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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350



Op-61/my  
Ser 001624381

11 Jan 71

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

Subj: Diego Garcia (U)

2/

Ref: (a) Joint State/Defense Airgram CA-6087 of 7 Dec 70  
(b) Op-61 Memo ser 002125P61 of 16 Dec 70

Encl: (1) AFSCF OL-9 MAHE 081232Z JAN 71

1. (C) Captain GRAESSLE of COMNAVCOMM and Mr. Dillery of Op-61 reached the Seychelles in time to brief Governor GREATBATCH, and BIOT Administrator TODD on 8 January 1971. Enclosure (1) is their report on the results of the briefing.
2. (C) It appears that plans can be made firm in the BIOT for:
  - a. Evacuation of the western half of the island (the area on which construction will take place) prior to arrival of construction forces.
  - b. Insured segregation of copra workers and Seabees.
  - c. Complete evacuation of Diego Garcia by copra workers by July 1971, when the temporary airstrip should become operational.
3. (C) Reference (a) informed the British of Congressional approval of the project, and initiated joint action on a number of items. The airgram was fully staffed in Navy, OSD and State, and one proposal contained read as follows: "We understand that resettlement cannot be completed before construction is scheduled to begin. However all local personnel should be moved from the western half of the island before the arrival of the construction force in March 1971. We hope that complete relocation can be accomplished by the end of July 1971".
4. (C) Reference (b) discussed the copra worker situation on Diego Garcia, and mentioned that the UK would have difficulty with complete relocation by mid-March. You agreed with the recommendation that relocation not be established as a firm prerequisite to the commencement of construction.
5. (C) It appears that the UK is indeed finding it virtually impossible to evacuate the workers prior to arrival of the construction force, but enclosure (1) does indicate that GREATBATCH and TODD find the original USG proposal as entirely feasible. In light of the realities of the situation,

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recommended that you approve the relocation plan outlined by GREATBATCH and TODD in enclosure (1). If you concur, I will so inform OSD/ISA and State, so that HMG may be informed.

6. (C) Answers to questions posed in enclosure (1) are being staffed within OPNAV, OSD and State. I am taking action to pass enclosure (1) to appropriate addressees.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

DISAPPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

11 JAN 1971

Copy to:

VCNO

Op-06

Op-04

Op-094

Op-44

Op-60

JAG (Code 10)

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NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

ROUTINE  
R 081232Z JAN 71  
FM AFSCF 019AHE ISLAND SEYCHELLES

TO CNO WASH DC

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ACTION

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SUBJ CLN DIEGO GARCIA BRIEFING TEAM (U).

ADVANCE COPY

1. (C) TEAM MET WITH GOVERNOR GREATBATCH AND BIOT ADMINISTRATOR TODD AM 8 JAN. TEAM GAVE STANDARD PRESENTATION WHICH WAS RECEIVED MOST CORDIALLY.

15 JAN 1971

2. (C) RELOCATION OF COPRA WORKERS WAS FIRST POINT OF DISCUSSION. TEAM STATED WE WOULD LIKE ALL PERSONNEL REMOVED BY D-DAY. TODD STATED ECO INSTRUCTED ALL WORKERS OFF WESTERN HALF OF ISLAND WITH COMPLETE RELOCATION BY JULY. TODD STARTING NOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WITH 250 SEYCHELLOIS TO BE RETURNED TO SEYCHELLES. 108 ILOIS AND ONE MAURITIAN WILL BE MOVED TO PENOS BANHOS AND SALOMON ON TEMPORARY BASIS. MOVEMENTS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY NORDVAER. TODD CONFIRMED THAT SMALL NUMBER PERSONNEL NOW ON WESTERN HALF WILL BE MOVED TO EASTERN HALF PRIOR TO ARRIVAL CONSTRUCTION FORCES. NO FURTHER COPRA OPERATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED ON WESTERN HALF AFTER MOVEMENT.

3. (C) GREATBATCH AND TODD STATE THIS IS FASTEST THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH RELOCATION WITH USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND IS ONLY SOLUTION OTHER THAN TO QUOTE DROP ILOIS ON PIER AT MAURITIUS AND SAIL AWAY QUICKLY UNQUOTE. THIS PLAN WILL RESULT IN TOTAL RELOCATION BY INTERIM AIRSTRIPOPERATIONAL DATE. GREATBATCH AND TODD WOULD APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION THAT THIS PLAN ACCEPTABLE TO USG AND HMG. WE INDICATED WE WOULD SO RECOMMEND. WE RECOMMEND THAT MESSAGE BE SENT TO HMG SOONEST CONCURRING IN ABOVE PLAN.

4. (C) TEAM STATED USG OPPOSED TO ANY USE OF LOCAL LABOR DURING ANY PHASE OF PROJECT. GREATBATCH AND TODD CONCURRED. TODD AND C.O. OF NMCB WILL ESTABLISH SYSTEM TO INSURE COMPLETE SEGREGATION OF LOCAL POPULATION AND US PERSONNEL DURING PERIOD MARCH-JULY.

5. (U) RECON PARTY NOW SCHEDULED SAIL 16 JAN. TODD WILL ACCOMPANY.

