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Moscow Calls Ford Inaccurate

^{Reuter}
MOSCOW, Aug. 31—The Soviet Union today accused President Ford of a "regrettable inaccuracy" in saying that Moscow has three operating naval bases in the Indian Ocean.

A commentator for Tass, the official news agency—in the first major indication here of Kremlin uneasiness at the new President's views on U.S. defense policy—said Mr. Ford "had been unfortunately misinformed by his staff."

"There are not three, nor is there even one Soviet naval base in the Indian Ocean," commentator Anatoly Krasikov said, referring to a remark by President Ford at his news conference Wednesday.

Mr. Ford had said he favors the limited expansion of naval facilities on the British Indian Ocean Island of Diego Garcia.

"I don't view this as any challenge to the Soviet Union, which is already operating three naval bases in the Indian Ocean," the President had said.

Earlier this week, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda attacked the decision of the Senate Armed Forces Committee to approve a \$29 million appropriation to improve existing facilities on the island.

Pravda said the United States was undermining peace and stability in the area.

The Tass commentary said the Pentagon planned to turn the island into a major U.S. naval base by building an airfield capable of handling heavy jets, fuel and ammunition depots, a naval harbor and military barracks.

"The U.S. top brass hope that this will enable them, in particular, to more than double the time of stay in the Indian Ocean of submarines usually based on the coastal areas of the United States, Spain or Guam," Krasikov said.

"The Pentagon's plans have, however, met with serious objections from the U.S. Congress, and at the same time triggered off a wave of protests in the countries of the Indian Ocean."