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April 20 / 1967

Note to Col. Wood, ISA
Capt. Higgins, JCS

refer
to
interior

Gentlemen:

Because I keep hearing murings to the effect that maybe Defense doesn't care all that much about the political status of the Trust Territory, I've concluded that it'd be very helpful if we could have a high level piece of paper from you on the subject. I've drafted the attached, with the expectation of asking either Udall or Luce to sign it here. But before sending it formally over to your building, I'd like (1) to give you notice and (2) to invite your comments, because if this seems to you a very Bad Idea better that we know it now.

I expect to be in touch with you tomorrow by telephone, to learn whether you'd have problems if Interior were to send forward to the Budget Bureau the draft commission resolution which we discussed a week ago today. Perhaps I can at the same time learn your reaction to the attached letter.

RWC

RVC
(Off. of TERRITORIES)

Enclosure

cc: Capt. Behrens, State
Charles Johnson, NSC

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HARRY DELASHMUTT, CHIEF
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04-427255

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To the Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. McNamara:

Representatives of our Departments and of the Department of State have held discussions in recent weeks concerning the political future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In that connection, this Department has produced an issue paper, a copy of which is enclosed, which attempts to sort out the alternative courses of action available to the United States. We would welcome any comments you may have concerning any portion of the issue paper. We would particularly ask whether our statement on pages 5 and 6 as to the position of your Department is accurate. We therein state the following:

"Interior understands that Defense is not deeply concerned with the precise form of political association between the United States and Micronesia, so long as that association is permanent, is not unilaterally revocable by Micronesia, and is conducive to political stability within Micronesia. While Defense would join State and Interior in preferring an arrangement whereby any United Nations scrutiny of Micronesia would be terminated, we understand Defense would find acceptable a status whereby the trusteeship would be terminated and the area would be placed under United States sovereignty, becoming a non-self-governing territory of the United States."

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HARRY DELASHMUTT, CHIEF
BRANCH OF SECURITY, DOJ
SIGNED:

Harry Delashmutt

Differently stated, we would find it most helpful to have your

Department's answers to the following questions:

1. Would the needs of the Department of Defense be satisfied if the Trust Territory were accorded the status of Guam today (i.e., United States sovereignty would extend over the area but its status for United Nations purposes would be that of a non-self-governing territory)?

2. Does the Department of Defense require that the Trust Territory be accorded a status comparable to that of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico today (i.e., United States sovereignty would extend over the area, but because Micronesia would be self-governing, it would not be subject to legitimate United Nations' scrutiny)?

3. As our issue paper states, we have assumed that the needs of the Department of Defense require modification of the political status of the Trust Territory. Given the express provision of the Trusteeship Agreement which permits the United States to establish military bases and to station Armed Forces in the Trust Territory (Article 5), and given the further provision which precludes the modification of the Agreement without the consent of the United States (Article 15), is this assumption correct? Perhaps the status quo meets your needs.

4. Would any one of the foregoing alternatives not satisfy the defense interests of the United States?

We will greatly appreciate having your answers to these questions.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Interior

Enclosure
cc: Austin (BOB), C. Johnson (NSC), *[redacted]*, Katzenbach

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