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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

Office of the Secretary of Defense ~~SUSC55a~~
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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31 JUL 1980

DOC # 128

Egypt
- Ras Banas

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Negotiating a Facility at Ras Banas (U)

(S) Given the President's approval in principle of seeking access to Ras Banas, I propose the following negotiating strategy, on which I request your agreement so that we can submit it promptly to the President. I regard this as a matter of urgency.

(S) Rationale. Early access to a facility into which we could stage up to a division and air wing in the relatively early phases of a crisis would: (a) enable us to move larger forces significantly closer to the Persian Gulf in response to warning, thereby greatly reducing closure time; (b) help to deter aggression against Persian Gulf states without having to position US forces in these states themselves; and (c) allow us to pre-position certain stocks, thus enhancing logistical support in the initial stages of a regional conflict.

(S) In order to support even the baseline RDF, (i.e. 3 1/3 division ground force, plus corresponding air and sea forces), we also need a rear support base complex far enough from the area of combat to be safe from easy air interdiction yet close enough to be within unrefueled C-130 range of forward operating bases in the Upper Gulf. This would: improve our ability to support actual combat operations; provide sites to assemble subsequent reinforcements; provide a secure logistics support complex; allow us to mount long-range operations.

(S) Third, we need at least one area site where if necessary we can train 2-3 times a year in modest strength, because we are experiencing difficulty in getting approval for individual onshore training exercises.

(S) Lastly, we probably need at least one base in the area for B-52 interdiction operations.

(S) These four needs rank very high on our list of near term priorities--at least as high as any facilities currently programmed.

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(S) Preferred Location. We have looked into sites in Diego Garcia, Turkey, Israel, Somalia, Oman and Egypt. The chief advantage of Diego Garcia is ready availability. The chief disadvantage is that it is too small and remote (2700nm from Abadan). Real estate is very limited, and Navy and Air Force want priority for barracks, which are limited in any case to an estimated 4500 men--too small for a division-sized facility. Political obstacles to early availability or usability of Turkish or Israeli bases rule them out. Berbera is too remote (1250nm from Abadan) for a staging base, and we might not be able to rely on early access in a crisis.

(S) We sought a division-sized staging facility at Seeb in Oman this winter. The Omanis did not want so large and sensitive an installation near their capital. Masirah or Thumrait are within C-130 range of Abadan (800nm) but they would be within Soviet tacair striking distance in event of conflict, and are much farther from CONUS than an Egyptian site.

(S) Therefore, as we informed the April 23 SCC in our PG/IO "Basing Concept" paper, "Egypt is clearly the preferred location . . . to support large deployments . . . in advance of a major contingency" (p. 6). Our paper for the July 15 SCC further noted that "Egyptian facilities seem the most feasible politically." Our analysis of these facilities (including the Sinai bases, were they to become available), confirmed by the Ras Banas site survey, has shown that Ras Banas is best suited for initial development into an austere early deployment base and subsequent rear-staging area for contingency operations. Moreover, given Sadat's repeated suggestions that we build up Ras Banas and his general responsiveness to our exercise requests, Egypt would be much more likely to allow us to deploy sizable ground/air forces early in a crisis than Oman, the only other country with facilities within C-130 range. Oman is particularly unlikely to accept such deployments at Seeb, which is the closest Omani area to likely PG operations.

(S) Ras Banas is beyond the combat radius of potential hostile tacair forces. It is located astride both the primary sea and air LOCs to the region and between 150-250 miles from Saudi Red Sea ports. Only 800nm from Abadan, it is within C-130 radius of the Gulf. Furthermore, by the end of 1981 when refineries at Yanbu and Jiddah are completed, Ras Banas will have easy and direct sea access to POL. A rear-staging complex there would greatly shorten deployment times. For example, the combat elements of a pre-deployed air mobile or airborne division brigade could be moved to Dharan within 3-4 days. Finally Ras Banas is not located near any major Egyptian population center.

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(S) As to rear support basing, we see Ras Banas as an entering wedge which would facilitate more extensive use of Egyptian rear bases in event of a major contingency. Egypt has far more in the way of skilled labor, industrial base, and other infrastructure than Oman and Somalia combined. If the US were willing to fund construction of Ras Banas, I believe Sadat would allow us full emergency use. I further believe that, if we agree to overbuild Ras Banas, Sadat will in turn agree to allow us to use it 2-3 times a year for exercises.

(S) Ras Banas may also turn out to be the preferred site for B-52 interdiction operations. It is much closer to Abadan (800 nm) than Diego Garcia (2700 nm). It is far less real-estate limited than Diego Garcia, though we might have less freedom to use it.

(S) In sum, access to Ras Banas would critically complement the facilities agreed upon with Oman and Kenya, and potentially with Somalia, which are mostly for naval and air use. They need to be complemented by a sizable ground force facility. If we can also preposition certain stocks there (e.g. ammo and POL) it would radically cut down on airlift requirements.

Estimated Costs

(S) We want to develop Ras Banas in a carefully phased manner. The first phase outlined below will meet initial staging base and rear support base requirements. A second and necessary third phase can be negotiated later, when our further needs have been analyzed.

(S) Phase I: Construction during FY 82-83, with capability to support full surge operations, pre-deployment of an Army brigade and AF tac fighter squadron, plus port upgrade to SL-7 (Ro/Ro) capability.

