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WITHDRAWAL ID 009348

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . National security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . Report

TITLE . . . . . Annex B

DESCRIPTION . . . . . Re DOD Assessment of US Strategic  
Interest and Objectives in Micronesia

CREATION DATE . . . . . 1972?

VOLUME . . . . . 17 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 033700026

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. NSC STAFF  
FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS:  
CONVENIENCE FILES

BOX NUMBER . . . . . 37

FOLDER TITLE . . . . . Micronesia Study (2)

DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 10/12/1999

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . HJR

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*Declassified with portions exempted*

*MR-NLF-00-19-20 TTPI Project 4/19/00*

*HJR 6/19/00*

DOD ASSESSMENT OF US STRATEGIC INTEREST AND OBJECTIVES  
IN MICRONESIA

1. US Strategic Interest and Objectives

a. The security of the United States depends, in large part, on our ability to control the Pacific Ocean area. Such control will be required as long as military forces must be moved through or are required to function in the area and as long as it is necessary to deny to the enemy positions from which attacks of any kind may be launched against the United States or its possessions. Our base system in the Pacific is an amalgum of key locations providing a US presence which assists deterrence to aggression and facilitates exploitation of the mobility of US Forces to rapidly reinforce allies if deterrence fails. Control of any portion of the area must be denied to potential enemies. The cost of lives, time, and resources paid by the United States in World War II to secure control of the Pacific is a direct measure of the vital need to establish and maintain unquestioned US control of this area.

b. US interest in Micronesia is based in part upon its military-strategic value. The area provides positions of potential military value for the defense of Hawaii, Guam, the Panama Canal, Australia, New Zealand, and of the United States. The area is also a zone of transit, the continued control of which is basic to the fulfillment of

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E.O. 12958 Sec. 1.5 ( ) 3.4 (b) (5)

MR-NLF-00-19-20

By TPI NARA, Date 4/19/00

Project NR 6/19/00



US Asian and Pacific security commitments under SEATO and ANZUS and under the bilateral treaties with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of China, and the Republic of the Philippines. The islands in the Pacific area are important sites for the network of transport and communications facilities essential to the maintenance of normal contact between the United States and the countries of Asia and Australasia.

c. The value of the area to the United States has been enhanced considerably by recent developments in military and space technology. The progress of the US earth satellite program has also increased its significance. In the interests of its longer range military and space programs, the USSR will be attentive to any political development that offers hope of cracking the Western power monopoly in the Pacific area.

d. There are presently discernible factors, including a deficit in the US balance of payments and growing political pressures against US bases in some countries, which probably will result in some additional limitations and restrictions on the use of the existing Far East bases. It is conceivable that continuing US military presence in some of the countries may be restricted seriously or jeopardized by the local political environment. Should future circumstances result in continued limitations and restrictions on the use of existing bases on foreign soil, use of Guam and the TTPI could well become a critical

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consideration in effective military operations in the Western Pacific.

e. In view of the developing PRC nuclear capability, Guam and the TTPI can be expected to become of more strategic importance to the United States. As the PRC threat evolves, there may be a requirement to adjust the US posture to provide an additional dispersal of military forces on territory under complete US control.

2. Specific Considerations

a. By nature of their location, across the lines of communication to existing Far East bases, the islands of the TTPI provide logistical fallback sites for our present forward basing posture. Together with Guam, these islands could fulfill a wide range of requirements that could develop under various contingencies. The isolation of some of these islands and their sparse population make them ideal sites for weapons and other equipment testing programs, space launch, recovery, telemetry and control stations, underwater surveillance test operations, and bases for application of future technological advances. The basic national strategy for the East Asia/Western Pacific area envisions US forward deployed forces, together with the military forces of our allies in the area, providing a deterrence to potential enemies, and a capability to defeat aggression if deterrence fails. Implicit in this forward strategy is the requirement for forward bases for US land, sea and air forces as well as logistic, communications

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and intelligence facilities. These forward bases can be located in allied countries, on US territories in the Western Pacific, or in areas that will be politically associated with the US.

b. Increasing Reliance on "Hard Bases":

(1) Assurance of Availability

(a) Several factors weigh against continued reliance on US bases on foreign territory. Among them are the declining cohesiveness of our alliances, and the internal political reliability in many of the countries in Asia, both of which make tenuous any US military presence in Asia that is dependent upon foreign basing rights. Thus, US bases in allied countries may be termed "soft" as a reflection of their vulnerability to host nation withdrawal/restriction of basing rights, and political pressure for reduced foreign (US) presence in their country.

