

### Diego Garcia and Chinese Interests in the Indian Ocean

Where Indian observers increasingly see a Chinese "string of pearls" encircling India, Chinese observers see a rapidly developing Indian navy gradually complementing the overwhelming U.S. naval power in the Indian Ocean to challenge the security of China's seaborne trade there. Since the Cold War's end, U.S. forces in Diego Garcia have been seen by Chinese analysts as part of a larger strategy of maintaining American control of East Asia at China's expense.<sup>143</sup> An article in *PLA Daily*, the newspaper of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army, states that Diego Garcia is viewed as anchoring an inner network of bases, or "First Island Chain," that constrains Chinese military power projection:

The Asia-Pacific region has always been one of the focal points of U.S. contention for world hegemony. For the purpose of structuring a strategic "containment" posture vis-à-vis the Asia-Pacific countries, the U.S. military has from beginning to end built a three-layer chain of bases west from Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asian countries and east to the western coast of the continental United States. The first layer of chains consists of bases extending from Japan and South Korea all the way to the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. They are an "island chain" type of "forward bases" that control very important navigation channels, straits and sea areas. The second stretch consists of various islands with the island of Guam as the center plus the bases in Australia and New Zealand. They serve as the backing for the first stretch as well as major intermediary bases for sea and air transportation. The third stretch is composed of bases on the archipelagoes around Hawaii and on the Midway Island, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. These bases are the main command center of the Pacific theater and serve as relay stations for the support coming from the western coast of the continental United States for the forward bases.<sup>144</sup>

Nearly identical wording is used by several other sources.<sup>145</sup> These include Academy of Military Sciences research fellow Wang Weixing, in an interview with a reporter from the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) primary daily newspaper for intellectuals and professionals, who adds that "since World War II, [Washington] has gradually built up a system of global military bases, backed up by the bases on the American mainland, in order to pursue its global strategy."<sup>146</sup> Chinese analysts thus view the "island chains" alternatively as benchmarks of progress in maritime force projection and as fortified barriers that China must continue to penetrate to achieve freedom of maneuver in the maritime realm.<sup>147</sup> As PLAN senior captain Xu Qi emphasizes, China's "passage in and out of the [open] ocean is obstructed by two island chains. [China's] maritime geostrategic posture is [thus] in a semi-enclosed condition."<sup>148</sup> The authors of the PLA's first

English-language volume on strategy likewise believe that "despite its 18,000 kilometer coastline, China is currently constrained by the world's longest island chain, centering on the strategically-, politically-, and economically-vital territory of Taiwan."<sup>149</sup> However, because neither the PLAN nor any other organization of the People's Republic of China government has publicly made the island chains integral parts of official policy or defined their precise scope, references to them must be interpreted with caution.

A 2006 article in the official PLAN journal *People's Navy* credited Diego Garcia with the following capabilities:

Diego Garcia Naval Base . . . has a usable area of 44 square kilometers, and a runway over 3,600 meters long that can accommodate heavy long-range bombers such as the B-52, B-1, and B-2. The 370,000 square meter aircraft parking area can hold over 100 military aircraft. The base's harbor has a wharf and two deep water channels. It can berth large aircraft carrier(s), nuclear submarines, and a fleet with prepositioned goods and materials. This base's combined installations are perfect, its strategic position is important. It has already become America's most important sea and air operations and logistics supply base in the Pacific region. It is called "the unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean."<sup>150</sup>

A *Liberation Army Daily* article lists Diego Garcia as "[one of, with Japan and South Korea] the U.S. military's frontline bases in the Asia Pacific region," one that controls "major sea and air navigation channels in the middle of the Indian Ocean."<sup>151</sup> The U.S. Air Force's plan to construct "four overseas relay stations for U.S. strategic bombers" (战略轰炸机的海外继中站) on Guam and Diego Garcia was formally announced on 27 November 2001;<sup>152</sup> it is viewed as part of a larger plan of "quietly stepping up its deployment of modern weapons in forward positions in the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>153</sup> A U.S. Air Force major general is quoted as saying that "[Guam's] Andersen [Air Force Base] is one of the two such important bases built by the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. The other important base is at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean."<sup>154</sup> Another *Liberation Army Daily* article concludes that "Diego Garcia not only controls the sea routes, straits, and sea areas in the western Pacific but can also launch attacks both to east and west in support of U.S. combat operations in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions. U.S. impatience to build up forward long-range bomber bases at [Diego Garcia and Guam] is bound to bring a real threat to peace and security in the Asian region, and cannot but arouse a high degree of vigilance in the countries concerned."<sup>155</sup> A subsequent Xinhua News Agency article reports that forward bomber basing gives the U.S. Air Force "a capability of striking anywhere in the region within 12 hours."<sup>156</sup> A group of Taiwanese scholars assess that improved access to naval facilities in Singapore will enhance the value of Diego Garcia as a key anchor of America's naval presence in the India Ocean.<sup>157</sup>

