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REPORT ON
TOUR OF THE U.S. TRUST TERRITORY

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/NE

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Introduction

From November 14 to December 9, 1965, I accompanied several members of the House Committee on Insular and Territorial Affairs on an official tour of the U.S. Trust Territory in the Western Pacific. We visited all six Districts in the Mariana, Caroline and Marshall Islands, as well as Guam and American Samoa.

This tour has convinced me, first, that it is urgent that the U.S. Government very soon make several critical political decisions regarding the future of the Trust Territory. Secondly, I think that the U.S. should commence immediately on a "crash" basis an extensive medical care program in order (a) to offset the effects of the recent WHO report which otherwise will certainly stimulate a seriously embarrassing attack on the U.S. in the U.N. Trusteeship Council and (b) to alleviate the shocking health conditions of the people. Third, I believe that it is also of the utmost necessity that the U.S. begin immediately on a long-range and broad development program throughout the Islands.

These convictions are based on the following assumptions:

1. The U.S. Government considers the Trust Territory of strategic importance to the U.S. and to our future position in the Pacific. The U.S. paid a heavy price in lives for these Pacific Islands during World War II. It is clear that with our growing involvement in the Pacific, these islands will again assume greater importance to the security of the United States.

At the very least, we would not want them to fall into the hands of, nor even under the influence of, another power.

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2. My second basic assumption is that the U.S. considers that an early and favorable termination of the Trusteeship Agreement with the U.N. has become politically highly desirable. The growing pressure on the U.S. in the United Nations by the Afro-Asian and Soviet blocs could soon make the present situation highly embarrassing to the U.S., if not untenable.

The following observations and recommendations from my tour of the Territory rest primarily on the foregoing assumptions. It would be possible to reach similar conclusions if one considered only the needs of the Territory peoples and U.S. responsibility towards them. However, I am basing my recommendations on what I believe are U.S. strategic and international political needs, which take precedence in the formulation of policy and the cost of implementing that policy.

I should preface my observations by stating that I understand that there has been improvement in the Administration of the Territory during the past three or four years. While the administrative approach has been improved and the budget has been increased, nevertheless it seems clear that neither the basic policy nor the implementation of it are commensurate with the strategic importance and the needs of the Trust Territory.

Also, by way of preface, I should add that, in the interests of brevity, I am not dealing with the problems in detail. While there are differences between the various districts, by and large the problems are similar throughout the Territory. The peoples in the various islands differ somewhat in their reactions towards their problems, but throughout the Trust Territory one finds the same basic problems, as follows:

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PART I

1. A Dependent and Unresolved Relationship Towards the United States

While dependency is an obvious, inescapable aspect of the present situation, nevertheless this relationship between the people of the Territory and the Administering Authorities of the U.S. fosters apathy, insecurity and resentment on the part of the dependents as well as a tendency towards indifference on the part of the U.S. Authorities.

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It is true that the Micronesians do not remember any past except dependency, whether it relates to the 18th and 19th Century Spanish domination, or the 20th Century German and Japanese "times." The people inevitably compare the present period with the pre-war Japanese "times," during which the economic condition of the people was probably better than it is today.

The fact that the political future of the Trust Territory remains unresolved, further complicates the relationship on both sides. The Micronesians tend to be insecure about their future, and uncertain as to what the United States wants of them. They know that the United Nations will have a role in determining their fate, but they do not know precisely what this means.

This unresolved political status of the Trust Territories also affects adversely the attitudes of the Administering Authority, namely the U.S. Frequently important planning and long-term decisions are postponed, pending the resolution of the basic policies. Congress may be reluctant to vote sufficient, developmental budgets without being certain of U.S. intentions. U.S. private industry is unlikely to consider

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1.36 X (S) significant investments in the Territory until it has some assurance that the Islands will remain in U.S. hands, and until certain basic infrastructure needs are provided.

1.36 X (S) (Meanwhile, Japanese economic interests cast nostalgic, covetous glances towards their former possessions, glances which are sometimes reciprocated by the poverty-stricken Micronesians some of whom remember "the good old days." While at present this Japanese interest is not a threat, it could become so unless the U.S. soon decides to resolve the basic political relationship.)

