

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1975

HEARINGS

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS

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PART 2

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

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DIEGO GARCIA NAVAL INSTALLATION, INDIAN OCEAN

Mr. SIKES. Turn to "Diego Garcia naval installation, Indian Ocean."
 Insert page 6 in the record.
 [The page follows:]

1. DATE	2. ORGANIZATION	3. PROJECT DESIGNATION									
	AF	FY 19 72 MILITARY CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM									
4. COMMAND	N/A	5. INSTALLATION CONTROL NUMBER									
		DIEGO GARCIA NAVAL INSTALLATION									
7. STATUS	N/A	8. STATE/COUNTRY									
		INDIAN OCEAN									
11. MISSION OR MAJOR FUNCTIONS	N/A	9. COUNTY (IES)									
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		10. NEAREST CITY									
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Mr. SIKES. What does the Air Force propose at Diego Garcia?

General McGARVEY. Sir, we propose a small addition to the Navy apron, an additional aircraft operational apron, 160,000 barrels of jet fuel storage, and about 6,000 square yards of open munitions storage; a handling point for offloading and unloading of munitions that might be staged through that location.

CAPABILITY FOR CONTINGENCIES

Mr. SIKES. Is the Air Force presently operating out of Diego Garcia?

General McGARVEY. No, sir, we are not.

Mr. SIKES. How would you classify this requirement? Is this an emergency type requirement? What is the real purpose?

General McGARVEY. Sir, the purpose is to give the Air Force a capability to utilize that location in the Indian Ocean for any contingencies that might arise, to stage tanker aircraft or cargo aircraft through there in support of DOD missions in that area of the world.

Mr. SIKES. There isn't much space in Diego Garcia. Do you see any problem about overcrowding?

General McGARVEY. No, sir. Our planning has been done in full coordination and conjunction with the Navy's plans.

Mr. SIKES. Will the funds requested complete the Air Force requirements on Diego Garcia?

General McGARVEY. Yes, sir, they will.

Mr. SIKES. Why do you have this project in the classified section?

General McGARVEY. Sir, it was a matter of timing. When the Navy program was submitted in the 1974 supplemental program, a decision was made at that point to classify it. We classified ours in the 1975.

Mr. NICHOLAS. That was based on the fact that the British Government hadn't yet announced it.

General McGARVEY. That is right.

APRON

Mr. SIKES. With the 25,000 square yards of apron space you are requesting here, what will be the total amount of apron space to be constructed at Diego Garcia?

General McGARVEY. The present facility at Diego Garcia provides only 20,000 square yards of apron space. In addition to our request for 25,000 additional square yards, the Navy requirement for increasing the parking apron involves 64,750 square yards. Thus, the final configuration would provide for 109,750 square yards of apron space.

Mr. SIKES. Why does the Air Force require apron space over and above the Navy's requirement for resupply and offloading of fighter aircraft during emergency conditions at sea?

General McGARVEY. Air Force requirements at Diego Garcia are contingency related. For example, in the event we are called upon to provide support to friendly nations in the Middle East, the Diego Garcia facility could be used as a staging base for westward flights over the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean route provides a valuable alternative to the Atlantic-Mediterranean route. In such a case, the extra ramp space would be essential for transient aircraft operations. Another requirement for the additional ramp space is for support of tanker aircraft conducting air-refueling missions.

AIR FORCE MISSIONS

Mr. SIKES. What missions does the Air Force have to perform at Diego Garcia?

General McGARVEY. The Air Force has no plans to permanently base personnel or aircraft at Diego Garcia. On a routine basis, the Air Force uses the airfield for resupply of the Navy communications station there. The facility could be used for staging airlift flights over the Indian Ocean and supporting fighter aircraft deployments. In addition, KC-135 tanker aircraft could use the base to refuel other aircraft operating in or through the area.

Mr. SIKES. Are these requirements over and above those of the Navy?

General McGARVEY. Yes, sir.

Mr. SIKES. Is there a JCS agreed position on just exactly what roles the two services are to have in this area of the world? If so, provide it for the record.

[The information follows:]

JCS POSITION, DIEGO GARCIA

Yes, sir. The JCS have addressed the need for Diego Garcia. Roles performed would depend upon the scenario or threat that may exist at a particular time. Present needs are to provide a support base for naval forces, an airlift staging base, and a capability for responding to future contingencies in that part of the world. Thus, completion of the support facilities at Diego Garcia will provide a capability to conduct both naval and air operations when directed.

Mr. SIKES. What aircraft would be used to perform a long-range reconnaissance mission here? Are suitably configured aircraft available in the Air Force inventory?

General McGARVEY. Should it become necessary to supplement Navy reconnaissance aircraft in the area at some future time, virtually all reconnaissance aircraft in the Air Force inventory could perform such a mission.

Mr. SIKES. What operating range would existing aircraft have? Provide that for the record.

[The information follows:]

OPERATING RANGE OF AIRCRAFT DIEGO GARCIA

Following are some illustrative unrefueled operating radii for some Air Force aircraft that could operate out of Diego Garcia:

	Nautical miles
KC-135	500-2,000
RC-135	2,750
F-4	675
RF-4	500
C-141	2,150
C-5	2,500

¹ Depends on fuel offload.