Diego Garcia's long-term use as a satellite tracking station is emphasized by Chinese analysts. One lengthy official news analysis notes Diego Garcia's role as one of five "photoelectric observation stations" that support the U.S. Air Force Air Surveillance and Tracking System/Ground-Based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance (GEODSS) to "[monitor] high-orbit satellites." GEODSS, in turn, is part of a "strategic early warning system" to help make the United States "the sole space-dominating power."<sup>158</sup> Chinese news reports have credited Diego Garcia with a role in monitoring Chinese military and civilian space activities.<sup>159</sup> According to a daily paper sponsored by the CCP Central Committee's China Youth League, "U.S. radar tracking and control stations and electronic listening posts will collect all electromagnetic or communication signals related to the launch of *Shenzhou VI* and other Chinese space vehicles."<sup>160</sup>

#### *Chinese Analysis of Diego Garcia's Operational Uses*

Chinese articles have repeatedly reported on the use of Diego Garcia to support the Clinton administration's pressure and air strikes on Iraq in December 1998. The official Xinhua News Agency, *People's Daily* (the daily newspaper of the CCP Central Committee), and Central People's Radio Network, for instance, have all noted that, following its expansion, Diego Garcia is capable of accepting long-range bombers, such as B-52s, from Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, as well as B-2s.<sup>161</sup> As one article noted, "The island is within striking range of Iraq, but beyond the reach of Iraqi missiles including Soviet-made Scuds."<sup>162</sup>

Chinese sources likewise observed Diego Garcia's role as a bomber base in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (fall 2001).<sup>163</sup> *Naval and Merchant Ships*, a journal of the Chinese Society of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, has published a detailed analysis stating that shipping "air-launched precision-guided weapons" such as "cruise missiles and laser-guided bombs" to such "front line" bases as Diego Garcia was a cost-effective strategy for the U.S. military.<sup>164</sup>

Diego Garcia has also attracted significant Chinese attention as a support base for Iraqi Freedom. As early as 2002 a *PLA Daily* reporter anticipated that B-52 and B-1 bombers might be moved from the island to the Middle East, possibly al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, to support an invasion of Iraq.<sup>165</sup> A *People's Daily* article later that year quoted an Associated Press reporter who anticipated that tanks and other equipment would be transported covertly by ship for Diego Garcia for that purpose.<sup>166</sup> As they had done before previous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Chinese observers noted a buildup of military aircraft on Diego Garcia, such as B-2 and B-52 bombers capable of dropping "satellite and laser guided 'smart' bombs."<sup>167</sup> China's official English-language daily asserted that this process began "in October 2002, one month earlier when the Security Council endorsed the Resolution 1441 on disarmament in Iraq."<sup>168</sup> An Army brigade's equipment had been airlifted from Diego Garcia to the Gulf, Academy



of Military Sciences researchers documented, while a Marine brigade's prepositioned equipment awaited transport.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, it is speculated that Diego Garcia could support a future U.S. attack on Iran.<sup>170</sup>

In keeping with general Chinese fears of "strategic encirclement" by U.S. force deployments as part of the "Long War" against global terror, there is concern, according to a graduate student at China's National Defense University, that improvements in American-Indian relations offer "conveniences for the U.S.'s military presence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. Additionally, the U.S. Army further plans to shift a portion of the pre-positioned equipment deployed in Europe to the Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean."<sup>171</sup> This is part of a larger assessment, expressed in a magazine published by Xinhua, that "the military bases in Guam can interact with the Diego Garcia Base in the Indian Ocean to make reactions against Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa."<sup>172</sup> The island has also been called a "northward strategic attack line."<sup>173</sup> A party-sponsored newspaper raised the related concern that a North Korean vessel, *Sosan*, was escorted toward Diego Garcia in December 2002 until the White House determined that there was no legal method of preventing the missiles it was carrying from continuing to Yemen.<sup>174</sup> However, a report in a Hong Kong journal said to have PLA connections, noting points of friction and unmet expectations in U.S.-Indian relations, goes so far as to suggest that strategic considerations impel India not only to assert increasing influence over the Indian Ocean but also to develop capabilities to counter U.S. forces at Diego Garcia as part of a strategic rivalry:

Dominating the Strait of Malacca is the key part of India's maritime strategy. . . . India set up a base in Blair Port, the Andaman Islands, in 1967 and the Andaman Fortress Headquarters in 1984. In 2001, the Indian Ministry of National Defense expanded this headquarters to the strategic defense headquarters. Once a war breaks out in the future, India will be able to deploy its naval troops in the eastern and western parts of the mainland to echo with the army in the metropolitan territories and to gain the assistance of the air force. In this way, India will be able to form an overall powerful army-navy-air force defense force and to launch corner offenses against the U.S. Diego Garcia Base in the Indian Ocean. . . . After the September 11 Incident, India established a strategic defense headquarters in the Andaman Islands. This headquarters may echo with the other two large naval forces garrisoned in the western coastal areas and rely on the mainland's nuclear attack capabilities to launch corner offenses against the U.S. Diego Garcia base in the south. The U.S. military will surely be worried about this.<sup>175</sup>

