

SRG MEETING 5/6/75  
INDIAN OCEAN  
MINUTES

SENIOR REVIEW GROUP MEETING

May 6, 1975

Time and Place: 4:16 p.m. -5:04 p.m., White House Situation Room

Subject: Indian Ocean

Participants:

Chairman: Henry A. Kissinger

State: Robert Ingersoll  
Helmut Sonnenfeldt  
George Vest  
Tom Thorton

CIA: William Colby  
Ted A. Cherry

ACDA: John Lehman  
John Newhouse

Defense: William Clements  
Amos Jordan  
James Noyes

NSC Staff: Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft  
Robert Oakley  
Jan Lodal  
Richard Boverie  
Col. Clinton Granger  
James Barnum

JCS: Gen. George S. Brown  
Lt. Gen. John W. Pauly

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

-- The Presidential Determination on Diego Garcia would be forwarded to the President for his signature at a time to be determined;

--that the initiation of negotiations on arms control in the Indian Ocean would be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Presidential Determination.

~~SECRET~~ (XGDS)

Secretary Kissinger: Bill, do you have a briefing?

Mr. Colby: (Began to brief from the attached text.)

Secretary Kissinger: What do you mean the northwest region? Where is that? (Referring to a statement in the briefing that the Soviet Indian Ocean force generally spends its time in the northwestern reaches of the Ocean.)

Mr. Colby: In the area around Socotra Island, and in this area (pointing to the map.) (Continued to brief.)

Secretary Kissinger: Is this missile-handling facility that you are talking about (Berbera, Somalia) the same one as you showed me earlier in the blown-up photos?

Mr. Colby: Yes. (Continued to brief.)

Secretary Kissinger: What are the Soviets doing for Somalia in return?

Mr. Colby: I don't know exactly, but they do have a military aid program. What the magnitude of the program is I can't tell you at the moment. There was an exaggerated story in the newspapers about six months ago about some sort of treaty relationship between the USSR and Somalia, but that story did not turn out to be true. (Continued to brief.)

Secretary Kissinger: Are those satellite photos? (Referring to photos Mr. Colby was showing.)

Mr. Colby: Yes. (Continued to brief.)

Secretary Kissinger: Do we have any there? (Referring to U.S. submarines in the Indian Ocean)

Mr. Colby: I don't believe we do.

Gen. Brown: No, we don't.

Secretary Kissinger: Why don't we have submarines in the Indian Ocean?

Gen. Brown: They are too hard to support. Our force plans don't call for subs in the Indian Ocean.

SECRET (XGDS)

Secretary Kissinger: I'm talking about nuclear submarines.

Gen. Brown: We have none, but we do have attack subs in the Indian Ocean. They are part of our regular patrols.

Mr. Colby: (Finished his briefing.)

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I think that, basically, we have two things to talk about today--Diego Garcia, and its relationship to arms control. I know that the Working Group has come up with three options as to what our force presence should be in the Indian Ocean. The first option foresees a pre-October 1973 force level, which is lower than our current deployment level. The second option is of a somewhat higher level, and the third option calls for a high level, or a significant increase in force presence. I can guess what everybody here favors. I want to congratulate the Working Group for the careful way in which they put the choices before us!

Is anybody in favor of the pre-October 1973 level?

Mr. Lodal: There is some sentiment for the lower level, but it is not significant.

Secretary Kissinger: What kind of forces do we have on Diego Garcia at the present time?

Mr. Clements: We have a very small presence.

Gen. Brown: All we have is a communications facility there. There are no forces, as such.

Mr. Clements: There are only 280 people there, Henry.

Secretary Kissinger: Yeah, and I suppose they are commanded by two General officers!

Mr. Clements: No, no, Henry. We can do it, though, if you want to.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I don't think that we need a big discussion on force levels. The real issue is deployment. Let me get it clear on what you mean by arms control approaches for limiting deployments. One would be limits on naval deployments, and the second would be limits on bases. Is that correct? But couldn't limits on naval deployments be negotiated independent of limits on bases?

