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MEMORANDUM FOR: (See page 2 for distribution)

Transmitted herewith informally are advance copies of the agreed memorandum covering US-UK talks in London February 25-27, 1964 on the subject "US Defence Interests in the Indian Ocean." Annex A lists the respective national delegations and Annex B a joint appraisal of "The Political Effect of increased American defence participation in the Indian Ocean on the countries of the periphery and the political presentation to be made by the UK and US Authorities."

Embassy London is transmitting immediately a report on these conversations together with the foregoing documents and, in addition, copies of: 1) a British military report on the extent islands in the Indian Ocean have a potential for development for "strategic" purposes and, 2) a Colonial Office summary of physical characteristics, political affiliations and populations of islands in the Indian Ocean.] *

Recipients of this memorandum will also receive the Embassy report.


Jeffrey C. Kitchen
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Politico-Military Affairs
Chairman, US Delegation

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U.S. DEFENCE INTERESTS in the INDIAN OCEAN

MEMORANDUM of U.K./U.S. LONDON DISCUSSIONS

February 1964

Official discussions between representatives of the U.K. and U.S. Governments took place in London from February 25-27, 1964. On the U.K. side, the Foreign Office, Commonwealth Relations Office, Colonial Office, Ministry of Defence and Service Departments took part. On the U.S. side, the Departments of State and of Defense and the military commands concerned were represented. A list of both delegations is at Annex A. The following is agreed between the two sides as recording the results of the discussions and recommendations to their respective governmental authorities for future action.

Background

2. The U.S. Government is considering a greater defense presence in the Indian Ocean area to complement (but not in any way to replace) the existing British effort in this area. U.S. participation is likely to mean over a period of time:-

- (a) Periodic visits by a U.S. task force into the
Indian Ocean area

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- (b) The installation of military communications and technical facilities on islands under British sovereignty
- (c) The development of austere base facilities to support U.S. forces which may be deployed in the area.

H.M.G. in the U.K. have welcomed this American initiative and agree that their joint basic objectives in the Indian Ocean area are first to deter Communist encroachment on countries bordering the Indian Ocean and second to have the capacity to deal firmly and rapidly with local disturbances in the area.

3. It was accepted by both delegations that the U.S. interest in developing a greater defense presence and support facilities in the area was conceived as a complement to the existing U.K. strategic posture, and would provide a valuable joint insurance in case of any loss or limitation of use of existing facilities. Political reactions by countries on the periphery and presentation by both Governments to third countries of the American initiative

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4. The two delegations agreed on a joint assessment (at Annex B) of the probable reactions of countries on the periphery to the American initiative and on the line which should be followed by both Governments in presenting this, as the need arises, to third countries.

5. As regards periodic visits of the task force, the U.S. delegation agreed to keep H.M.G. informed of U.S. general intentions and, in particular, to give as much notice as possible of requests to visit any U.K. bases.

U.S. Interest in technical and support facilities

6. The U.S. delegation confirmed their positive interest in the development of a communications facility, subject to joint survey, in Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, which is now under the administration of Mauritius. They also expressed interest in the development of austere support facilities in Diego Garcia, and in a lower order of priorities possibly in Aldabra, the remainder of the Seychelles area, and the Cocos/Keeling Islands (under Australian administration). Such facilities might include in the long-term:-

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- (a) Stockpile area for substantial portion of an Army division plus other pre-stockage facilities.
- (b) Air base capable of supporting cargo, troop carrier, and tanker aircraft. Facilities to support anti-submarine patrol operations and air logistic operations. Parking area for two to four squadrons of aircraft.
- (c) Naval anchorage and base area to support a carrier task force, amphibious, and support ships.
- (d) Communications station.
- (e) Amphibious staging area.
- (f) Space tracking and communications facilities.
- (g) Fuel and ammunition storage.
- (h) Secondary support anchorages and logistic air strips.

The U.K. delegation reserved their position about the dimensions of any space tracking facilities which the U.S. might possibly propose to establish on Diego Garcia.

