



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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JCSM-127-71  
18 March 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Kagnew Station Communications Facilities (U)

1. (S) Reference is made to a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 16 September 1970, subject: "Kenitra and Kagnew Communications Facilities," which requested that a study of US communications functions at Kenitra, Morocco, and Kagnew Station, Ethiopia, be developed in the form of contingency relocation plans.

2. (S) The plan for Kagnew Station, Ethiopia, Appendix A hereto, is forwarded as requested in the reference. The plan for Kenitra, Morocco, was submitted to you on 18 January 1971. [REDACTED]

and were forwarded to you on 19 February 1971.

3. (S) The Kagnew Station communications facilities are important to the national security interests of the United States. Loss of the station and the relocation of these facilities to other sites would result in a serious reduction of the capabilities now being provided at Kagnew Station. A complete reconstitution of the missions now performed at Kagnew Station is not possible. Circuit cost estimates for the relocation of minimal essential capabilities exceed \$18 million, [REDACTED]. Further, the total value of an installed plant which cannot be recovered is estimated to be in excess of \$60 million.

4. (S) The possibility of reducing strategic communications facilities at Kagnew Station by utilization of advanced technological developments was investigated. Expansion of the use of military satellite communications capabilities would permit the reduction of high-frequency (HF) circuitry in the Defense Communications System (DCS). However, because a program has not been approved and funded, replacement of the US Navy's tactical HF facilities by satellite communications is not feasible at this time. Present plans for development of the military satellite

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communications system for tactical and strategic purposes in the Indian Ocean area have not yet been funded. Because of the isolation of Kagnev Station from Middle Eastern and European DCS nodal points, the employment of other advanced communications technologies, e.g., microwave and troposcatter, is not feasible.

5. (S) In planning relocation sites for the communications facilities of Kagnev Station, use of the US Navy site at Diego Garcia was considered as a suitable location from the technological standpoint. The site, however, is limited in scope to construction of an austere communications facility by an understanding with Congress. Therefore, expansion beyond the presently approved scope would require your approval and that of Congress. In addition, coordination with the Government of the United Kingdom would be necessary.

6. (S) Construction at Diego Garcia will commence in March 1971 and is estimated to be completed in March 1973, at which time an interim operational capability will be available. Upon completion, an 18-month testing period will be authorized to acquire sufficient data to ascertain the feasibility of phasing down a portion of the US Navy's tactical communications facilities at Kagnev Station oriented towards the Indian Ocean area. If the data prove that communications for fleet operation in that geographic area can be provided from Diego Garcia, that portion of tactical communications facilities at Kagnev Station, Ethiopia, might no longer be required. Tactical HF coverage of the western Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf now available from Kagnev Station could not be provided from Diego Garcia, even if it were to be expanded. The most feasible alternative for Kagnev Station's naval tactical HF facilities covering these areas is Bahrain Island.

7. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that Kagnev Station communications facilities be retained to support the continuing requirement for command and control communications facilities for naval forces, Presidential communications support, the DCS, [REDACTED].

8. (S) In accordance with a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 27 October 1970, implementation of the US Navy plan for the consolidation of DCS facilities at Kagnev Station, Ethiopia, has been held in abeyance, pending the updating of Appendix A. The estimated cost of \$6 million involved in implementing the consolidation plan could not be offset by projected savings in less than 5 years.

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9. (S) Although there has been general interagency agreement on the necessity to retain Kagnev Station for at least the next 5 years, National Security Study Memorandum 115, dated 25 January 1971, subject: "Horn of Africa," will focus on Kagnev Station and its value to the United States. In view of National Security Study Memorandum 115 and the resultant uncertainty of US tenure of Kagnev Station, the Joint Chiefs of Staff further recommend that implementation of the consolidation be reconsidered after the response has been approved by the Senior Review Group.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



MASON FREEMAN  
Rear Admiral, USN  
Vice Director, Joint Staff

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