More recently there has been substantial concern that Diego Garcia can help Japan to project maritime power and influence, through its alliance with the United States. A Hong Kong newspaper thought to have PLA connections notes



that on 21 September 2001 "an Aegis destroyer and a supply ship under Japan's Defense Agency, accompanied by USS *Kitty Hawk*, departed Yokosuka, Japan for the Indian Ocean. The [Self-Defense Force] vessels will ply between Japan and the American base in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean to provide supplies to U.S. armed forces and undertake the mission of escorting U.S. aircraft carriers. This was the first time that Japan sent its escort vessels overseas under the pretext of gathering information."<sup>176</sup> China's military press claims that Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force general staff headquarters officers pointed out in a 10 April 2002 meeting with, and subsequent letter to, Robert C. Chaplin, commander, U.S. Forces Japan, that "the Japanese P-3C warning plane has a rather high capability for search and rescue and conducting maritime monitoring. It is hoped that Japan can send this aircraft to increase its support, and the U.S. military would speak highly of the aircraft if the aircraft were to conduct activities in the vicinity of the Diego Garcia Island."<sup>177</sup> (The Chinese claim was dismissed by General Nakatani, director general of the Japan Defense Agency, on 7 May.<sup>178</sup>) Whatever the validity of these claims, Japanese scholars too recognize Diego Garcia's strategic significance. An Osaka University professor writes in a journal on Chinese and East Asian affairs published by the Kazankai Foundation, Japan's oldest organization of China watchers, that the island is "one of [the] strategic deployment positions supporting the U.S. forces' worldwide crisis response capability."<sup>179</sup>

Finally, it must be emphasized that despite an almost visceral distaste for elements of America's global military posture in general, current Chinese analyses of Diego Garcia's significance for Beijing's interests are not nearly as alarmist as those concerning American bases in Guam, Japan, or even South Korea, which are perceived as more directly related (or at least applicable) to military scenarios directed against China and its territorial and maritime claims. This disparity probably stems in part from a present lack of Chinese capability to project power into the Indian Ocean but also from a belief that any U.S. overextension in the "Long War" against global terror would likely be beneficial to China's security. As one Xinhua report concludes,

Regarding the strategic readjustment of U.S. forces abroad, some U.S. military experts believe it is necessary to readjust military deployments around the globe and cover the globe with rapid-response units to launch a "pre-emptive first strike" against terrorist organizations that are difficult to track and whose members are scattered as well as those countries the United States believes will pose a potential threat in the future. But there are also some military personnel and defense experts who believe such readjustment carries a certain degree of strategic risk; it spreads out the U.S. forces in various parts of the world and is not favorable for fighting a large scale war against a major power.<sup>180</sup>

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China's current naval platforms and weaponry still suggest an "access denial" strategy focused on deterring Taiwan from declaring independence and on consolidating its other contested island and maritime claims in the three "near seas" (Yellow, East China, and South China). Beyond these areas and their immediate approaches, the PLAN may not seek to project naval influence substantially into the western Pacific; it may instead look south and west along the strategic searoutes through Southeast Asia and past the subcontinent. Persistent fears of oil-supply interdiction together with China's growing interests in maritime resources and commerce may gradually drive more long-ranging naval development.

Already, low-intensity operations driven by overseas commercial and human-security interests are giving China a modest presence in the Indian Ocean. These include the deployment of a frigate and military transport aircraft to safeguard the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya in February 2011; sixteen (and counting) anti-piracy task forces to deter pirates in the Gulf of Aden since December 2008; and the dispatch of a hospital ship to treat over 15,500 in Indian Ocean and African nations in the summer of 2010, individuals in the Caribbean in autumn 2011, patients in seven Indian Ocean region countries and on Chinese and foreign naval vessels conducting anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden in summer 2013, and Typhoon Haiyan victims in Tacloban, Philippines in November 2013. However, it should be noted that capabilities will not match Chinese intentions any time soon; Chinese naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean region will run afoul of those of India, another rising great power operating far closer to home; and whatever its leanings in the abstract, Beijing must tend to matters in East Asia before it can apply its energies to building up naval forces able to vie for supremacy in the Indian Ocean region.<sup>181</sup>

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American interests in the Indian Ocean littoral are driven by a mixture of economics and security. Among the most significant concerns are the need to secure SLOCs, the desire to prevent a hostile power from dominating the littoral, and the challenge to existing governments in the region posed by the spread of radical extremist militant Islamist groups. Underpinning all of this is recognition that the Indian Ocean littoral is a fragile part of the world, characterized by Barnett's "Non-Integrating Gap."<sup>182</sup> The potential for interstate conflict remains high as many states in the area have unresolved maritime or territorial disputes. In addition to conventional security challenges, the littoral region is plagued by a host of irregular security threats, such as terrorism, insurgency, and trafficking in arms and drugs.

