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

OP-00

OP-002

OP-003

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OP-005

OP-006

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IN REPLY REFER TO

Op-614/mg
Ser 001565P61

18 MAR 1961

John's views

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Subj: Concord Squadron Cruise II

1. As a result of conditions currently prevailing in Southeast Asia the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved, with OASD/ISA and State Department concurrence, CinCPac's recommendation for withdrawal of the latter's forces, previously planned to constitute the Concord Squadron, from this Spring's (April May) Cruise in the Indian Ocean area. At the moment the JCS are awaiting responses from CINCEUR and CINCLANT to a query regarding the feasibility of the latter providing prestigious forces (CAG/CLG/CVS) as Concord Squadron replacements during the same time frame. Present indications are that neither will be forthcoming.
 2. With the foregoing as a background, at the request of Mr. Jeffrey Kitchen (State Dept.), representatives from the Department of State, the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Joint Staff met on 17 March in the office of the Director, Politico-Military Policy Division to explore, informally, the prospects for conducting a Concord Cruise this Spring.
 3. At the outset Mr. Kitchen offered his views, stressing three points. First, that the necessity for withdrawal of the Seventh Fleet ships previously programmed for Concord II was clear. Second, that U.S. interests would be importantly served, as a result of conducting Concord II within the time frame previously set by:
 - a. Demonstrating to all nations the U.S. ability to assert a military presence in this relatively remote area despite heavy involvement in such locales as Southeast Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean.
 - b. Reminding sub-continent nations, particularly the Indians, of the ready availability of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, thereby disabusing them of the inclination to embark on their own nuclear bomb program in reaction to the first (and shortly second) ChiCom nuclear detonation.
- And third, that he was hopeful, in extension of the foregoing, that a Concord Squadron consisting of INDEPENDENCE, now scheduled to visit Capetown, SA, 28-31 May, a departing Sixth

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Op-614/mg
Ser 001565P61

13 MAR 1965

Fleet Cruiser and two Middle East Force Destroyers could be committed for visits along the littoral of East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Sub-Continent.

4. Navy/JCS views were then presented which were, in substance, that despite a genuine appreciation of the potential value of the proposed Squadron Cruise it had to be pointed out that:

a. INDEPENDENCE was already committed to a 20 knot speed of advance in order to join the Seventh Fleet from the west in time to permit CORAL SEA to depart from the eastern boundary of WestPac and be placed in Reserve on the west coast of the U.S. prior to 1 July 1965 (the time at which the Attack Carrier head-count could not exceed fifteen). Further, high priority was assigned the introduction of A-6-A aircraft, embarked in INDEPENDENCE, into SEA operations.

b. Although formal comments had not been received from the concerned Unified Commanders, working level inquiries revealed that both CINCLANT and CINCEUR would state that because of current commitments (including contingencies), present high tempo of operations and world tensions, they consider the diversion of their Forces at this time both imprudent and impracticable.

In sum, it was pointed out that a shortage of major ships, particularly Carriers, was the central problem.

5. Impressed with the Navy's current major ship short fall, Mr. Kitchen indicated he would consider seeking, through his OSD contacts, a waiver for perhaps two weeks in the placing of CORAL SEA in Reserve. This would, of course, take some of the pressure off of INDEPENDENCE's schedule.

If the foregoing effort bears fruit, Mr. Kitchen has in mind proposing to Defense the following plan for a Concord Squadron Cruise this Spring:

INDEPENDENCE proceed independently to Bombay from Capetown for two-three day visit (placement of request, even if rejected would deliver the intended message) and Cruiser, upon detachment from SIXTH FLEET, transit Suez Canal and visit appropriate Red Sea and East African ports in company with two Middle East Force Destroyers.

SECRET

SECRET


Op-614/mg
Ser 001565P61

10 MAR 1965

Op-61 Comment

1. No commitments were made by either Navy or JCS representatives.
2. Issue of whether CINCLANT or CINCEUR would absorb the additional Cruiser task was not discussed.
3. If Mr. Kitchen represented official State position, is is clear that Department is "fixed" upon having Concord Squadron Cruise II conducted this Spring.
4. The catalyst for the next action in this case will probably be the notification (anticipate next week) of State by the JCS, via OASD/ISA, of the infeasibility of conducting Concord Cruise II this Spring. Predict this will, in turn, bring forth a State Department package proposal similar to that outlined in paragraph 5 above.

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