Mr. SIKES. Are you planning to use new types of aircraft here? General McGARVEY. We have no plans to station any aircraft—old or new—at Diego Garcia. However, new aircraft coming into the Air Force inventory could conceivably use Diego Garcia as a staging base, depending on the particular contingency or support requirement at the time.

Mr. SIKES. What aircraft would be used in the interdiction and sea control missions here? Are these available now? Do you have aircraft excess to your requirements in other areas?

General McGARVEY. If required, the Air Force can supplement the Navy's sea interdiction efforts in many areas of the world by using the F-4, F-111, A-7 or B-52. As you know, all of these aircraft except the B-52 can operate out of Diego Garcia. Since sea interdiction is not a primary USAF role, no aircraft have been purchased specifically for—or are dedicated to—this mission. However, as stated, several aircraft in the present Air Force inventory have an inherent capability to perform such a mission. We have no forces excess to our requirements, and any forces employed in the Indian Ocean area would be contingent upon their release from other areas of the world.

Mr. SIKES. What is the requirement for an additional 160,000 barrels of fuel storage? Would this be for fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, refueling, or transport aircraft?

General McGARVEY. The fuel could conceivably be used for all of these types of aircraft, depending upon the contingency existing at the time and the nature of the Air Force effort.

Mr. SIKES. How did you arrive at the requirement for 160,000 barrels? Provide details for the record.

[The information follows:]

Such an amount would be sufficient to support approximately half a squadron of tactical fighter aircraft on a contingency basis for 30 days, or an airlift effort similar to that which staged through Lajes during the recent Yom Kippur war. This fuel could also support KC-135 tankers conducting air-refueling missions, although the duration would depend on the nature of the contingency and intensity of operations.

MUNITIONS STORAGE

Mr. SIKES. You are also requesting 6,024 square yards of open munitions storage. How many short tons of capacity would this provide?

General McGARVEY. We will provide that for the record.

[The information follows:]

MUNITIONS STORAGE, SHORT TONS CAPACITY, DIEGO GARCIA

Approximately 2,800 short tons, which is sufficient storage capacity to accommodate an initial airlift of munitions into Diego Garcia at the outset of a contingency, and compensate for the time-delay inherent in follow-on surface resupply to sustain contingency operations.

Mr. SIKES. Will it meet criteria for nuclear weapons storage?

General McGARVEY. No Sir.

Mr. SIKES. Are nuclear weapons to be stored here?

General McGARVEY. No, sir.

Mr. SIKES. What types of aircraft could this support?

General McGARVEY. Any fighter aircraft in the Air Force inventory.

Mr. SIKES. What missions would this storage support?

General McGARVEY. Primarily air defense and in support of the Navy's sea interdiction efforts.

Mr. SIKES. Why can't you use an ammunition ship for ammunition supply as the Navy will?

General McGARVEY. Such use would tie up a valuable ship at Diego Garcia at the very time it would be needed for fleet support at sea.

Mr. SIKES. What size tactical unit would this ready storage support, assuming backup supplies were maintained on shipboard?

General McGARVEY. About half a squadron of tactical fighter aircraft. There are no plans to maintain any Air Force munitions on shipboard.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Mr. SIKES. What is the estimated construction time for these facilities?

General McGARVEY. Twelve months, sir.

Mr. SIKES. Will the Navy be your construction agent?

General McGARVEY. The Navy will be the construction agent.

Mr. SIKES. Will they do this work simultaneously with their own or subsequent to it?

General McGARVEY. They would do it simultaneously with their work.

Mr. SIKES. If there should be a delay in the Navy construction program such as that encountered in the supplemental bill, would your construction be delayed if authorized and funded?

General McGARVEY. Yes, sir; it would.

Ours is strictly supplemental to the Navy requirement.

Mr. SIKES. Are there questions?

OVERFLIGHT PERMISSION

Mr. PATTEN. May I get one question in?

With our new relations with Egypt and Iran and the like, do you think our ability to overfly some of these areas will be improved shortly?

For instance, today we don't go over the Sudan. We don't go over Algeria, even on a commercial basis. You haven't been going over Egypt?

General McGARVEY. No, sir. We have been restricted and I could only—

Mr. PATTEN. Libya?

General McGARVEY [continuing]. Personally speculate that it might improve in the future but at the moment we are certainly restricted from any of those areas in the Middle East from overflight rights.

Mr. PATTEN. More likely our nonmilitary flights would be received first, Isn't that probably how it would work out?

General McGARVEY. Colonel Reed?

Colonel REED. I doubt seriously for military purposes that we will see a change of heart very rapidly, particularly when you start speaking of Algeria and Libya which are rather hardliners, and I don't think you can expect that we will be given permission to ferry military supplies, say, to Israel or somewhere else to someone else whom we may consider friendly or they may consider against their interests.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. SIKES. Are there further questions on Diego Garcia?

Mr. LONG. I understand Mrs. Gandhi, speaking to a way-out leftist group, accused us of using Diego Garcia as a platform for nuclear

[The page follows:]

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