As the world's largest economy, the United States has a strong interest in the security of the ships that transit the Indian Ocean to bring goods and energy to market. The energy resources of the Persian Gulf are accessible only via the

Indian Ocean's SLOCs. Not only does 22 percent of America's imported oil reach the market in this way, but more than fifty strategic minerals come from or transit through the littoral region. Because the market for hydrocarbons is global, a supply disruption affects world prices for oil and gas. The requirements of trade and energy make the continued free passage of shipping through the Indian Ocean SLOCs of supreme importance for the United States.

Deriving from protection of the freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean is America's second major interest in the region—preventing the littoral from being dominated by a power hostile to the United States. China has been quite active in securing energy supplies and increasing its strategic political influence across the region from Southeast Asia to the coast of East Africa. As discussed previously, there is even speculation that some informal set of access rights may ultimately increase the PLAN's ability to project power into the littoral while economic ties provide influence over local governments. In the western portion of the region, as explained earlier, Iran has achieved the ability to threaten navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important choke point. Should either or both of these nations achieve a dominant role in the littoral, there is a strong potential that American interests would be harmed.

Finally, American interests in the region are driven by the fact that the Indian Ocean littoral encompasses a large portion of the "arc of instability" that stretches from Southeast Asia through Central Asia to the Middle East and East Africa. This zone not only has a high potential for producing failed states but is also home to much of the world's Muslim population. The Indian Ocean is located at an intersection of two main reservoirs of Islamic extremism. Prior to 11 September 2001, the United States was the victim of al-Qaeda-backed terrorist attacks in Kenya, Tanzania, and Yemen. Today, the United States and its allies are conducting military operations against Muslim extremists in the East African, Central Asian, and Southeast Asian subregions that abut the Indian Ocean.

### Diego Garcia's Strategic Future

The security situation in the Indian Ocean region, long characterized by uncertain relations between its major power brokers, is prone to strategic miscalculation. More than ever before, the interests of the United States, India, and China coincide and collide in the Indian Ocean littoral. These key states, one predominant and the others ascendant, may find themselves at odds as they protect national interests in a region with great potential and numerous challenges, including:

- Volatile and fragile states, which are often beset by, and sometimes facilitate, irregular threats, irredentist powers, sectarian divides, and religious tensions
- A rich flow of resources through constrained and vulnerable shipping lanes



- Often skittish host nations
- Restive and newly hopeful populations seeking more responsive governance as well as improved economic and social conditions
- Newly capable actors possibly seeking to undermine others' influence by sustained projection of power

It has been widely argued that the world is undergoing a significant geopolitical realignment, and that the global "center of gravity" is shifting from the Euro-Atlantic to the greater Asia-Pacific region.<sup>183</sup> The National Intelligence Council envisions "fast developing powers, notably India and China," joining the United States "atop a multipolar international system."<sup>184</sup> As India and China continue to accrete military might, they pull the center of gravity toward the Indian Ocean. To maintain its preponderant position in so dynamic an international environment, the United States will have to shift its geostrategic focus from the Euro-Atlantic (which, after decades of American attention, is prosperous, secure, and self-sustaining) to regions of the world that were once dismissed as peripheral to American interests. One such area is the Indian Ocean, the littoral of which is emerging as a key strategic region in the "Asia-Pacific Century." All this particularly affects the maritime dimension, where the U.S. Navy guarantees the free flow of goods at sea worldwide.

Sustained American preeminence in the greater Indian Ocean region will be increasingly difficult to realize without an appreciation for the need to invest in a versatile and enduring basing structure. With a flexible constellation of bases and other facilities in place, American strategists must shield these bases and the larger region from any interference, whether physical or political, by state and substate actors. In doing so, the United States must avoid an insular approach, instead crafting a coherent Indian Ocean policy that accounts for the reactions of India and China as well as the interests of its regional partners. Such an approach will strengthen U.S. command of the commons in partnership with India and may open ways to engage with China in the Indian Ocean. The Department of Defense would do well to reprise the approach taken in the late 1990s by its Office of International Security Affairs, which issued a series of unclassified regional policy documents.<sup>185</sup> A direct evaluation of Indian Ocean policy, which could assist in forming a holistic view of the Indian Ocean littoral and the unique aspects of Indian Ocean security rather than a narrow one of the separate PACOM, CENTCOM, and AFRICOM theaters, is long overdue.

A comprehensive regional strategy would encourage more rapid and extensive infrastructure development in concert with partners in the region. The United States must augment its regional knowledge, enhance coordination, and, for the first time, consider the Indian Ocean as a whole, as a vital strategic space, with a networked basing arrangement at its core.

