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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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TO : IO - Mr. De Palma

DATE: July 16, 1970

FROM : IO/UNP - John A. Armitage *JA*

File memo
[Signature]

SUBJECT: Micronesia - Follow-up Executive Session of House Interior Committee on Future of TTPI

At the request of the Committee, Assistant Secretary Loesch and the members of the Interagency Group returned Tuesday, July 14, to the House Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee on Territories for a further executive session on the future of the TTPI. With the exception of Congressman Saylor (see below) the questioning was generally amicable. Most members present seem to have studied our proposals and were genuinely interested in clarifying points rather than making pointed criticisms.

The following is a summary of the key questions raised by the various Committee members and the responses made by Secretary Loesch and other members of the Interagency Group.

Congressman Aspinall (Colorado - Chairman of the Full Committee)

Congressman Aspinall, who had not been present at the first session, pointed out the expertise of the Committee in these matters and the fact that once the Committee reached a position, it seldom had a problem carrying it on the floor of the House. The Congress, however, was not going to be pressured into making a decision on this matter. Aspinall said he was convinced the Executive Branch was still not in agreement among itself and was just trying to pass the buck to the Committee to resolve the problem. He said that he would not allow the Committee to be put in this position -- that the Committee would take no action until the Executive Branch made its position known. He said that he had made this clear to the Micronesians (he has just returned from Saipan) and told them they could expect no action from this Congress. Secretary Loesch in response to a later question made clear that the Administration proposal, which had been discussed and

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given to the Committee in the previous session, was an agreed position and in fact had the approval of the President.

In response to other questions from Aspinall, Secretary Loesch said that there was no doubt that the Micronesian delegation knew we could not accept their position -- that they in effect agreed to disagree. As to future prospects, Loesch said he did not expect action from this session of the Congress of Micronesia; perhaps after the Micronesian elections in the fall the new Congress would act, but it also might -- as Aspinall suggested -- create a new delegation to study the matter further.

Aspinall later commented that he thought the Puerto Ricans were still divided on the nature of their status -- on the meaning of Commonwealth. If they, on one island with one language had a problem, what could we expect from the Micronesians? They understood independence to a degree, but he thought that a Constitution and the Commonwealth caused problems -- that they would find it much easier to understand a status of unorganized territory.

Congressman Carey (New York - Chairman of Subcommittee)

Congressman Carey reiterated his thought of the previous session that the Committee might usefully participate in further discussions between the Executive and the Micronesians in trying to work out the differences. He specifically suggested that our press release (which Loesch had mentioned in his brief opening remarks) should include reference to the interest of the Congress in this matter and the attention which the Committee was and had been devoting to it. (Note: The Interagency Group has agreed to include such a reference in the press release and, at least in general terms, to assure the Committees -- both House and Senate -- that we appreciated their expertise and interest and would in the future be working with them.)

Carey was also concerned that the "non-negotiable" points in the Micronesian position put us in a real dilemma and wondered what was the basis for our feeling that the Congress of Micronesia would take a more sympathetic view. Loesch said we had some indications to that effect, but we clearly could not be certain; we would wait and see. In response to Carey's questioning, Loesch acknowledged that the status

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offered was a new one in terms of US precedent and described the difference from Puerto Rico.

Congressman Kyl (Iowa)

Kyl was also interested in the comparison with Puerto Rico and asked if we were certain the Micronesians understood in the same manner as we did the term commonwealth as it would be applied to them. Secretary Loesch explained the reasoning behind the use of this title and said we were sure the Micronesians understood the nature of our proposal.

Mrs. Mink (Hawaii)

In response to Mrs. Mink's question, Secretary Loesch stated our needs in Micronesia as threefold: (1) eminent domain for strategic purposes; (2) denial of the territory to other powers; and (3) a long term relationship. Mrs. Mink asked, if, rather than our proposal, these needs could not be met in the first case by designating in advance the areas needed for bases and on the latter two points by treaty relationships. Mrs. Mink further wondered if the basic differences between us were insurmountable. Secretary Loesch responded that in the first place we were not certain that the Micronesian delegation really spoke for the Congress or the people. As for our position, he felt some form of eminent domain was essential, but perhaps (speaking personally) some provision for a second look at the islands' status at some point in the future might be built in. Commander Kuhn later said DOD would be most reluctant to agree to such a provision for a second look.

Mrs. Mink was also concerned as to whether our proposal would allow us to terminate the agreement in New York and whether we anticipated difficulties. I responded that if fully implemented -- i.e., with demonstrable Micronesian support -- it would allow us to terminate ^{and} that, while in view of the attitude of some UN members, we could expect some criticism, it would be manageable.

Congressman Meeds (Washington)

Meeds started his questioning by complimenting the Executive Branch on its proposal which he viewed in general with favor

and which he felt was a great stride forward. Meeds' questioning was extensive and detailed, but of greatest interest, he asked DOD if it could define its needs which Commander Kuhn did in terms of (1) denial, (2) missile testing and (3) possible future bases (adding, however, that Defense has "no present intentions to establish military facilities in the TTPI other than those now in the Marshalls").

Meeds asked with regard to termination in the UN, whether our offer met our UN obligations, whether we would have clean hands, and whether a referendum was essential. I answered affirmatively in each case -- with reiteration of the clear need for Micronesian approval. Meeds also asked for State's view and that of the UN on giving separate choices to the Districts. I replied that it was difficult to know political attitudes on the islands; we thought the UN realized the possible problem of smaller island groups, but was trying to duck it for now.

Congressman Saylor (Pennsylvania - Ranking Republican on Full Committee)

Saylor, who also missed the earlier executive session, did not ask any questions, but delivered a lengthy and emotional tirade against the Department of State. He blamed the Department for the administration of the Territory and in general for not acting like Americans and for giving everything away. Re TTPI, he said that he was sick of the UN and we should ignore it; that we were not going to offer the Micronesians independence under any circumstances; that we would not forego eminent domain; that if DOD did not have plans to use the area they better make some; and that the Micronesians were going to have a choice between coming with us voluntarily or by compulsion.

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