61(3) ACT  
00(2) 09(1) 10(5) 03(1) 32(3) 33(6) 34(2) 37(2) 04(2) 60(8)  
44(5) 05(7) 50(16) 51(1) 06(1) 60(3) 094(40) FP(1) BFR(1)

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NAVY DEPARTMENT

NAVAL MESSAGE

6. (C) TODD STATED THAT SEYCHELLES CRIMINAL LAW APPLIES IN BIOT. TODD IS INVESTIGATING APPOINTMENT RN LIAISON OFFICER OR EVEN US NAVAL COMMANDER IN ABSENCE BRITISH PERSONNEL AS JUSTICE OF THE PEACE OR MAGISTRATE FOR ADMINISTRATION JUSTICE FOR CIVILIANS ON DIEGO GARCIA. REQUEST PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION WHETHER USN OFFICER COULD ACCEPT THIS DESIGNATION.

7. (C) IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE PROHIBITING ENTRANCE TO BIOT EXCEPT FOR OFFICIAL BUSINESS WILL BE PROMULGATED SHORTLY. ORDINANCE SETTING 12 MILE FISHING LIMIT AND THREE MILE TERRITORIAL SEA CLAIM EXPECTED TO BE ISSUED COINCIDENT WITH SEYCHELLES SPRING 1971.

8. (U) GREATBATCH AND TODD SUGGESTED USN ASSUMPTION OF METEOROLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITIES NOW BEING PERFORMED BY MAURITIAN PERSONNEL FOR UK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. RECON PARTY WILL INVESTIGATE REQUIREMENTS AND REPORT ON RETURN CONUS.

9. (C) GREATBATCH AND TODD CONCUR IN CONCEPT OF STAGING AND SUPPORT FOR CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS AS BRIEFED. INDICATED HOWEVER THAT MORE USE COULD BE MADE OF SEYCHELLES ON AD HOC BASIS IF NEEDED. GREATBATCH SAID NO LOCAL REACTION TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITY.

10. (C) ASSUMING USG CONCURRENCE IN RELOCATION PLAN GREATBATCH AND TODD FEEL THAT CONSTRUCTION PLAN AS BRIEFED IS COMPLETELY FEASIBLE AND ACCEPTABLE.

11. (C) TEAM BRIEFED AMBASSADOR MCILVAINE AND UK DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER NAIROBI 6 JAN. BRIEFINGS WERE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL BUT NO ACTION ITEMS DEVELOPED. AMBASSADOR REQUESTED DEBRIEFING WHEN TEAM RETURNS THROUGH NAIROBI.

12. (U) REQUEST CNO MAKE DISTRIBUTION THIS MESSAGE AS APPROPRIATE.

13. (U) GRAESSLE/DILLERY SEND. GP#4.

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

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IN REPLY REFER TO  
Op-61/afc  
Ser 02125P61

16 DEC 1970

OP-00 FILES

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

Subj: Copra Workers on Diego Garcia (U)

Ref: (a) STATE CA-6087 of 7 December 1970  
(b) Embassy London 10242 DTG 112046Z December 1970

1. (C) At your meeting with the Deputies on 10 December, you stated your desire to push the British to get the copra workers off Diego Garcia prior to the commencement of construction. This is the first situation report on this effort.

2. (C) The background on the workers is as follows: The most recent census on 15 March 1969 indicated that the total number of persons on Diego Garcia was 380. Of this total, 22 were Mauritian, 230 Seychellois, and 128 were Ilois. The latter can be considered to be citizens of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). They are mostly infants born on Diego Garcia. It has been clearly understood by both the U.K. and the U.S. that the British have the responsibility to remove the workers since the signing of the agreement on the use of the BIOT on 30 December 1966. U.K. responsibility includes bearing the costs of relocation. Since all but the Mauritian nationals are British subjects, the U.K. has an additional moral responsibility in the matter.

3. (C) The United States first indicated in mid-1968 that we wished all the workers to be removed from the island before the commencement of construction. On this basis the British began to plan for the relocation based on utilization of the workers on other copra plantations in the area. This proceeded to a point in early 1970 when the British informed the U.S. that relocation would be accomplished in 1970 even though the United States might not want to utilize the island at an early date. This fell through in August 1970 when it was learned that a typhoon had hit Agelega Island, the desired relocation area, causing damage to the copra plantations there. This effectively stopped the British efforts for 1970. In view of the uncertainty about Congressional consideration of the funding for the project the U.S. did not push for more action at that time.

GROUP 4  
Downgraded at 3 year  
intervals; declassified  
after 12 years

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Ser 02125P61

16 DEC 1970

4. (C) After Congressional approval was granted, an airgram was sent to Embassy London (reference (a)) indicating that we desired the relocation completed as soon as possible. As a minimum, we asked that the western half of the island be cleared by the time that construction starts in mid-March 1971 with full relocation by the time that the initial airfield capability is accomplished at the end of July 1971. In response, the British Foreign Office on 11 December (reference (b)) "stressed that there may be difficulties in meeting March date for relocation of islanders. The dimension of the difficulties cannot be known until after consultation with the BIOT Administrator in the Seychelles."

5. (C) As a result of maximum effort in State, OSD and OPNAV, a joint US/UK press release about Diego Garcia was achieved on 15 December. Efforts are now being made on an urgent basis to arrange a meeting between Navy representatives, the BIOT Administrator and interested HMG representatives. The meeting could take place as early as 22 December. The question of relocation will be raised again at that time, and the urgency stressed. In light of past history it appears that the U.K. will have a great deal of difficulty in meeting a mid-March 1971 deadline for complete evacuation of the workers from Diego Garcia. It is recommended that this not be established as a firm prerequisite to the commencement of construction.

6. (U) I will continue to keep you informed as events occur.

TO: 06.

CNO ACTION

APPROVED

DISAPPROVED

NOTED

cc: 09.

*J. H. Dick*

J. H. DICK  
Deputy Director  
Politico-Military Policy  
Division

Copy to:  
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