2. The Trust Territory is An Acutely Underdeveloped Area.

Excepting for the few small American enclaves where the U.S. officials live in relative convenience and comfort, most of the Territory lacks the basic infrastructure needed for civilized development of human and natural resources.

Throughout the Territory there are either extremely limited or non-existent water supplies, sanitation, electric power, transportation and communication. There are very few good roads within most of the Islands, and while there are small airfields on most of the major Islands, there are very inadequate docking facilities, to say nothing of extremely limited actual means of transportation and communication between the many islands of this vast ocean area (3 million square miles) as well as with the outside world.

Consequently, the possibilities for economic activity and development are at present largely untapped, and even unknown.

3. Poor Health and Medical Conditions

A related but possibly even more acute Territory-wide problem is the health of the people. There is a severe lack of adequate medical facilities, personnel, supplies and medicines.

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There is very little or no public health education, and only the beginning of an immunization program. While the latter was commenced three years ago, following an acute epidemic of polio, it has not yet been completed, and there are insufficient medical personnel and funds to carry out a continuous program.

Throughout the Territory there is a high incidence of tuberculosis, gastro-enteritis and various serious parasitic infections.

The World Health Organization team which has just completed a survey throughout the Territory will soon report its findings which I believe will document the serious health situation prevailing.*

I should add that the few U.S. doctors and Micronesian medical practitioners appear to be doing an heroic job under almost intolerable circumstances. Inadequate salaries, poor living and working conditions at present make it nearly impossible to recruit U.S. doctors.

While there are several new hospitals, they do not begin to meet the needs of the people. Even the new hospitals do not appear to be well planned, nor adequately staffed and budgeted to provide for operation and maintenance.

*Since drafting the above, I have read the advance Confidential Copy of the WHO report. It seems to me to be a carefully drafted under-statement of the real needs, but it clearly will put the U.S. in a highly unfavorable light and embarrassing situation.

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4. Poor Housing

The housing conditions throughout most of the Territory can only be described as squalid, run-down, unsanitary and unhealthy. Many of the hovel-like dwellings have been put together out of rusty corrugated iron scraps, the dreary wreckage of the last war.

Here and there one sees a few new modest housing developments, although most of these are set aside for U.S. and local officials and teachers.

In some areas there are traditional open huts with thatched roofs, dirt floors and other picturesque but unhealthy aspects.

Throughout much of the Territory one gets the sickening impression of a rural slum. An American feels ashamed to know that so many such wretched homes exist under the American flag.

5. Educational Needs

The "crash" program, begun in 1963, to build new schools throughout the Territory is beginning to answer the most pressing physical needs for elementary and secondary schools. But while there are new school buildings going up, or recently completed in most of the District centers, there are still severe shortages of teachers, text-books, and teaching materials.

It is shocking that the new school building program was so poorly planned that most of the schools lack sanitary arrangements. In other words, there are classrooms but frequently no toilets and no running water; yet this in a primitive environment where children need to be taught the simplest fundamentals of health and hygiene!

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In spite of these deficiencies, the young people are showing a definite ability and desire to study and especially to learn English. The high school pupils are as avid for technology, science and higher education as young Americans are, in spite of the Micronesians' limited present opportunities.

6. Rising Expectations

This leads me to comment on the inevitable gap that is already occurring between what the Territory now offers to young people and what they are learning exists elsewhere, and toward which they, too, aspire.

The awareness of these differences has been growing since the last war when the Micronesians were exposed to the technology of the modern industrial world.

The newly inaugurated system of universal, compulsory education with English teaching along with the inculcation of American democratic procedures and values, admirable and necessary as this education is for future development, is bound to sharpen the discontent and to escalate the desires for better living.

7. Low Wages

The minimum wage throughout the Territory is about 35¢ an hour, with the average wage being about 50¢ an hour. At the same time that wages are so low, living costs are very much higher. A money economy has been imposed on the once-primitive society, but there are as yet few revenue-producing resources. "Lack of funds" seemed to lie at the root of nearly every serious deficiency in the community services and the daily lives of the people.

