



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

to be returned
to the Director of the
Joint Staff



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OSD letter, May 6, 1972
By *ALJ/ML* NARS Date *3-14-75*

19 October 1945

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:



The enclosed study on the necessity from the point of view of the national defense of the retention of ex-Japanese Mandated Islands and other captured Japanese Islands in the Pacific, is forwarded for your information.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have approved of this study as a matter of record.

With your approval copies will be sent to the Secretary of State, Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

William D. Egan

WILLIAM D. EGAN,
Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Chief of Staff to the
Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy.

Incl.

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STRATEGIC AREAS AND TRUSTEESHIPS IN THE PACIFIC

THE PROBLEM

1. To recapitulate arguments for:
 - a. Exclusive and permanent control by the United States of the ex-Japanese Mandated Islands.
 - b. Retention of the Nansei Shoto south of latitude 29° North, Nanpo Shoto south of Sofu Gan, and Marcus Island under United Nations strategic trusteeships administered by the United States.

PRESENTATION

2. The ex-Japanese Mandates were acquired by Germany late in the nineteenth century and were a portion of German holdings both north and south of the Equator. The fundamental relationship of the ex-Japanese Mandates to the security of the United States has been recognized by the War and Navy Departments ever since they were first seized by Japan in 1914. The efforts of these departments to prevent the allocation of those islands to Japan by the Versailles Conference proved unsuccessful, largely because of secret agreements entered into between the British and Japanese in February, 1917. By a secret treaty Great Britain agreed that in the peace treaty, following World War I, she would support Japanese claims to German rights in Shantung and to German islands north of the Equator in exchange for similar support by Japan for British claims to German islands south of the Equator. By treaties in March, 1917, France and Russia also agreed to support the Japanese claims. As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, all of the German islands north of the Equator were given to Japan as a mandate under the League of Nations. Although not a party to this agreement, the United States on 11 February 1922 entered into a treaty with Japan whereby we "consented" to the administration by Japan of all



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the former German islands in the Pacific Ocean lying north of the Equator. This treaty also confirmed Article 4 of the Mandate which provided that no military or naval bases were to be established or fortifications erected in the territory.

3. As was apparent then and as was evidenced in World War II, Japanese control of these islands was a direct and grave menace to the security of the Western Hemisphere, a menace which increased progressively with developments in aviation. Our political policy in 1922 disregarded the significance of these islands in connection with control of the Pacific Ocean, the defense of the Western Hemisphere and our line of communications to the Philippines, in that it did not insist upon safeguards against their being developed as military and naval bases by Japan.

4. Between the two world wars we owned Guam and the Philippines and assumed the responsibility for protecting them. The development of Japanese naval and air bases in the Mandates during the period between the two wars placed the United States in the very vulnerable and militarily unsound position of having the continued responsibility for the security of Guam and the Philippines without having control of the line of communications to them. Moreover, the possession of these bases in the Mandated Islands by the Japanese gave them control of vast areas in the Pacific, enabling them to challenge the security of the Hawaiian Islands, which are indispensable to the control of the eastern Pacific and thus to the security of the United States. Our vulnerable situation in the Pacific was recognized in the 5-3 ratio, which was not maintained by the United States, thereby paving the way for World War II with its expense in lives and treasure. Effective political denial of the Mandates for development as naval and air bases by Japan following World War I would have been of supreme importance not only in connection with our preparations for war but in the conduct of operations in the Pacific in World War II.



5. Throughout the intervening period between the two wars our military and naval thinking was devoted to the problem of how a line of communications could be reopened through to the Philippines for their relief in the event of war with Japan. The futility of this and the meager results obtained with the limited resources available were forcibly demonstrated by the surrender of the Philippines in May, 1942, before the resources for their relief could be developed. The pre-war plans for reestablishing ourselves in the Philippines followed relatively closely the pattern of the steps which finally had to be undertaken at such tremendous cost in 1943-45. In the conduct of this campaign, the elementary objective was not so much to get back to the Philippines as to project our forces to the Asiatic mainland for the purposes of cutting off the enemy from the vast natural resources of Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies (and conversely to keep these resources available to augment our own war making potential), together with procuring the necessary bases for softening up the enemy's citadel and providing the areas for mounting the final assault which had to be planned, but fortunately turned out to be unnecessary of execution.

6. The relationship of the subject islands to our security will assume a far more vital character in the future. It can be expected that effective munitioning capacity in East Asia will eventually result from the progressive industrialization of its vast population, approximately one-half of the world's total. For the future security of the United States against a possibly unfriendly and militant Asia, or an Asiatic-European coalition, we must be able to continue to control the Pacific Ocean. Such control is necessary not only so that we can project our own offensive forces against the Asiatic mainland, but also so that we can deny an enemy access to the Western Hemisphere by way of the Pacific Ocean. In arriving at this conclusion, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are not thinking solely in terms of the present but in terms of the future, the next twenty-five, fifty, one hundred years and beyond, when the United Nations may have an entirely different structure from that envisaged now and when an enemy force may exist in East Asia which has the capability of rapidly projecting itself and its new munitions by sea or air to the



eastward, thus threatening our security. On this basis the military base system envisaged for the Pacific by the Joint Chiefs of Staff calls for a firm line of communications from our West Coast to the Asiatic mainland, plus denial of this line in time of war to any potential enemy, or coalition of enemies.

