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SECRET

Op-6178/000  
Ser 00138/001  
23 SEP 1966

CNO BRIEFING SUMMARY  
10/3/66  
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SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Subj: Diego Garcia; Proposed Joint US-UK Survey (S)

Encl: (1) Unofficial copy of undated UK note

1. Mr. Kitchen has given us an unofficial copy of a diplomatic note relating to the proposed joint survey of Diego Garcia which he received late yesterday afternoon from the British Embassy. Official copies are coming to us through regular channels.

2. In the note, the UK Ministry of Defence has asked for more detailed information about our plans for Diego than we have provided up to this point. The Secretary of Defense has not yet received our Program Change Request for decision. (The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Installations and Logistics is reviewing it now prior to sending it to the Secretary with a recommendation for approval.) We should respond to the UK note in the near future and I think that, with appropriate cautionary language, the information requested can be furnished. We will work closely with ISA in preparing the response.

3. Neither Mr. Kitchen nor Mr. Bronze think the UK comment about a possible rise in land prices on Diego Garcia is any reason to consider deferring the survey. Given the past history of this project, we can have no assurance that the purchase of Diego Garcia private land would be completed in any reasonable time even if we did defer the survey. I think we should continue our preparations and conduct the survey as soon as possible. The British are well aware of the fund limitations the U.S. Government is under in financing the Indian Ocean Islands and Mr. Kitchen is prepared to make clear to the British that anything above the \$14 million we have committed must come from their own resources. He does not at this point regard the UK statement as a serious problem.

4. The foregoing paragraphs are classified Secret.

Copy to: (Blind) (w/o encl)

Op-002  
Op-09  
Op-06, 58010  
Op-60

SECRET

... will take some time to complete the purchase of Diego Garcia. Presumably, the United States will not wish to defer the survey until after this has been accomplished, but it should be noted that a survey of the thoroughness apparently proposed may well lead to a decision to raise sharply the price that he will expect

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DIEGO GARCIA

The British Government have agreed in principle that the survey of Diego Garcia should go forward and are glad to accept the invitation to send observers. They would like to include in the party two representatives of the Navy Department. When and where are these observers to join the party?

2. When the United States abandoned their original idea of establishing communications facilities on Diego Garcia, the Navy Department came to the conclusion that a purely British refuelling depot there would be more expensive than using chartered tankers to ensure oil supplies for ships of the Royal Navy in the area. The presence of British observers during the survey should not therefore be regarded as in any way commitment to British participation in any project which the United States may decide to undertake as a result of the survey.

3. To enable the Ministry of Defence to brief the two Navy Department observers the Embassy would be grateful for the answers to the following questions:-

- (a) Can any idea be given at this stage of the size and type of the oil installation