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**MEMORANDUM**

MAR 3 1964

TO : The Secretary  
 THROUGH: G - U. Alexis Johnson  
 S/S  
 FROM : G/PM - Jeffrey C. Kitchen

3476

SUBJECT: Discussions with the British on Indian Ocean Island Facilities

1. You approved on February 14 a memorandum outlining the area of discussions which Frank Sloan (DOD) and I expected to cover with British officials in London (Tab B). The talks were held February 25 - 27 and centered on long range U.S. defense interests in the Indian Ocean area and on U.K. support for this American presence as complementary to their own.

2. Before departing London, we prepared a report which transmits an agreed U.S.-U.K. statement of the results of the discussions, a joint analysis of the political effect of such increased U.S. defense presence in the area, a British military appreciation of the potential for strategic development of Indian Ocean Islands under British sovereignty, and a summary of essential data on the islands. Pending arrival of the report, I summarize here the major impressions received and attach for your perusal the agreed statement of recommendations for future action (Tab A).

a. It was clear that the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, were pleased at the U.S. initiative and that they wished to be as cooperative as feasible, having in mind their own interests. They noted they intend to remain in the area in force, and that our presence would complement theirs, rather than substitute for it.

b. */s/ Dean Rusk*

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*G/PM H. Meyers*

*DEF 15 IND-US*

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 b. British strategic concepts are similar to our own, in that they envisage development of islands as supplementing existing bases or staging facilities on the Indian Ocean littoral, and as reinforcement in depth for mainland commitments. For example, they favor U.S. development of the Chagos Archipelago for a central ocean communications station and austere supporting facilities. The U.K. would like to share use of an oil storage depot and might share airfield facilities if their position in Can became untenable.

The U.K. strongly favors development of an airfield on Aldabra (an uninhabited Crown island 500 miles off Tanganyika), which we would share, in order to anticipate inability to overfly Africa from Ascension Island, and to provide a staging area for actions in East Africa. (Similarly Aldabra would be useful to the USAF and GINCSRIKE for operations either from Ascension or through Turkey and Iran.)

They, as we, could usefully employ facilities in the Cocos/Keeling Islands in conjunction with the Australians thus, with Diego Garcia and Aldabra, creating a strategic triangle.

They understand we envisage development of austere air and harbor facilities over a long term, and that except for a communications station on Diego Garcia, firm decisions as to the future have yet to be made in the USG.

c. Colonial Office representatives, while sympathetic to U.S. interests tried unsuccessfully to obtain some indications the U.S. could help with aid programs or by large employment operations to benefit local economies. We made clear we preferred exclusive control, preferably without employing local inhabitants, in islands where we might install facilities, while of course being willing to share these facilities with the U.K. As you will note in the summary of agreed recommendations at Tab A, the U.K. delegation agreed that the U.K. should be responsible for acquiring land, resettling the population and compensating them therefor, at HMG's expense, while the U.S. would be responsible for construction and maintenance costs.

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d. With regard to our present and funded requirement for a communication station, it was agreed a joint survey of Diego Garcia should take place quickly, the timing being dependent on British decisions when and how to transfer the administration of Diego Garcia from Mauritius. Here, despite Colonial Office reservations and desire to consult local authorities, the Foreign Office clearly indicated that control over the Chagos Archipelago (including Diego Garcia) should be transferred in such way as to minimize substantially or remove the possibility that use of the islands could be hampered by external pressures for self-determination.

e. Incident to the central negotiation, the British accepted the U.S. draft on terms of operation for the U.S. satellite tracking station in the Seychelles.

3. If you approve the statement and recommendations regarding U.S. actions contained at Tab A, I will take the necessary steps to proceed with DOD to move forward as recommended, in concert with all concerned agencies and departments.

Approved

/s/ Dean Rusk

MAR 5

1964

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

## Enclosures:

- Tab A - Statement of recommendations
- Tab B - Memorandum

CC: AF - Gov. Williams  
 EUR - Mr. Tyler  
 FE - Mr. Green  
 NEA - Mr. Talbot

G/PM: HMeyers:JCK:chen:ml 3/3/64

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February 14, 1964

MEMORANDUM TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: G - U. Alexis Johnson  
S/S

FROM: G/PM - Jeffrey C. Kitchen

SUBJECT: Discussions with the British on Indian  
Ocean Islands and Related Topics

1. Frank Sloan (DOD/ISA) and I plan to spend approximately two days in London for discussions with the British, commencing February 25. Phil Talbot hopes to join us for one of these days and will add the NEA political dimension to these talks.
2. We initiated these discussions. Our original intention was to obtain British permission to carry out a survey of the Chagos Archipelago (Diego Garcia) to ascertain whether we could establish a communications and satellite monitoring facility. However, the conjunction of the creation of CINCSTRIKE/CINCMEAFSA with its responsibility in the African-Asia sub-continent area, and the pending initiation of a Naval Task Force cruise in the Indian Ocean area have led State and DOD to consider it useful to expand the talks with the UK, along the following lines:
  - a. We wish to explain to the British that we are trying to do some forward thinking concerning possible requirements for military resources in an area of mutual interest, stretching from the Gulf of Oman eastward. While we do not have firm needs presently for facilities other than of a communications nature, as in Diego Garcia, we would envisage the possibility of an eventual requirement in

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(i) Current and long-term UK defense interests, including force deployments and supporting facilities in East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula periphery and the Indian Ocean Islands.

(ii) A review of military problems arising out of the present East African situation, including the Horn, with emphasis on encouraging continued British commitment and leadership.

3. We would make it clear to the British that where they now maintain prime responsibility, a possible US role in any of these areas would be complementary to and not a replacement for existing UK programs.

4. While the broad concepts of the discussions outlined above have been approved by the interested bureaus in the State Department and by the DOD, I want to inform you of their precise nature.

Approve /s/ Dean Rusk Feb. 14, 1964

Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Concurrences:

- AF - Mr. Fredericks
- NEA - Mr. Grant
- FE - Mr. Green
- S/P - Capt. Colbert
- EUR/BNA - Mr. Armstrong

G/PM:HMeyers:JCKitchen:ew

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