7. Throughout the papers which have been presented on the subject of Pacific bases and strategic areas it has been shown that our strategic need is twofold:

- a. To establish and develop such base sites as we will need for our future security, and
- b. To deny these locations and areas to a potential enemy.

Most of what has been said to date has naturally emphasized the first point. Actually the second point, denial to a potential future enemy, is fully as important and will become more so as funds for development of our own actual base needs are reduced. The importance of this factor may be illustrated by the following situation which may quite possibly face us in the not-too-distant future.

Assume that China has become Communist and a satellite of Russia and that the Soviets in pursuance of their expansionist policies have obtained or seized base rights in the demilitarized Rensei Shoto in the event that they are returned to Japan. Under such circumstances the United States would be confronted with two alternatives: (a) Expend tremendous funds really to build up our own remaining holdings in the Pacific or (b) Follow the process which we adopted before and during World War II, with all the cost of lives and treasure which that process involved.

In such a case, not at all beyond the realm of possibility, the position taken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, particularly with reference to denying a potential enemy a foothold in the Pacific Islands, constitutes the most economical method of assuring our future security in the Pacific.

8. On 21 January 1944 the Australian and New Zealand Governments reached an agreement on matters of common concern in the Southwest and South Pacific areas. Included in this agreement were provisions which are of fundamental importance to the future security

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of the United States. In substance, these provisions asserted the right of Australia and New Zealand to a determining voice in the final disposition of the Pacific islands mandated to Japan. At that time the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the Department of State that the assured possession and control of the Japanese Mandated Islands by the United States are essential to our security in that they bear a vital relation to the defense of the United States. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also stated:

"The Japanese Mandated Islands should be placed under the sole sovereignty (exclusive and permanent control) of the United States. Their conquest is being effected by the forces of the United States and there appears to be no valid reason why their future status should be the subject of discussion with any other nation."

During the hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before the adoption of the United Nations Charter, it was brought out that the Joint Chiefs of Staff "are of the opinion that the military and strategic implications of this draft charter as a whole, are in accord with the military interests of the United States." Also "The War Department is of the opinion that the military and strategic implications of this charter are as a whole in accord with the military interests of the United States." The Secretary of the Navy qualified his approval by stating, "Our agreement that this charter is in accord with the military interests of this country is conditioned by the understanding that the United States is not committed by this charter or any provision thereof to place under trusteeship any territory of any character, and that if this country hereafter determines to place any territory under trusteeship this will be done only on such terms as it may voluntarily agree to." On this point the Chairman, Senator Connally, said, "In short, it was our attitude that if we are in possession of an island which we have conquered from Japan at the cost of blood and treasure we can remain in possession of it, if it is within a strategic area, until we consent to have it go under trusteeship; and when we do agree that it go under the trusteeship, we have the right to stipulate the terms upon which it will go there."

10. Article 82 of the United Nations Charter provides that certain strategic areas may be designated within trusteeship areas. Article 83 of the charter stipulates that these strategic areas are to be administered under the Security Council, which approves "the terms of the trusteeship agreements and . . . their alteration or amendment". The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee has prepared a draft trusteeship agreement for strategic areas which, considered by itself, appears adequately to protect the security interests of the United States. When considered with the Charter of the United Nations, however, there are several particulars in which the draft can be attacked by other nations as being inconsistent with the Charter. The Joint Chiefs of Staff feel that any change in this draft, during the processes of negotiation, which would in any measure lessen the degree of United States control as indicated in the draft, before it evolves in the form of a treaty, would militate against our security interests.

11. Further, while it is recognized that the veto power in the Security Council now affords a certain measure of assurance to the United States of exclusive control and administration of strategic areas once allocated to its control, there is no certainty either that the veto power will continue indefinitely or that in some crisis or even impasse in the Security Council a compromise, weakening this exclusive control, may not be made for the sake of expediency. Also, exercise of the veto power by some other nation might prevent allocation of the subject islands to exclusive United States administrative control unless the proposed draft trusteeship agreement were radically modified. In this event we will be faced with two alternatives: (a) Modify the draft agreement to the extent that it does not satisfy our security interests but is acceptable to the Security Council, or (b) expose ourselves to severe international criticism by withdrawing the offer of trusteeship.



