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EXCISE

# Memorandum

TO : MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

DATE: December 16, 1969

FROM : IO/UNP - Samuel R. Peale

SUBJECT: Meeting of the Secretary with Secretary Hickel, Dr. Kissinger and Assistant Secretary Nutter to Discuss the Future of the TIFI

Assistant Secretary DePalma attended the meeting and reported the outcome as follows:

The meeting, which lasted for an hour, was devoted almost exclusively to a discussion of the land issue. Secretary Hickel offered a number of arguments in favor of the Interior proposal, speaking primarily from the point of view of wanting to avoid the land problems which we have faced with the Indians and the Eskimos. Hickel was convinced that if we meet the Micronesian requests we would be able to obtain all the land we needed.

Nevertheless, the Interior proposal was rather definitely rejected, both Dr. Kissinger and the Secretary being quite firm on this point.

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Hickel was skeptical about the success of such an offer and there was no agreement as to when we might make such a proposal to the Micronesians. Mr. DePalma felt it was likely that Interior would wish to work on this immediately -- and this would be quite understandable. Thus the ball might very well be put in Defense's court, with the requirement that they assess their current holdings, their likely future needs and the outside limits they could accept. All this was subject to further determination, however.

One thing was made clear, however; namely, that we need not feel rushed. The Secretary was quite strong in saying he saw no need for frantic negotiations -- that we would proceed at a more leisurely, normal pace for negotiations of this sort. There was agreement that we obviously needed to stay ahead of political agitation in the Territory, but this did not impose any specific deadline at this moment. Hickel raised the possibility of the Micronesians unilaterally declaring themselves independent before the UN. This was viewed as unlikely at this time, and it was felt that we should be able to spot such a move in advance and act to head it off. It was also pointed out that the UN could not legally terminate the trusteeship without US concurrence (although we would obviously not want to see the Micronesians publicly against us in New York).

With the meeting obviously drawing to a close, Mr. DePalma raised the question of putting our land position in a broader framework -- specifically the Constitutional Convention approach. Dr. Kissinger came down quite hard against this idea. He was not sure that we should risk this at this time and wondered why we were abandoning the Organic Act approach. The Secretary agreed with these reservations saying he too was not sure of the wisdom of this approach at this time. (The Secretary had not mentioned these reservations at the in-house meeting December 15). Nothing further was said about the broader approach, and Mr. DePalma stressed that the issue had in no way been discussed in depth so that one should not read too much into the reactions of the Secretary and Dr. Kissinger. The question of the chief executive was not even mentioned.

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Thus, apart from the basic land issue, the results of the meeting were fuzzy, and it would be up to the Interagency Group to sort out the next steps. The most likely course appeared to be a further exploration of the land question. Assistant Secretary Loesch was obviously under no pressure to make an immediate trip to the Territory.

cc: S/PC - Mr. Ruser  
USUN - Mr. Sacksteder  
L/UNA - Mr. Boyd

IO:UNP:SRPeale/fmt 12/29/69  
Cleared:IO:Mr. DePalma

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