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TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (TTPI)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY <u>B.H. BAAS</u> DATE <u>3/2/87</u>
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Note: Responsibility within the State Department for the TTPI lies with IO because of the UN factor of the problem. However, EA has a strong interest because of the geographic factor and recently an officer from EA has been assigned as Political Adviser to the TTPI HICOM in Saipan. Samuel DePalma is briefing Mr. Irwin on TTPI.

The TTPI (Micronesia) is a strategic trust under the Security Council of the United Nations that is administered by the United States.

Virtually the only interest of the United States in Micronesia is strategic: to ensure access to bases for ourselves and to exclude a possible enemy.

Construction of bases in the Territory is permitted under the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement, but probably it will not be politically practicable to build any new major military facilities until the permanent status of the Territory is settled.

Administration and development of the Territory are closely monitored by the United Nations, and the territory is being prepared by the U. S. for a form of self-determination. We are under pressure to do so because the TTPI is one of the last Trust territories remaining.

Foot-dragging by the United States has resulted in the Islanders setting a price for their future association with the United States which neither Interior, Defense nor Congress is willing to meet.

One of the first acts of the Congress of Micronesia after its establishment in 1966 was to pass a resolution asking the U. S. Congress to set up a Political Status Commission to study the future status of the TTPI. As the U. S. Congress did not act, the Congress of Micronesia in 1967 established its own Future Political Status Commission. After two years study this commission recommended in July 1969:

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- that the TTPI be constituted as an internally self-governing state with Micronesian control of all the branches including the executive in free association with the U. S.; or that failing,
- that the TTPI seek independence.

The Congress of Micronesia taking note of the recommendation, but not approving it, selected a delegation to visit Washington to discuss the future status.

The delegation met with the U. S. delegation headed by Interior Assistant Secretary Harrison Loesch. Our delegation first offered the Micronesians unincorporated territory status like that of Guam or the Virgin Islands. The Micronesian delegation rejected it. Since then a draft bill providing Commonwealth status similar to that of Puerto Rico has been given them.

Both houses of the Congress of Micronesia in August 1970 passed resolutions rejecting the U. S. offer of Commonwealth status on grounds that it fails to meet the four basic demands of the TTPI -- "non-negotiable rights" as they call them. These are:

- That sovereignty in Micronesia resides in the people of Micronesia and their duly constituted government;
- That the people of Micronesia possess the right of self-determination and may therefore choose independence or self-government in free association with any nation or organization of nations;
- That the people of Micronesia have the right to adopt their own constitution or governmental plan at any time;
- That free association should be in the form of a revocable contract, terminable unilaterally by either party.

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The Micronesian Senate made it clear that the rejection was a bargaining device to induce a better offer by the U. S., not final rejection.

The White House recently directed the IRG Working Group dealing with the future status of the TTPI (at its own suggestion) to prepare a paper setting forth the U. S. options. The Working Group is doing this now.

The present basic position of the U. S. -- that the only alternative to permanent association is the indefinite continuation of the present status -- is not tenable. The U. S. told the U. N. Trusteeship Council in its 1969 meeting that, with regard to the future of the TTPI

- we are still dedicated to allowing an exercise in self-determination in the near future;
- we are preparing to devise a new status involving a lasting political partnership between Micronesia and the U. S., consistent with the wishes of the Micronesian people.

The U. S. and Micronesian positions are irreconcilable on two counts:

First - The U. S. requirement (at the insistence of DOD) that we shall have the right of eminent domain -- to use for military installations whatever land is needed clashes with the Micronesian requirement that the U. S. state now what lands will be needed for military purposes, and that whatever is used by the U. S. must be permitted by the Micronesian Government.

Second - The U. S. determination that its own law shall be supreme clashes with the Micronesian determination that its law shall be supreme.

The Micronesian delegation was particularly put out because the U. S. insisted upon fitting Micronesia into

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a traditional U. S. pattern of constitutional development and association with the United States and was not willing to devise a unique status for Micronesia.

To get the problem off dead center two things are necessary in the view of EA/ANZ:

1. To get Defense to define its minimum base needs in Micronesia (perhaps assuming that the U. S. will not have bases on the closer periphery of East Asia and that conventional forces will be used in any actions, though specific formulation of assumptions could be left to Defense), and

2. To acknowledge that we must work out a "unique" arrangement with the Micronesians if we are to get anything near what we want.

IO is working on the first point but not making headway.

October 2, 1970 .

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