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12. The differences in position center around two points:

a. In SWNCC 59/1 it is proposed that the ex-Japanese Mandates should be turned over to the United Nations and then given to the United States as sole administrator of a trusteeship. The Joint Chiefs of Staff maintain that a trusteeship can not be drawn up with terms in complete and unassailable consonance with the present United Nations Charter and still satisfactorily preserve our security interests.

b. In SWNCC 59/1 it is concluded that the Ryukyus (Ransei Shoto) are unnecessary for our base system and that, therefore, they should be demilitarized and returned to Japan in the category of "minor islands," this terminology apparently being based on that portion of the Potsdam Declaration which says "Japanese Sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as we determine." The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the conclusion classifying the Ryukyus (Ransei Shoto) as unnecessary and minor is unsound. They strongly reiterate that exclusive strategic control of the Ransei Shoto south of latitude 29° North is, from the military point of view, vital to our future security interests.

13. The arguments presented by proponents of trusteeship for the ex-Japanese Mandates are essentially as follows:

a. That the United States is bound by the terms of the Cairo Declaration announced in December 1944, wherein it was stated that the three allies coveted no gain for themselves and had no thought of territorial expansion.

b. That the United States should offer the ex-Japanese Mandates for trusteeship as an expression of good faith in the United Nations, and that this should be done soon, preferably at the opening of the first meeting of the General Assembly.

c. That, since the Joint Chiefs of Staff have agreed to a trusteeship arrangement for the Ransei Shoto and Nanpo Shoto, they should therefore be willing to accept a similar arrangement for the ex-Japanese Mandates.

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14. It will be noted that the Cairo Declaration was subscribed to by the Soviets and that all three powers concerned stated that they had no thought of territorial expansion as a result of World War II. Yet at Yalta, which followed later, the Russians were conceded sovereignty of the Kuriles. The Cairo Declaration was no doubt inspired by a desire to prevent what has already been achieved by the Russians in Eastern Europe and what they are attempting to achieve in the Middle and Far East.

15. In view of the small population, resources, and land areas involved in the ex-Japanese Mandates it can not be reasonably considered an attempt at territorial aggrandizement to assume their exclusive and permanent control. The area of the Mandates is 830 square miles with a population of 71,400.

16. In arguing for trusteeship of the ex-Japanese Mandates, the question has been raised, as indicated previously, as to why the Joint Chiefs of Staff are willing to accept trusteeship for the Nansei Shoto and Nanpo Shoto while at the same time they are not willing to accept trusteeship for the Mandates. Actually they would prefer, from the security point of view, exclusive and permanent control of all these places, but they would accept the attainment of this control under trusteeship where populations and land areas are of consequence (Nansei Shoto) or where the security stake is not so vital (Nanpo Shoto) as in the Mandates. Hence, the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is that exclusive and permanent control for the Mandates must be had in order to assure us as long as we deem necessary one complete line of communication to the Asiatic mainland--namely, via the Hawaiian Islands, the ex-Mandates and the Philippines. The Nansei Shoto and Nanpo Shoto are not vital elements to this particular line of communication, though they are essential annexes thereto. The Nansei Shoto and Nanpo Shoto are vital, however, as regards our need and our ability to deny them to a future potential enemy. In short, the Nansei Shoto and Nanpo Shoto are areas which must be

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denied to any enemy to prevent his harassing our own vital line of communications, which can be maintained only by unquestioned strategic control in the former Mandates. It will be recognized that this point is one of absolute minimum essential requirements; there can be no question as to the importance of the Nansei Shoto as a base for any offensive operations of our own that may become necessary in the East China Sea, the Yellow Sea, or the Gulf of Chihli, or against the Asiatic mainland.

CONCLUSIONS

17. Exclusive and permanent control of the Nansei Shoto and Nanpo Shoto would be desirable in order to insure our future security. However, such control attained under trusteeship is acceptable where populations and land areas are of consequence (Nansei Shoto) or where the security stake is not so vital (Nanpo Shoto) as in the Mandates.

18. The Japanese Mandated Islands are a distinct and indissoluble strategic entity. Their control in their entirety is necessary not only to afford sites for bases for our own use but also to enable us to deny the entire area to a potential enemy. As future economy of funds tends to prevent adequate maintenance of Pacific bases, the denial aspect will assume increasing importance.

19. The subject islands have a vital strategic relationship to the security of the United States as was fully shown in the last war. This relationship will be even more vital in the future in view of rapid advances in the science of aeronautics, the advent of new weapons, and the magnitude of the potential danger which would confront us with an East Asia, comprising one-half of the world's population, dominated by the Soviets.

20. Exclusive and permanent control of the Mandated Islands is essential both to our future security and to the avoidance of again having to make an otherwise needless sacrifice of American

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lives. There is no assurance at present that adequate control can be guaranteed indefinitely through the mechanism of trusteeship. There is nothing in the record of history that affords us sound ground for assuming that we can fully rely upon our maintenance of exclusive and permanent control of the Mandated Islands by any form of trusteeship.

21. Finally, from the military point of view, the Joint Chiefs of Staff cannot agree to, nor accept any responsibility for, a modification of their position in this matter that will, in their opinion, jeopardize the security of the United States. It should be noted in this connection that throughout history the safeguarding of the national security has been the most fundamental political objective of the foreign policy of every state.