(b) Forward bases on US territory, and on territory over which the US exercises sovereign control or that which is politically associated with the US are not susceptible to political pressures or constraints from a foreign nation. The use of these "hard" bases is subject only to national decisions on such issues as Congressional appropriation; the acquisition of land for base development and expansion; and, the types and sizes of forces to be based there. Other aspects which favor the use of US territories or areas that are politically associated with the US, are the opportunity

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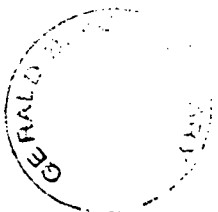
to acquire or retain options for prospective military bases, and the ability to obtain reentry rights where forward bases are abandoned or are shared with commercial enterprises. These options are generally not available in foreign countries.

(c) In summary, the assurance of availability of bases over which the US is sovereign or are located in areas that are politically associated with the US is considerably greater than on foreign soil. This fact alone dictates that Micronesia must remain associated with the US and that increased efforts should be directed toward acquiring adequate forward bases and basing rights in Micronesia to ensure that the US is able to maintain a forward defense posture in Asia in the event that basing of US forces in allied countries becomes untenable.

(2) Other Advantages. Maintenance of an adequate forward base structure in Micronesia provides a number of important advantages:

(a) US as Pacific power. US military bases in the Western Pacific serve as a convincing demonstration of the US's intent to remain an East Asia/Western Pacific power, and to maintain sufficient forward deployed military power to fill our commitments to our allies and protect US interests in that area. The existence of these bases also serves as a tacit reminder to other Asian powers that the US exercises sovereignty over territory in the Pacific

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Basin, hence it is a resident Western Pacific power -- a geographical neighbor to the nation Asian littoral.

(b) Lateral leverage on host nations. Host nations tend to inflate the US's dependence upon bases in their countries, and to believe that these bases are more important to the US than to the host nations. Consequently our allies consider that our reliance on these bases gives them considerable bargaining power with, and leverage over, the US. These host nations may demand increased material benefits (a quid pro quo in return for static US basing rights. Increased US emphasis on use of present "hard" bases and development of new ones will exercise lateral leverage on nations which are host to "soft" bases in East Asia, in two respects. By improving the US's "hard" base structure and thereby increasing our forward base options, it should undercut host government attempts to raise the material quid required in return for US "soft" bases. The US's reduced reliance upon "soft" bases may cause host nations to reappraise their interests in a US base presence, quite possibly concluding that they in fact attach a greater value to the continuation of the bases than the US itself does. Hence, application of this lateral leverage will likely enhance US prospects of retaining "soft" bases in East Asia on reasonable terms.

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(c) Balance of payments. Increased use of bases on US sovereign territory or in areas that are politically affiliated with the US and concomitant reduction of forces deployed on foreign soil, would substantially decrease the foreign exchange outflow and thereby improve the US's balance of payments in Asia. A significant percentage of our military foreign expenditures thus saved would be redirected into the economics of the US and Micronesia, both through expanded base development and the impact of US forces on the local economy.

(d) Political mobility. US forces based in Micronesia will have immunity from foreign basing constraints. Therefore, in the event of further erosion of current bases they will provide the political mobility essential to a strategy that emphasizes flexibility and freedom of maneuver, even though these bases are not as strategically located to potential objective areas as present forward bases.

c. Were unfriendly powers to achieve footholds in the TTPI, the United States would be faced with essentially the same situation that existed prior to World War II when the Japanese controlled these islands. Such footholds could provide unfriendly powers with refueling bases, missile control stations, submarine bases, and other military

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facilities detrimental to the interests of the United States. The TTPI in unfriendly hands would present a formidable threat to the security of the United States, and the military value of US installations on Guam would be largely neutralized.

d. Japan has emerged as a world economic power and greater efforts are being made to project this power and influence into the TTPI and elsewhere. US strategy and actions should work toward insuring that Japan develops appropriately in harmony with US security interests. However, this should not preclude provision for alternatives should Japanese interests prove inimical to US interests in the Asian-Pacific area.

e. The strategic importance of the TTPI was recognized by the UN Security Council in 1947 when it was designated a strategic area. This importance has increased as the United States has been called upon to discharge its obligations as a Pacific power. As political pressures grow to restrict or eliminate US use of bases and facilities in the Far East, the importance of permanent US military control of the TTPI becomes increasingly evident.

f. The TTPI and Guam are so located as to permit surveillance and defense of the major air and sea lanes from the United States to the PRC, Southeast Asia, and the Southwest Pacific. Submarine and surface ships patrolling the Philippine Sea can be supported logistically, eliminating the requirement to return to Hawaii, approximately 2,500 miles more distant. These locations

