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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-392-65

20 May 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Indian Ocean Islands (U)

Indian Ocean

1. (C) Reference is made to:

a. A memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), I-23226/65, dated 15 May 1965, subject as above, which requested the military value of certain islands in terms of dollar cost to the United States for detachment.

b. JCSM-1028-64, dated 10 December 1964, subject as above, which set forth by order of desirability the requirements of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for access to, construction on, and possible future utility of certain British-controlled islands in the Indian Ocean.

2. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the British are attempting to use the Indian Ocean island requirements of the United States as a means of easing, as much as possible, the financial burden of their defense commitments. They have muted their own politico-military requirements in the area and are emphasizing the desirability of the United States becoming more involved militarily and financially in the area "east of the Suez."

3. (S) Nonetheless, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reiterate that there is a US military requirement for Chagos Archipelago and Aldabra and a potential requirement for Farquhar and Ile des Roches. The military requirement for Chagos Archipelago and Aldabra (and to a lesser extent, Farquhar and Ile des Roches) warrants a US expenditure, or other equivalent financial support to the United Kingdom, for "detachment costs" provided adequate agreement for perpetual US access is obtained. Negotiations should insure a minimum US expenditure with a limit on the US share of no greater than 50 per cent. The military value justifies an expenditure as high as \$15 million provided a more favorable alternative financial arrangement cannot be obtained.

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4. (S) A US requirement now exists for an air facility on Aldabra and funds should be programmed. The United States could contribute half of the costs of the construction of a jointly financed US/UK airfield on Aldabra in lieu of a cash contribution toward defraying the "detachment costs." Such a financial arrangement is more desirable than a direct contribution.

5. (C) A reduction in surcharges on the British F-111 purchase equivalent to the US share of "detachment costs" represents another way to finance detachment of the desired islands. This type of financing may be preferable to other arrangements.

6. (C) World-wide military requirements of the United States indicate that any expenditures to defray "detachment costs" should not be obtained at the expense of existing Defense programs.

7. (S) The British have made continuing efforts to have the United States shoulder more of the British military burden "east of Suez." The deteriorating situation in Aden, the loss of income from Far East investments, and the cost of maintaining military forces in this area are some of the factors which make a British withdrawal increasingly attractive to the advocates of financial retrenchment. The continuing involvement of the United Kingdom in control of selected islands and possible joint utilization, however, will provide a means of reversing this trend and is therefore in the long-term interests of the United States. In this sense alone, these islands may well prove to be of strategic value far in excess of the estimated detachment costs.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SIGNED

L. J. KIRN

Rear Admiral, USN

Deputy Director, Joint Staff

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