## Notes

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56. Defence Planning Staff, "Brief on US/UK Discussions on United States Defence Interests in the Indian Ocean," 6 March 1964, p. 5, document marked "secret," CAB 21/5418, TNA. Early discussions explored the idea of creating additional shared facilities at Aldabra in the Seychelles and on the Australian-owned Cocos Islands to create a "strategic triangle" in the Indian Ocean. See Rusk to President Johnson, "Indian Ocean Island Facilities," 15 July 1964, in *FRUS*, series 1964-1968 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2000), 21:92.
57. House of Commons Debate, written answer to question, 10 November 1965, vol. 720, col. 2.
58. Joel Larus, "Diego Garcia: The Military and Legal Limitations of America's Pivotal Base in the Indian Ocean," in *The Indian Ocean: Perspectives on a Strategic Arena*, ed. William L. Dowdy and Russell B. Trood (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1985), 437-38.
59. U.S. State Department, "Agreement on the Availability of Certain Indian Ocean Islands for Defense Purposes, 30 December 1966," in *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1967), 28.
60. Costs included payments to Mauritius and the Seychelles, the purchase of privately held land on Diego Garcia, and the resettlement of inhabitants. Rather than make a direct payment, the United States credited Britain with \$14 million toward its share of the research and development costs of the Polaris missile program. David Bruce, U.S. Ambassador to Britain, to George Brown, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 December 1966, letter marked "secret" appended to "Exchange of Notes and Agreed Minutes concerning Defence Co-operation in the British Indian Ocean Territory," FO 93/8/401, TNA.
61. D. F. Milton, memorandum to Woodham, "Diego Garcia: Further Research," 2 October 1975, FCO 40/696, TNA; and Bandjunis, *Diego Garcia*, 8.
62. Bruce (London) to Rusk (State), embtel 12335, 4 September 1968, DEF 15 IND-US, Central Files 1967-69, RG 59, NARA; and Secretary of State for the

- Colonies, telegram to Governor, Mauritius, "U.S. Defence Interests in Indian Ocean," 6 March 1964, CAB 21/5418, TNA.
63. Bandjunis, *Diego Garcia*, 15.
64. Memorandum, "House of Lords Question by Baroness Lee: Oral Answer on 27 October 1975," 23 October 1975, FCO 40/696, TNA.
65. Milton memorandum, "Diego Garcia."
66. The majority of the workers were Mauritian citizens either by birth or by Mauritian nationality provisions. Bandjunis, *Diego Garcia*, 64–65.
67. This represented seven times the Mauritian per capita GDP (\$780 in 1976) for each displaced worker. An initial payment of \$1.4 million provided compensation to anyone living on Diego Garcia as of 1965, including those who had relocated prior to the closing of the plantations. A resettlement plan was developed for the evacuated copra workers, but the Mauritian government neglected to distribute the money until 1978. As a result, many of the former copra workers fell into poverty. Despite the fact that the 1972 resettlement agreement was acknowledged by Mauritius to represent "a full and final discharge of British obligations" to the former plantation workers, the UK gave Mauritius an additional \$7.2 million (\$4,600 per person) in 1982 as a "full and final settlement" for the workers relocated from Diego Garcia; *ibid.* Also Larus, "Diego Garcia," 442; and Bart McDowell, "Crosscurrents Sweep the Indian Ocean," *National Geographic* 160, no. 4 (October 1981): 440.
68. Bandjunis, *Diego Garcia*, 55; and U.S. State Department, "Naval Communications Facility on Diego Garcia, 24 October 1972," in *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1972).
69. Wilson's decision was primarily motivated by the sterling crisis of November 1967, which badly damaged the British economy and indicated to some that Britain could no longer afford to be a world power. However, the nearly simultaneous collapse of the British presence in Aden was also a contributing factor in the decision to draw down British forces in the region. William Rodger Louis, "The British Withdrawal from the Gulf, 1967–71," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 1 (January 2003): 82–83.
70. See the discussion contained in "Proposal for a Joint US Military Facility on Diego Garcia," memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, 10 April 1968, Indian Ocean 323.3, OSD Files FRC 73 A 1250, RG 330, NARA.
71. Sick, "Evolution of U.S. Strategy," 56.
72. Bandjunis, *Diego Garcia*, 54.
73. Sick, "Evolution of U.S. Strategy," 65.
74. Larus, "Diego Garcia," 439. Under the 1976 agreement, facilities on Diego Garcia are intended to support "ships or aircraft owned or operated by or on behalf of either government." "Exchange of Notes Concerning a United States Navy Support Facility on Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory," 25 February 1976, FO 93/8/438, TNA.
75. McDowell, "Crosscurrents Sweep the Indian Ocean," 423.



