



SECRET

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority WWD 978245
By ca NARA. Date 7/3/0

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

24 January 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL LIBBY

SUBJECT: Necessary Negotiations for LORAN-C Project

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have determined that the LORAN-C project in various European countries should be expedited in order to provide support for the POLARIS project. They desire these stations to be operational by 1 January 1959.

In order to meet this deadline it is necessary for the Coast Guard to begin construction not later than 1 July 1958. Prior to that time agreements must be sought or existing agreements amended in the several nations in which the stations are to operate. The first step in this process is to seek a site survey, and the Coast Guard has their survey party organized and will be ready to depart Washington in a special aircraft on 1 February. Any appreciable delay in departure of the survey group could well result in an equal amount of delay in achieving the operational capability.

After the sites have been selected by the survey party it will be necessary to conduct negotiations to secure the sites and the operational rights, and these too, must be completed on a very expedited basis if the proposed date is to be met.

LORAN-C has both a military and commercial use and we therefore have the possibility of using either of these avenues for our discussions with the various countries. The project could be presented as a rather "routine" requirement for a navigational aid suitable for both commercial and military use, or we can make a maximum effort by stating the real reason for the project and therefore the urgency of our requirement as to time, to a very limited number of top officials, perhaps only one or two in each country, whose cooperation is necessary to assure the required speed.

This office considers that the chance of getting an agreement in time to permit the program to be accomplished within the time limit desired by the Joint Chiefs of Staff is very remote unless we authorize the Ambassador to make this very frank presentation of the entire matter to an appropriate high official of each of the NATO countries concerned. We do not intend to disclose the purpose of the entire project in the case of Libya, the non-NATO member. Since we do feel that at some time

SECRET

14/cs

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

Authority WND 978245

By cdg NARA. Date 7/13/11

during the course of the negotiations with the NATO countries it will be necessary to disclose the nature of our requirement, we consider it best to do so immediately, both because we feel that that will expedite our getting the survey rights and because we feel that if we do not state the reason for the project at this time and later are forced to do so, there might be some resentment on the part of the proposed receiving state of our having been a bit less than frank in the initiation of the discussions. Furthermore, such a procedure might tend to create a suspicion of our intentions which might not be entirely satisfied by our later explanations.

We also feel that as a practical consideration, the Ambassador would find it very difficult to impress upon the foreign government the urgent need for action on this matter, if he can only present it as a further development of a commercial program with some related military significance.

We recognize, of course, that there would be some advantages from the security aspect in making no disclosure of our real purpose but we think this should be carefully considered as against the probability of perhaps an extensive slippage of time if we do not make the disclosure.

It is therefore recommended that you concur in the draft which is presented herewith, which now has the concurrences of Army, Air Force, Coast Guard and interested offices of OSD. Similar cables, modified to suit the particular situation, will be dispatched to each of the other countries in the near future.

The Department of State concurs in substance with the above approach to the problem and have cleared the draft cable at working level.

[SIGNED

J. W. CHAPMAN
Colonel, USAF
Assistant, Office of
Foreign Military Rights Affairs

Attachment
(Draft msg to Amembassy ANKARA)

cc: Captain Stroh
Captain Morrison (page 3 only) ←
Commander Payne (" ")

SECRET