

JFK: NST, R.W.Komer, Ex 422, IN 11, 103 (W.A. Rumsfeld)
Indon then
Komer/Pek
SECRET

Governor,

August 29, 1963

I intend to keep pitching on Indian Ocean task force, and hope State won't let itself be diverted by McNamara's interim offer of pre-stockage instead. For reasons given in attached, this seems a poor substitute, especially because it lacks the multi-purpose flexibility we need.

What we want is the kind of force which will enhance the credibility of our commitments in Iran, Persian Gulf, Yemen, India, etc. as well as Pakistan. Indeed I can see where an Indian Ocean force might be a very useful implied restraint in event of Chicom pressure on Burma or Indonesian muscle-flexing against Malaysia.

R. W. Komer

Att: Cy, Memo, RWKomer to "Mac", 8/29/63,
re Indian Ocean area

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Indira Gandhi
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Mac -

August 29, 1963

MacNamara seems to favor pre-positioning equipment in Pakistan as the best means of underlining credibility of our commitments in Indian Ocean area. No doubt he has good reasons; it's also unclear whether he sees this as a firm substitute for carriers or simply a means of holding the line till he wins his war with the Navy.

In any event, I wonder if pre-positioning, especially in Pakistan, meets either our Pakistani or larger needs.

1. Of all the threats in Indian Ocean area, that to Pakistan from Indians or even Soviets comes lowest on our probability scale. Iran or Burma stand far higher.
2. Pre-positioning in Pakistan gives yet another base hostage to Ayub; Peshawar alone already gives him too much leverage on us.
3. The Paks are also the very ones who'd scream most if we ever tried to use this equipment elsewhere, say in India. It's even conceivable they'd prevent us from doing so.
4. Would pre-stockage of only a brigade set or so be very reassuring to the Pak military, who know their chief need is not ground force but air support? Despite its value, a brigade or division set of equipment is simply not as credible a reassurance as the presence in an area of 100-150 attack aircraft which can deliver a nuclear or non-nuclear punch 600 miles inland.
5. Even if pre-stockage helped solve our Pak problem, it is not nearly as helpful for Iran, Persian Gulf, India/China, Burma, or Indonesia as more flexible carrier task force might be. And we'd still have to fly planes out from US to pick up pre-stocked items in Pakistan if they had to be moved elsewhere.

So at the least we ought to take a close look at whether this option really buys us enough flexible coverage to outweigh such potential disadvantages. Where do we go from here? (I'll try and get State whee'd up.)

R. W. Komer

cc: Averell Harriman

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