Mr. Clements: I don't think so, Henry. Diego Garcia is a support facility, not a base. In the context of our terminology, Diego Garcia is not a base.

Secretary Kissinger: What's the difference between a support facility and a base?

Mr. Clements: Well, it becomes a base when we make certain improvements. As you know, we propose only to add about 300 more people to that facility. That would only make a total complement of some 600 people.

Secretary Kissinger: What would 300 more people do that the 280 people can't do now?

Mr. Clements: Well, they would refuel airplanes, service a deep-water jetty that we plan to build there, and do other general housekeeping duties.

Secretary Kissinger: I assume that you would want to go from a support facility to a base. I could get more enthusiastic about a base than just upping the number of people from 280 to 600.

Gen. Brown: We've been in there at Diego Garcia for some time now. We want to improve the facilities, you know, like provide some ramps and some parking facilities for aircraft.

Secretary Kissinger: What would you do if you made it a base?

Gen. Brown: What we're talking about is making Diego Garcia a support base, not an operational base. An operational base means that you would have a deployed unit stationed there at all times. We're not talking about that.

Mr. Clements: Yeah, Henry, we're not talking about an operational base.

Gen. Brown: Besides, Diego Garcia could become more important if we lose those facilities in Thailand.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I'm not opposed to the concept of a base at Diego Garcia, I'm just trying to understand what is needed.

Mr. Clements: All it would mean is that there would be more people stationed there. There would be no planes stationed there. We want to build a jetty and some other things, but there would be no ships stationed there.

(XGDS)

Mr. Colby: Isn't what you want some sort of base for repair work and things like that?

Mr. Clements: Yes, that's it. It would be used for refueling aircraft and ships and things like that. You know, I'd hate to have to take that Bahrain facility (from which three Mideast Force ships operate) out of there. I'm really enthusiastic about the Bahrain facility.

Secretary Kissinger: Then what the hell did you do to make us lose it?

Mr. Clements: We haven't lost it. All that business was just cover for the Emir. He still wants us there. He's having trouble with the Council, and is just playing up to them. He's posturing.

Mr. Clements: He (the Emir) just wants the Council to think that they are involved in this thing. He didn't sign the agreement, but has no intention of refusing. It's just a ploy to hold the Council off for a while. In the meantime, he's happy that we are there.

Secretary Kissinger: John (Mr. Lehman) are you here for ACDA or for Senator Jackson?

Mr. Lehman: For ACDA.

Secretary Kissinger: What do you propose along the lines of arms control negotiations?

Mr. Lehman: We have identified four possible actions that could be taken. Only two of them make any real sense. Our first option would be that we do nothing, but tell the British about NSSM 199 and that we have studied the problem. This would be the consult and study issue that they are worried about. This would partially get us off the hook.

Secretary Kissinger: How would this get us partially off the hook?

Mr. Lehman: One of the Brit's complaints is that we are not studying the problem in the Indian Ocean, and if we let them see NSSM 199, this would show them that we are at least studying the problem and that we have done something.

(XGDS)

SECRETARY KISSINGER: What have we done?

Mr. Lehman: The NSSM 199 study. That's the first option. In the second option, we would propose a freeze--negotiation on a bilateral basis, with the Soviets. We would propose to freeze naval bases at their present level, or some other level--a common ceiling approach. This has not been staffed out as yet, and would involve considerable work.

Secretary Kissinger: And you would hope to exclude Diego Garcia and Bahrain?

Mr. Lehman: We would declare certain places as naval bases and freeze them at a certain level. There would be a limit to the size of the base and on future expansion.

Secretary Kissinger: And you would put a freeze on deployments?

Mr. Lehman: No. We could, at a later date, or if feasible, add an offer to freeze the number of ship days. This has not been thought out entirely yet. Primary attention would be focused on a freeze of major facilities.

Secretary Kissinger: What if the Soviets don't go for a freeze on their base at Berbera?

Mr. Lehman: That would be a problem.

Secretary Kissinger: What would happen if the Soviets wanted to put a freeze on Socotra and Diego Garcia but not Berbera?

Mr. Lehman: Well, that's what you would have to negotiate about. These proposals would be designed only to get Congress off our back about initiating some sort of arms limitations in the area.

