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

#56

JCSM-47-81
17 February 1981

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WIIS
Date: 01 Mar 2019 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 U.S.C. § 552
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MDR: 19-M-0058

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Access to Moroccan Air Facilities (U)

1. (U) The primary constraints on US power projection into Southwest Asia are strategic mobility and sustainability. Furthermore, the need for assured availability of en route air facilities is a major determining factor affecting the development of contingency options. Morocco, with facilities potentially able to meet major portions of US surge requirements, offers the possibility of overcoming en route access difficulties. Factors supporting seeking access to Moroccan facilities include the following:

a. (U) Morocco's geographic location and air facilities offer great potential to contribute to the force projection capability of the United States in a Southwest Asia contingency. Additionally, these same facilities could provide increased flexibility in responding to a NATO contingency and could be useful in executing a wide range of actions in Africa.

b. (U) During discussions last April, senior Moroccan military officials indicated a willingness to offer the United States access to one airfield.

c. (U) Access to Portuguese and Spanish facilities to support Southwest Asia operations cannot be guaranteed.

d. (U) In a non-NATO scenario, West European nations may be unwilling to provide the overflight clearances and levels of access needed to meet US requirements in contingency situations.

e. (U) An approach to Morocco for access could influence similar negotiations with Portugal and Spain by signaling reduced dependency on their facilities.

2. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the political factors that resulted in the previous deferral* of a decision to approach

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Morocco have changed and that the United States should move expeditiously to seek access to Moroccan facilities. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that a memorandum, substantially like that in the Appendix, be sent to the Secretary of State.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



THOR HANSON
Vice Admiral, USN
Director, Joint Staff

Attachment

Reference:

* Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 8 May 1980, "Access to Moroccan Airbases (U)"

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