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680.1 Jan-July
RG 330 Stk 490
ASD ISA Decf 6 1962
Box 72

SECRET

In reply refer to I-16,011/62

5 MAY 1962

680.1

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Base rights in the Indian Ocean area

There is attached a letter from the Department of State responding to our letter of 2 March, a copy of which has been furnished to you, concerning the availability of certain islands in the Indian Ocean for military purposes. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had earlier written to the Secretary of Defense on this subject in their memorandum JCSM-26-62.

The letter from the State Department indicates that outright acquisition by the United States of territory in the Indian Ocean area for military purposes would not be politically feasible. However, although it foresees political difficulties, the State Department is prepared to explore in confidential discussions with the United Kingdom and Australia the possibility of arranging for emergency or base rights in respect of certain of the islands mentioned in JCSM-26-62.

In this regard, the State Department foresees: (1) the possibility of arranging in advance for the emergency use of the Cocos Islands; (2) the same prospect for Diego Garcia if the U.S. is prepared to fund the major costs of developing joint U.S.-U.K. facilities there; and (3) the likelihood of being able to make arrangements in time of emergency for the use of Gan, Socotra, and the Seychelles. However, the State Department considers the advance establishment of U.S. military bases in Socotra and the Seychelles would create a political liability for the U.S., and its evaluation of the possibilities at Gan argues against the likelihood of overt advance preparations by the U.S. there.

As a next step, it would be helpful to discuss in more detail with the State Department our plans for the use of facilities in the Indian Ocean area. We should be prepared to indicate the types of facilities we envisage at each of the locations, and the extent to which the U.S. would be prepared to fund the establishment of joint U.S.-U.K. facilities

Tab A

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC
REGRADING; DOD DIR 5200.10
DOES NOT APPLY

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I 16011/62

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at Diego Garcia. It would also be useful to know whether existing facilities at Aden, Socotra, and the Seychelles would be adequate for our purposes in an emergency and, if not, whether the U.S. would be prepared to contribute toward the development and continued maintenance of emergency facilities under U.K. auspices. It would be appreciated if this office could be provided with appropriate information on the foregoing points and if representatives of the Joint Staff would be prepared to participate in our discussions with the State Department.

William P. Bundy
Acting Assistant Secretary

This will be a good State/Jcs item when the duck's are more in a row. ?

Inclosure
Ltr fm State

RWBronez/nsw ISA/FMRA
I-16,011/62 3 May 62

Orig & 3 cc - Chm, JCS D-43076
cc - R&C
cc - reading file
cc - subj file
cc - chron file

(?) places to search

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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE *(INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS)*
INTEROFFICE CONTROL SHEET

DATE: 3 May 1962

LOG NUMBER: I-16,011/62

	TO:	INITIAL	FOR: INFORMATION	CONCURRENCE	APPROVAL	SIGNATURE	ACTION	DISPOSITION
	ASSISTANT SEC/DEF *(ISA)*							
5	DEPUTY ASD				X	X		
4	SPECIAL ASSISTANTS Mr Toner		X					
8	EXECUTIVE OFFICER		X					
	DEPUTY ASD/REGIONAL AFFAIRS Alvey					X		
	DIRECTOR, EUROPEAN REGION							
1	DIRECTOR, NESA REGION			X				
	DIRECTOR, FAR EAST REGION							
	DIRECTOR, W. HEMISPHERE REGION							
	DIRECTOR, SINO-SOVIET REGION							
	DIRECTOR, FOREIGN MIL RIGHTS AFFAIRS							
	DIRECTOR, FOREIGN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS							
	DEPUTY ASD/DISARMAMENT							
	DIRECTOR, DISARMAMENT							
	DEPUTY ASD/PLANNING AND NSC							
2	DIRECTOR, POLICY PLANNING STAFF			X				
	DIRECTOR, COORDINATING STAFF							
	DIRECTOR OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE							
	DEPUTY DIRECTOR/MA							
	CHIEF, PLANNING DIVISION							
	CHIEF, PROGRAMMING DIVISION							
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	CHIEF, MANPOWER & TRNG DIVISION							
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	DIRECTOR, POLICY REVIEW STAFF							
	LEGAL ADVISOR							
	PUBLIC AFFAIRS							
5	RECORDS AND CONTROL *(ISA)*							X

SUBJECT: Base rights in Indian Ocean area

ORIGINATOR AND EXTENSION: R. W. Bronez, ISA/FMRA
Room 3E188, ext. 56387

REMARKS

It is recommended that you sign the attached self-explanatory memorandum to the Chairman, JCS, forwarding a copy of a State Department letter on this subject and requesting information upon which further discussions can be based.

