

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 23, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
United States Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent decision by the United Kingdom to give control over the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius, and the Biden-Harris Administration's endorsement of the move. As you know, the Chagos Archipelago, specifically Diego Garcia, is of particular strategic significance to U.S. national security and our ability to maintain stability and project power in the region. The decision to give up the islands is dangerous and irresponsible, especially in the face of China's increasing aggression.

The presence of the U.S. military on Diego Garcia is a vital component of our defense posture in the Indo-Pacific. With the transfer of control to Mauritius, I am concerned about our ability to maintain the integrity of our operations in the region. Chinese ambitions, particularly their strategic interest in expanding influence over critical maritime chokepoints and naval installations, present a clear and present threat to regional stability. We are all but guaranteed to see an increase in nefarious Chinese behavior around Diego Garcia following what has become a familiar playbook — Chinese fishing boats conducting surveillance, and debt trap diplomacy to ensure Chinese control of critical infrastructure.

With this in mind, I seek clarity on several points:

1. Why did the administration endorse the United Kingdom's decision to grant control of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius, knowing that move would put U.S. assets in the region at risk?
2. How does the administration plan to ensure that U.S. military operations on Diego Garcia will remain uninterrupted under Mauritian sovereignty?
 - a. Beyond the long-term lease to the U.K., have there been discussions or agreements made with Mauritius to safeguard continued U.S. military access to the island?
3. Considering the close relationship between Mauritius and China, what measures are you considering to prevent increased Chinese influence — either economic or military — over Mauritius, which would impact the strategic use of the Chagos Archipelago?
 - a. Does the administration anticipate that China will increase its pressure on Mauritius to alter its security alignments, especially its commitment to leasing Diego Garcia to the U.K., in the region?

- b. How does the administration plan to prioritize diplomatic engagement with Mauritius to ensure its alignment with U.S. and allied security interests in the region?
 - c. What steps are you taking to bolster Mauritius's own capacity to resist Chinese overtures, both economic and military?
4. In the context of this geopolitical shift, what role does the administration envision for broader regional alliances and partnerships to ensure the security of the region? Have you planned any initiatives to strengthen collaboration with other regional allies to secure the Archipelago and other vital assets in the region from external threats, including China?

Given the evolving geopolitical landscape, America must act proactively to secure this region from external influences that could jeopardize a free and open Indo-Pacific. I look forward to your response by November 22.

Respectfully,



John Kennedy
United States Senator