

MEMORANDUM FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

FROM: Elizabeth Feller

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Analysis for Proposed U.S. Embassy Construction in Maldives

Summary: This memo provides key findings for the proposed construction of a U.S. Embassy in the Maldives. The considerations include:

- 1.) **Location and Infrastructure Analysis:** A strategic location for the U.S. embassy in Northern Malé would be near government buildings and public transport, co-locating with the British High Commission for cost-effectiveness due to limited land availability.
- 2.) **Embassy Size and Durability Considerations:** For efficient space utilization, the small U.S. Mission Maldives team could share a building with the British High Commission, leveraging its existing location at the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- 3.) **Local Community Dynamics and Construction Practices:** In Addu City, the presence of ISIS-affiliated and al-Qa'ida cells, requires security measures. Building materials like concrete, metal, and wood are preferred for durability in humid climates
- 4.) **Environmental Factors and Security Concerns:** Considering the threats of rising sea levels, tropical storms, and flooding, the embassy should implement emergency response plans and a flood protection system to ensure staff safety.
- 5.) **Local and International Collaboration Opportunities:** AMIN Construction PVT LTD, a Malé-based company with experience in government projects, can be a potential collaborator in the construction of the embassy.

Introduction: This memo examines the Northern region of Malé as a potential location for a U.S. Embassy or U.S. consulate. It addresses embassy size, durability, local community dynamics, construction practices, environmental and security concerns and local collaboration opportunities.

Key Findings:

Location and Infrastructure Analysis: The Northern region of Malé, is viable for an embassy for numerous reasons. It is home to the President's Office, government buildings, and embassies (Tourist Spots, n.a.). Malé is a densely populated city, providing transportation options, and large transportation hubs, such as Male's Commercial Harbor and the primary airport in the Maldives (Maldives Ports Limited, n.a.). Available parcels of land are limited in Malé. An empty building could be converted to an embassy or consulate. However, a cost-effective solution is co-locating with the British High Commission. The British High

Commission, located at 5GH8+63W, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Malé, is strategically located in Northern Malé, and provides an opportunity for resource sharing and accessibility. The island's infrastructure is equipped to handle large scale building projects. Several high rise buildings, built with modern materials, exist in Malé.

Embassy Size and Durability Considerations: The U.S. Mission Maldives, currently situated in the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, could operate with a small team in a shared space at the British High Commission building in Malé. If a larger space is needed, renovating an existing building in Malé's Northern region, would be ideal.

Local Community Dynamics and Construction Practices: Security concerns are minimal, in the Maldives. However, Addu City, located about an hour and a half by plane, South of Malé, harbors an ISIS-affiliated cell, and an al-Qa'ida cell (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2023). Pro-US communities in the Maldives are difficult to locate. Pro-US sentiment is spread through the American Center in Male, which educates youth on the United States, and teaches the English language (U.S. Mission to Maldives, n.a.). In Malé, buildings are made from steel, glass, and concrete. Traditional building materials, often used outside urban areas, are coral stone and timber. Coral stone erodes fast, whereas concrete, metal, and wood hold up for long periods of time in the humid environment (Hassan Hameed, n.a.; Parker Design Build, 2023).

Environmental Factors and Security Concerns: The climate in the Maldives is consistently warm and humid, with dry and wet seasons resulting from monsoons (Maldives Meteorological Service, n.a.). This requires the use of building materials that are resistant to erosion and rust. The impact of climate change intensifies the nation's challenges of rising sea levels and severe tropical storms (World Bank, 2021). In response, embassy staff will need emergency response plans for natural disasters to ensure safety. The proximity of the main airport and harbor to Northern Malé is ideal for evacuation purposes. The constant threat of flooding may require flood mitigation measures, such as installing a flood protection system, and training for staff to properly deploy the system (Sandink & Binns, 2021).

Local and International Collaboration Opportunities: AMIN Construction PVT LTD, a construction company located in Malé, has completed numerous government projects for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Maldives National Defense Force, including building the Maldivian High Commission in Sri Lanka (AMIN Construction, n.a.).

Recommendations: The Northern region of Malé, specifically co-locating to the building of the British High Commission, is ideal because of its proximity to government buildings, accessible transportation, absence of anti-US groups, and cost-effectiveness. Ideal for longevity, building materials, such as concrete, metal, and wood, should be used. Security strategies must be implemented to address threats from anti-US groups, flooding, and severe weather events. Lastly, a potential contractor, with a background in building government offices, is AMIN Construction PVT LTD.

Conclusion: Establishing a U.S. embassy in the Republic of the Maldives requires an understanding of the location, climate, population, and environmental concerns. Prioritizing a location free of anti-US groups, focusing on security and emergency preparedness, and embracing a method that addresses long-term concerns, can help prepare the diplomatic team in facing the challenges located in the Maldives.

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