William Lang
WILLIAM E. LANG
Director
Foreign Military Rights Affairs

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SD FORM 1 AUG 61 161 PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THIS FORM ARE OBSOLETE.

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Roy
Lets discuss

March 28, 1962

I 25049/62
Mr Brown

Dear Haydn:

My staff has been exploring with other interested areas of the Department of State the questions raised in your letter of March 2, 1962 to Deputy Under Secretary Johnson regarding the possibility of using small islands in the Indian Ocean as military bases in emergency situations. I don't recall we put it this way.

As you will appreciate there are numerous, serious political problems associated with obtaining base or emergency operating rights in this area. However, we are not averse to exploring this problem including holding confidential discussions with the Governments of Australia and the United Kingdom.

We do not now believe that the suggestion that we might acquire these or other locations through outright purchase is practical since such action would play directly into the hands of Soviet Bloc propaganda. Also, in our view, an approach to the British or Australians will have to contain an offer to pay a substantial part of the cost of any facilities if it is to meet with success.

With regard to the island of Gan in the Maldives, we see little likelihood of securing permission from either the British or the officials of the Maldives for the establishment of bases unless and until the external threat in the Indian Ocean area becomes more apparent to the local states than it is now. Recent conversations with British Embassy officials regarding the transit of Pakistani troops through the Maldives enroute to the SEATO area reinforce this belief. On the other hand, if an emergency actually develops we believe that our chances would be good of getting necessary access at least for the duration of the emergency. This is a question which we have under active consideration and which will receive our continuing attention.

In contrast, the political reading on the Cocos Islands is that they

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that they will remain Australian indefinitely and we will have no particular difficulty in using them in an emergency. The Department of State would have no objection to discussing this situation in confidence with the Government of Australia and would anticipate an affirmative response.

As you know, the island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago is administratively attached to Mauritius. There is a movement toward self-government in Mauritius and it is likely that goal will be realized in the next few years. There appears to be no logical reason, except administrative convenience, for the attachment of Diego Garcia to Mauritius. They are some twelve hundred miles apart. The Department of State would have no objection to initiating confidential talks with the United Kingdom regarding the detachment of Diego Garcia from the Mauritius group before the granting of self-government and raising its possible use as an emergency base. However, it is our belief that in such discussions we will have to offer to pay the major costs of establishing base facilities. If we discuss this with the British as a joint project we believe there is some chance of success. Merely asking them to hold the island for our emergency use without an offer on our part to finance development of facilities will not be sufficient.

With reference to Socotra in the Eastern Aden Protectorate, we would consider the establishment of a U.S. military base here as a political liability adversely affecting U.S. interests in the Arab Near East. Accordingly, we would prefer that Socotra be excluded from consideration. In any case, we foresee no movement for independence during the near future. In any emergency during this period, therefore, we believe we will, with advance consultation and planning, be able to use the island. The same applies to the islands of the Seychelles group.

In summary, the Department of State will continue to review the question of the Maldives but believes there is a good chance of access if an actual emergency develops. We do not foresee major difficulties in the Cocos or at Diego Garcia and are willing to discuss the emergency use of these islands in confidence with Australia and the United Kingdom. We are willing, also, to discuss with the British the possibility of the use of Socotra and the Seychelles.

Since I

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Since I am not clear as to the timing you envisage, I think we should discuss this matter further. I am ready to meet with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Kitchen
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Politico-Military Affairs

The Honorable
Haydn Williams,
Deputy Assistant Secretary,
for Regional Affairs,
Department of Defense