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In reply refer to:
I-36087/71

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Military Basing in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)

Reference is made to Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum dated 18 October 1971 (JCSM-456-71), recommending early initiating action for future Tinian base development; an action in consonance with the new military requirements stemming from the Okinawa reversion.

The need to move ahead with dispatch and establish a viable military presence in the TTPI, in view of the rapidly changing aspects of the U.S. posture in the Pacific, is recognized. I am concerned, however, that planning and programming actions, even if classified, could be compromised and adversely used to affect the on-going Micronesian Status Negotiations. Because of this concern Ambassador Williams, the head of the U.S. delegation was queried concerning the substance of your memorandum. His response relayed the same fears and is attached for your information.

Based on my current understanding of the situation, it does not appear that a relatively short delay at this time in the development of Tinian Island would jeopardize national security when viewed in the context of the possible adverse effects such action may have on the overall U.S. goals of the Micronesian negotiations. I am told that the next round of negotiations is anticipated in March 1972. I believe we should await the outcome of these negotiations to address the issue, anticipating inclusion of the Tinian development project in the FY 74 budget.

In view of the on-going political status talks with the Micronesians and the potential critical effect of outside events on the outcome of these talks, it is considered detrimental for any revelation of specific facility programming actions in the Tinian area until firm status agreements and land negotiations have been established. Accordingly, although the Tinian plans, referenced in paragraphs 1a and 1c of JCSM-456-71, may be incorporated into appropriate planning documents on a contingency basis, no facility programming actions (i.e. project documentation, requests for funds, etc.) should be contemplated until completion of negotiations.

Should you determine that national security would be jeopardized by delaying the programming of essential facilities involved in the development of Tinian for about a year, I would appreciate receiving your views.

(S)
Melvin Laird

Attachment

PREP: CAPT SCHULLER/OSD/ISA/EAPR/6 Dec 71/rdm/71802
LIST: Orig & 3 - Addee Xerox cy - ASD:I&L
Grn - OSD Files xerox cy - Asst. to Sec(AE)
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