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are well-suited for monitoring Soviet and PRC submarine activities. A capability exists at Tinian, Saipan, and Babelthuap, to build airfields and other strategic military facilities capable of supporting major operations. These areas have been subjected to detailed analyses as they relate to our post-Vietnam defense posture and minimum military land requirements to support our basing options and strategic interests have been developed. Should the stationing of major PACOM Forces in Southeast Asia, Okinawa, and elsewhere be further restricted during the post-Vietnam, mid- and long-range periods, possible future use of the TTPI includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(1) Marianas Islands:

(a) Bases for strategic air, tactical air, Navy air ASW patrol squadrons, missiles, airlift, [REDACTED] conventional weapons storage, POL, communications maintenance and supply, port facility, army depot supply and maintenance unit, and Marine forces, possibly to MAF level. Additionally, an aerial bombing range could be accommodated.

(b) Guam is the westernmost of US territorial bases in the Pacific. [REDACTED] there, as will be general purpose naval forces in the near future. However, population pressure and economic development in Guam sharply limit

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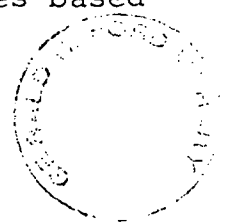
the land on the island available for any future significant expansion of current US military facilities.

(c) The Department of Defense has identified a requirement for a US military complex on the island of Tinian. This complex would provide a relocation site for the strategic forces and activities previously situated on Okinawa prior to its reversion; would support the surveillance and Defense of Micronesia, and the lines of communication in the Pacific; and would preserve a fallback location in the Western Pacific in the event US base rights in Japan, Okinawa, and Taiwan were terminated or unduly restricted.

(d) The base development plan for Tinian includes reactivation and improvement of an airfield on the middle part of the island; restoration of the harbor development of a port facility and a logistics complex; and establishment of a Joint Service maneuver and training area. When fully developed, this military complex would be capable of supporting Air Force strategic, tactical and theater airlift squadrons; an Army depot supply and maintenance unit, a NIKE artillery defense battery, and a Special Forces unit; a Navy ASW patrol squadron; and USMC ground forces up to MAF size.

(e) The Marianas Islands are well located strategically. Mainland Asia is easily within range of B-52s operating from the Marianas. Forces based

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there are well situated for protection of the Central Pacific LOCs and the increasingly important LOCs between Australia and Japan. Because of their distance from mainland Asia, the Marianas are less vulnerable to attack from the continent than more western US bases. However, this distance is somewhat disadvantageous with respect to the radius of action and closure time of US forces based in the Marianas area having to respond to a crisis on the mainland or in the offshore islands of our East Asian allies. Also, because of their distance from the extreme reaches of Southeast Asia, forces based in the Marianas could provide only a marginal degree of protection to the vital LOCs and choke points between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

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(f) In summary, retention of existing bases on Guam, and acquisition of additional bases in the Marianas are important to the maintenance of an adequate forward defense posture in the Western Pacific in the 1970s. However, a military base structure in the Marianas could only partially compensate for loss of existing bases in East Asia.

(2) Palau Islands:

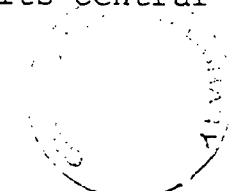
(a) Basing options are necessary for future development of a logistics, cantonment, munitions storage, and communications complex; USMC maneuver area; airfield; and harbor facilities.



(b) Of the island groups in the TTPI, the Palaus possess perhaps the greatest potential because of their strategic location. They are almost 800 miles closer to the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean than the Marianas. Within 1500 miles from the Palaus are Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia most of the China Sea, and almost all of the Indonesian all of the LOCs between Japan and Australia. Because of their proximity to Southeast Asia, the Palaus are the most desirable alternate or fallback location for US bases in event of loss of base rights in the Philippines. A US base in the Palaus would provide continued access to the increasingly important Southwest Pacific area, as well as constitute a key defense outpost on the western fringe of Micronesia.

(c) If basing rights on foreign soil were revoked US bases in the Palaus and in the Marianas 800 miles to the northeast would in effect form a forward defense perimeter across the mid-latitudes, and would constitute the western most basing posture achievable in the Western Pacific. Mobile US forces operating from the Palaus would possess an important advantage over Marianas-based forces: they could provide protection to the Indian Ocean-Western Pacific LOCs, especially where they pass through the critical choke points in the Indonesian archipelago. By virtue of its central

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location, a US base in the Palaus would be able to support operations in the Western Pacific, in the Indian Ocean, or, if the need should arise, on the mainland of Southeast Asia. The base's proximity to the Marianas would permit the base complexes in the two island groups and mobile forces from both areas to be mutually supporting.

