

10/18/65

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NLJ/RAC 05-30

By isl NARA, Date 12-1-05

1. Following from negotiations undertaken at U.S. initiative in January, 1964, the British, in June 1965, agreed in principle to "detach" (i.e. retain under London's administration) certain Indian Ocean islands being administered locally from Mauritius (Chagos Archipelago) and the Seychelles (Aldabra, Farquhar and Ile des Roches). The British position was tempered by a desire to obtain some measure of agreement from the local authorities. Tentative soundings by U.K. authorities with key local officials indicated "enabling" costs might run as high as \$28 million, or approximately double the original British estimate. Subsequently, a high-level British approach was made seeking a U.S. contribution of about 50% of these costs. Secretary McNamara agreed the U.S. could share costs up to \$14 million through deductions from certain R&D payments due the U.S. under the Polaris Sales Agreement. In addition, Mr. McNamara agreed that, should the British have an early requirement for an air-staging facility on Aldabra, we would consider paying some construction costs in return for joint usage rights. Our only firm requirement during the negotiating period was for a communications relay station on Diego Garcia, but this is now being re-examined because recent developments in

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communications satellites indicate the requirement might be more economically met by this means. This does not diminish our long term interest in the availability of the islands, nor the necessity for the British to move now politically.

2. A joint State/DOD team met in London with the British September 23-24 to move ahead on these pending issues. The meetings were very successful; major developments are as follows:

A. The British agreed ad referendum, with very minor changes, to our proposals by which the US/UK Polaris Sales Agreement would be modified to enable funds to be furnished to meet "detachment" costs, up to \$14 million.

B. The British representatives will support a detailed agreement which the U.S. side presented, designed to regularize the terms and conditions under which we have been operating for three years the tracking and telemetry station on the island of Mahe in the Seychelles. This had been delayed because of British insistence on considering the tracking station arrangements in connection with the "detachment" issue, largely because the Seychellois have been trying to extract maximum economic benefits from the presence of this installation on their soil. In effect, U.K. representatives agreed the Seychellois could no longer hold up agreement, in view of the US contribution

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to over-all costs. The U.S. will provide certain clarifications and more precise definitions, but the text we presented was substantially agreed.

C. The most protracted discussion revolved around terms under which the U.S. would have access to all of the islands which would be retained under U.K. sovereignty and administration. British attitudes have clearly hinged upon two major decision areas: (1) their still-incomplete defense review, and the role envisaged for Indian Ocean islands for British defense requirements East of Suez; (2) whether Mauritius would be granted its independence at an early date. It is pertinent to note that Mauritian political leaders initially preferred to retain the Chagos Archipelago (including Diego Garcia) and to make it available to the U.S. immigration quota and a huge U.S. sugar quota of 300-400,000 tons a year. On September 24, as a result of Foreign Office and MOD efforts, Prime Minister Wilson saw the Mauritian Prime Minister and told him that the Chagos Archipelago must be retained by the U.K. for defense purposes, as part of the arrangements enabling independence for Mauritius within a year which the British announced the following day. It is clearly a package arrangement, in which the Mauritians agreed to British retention of

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the distant Chagos Archipelago in return for independence, a substantial financial contribution, and a defense link with the U.K. While the leader of the second largest Mauritian party did not want to accept the concept of independence, he had no difficulty with the British retaining the Chagos.

The U.S. and the U.K. sides did not reach definitive agreement on the terms under which the U.S. would have access to all of the Indian Ocean islands involved, largely due to the complexities of settling the question of interim civil and criminal jurisdiction. Although jurisdictional concepts suggested by the U.S. envisaged a situation in which all local populace had been removed and only U.S. or British personnel were present, in fact there may be a variety of interim situations during which construction may be going on (using perhaps some local personnel), or land-purchase negotiations might not be completed and hence some local inhabitants still present. Some difficulties arose because the Colonial Office has not itself settled on the nature of the administration envisaged for the islands on which there would not be early construction of defense facilities. It was agreed both sides would exchange information and seek quickly to settle on language to complete this agreement.

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Although retention of specific islands under British sovereignty is now firmly agreed, Orders in Council will be issued only after agreement with the Seychelles on the tracking station and settlement for islands retained. U.S. facilities may be constructed any time after that event. However, the British may well await word from the U.S. as to results of the review of the communications station requirement on Chagos, which was ordered by Mr. McNamara at the end of August. In addition, we will probably have to assure ourselves that the Colonial Office does not allow negotiations with local landowners (most of whom are equally members of the local administrations) to delay the Orders in Council providing for retaining the Chagos Archipelago.

From their initial soundings, the British anticipate little difficulty in retaining the three islands of the Seychelles. They expect the private landowners to be somewhat troublesome, in a financial sense, but they are prepared to pursue this shortly and in a vigorous manner. The outlook, overall, is very favorable now that the pattern has been set with the Mauritians.

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Letter, John Doe to the President, 5/22/67, Name File, WHCF, LBJ Library.

Memo, David Hornig to the President, 5/13/65, Ex ED 2, WHCF, Box 5, LBJ Library.

Cable, State 77828 to Lagos, 12/1/67, #30, "Nigeria, Vol. II," Country File, NSF, Box 96, LBJ Library.

Memo, Manatos to McPherson, 3/5/65, "State of the Union," Office Files of Bill Moyers, Box 42, LBJ Library.

Transcript of Telephone Conversation between Lyndon B. Johnson and Luther Hodges, February 1, 1964, 12:57PM, Citation #1803, Recordings and Transcripts of Conversations and Meetings, LBJ Library.

Letter, Lyndon Johnson to Ramsey Clark, 9/13/67, "President's Correspondence," Papers of Ramsey Clark, Box 34, LBJ Library.

Letter, Lyndon B. Johnson to Winston Churchill, 1/2/55, "Churchill, Winston," LBJA Famous Names, Box 2, LBJ Library.

Letter, Jake Pickle to Lyndon Johnson, 6/15/54, "Correspondence - J.J. Pickle," Senate Political Files, Box 19, LBJ Library.

Memo, Marvin Watson to the President, 3/28/67, "March 31, 1967," President's Appointment File [Diary Backup], Box 111, LBJ Library.