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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

9 SEP. 1971

Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams
Office of the Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ambassador Williams,

This letter sets forth the long-term requirements of the United States for military basing options in the area encompassed by the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). Requirements pertinent to other departments and agencies, including the Department of Transportation (U.S. Coast Guard) are not included.

I am sure you are familiar with the statement of U.S. strategic interests with respect to the TTPI concurred in by the interested executive departments and forwarded to the President on March 31, 1971 (NSC-U/DM 62).^{*} What follows below is consistent with and an elaboration upon that basic statement, which remains valid.

The specific requirements herein with respect to U.S. use of land in the TTPI are founded largely upon certain of what I believe to be the enduring interests of the United States. The interests of concern include the U.S. ability to:

- Implement a defense-in-depth in the Pacific to the West of the State of Hawaii.
- Defend Guam.
- Defend the islands of Micronesia, since they would become a permanent United States defense responsibility, as anticipated by each of the successive U.S. negotiating positions approved by the President on 20 July 1971.
- Defend lines of communication through the Central Pacific in order to assure continuing freedom of transit for essential strategic materials which would not otherwise be available in time of war.
- Carry out treaty commitments.
- Maintain a credible nuclear and conventional deterrent to armed aggression against the U.S., its allies, and countries considered vital to our security; and continue to maintain a balance among the great powers in Asia (China, Japan, USSR, and U.S.) which discourages the use of force as an instrument of national policy in the area.
- Meet future contingencies and satisfy research and development (R&D) requirements.

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* Attachment to JCS 2206/58 00

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... following facts and evident trends are pertinent to any definition of our military land needs in the TTPI:

- Population pressure and economic development will continue both in Guam, Micronesia, and elsewhere in the Western Pacific; this will progressively diminish the land available for U.S. military purposes.
- Current U.S. bases in the Western Pacific (e.g., in Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan and Philippines) are subject to political pressures and decisions which could deprive the U.S. of operating flexibility to an increasing extent, with a tendency to limit the use of bases to the immediate defense of the country in which they are located.
- Threats against U.S. interests could arise in the future not only from countries which today appear potentially hostile but also from those with whom we currently have good relations or even defense commitments; for example, bases could be established by governments hostile to the U.S. in the wake of political turmoil in various Pacific Islands.
- Of the strategic and critical material imports the U.S. must obtain from external sources (i.e., from beyond the North American continent and the Caribbean) in a period of emergency, about 38% in dollar value (\$600 million annually) would be obtained by sea transport through the Central Pacific. This includes 32 of the 72 items on the Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) List of Strategic and Critical Material. In the future, U.S. reliance on these overseas sources is expected to increase markedly as will the importance of lines of communications through sea areas adjoining Micronesia.

It should be noted that:

- Our needs for basing options do not represent a new requirement; the U.S. currently possesses a legal right to establish military bases and facilities in Micronesia under the Trusteeship Agreement. This right was acquired on the basis of an assessment of U.S. long-term strategic interests made prior to establishment of Micronesia as a unique "strategic" trust some 24 years ago, an assessment that is hereby reaffirmed.
- Future political and technical developments, including future generations of strategic weaponry, cannot be predicted with certainty; the U.S. requires some flexibility in the future to take account of events that are unforeseeable today.
- The minimum requirements specified below are not predicated upon loss of existing U.S. bases in the Western Pacific (a military base structure in Micronesia which could only partially compensate for loss of existing Western Pacific bases would require substantially more than the minimum acreage specified).

In brief, the requirements set forth below would ensure continuation of options that are required not only for the foreseeable future but, for the most part, permanently.

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Under the circumstances set forth above, our ability to exercise eminent domain in a new political relationship with Micronesia, would best assure the U.S. ability to satisfy possible future basing requirements beyond those which can be predicted with relative certainty and satisfied in advance, since land generally is not a marketable commodity in Micronesia. Should an unrestricted exercise of eminent domain not be possible, virtually any reasonable limitations (e.g., national emergency declared by the President; rights obtainable limited to long-term lease) would be better than not having this right at all.

Finally, should eminent domain not be obtainable in any form, certain minimum essential requirements must be satisfied if the U.S. is to be assured of even a fair chance of preserving the interests set forth above over an uncertain future. These minimum requirements have been defined on the following basis:

- Certain land is of such overriding, long-term importance that it should be acquired as soon as possible by the U.S.--even if the ability to exercise eminent domain is retained. However, elsewhere, long-term leases or lesser interests will suffice.
- Political realities in the TTPI are taken into consideration to the maximum practicable extent, with full knowledge inter alia of the importance of land in the Micronesian culture.
- Joint Service basing is contemplated to preclude duplication and minimize requirements.
- Land of least relative economic value to the Micronesians is specified wherever there is a choice. In particular, a thorough study of possible basing alternatives in the Western Carolines was made and considered.
- Possible basing afloat and anticipated improvements in sea and air mobility also were considered.

Based on a thorough review of all these factors, the following principal, minimum long-term real property is required:

- Kwajalein, Marshall Islands. Retention of current land holdings associated with the missile testing facility, (about 1,320 acres; continuation of long-term leases and other use agreements, both current and pending).
- Bikini, Marshall Islands. Retention of 1.9 acres for emplacement of future, unmanned instrumentation.
- Tinian, Mariana Islands. To provide basing options for all of the Services, outright acquisition of the entire island is a highly desirable objective, which would permit us to avoid many predictable future problems. But obtaining the northern part, with its World War II airfields, and acquisition of the harbor on a joint-use (civilian-military) basis, are essential. (16,518 acres out of a total of 26,200 acres.) Population on this good-sized island is relatively small (about 800), and much of the essential land currently is in a military retention status.

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-- Palau Islands: (1) access and anchorage rights in Malakal Harbor, (2) acquisition of 40 acres of fill rights and connecting land in the Malakal harbor area for a small support facility; (3) joint-use (civilian-military) of an airfield capable of supporting military jet aircraft operations (possibly a new airfield constructed on a reef area off Carreru Island), (4) a right that will permit acquisition or the long-term assured use of 1,500 to 2,000 acres on the west coast of Babelthuap as a logistics and basing area, and (5) an arrangement that assures the right to use 25,000 to 30,000 acres on Babelthuap as a ground force maneuver/training area. (Involves use of about one-third of Babelthuap, a large island--28 miles long, 7 miles wide--with a population of about 4,000.) The Palau Islands, 700 miles Southwest of Guam and some 1,200 miles to the North of Australia and Indonesia, would provide assured options with respect to the increasingly important Southwest Pacific area as well as constitute a key defense outpost on the Western fringe of Micronesia.

It should be recognized clearly that satisfaction of only these minimum requirements entails acceptance of a number of inherent and associated strategic risks. In particular, I wish to highlight the fact that lands retained for ground force use in Micronesia will only support staging of forces or basing and training of units up to brigade size. In the light of all relevant circumstances, I believe that our needs are reasonable and, if anything, understated. Our national security requirements, moreover, of which basing options are an important part, are the only real justification we will have in asking the U.S. Congress to enter into a new relationship with Micronesia involving the continuation of a substantial level of financial support. Accordingly, the above requirements should be approached as an irreducible minimum.

The attachments contain additional information concerning the minimum requirements described above, together with certain other requirements; a list of current military retention holdings that might be released during negotiations; and comments on compensation to be offered for acquisitions. Data of a more detailed nature is being provided separately.

To facilitate any subsequent discussion of this subject, I am providing Secretary Rogers, Secretary Morton, and Dr. Kissinger with copies of this letter. In closing, I wish to emphasize the importance that I attach to satisfaction of the above requirements.

Yours truly,



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