

DECLASSIFIED

AISS/IPS, Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

October 11, 2007

Department of State

TELEGRAM

POL-1 MALDIVES

ACTION: POL

CN: 5027

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Classification

CHRON R 062259Z DEC 75
 AMB FM SECSTATE WASHDC
 DCM TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1231
 BT
 ECON C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 288577

ACTION TAKEN:
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 ARK
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USIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MV

SUBJECT: U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE MALDIVES

REF: COLOMBO 3716

1. DEPARTMENT CONCURS WITH POST'S ASSESSMENT THAT U.S. INTERESTS, THOUGH SMALL, ARE WORTH SOME POSITIVE ATTENTION. WE HAVE NO WISH TO SUSTAIN MORE THAN A MINIMAL PROFILE THERE BUT WE SHARE EMBASSY'S CONVICTION THAT EVEN A LIMITED PRESENCE CAN BE BENEFICIAL TO U.S. INTERESTS. FACT THAT MALDIVES WAS ONLY SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY TO SUPPORT US ACROSS THE BOARD ON THE KOREAN ISSUE IN THE UNGA DEMONSTRATED GOM INDEPENDENCE AND THE UTILITY OF DEVELOPING A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MALDIVES. WE ARE ALSO AWARE THAT IN THE WAKE OF THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM GAN, THE GOM MAY SEEK TO EXPAND ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS AND EXPOSURE (PARTICULARLY IN THE U.N.). IN THIS CONTEXT WE BELIEVE POST'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN SUPPORT OF OUR INTERESTS TO BE TIMELY, REASONABLE AND REALISTIC AND WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO IMPLEMENT THEM WHERE POSSIBLE. COMMENTS FOLLOW ON SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS IN REFTEL.

2. AUB STUDY GRANTS - ALTHOUGH CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON OBVIOUSLY MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AID INTENDS TO CON-

TINUE MAKING PARTICIPANT GRANTS AVAILABLE TO MALDIVIAN STUDENTS. THERE IS NO SPECIFIC CEILING ON THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS FROM THE MALDIVES RECEIVING SUCH GRANTS, BUT FOR BUDGET AND PLANNING PURPOSES WE ACCEPT YOUR RECOMMENDATION TO THINK IN TERMS OF APPROXIMATELY FIVE SCHOLARSHIPS PER YEAR. FYI - SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AGREE WE COULD ALSO USE OUR RUPEE HOLDINGS TO FINANCE THIRD COUNTRY GRANTS IN INDIA. MALDIVES WOULD BE NATURAL CANDIDATE. END FYI.

3. CIVIL AVIATION TRAINING - WE ASSUME THAT MALDIVIAN INTEREST IN CIVIL AVIATION TRAINING IS RELATED TO PRESENCE OF UNDP

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INTEREST IN CIVIL AVIATION TRAINING IS RELATED TO PRESENCE OF UNDP - SPONSORED CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY CENTER IN BEIRUT WHICH SPECIALIZES IN TRAINING STUDENTS FROM LDCS. CIVIL AVIATION IS NOT AMONG AID'S CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED PRIORITY FIELDS, NOR DO EITHER FAA OR CAB FUND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THIS FIELD. ICAO WHICH ADMINISTERS GASC WOULD BE LOGICAL SOURCE OF SUPPORT FOR A CIVIL AVIATION STUDENT.

4. U.S. NAVY SHIP VISIT - EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION ACCORD GENERALLY WITH CURRENT PRACTICE WHEREBY AMBASSADOR HAS TRAVELLED TO MALDIVES IN 1974 AND 1975 ON BOARD U.S. NAVY SHIP. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS MAY NOT ALWAYS BE FEASIBLE, HOWEVER, AND NAVY WELCOMES POST'S INTEREST IN A YEARLY VISIT. AS IN PAST ANY SPECIFIC DECISIONS ON VISITS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH EMBASSY COLOMBO.

5. INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAM - DEPARTMENT IS PREPARED TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE IV PROGRAM FOR THE MALDIVES AT LEVEL OF ONE GRANT PER YEAR AS SUGGESTED. IF SUITABLE CANDIDATE CAN BE PROPOSED WE ARE PREPARED TO PROGRAM A GRANTEE IN FY 76.

6. SEPARATE USIS PROGRAM - ANTICIPATED BUDGETARY CONSTRAIN PRECLUDE ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE USIS PROGRAM FOR THE MALDIVES OR AUGMENTING USIS SRI LANKA'S BUDGET FOR THIS PURPOSE AT PRESENT. HOWEVER, WE CONCUR IN REFTEL'S SUGGESTION THAT PAO TRAVEL TO MALE TO SURVEY POTENTIAL AUDIENCES AND ESTIMATE PROGRAM NEEDS AND PREPARE SECTION ON PROPOSED PROGRAMMING IN MALDIVES FOR INCLUSION IN SRI LANKA CPP. ON RECEIPT OF DETAILED PROGRAM PROPOSAL AGENCY WILL DETERMIN EXTENT TO WHICH THE POST MAY BE AUTHORIZED A MODEST DIVERSION OF FUNDS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS PURPOSE FROM THE EXISTING USIS SRI LANKA PROGRAM.

7. FYI: THIS WOULD NOT BE AN UNUSUAL PROCEDURE AS THERE ARE A NUMBER OF USIS POSTS USING OWN BUDGET AND RESOURCES TO PROGRAM IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WHERE THERE ARE NO USIS ESTABLISHMENTS (E.G. TRINIDAD PROGRAM COVERS BARBADOS AND GRANADA; GEORGETOWN COVERS SURINAM). THERE ARE ALSO SEVERAL OTHER SMALL COUNTRIES IN WHICH USIS HAS NOT AND DOES NOT PLAN TO ESTABLISH ANY USIS PROGRAMS, PRIMARILY FOR BUDGETARY REASONS (E.G. BAHAMAS, SAO TOME-PRINCIPE, SEYCHELLES, COMOROS, CAPE VERDE ISLANDS).
END FYI.

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8. SUPPLY OF TEXTS FOR MALDIVIAN SCHOOLS - UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OUR OPTIONS IN THIS AREA ARE QUITE LIMITED AS (A) USIS INDIA BOOK PROGRAM TITLES ARE INTENDED FOR UNIVERSITY USE AND ARE NOT ORIENTED TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND (B) UNLESS QUANTITY NEEDED IS SMALL, THE ACQUISITION OF U.S.-PURCHASED TITLES THROUGH USIA FOR PRESENTATION PURPOSES MAY BE DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH WITHIN THE AGENCY'S CONGRESSIONALLY IMPOSED PRESENTATION CEILING. WE WOULD THEREFORE NEED TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC NATURE AND EXTENT OF MALDIVIAN BOOK REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY.

9. UPGRADING OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM - SINCE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR GARDINER DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO COLOMBO, WE WILL AWAIT HIS RETURN TO AID/W BEFORE COMMENTING ON POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE IN THIS AREA. WE WILL PROVIDE SEPTEL ON THIS SUBJECT ASAP.

10. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES - WE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH FOR COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND PUBLICIZE THEM IN REGULAR USG CHANNELS.

11. POST IS CORRECT IN WISHING TO INFORM GOM THAT THERE IS NO AID PROGRAM UNDER WHICH USG CAN PROVIDE AIRCRAFT IN RESPONSE TO MALDIVIAN REQUEST FOR SUCH ASSISTANCE. INGERSOLL

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