

52. June 2012

Our Reference: PQ 92396 and 92397

Andrew Tyrie MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &
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Office

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Dear Andrew

I am writing with further information relevant to the Parliamentary questions you tabled on 24 January concerning Diego Garcia.

In answer to PQ 92396 concerning the records kept by the UK Authorities of flights landing on Diego Garcia in March 2004 I answered as follows:

“The UK does not hold any flight manifest information on flights which landed in Diego Garcia in March 2004. British Indian Ocean Territory immigration authorities hold immigration cards for civilians arriving in Diego Garcia during that period.”

While further enquiries have confirmed that flight manifests are only held by the US air transport provider, Air Mobility Command (AMC) – and then only for a period of three years – there is some information on flights in three other sets of documents held in Diego Garcia by the BIOT Administration:

General Declarations made by arriving flights. These include details of owner/operator; marks of registration and nationality; flight number; date; departed from; crew number and sometimes names; sometimes the number of passengers but never names. Held since January 2004;

BIOT Customs and Immigration daily occurrence log. Held since October 2002;

Monthly reports which summarise the daily occurrence logs.

As you will be aware, since tabling your questions, the Commissioner for the British Indian Ocean Territory has been placed on notice of possible legal action by solicitors Leigh Day relating to allegations of rendition operations. As a consequence, both HMG and the BIOT authorities must now take this into account when considering the disclosure of information that may possibly be relevant to these legal proceedings. Unfortunately, this means that at this time I am still unable to respond substantively to your question. I will reply fully as soon as I am in a position to do so.

*Best wishes,
Henry Bellingham*

HENRY BELLINGHAM MP

Minister for Africa, the UN, Overseas Territories and the Caribbean