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L-3/24

COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

~~MARCH~~ 20, 1969

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

During my years on the Interior Committee I served on the Subcommittee for Territories. In this work I became deeply involved in the problems of the Trust Territory of the Pacific. During the past few years I have become evermore concerned about our national policy for the Trust Territory and over the political progress that we are making in this area, which I believe is of utmost strategic importance to the United States.

Recently I asked my long-time personal friend and former member of Congress and former colleague on the Interior Committee, Neiman Craley, who now serves with the Trust Territory Government as a Special Assistant to the High Commissioner to prepare for me a brief synopsis of his thoughts pertaining to the situation involving our interest in the Western Pacific.

The attached is his memorandum in which I believe he summarizes the situation accurately. I am convinced that our policies and positions of the past are inadequate today. I believe that new policies and new action will only result from firm Presidential leadership and from a complete awareness on the part of the National Security Council.

It is with this in mind that I respectfully submit his remarks, which I believe to be pertinent and also offer my own expression of urgency that we move with a renewed sense of purpose in our dealings with Micronesia. The ultimate status of this complicated conglomerate area is, in my opinion, of great importance to the United States.

Most respectfully,

  
Rogers C. B. Morton  
Member of Congress

RCBM:aw  
Attachment

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TRUST TERRITORY OF PACIFIC ISLANDS

MICRONESIA - 1969

The United States faces more problems in Micronesia today than we've faced in the past twenty-two years. We lack at the Executive level a National policy relative to the area, its people and their future. We operate through an inefficient and an antiquated "chain of command" and attempt to develop policy by cooperation and agreement of three Departments -- Interior, State and Defense. We endeavor to manage a vast territory with some ineffective, and in other cases incompetent, staff and our programs are many times ill-conceived and poorly implemented and lack coordination between Interior and State and Defense.

To these formidable problems we add the fact that very few people in the Executive branch know anything about Micronesia and only about ten percent of the Members of Congress have any real knowledge of the area -- and then very few understand in depth the current situation and the impending crises. Add to the above the current and past military involvement and for good measure throw in their projected interest - either real or imagined.

Top off all of these with some 500 Peace Corps volunteers, critical resolutions to the United Nations from the Congress of Micronesia and other district legislatures, and a "political

future" deadline of mid-May. This makes the present and the immediate future disconcerting at best.

What do we do? We first agree that there is a problem and that it must be given immediate and coordinate attention by the National Security Council and the Secretaries of Interior, State and Defense and/or their representatives. This group meets with advisors and consultants and formulates a policy which is accepted by the President and enunciated by him.

In the meantime, a time schedule must be presented to the High Commissioner and his staff and to the Micronesian leaders. They must know now that discussions are going on and that they can expect certain answers by certain dates. Prior to these "deadlines", the High Commissioner and the appropriate member(s) of his staff meet with the above "policy making" group to take part in final discussions and to develop a course of action to implement these policies.

Specifically, we must decide whether this area (either in total or in part) is necessary to the safety and welfare of the United States and our peace keeping efforts. If our answer to this first and most important question is affirmative, we must then formulate a policy and acquaint the Micronesian leaders and people.

I would suggest that in the meantime (as soon as the first decision is made [see immediate paragraph above] a Presidential mission visit Micronesia and travel through the entire Territory. This "mission" should be composed of a Presidential representative and his staff and a suitable representative from the Trust Territory administration. The purpose of this group visit would be to formally state our objectives and present to the Micronesian leadership our proposed time schedule regarding their problems - past, present and future.

This "mission", if properly carried out by mid May, 1969, would gain for the United States some valuable time, show the Micronesians the first concrete signs of our interest in them, and possibly delay many of their immediate "political deadlines".

In order to attack our Trust Territory dilemma with the thoroughness and continuity that it requires, it might be advantageous to direct and coordinate our programs for the immediate future from a special Presidential office or the National Security Council -- using the Department of the Interior as advisor and administrating agency, the Department of State as advisor and liaison with the United Nations, and coordinating both with the Department of Defense.

This immediate two-step program -- the formulating and directing of our Trust Territory program from a central Presidential office (using the three interested Departments - Interior, State and Defense - to implement same) and the visiting United States mission, will do much to simplify and eliminate our problems in Micronesia. In any case, continued attention, a firm but fair policy with frequent public (to the Micronesians) announcements and concrete accomplishments must come forth from both the United States Government and the Trust Territory Administration.