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(not sent)*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 26, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT:

Collapse of Attempts to Resolve
the Problems with Madagascar

As you know, we have hoped that a special mission to Madagascar would be able to resolve the current crisis in our diplomatic relations with the Malagasy Republic. On Thursday night, these hopes began to collapse. We discovered that the Malagasy Foreign Minister gave an extensive interview to a Newsweek correspondent during which he had specifically identified the United States as the government which had interfered in Malagasy affairs, and reiterated the Malagasy insistence on Ambassador Marshall's withdrawal and the PNGing of the five Embassy officers. He has also stressed to the Newsweek correspondent that his government had "irrefutable documentary proof" of our Embassy's wrong-doing.

In view of this development, which would obviously publicize this entire matter in a manner most unfavorable to us, we informed the Foreign Minister that in view of his conversations with the Newsweek correspondent we felt there was no purpose in our mission proceeding to Madagascar unless we were allowed to examine the "evidence." The Foreign Minister responded that we would "never see the evidence," that they had not invited our mission in the first place although they were prepared to receive it, that there was nothing to discuss unless we were bringing some "new element" to discuss with them, and that he was absolutely convinced of the culpability of Ambassador Marshall and the five Embassy officers.

In view of these developments and the Sulzberger article in the Friday New York Times, the State Department told the press today that the charges against our personnel were without foundation, that our mission would not proceed to Tananarive, that Ambassador Marshall would not return, and that the five Embassy officers were being withdrawn forthwith.

State Dept. review completed

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Our interests in Madagascar are minimal and consist primarily of a NASA tracking station which NASA no longer wishes to retain. State has wanted to maintain the station as a possible alternative should we close the one in South Africa. The Malagasy, of course, benefit from the NASA station, and it is by no means clear that they will wish to close it.

Our current intention is not to replace the Ambassador nor the five officers, but to maintain a rump Embassy in Tananarive with a Charge at its head. It is, of course, possible that the Malagasy will react to this latest development by choosing to terminate relations, but State's best judgment is that they will not elect to do so.

Among the other developments in this tangled matter was a semi-coherent letter from President Tsiranana to the President which charges Tony Marshall with being a CIA agent, and incorrectly states that the President had promised that he would reform. We have considered returning this letter as "unacceptable," but have decided instead simply to ignore it rather than further exacerbate our already tenuous relations with Madagascar and its old, sick and emotionally unstable President.

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