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Recent Developments on the Future of the TTPI

Prepared for EA - Amb Greene briefing

Perhaps recent developments relating to the question of the future of the TTPI can best be presented by dividing them into two categories -- those taking place in Micronesia and those in Washington.

In Micronesia

The Congress of Micronesia met for its regular 45-day session on July 14. The Congress has spent a large amount of time considering the Final Report of the Micronesian Political Status Commission which, as anticipated, called for a self-governing state in free association with the United States. Although the Status Commission is not particularly specific in its recommendations, it does say that self-government means Micronesian control over all three branches of government, and its description of free association appears similar to the status of Puerto Rico or the Cook Islands. To date, although a resolution of endorsement has been introduced in the Congress, the Micronesians have not taken any action to approve or reject the Commission's report. Interior is unaware of the reasons for such inaction.

The Congress of Micronesia has passed a resolution calling on the President and the US Congress to consider the future of the Territory. (Although Interior likes to see this as a call for association, there is no mention in the resolution of any particular type of status.) There was some thought of seeking a US Congressional resolution in response, but this idea was killed by the House Interior Committee -- which said it would respond as it saw fit.

A representative from Palau (perhaps motivated by political rivalry with Senator Salii, another Palauan who was President of the Status Commission) has introduced a resolution in the Congress of Micronesia calling for independence. The resolution was co-sponsored by three representatives from Truk (including one of the two Special Advisors to this year's Trusteeship Council who seemed anything but a radical) and the Vice Speaker of the House from the Marshalls. No information is available on the action taken on, or response to, this resolution.

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Mr. Edgar Kaiser, Secretary Hickel's Special Assistant dealing with the Future Question, sat in on the President's Guam meeting with Senator Salii, the heads of the two Houses, the High Commissioner and the two senior Micronesian civil servants. The President apparently had done his homework and made a favorable impression. He specifically invited the Micronesians to Washington to start discussions on September 2.

After this meeting Kaiser went to Saipan and gave the Micronesians copies of the draft Organic Act with all the possible disclaimers. He is going back next week to try to get a feel of their reaction to this draft and to gauge their attitude toward the Status Commission Report. In the meantime, Chief Judge Shoecraft, an American to whom Kaiser had earlier given a copy of the Act with a request for his reactions, has sent a report to Interior indicating in effect that the Micronesians would have little trouble with anything in the Act -- a finding which apparently even Interior finds hard to believe since Kaiser is going out to check for himself.

In Washington

The Interagency Committee created a subcommittee consisting of representatives from State (L and IO), Defense, Justice and Interior to rework the draft Organic Act into a more suitable form. The intention was that each Department would be represented by a lawyer and a policy type, with Justice just having a lawyer. This was to be a working-level exercise with subsequent review by the Interagency Committee and the Under Secretaries Committee.

After an initial false start involving consideration of the possible US Congressional resolution (see above), the Subcommittee got down to its task on August 4. It developed, however, that despite a meeting in the Under Secretary's office, involving EA, L and IO, there was still a difference between the latter two Bureaus as to the proper position for the Department to take on the provisions for the "Executive" in the Act. The difference was more one of tactics than of substance: both Bureaus believed that an elected governor was necessary to meet our ultimate objective of ending the trusteeship and thus severing all UN involvement in the Territory, but differed as to the extent of power which such

an elected executive should necessarily have. L took an essentially purist position -- claiming that full powers had to be given to the executive to meet our obligations and that the Department should stick by that position from the start despite Interior's opposition. IO, while agreeing that full powers would be preferable, argued that we could get by in New York with restricted powers and that in view of Interior's apparently adamant position and the known attitude of Congressman Aspinall, we could only hope to induce Interior to compromise if we could demonstrate that an elected governor could be so controlled as not to challenge the basics of the Interior position. Both Bureaus believed that Interior would probably reject either of the two positions, and that in the end, the decision would have to be made by the Under Secretaries Committee.

Although we have yet to see a written report of the Under Secretary's decision, we understand that he has ruled firmly against L and is skeptical about the IO position. He doubts that either position can be sold to Congress and feels he will need further information before he can support even the IO position. We have been authorized, however, to inform Interior that we are still reserving our position. The final decision will depend on possible further readings from the Territory, possible indications as to Congressional views and further views from New York.

In the meantime, the subcommittee has continued to review the draft act and has made some notable changes in it -- as indicated in the attached memo. It is in fact distinctly improved -- lacking only the most basic of elements in any democratic system of self-government -- namely an elected chief executive. (Even Interior admits the status as now drafted is not self-government -- they simply maintain self-government is impossible now, that such a status is unnecessary in New York, and that in any case State has agreed to handle the problems that might arise.)

With the redrafted act now needing only a final polishing, the next step will be for the Interagency Committee to forward it, presumably with State maintaining its reservation, to the Under Secretaries Committee which will meet probably

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August 28 or 29. Assuming all differences are then worked out, the US Government will be ready for the arrival of the Micronesians on September 2. Their reaction to our proposals is the untested factor -- and the one which may well overturn all the carefully defined and adamantly held positions now in vogue. In any case, the negotiations with the Micronesians are now scheduled to be completed by September 15 so that the final agreed package can be given to Congressman Aspinall no later than September 20 -- a date which probably no one expects to be met.

IO:UNP:SRPeale:jkb

August 15, 1969

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