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(1969)

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April 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

Subject: USC Action on Future of the Trust Territory--Secretary Hickel's Dissent - ACTION MEMORANDUM

On March 24 the USC considered the future of the Trust Territory. Under Secretary of the Interior Train participated.

My own proposal--from which none of those present dissented at the time--was that the USC recommend to the President the appointment of a Special Representative on the Status of the Territory (see TAB A, Para. 4). I now understand that Secretary Hickel opposes appointment of such an official as an infringement of Interior's jurisdiction. In addition, the Secretary feels that Interior should chair the staff group, which has been created to work up guidelines and instructions.

Secretary Hickel plans ⁵ a personal visit to the Territory later this month.

My own view continues to be that the concept of a Special Representative is in principle sound.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
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-- First, administration of the Territory clearly falls within Interior's jurisdiction, but this is not true of the Territory's future status, which deeply affects the policy interests of State and Defense.

-- Second, the history of this problem has been one of delay, not the least because there have been significant differences within the Executive. For example, the Services, understandably, would like to retain maximum freedom of action--e.g., the right of eminent domain--a matter which has created political problems within the Territory. Our own major concern is the adverse publicity abroad--notably in Japan--created by evidence of rising discontent and the problem of how to bring the Territory under U.S. sovereignty in a manner compatible with our UN obligations. These diverse interests probably cannot be coordinated, effectively, short of the White House.

-- Third, the Administration will face a very considerable task in gaining Congressional approval and Micronesian acceptance for any viable course of action. Appointment of a public spirited citizen of considerable stature, acting on authority of the President and devoting full time to this problem, certainly would greatly enhance the prospects of--if not assure--success. (Some possible candidates at TAB B.)

* * *

In light of Secretary Hickel's firm **opposition**, I have considered whether we should put forward such a recommendation, even over Interior's dissent; or, alternatively, whether

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we should hold the proposal for a Special Representative in abeyance pending the completion of the staff study. There are arguments both pro and con:

Pro:

The concept of a Special Representative may encounter very major problems on the Hill if opposed by Interior and, possibly, the Armed Services. This argues for a quick decision-- to invoke Administration discipline.

Con:

The President may not wish to deal with this matter piecemeal. This argues for letting the study proceed and putting forward the proposal at the time of the NSC review.

The other matter concerns the chairmanship of the staff group. In view of the diverse Departmental interests, it seems reasonable that Interior be asked to agree, as a minimum, to shifting the staff group to "neutral" ground, i.e., the NSC.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you (or I) call Secretary Hickel to suggest:

-- The proposal of a Special Representative be held in abeyance pending the completion of the staff study; (the Department may want to revive this proposal at the NSC review).

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-- We hope that Secretary Hickel would let the staff study proceed under its present auspices, with full Interior participation; (if this is not agreeable, we would propose that the group be reconstituted under NSC auspices).

Elliot L. Richardson

Approved: _____

Disapproved: _____

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