JCS ESTIMATE OF CONSTRUCTION COST (IN 1980 DOLLARS)*

Airfield Upgrade	\$57,796,000
Airfield lights/barriers	1,222,000
Water supply system	3,495,000
POL storage/supply system	23,595,000
Power generation and distribution	5,400,000
Cantonment facility (bde & sqd)	25,446,000
Airfield munitions storage and ammunition storage	1,420,000
Port Upgrade	50,300,000
Airfield spt/opns	3,053,000
TOTAL	\$171,727,000

*Project totals include a nine percent planning and design (P&D) cost. Cost figures shown above are extracted from the draft inspection report and are tentative pending confirmation during planning and design phase.

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(S) This Phase I package includes \$10-12m. in planning and design (P&D) funds in FY 81 with construction/upgrade to begin in FY 82. At this or some later date, we may wish to add funds for B-52 upgrade.

(S) Phase II: The above Phase I package is designed to dovetail into an expanded package (\$101m.) increasing from a brigade to a division-sized cantonment area, more aircraft maintenance, enlarged ammunition storage, etc. for a total cumulative cost of \$272.681m. in FY 80 dollars. Since the present FY 82-86 FYDP package of \$119.9m. for FY 82, \$87.6m. for FY 83 and \$32.0m. for FY 84 in then year dollars totals only \$239.5m. in then year dollars, additional funding will be required.

(S) Approach to Egypt. The urgency of our needs dictates promptly starting negotiations with Egypt. This raises the issue of whether a formal access agreement on the Kenya/Oman model is needed. Congress has made it clear, especially in the FY 81-A hearings, that no Milcon funds will be provided until adequate access agreements have been signed. Hence one is probably necessary, and strong Egyptian objections may not develop. Sadat may even lean on Foreign Minister Ali to conclude an agreement quickly without drawing out negotiations over quids. Our construction proposals, once access negotiations are underway, could then be folded into an improvements package, as was done with Oman, Kenya and Somalia. We would also want to indicate our interest in Egyptian participation in the development/construction plan. DoD is currently studying possible Egyptian funding and participation. An access agreement of 5-10 years duration is an absolute requirement.

(S) Congressional Approval of Preferred Construction/Funding Profile. Getting Congressional approval and funding of expedited construction will be difficult. Beyond this, accelerated funding, design and construction will present special problems. Three options are presented below:

OPTION "A"--Normal Procedure. This would involve seeking construction funding in the FY 82 budget, or perhaps an FY 81 supplemental, with hearings beginning in January.

Perhaps we could reprogram modest funds now to begin design work, since Congress usually turns down any construction project on which design work is not 35% completed. While we doubt that 35% will be finished by January, Congress might relent if we can show that the project is vital and that the architects/engineers are hard at work. We estimate that Phase I construction can be completed by the fall of 1983, and Phase II by fall 1988.

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OPTION "B"--Fast Track. This would involve combining the design and construction stages, as we've done in building Israel's new Negev bases. On an optimistic schedule, if all went well with Egypt and with Congress, we could award a planning and design contract by the end of this fiscal year (technically we can do this without Hill approval but it is prudent to advise Congress).. If Congress then approved an estimated \$35m. we could begin runway upgrade by 1 June 1981 and complete Phase I by mid-1983 provided follow-on programming approval with FY 82 funds. However, we see many potential pitfalls in this expedited procedure, not least getting Hill approval. Moreover, these extraordinary actions would at best save perhaps six months in the construction cycle by permitting selection of a contractor(s), establishing a mob camp, ordering aggregate, finding a labor source, etc.

OPTION "C"--A combination of military construction funds and Security Assistance (FMS Credit). By this means we could, with the cooperation of the Egyptians, initiate construction in FY 81. Since upgrade of the airfield and port facilities are improvements to what are essentially Egyptian facilities, there is some good rationale in involving the Egyptians in these improvements through Security Assistance funding. Specifically, in FY 81 the Egyptians could undertake a portion of the Phase I airfield upgrade, the highest priority improvement, for about \$50m. One of two strategies could be followed.

- Request, in an FY 81 Supplemental, additional FMS credit funds (or possibly Security Supporting Assistance) for Egypt.
- Use FMS Credit funds already programmed for Egypt in FY 81, working out an agreement with Sadat to transfer some of these funds from projects already agreed upon with the promise of like, or increased, funding in FY 82.

US planning and design work to support, first, the projects which the Egyptians would execute could begin immediately by drawing on SecDef discretionary funds. Additional planning and design funds could be included in an FY 81 Supplemental request.

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Reprogramming

(S) Under any of the above options, DoD may have to reprogram \$10-12m. FY 80-81 funds in order to get started on Phase I P and D at Ras Banas in timely fashion. DoD regularly has to reprogram funds every year, but doing so with Milcon presents special Congressional problems and could involve some small slippage of funds we've promised to Oman and prospectively Somalia. Since we have not yet even begun to negotiate an access agreement with Somalia, we could request that \$1m. or so in Somalia P and D funds appropriated in the FY 80s plus the \$10.5m. in FY 81 money authorized by the HASC for Somalia construction be used for Ras Banas and then replaced with FY 82 funding for Somalia. Another source of reprogramming would be Diego Garcia, where the FY 81A package, which seems likely to survive, includes \$35m. for BEQ/BOQ facilities, which could be deferred to FY 82.

(S) We will probably have a severe Milcon funding problem for Oman/Somalia/Kenya as well as Ras Banas since the HAC approved only \$190m. out of the \$280m. the HASC authorized for FY 81. The SASC gave us greater flexibility by authorizing a lump sum for PG/IO contingencies, but limited it to \$200m. Therefore, our best bet is to seek the full \$280m. authorized by the House but the lump sum authorization of the Senate. This will be hard to get but is well worth the try.

Howard Brown

cc: Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs