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333. Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)

Washington, October 17, 1963.

MAC—

Our Indian Ocean exercise is moving ahead. Rusk is sending a strong (I helped beef up) reply to atrocious Gilpatric 2 October letter,<sup>1</sup> stressing politico-military value of carrier task force. It accepts DOD offer of 2-4 months a year ad interim, but goes on to urge a carrier be deployed at least eight months out of twelve. So we're keeping ball in play.

Need for some more reassuring words to Paks when Taylor/McN. go out is also a plus factor. Since DOD has already offered intermittent deployment, doesn't this permit their mentioning to Paks that we'll be deploying a task force though perhaps not full-time for a while.

Incidentally, the draft (6 Sept.) SecDef memo for the President,<sup>2</sup> which calls for maintaining 15 carrier level through FY 1969, contains many arguments which would justify Indian Ocean project. Unfortunately, the draft deals with everything else *but* the rationale for where to deploy the 15 carriers. Nonetheless:

1. *Costs* (pp. 9-10). These are very crudely estimated at \$300 million annually for each carrier and associated air group, escorts, etc. But one cannot blithely accept this figure as the new out-of-pocket cost of putting a one carrier force in the Indian Ocean, because: (a) it includes amortization of capital outlay for the carrier, planes, associated air group, *which costs have already been incurred*; (b) Indian Ocean force might well need fewer escorts, less high performance aircraft etc. because of reduced air/sea threat and chiefly conventional mission.

2. *Theater vs. CONUS-based tactical air* (pp. 11-12). The case for theater-based air looks better in Indian Ocean than almost anywhere else, simply because *this is the theater farthest from CONUS*. So here theater-based forces are most needed to (a) improve probability of getting strategic warning; and (b) furnish temporary protection for deployment of CONUS-based forces.

3. *Carrier Air vs. Land-based Air* (CASF). Precisely those missions described as "efficient employment" of carrier air look best in Indian

Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, India, General, 9/28/63-10/19/63. Secret.

<sup>1</sup> The letter from Gilpatric to Rusk conveyed Joint Chiefs of Staff views that a limited, intermittent deployment of a carrier task force to the Indian Ocean was feasible. (Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD Files: FRC 69 A 3131, India 381 ((10 Jul 63), Indian Ocean Task Force 63) See footnote 1, Document 320.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

See orig.  
note below

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