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 By **167** NARA Date **11/16/05**

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MEMORANDUM

TO : G - Mr. U. Alexis Johnson
 FROM : G/PM - Jeffrey G. Kitchen
 SUBJECT: Proposed Note to the British Government
 Concerning Possible Long-Term Development
 of Base Facilities in the Indian Ocean Area.

April 25, 1963

DISCUSSION

The Defense Department, as the result of JCS recommendations, has requested the State Department to make a government level approach to the British suggesting the initiation of talks on the military and technical considerations of a possible long-term development of base facilities in the Indian Ocean area.

JCS Study. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have pointed out the long-term need for bases in the Indian Ocean area for possible contingency operations. They have recommended, as an immediate objective, discussions with the British which would look toward the availability over the long-term (25 years or more) of several such areas now under British control in order to permit the orderly development of necessary facilities at an appropriate time. (Similar talks would be held later with the Australians on the Cocos Islands in this area.)

The JCS concept of a possible Indian Ocean base system is indicated at Tab B. This is indicative only, and will not be presented to the British with the formal note. From the character of the facilities, you will note that some of them would support other than contingency operations.

Further,

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G/PM/W. Lond - BNA/A. Bengeson/jmt

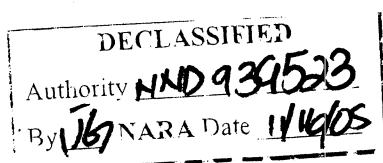
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Further, there would also be a requirement for the continued peacetime stationing of U.S. personnel on at least some of the facilities to insure their preparedness in time of emergency.

Bureau Comments. The geographical bureaus dealing with the Indian Ocean area (NEA, AF, FE) are in agreement in principle with the proposed long-term development of base facilities in the Indian Ocean area and concur in the proposed approach to the British. NEA stresses the importance of joining with the British and the Australians rather than supplanting them in the area. It opposes any discussion of Socotra Island. AF sees a real need for such a system of bases and urges prompt and concrete talks with the British. FE points out the necessity of approaching the Australians because of their control of the Cocon Islands. EUR suggests the selection of territory with as scarce population as feasible. Its experience in the Caribbean area with the aftermath of the "bases for destroyer" agreement of 1940 indicates that even formal long-term leases cannot be made to stick if they are opposed by an aroused local population led by aggressive political leaders in either a dependency or independent state.

Further comments by the two geographical bureaus most directly concerned, NEA and AF, are attached at Tab C.

Probable British Policy. Until about 1948 the British had full political control of a number of military bases of varying capability which provided support for almost all types of military operations in the Indian Ocean area. The granting of independence to former British colonies has led to the closing of a number of these bases, such as Trincomalee in Ceylon. As remaining territories achieve independence, this process may be expected to continue; Mombasa on which the British have expended a considerable amount of money, will almost certainly be closed when Kenya achieves independence. The short-term future of Aden as a base does not inspire confidence. The long-term future of the Singapore

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base is unpredictable, though apparently assured for the present. The current British concept for the defense of this area (as outlined in the February 1962 Defense White Paper) envisages forces based in Aden whose mobility would be obtained by the use of Commando carriers and transport aircraft. Possibly, the British are by now looking for a long-term site which could supplement the present Aden base.

We believe that the establishment of facilities for logistic support of, and communications for, mobile forces in the Indian Ocean area would be compatible with British strategy and thinking. This assessment is in part based on the fact that our own current concept does not include the stationing of a large number of troops or other forces at the proposed bases.

Governmental Approach. We and Defense agree that an approach to the British would be more successful if we emphasized that the UK and the US have joint responsibilities in this area which could be met by the establishment of the subject facilities. This is suggested in the attached formal note to the British Embassy. The note also suggests that discussion of the political aspects of using the islands take place after it is determined that such strategic uses are militarily feasible. A similar approach to the Australian government will be made later.

RECOMMENDATION

That you authorize Assistant Secretary Tyler to sign the formal note to the British Ambassador (Tab A) proposing talks between officials of the two governments concerning the long-term availability and development of base facilities in the Indian Ocean area along the lines stated herein.

/s/ U. Alexis Johnson

Approved _____

Disapproved _____

Attachments:

See next page.

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Attachments:

- Tab A - Formal Note to British *attached*
Tab B - JCS Proposals for Indian Ocean *not attached*
Tab C - Further Comments by NEA and AF *attached*

Clearances:

G/PM - Mr. Newman
DOD/ISA - Mr. Lang
L - Mr. Huang
AF - Mr. Gulashin

FE - Mr. Peters (substance)
EUR - Mr. Tyler
BNA - Mr. Knox
NEA - Mr. Talbot (substance)
NEA - Mr. Padelford

[Signature]
G/PM/WLORD-BNA/ABergesen/jmt

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