(d) Although the strategic value of a fallback base in the Palaus is widely recognized, planning for this base has been accorded lower priority than development of a military complex on Tinian. As has been noted above, the Marianas lack the geographical proximity to the Southwest Pacific which the Palaus provide, consequently neither Tinian nor Guam is an acceptable substitute for a military complex in the Palaus. Further, a complete dependence upon US military facilities in the Marianas would limit the flexibility of, and increase the risk to, forward deployed forces in the Western Pacific.

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(e) It is therefore important that US base requirements in the Palaus be recognized and that appropriate action be taken to reserve the required real estate as a hedge against loss of existing East Asian bases, especially in the Philippines. A master base development plan must be tailored to



provide support for the highly mobile forces which will constitute the US's forward military presence in Asia in the future. Hence, use of a deep water, well sheltered harbor and development of modest port facilities adjacent to the harbor would be essential. The Palau base complex should also include an airfield capable of supporting military jet aircraft operations and a logistic support base; and reserved real estate for use as a ground force maneuver/training area.

(f) The US's intent to avoid future involvement in a land war on the mainland of Asia is apparent. Nevertheless, as stated in the Nixon Doctrine, we are committed to support our allies. Hence, the focus of attention is shifting to forward support bases and to the protection of the vital lines of communication which link our allies and our support bases with each other, and with the rest of the Free World. The Palaus' proximity to our allies in the Southwestern Pacific, and to the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific LOCs which converge in the Indonesian archipelago, is a strategic advantage which is unmatched by any other area in Asia over which the US exercises control.

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For the future security of US interests in Asia, it is essential that the US obtain an option to establish a forward base in the Palau Islands which could serve either as a fallback from the Philippines or as an additional base to meet as yet unforeseen circumstances.

(3) Marshall Islands: Of particular significance is the value of the Marshall Islands to the research and development programs of the Department of Defense. Kwajalein is the location for both operational and research and development missile tests, penetration studies, and tests of ballistic missile defenses. The requirement for the use of Kwajalein in the research and development program is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. US investment in facilities on Kwajalein are extensive and there is no suitable alternative presently available.

g. Ocean areas and islands such as the TTPI are becoming increasingly important to mid- and long-term US strategy. Previous consideration of the importance of oceans and islands has been primarily in relation to maintaining air and sea lines of communication. In the future, the growing economic value of the resources available and exploitable from the oceans will increase their importance. In addition, as pressures increase against US presence

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in forward allied areas, greater reliance may have to be placed on use of US-owned or controlled islands to insure continued protection of US security interests. US national policy should assure the continued unfettered use of the TTPI for both military and economic purposes. We should seek positively to reverse any trends toward termination of US interests in the area.

3. Summary

a. The security of the United States will continue to depend in large part on US ability to monitor and control, as necessary, the sea and air space of the Pacific Ocean area and to meet and counter communist strength in the forward Asian-Pacific regions. The TTPI, under close political association with the US, would contribute to the accomplishment of these objectives.

b. It is essential, because of the cessation of hostilities in South Vietnam, that redeployment of US Forces assures a military force posture which will permit rapid and decisive reaction to fulfill Asian and Pacific commitments. For this reason, the posthostilities posture of US Forces would be enhanced significantly by the option for military bases and associated facilities in the TTPI.

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c. The United States should continue to oppose any withdrawal of US Forces from our present Pacific forward base structure. However, if the intensifying political pressures cause future denial or curtailment in the use of our forward bases, the TTPI provides the only real estate, with the exception of Guam, on which the required capability to project US power into the Western Pacific could be based. Current US control of the TTPI, favorable balance of payments considerations, and potential for US sovereignty and/or jurisdiction offer the possibilities of long-term stability required for planning of a base structure.

d. Kwajalein will remain strategically significant in view of its importance to DOD research and development programs.

e. In addition to the strategic importance of the TTPI for future US military development, the location and expanse of the TTPI make it imperative that we continue to deny these islands to possible enemies. The TTPI in the hands of unfriendly powers would present a formidable threat to the security of the United States. In particular, the vulnerability of Guam, surrounded by the TTPI, would be significantly increased.

f. DOD has repeatedly expressed the view, both to the President and to the Congress, that the TTPI is essential to our national security interests.

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