76. Bandjunis, *Diego Garcia*, 70; and Rais, *Indian Ocean and the Superpowers*, 81.
77. Rais, *Indian Ocean and the Superpowers*, 86.
78. Rand's study of various basing alternatives is especially relevant in summarizing the competing concerns for overseas basing strategy, including "the costs and deployment timelines for various forward support location options under different degrees of stress on combat support while taking into account infrastructure richness, basing characteristics, deployment distances, strategic warning, transportation constraints, dynamic requirements, and reconstitution conditions." Its 2006 report concludes that Diego Garcia is one of the most important Tier 1 forward support locations. For a review of the report, see Mahyar A. Amouzegar, R. McGarvey, and R. Tripp, "Combat Support: Overseas Basing Options," *Air Force Journal of Logistics* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 3-14.
79. Conway, Roughead, and Allen, "Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower," 10. Three new maritime priorities arise from the maritime strategy: reliable access to areas of concern, flexible forward-positioning of resources, and a broadened maritime mission, to include humanitarian response. In key ways, the Indian Ocean region drives each of these priorities. The strategy underscores this new reality: "In times of war, our ability to impose local sea control, overcome challenges to access, force entry, and project and sustain power ashore, makes our maritime forces an indispensable element of the joint or combined force. This expeditionary advantage must be maintained because it provides joint and combined force commanders with freedom of maneuver. Reinforced by a robust sealift capability that can concentrate and sustain forces, sea control and power projection enable extended campaigns ashore. . . . The Sea Services will establish a persistent global presence . . . [that] must extend beyond traditional deployment areas and reflect missions ranging from humanitarian operations to an increased emphasis on counter-terrorism and irregular warfare. Our maritime forces will be tailored to meet the unique and evolving requirements particular to each geographic region, often in conjunction with special operations forces and other interagency partners. In particular, this strategy recognizes the rising importance and need for increased peacetime activities in Africa and the Western Hemisphere."
80. U.S. official, personal interview, September 2012.
81. The AOR seams in the Indian Ocean present both planning and operational challenges. See J. Stephen Morrison, *Exploring the U.S. Africa Command and a New Strategic Relationship with Africa*, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 1 August 2007. He states, "Unity of effort . . . transcends the present artificial geographic 'seams' that separate Africa into a U.S. EUCOM zone separate from the Horn of Africa that is the responsibility of the U.S. Central Command. [The U.S. Pacific Command is responsible for Africa's Indian Ocean island nations.] It requires stronger leadership, coherence and integration of programs, and more effective management. And it requires confidence that the resources and commitments

needed over the long-term will be there, and that Congress and the American people will be supportive. These are the accumulating concerns that AFRICOM is intended to address."

82. The authors base their selection of the four main military missions described here on a distillation of various sources, the most important of which are personal interviews conducted with various midlevel naval officials between September 2007 and February 2008. The authors gained general insight into planning and operations from Vice Adm. Jeffrey Fowler, USN, superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy, personal interview, September 2007. The authors are also indebted to various U.S. Navy officers from Submarine Development Squadron 12, Groton, Connecticut, for their insights into CENTCOM operations. For an updated general overview on Diego Garcia's military capabilities, see "Territories, British Indian Ocean Territory," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—South Asia*, 10 October 2012, [sentinel.janes.com/](http://sentinel.janes.com/). For another general description of the military assets on the island, see "Diego Garcia: Camp Justice," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/diego-garcia.htm>.
83. For a review of prepositioning capabilities and a comprehensive look at the rival sea-basing concept of operations, see Massimo Annati, "Naval Assets for Long-Term Deployment," *Military Technology* 31, no. 4 (2007): 84–90.
84. A small portion of the inhabitants of Diego Garcia are the civilian operators of these sealift vessels. The command structure of the sealift ships keeps manning requirements low. For a comparison of the command structures of U.S. Navy warships and MSC ships, see John K. Hafner, "Separate but Equal," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 134, no. 1 (January 2008): 32–35.
85. See Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, *Statement on the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, House Armed Services Committee, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 13 December 2007, 7–9. Admiral Roughead establishes humanitarian assistance and disaster response, collectively, as one of the six primary maritime missions: "Human suffering moves us to act, and the expeditionary character of maritime forces uniquely positions them to provide assistance." In addition, the Congressional Budget Office has considered speeds of deployment to various hot spots in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, concluding in most African cases that deployment was significantly faster from Diego Garcia; Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Changing the Army's Overseas Basing* (Washington, D.C.: CBO, May 2004), <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/54xx/doc5415/05-03-armyobasing.pdf>, 69. The report concludes: "Furthermore, the time required to deploy heavy units by sea to many potential trouble spots is not significantly shorter from Eastern Europe than it is from Germany. Moreover, for many ports in Africa, it takes much longer to deploy a heavy brigade combat team from Eastern Europe than to deliver the prepositioned set of equipment that is maintained on board ships at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean." MSC ships can also rapidly deploy to the site of a humanitarian disaster; see Robert C. Morrow and Mark D. Llewellyn, "Tsunami Overview," *Military Medicine* 171 (October 2006 supplement): 5–7.

