

LBJ-NSF, Country File, BX 216, UK, PM Wilson Visit Br. by Book, 7/29/66 [2 of 2]

PMW/B-12 Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY

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7/25/66

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MEMORANDUM

TO : The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S
G - U. Alexis Johnson

FROM : G/PM - Jeffrey C. Kitchen

SUBJECT: Indian Ocean Islands - Information Memorandum

This is essentially an up-dating of developments concerning "East of Suez" and the British Indian Ocean Territory negotiations which may be helpful in connection with Prime Minister Wilson's forthcoming visit.

To formalize the USG participation in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) project, we transmitted, on January 25, 1966, three draft proposals (in the form of a package) to HMG. They covered:

- a. Cost sharing arrangements
- b. U. S. usage rights, and
- c. Renewal of the Agreement covering the USAF Tracking and Telemetry Facility on the island of Mahe (Capital of the Seychelles). This is technically outside the limits of the U. S.-U. K. BIOT Agreement but bears through its economic implications in the Seychelles.

On July 2, 1966 Embassy London forwarded British amendments to our proposals (a) and (b). The U. K. response on Mahe tracking facilities is still pending.

Reviews of the two U. K. amendments reveal that several issues still remain to be resolved, principally in connection with U. S. entry rights and the duration of the Agreement. Our aim is to provide for Service to Service arrangements for utility and to maximize the duration of the document. With regard to entry and usage rights the British are still holding to the necessity for Government level approval.

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
State Dept. Guidelines
By jc, NARA, Date 2-21-01

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With regard to the duration of the Agreement, the British suggest an initial period of 30 years while we would prefer 50 years. Despite the foregoing disparities, we believe that agreement can be reached shortly.

It is apparent that the British are having some trouble in handling the tracking facility matter with the Seychelloise; however, this should not present a serious problem since our presence there is already established.

In connection with specific utility of these islands we had initially (1964) indicated to the British a requirement for a communications facility on Diego Garcia. However, immediately prior to the formation of the BIOT, we had to advise the U. K. that technological advances (satellites) had overtaken this requirement. On their part, aside from a reference to a possible POL storage area on the same island, the U. K. indicated nothing of immediate interest. Recently, however, the U. S. Navy has generated a new proposal (total value \$45,000,000) for Diego Garcia and they presently are budgeted for a related definitive engineering survey. (The U. K. has not been informed of this proposal). The latest development finds the U. K. indicating a positive interest in establishing a "through-put" (air staging facility) on Aldabra. In Canberra, Cooper, the U. K. MOD representative, queried me regarding the possibility of U. S. participation in a U. K. definitive engineering survey of Aldabra. We wish to proceed to survey Diego Garcia, and thus the prospect of cooperating with the U. K. on Aldabra seemed quite attractive, although I made no commitment; stating only that I would report the proposal for consideration in Washington.

Since our return, Nigel Trench, Counselor at the British Embassy, (Cousin of Governor of Hong Kong) raised the same subject on July 14, after which he communicated several questions by letter the next day. Specifically, the British want to know:

a. Would the USG be prepared to contribute half the cost of constructing an airfield and supporting facilities subject to the outcome of a survey and final determination of cost?

b. If so, would we wish to participate in the survey?
and

c. If your answer to (b) was "yes", could we have a party ready to go by September 1?

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This information has been relayed to DOD where it is under consideration in connection with our own desire to move ahead on Diego Garcia.

Events of the next few weeks will undoubtedly influence our response with regard to the U. S. interest in Aldabra and the related timing of our Diego Garcia initiative. However, my hope is that we will be able to maintain momentum, keep the British committed and involved in the area, and at the same time obtain some highly useful facilities.

CC: U FE
S/S EUR

G/PM/JCKitchen/ACoward/7-25-66

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