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**MEMORANDUM TO:** The Acting Secretary

**THROUGH:** S/S

**FROM:** IO - Joseph J. Sisco

**SUBJECT:** Response to Secretary Udall's Letter Regarding  
the Trust Territory: ACTION MEMORANDUM

In a recent letter to Secretary Ausk (Tab B), Secretary Udall proposed that you meet with Under Secretary of Interior Luce to discuss the political future of the Trust Territory, particularly a new Interior proposal for legislation to establish a Congressionally-oriented commission which would recommend means toward our objective of terminating the trusteeship status of Micronesia while simultaneously ensuring its continued free association with the U.S. The proposed response (Tab A) endorses the proposal for high-level discussions and mentions a key concern and reservation we have about Interior's plan. In short, we feel the commission idea will result in substantial delay.

With a JCS determination that the Territory is strategically essential to the U.S., we have been pressing to consolidate our position in the TTPI in a way consistent with our obligation under the trusteeship agreement to develop the area's independence or self-government. In general, there is a consensus within the Executive Branch on a dual approach whereby we would greatly accelerate the TTPI's economic development and permit an early exercise of self-determination, believing the inhabitants will freely choose continued association with the U.S. if we move fast enough. Our belief is the sooner the TTPI is given an opportunity for self-determination, the sooner we will get from the Micronesian people the answer which will best protect our strategic interests: some form of association with the United States and a judgment that the TTPI is in effect self-governing. Despite general agreement on goals, we have not yet managed to work out a specific program which would

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meet our various obligations and obtain Congressional support essential to implementation.

Interior's proposal for a Congressionally-established commission would have the virtue of involving the Congress deeply in the process of actually determining a program for the TIPI, but it would also come very close to dumping our Executive responsibilities on the commission without assurance of a satisfactory result. We have some alternative ideas which we wish to discuss with you. We hope therefore that an early meeting can be held in response to Udall's request.

Recommendation

That you sign the proposed reply to Secretary Udall which responds affirmatively to his request for an early meeting at the Under Secretary Level.

Concurrences

EA/ANZ - Mr. Lindquist  
L/USA - Mr. Reis

S/P - Capt. Behrens

Attachments

Tab A - Letter to Secretary Udall  
Tab B - Letter from Secretary Udall

IO:JJSisco/UNP:WGloysteen/jc  
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Dear Mr. Secretary:

I fully share the sense of urgency expressed in your letter of February 2, 1967 about the need for a decision on the political future of the Trust Territory which meets our defense requirements, our international obligations, and the desires of the Micronesian people. I particularly welcome your opinion that we must take positive, constructive steps to resolve this issue. We are convinced that if we move swiftly enough to give the Territory's people an early opportunity for self-determination and self-government, they will freely choose continuing association with the United States. Such a choice by the Micronesians would best protect our strategic interests in the area.

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I also concur with your suggestion for prompt, high-level discussions of your proposed legislation which would establish a status commission to provide recommendations framed by representatives of the Executive, Congress, and the Micronesians themselves. One of the questions we need to examine carefully is whether a commission of the kind proposed would expedite or possibly delay plans for a plebiscite and the program of self-government necessary to terminate the trusteeship status.

The Honorable

Stewart L. Udall,  
Secretary of the Interior

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We are reviewing your new suggestion and possible alternatives which have been under consideration between our respective staffs. I will be calling your office to suggest an early date for a meeting. I am sure you would agree that it would move things along more rapidly if we include representatives for Defense and Walt Rostow's staff at such a meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Nicholas deB. Katzenbach

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