

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET
BY THE HON. PRIME MINISTER

Development of Manoel Island

Proposals were made to the Service Authorities in the summer of 1963 for the partial vacation of Manoel Island and negotiations were started on the subject. At the request of the Minister of Industrial Development and Tourism, the Naval Authorities were informed on 21st March, 1964, "that certain developments which render it necessary to treat the development of the Island as a single, comprehensive project" had caused the Malta Government to ask for the return of the whole of Manoel Island at an early date.

2. In reply the Naval Authorities said that they would give consideration to the needs of the Malta Government but they requested confirmation that the Malta Government would bear the cost of providing alternative land and accommodation elsewhere for those facilities which the Naval Authorities had planned to continue to have on Manoel Island, viz., the Joint Tactical School, the Signal Training Centre, the Fleet Clearance Diving Centre and the Manoel Island Services Club.

3. The Naval Authorities based this request on their understanding of certain discussions which took place between officials of the Malta Government and the United Kingdom Defence Agreement Delegation. A reply was returned to the Naval Authorities that the Government had not given an undertaking to provide alternative land and accommodation for the establishments on Manoel Island but that the Government would be prepared to meet the Service Authorities once again to discuss further the complete evacuation of Manoel Island.

4. It now transpires that the firm Messrs. Raglan Squire which had originally requested a concession of the whole of Manoel Island is not interested in that part of Manoel Island which lies north of the main road and which comprises the Drydocks and two naval establishments which house the Joint Tactical School, the Signal Training Centre and the Fleet Clearance Diving Centre; nor is the Italian Hotel Company interested in this area. The Minister of Industrial Development and Tourism agrees that the development of Manoel Island for tourism is not contingent on the whole of the Island being made available for the purpose and the continued presence of the naval centres which are grouped in two shore establishments would not hamper in any way the plans for Manoel Island.

5. As regards the Manoel Island Services Club, the position is that the grounds attached to the club lie south of the main road and within the area ripe for development. The club buildings lie north of the road and project into the Drydocks.

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6. As negotiations on Manoel Island are being resumed shortly, Ministers are asked to agree -

- (i) that the Naval Authorities should be allowed to retain the two shore establishments on Manoel Island which they propose to join by an enclosing fence for security and demarcation purposes; and
- (ii) that the Naval Authorities should be allowed the temporary use of Manoel Island Services Club for a period of five years after which the club will be incorporated in any plans for the development of Manoel Island.

7. The implication of allowing the Naval Authorities to retain the two establishments unconditionally is that, in terms of the draft Defence Agreement, the Malta Government will be responsible to provide alternative land and accommodation for the establishments if the Naval Authorities are asked to give them up in future. With regard to (i) it is not envisaged that the area covered by these establishments will be required for tourist or other development. As regards (ii) it is not likely that the incorporation of the Club in the plans for Manoel Island will need to be made within the next five years.

18th May, 1964.

L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta