

TRUST TERRITORY TASK FORCE MEETING
October 22, 1963
Summary.

A meeting of the Trust Territory Task Force was held at 3:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 22, Room 6116, Department of the Interior Building, to discuss the report of the United States Government Survey Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Mr. Anthony Solomon, who headed the Mission, and some members of the survey group were present at the meeting. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Carver chaired the meeting. A complete list of persons present is appended.

In opening the meeting, Secretary Carver stated that the Survey Mission Report will be presented to the President on October 24 with Mr. Solomon, Secretary of the Interior Udall, and Secretary Carver in attendance. At that time, it will be reported to the President that the fact of the study and the broad outlines of its findings have been discussed with key Congressional leaders in the House and the Senate. Similarly, as a result of the Task Force meeting, it will be possible to report that the Task Force has also reviewed the report and its key policy questions.

The major issues before the Task Force as outlined by Chairman Carver were:

- (1) Do we endorse the Survey Report's recommendations on the plebiscite?
- (2) Are we satisfied with the political recommendations for the pre- and post-plebiscite period?
- (3) On what basis do we present the economic program to the Congress? (With the full report before it, or some abbreviations thereof?)

Pointing out that the report is concerned extensively with the administration and supervision of the Trust Territory by the Department of the Interior, Secretary Carver stated that the Interior Department regards the Report as a thorough, carefully prepared, useful guide for strengthening administration and programs in the Trust Territory.

The Chairman introduced the High Commissioner who stated that the Survey Mission Report is a comprehensive document bringing into focus most of the pressing problem areas, both policy and administrative, confronting the administration of the Trust Territory. Although not disagreeing with major points of the report, the High Commissioner did cite some deficiencies, most notably what he regards as unjustified criticism of personnel in the area. He closed his statement by noting that implicit in much of the report

is the mounting of an open drive to win the plebiscite. Based upon his observations and associations with Micronesians during the past two and a half years, he stated that United States objectives may be won more surely and effectively by a carefully developed approach of a "soft-sell" nature rather than a "hard-sell" approach.

There followed a discussion as to what constitutes "hard-sell" versus "soft-sell". Although neither was defined, it appeared to be the consensus that greatest care is required in getting across to the Micronesians the intended effect of the several programs recommended in the survey report.

Closely related to the question of the intensity of the "selling" effort, was the discussion of the timing of the plebiscite. From the standpoint of international involvement, the earliest possible date seemed to be most desirable. At the opposite extreme, was the feeling that what may be required is self-government in substance rather than merely a form of self-government, hence the date for a "credible" plebiscite is many years in the future. The consensus of the discussion, however, was that late 1967 is an appropriate target date provided sufficient flexibility is reserved to permit either advancing or delaying a plebiscite depending upon circumstances as they develop.

With respect to pre- and post-plebiscite governmental forms, it was felt that due speed should be exercised in the creation of a territorial legislature. It was the consensus, however, that post-plebiscite governmental forms are sufficiently remote that no decision need be taken at this time.

With respect to the presentation of the economic program, it was generally agreed that a "sanitized" version of the economic section of the report could be publicly released. In so doing, however, it is essential that the congressional committees be kept closely and intimately informed of progress towards the plebiscite question and the political steps which must follow thereafter. It was strongly urged that the political sections of the report not be released.

At the conclusion of the meeting some comment was made with respect to the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior. The point was made that responsibility should be generally focussed upon the Secretary of the Interior and that each interested agency in terms of its own responsibilities could, would, and should consult with the Secretary whether or not an advisory committee continues in effect. There was some expression of doubt

concerning the need for and utility of a continuing advisory party although the Chairman stressed that the current Task Force had proved to be a useful instrument.

Attached are copies of the opening statement of Assistant Secretary Carver and High Commissioner Goding.

TASK FORCE - T.T.P.I.
October 22, 1963
3:00 P.M.

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White House

Michael Forrestal
Charles Johnson

State

Harlan Cleveland
Mr. Hennes
Mr. Parker
Mr. Edwards

Defense

Art Way
Frank Sloan

Health, Education and Welfare

Robert Kevan
James M. Quigley
Laurence Wyatt

Bureau of the Budget

K. R. Hansen

Trust Territory Mission

Anthony Solomon
Howard Schnoor
Cleo Shook
Paul Daly
Dr. Mangone
Don Lindholm

Interior

Secretary Carver
Richard Taitano
John J. Kirwan
John P. deJongh
George Milner
Samuel Heller
Robert Mangan

Office of the High Commissioner
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

M. W. Goding
Jose Benitez
Robert Shoecraft

Statement of Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr.
at a Meeting of the Trust Territory Task Force - October 22, 1963

The agenda for today's meeting is the report of the United States Government Survey Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Mr. Anthony Solomon, who headed the mission, is here, with members of the survey group.

I should announce first that the presentation of the Report to the President will take place on October 24, with Mr. Solomon, Secretary Udall, and I in attendance.

This report has been in your hands for about a week; discussions were had with several of you before its final preparation. We have an opportunity today, therefore, to probe more deeply into the policy matters discussed in it than might otherwise be the case. We can as a minimum inform the President of our consideration, just as we will be able to assure him that the fact of the study and the broad outlines of its findings have been discussed with key Congressional leaders, both House and Senate.

Also present with us today is the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, Mr. Goding. A Survey Report can be no better than the data on which it is based. By definition, the High Commissioner is the official best able to controvert, if such is indicated, any factual or technical details which furnish basis for policy conclusions. I intend, therefore, to ask him to comment on the report first.

I would like to emphasize, however, that our principal interest today is in the policy areas, and therefore I will exercise the Chairman's prerogative and reserve sufficient time for this purpose.

So that we may be thinking of them, it seems to me that these broad policy issues present themselves to us:

- a. Do we endorse the Survey Report's recommendations on the plebiscite?
- b. Are we satisfied with the political recommendations for the pre- and post-plebiscite period?
- c. On what basis do we present the economic program to the Congress? With the full report before it, or some abbreviation thereof?

The Report is concerned extensively with the administration and supervision of the area by the Interior Department. Implicit in the Report is the fixing of responsibility on the Secretary of the Interior --

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- Better guidance and review of program in depth
 - Making the Task Force an advisory group to the Secretary of the Interior
 - High Commissioner to be appointed and removed by the Secretary
 - Clarification of the Secretary's delegation to the High Commissioner, particularly on the question of redelegation of legislative power.

It also criticises the operations in the area, singling out lack of qualifications of personnel, too long tours, and failure to utilize available resources. Significantly, it is recommended that contract procedures be used for much of the task recommended, in order to prevent the further proliferation of the local bureaucracy.

The Department as a Department is not disposed to argue with these findings, although Mr. Goding will be permitted his own comments. I would like to state that the briefings we have had with Congressional leaders have elicited information which strongly supports the concept of fixing responsibility clearly with the Secretary of the Interior. This is related to the continuance of jurisdictional responsibility in the Interior Committees.

Flexibility is essential. No one here imagines that the Congress will be easy to convince on the funds or the policies, and we know therefore that adjustments will have to be made. Some adjustments may later be necessary in the political judgments which now support the Report. The attitude of the Department and the Secretary is that this Survey Report was prepared by an able and dedicated staff, capably led. We intend to profit from it.

We are willing, even desirous, to have a clearer delineation of our responsibility for administering the area, and will continue to call upon all the assistance we can get, including particularly the continued functioning of the Task Force.

But the corollary is that the Secretary's authority must not be diluted. In this connection, the Report must be considered as a guide, not a charter, and the Task Force must be considered as policy-advisory, not policy formulating.

I will introduce now Mr. Solomon. He has informed me that he has no statement or comment but will respond to any questions. I will then ask the High Commissioner to comment on factual and technical matters, hoping that there will be a free interchange (but not too extensive) between him, the Mission Director and members, and the Task Force Members.

Then we can proceed to the policy questions I have outlined, together with others which may be identified. I hope to complete the meeting in two hours, so forgive me if I tend to keep us moving along.

