

EXCISE AUG 43 05 JUN

IO: UNP: WFE: Con: W Gleysteen CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REVIEWED BY W.V. Hrel DATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: August 23, 1967

EDS: NO EXT. DATE: PART(S) [] X RELEASABLE IN PART B1

SUBJECT: Future of the TTPI

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Jack Shepherd, Minister, New Zealand Embassy; Mr. Charles G. Woodward, Counselor, Australian Embassy; Mr. Brian T. Gilmore, First Secretary, US Embassy

Mr. William Gleysteen, Deputy Director, UNP; Miss Frances McReynolds, Office of New Zealand and Australian Affairs

COPIES TO: Mr. William F. Eaton, UNP

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Mr. Gleysteen explained that he wished to brief Messrs. Shepherd, Woodard and Gilmore on the draft Joint Resolution to establish a Presidential Commission to study and assess all factors bearing on the future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) which President Johnson had forwarded to the Congress on August 21. He explained the background reasons which had led the Administration to propose the Joint Resolution, in particular the resolution which the Congress of Micronesia passed in 1966 petitioning the President to establish such a status commission, the general mood of decolonialization prevailing in New York, the resolutions of the Trusteeship Council urging accelerated political development in the TTPI, and more immediately the recent introduction in both Houses of Congress of proposals to establish Commissions to study the future status of the TTPI together with the expectation that hearings would be held in the near future by the House and Senate Subcommittees concerned with the TTPI. We believed the President's proposal was best designed to meet a large number of considerations and achieve agreement among the various groups concerned including the Executive Branch, Congress, the Micronesians, and the UN.

In reply to a question, Mr. Gleysteen said that we did not know at this time who would serve on the Commission but that we envisaged high-level bipartisan commission with a well-known public figure

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as chairman. Mr. Gleysteen stated that the proposed procedure would in our belief spur the political advancement of the territory so that the Micronesians would be better able to make a meaningful choice concerning their future political status in a plebiscite with some appropriate UN involvement not later than but probably not much before June 1972. If the arrangement were to permit us to terminate the Territory's trusteeship status, we recognized that a plebiscite would have to include the alternatives of independence and some form of self-government in continuing association with the United States. We were reasonably confident that the people of Micronesia would freely vote for some form of continued association with the United States if such a plebiscite were held within the contemplated 5-year time span. We could not, however, speak with assurance about termination of the Trusteeship Agreement because it was impossible to predict this far in advance what sort of recommendations the Commission would actually make.

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Mr. Shepherd asked whether the Micronesians would have a full range of choices, including the status quo, in the proposed plebiscite. Mr. Gleysteen replied that the Commission would certainly have the right to recommend a full range of choices including the status quo, but that the Micronesians were, by virtue of their resolution requesting the President to establish a Status Commission, not satisfied with the uncertainty of their present status.

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Mr. Woodard asked whether the United States would really grant independence to the Trust Territory if the Micronesians adopted this alternative in the plebiscite. Mr. Gleysteen stated that it was the general expectation within the United States Government that the Micronesians would choose continued association with the United States in preference to independence but that the United States would have to carry through and grant the Trust Territory independence if the people so chose. Mr. Woodard asked whether there were defense considerations involved in our decision to put forth the Joint Resolution. Mr. Gleysteen replied that defense considerations were an important factor in our consideration of the Joint Resolution. He added that it was no secret that the United States had military facilities in the TTPI and in view of our estimate of Micronesian attitudes, we assumed the area would remain available.

Mr. Shepherd stated that he was puzzled by the wording of Section I of the Joint Resolution which states that the objective of the Commission was to develop such a degree of self-government that the people would be able to freely choose their future form of government. Mr. Gleysteen replied that this language was drawn up keeping in mind our practices in the UN and particularly Resolution 1541 which states that territories may cease to be non-self-governing through independence, integration with another state or some form of free association with another state. The resolution explicitly states that free association should be the result of a free and voluntary choice by the people of the territory concerned expressed through informed and democratic processes.

In reply to a question from Mr. Woodard, Mr. Gleysteen replied that the Commission no doubt would not confine itself merely to the Trust Territory itself but would consider the area's relationship to Guam and such other factors as the feasibility of integration into the United States. Mr. Woodard wondered whether in the event the Trust Territory chose independence Guam would have to become independent. Mr. Gleysteen replied that there had been no official consideration of this unlikely contingency but that speaking personally he would estimate that Guam, which had long been a part of the United States, would move even closer in spirit to the United States should the TTPI choose to become independent.

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Mr. Shepherd believed that the Administration's proposal was logical and more likely to be successful as long as the options, particularly independence, were not circumscribed.

Mr. Woodard described the President's proposal as a "significant and radical" step, for it had been his belief that as a result of the April Quadripartite talks it had been agreed that the metropolitan powers would continue to retain control over their Pacific Island territories. Mr. Gleysteen took exception to the term "radical". Recalling that we had discussed our general long-range plans for the TTPI at the Pacific Island Talks, he suggested that our proposal could only be termed radical if it lead to independence of the Territory and that this was a prospect which, to us, seemed unlikely. Mr. Woodard subsequently retracted the word "radical". Mr. Shepherd stated his understanding of the agreement reached at the Quadripartite talks was that there were many ways that the metropolitan powers could exercise influence and control over their Pacific Island territories. In his view, the United States proposal was clearly one of these ways.

In reply to a question Mr. Gleysteen acknowledged that criticism arising mainly in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly would complicate the efforts of the United States to move forward towards a solution of the TTPI problem, but that we believed the criticisms could be managed; otherwise we would not have proceeded with this proposal.

On leaving Messrs. Shepherd, Woodard and Gilmore all agreed that the Administration's proposal was a logical and appropriate method to move the problem of the future of the Trust Territory towards a satisfactory conclusion in line with United States objectives.

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