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Op-601F2/hy
 Ser: 00835P60

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Subj: Bonin-Volcano Islands (U)

1. The Bonin-Volcano Islands are tied closely to the posture of forward defense which the US has maintained in PACOM since the close of World War II. Their contribution to effective maintenance of this posture at all levels of conflict in the area may be summarized as follows:

a. The Chichi Jima Naval Facility is the site of a special weapons storage unit which permits greater dispersal and consequently greater survivability of CINCPAC's nuclear weapon reserve.

b. The USAF base at Iwo Jima provides weather information, navigation aid and emergency recovery facilities for aircraft transiting between Guam or the Trust Territory Islands and Japan, or from Mid-Pac to West-Pac.

c. Iwo Jima is also the site of two Loran stations which are important links in the West-Pac chain of NavAids.

d. These islands provide an ideal locus for a far eastern US "listening post" astride major east-west maritime and air routes, and within electronic range of the Chinese mainland.

e. In contingency and limited/general war situations, the naval facility on Chichi Jima is slated to accommodate mine assembly and storage facilities and to provide support to a tender-based submarine squadron. The USAF base at Iwo Jima will be used to relieve pressure on other Far East bases in staging, or supporting strike aircraft during periods of intensive operations.

2. Since 1947, the Japanese government has made repeated efforts to repatriate the former Bonin Islanders of Japanese descent who are now living in Japan. In addition to the fact that insufficient arable land exists to support these people, a US agreement to accept such an influx would precipitate a security problem and erode our control of the islands.

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3. As you know, the JCS recently approved the "Strategic Island Concept" and recommended that the State Department take steps to acquire rights to identified, potentially useful islands. The Bonin-Volcanos, under the control of a military governor (CINCPACFLT), are readily available to meet the military requirements of our strategic plans. Assuming State Department implementation of the "Strategic Island Concept", it would appear to be anomalous to accede to an erosion of control over the Bonin-Volcano Islands while attempting to obtain rights to other Pacific islands.

4. In the event that currently evident pressures force our evacuation or phase-down of support facilities in Japan and the Ryukyus, our unencumbered use of the Bonin-Volcano group would assume added significance and could well become a critical consideration for effective operational planning in the West-Pac area.

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