

THE HISTORY OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
AND NATIONAL POLICY

VOLUME I
1945 - 1947

By
James F. Schnabel

Historical Division
Joint Secretariat
Joint Chiefs of Staff
February 1979

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Central to any strategic planning for the defense of the United States and its allies in event of another world war was the establishment of a system of bases to support military operations. In a conventional situation, strategic plans would have been developed and approved and the bases to support these plans would have been identified prior to negotiations for their acquisition. Several factors, among them JCS failure to approve joint strategic plans and the rapidly changing international political scene, worked to prevent this conventional approach. Instead, the Joint Chiefs of Staff developed base requirements using a very broad strategic appreciation of what might be needed and, for political considerations, practicing the "art of the possible."

Planning for postwar military base needs began while World War II was still in progress. In late November 1943 the Joint Chiefs of Staff, responding to a directive from President Roosevelt, drew up a list of air bases that the United States would need in the postwar period. The end of the war was nearly two years away, and it was not possible for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to forecast precisely all such air base requirements. For their purposes, they divided the postwar period into three major phases: (1) after defeat of Germany but prior to the defeat of Japan; (2) after hostilities

The Origins of Postwar Base Planning

ACQUISITION OF POSTWAR BASES

CHAPTER VII

the bases of the postwar
the art of the possible

1. JCS 570/2 with Encls, 10 Jan 44, CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 2.

had ended but before the United Nations Organization had formally established worldwide order; (3) after worldwide order had been established under the United Nations Organization. "In general," the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the President, "the requirements for bases during the third period must evolve from experience obtained during the second period and in the light of international developments." They therefore proposed a system of bases for the first and second periods only. Maps showing the location and purpose of each base were given the President. Bases for the second period were proposed at 33 area sites in the Atlantic, Latin America, Canada, Greenland, and Iceland. In the Pacific Ocean and along the coastal region of Asia 39 area sites for bases were proposed. The President approved the findings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, on 7 January 1944, sent the Secretary of State the study that they had presented him along with the listing of bases. He instructed Secretary Hull, "as a matter of high priority," to initiate negotiations with the appropriate governments to acquire permanent or long-term benefit of the bases, facilities and rights required, "at the earliest possible moment."¹

Little positive accomplishment resulted from this initiative, however, owing to greater priorities involved with fighting the war. The Joint Chiefs of Staff developed no further overall study of the base problem during the remainder of the war in Europe, although they considered individual base problems as they arose.

2. Minutes of SMNCC 13th Mtg, 3 Mar 45, CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 4.

General Marshall wanted this study to place the bases in the order of priority in which they were required. He wanted the "maxima and minima" of requirements to be obtained through negotiation for US bases organization."

In May 1945 the Chief of Staff US Army proposed that a new overall study of US requirements for postwar bases be undertaken in light of the existing situation. "This study," General Marshall stated, "should consider our needs to satisfy the following requirements: (1) Bases required by conditions under which the United States will find itself at war with a major power or powers; (2) Bases required by the United States as a participant in a peace enforced by the major powers, possibly through participation in a world security organization."

The Original JCS Postwar Base Plan

The SMNCC discussed the problems of bases, however, and on 3 March 1945 agreed that the War and Navy Departments should be more closely involved with the joint Chiefs of Staff in developing plans for postwar bases. It was agreed that a newly formed Air Coordinating Committee should be involved, since negotiations for commercial air rights abroad would "necessarily" bear a close relationship to US military base requirements. There had also been created an interdepartmental committee chaired by Mr. John D. Hickerson, the State Department representative, charged with preparing for negotiations for those bases that the joint Chiefs of Staff stated were essential. The War and Navy representatives on this Committee acted in this regard on behalf of the joint Chiefs of Staff rather than of their own departments.²

*at Marshall's place
has
2-11-45*

Air Coordinating Committee

- 3. JCS 570/17, 14 May 45, w/Dec On, 24 May 45, same file, sec 5.
- 4. SM-2365 to ADM Leahy, 2 Jul 45, same file, sec 6.