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COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS BY HIGH COMMISSIONER M. W. GODING ON THE
REPORT OF THE U. S. SURVEY MISSION TO THE TRUST
TERRITORY, October 22, 1963

I am most appreciative of the opportunity of being here at the presentation of the Survey Mission Report. It is indeed a comprehensive document bringing into focus most of the pressing problem areas, policy and administrative--that confront us in the administration of the Trust Territory. The scope of the survey and the depth of detail incorporated in the report preclude comprehensive analysis in a short time. Indeed thorough analysis, in all aspects (particularly technical and factual) can only be accomplished by somewhat time-consuming review by headquarters and district staff officers in the Trust Territory Government.

The report hinges almost completely on the policy premise that the plebiscite on the question of the political future of Micronesia be conducted at the earliest date practical.

This premise, which we must accept, stems not so much from the observations and conclusions of the Mission survey as from earlier consideration of national self interest.

With this premise, the report undertakes to reach conclusions and to formulate recommendations adding up to a comprehensive plan for guidance of the political, economic, social and educational development of Micronesia in the years immediately ahead.

Most of the technical studies and analyses in the report are well and competently done. I would cite especially the political and economic analyses. The former is centered on factors affecting the plebiscite but also is generally most perceptive and helpful in its review and comments on government at the District and local levels. The economic section, too, although coming to a rather pessimistic conclusion as to the overall potential is most useful in the compilation it presents of all relevant information and in the assessment of various sectors of the economy.

Here I would note some disappointment that, throughout the report, there is a general failure to note or highlight action that has been or is being taken to carry out the very points recommended or discussed. For example, the economic report, after noting the inadequacy and irregularity of transportation services, states "For economic development of Micronesia, first priority should be given to improvements in transportation." The "should be" might have read "has been." Indeed this has received priority attention for two years and great progress has been made in this area. The transportation section notes the improvement in the logistic shipping service and concludes that it is now adequate. The Air transportation service too has been greatly improved and will be well "out of the woods" in another eight months when the Palau airfield goes into service.

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Program and budget planning with deficiencies and shortcomings pointed up is an area that has received major attention. Two and a half years ago there was no semblance of systematic programming and budgeting. Years of level and starvation funding had reduced the function to an allocation process after each year's funds became available. The educational process is slow but making significant progress. I concur in and welcome the comments which will be most constructive in improving our process and procedures.

Deterioration of physical plant

The report effectively supports our needs for a major improvement of public facilities. We concur in this emphasis. However, in so doing it overstates the situation. Administrative plant and especially public utilities are grossly inadequate but the situation is one in which improvement has been made--if far too slowly. In general our plant is better than it was twelve years ago when most of the area was transferred from the Navy administration. Almost every person who has personal knowledge, visiting the area after a lapse of years comments on the improvements rather than the existing deficiencies. In Saipan, during the post years great progress has been made rather than retrogression. Roads have been opened that were barely possible to jeeps and power and other utility plants are now being maintained at a much higher level than previously.

The Trust Territory Bureaucracy

The report in general deals harshly with the shortcomings of the present administration organization and of the personnel making up the bureaucracy. Many of the observations are founded on specific deficiencies but I would be remiss, indeed, if I failed to note and to take exception to what I know to be much too far-reaching criticism. Our bureaucracy has its faults but measured against any nearly comparable organization in the United States and territorial governments of which I have personal knowledge, it is well above par. Our personnel are, to a very high degree, competent, devoted to their jobs--underpaid and overworked under conditions that most overseas agency personnel would not endure. Long years of grossly inadequate budgets have created frustrations and problems. As an example of the interest in program and devotion to duty, in the past four months, since our increased funds became available over half of the staff coming up for home leave have voluntarily given up or curtailed their leave in order to stay on the job "to get the show on the road."

The "hard-sell" vs. the "soft-sell"

Implicit in much of the report is the mounting of an open drive to win the Micronesians to vote affiliation. I feel it is incumbent on me to point up the rather obvious hazards of too open an effort. Based on two and a half years of continuing and close association I am of the opinion that our objectives may be won more surely and effectively by a carefully developed approach of a "soft-sell" nature.