



CS # 1081-71 att  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350  
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BRIEFED

IN REPLY REFER TO  
Op-61/afc  
Ser 01846P61

24 MAR 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
(PLANS AND POLICY)

Subj: Copra workers on Diego Garcia (U)

Ref: (a) Op-06 Note to Op-61 of 12 March 71

1. (C) Reference (a) reported a conversation with RADM PRATT concerning Diego Garcia. RADM PRATT called attention to the possible problems that could be caused by the fact that some of the copra workers on Diego Garcia have been on the island for a long period of time. He was concerned that the British may not have given us all available information on this subject.
2. (C) We have been aware that some of the personnel working on Diego Garcia have been there for a long time. We have known, for example, that some of the workers on the island are the second generation to do this kind of work in the same place. It is thus true that criticism could be made of the relocation of these persons to another island. A newsman so disposed could pose questions that would result in a very damaging report that long time inhabitants of Diego Garcia are being torn away from their family homes because of the construction of a sinister U.S. "base".
3. (C) The other side of the coin is that all of the copra workers realize that their activities on the island of Diego Garcia (and similar islands scattered around the Indian Ocean) are dependent on the operation of copra plantations. Some of the workers stay on a given island for a short period of time, say one or two years, and then return to their homeland or go to another island. Others remain on the same island for long periods of time. Although there is a general policy that women must leave the island by the time that they are six months pregnant for the delivery of children off the island, some children have been born on Diego Garcia. They could be said to have British citizenship if they were born after the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory. All other persons would have some other nationality.
4. (C) The manager of the copra operation has served as the patron of the copra workers for many years and states that the legal questions are not as important for the workers themselves as is the confidence they have that they will continue to be given a chance to work copra somewhere. The relocation plan

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year  
intervals; declassified  
after 12 years

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which the British are implementing takes this into account and will provide for continued employment for the long-term workers.

5. (C) The conclusion of the Department of State, OSD and OPNAV is that the relocation of persons from Diego Garcia is indeed a potential trouble area and could be exploited by opponents to our activities in the Indian Ocean but that the advantages of having a station on an island which has no other inhabitants makes it worth the risk to ask the British to carry out the relocation. Those agencies also conclude that the British plan for relocation is satisfactory and that the advantages of having the British undertake the program are so great that the United States should adopt a strict "let the British do it" policy while at the same time keeping as well informed as possible on the actual relocation activities.

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E. L. COCHRANE, JR.  
Captain, USN  
Acting Director, Politico-Military Policy Division

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3-12-71  
(Date)

MEMORANDUM FROM THE DCNO (PLANS & POLICY)

61 -

Dick Pratt, Commandant,  
visited me yesterday.

During which, we discussed  
Dez Garcia and updates for [reports he's]  
received from his advance  
party. He warns of possible  
future bad publicity re the [so-called  
"Copac workers".] He cites posture  
and intention of this old man who's  
been there 50 yrs. There's a feeling  
the UK haven't been completely  
adone based on this. We can't  
want another Chilean style  
to develop.

[fine old man who's]  
★★

10 MAR 1971

[Chilean style]

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