A few days later, Under Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew addressed the Secretaries of War and Navy on the matter of postwar bases. On 7 July Mr. Grew made reference to President Roosevelt's approval of the

of Staff.⁴
 had never been clearly established by the Joint Chiefs relationship of that study to ground and naval forces requirements for ground, naval and air bases, the early 1944 had been used as a guide in considering while the JCS study approved by President Roosevelt in policy upon which base requirements may be determined." authoritative or tentative joint statement of national United States has been prepared. Moreover, there is no ments for the naval, air, or ground forces of the tive or tentative joint statement of the base require- McFarland, informed Admiral Leahy that "No authorita- Secretary of the Joint Staff, Brigadier General A. G. While work on this study was in progress, the

them through the JSSC.³
 such a study be prepared by the JPS and submitted to Staff approved General Marshall's recommendation that should be explored." On 24 May the Joint Chiefs of Western Hemisphere. The desirability of trusteeships European-owned territories within or adjacent to the accrue to the Americas as a result of acquisition of military benefits, including economies, that might to determine whether or not it might be better for the United States to try to acquire some of these territories. "The study," he said, "should investigate the set up on foreign territory. These should be review.

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5. Ltr, UsecState to SecWar, 7 Jul 45, CCS 360
(12-9-42) sec 6.
6. SM-2665 to SMNCC, 21 Jul 45, same file.

It is not possible for the State Department, of course, to negotiate for such rights until it knows exactly what is desired and for obvious reasons, our bargaining position deteriorates as time goes on. In the meantime, we are obliged to maintain control of many foreign bases which we may ultimately have no use for. This involves not only additional expenditures of manpower and money

Apparently not taking into consideration the complexity and scope of the review of base requirements then underway in the JPS, the Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. Robert A. Lovett, complained to the Deputy Chief of Staff, US Army, at the slowness with which the study was proceeding. His main concern was that the lack of a JCS decision on this matter was hampering the work of the Department of State:

JCS study and the requirements that had been established thereby. He observed, however, that the signing of the UN Charter on 26 June and the conditions found in Germany by US occupation forces might have some effect upon postwar base requirements. He wondered whether, in the circumstances, the Joint Chiefs of Staff might consider it advisable "at this time to review their estimate of United States post-war base requirements." 5
The Under Secretary's views were passed on to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. On 21 July they asked SMNCC to inform the Department of State that an estimate of postwar base requirements was currently under preparation. "Any revisions of the November 1943 estimates will be communicated to State," they advised the SMNCC. And they suggested that negotiations for base rights already in progress continue.

*State Dept
comparisons*

*Reconsideration
of 1943
plan*

but also impairs the disposal value of such installations or equipment thereon that eventually may become excess and, in addition, its raising political difficulties in England, France, and elsewhere.

Mr. Lovett notwithstanding, it was not until 27

September, that the JPS submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff their report on US requirements for military base areas and base rights in the postwar period, in which the JSSC had concurred. The system that was outlined in detail in the report had been judged adequate only if the following conditions pertained:

1. All Japanese mandated islands and Central Pacific islands detached from Japan, including the Bonins and the Ryukyus, would be available, preferably through the assumption of full sovereignty, otherwise through trusteeship agreements designating these islands as strategic areas.

2. Military base rights and air transit privileges in South and Central America and Mexico would be obtained as required in implementation of the Act of Chapultepec.

3. Military base rights and air transit privileges required in Canada would be obtained in extension of present United States-Canadian agreements or under satisfactory substitutes therefor.

4. Bases additional to those shown would be available when needed by US forces for the discharge of their obligations to the United Nations Organization.

1. Memo, AsstSecWar to DepCSA, 24 Aug 45, Encl to JCS 570/28, same file, sec 7. General Marshall ordered this memo circulated for information to the JPS, JSSC and JPMC.
8. JCS 570/34, 24 Sep 45, CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 8. Provisions of the Act of Chapultepec are discussed in Chapter VIII.

New P/a

9. See Chapter V for details of JCS 1518 and the JCS strategic concept. In a later paper (JCS 570/62), the JCS stated that "the strategic concept as expressed in J.C.S. 1518 has been used as the basic guide for determining requirements."

Secondary Base Areas were those areas necessary to protect primary bases and to allow access to them. They would also allow projection of military operations by the United States. Within this second category, the JCS nominated the following: Fairbanks-Nome-Central and Western Alaska; Midway Island; Johnson Island; Wake Island; Marcus Island; Benin-Volcanso Islands; Ryukyus Islands; Truk Island; Kwajalein Island; Manas; American Samoa; Galapagos Islands; Canton Island; Bermuda; Iceland; Greenland; Cape Verde Islands; Ascension Island; Guantanamo, Cuba; Trinidad; Airfields in the Republic of Panama; and the Natal-Recife area of Brazil.

