

70D68
Box 12411

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET

03
2267
2127

DRAFT

R

MEMORANDUM TO THE UNDER SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Political Future of the Trust Territory
of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)

1. Background

The US TTPI is among the last three of the eleven Trust Territories placed under UN supervision following World War II. (This was indirectly alluded to by the current UN Visiting Mission to the TTPI--Chairman, Miss Angie Brooks of Liberia--during their call on the Secretary on January 31, 1967.) For some time the Department has been well aware, in light of the international spirit against all forms of colonialism and toward independence and self-government, that pressures have been growing for a resolution of the political future of the TTPI. NSAM 145 of April 18, 1962 (at Tab A), calling for a New Policy for the US TTPI, likewise recognizes "that fundamental changes have been taking place in the outlook of the peoples of the remaining dependent areas and in the attitude of the rest of the world toward these areas, bringing with it a recognition of the need for a greatly accelerated program of political, economic and social development."

Within budgetary limitations, such a program of political, economic and social development has been pursued by the US in the TTPI, primarily under the aegis of the Department of Interior which holds administering responsibility for the Territory. There is evidence now that progress in this program, while in a number of respects less than desirable, when combined with the natural desire to affiliate with powerful and affluent America, has been sufficient so that the people of Micronesia (TTPI), if offered a choice in the immediate future, would opt for a political solution recognized as improving and solidifying their ties to the US. The recent introduction of the Peace Corps volunteers into Micronesia will contribute to this by providing new evidence of US good intentions.

2. Strategic Interest

Integral and significant to a resolution of the political future of the TTPI is our strategic interest in the area. The JCS on February 5, 1965, by JCSM 88-65, stressed the increasing strategic

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

SECRET

REVIEWED BY B.H. BAAS DATE 3/25/87

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS
DECLASSIFIED RELEASABLE
RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

DECLASSIFIED

05 421943

SECRET

SECRET

2.

significance of these islands (plus Guam) to the US. Further, as indicated in NSAM 145, since "It is unlikely that the Trust Territory could ever become a viable, independent nation...it is in the interest of the United States that the Trust Territory be given a real option at the appropriate time to move into a new and lasting relationship to the United States within our political framework."

3. Proposed Solution

The solution proposed for the Territory's political future is a plebiscite in which the people would be able to choose from among different options, followed by action in the UN to demonstrate that the inhabitants of the TTPI had exercised their right of self-determination. The plebiscite should offer outright independence (with a clear loss of US economic and political support), or a new form of free association with the US which would end all UN overview (and would include full US citizenship for native inhabitants). A third possibility, undesirable to the US, especially from the point of view of Pacific strategic interests, could be a continuation of the status quo.

4. Other Considerations

There remains the consideration that it might be too early to try to resolve this political problem. Events would seem to negate this contention. The President's recent trip through the Pacific region with his stop in American Samoa (whose future, like Guam, is closely aligned to that of the TTPI) emphasizes new attention to the area. Nuclear China and struggling Viet-Nam dramatize the strategic importance. And there is no delaying the thrust of Twentieth Century anti-colonialism.

The President has a keen awareness of our purely national Pacific interests. Resolution of the TTPI political future in several respects goes hand in hand with working toward a stable solution in Southeast Asia. Further, in terms of our international and domestic social and humanitarian efforts, it is consistent that we should try to improve the lot of our Micronesian charges.

Several resolutions of Territory legislatures during the last two years indicate the aspirations of the Micronesians, specifically for US citizenship and termination of the trusteeship status.

SECRET

SECRET

05 421944

SECRET

SECRET

3.

In addition, by Joint Resolution, August 3, 1966 the Congress of Micronesia petitioned the President to establish a Commission "to ascertain the political desires of the people of Micronesia...to lead to the attainment of such desires and determination of the political status of Micronesia."

5. Recommendations

a. Despite the fact that the Department of Interior supports the establishment of a Commission as proposed by the Congress of Micronesia, we do not recommend such a course. As discussed within this Department, it is considered that this could be a very time-consuming process and could prove counter-productive to the above explained need to make early progress on reaching a solution to the future of the TTPI. Additionally, firm Executive control of this important political and strategic problem is essential. An appointed Commission, requiring Micronesian and US Congressional participation (Tab B is a draft of Interior's suggested Commission), could lead to unpredictable and indeed unsatisfactory results.

b. We recommend, since Interior is open to suggestions, the following program alternative to their Commission proposal:

(1) Seek a decision within the Executive on the desirability of an early plebiscite in the TTPI, with agreement on the options to be offered to the Micronesians;

(2) Pursue extensive consultation in Congress with the Interior, Foreign Relations, and Armed Services committees of the House and Senate in order to inform these committees of the Executive program and to gain their cooperation and support;

(3) Through Congressional briefings, and possibly hearings, work for passage of a Congressional resolution endorsing a plebiscite with specified options;

(4) Consult informally with the UN Trusteeship Council to advise the UN of our intention of carrying out self-determination for the Micronesians.

(5) Conduct a plebiscite; and finally,

SECRET

SECRET

OS 421945

REF ID: A66010
SECRET

4.

(6) Obtain Congressional ratification of the plebiscite results.

c. We recommend close coordination with Interior, Defense and the White House for a program along the above (para. b.) lines. Positive Executive Branch agreement will be essential, as a formidable effort with the Congress will be required to implement the program. It must be presented as a matter of urgency not only for the benefit of 90,000 Micronesians, but also of extreme importance from the standpoint of national security considerations. The objectives in Congressional consultation must be seen as both (i) engendering support for the program outlined and (ii) gaining support for ultimate endorsement by the US Congress of arrangements chosen by the people of the Trust Territory.

6. Implementation

a. If you support this program, we further recommend (i) preliminary discussion in the Interagency Planning Group, followed by (ii) SIG consideration. These steps are seen as meaningful in obtaining requisite positive Executive agreement before going into Congressional briefings.

b. It may eventuate that the foregoing discussions will indicate acceptance of the Interior Commission proposal in some form is necessary. We are prepared reluctantly to acquiesce in this concept with the fallback proviso that the Commission be Presidentially appointed and not designed as a substitute for the procedures recommended above. In other words, a Presidential commission (with a carefully selected chairman and a definitely established termination date) might serve as an adjunct to Congressional hearings and help to obtain Congressional as well as public support for moving the Trust Territory into a new and lasting relationship with the US, as required by NSAM 145.

c. We (representatives of IO, EA, L. and S/P) would like to meet with you at an early date on this subject.

S/P-WWBehrens Jr: dch 2/2/67

SECRET

REF ID: A66010

OS 421946