The U.S. delegation recognized that topography might preclude the location of facilities for the above objectives in one single island and, since the entry of their forces into

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the area in individual instances might be from either East or West, according to circumstances, envisaged the development of some support facilities at both extremes of the Indian Ocean, with, ideally, a principal base area in the center. The U.S. delegation emphasized that they wished to avoid the political problems arising from the development of military facilities in populated areas and to have assured security of tenure for at least 25 years.

Diego Garcia

7. Subject to survey, the U.S. delegation envisaged that if H.M.G. agreed, the most suitable arrangement would be that H.M.G. should be responsible for making available the necessary land, at H.M.G.'s expense. H.M.G. would also be responsible for any resettlement of population and compensation. For their part the U.S. Government would undertake to accept construction and maintenance costs of the facilities they would build and to share the facilities with the U.K. The two Governments would consult as necessary about the establishment of any possible U.K. military facilities which might be required in the island.

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8. It was agreed however by both delegations that it would be imprudent to undertake any survey until the constitutional future of Diego Garcia (together with the remainder of the Chagos Archipelago) was determined. The U.K. delegation undertook to recommend to H.M.G. that in the light of the joint strategic interest, the feasibility of the transfer of the administration of Diego Garcia (and the remainder of the Chagos Archipelago) and the Agalega Islands from Mauritius should be pursued as rapidly as possible and to inform the U.S. authorities if and when such transfer was effected.

9. When it is agreed that a survey can take place, this should be a joint project, under U.K. auspices, with the U.S. contingent of minimum size necessary. The U.K. would provide one of the H.M. ships for the purpose.

ALDABRA

10. The U.S. delegation expressed a possible interest in the eventual development of an air staging post in the Western Indian Ocean. Aldabra seemed a likely possible site for this. The U.K. delegation said there might well be a future U.K. requirement of a similar nature in this area and made available

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to the U.S. side a survey for a possible airfield, which had already been completed of Aldabra. Consideration of such a facility was agreed by both delegations to be a matter for further reference to governmental authorities.

Cocos/Keeling Islands

11. The U.S. delegation explained that they had already been advised informally by Australian authorities of interest in U.S. use of facilities to be developed in the Cocos/Keeling Islands. It was agreed by both delegations that since the U.K. also shared a positive interest in facilities there, further approaches to the Australians might best be undertaken in concert by the U.K./U.S. At the same time a general explanation would be given to the Australians of the discussions held between the U.K. and the U.S. It was agreed that the U.K. and U.S. Governments would keep in close touch on this matter.

Summary of agreed recommendations

12. The U.K. delegation agreed to recommend to the U.K. governmental authorities that they should: -

- (a) Consider favourably the possibility of the development by the U.S. of such facilities on U.K. island possessions as they may require, on the following general principles: -

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- (i) H.M.G. should be responsible for acquiring land, resettlement of population and compensation at H.M.G.'s expense.
 - (ii) U.S. Government should be responsible for all construction and maintenance costs.
 - (iii) U.S. Government would share these facilities, during development and subsequently, with the U.K.
 - (iv) The two governments would consult as necessary about the establishment of any possible U.K. military facilities that might be required.
- (b) Pursue as rapidly as possible the feasibility of transfer of the administration of Diego Garcia (and other islands in the Chagos Archipelago) and the Agalega Islands from Mauritius.
- (c) As soon as politically practicable, facilitate a joint survey of Diego Garcia and any other islands under British sovereignty in the Indian Ocean area that the U.S. may require.

13. The U.S. delegation agreed: -

- (a) To recommend to the U.S. Governmental Authorities acceptance of the proposals set out in paragraph 12 above.

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- (b) To consider further the location of a site for an air staging post in the Western Indian Ocean.
- (c) To consider further whether jointly to approach the Australian Government regarding possible use of facilities in the Cocos/Keeling Islands.
- (d) To communicate further with the U.K. regarding all the above.