Primary Base Areas were those areas strategically located and adequately developed, that would comprise the foundation of the base system that was essential to the security of the United States, its possessions, the Western Hemisphere, and the Philippines. They were also needed for projection of military operations. The JCS recommended that the Panama Canal Zone, Hawaiian Islands, Marianas Islands, Philippine Islands, Southwestern Alaska-Alutian area, Newfoundland, Puerto Rico-Virgin Islands, and Azores be included in this top category.⁹

The JCS report took into full consideration the strategic concept developed and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, the planners presented no strategic plan to support the lists of bases that were the core of the report. They did, for purposes of priority, place each of the requested bases in a specific category as follows:

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Island; Manas; American Samoa; Galapagos Islands;

Canton Island; Bermuda; Iceland; Greenland; Cape Verde

Islands; Ascension Island; Guantanamo, Cuba; Trinidad;

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Subsidiary Base areas were areas required for increasing the flexibility of the system of primary and secondary bases, using either existing or limited future facilities, not necessarily operated at full capacity. This category comprised: Annette and Yakutat, Alaska; Yap-Ulithi; Eniwetok; Tarawa; Majuro; Palmyra; Palau; Formosa; Funafuti; Talara, Peru; Canary Islands; Georgetown, British Guiana; Belém, Brazil; St. Thomas; Antigua; St. Lucia; Bahamas. Minor Base Areas were defined as those at which few, if any, US operating personnel would normally be maintained. The base sites would not be developed but at these sites transient privileges and varying military rights were desired so that they would be available, if needed, to increase the flexibility of the overall base system. Twenty-three areas were listed in this category ranging from Central and South Pacific Islands, through locations in Alaska and Canada, South and Central America, and North Africa.

A second section of the JPS report contained a suggested letter to the Secretary of State and an appended list of bases and areas for which diplomatic negotiations would be required in order to obtain the necessary rights. Obviously, base areas located on US territory or under prior control of the United States were not involved. The JPS had devised a second system of categories to be used in negotiating for bases not under US control, designating base areas as "essential," "required," or "desired" to indicate generally the suggested priority for negotiations. In each instance the JPS had indicated the type of usage for which the area was desired, the sovereignty of the area involved and the maximum and minimum rights desired. Lastly, the JPS had forwarded a suggested letter to the

Air Coordinating Committee showing a list of base areas required for air purposes only.

After reading and analyzing the report by the JCS, General Marshall informed his fellow members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that there was a danger of misinterpretation as to the strategic significance conferred upon some of the base areas by virtue of the classification in which they were placed. He pointed out that for financial or political reasons, some of the places which were very important strategically might receive very little attention or see little, if any, US military activity during peacetime. This did not mean they were any less important strategically, and should certainly not influence US efforts to make arrangements for their use in an emergency. However, the nature and extent of development of some sites and the number of US personnel placed there during peacetime should be based on much further study. To this extent it should be agreed and understood that the present study had no significance in making these determinations. General Marshall, for these reasons, proposed emendation of the wording of the various classifications since the present wordings might prove too restrictive in some cases. He noted that the importance of some of the sites was not a direct guide to the desirable expenditures or the active use to which the site was to be put in peace or war. "It is not unlikely," the Chief of Staff stated, "that the assurance of denial of some areas to a possible opponent will fulfill our initial strategic requirement in that area."

General Marshall also proposed adding a paragraph that would encourage the State Department to consider

seriously making arrangements by which certain other nations would maintain required installations in some areas in return for some form of payment by the United States. This, he believed, would be one practical way around the political complications in keeping US troops on foreign soil and would perhaps cut the costs in money and manpower to the United States.

Admiral Leahy limited his comments to the JCS remarks on the Japanese mandated islands. He believed that these islands should be brought under exclusive US strategic control, but thought that the report should not attempt to specify how this would be done.¹⁰

The relative importance of some of the bases on the JPS list raised differences among the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Admiral King wanted the Azores downgraded from a Primary Base Area to a Secondary Base Area. General Marshall, on the other hand, insisted that the Azores was sufficiently important to rank as a Primary Area. With respect to negotiations for Formosa and Rabaul, however, he recommended lowering both from the "required" category to the "desired" category. General Arnold, with a view toward enhancing the role of air power, insisted that Iceland, Greenland, and the Ryukyus be elevated to the status of Primary Base Areas; Dakar should be raised from "required" to "essential" for negotiating purposes. He opposed lowering Formosa from "required" to "desired" and, at the same time, insisted that the Azores remain a Primary Base Area. "I consider that we should keep the

10. JCS 570/36, 8 Oct 45, CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 9.

11. JCS 570/37, 10 Oct 45, same file.
 12. JCS 570/39, 19 Oct 45, same file.

These were:

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On 23 October 1945 the Joint Chiefs of Staff reached agreement on a revision of the JPS report which they approved as JCS 570/40. As suggested by General Marshall, the definitions of the four categories were changed to reflect more accurately the meanings desired. results politically, particularly abroad.¹² their real value and could possibly have unfavorable status, because such a move would do nothing to enhance Admiral King did not favor granting them Primary locations for offensive air operations. Nevertheless, not. Iceland and Dakar occupied particularly strategic Rukyas qualified under these criteria, Greenland did land, sea, or air, or a combination thereof. While the mounting and support of a sizable task force, either it be adequately defended or capable of immediate tion of the base system; that it be under US sovereignty or exclusively under US strategic control; that Primary Base Area were: that the area form the foundation of the base system; that it be under US sovereignty or exclusively under US strategic control; that it be adequately defended or capable of immediate mounting and support of a sizable task force, either land, sea, or air, or a combination thereof. While the Rukyas qualified under these criteria, Greenland did not. Iceland and Dakar occupied particularly strategic locations for offensive air operations. Nevertheless, Admiral King did not favor granting them Primary status, because such a move would do nothing to enhance their real value and could possibly have unfavorable results politically, particularly abroad.¹²

Admiral King, on 19 October, agreed to place the Rukyas in the Primary category. His criteria for Primary Base Area were: that the area form the foundation of the base system; that it be under US sovereignty or exclusively under US strategic control; that it be adequately defended or capable of immediate mounting and support of a sizable task force, either land, sea, or air, or a combination thereof. While the Rukyas qualified under these criteria, Greenland did not. Iceland and Dakar occupied particularly strategic locations for offensive air operations. Nevertheless, Admiral King did not favor granting them Primary status, because such a move would do nothing to enhance their real value and could possibly have unfavorable results politically, particularly abroad.¹²

Arnold stated. "We must be in a position to deliver damaging counter-blows, possibly within a matter of 24 hours, to any source of influence controlling aggression against us and, at the same time, we must have adequate forward bases for warning and interception of initial enemy assaults."¹¹

a. Primary Base Areas: strategically located,

comprising the foundation of a base system essential to the security of the United States, its possessions, the Western Hemisphere, and the Philippines and for the protection of military operations.

b. Secondary Base Areas: essential for the protection of and/or for access to primary bases, and for the projection of military operations;

c. Subsidiary Base Areas: required for increasing the flexibility of the system of primary and secondary bases.

d. Minor Base Areas: sites at which transit privileges and varying military rights are required, if not already obtained, in order to insure availability as required further to increase flexibility of the base system.

The Azores remained as a primary Base Area. The Ryukyus and Iceland had been added to the primary list.¹³

The prime rationale underlying the JCS analysis of the base requirements to support strategic war plans that had not yet been agreed was, as expressed in JCS 1518, that the United States must be capable of applying armed force at a distance. This called for a widespread system of bases beyond which lay "the United States strategic frontier." From this frontier overt hostile acts might be countered by the threat of force or by effective use of force. Within this frontier, the US military predominance must be kept inviolate. To support this strategy the United States must establish a base system that would allow rapid development in any direction and permit adequate and immediate

13 JCS 570/38, 12 Oct 45; JCS 570/39, 19 Oct 45; JCS 570/40, 25 Oct 45; CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 9.

17. SM-4962-46 to SMNCC, 8 Feb 46 (derived from JCS 570/52), CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 14. Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol I, pp. 1142-1145.

During World War II, the United States had stationed military forces and had built and maintained military installations on the soil of many sovereign nations. These arrangements had been necessary to the prosecution of the war and had been formalized in various agreements worked out between the United States and the nations in question. In nearly every case there was some provision in the agreement for the withdrawal of US forces at a specified time after the hostilities had ended. These provisions ranged from "immediately on conclusion of hostilities" to "one year after the date of the peace treaty." While the United States had not yet established a date for the end of the war, most

Retention of Certain World War II Bases

2. Eastern Hemisphere Route: Algeria-Libya-Egypt-Saudi Arabia-India-Burma-Thailand-Indochina.¹⁷

Islands.

