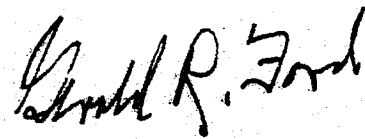
Knowing of your personal concern for the adequacy of our defense posture, I am writing to express my views on the necessity of going forward with a modest expansion of the naval support facility on Diego Garcia.

The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean is, I believe, clear. Not only is it an important crossroads of maritime activity, but it is, as well, key to our ability to demonstrate our support for allies in the region and to protect U. S. interests there. As you know, we have maintained a military presence in the Indian Ocean for more than twenty years. In recent times, as the presence of other Western countries in the area has been altered and the resource potential of the area has become more important, we have been conducting more frequent naval deployments in the Indian Ocean.

The level of funding requested and the nature of intended improvements are in keeping with the limited character of our operations. The expenditures are further justified as measures which will shorten the length of the supply line and reduce the strains which our deployments could place on our limited logistical support resources in the Pacific. It is also important to recognize that construction of expanded facilities on Diego Garcia does not imply a significant new increase in the U. S. military presence in the area.

I know that you recognize the importance of this proposal and am confident that I can count on your support to resist any efforts to reduce the funding to carry it out or to restrict otherwise my latitude to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gerald R. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "G" and "F".

The Honorable John C. Stennis
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510