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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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June 24, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Holders of SSDSG Study of U.S. Overseas Base Requirements in the 1970's (SSDSG Base Study)

SUBJECT: Assessment of SSDSG Base Study

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed subject Study and have approved the assessment in the Enclosure and its Appendices A and B. They are forwarded for your information in accordance with the recommendation of the Deputy Director, J-5, Joint Staff.

Copies of this material will accompany any additional distribution of the SSDSG Base Study.

This memorandum is UNCLASSIFIED when separated from classified enclosure.

  
Howard Furnas  
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Politico-Military Affairs

Enclosure

- cc: OSD/ISA - Rear Adm. William E. Lemos, USN
- OJCS - Maj. Gen. Norman S. Orwat, USAF
- CIA - Mr. Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.
- White House - Mr. Morton C. Halperin

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ENCLOSURE

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL STATE-DEFENSE STUDY GROUP STUDY,  
"A STUDY OF US OVERSEAS BASE REQUIREMENTS IN THE 1970s" (U)

1. (S) The Special State-Defense Study Group study on "A Study of US Overseas Base Requirements in the 1970s" provides a comprehensive overview of the world environment in the 1970s. While it does not set forth a definitive worldwide base structure with detailed force level and budgetary considerations, it does provide data on US overseas bases and the military, political, economic, and technological factors involved. The study should be of value as a reference document for related study actions and as a point of departure for further detailed studies on basing systems.
2. (S) The study does not respond fully to the terms of reference, which are contained in Annex H to Volume VI. The Study Group was directed to "evolve an optimum overseas base system, with alternatives, to support the US worldwide objectives, commitments, and strategy through the next decade." Specifically, the study does not develop a base structure capable of supporting US strategy and forces at an acceptable level of risk. The study acknowledges this shortcoming. This deficiency was due, in part, to the absence of a definitive statement of worldwide strategy.
3. (S) Considering the scope and complexity of the problem, the study should be accepted as a significant accomplishment. However, it contains numerous views and assertions that are questionable. In addition, there are several inaccuracies and omissions in the study, e.g., location of some bases are not correctly depicted and references to requirements for numbers and types of aircraft are given as totals without identity in one place and as squadrons without identity in others. Also, there are frequent discrepancies in statistical data. Because of such errors and omissions, care must be exercised when the study is used.
4. (U) Appendix A hereto contains the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Volumes I, II, III, IV, and VI of the subject study. Their comments on Volume VII, WESTPAC Pilot Model, are contained in Appendix B hereto.
5. (U) Without attachments, this assessment is downgraded to SECRET.

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Enclosure

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## APPENDIX A

### GENERAL COMMENTS ON VOLUMES I, II, III, IV, AND VI

1. (S) Regional Approach. The study recognizes that certain overseas facilities are required, regardless of the regional policy-strategy selected, but it does not address the interrelationship of facilities to support worldwide commitments. Regional policy-strategy alternatives would be more meaningful if derived from a worldwide strategy, taking into account simultaneous contingencies and their interrelationships.
2. (S) Costs. Study references to possible domestic unwillingness to bear costs inherent in overseas involvement imply that national security posture should be geared to minimum budgets. While domestic and budgetary pressures must be recognized, there is no meaningful alternative to an approach which would address the threat and national objectives and develop a posture to meet the objectives at a prudent level of risk. The cost and saving figures contained in the study are useful as "order-of-magnitude" estimates and for rough comparative purposes. However, in order to provide an appropriate basis for decision making, each policy-strategy alternative would require a detailed quantitative analysis to validate its gross cost and saving estimates and resulting implications. Among the major factors not considered in the study were the cost of the CONUS basing of forces relocated from discontinued overseas bases and the cost of modifying existing programmed force levels.
3. (S) Alaska. The study appears to have largely neglected Alaska and failed to consider its value relevant to rapid deployments. This strategic area takes on added importance when great circle distances to vital locations in Asia and Europe are considered.
4. (S) Guantanamo. The Study Group's evaluation of the US base at Guantanamo does not give adequate consideration to its strategic importance, contribution to various types of military operations, minimal impact on balance-of-payments problems, outstanding natural harbor, location for control of shipping in the Windward Passage, and use as an intelligence collection site. Retention of Guantanamo is essential to maintain US presence in Cuba, to deny the facilities to all countries opposed to US interests, and for its contribution to US prestige in the Caribbean.

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5. (S) Puerto Rico. Relocation of headquarters functions and facilities from the Panama Canal Zone and Guantanamo to Puerto Rico would result in the degradation of the functions being performed, overcrowding of facilities, and restriction of flexibility in command locations.

6. (S) Okinawa. The study states that the United States should be prepared to negotiate an Okinawan reversion agreement with the Japanese " . . . recognizing that this means giving up peacetime rights to store nuclear weapons on Okinawa." This statement is premature and misleading because there is no assurance that the US Government will agree to reversion on these terms or that such an agreement would be necessary.

