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February 24, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF, USAF

SUBJECT: MOL Requirement at Easter Island

The MOL program has a requirement for a staging base in the South Pacific Ocean from which to conduct search and rescue operations in the event of an abort. Easter Island, a possession of the Government of Chile, is a geographically suitable location from which to conduct such operations, and the existence of an airfield there and [redacted] permanent installation make it economically the most advantageous site. The Government of Chile has agreed in principle to our use of Easter Island for this purpose, and the Department of State has agreed that our understandings be formalized by an exchange of letters between you and General Errazuriz. These letters would provide a basis for the Air Force to negotiate detailed arrangements with the Chilean Air Force for the operations and their support. As you will recall, your exchange of letters last year with General Errazuriz constitutes our formal agreement with the Chilean Air Force [redacted] facilities in Chile, and those letters have served as a model for the proposed letters on MOL operations.

If you concur, we propose to request that State send the attached message containing the proposed letters to our Embassy in Santiago. If the letters are acceptable to the Chilean Government and Air Force, we would then request that you sign the agreed letter to General Errazuriz.

Lieutenant General L.I. Davis, AFSC, and Brigadier General Pettit, AFXOP, have been briefed on this approach, and the letters and this memorandum have been coordinated with Major General Evans, SAF-SL.

DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS;
NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED
DOD DTR. 5000.10

PHILIP F. HILBERT
Deputy Under Secretary
(International Affairs)

Attachment

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DS 67-0950 AG

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- SAF-SLV ✓
- SAF-USI Subj
- SAF-USI RF
- SAF-AAE
- SAF-SL

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ACTION: ... AmEmbassy SANTIAGO

SUBJECT: MOL - Easter Island

STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

1. After response received to Embassy's Aide Memoire re MOL operation on Easter Island, next step should be exchange of letters between Air Force Chiefs of Staff. Proposed text for letter from General McConnell and suggested reply from General Errazuriz follow:

Dear General Errazuriz:

My Government has assigned to the USAF the responsibility for developing a capability for rescuing astronauts who may have to make an emergency landing in the South Pacific Ocean. The USAF would very much appreciate the assistance and cooperation of the Air Force of Chile in the development of a capability to conduct search and rescue operations in support of manned space flights. I understand that Chilean Air Force airport facilities at Mataverí, Easter Island, would be a suitable location from which to conduct such operations.

I would suggest that proposed search and rescue operations be conducted jointly by the USAF and the Air Force of Chile and that the provisions of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of 1952 be made applicable to this effort. I would further suggest that Mataverí airport facilities be used for this purpose, and that, since I envision that these facilities will be required for a substantial period of time, they be made available for a minimum of ten years

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and afterwards until one year after either Air Force gives notice of its desire to discontinue the joint operations.

If these proposals are accepted by the Air Force of Chile, I shall designate USAF officers who can work out mutually satisfactory detailed arrangements with officers of the Air Force of Chile. (Signed McConnell)

Dear General McConnell:

In recognition of the scientific value of manned space flight and out of consideration for the safety of astronauts, the Air Force of Chile welcomes the opportunity to assist and cooperate with the United States Air Force in developing a capability for jointly conducting the rescue of astronauts who may have to make an emergency landing in the South Pacific Ocean. I am pleased to inform you, with the authorization of my Government, that the proposals contained in your letter are entirely acceptable.

I shall appoint officers of the Air Force of Chile who will work with designated United States Air Force officers in concluding mutually satisfactory detailed arrangements. I suggest that a meeting between the designated officers of our two Air Forces be arranged at an early date. (Signed Errazuriz)

2. Embassy should present proposed letters to FACH and, as appropriate to For Min and Def Min, and attempt obtain agreement on text as authorized herein. After agreement on wording reached, signed copy of General McConnell's letter

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will be sent to Embassy for delivery to General Errazuriz, and General Errazuriz should sign his reply at that time.

3. In view of previous exchange of letters between Chiefs, we do not foresee that GOC or FACH will have any serious difficulty with proposals except possibly sentence on tenure. We regard tenure provision as very important since USAF anticipates it will require use of Easter Island for substantial period of time and in view of Congressional interest in tenure rights when large expenditures are requested for permanent construction. If GOC or FACH seriously object to length of term, we can accept five year initial period. If after explanation of importance of tenure provision to USG, GOC or FACH should reject inclusion of any tenure provision in letters or if they desire any other substantive changes, Embassy requested furnish detailed report and recommendations for further Washington consideration.

4. After letters have been signed, arrangements will be made through Embassy for USAF representatives to meet with FACH officers to conclude details.

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