86. Plans for a recreation center were included in FY10 budgets under Project 182. The 10,400-square-foot center was envisioned to allow personnel to use computers, call home, and relax away from the ship—all important luxuries for sailors on long deployments in cramped work environments.
87. Ravi I. Chaudhary, "Transforming American Airlift: Effects-Based Mobility, the C-17, and Global Maneuver," *Air & Space Power Journal* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 94.
88. In the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, for example, U.S. Air Force commanders had very few access points close to Taliban targets. As a result, tactical fighters experienced significant difficulty with the long-range flights: "Even in the early days of the war, shorter-range USAF aircraft, such as the AC-130 gunships and F-15E fighters, participated, though they flew a limited number of missions. These aircraft, launched from bases in the Gulf region, could not operate as efficiently as long-range bombers and large support aircraft. . . . The alternative would be to operate tactical aircraft out of distant bases, an activity that requires extensive aerial tanker support. . . . Diego Garcia is secure and particularly useful for attack operations by B-1B and B-52 heavy bombers. However, the British-owned Indian Ocean atoll lies 2,500 miles from Afghanistan. While this poses no problem for bombers, tactical fighters would face prohibitive distances." See Adam J. Hebert, "The Search for Asian Bases," *Air Force Magazine*, January 2002, 52.
89. For a discussion of the relative strength of bombers vis-à-vis fighters in this type of conflict, see Rebecca Grant, "An Air War Like No Other," *Air Force Magazine*, November 2002, 33.
90. Hebert, "Search for Asian Bases," 52.
91. Shore-basing fighters in various CENTCOM areas is discussed in Scott A. Cooper, "We Need Shore-Based Aircraft in Iraq," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 133, no. 9 (September 2007): 70–71.
92. "Coalition aircraft at Diego Garcia dropped more ordnance on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan than any other unit during the war on terror." See "Diego Garcia," *GlobalSecurity.org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/diego-garcia.htm>.
93. Controlled pure water is used in nuclear propulsion plants for circulation in chemically sensitive boilers and in the core of the pressurized water reactor itself. Accordingly, the Navy maintains graded water standards and tests for both chemical and mechanical impurities in the water. Such treatment and testing facilities are expensive to maintain and are not ordinarily required for deployed ships that generate and test suitable water while at sea from reverse-osmosis units.
94. The current structural and utility status of the island is discussed in the Navy-funded construction program "Project 182: Wharf Upgrades and Recreation Facility," FY 2010 Military Construction Program Report, DD Form 1391 (13 May 2006), 5. The report describes the aging electrical infrastructure: "The electrical utility system provides electrical service to the western half of the island where most of the U.S. forces are accommodated. The electrical system



consists of two main power plants, North (NPP) and South (SPP), two 13.8 kV switching stations and a 13.8 kV distribution system, which consists of overhead lines and underground cables. The existing switchgear in the switching stations and power plants are old and obsolete. The normal electrical capacity provided by the two power plants is 15,000 kW. With the addition of the SSGN to the island, the electrical load for the island is estimated to be 24,800 kW."

95. Historical electrical use for a full air wing and naval contingent averages approximately 12,800 amp-hours. This ordinarily leaves 4,800 amp-hours available for the waterfront complex. Electrical loads for shore power to moored units approach this limit with only a supply ship and one SSN. As planners intend to expand mooring requirements for the pier, electrical requirements will proportionately rise. As a result, a major electrical upgrade will need to occur before the island can simultaneously host multiple SSNs, a T-AKR, or a supply ship.
96. To maintain the reactor critical at the pier, three times as many operators are required to monitor indications from the plant as are needed when the reactor is shut down. Critical operations at the pier would therefore limit rest—and mental downtime—for the engineering department of the SSN and would unnecessarily raise radiation exposure, which the Navy attempts to keep "as low as reasonably achievable" for both operators and shoreside civilian populations.
97. "Project 182, Wharf Upgrades and Recreation Facility," 5. The addition of aerators and filtration upgrades will assist in the removal of the THAs. Wholesale replacement of the existing water treatment plant is not expected due to cost and time constraints.
98. U.S. naval official, personal interviews, November 2007 and February 2008.
99. *Ibid.*, 7 February 2008.
100. *Ibid.*
101. According to a U.S. official interviewed by one of the authors, the SSGN deployment cycle is anticipated to proceed as follows: "Based on experience gained in SSBN continuity of operations (SCOOP) exercises, an SSGN deployment cycle has been proposed to maximize deployed presence while continuing to meet the TRIDENT-class maintenance plan. A four-SSGN force would be used to provide 365 days of 154-TLAM CENTCOM presence and 365 days of global SOF availability per year, while meeting all periodic TRIDENT crew certification requirements and providing SOF training opportunities. Typically, an SSGN would alternate between CENTCOM strike and EUCOM or PACOM SOF availability. After a 50-day refit, for example, Kings Bay SSGNs would transit to the CENTCOM AOR, where they would provide the CINC with strike presence in CENTCOM for 65 days while also being available for SOF-mission tasking. This would be followed by a 14-day in-theater crew exchange and upkeep period, after which the SSGN would transit to the EUCOM AOR, where it would be available to the CINC for 65 days, primarily for SOF missions, but for strike taskings as well. After a return transit to Kings Bay, a

