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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520



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TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: IO - Samuel DePalma

SUBJECT: The Future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: The Need to Alert the President and Secretary of the Interior Hickel to a Deteriorating Situation - ACTION MEMORANDUM

I believe that you should alert the President to the deteriorating political situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), which we administer as a strategic trust under a formal agreement with the UN Security Council, and to the threat which this poses to our strategic interests in the area. I also suggest that you should discuss this situation with Secretary Hickel to alert him to the sensitivity and special importance of new appointments to positions dealing with the Territory.

Discussion

The previous Administration, motivated primarily by concern for protecting our strategic interests in the Trust Territory, attempted to institute a program which would have changed the TTPI's present trusteeship status to one of permanent association with the United States in a manner consistent with the Trusteeship Agreement. The program consisted of two interrelated parts: (a) preparations for a plebiscite in the near future in which the inhabitants would be offered some form of self-government under US sovereignty, and (b) a drastic overhaul of the administration of the Territory aimed at ending the neglect and inefficiency with which we have been charged and convincing the people that it is in their interest to choose association with the United States.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY B.H. BAMS DATE 3/25/87

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TS AUTH. 12356 REASON(S) E.O. 12356

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS  SEC 1.3(G)(5)

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RELEASE DENIED

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS B1, A5, B6

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This policy assumed that the elite of Micronesia would see that their interests were fundamentally entangled with ours and would cooperate with us in bringing about the desired result of an exercise of self-determination. This assumption is now in serious doubt, largely because of long delays in carrying out the policy. BIF

This problem may reach critical proportions in April with the request by the Congress of Micronesia's own Status Commission for our comments on the future of the Territory, and in May with the UN Trusteeship Council's consideration of strongly anti-US petitions reflecting the political discontent in the TTPI.

Since the House Interior Committee effectively blocked the previous Administration's proposal, we now find ourselves standing still at the very moment when action is most urgently required. Ambassador Pederson has been in touch with Dr. Kissinger and the question of the TTPI is being actively considered for discussion by the National Security Council. In keeping with your responsibility under the Executive Order of May 7, 1962, for questions relating to the Territory's international status, I believe you should alert the President to the situation and enlist his support for priority consideration of this issue.

Of immediate concern, we believe that staffing decisions by the Department of the Interior relating to the Territory must be considered as matters of critical importance and must not be treated in a routine fashion. In particular, the position of High Commissioner of the Territory, which is now vacant, will obviously be a key one in the essential effort to improve the Territorial administration. It would be most unfortunate if the selection were made without regard to the national interests involved.

Although the decision may be beyond recall, we believe you should emphasize to Secretary Hickel the critical importance of selecting a man with the ability to make a real impact

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on the Territory and the similar importance of any other appointment affecting the Territory.

Recommendations

1. That you sign the attached memorandum to the President (Tab A). This will serve to alert the President to the problem and indicate the need for a continuing White House role in solving it.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_

Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

2. That you telephone Secretary Hickel in order to discuss the critical situation regarding the future of the TTPI which we see at this moment (talking points attached at Tab B).

Approve \_\_\_\_\_

Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments:

- Tab A - Memorandum to the President.
- Tab B - Talking Points

cc: U  
J  
C

Clearances: IO:UNP - Mr. Gleysteen  
EA/ANZ - Mr. Moore  
J/PM - Mr. Wolfe

IO:UNP:SRPeale:jkb 3/14/69

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: The Future of the Trust Territory  
of the Pacific Islands

I am concerned about the noticeably deteriorating situation in the strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which we administer under an agreement with the United Nations Security Council, and about the threat which this poses to our national interests.

Motivated primarily by a JCS conclusion that we need permanent access to the area for defense purposes, the previous Administration adopted a two-part program to lead the Territory from its present trusteeship status to one of permanent association with the United States in a manner consistent with the Trusteeship Agreement. The program involved (a) a relatively early exercise of self-determination for the inhabitants of the Territory, including an appealing offer of self-government under United States sovereignty, and (b) a drastic improvement in the United States administration of the Territory to help convince the people that it is in their interest to choose permanent association with the United States.

The basic premise of this policy was that the leaders of the Territory would see that their interests were fundamentally entangled with ours and that they would cooperate with us in bringing about the desired result. Largely because of protracted delays in implementing our policy, this assumption is now in serious doubt.

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As a result of Congress's failure to adopt legislation proposed by the previous Administration, we now find ourselves standing still at the very moment when action is most urgently required. We must therefore accelerate the National Security Council's consideration of this problem. I have also called Secretary Hickel to alert him to the critical nature of this problem, and I am sending him a copy of my memorandum to you. I have urged, as a first step, that he give most thorough and careful consideration to new appointments involving the Territory, in particular his recommendation to you for the key position of High Commissioner.

William P. Rogers

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Talking Points for Telephone Call to Secretary Hickel

1. I am concerned over clear evidence of the deteriorating political situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Although this is not a new problem, the US Government has been unsuccessful in dealing with it, and according to the latest reports our time for corrective action may fast be running out.

2. I have therefore written a memorandum to the President -- and I am sending you a copy -- alerting him to the problem and enlisting his assistance in accelerating the National Security Council consideration of all aspects of the future of the TTPI.

3. I hope that we can work together in producing movement on this problem, and avoiding further delays which seriously jeopardize our defense interests.

4. Until the NSC takes action, the question of personnel assignments in the Territory appears to be the most immediate problem. In particular the High Commissioner will play a vital role in any policy which the NSC might decide upon. I would therefore be interested in your thoughts on who might best fill this position, and if the appointment is not finalized, I think it is a matter which we might usefully discuss before any definitive action is taken.

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