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The presence of American officials and teachers whose salaries and living standards are considerably higher than even the best paid Micronesians tends to sharpen the discontent of the latter. For example, when we arrived at Saipan our group was greeted by an orderly, well-organized "demonstration" of Micronesians carrying signs reading "Equal Pay for Equal Work," "Help Us!" etc. We also received frequent urgent requests for higher wages, as the present wage-scale is not adequate to support a family.

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PART II

Now I want to mention several of the positive factors throughout the Trust Territory which impressed me strongly. Fortunately, in spite of the serious problems as outlined above, there are also several dynamic developments which offer encouragement and hope for the future -- provided that the United States makes and acts on the right decisions soon.

1. Friendliness Towards the United States

In spite of the many serious problems of the people, there prevails among the majority of the leadership groups a basically friendly attitude towards the United States. This attitude is probably shared by the majority of the uneducated, less articulate groups primarily because the Micronesians are traditionally "friendly" islanders. The fact that both Catholic and Protestant Missionaries have had Missions and schools in the Territory for more than a hundred years has also helped to pre-dispose the Micronesians towards American values.

Along with this basic friendliness, there is a clear, present desire on the part of the political leaders for a closer and continuing relationship with the United States. Our official group was presented with petitions and also informal requests for the Trust Territory now to become an American Territory, and for the Micronesians to become American citizens. Even in the District of Yap, one of the most conservative districts, we received a formal petition by the Yap Islands Congress requesting immediate removal from the U.N. Trusteeship Status in order to come under direct American supervision, until such time as the Yapese people will be ready to decide their own future. In Saipan, we received a petition requesting immediate American citizenship through association with Guam as an American Territory.

On the basis of the many private conversations which I had with political leaders throughout the Territory, I believe that

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if a referendum were held now providing as one option the right of becoming an American Territory this would be the majority choice.

There is undoubtedly a minority who look back on Japanese "times" as better than the present, and who might vote for an option specifying some form of association with "another power. But I believe that this minority will remain small unless the United States fails to act soon, both as regards political decisions and economic and social development.

2. Political Development

The progress throughout the Trust Territory towards democratic self-government is one of the most impressive features of Micronesia today. There is, of course, the newly organized Congress of Micronesia, whose members are elected on a representative basis from all the six Districts. The Congress of Micronesia gives evidence of Micronesia as a viable political unit notwithstanding the obstacles of language differences distances and presently limited powers. There are also District Councils and Municipal Councils which concern themselves seriously with local problems, although as yet their actual power to legislate and tax is limited.

Everywhere that we went we had frank, lively discussions with young political leaders. I was amazed to find many of them not only articulate in discussing their own political and economic problems, but also analytical and even rather sophisticated about their own goals and international affairs. Among these young political leaders, there was considerable awareness of the United Nations. Searching questions are being asked regarding the various options which may be available to Micronesia when the time comes to make decisions regarding their political future.

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3. The Economic Possibilities

The economic prospects for the Trust Territory are still largely unexplored. Fortunately, an economic study to be combined with a plan for implementation is being conducted now by a Robert Nathan Associates group under contract with the Department of the Interior. Members of this group with whom we had private conversations expressed concern that unless and until the U.S. Government reaches basic decisions regarding the importance and future of the Trust Territory this study will be unable to develop any significant recommendations. I concur with their view, but even in advance of their expert findings it is possible to look into the not-too-remote future and predict that these Pacific Islands will have considerable economic value in at least two important areas, as follows:

a. The Largely Unexplored Fishing Industry and Other Aspects of Oceanography.

While the Japanese fishing industry in pre-war days was significant to the Japanese, today these possibilities are barely being touched. However, it seems certain that there is an important future economic potential here, particularly in relation to the growing population and man's almost certain future need for utilizing the food from the seas.

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In regard to fishing, here again it seems clear that if the United States is unwilling to develop these economic resources, there are other nations which would like to do so. American strategic needs might thus be jeopardized, however, since political and military influence tend to follow economic hegemony.

b. Tourism

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b. Tourism

As the world population expands and Western affluence makes travel more easily available to more people, the lure and exceptional beauty of these South Sea Islands is bound to become more attractive. Swifter, more economical jet travel is already making the islands more accessible. The space factor will eventually no longer be a deterrent to tourists from the U.S. and even Western Europe, to say nothing of the Asian mainland.