- crew exchange, and another 50-day refit, the cycle would repeat. At the end of every third cycle, the ship would conduct a periodic certification for SOF missions. Pacific SSGN cycles would be similar. A four-ship SSGN force with 2 LANT and 2 PAC SSGNs can maintain a 1.29 presence in CENTCOM and an overseas SOF presence in EUCOM and PACOM of 0.49 and 0.45, respectively." Specific figures obtained from [www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1999/ssgn.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1999/ssgn.htm). 117.
102. U.S. naval official, personal interview, November 2007. 118.
103. For a full discussion of the unpredictability of the foreign basing environment, see Franklin D. Kramer, chair; C. Richard Nelson, rapporteur, *Global Futures and Implications for U.S. Basing*, Working Group Report (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council of the United States, May 2005). The report reiterates the importance of flexible access: "Current surveys show a wide-spread international disquietude with at least some U.S. policies—and with a spill-over into a general anti-U.S. sentiment. If anti-U.S. sentiments become prevalent in much of the world, foreign leaders may face insurmountable domestic opposition to allowing the United States to maintain or to use bases on their territory" (17). 119.
104. For each Suez transit of a naval vessel, Egypt charges the United States a significant cash fee for security services. 120.
105. Ashley Jackson, "The British Empire in the Indian Ocean," in *Geopolitical Orientations, Security and Regionalism in the Indian Ocean*, ed. Dennis Rumley and Sanjay Chaturvedi (New Delhi: South Asian, 2004), 35. 121.
106. Peter J. Brobst, *The Future of the Great Game: Sir Olaf Caroe, India's Independence, and the Defense of Asia* (Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 2005), 13. 122.
107. Keshav B. Vaidya, *The Naval Defence of India* (Bombay: Thacker, 1949), 101. 123.
108. Kavalam M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1945), 16. 124.
109. *Ibid.*, 84. 125.
110. This policy has been characterized as "neo-Curzonian"—an allusion to the British imperial viceroy Lord George Curzon. 126.
111. Ministry of Defense, *Strategic Defence Review: The Maritime Dimension—A Naval View* (New Delhi: Indian Navy, 20 May 1998), 34. 127.
112. *Indian Maritime Doctrine*, 56. 128.
113. *Ibid.*, 64. 129.
114. Manjeet S. Pardesi, *Deducing India's Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, 2005), 55. 130.
115. "India," in *CIA World Factbook* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2007). 131.
116. Sureesh Mehta, "India's Maritime Diplomacy and International Security," speech presented at "India as a Rising Great Power: Challenges and Opportunities," New Delhi, India, 18–20 April 2008, [www.iiss.org/](http://www.iiss.org/). 132.

117. Nations in the South Asian region are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives.
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119. Carin Zissis, "Backgrounder: India's Energy Crunch," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 23 October 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/india/indias-energy-crunch/p12200>.
120. Arun Prakash, "A Vision of India's Maritime Power in the 21st Century," *USI Journal* 136, no. 4 (October–December 2006), <http://www.usiofindia.org/Article/?pub=Journal&pubno=566&ano=406>.
121. *Indian Maritime Doctrine* (2009), 50.
122. "'Look West' Policy to Boost Ties with Gulf," *Financial Express*, 28 July 2005.
123. "System on Foreign Trade Performance Analysis," *Government of India, Ministry of Commerce & Industry: Department of Commerce*, <http://www.archive.india.gov.in/outerwin.php?id=http%3A%2F%2Fcommerce.nic.in%2Fftp%2Fdefault.asp>.
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127. "Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta Spells Out Vision 2022," *India Defence*, 10 August 2008, <http://www.india-defence.com/reports/3954>.
128. *Indian Maritime Doctrine* (2004), 52.
129. Devin T. Hagerty, "India's Regional Security Doctrine," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (April 1991): 351–53; and *Indian Maritime Doctrine* (2009), 3.
130. The Indian navy's maritime doctrine explicitly discusses "attempts by China to strategically encircle India" and warns of Chinese encroachment into "our maritime zone." Cited in "India's Naval Posture: Looking East," *Strategic Comments* 11, no. 6 (August 2005): 2.
131. "Chairman's Message," *Gwadar Port Authority*, [www.gwadarport.gov.pk](http://www.gwadarport.gov.pk).
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133. See, for example, Gurmeet Kanwal, "Countering China's Strategic Encirclement of India," *Indian Defence Review* 15, no. 3 (July–September 2000): 13; and C. S. Kuppaswamy, "Myanmar-China Cooperation: Its Implications for India," *South Asia Analysis Group*, 3 February 2003, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper596>. For a skeptical assessment of such developments, which are in accordance with available data, see Daniel J. Kostecka, "Places and Bases: The Chinese Navy's Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean," *Naval War College Review* 64, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 59–78; and Andrew Selth, "Chinese Military Bases in Burma: The Explosion of a Myth," in *Regional Outlook Paper 10* (Nathan, Australia: Griffith Asia Institute, 2007).



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135. Joel Larus, "India's Nonalignment and Superpower Naval Rivalry," in *The Indian Ocean in Global Politics*, ed. Larry W. Bowman and Ian Clark (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1981), 46.
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138. *Ibid.*, 47–48.
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150. 静海 [Jing Hai], "美国海军太平洋舰队五大海军基地和多少" [The U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet's Five Great Naval Bases and Their Relevant Statistics], *人民海军* [People's Navy], 4 March 2006, 4. For a similar analysis that also includes Guam (which Jing's *People's Navy* article fails to provide, perhaps for reasons of sensitivity), see 静海 [Jing Hai], "美国太平洋舰队海军基地" [U.S. Pacific

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