



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail Sept. 30 - Oct. 6, 2024

Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press the reply button for your feedback and comments.

**Britan Frees Chagos Islands, Sovereignty back to
Mauritius**



Figure 1: The Chagos Islands: IMAGE / <https://govmu.org/EN/Pages/AboutChagos>

The United Kingdom announced the freedom of the [Chagos Islands](#), a long-time disputed British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), and handed over to Mauritius. The British Government and the Republic of Mauritius reached a "historical agreement" this week. Now Mauritius holds sovereign rights over the Archipelago except for Diego Garcia, the longest island in the island chain and a U.S. military base. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Keir Starmer, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth Balmer, said in a [joint statement](#) that both countries have reached the "seminal moment" and intend to solve the long-standing issues as per the international law regarding the island chain and its inhabitants.

As per the agreement, the United Kingdom will recognize Mauritius' sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. With a 99-year lease for Diego Garcia for the long-term, secure, and effective military base operation that plays a vital role in regional and global security. It further states that "Mauritius will now be free to implement a program of resettlement on the islands of the Chagos Archipelago, other than Diego Garcia, and the U.K. will capitalize a new trust fund, as well as separately provide other support, for the benefit of Chagossians."

While reaching the political agreement, the U.K. and Mauritius acknowledged the full support and assistance of the United States and India. U.S. President Biden welcomed the historical agreement and freedom for Chagos and [said](#), "The agreement secures the effective operation of the U.S.-U.K. joint facility on Diego Garcia into the next century." He added that the U.S. will continue its strong partnership with Mauritius and the United Kingdom in upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific. Since 1966, Diego Garcia has served as a U.S.-U.K. joint naval logistic base that had a significant role during the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts when it acted as a launch pad for long-range bombers.

It is worth mentioning that sovereign rights to Mauritius have come to an agreement followed by the multiple rounds of talks started in 2022 after [Mauritian calls for sovereignty](#) that were recognized by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the U.N. General Assembly in 2019 and 2021. [Read More](#)

Xi Jinping Addresses on the Eve of China's National Day

Chinese President Xi delivered a cautious speech to thousands of Chinese Communist Party leaders, delegates, and foreign guests on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). He said, "no difficulties can stop the Chinese people from moving forward" but called on the population to be "vigilant", prepare for danger, and rely on the party and its army ahead of tough times. "The road ahead will not be smooth, there will definitely be difficulties and obstacles, and we may encounter major tests such as high winds and rough seas, or even stormy waves," said Xi.

In his speech, he reiterated the reunification of Taiwan as China considers Taiwan a breakaway province of China. On the contrary, Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said that Taiwan has political roots older than the People's Republic of China and that the PRC has no claims of sovereignty over Taiwan. PRC celebrated its 75th anniversary in Oct; it will be Taiwan's (Republic of China) 113th National Day next week. [Read More](#)

U.S. Conducts Multilateral Exercise in the Timor Sea

The U.S. Navy, Royal Australian Navy, and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force conduct [joint operation](#) in the Timor Sea in support of Free and Open Indo-Pacific. The Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet said, “Our relationships with Australia and Japan are a cornerstone of security in the Indo-Pacific.” He further stated that seamless coordination both our allies serves as an effective deterrent against aggression in the region and promotes our shared commitment to preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific. The ships conducted a wide range of training, including formation sailing, combined communication, and a replenishment-at-sea.

India’s External Affairs Minister (EAM) to Visit Pakistan

India’s Foreign Minister, Dr. Jaishankar, will [attend the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Meeting](#) (SCO) that Pakistan will host. The visit of EAM will be a significant step in viewing the hostile relationship between two nuclear-armed neighbors. There have been no visits from high-ranking Indian officials since 2015. It is important to note if this visit could start a preliminary dialogue between the two countries. However,

Mr. Jai Shankar has stated that his visit would be focused on SCO meetings but not on bilateral relations.

Indo-Pacific Quiz

As per the new agreement between U.K-Mauritius, how many years is Diego Garcia leased for?

- a. 50 Years
- b. 20 Years
- c. 99 Years
- d. 10 Years

When does Taiwan Celebrates its National Day?

- a. Oct 10th
 - b. Oct 4th
 - c. Feb 28th
 - d. Oct 5th
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Consortium Highlights

v A Commentary by Amb. Alfredo Toro Hardy, [What would a War Between the U.S. and China Look Like?](#)

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