7. (S) Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). While the study refers, in several places, to the strategic importance of the TTPI (particularly if Okinawa or other offshore islands are lost as forward bases) and assumes the continued availability of the Trust Territory as a basing area, insufficient attention has been given to both the domestic US and international political steps which must be undertaken in order to secure a permanent relationship between the United States and the TTPI.

8. (S) Philippines. The return of Sangley Point to the Philippine Government cannot be managed without serious military disadvantages to the United States. This facility supports the US antisubmarine warfare surveillance mission, and its function would be difficult and costly to relocate to Cubi Point because of the load factors and absorption capability involved.

9. (S) Communist China. Relations between the United States and Communist China might be more harmonious in the next decade, but it is unrealistic to assume that the relations would be sufficiently harmonious to reduce requirements for US bases. Also, the past record of the United Nations makes reliance on its peacekeeping effectiveness in this area a questionable option.

10. (S) Intelligence. The statement that "US intelligence activities are broad and only partially or indirectly related to regional US security strategies" could be misleading. Intelligence collection efforts are designed to support US strategy worldwide and are positioned as close to the target as possible. With the withdrawal of US Forces, there may be a corresponding reduction in the means of collection but not necessarily a reduction of the requirements for collection.

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11. (S) Deployment. Deployment planning does not consider adequately:

- a. Time relationships of mobilization and deployment decisions and troop requirements by time phase.
- b. Readiness conditions, availability for movement, locations of forces, and staging requirements.
- c. Reception and throughput capabilities of CONUS, inter-theater and intratheater movement systems.
- d. Time required in the overseas area for final preparation to include movement to the objective area prior to employment.

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## APPENDIX B

### GENERAL COMMENTS ON WESTPAC PILOT MODEL, VOLUME VII

1. (TS) The Pilot Model is a detailed quantitative analysis of a strategy and associated basing alternatives in the Western Pacific Area (WESTPAC). Although it contains many of the basic elements of the WESTPAC policy-strategy alternatives discussed in Volume III of the study, it is not an analysis of any of these alternatives. As a consequence, it does not give the same recognition to all of the US military capabilities considered in the basic study alternatives.

2. (TS) The finding in the Pilot Model that, with the use of bases in Thailand and Korea and commercial facilities in Singapore, the United States could meet its post-Vietnam force deployment objectives in Asia and support the Seventh Fleet from US territory, including the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), is questioned. The estimated costs of this option are of doubtful validity. The conclusion that the costs of maintaining antisubmarine warfare operations and nuclear weapon storage are relatively insensitive to base denial is not supportable.

3. (TS) The WESTPAC Pilot Model does not provide a comprehensive examination of all factors and variables affecting the economic, political, and military impact of alternative base structures. Some omissions are:

- a. Cost and feasibility of defending Guam/Trust Territory.
- b. Logistic support of the Air Force other than airlift requirements for deployment.
- c. Requirements for simultaneous Southeast and Northeast Asian contingencies.
- d. Loss of tactical flexibility and wartime sanctuaries in WESTPAC if offshore island bases are denied.
- e. Consideration of conventional capabilities and basing requirements for strategic bomber aircraft and tanker support for fighter aircraft.
- f. Logistic support of naval amphibious, surface, and mine warfare units. The omission of stores ships (AF, AKS, AFS) results in a substantial error in the computations of naval logistic support.

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g. Communications support for the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps and command and control of joint forces.

h. Threat analyses of all of the potential enemy forces and capabilities in relation to the policy-strategy being examined.

4. (TS) The WESTPAC Pilot Model assumes that available aircraft will be adequate for the contingencies considered. While this might be feasible for a given region, it fails to recognize requirements on a global basis, involving simultaneous contingencies.

5. (TS) In determining the capability for nuclear operations, the Pilot Model should have taken into account the additional weapons required to compensate for greater wartime transit hazards and the increase in total airlift and storage requirements. It is not clear that all airlift requirements for air and ground forces and nuclear weapons have been included in the logistic support and rapid deployment analyses. In view of the possible base constraints in the operational theater, it is quite possible that all airlift requirements would not be met during the first weeks of action. The estimates shown on page J-107 of the projected nuclear capabilities of the Chinese Peoples Republic are lower for the bomber force and higher for ballistic missile forces than those in existing intelligence estimates.

6. (TS) Antisubmarine warfare carriers (CVSs) are used in area surveillance to compensate for losses of patrol squadron (VP) air bases, a fact which would reduce the capability to have the CVS available for other missions, such as point protection for attack carriers (CVAs), underway replenishment groups (URGs), convoys, or amphibious objective areas. Also, it would require 3.6 CVSs constantly deployed in WESTPAC to compensate for the two areas requiring coverage due to base loss. To keep four CVSs constantly deployed would require at least eight CVSs in the Pacific for just that mission. Not more than one CVS can be scheduled for WESTPAC with the currently approved forces.

7. (TS) Deployment timetables are unrealistic in a number of cases. Transit time utilizing projected airlift capabilities is only a fraction of total deployment time, but insufficient consideration is given to mobilization/assembly timing and to required reception facilities and arrangements.