Secretary Kissinger: If there is a freeze, would each side be limited to one base or two bases?

Mr. Lehman: It would depend upon the definition of what a base is. We would like to see it restricted to naval bases.

Secretary Kissinger: And would we declare Bahrain a naval base under these circumstances?

Mr. Lehman: Well, that would have to be worked out. At the absolute minimum would be Diego Garcia.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: (XGDS)

Secretary Kissinger: Okay, what are your other two options?

Mr. Lehman: Well, the first one would be a unilateral declaration..... We would try to realistically limit the number of ship days to 1974 levels. This wouldn't affect Diego Garcia. This option is really directed at Congressional concern over the initiation of arms control talks with the Soviets.

Secretary Kissinger: What kind of a ratio, in terms of numbers, are you talking about?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Something like a ten-to-two ratio.

Gen. Brown: In general, we had about 2,600 ship days last year in comparison to 10,500 on the part of the Soviets.

Mr. Lehman: Those figures are misleading and hard to evaluate. You can't compare carrier ship-days to the ship-days of little ships, like destroyers, for example.

Mr. Colby: No matter how you count it, the Soviets still end up with more ship-days than we have had. Even if you reduce the number that Gen. Brown gave, the Soviets end up with a higher number of over-all ship-days.

Gen. Brown: We don't want to chisel these numbers (the ratios) into granite or anything. Our proposal is that we have about the same number of carrier force deployments as we have had--about one every quarter.

Secretary Kissinger: Okay, let's hear the punch line--Option Four.

Mr. Lehman: This option also has not been fully staffed out as yet. What it amounts to is to throw the ball to the United Nations--let them wrestle with the problem.

Secretary Kissinger: That's insanity!

Mr. Lehman: Well, it has the advantage of not giving us more lumps than we would already receive. It has the advantage of showing Congress that we are trying to get some sort of arms control negotiations going. Besides, it would give (Ambassador) Moynihan something to work on.

Secretary Kissinger: What you are saying is that you would rather have the issue kicked around<sup>in</sup> the General Assembly rather than the United States Senate.

Mr. Lehman: Yes. We believe the damage that the U. N. could do would be minimal--as compared to the damage the Senate could do.

Secretary Kissinger: That is, if you can impress upon the Senate to abide by what the General Assembly comes up with.

Mr. Lehman: The U. N. ploy is simply a stall tactic.

Secretary Kissinger: George (Gen. Brown), what do you think?

Gen. Brown: I don't have much of an opinion on these proposals. I can't take them (ACDA's options) seriously. I just don't think the Soviets will go for any of them. Look, we have two major negotiations (SALT and MBFR) going on with them already, and I don't think we need, or should, take on another. I really don't think the Soviets would be interested in negotiations over arms control in the Indian Ocean.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, let me see if I understand your (ACDA's) proposals. One Option would be a freeze on the number of ship-days, and this could be at any level, like 5,000. The first option is irrelevant to the situation at Diego Garcia.

Mr. Lehman: As far as the legislative situation is concerned, no. We already have the authority.

Mr. Clements: All we need is a Presidential Determination.

Secretary Kissinger: Then what you are saying is that a freeze on the number of ship-days, at any level, would not affect Diego Garcia. That (Diego Garcia) could be negotiated separately. We would have to assume that each side (the USSR and the U. S. ) would declare more bases than it actually has so that it can maintain the ones it really wants. What do we have, at least two bases, Bahrain and Diego Garcia?

Mr. Clements: We can't declare Bahrain a base. It's not a base.

Mr. Newhouse: Is the incentive of a freeze on bases not for each side to have a larger number of bases than the other?

Secretary Kissinger: But then you get into a debate about what is a base and what is not a base.

Mr. Newhouse: Well, you don't have to make it that complicated.

[REDACTED] (XGDS)



Secretary Kissinger: But does it include Diego Garcia? In other words, suppose we say that in a freeze we will keep Diego Garcia and they can keep Berbera.

Mr. Oakley: The problem is that they will say that the Berbera facility belongs to Somalia--that it is not their (the Soviets) base.