1. Western Hemisphere Routes: Mexico-Nicaragua-Guatemala-French Guiana; and Mexico-Marguesas and Cook Islands.

For example, a North Africa-Middle East-Indochina route would permit movement from the eastern to the western flank of the base system without passing through the Western Hemisphere. There were further benefits: additional sites might more easily be gained at a later time; air crews would become familiar with operating conditions; and superior surveillance, communications and liaison facilities could be maintained. Accordingly, in February 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked the State Department to negotiate for transit rights at sites within the following countries:

1. Western Hemisphere Routes: Mexico-Nicaragua-

Guatemala-French Guiana; and Mexico-Marguesas and Cook

and ports on the lines of communication to Japan and Germany. Some US forces must be stationed at intermediary points on these LOCs as a military necessity. With respect to the US long term requirements for base rights set forth in JCS 570/40, to withdraw US forces from "essential" or "required" bases would weaken US security and endanger obtaining long term base rights at those locations. Lastly, with respect to the negotiations for long-term US military rights for air transit and technical stop for military aircraft the Joint Chiefs of Staff felt that US personnel responsible for weather reporting, navigational aids and communications should be left on location until the local governments or commercial interests were prepared to replace them with qualified personnel. The Joint Chiefs of Staff then recommended that prior to the agreed dates for withdrawal, the Secretary of State complete, where practicable, negotiations for long-term rights. If long-term rights could not be negotiated before the expiration of present agreements, the Secretary of State should conclude interim arrangements for US forces to remain at those locations required to support occupational forces, or where the continued presence of US troops was needed to further negotiations for long-term military rights. Where no long-term rights were indicated, but where there was a need to support occupational forces, they asked that the Secretary of State conclude short-term arrangements for the maintenance of US troops. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also wanted the Secretary of State to furnish the Secretaries of War and Navy a list of those locations

from which US forces could be withdrawn at any time without adversely affecting negotiations for long-term rights.¹⁹

Base Requirements are Scaled Down

In March 1946 Admiral Nimitz had asked his JCS colleagues to reassess base requirements where negotiations would be needed. In his view the JCS base requirements were excessive, and the rationale in support of them failed to establish sufficiently the order of importance. As a result, diplomatic efforts at negotiation could not be properly apportioned. Among French possessions, for example, Casablanca would be far more valuable than Dakar. In the South Pacific, anchorage and air transit rights in Espiritu Santo and New Caledonia should suffice to protect the lines of communication with Australia and Indonesia. Also, since the need for an alternate air route appeared remote, he saw no need for rights in Clipperton Island and Bora Bora. On 22 March the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the JPS to review JCS 570/40 and related papers in order to reduce stated requirements for military rights to "the absolute minimum."²⁰

On 15 May 1946 the JPS presented a report, concurred in by the JSSC, that was a critical review of the previous paper on base requirements. As in the earlier document, the strategic concept set forth in JCS 1518 had been used as a basic guide. But the JPS now stressed the feasibility of attaining its goals in view of the growing desire among the many nations involved to reassert their sovereignty and to remove foreign soldiers from their soil. This meant that the United States was going to have an increasingly

19. SM-4581-46 to SWNCC, 10 Apr 46 (derived from JCS 1648), same file, sec 18. Foreign Relations, 1946, pp. 1171-1174.
20. JCS 570/58, 22 Mar 46; N/H of JCS 570/58, 23 Mar 46; CCS 360 (12-9-42) sec 17.

Reduce to the absolute minimum

difficult time acquiring military rights. Carried to its logical conclusion, this pointed to a policy of asking only for those military rights and bases that were absolutely essential to US security. As a result, and because the United States really did not need "exclusive" rights, the JPS recommended eliminating the term which, in fact, implied that some degree of sovereignty or extra-territoriality was a military requirement.²¹

The Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the report of the JPS and on 4 June requested the SMNCC to inform the Secretary of State of its recommendations as follows. They pointed out that while their earlier memorandum had used the term "base" to identify those areas where military rights were desired, this did not mean that the US wanted necessarily to garrison these areas or to station planes or ships in foreign territory in peacetime or even in wartime. Whether or not the United States exercised these "rights" would depend upon such factors as current strategic concepts, new weapons, the international situation and the resources available to the armed forces of the United States.

With regard to actual base requirements, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said they now found they could reduce their list to 30 locations. This figure, arrived at by eliminating a number of locations in the South Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa, included only six that were essential: Iceland, Greenland, the Azores, Casablanca-Port Lyautey (or in lieu of this area, the Canary Islands), the Galapagos Islands, and Panamanian

21. JCS 570/62, 14 May 46, same file, sec 19. The JPS recommended eliminating earlier requests for "Exclusive" US base rights in Iceland, Greenland, Panama, Galapagos, Canton, Funafuti, Christmas, Clipperton, and Formosa.