London
27th February, 1964

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ANNEX A

U.S. Delegation

Mr. Jeffrey C. Kitchen,	Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs
Mr. Frank Sloan,	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
Rear Admiral J.W. Leverton, Jr.,	Deputy Chief of Staff, CINCLANT
Mr. Howard Meyers,	Department of State
Mr. George Newman,	American Embassy
Mr. Ray Bronez,	Department of Defense
Captain Walter Stencil,	Joint Staff
Mr. R.A. Ericson, Jr.,	American Embassy
Colonel George Hannah,	U.S. Air Force Staff
Captain Charles Tucker,	London Staff, CINCSTRIKE

U.K. Delegation

Mr. E.H. Peck,	Assistant Under-Secretary, Foreign Office
Mr. J.P. Waterfield,	Foreign Office
Rear Admiral P.J. Hill Norton,	Assistant Chief of Naval Staff
Captain J.C.Y. Roxburgh R.N.,	Deputy Director of Plans (Navy)
Commander G.R.M. de la Pasture, R.N.,	Defence Planning Staff
Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Thrift,	Defence Planning Staff

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Lieutenant-Colonel V.H. Martin,	Defence Signal Staff
Mr. M. Holton,	D.S.11, Ministry of Defence
Mr. F. H. Mawer,	M II, Admiralty
Mr. R. F. Havell,	Head of S 6, Air Ministry
Group Captain J.H.L. Blount,	Deputy Director Air Plans 2, Air Ministry
Major-General G.R. Price,	Commonwealth Relations Office
Mr. J.D. Higham,	Colonial Office
Honble. A.P. Cumming-Bruce,	Colonial Office
Mr. R. Terrell,	Colonial Office

Note: - Mr. Phillips Talbot, Assistant Secretary of State, State Department, and Mr. R. S. Crawford, Assistant Under-Secretary, Foreign Office, also attended for part of the talks.

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ANNEX B

The Political Effect of increased American defence participation in the Indian Ocean on the countries of the periphery and the political presentation to be made by the U.K. and U.S. Authorities

Introduction

"Increased American participation is likely to mean:-

- (a) Periodic visits into the area of an American carrier force (say once every six months). This force is likely to sail from the Pacific through the Singapore or Malacca Straits, and to visit Diego Suarez, Aden and the Gulf of Oman (and probably Mombasa) on the initial visit and possibly Karachi and an Indian port, Malaysia and Indonesia. Subsequent visits will depend on circumstances.
- (b) The installation of a few communications and other technical facilities on British possessions (e.g. most probably in the Chagos Archipelago).
- (c) The possible development of an "austere base" - i.e. airstrip, anchorage, oil depot, on one or more islands under U.K. control.

2. Paragraph (a) above is more likely to attract publicity than (b) or (c). Our line, agreed with the Americans, might be "this is not provocative; this is an area where the British have always provided the major Western presence; now here is a sign of Western solidarity, and of an increasingly solid Western military guarantee behind the various Western treaty commitments (CENTO, SEATO etc.).

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY ASSESSMENT OF REACTIONS TO
INCREASED U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN
AREA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.K./U.S. ACTION IN
EACH CASE

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The following assessment and recommendations for action have been agreed by the U.K. and U.S. delegations during their talks in London from February 25 to 27, 1964

IRAN

Reaction

Would welcome Naval task force deployment; no problems with technical facilities; would welcome austere base. Grateful for support and for presence in Indian Ocean.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Make the most of the "support for CENTO and for Iran" theme.

IRAQ

Reaction

Reaction largely dependent on volume of communist - neutralist propaganda, and on state of Arab-U.S. relations. Mildly suspicious but not deeply interested.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Diplomatic explanation of any major visits to the Gulf by U.S. representative in Baghdad portray increased U.S. presence as not directed against any state, available for help in natural disasters, potential support for countries menaced by CHICOM expansionist efforts.

U.A.R.

Reaction

As for Iraq, but quick to seize on any tactlessness in presentation for anti-West propaganda.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

As for Iraq.

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SUDAN

Reaction

Not interested.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

If Sudanese inquire, use line recommended for Iraq.

ETHIOPIA

Reaction

Interested, probably welcoming attitude.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Careful presentation through U.S./U.K. diplomatic channels. Line similar to that for Iraq, adding that presence will make for greater stability in the area.

PERSIAN GULF GENERAL

Reaction

Take note that U.S. appear to be backing up British policies - grateful for this.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.K. primary responsibility.