Of course, in order to develop tourism, there will need to be a prior investment in the basic infrastructure as well as transportation facilities, hotels and other tourist attractions. But the potential is there, and it is bound to be exploited eventually -- whether by the U.S., Japan, or some other power.

4. The Example of American Samoa

One of the most encouraging examples of what can be done in the Pacific Islands towards self-government and economic development is in American Samoa. This beautiful island, which only four years ago was accurately described as "America's Shame in the South Seas" has now become "America's Pride in the Pacific." The social and economic improvements that have been brought about in so short a time are spectacular. They are due to a variety of factors, the most important of which are U.S. determination and leadership, motivation and efforts of the Samoan people, first-rate vigorous, modern U.S. administration and last but not least, sufficient money. During the past four years a total of about \$26 million has been expended in American Samoa, which amounts to an input of about \$1,000 per capita, as compared with only about \$175 per capita input throughout the Trust Territory.

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It is not my purpose here to describe all that has been accomplished in American Samoa, but for those concerned with the future of the much more important strategic area as represented by the Trust Territory, American Samoa stands as an inspiring example of what can be done, and relatively quickly.

Of course, it is true that in the Trust Territory there are nearly four times as many people involved, and there are other complexities such as the great distances between the Islands, the numerous languages and other cultural differences. However, all these factors will change -- are already changing -- and as for the size of the population, 100,000 population of the Trust Territory is still an extremely small number in terms of developmental aid.

The important thing is to realize that a Pacific Island which only four years ago was considered a disgrace to America has been transformed into a beautiful asset, both to the people of Samoa and the United States.

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PART III

Recommendations

1. There should be a swift policy determination by the U.S. Government to immediately take the necessary steps towards self-determination for the Trust Territory and thus conclude the Trusteeship Arrangement with the United Nations. (See Ambassador Goldberg's letters to Secretary Sisco of November 9 and to Secretary Rusk of December 22.) There is every indication that the peoples of the Territory would now vote favorably to cast their lot with the U.S. This advantage should be seized upon while it exists, and before the United Nations pressures become embarrassing to the U.S. Furthermore, such a resolution would be a necessary step in order to interest Congress in the legislation and appropriations required for development of the Territory.]

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2. There should be commenced at once a "crash program" for medical care, hospitals, dispensaries and health centers. Legislation should be enacted to permit the assignment of U.S. Public Health young doctors who would spend at least two years in the Trust Territory.

In addition to answering one of the most acutely felt needs of the Micronesian people, the immediate launching of such a program -- even the planning for it -- would help to alleviate the criticism at the U.N. Trusteeship Council which may be expected when the World Health Organization Team's report is issued shortly.

3. There should be a speed-up in the preparation of the long-range plans for economic development of the Trust Territory. In order to do this, the Robert Nathan Associates' group should now receive answers to their present uncertainty in not knowing what long-term U.S. policy goals are towards the Territory.

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[In this connection it is vital to U.S. security that the United States be the country which makes the necessary initial economic investments, and does not permit nor encourage at this time Japanese or other countries to move in economically.]

The economic stagnation of the Territory will get worse if basic long-term plans are not soon developed and implemented. [If the U.S. wishes to hold the Territory, as I believe it does, we cannot afford to permit any further deterioration.]

4. The present economic planning group (from the Nathan Associates) should be encouraged as a part of their basic plan to include planning for a broad developmental aid program which would provide the indispensable infrastructure such as water, sanitation system, electric power, roads, etc. These essentials must be developed before the health of the people can be secure and before there can be any significant economic development.

5. The educational development already commenced should be expanded, particularly by securing significant numbers of ex-Peace Corps teachers. There should be legislation to permit Peace Corps recruits to be assigned to the Trust Territory.

6. There should be at least modest increases in the present wage structure in order to provide immediate tangible proof to the Micronesian people that the United States is concerned with their lot, and that meaningful improvements are on the way.

Eugenie Anderson
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