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State Dept. review completed

JUN 21 1971

OSD review completed

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger (Signed) HK

SUBJECT: Maltese Election in Perspective

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Dom Mintoff, 54-year-old leader of the Malta Labor Party, was sworn in as Prime Minister of Malta on June 17, following a narrow parliamentary victory over Borg Olivier, Malta Nationalist Party, in the June 14 general elections.

In all likelihood Mintoff will walk a more neutral road than his pro-US, pro-NATO predecessor. Our NATO interests -- Malta is the headquarters of Commander, Allied Naval Forces Southern Europe -- are a primary reason for our seeking to maintain reasonably satisfactory US-Maltese relations.

Prior to the election, Mintoff spoke out against the NATO presence.

That Mintoff won can probably be attributed to the voters' feeling that it was time for a change (the Nationalists having been in office since 1962), his ability to attract the country's new voters, and the Roman Catholic Church's decision not to speak out against Labor as it has in the past.

As Prime Minister, Mintoff can be expected to advocate a Malta not tied to any military or political bloc, free to accept assistance from any source. He has hinted that he will permit NATO's presence if Malta receives "adequate" compensation. He will try to improve assistance arrangements with the UK and US, and he has threatened to turn to the USSR and Lybia for help if assistance is not forthcoming from the West.

Your congratulatory message (Tab B) was transmitted to our Embassy in Malta for delivery to the new Prime Minister as soon as the election results were official. For the time being, the Sixth Fleet will continue its ships' visits and awarding of drydock work to Malta, and we will continue to encourage US firms to invest in Malta. If Maltese ships cease violating the provisions of our Foreign Assistance Act (by calling at Cuban and North Vietnamese ports), AID programs in Malta may be possible.

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Our future relations with Malta will depend on the course Mintoff follows. We will wait for Mintoff to indicate whether he wants to change Malta's relations with NATO, and will be watching closely for indications of his attitude toward the US.

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