KUWAIT

Reaction

As for Persian Gulf.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. will explain locally before task force enters area. U.K. will support as necessary.

SAUDI ARABIA

Reaction

While public attitude would be constricted by pan-Arab and pan-African feeling, would welcome task force. Have no problems with technical facilities and generally would be pleased with increased U.S. presence.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. should explain with attention directed to increased ability to contribute to stability of area.

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SOMALI REPUBLIC

Reaction

Government position opposed; possible that pro-Western element may be encouraged.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. should do their best with diplomatic presentation along lines for IRAQ, but without reference to CHICOM threat.

EAST AFRICA

(Kenya, Uganda,
Tanganyika)

Reaction

Perhaps less influenced than formerly by pan-African line, which is likely to allege that cold war is being brought into Indian Ocean. But with tactful presentation, with particular note of friendly intentions, might welcome privately increased presence, and would probably welcome benefits of occasional visits. Probably apprehensions that increased U.S. presence might adversely affect their desires for neutralist position.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Great care with presentation and timing of any visits. U.S. must make approaches but U.K. would welcome prior consultation over method and timing.

ZANZIBAR

Reaction

Likely to be distinctly adverse and would not welcome naval visits.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

As above, but more difficult to prevent loud protests.

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MADAGASCAR

Reaction

Has requested task force visit. Likely to welcome future visits and increased U.S. military presence.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. to confirm when task force schedule clear.

SOUTH AFRICA

Reaction

Welcome.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

None at present. (U.S. not presently considering sending this task force to South Africa.)

South-East Asia

BURMA

Reaction

Publicly highly suspicious; danger of protests if not carefully handled. Private satisfaction that Western strength increased in area vis-a-vis Chinese.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Careful presentation, stressing non-aggressive intention.

MALAYSIA

Reaction

Pleased, provided the carrier force does not visit Indonesia, but might reluctantly accept such a visit anyhow, dependent on the circumstances at the time. No problems with technical facilities; would welcome increased U.S. presence as backing up U.K.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. responsibility to clear visits with Malaysians; dependent on task force schedule and influenced by reactions of India, Pakistan, Indonesia. U.S. will keep U.K. informed on political and military levels.

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INDONESIA

Reaction

Probably reluctant to have task force visit Indonesia. Particularly suspicious if carrier force visits Malaysia. Opposed to any increased U.S. military presence in "Indonesian Ocean".

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. responsibility.

THAILAND

Reaction

Welcome support for SEATO.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Plug this for all that it is worth.

INDIA

Reaction

Any increase in U.S. military presence likely to provide adverse press and Governmental reaction. Intensity of this reaction will be conditioned by internal domestic factors - non-alignment needs, and whether CHICOMS threatening. In last event Indians could almost welcome presence. No great problems with technical facilities.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

Careful presentation before taking any action. U.S. responsibility to obtain clearance for visits.

PAKISTAN

Reaction

Indifferent to technical facilities; probably would accept task force visits, although not happy about it. Would accept increased U.S. presence but public attitude would be dependent on state of Indo-Pakistan, CHICOM and U.S.-U.K./Pakistan relations and on Afro-Asian reactions.

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Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. responsibility. Careful presentation of political and further military benefits of task force and increased U.S. presence, particularly to Ayub. U.K. would welcome being kept closely informed and would support if necessary.

CHINA

Reaction

Strongly hostile obviously; possibilities for anti-American exploitation dependent on reactions of other countries.

Action by
U.S./U.K.

No initiative by either U.K. or U.S.

CEYLON

Reaction

Except for communication facility, Government and public reactions hostile. Will be strongly opposed to any increased U.S. military presence. No visits by task force expected to be allowed (particularly due to Ceylon's denial of visits of "ships with nuclear weapons or equipment for nuclear warfare").

Action by
U.S./U.K.

U.S. responsibility. U.K. would welcome being kept informed.

Conclusion

Although increased American participation will be welcome to several countries in the area, it will provoke suspicion and criticism in several others whose hostility will be exploited by the Chinese Communists. The critics are likely to be more vocal than the supporters of this development. Every effort should be made to reduce this reaction to the minimum by careful advance explanations to the countries in the area.

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