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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

*[Handwritten initials]*  
19 June 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL GOODPASTER

SUBJECT: Bonin Islands

The following items are submitted in brief explanation of some of the more important factors from a military point of view to be considered in connection with retention of the Bonin Islands. These factors relate only to this element of the problem, and are not to be construed as covering the entire problem.

Much of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reasoning in this matter is related to the eventuality of United States forces withdrawing from Japan.

Our base system in the Pacific Ocean is a single strategic entity which comprises numerous island positions. While economy of forces will not permit maintenance of garrisons in all these positions, the maximum U.S. control must be maintained in order to assure maximum availability in time of war.

Under the conditions envisaged, these islands would be used for the following purposes:

1. As missile bases, including the necessary control apparatus and radars. The Joint Chiefs of Staff feel strongly as to the necessity of dispersal of our retaliatory forces with particular emphasis on locating a proportion of such forces outside the continental United States, thereby making the Soviet problem of surprise attack a harder one to solve, and also decreasing relatively the attractiveness of the continental United States as a target.
2. As a supporting base for NSA and CIA operations.
3. As an advanced submarine base.
4. As an advanced storage site for limited number of nuclear weapons.



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Of interest in connection with the foregoing is the physical size and conformation of these islands. They are small; they have almost no economic potential and were utilized by the Japanese almost entirely to increase Japanese military potential.

It has been contended that we should be willing to repatriate the Bonin Islanders to areas on which there are no important military installations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that repatriation of a Japanese-oriented group to any of these islands, regardless of whether or not there are at present any military installations, would largely negate their potential usefulness. Furthermore, the difficulties which would ensue as a consequence of such partial repatriation are clearly indicated by our experience in the Ryukyus Islands.



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