Mr. Clements: Yeah, and how about Aden? That's a beautiful facility that they have there. Suppose they give up Berbera and switch to Aden.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I guess we could say--a way to prevent that is to allow each only one base and declare the rest illegal.

Mr. Lehman: That could be. Of course, we could use Perth (Australia) as a base. There's a good harbor there.

Mr. Colby: There are various other bases in the area we could use.

Secretary Kissinger: If we claim other bases in the area.... How about Singapore?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Both of us (the USSR and the US) could claim Singapore at the present time.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I'm just trying to define what a base is. What would happen if they declared Berbera a Somalia base?

Mr. Colby: They would just declare Aden a Yemeni base.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, what I would like to do is separate the Diego Garcia and Indian Ocean issues. I think that if we try to link the two, it will be impossible to get Diego Garcia.

Mr. Clements: Are the British pushing us on this?

Mr. Lehman: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: What is the Congressional picture?

Mr. Clements: Henry, I don't think the Presidential Determination will be defeated.

Mr. Ingersoll: We think it will. There is a lot of differing opinion on this.

(XGDS)

Secretary Kissinger: What's the problem?

Mr. Lehman: The President must submit a Presidential Determination affirming the essentiality of Diego Garcia before funds can be obligated. The Senate will have to pass a disapproving resolution to knock it down. The Kennedy-Javits-Pell Resolution requires an attempt to negotiate a formal arms control agreement in the Indian Ocean. Our Congressional Relations people say that we can stop the Kennedy Resolution.

Secretary Kissinger: I would be happy to discuss arms control, but only after we get the funds for Diego Garcia. I don't like to see our military programs getting mixed up with negotiations. It just is not sound.

Mr. Clements: We could offer Masirah as a trade!

Gen. Brown: That's a good trade!

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I think that if a Presidential Determination is put forward it should not be linked to any kind of arms limitation negotiations.

Mr. Clements: Right!

Secretary Kissinger: When would be the best time to put the Presidential Determination forward?

Mr. Clements: I really don't know, Henry.

Secretary Kissinger: (Senator) Stennis says June would be a good time.

Mr. Lehman: Stennis wants to hold off on the P. D. until after the Defense Bill is approved. He feels that he will be too tied up on that to give the P. D. the proper attention it needs. Also, if we wait until June, Congress would have less time to pass a defeating resolution. The P. D. has to lie in Congress at least 60 days. By putting it forward in late June, Congress would have only about 20 days to discuss it before they go on recess.

Gen. Brown: Would this get mixed up in the funding for FY 1976?

Mr. Lehman: No, we can hide it.

Secretary Kissinger: By the way, are you serious about stopping the withdrawal of those planes out of Thailand?

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~ (XGDS)

Gen. Brown: Yes. We already have out what we wanted. The rest are things we don't need.

Mr. Clements: We took the cream of the crop, Henry. All that is left is junk.

Secretary Kissinger: Who ordered it stopped? I think we should get some foreign policy benefit out of it. Why did it stop? Who ordered it?

Gen. Brown: (Charge!) Masters, I think, but I'll check.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, it makes a difference whether Masters ordered the stop or whether the Department of Defense did. What happened, George (Vest)? That's your area.

Mr. Vest: It was part of a political dialogue. The foreign minister was posturing. It was part of his grand stand play. He had to put up a fuss for political reasons, but the Thai's are happy. The foreign minister is just playing to the opposition. All the cream has left. The Thais are happy.

Secretary Kissinger: Okay, let's proceed with the Presidential Determination. We'll offer arms limitation negotiations after the Presidential Determination is announced.

Mr. Clements: Good. We'll need a strategy for getting it through, you know. We'll need the help of everybody here, plus the Administration.

Secretary Kissinger: I don't want State pushing for arms limitations negotiations until after we get the funds for Diego Garcia. I want to separate arms control in the Indian Ocean from the funding for Diego Garcia. Otherwise, we'll be dragged into endless negotiations.

Mr. Clements: Good.

~~SECRET / SENSITIVE~~ (XGDS)