

VISIT OF BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY
Washington, March 21 - 24, 1965

INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 93-268
By ing, NARA, Date 4-5-94

Discussion

On March 5, 1964 the Secretary approved a report and recommendations concerning discussions with the British on Indian Ocean island facilities for military uses. On April 21, Defense likewise approved the same paper. In summary, we anticipate the development over a period of years of an Indian Ocean strategic triangle of austere facilities (a communications station, airstrips, anchorages, pre-stockage depots).

The British would have responsibility for acquiring land, resettling the small numbers of people involved and compensating for both; the US would have responsibility for construction and maintenance costs. The US would share the facilities which it constructs with the UK. The two governments would consult as necessary about the establishment of any possible military facilities required.

A US/UK survey of the potential military usefulness of various islands in the Indian Ocean was completed in mid 1964, and the US recommendations were given to the British last January. The British, who

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wish to undertake only a "one-bite" operation, are presently considering when and on which islands detachment proceedings will be instituted to place them under London administration, as a basis for moving forward on this program.

Recommended US Position

We assume that the UK is addressing itself to a decision on detachment of those islands which we consider useful from a US military standpoint. We are most interested in the British decision, so that joint planning on succeeding measures can proceed quickly.

Anticipated UK Response

HMG is indeed grappling with the problem of determining those islands on which detachment proceedings will be instituted. Political attitudes of the island leaders, anticipated reaction in the United Nations and elsewhere, military requirements, and costs are factors which have to be taken into account. Of these, costs are the primary factor and will probably be the basic element in the UK decision. It is conceivable that HMG will desire further discussions with the US concerning this aspect, in order to determine more specifically the scope of the US military requirements.

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