



## Diego Garcia: Creation of the Indian Ocean Base

By Vytautas Bandjunis

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### Diego Garcia: Creation of the Indian Ocean Base By Vytautas Bandjunis

Diego Garcia is about the Navy's need for secure communications in the Indian Ocean area, and who and how this need was fulfilled. The establishment of a classified radio station on the island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago precipitated considerable national and international debate during the Cold War. How Diego Garcia became the linchpin of United States strategy in the Indian Ocean and Southwest Asia illustrates the complexities and difficulties that a democracy faces whenever it addresses national security issues. During the early 1970's, as British presence East of Suez was being withdrawn, India led an effort to establish a Zone of Peace, and the dependence on Middle East oil required the United States to establish an Indian Ocean presence effectively and unobtrusively. Diego Garcia fills in a 25 year gap in the history of this base, and those who made it possible.

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#### **About the Author**

Vytautas Van Bandjunis served in the Navy Civil Engineer Corps in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Naval Academy, and at the Chelsea Naval Hospital before joining the Office of Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Housing in 1968. There he reviewed and assisted in presenting construction programs and legislation before congressional committees.

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