

Honolulu, Hawaii
05 April 1971

SUBJECT: USIA Activities Within the Trust Territory, Pacific Islands.

1. PROBLEM. To determine what action should be taken by the USIA in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) given the current political environment of the area.

2. ASSUMPTIONS.

a. For the purposes of USIA operations, Micronesia cannot be termed a domestic audience, both from the standpoint of locus and political status; therefore, USIA action in support of US foreign policy is valid.

b. That positive action by the USIA can ameliorate the dissatisfaction currently being stated within Micronesia, by Micronesians, over their political status, and lessen US vulnerability to precipitate action, under pressure of world opinion, which may not be in the long range political and strategic interests of the United States.

c. That USIA action can be provided from existing resources or from resources which can be made available to the USIA.

d. United States action to inform the electorate in Micronesia would be consistent with US moral values and political principles; therefore, application of USIA resources to this end would not deprive the Micronesians of the right of choice, but would assist the Micronesians to realistically approach alternatives and decisions and to create the communicative conditions necessary for the debate and conduct of political accommodation.

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3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.

a. A purpose of the USIA overseas communications program is to provide a public relations service for the United States.

b. An aim of the USIA is to assist in making clear to foreign peoples the nature and objectives of American foreign policy, in order to prevent misunderstandings of American aims and policies and to aid foreign peoples to arrive at a true understanding of American life; and to present a representative picture abroad of American opinion.

c. That the US political approach to Asia recognizes the growing sense of Asian identity; that achievement of political solution to the disposition of the strategically important Trust Territory constitutes a significant foreign policy problem for the United States.

d. There is disagreement between the United States and the Congress of Micronesia, the official spokesman for the people of Micronesia, and among the Micronesians themselves, as to the ultimate political status of Micronesia. ?

e. The U.S. has been attacked as "colonialist" at the UN by the Soviets and the Afro-Asian bloc over Micronesia; the Soviets perennially attack the US Administration at the Trusteeship Council; the US is in a tenuous position, world-opinion-wise, vis-a-vis the political disposition of Micronesia.

f. Micronesia is of strategic value to the United States.

g. The US record has been sluggish regarding the solution to the Micronesian political destiny question, but under the Nixon Administration is taking aggressive action to attempt to

025759

solve the question.

h. The Marianas Islands desire an immediate dissolution of identity with the remainder of the territory and positive identification with the United States.

i. That US policy and hence USIA policy considers the feelings of others and reflects concern for the welfare of the target audience.

j. People will more likely live in peace and cooperate fruitfully if they are able to communicate freely.

k. US self-interest will be advanced through encouragement of international communication.

l. Executive Order 11021, 7 May 1962, stated the Secretary of State to have primary responsibility to coordinate all relations between the departments and agencies of the government and the appropriate organs of the United Nations with respect to the Trust Territory.

m. The US and the Micronesians are entering another phase of negotiations to accommodate the differences between political positions, but political solution does not appear to be in the immediate future.

4. DISCUSSION.

a. Advantages in USIA action:

(1) The US would less likely be forced into precipitate (political status determination) action if US policy was announced and explained, preferably accompanied by tangible economic policy change.

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(2) Would contribute to reasoned political determination by an informed electorate, potentially in the best interests of both the US and the Micronesians.

(3) A favorable US image could be created and maintained.

(4) Would impact favorably on long-range US objectives.

b. Disadvantages in USIA action:

(1) Criticism of the international adversaries of the US would be brought to bear on US "colonialist" activities.

c. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) consists of 699 square miles of land spread over 3 million square miles of ocean. The Islanders are a polyglot people with multi-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Of the approximate 100 thousand population, fully ten percent in the outer-islands areas are essentially out of contact with the rest of the world.

The strategic value of the islands is the most important island asset. The area is currently under strategic trust administered by the United States, which means the US enjoys UN veto power over the political destiny of the islands. It is also charged under Article 6 of the Trusteeship agreement to foster the development of political institutions as are suited to the Territory, and to promote the development of the inhabitants toward self-government and independence. The US is further charged to promote the economic, social and educational advancement of the Micronesians.

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The economic development of the Islands has been retarded due to US policy. The US has minimized activities in the Islands to avoid the stigma of colonialism and or imperialism. This avoidance is further compounded by virtue of the "most favored nation" clause of the Trust agreement. Essentially, this means that the US has approving authority over all trade relations conducted by and with the Micronesians, and that the US has used this clause to prevent the growth of trade, and hence, entry into the islands by other nations. The Islanders are agitating through the Congress of Micronesia to have this clause amended to enable trade with other nations, principally, at this time, Japan.

The education of the Islanders is conducted by the TTPI Department of Education. Only a minimum number of students progress past the eighth or tenth grades; a marginal introduction to American Civics studies is made in the higher grade levels; the quantity and quality of teachers is minimal, and great numbers of Islanders are, even so, in relation, uneducated due to geographic separation. It is these people who will vote in any plebiscite to initiate any change in political status.

The most important question about Micronesia remains its future political status. The Micronesians seem to desire a continued relationship with the US, under a political concept called "Free Association", which the Micronesians feel is the most advantageous relationship, in that as presently defined, the Association can be terminated unilaterally at any time by the

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Micronesians. Free Association could then be entered into with any other nation, or series of nations, as desired.

The United States has offered the Micronesians Commonwealth status, which has been rejected due to the permanency of the arrangement, i.e., it would remove any prospect of future independent status.

There are political alternatives which can accomodate the situation; for one, the concept of Associated Statehood, which could eventually lead to Micronesia's entry into the Union as a free and equal partner. Pending political accomodation, however, protracted stalemate could lead to world opinion being brought to bear, caused initially through UN discussion and debate (already asked for by the Congress of Micronesia) which may force the US into precipitate action in order to disassociate itself from the stigmas of colonilalism or imperialism. Any such precipitate action would be at the expense of the long range strategic interests of the United States in the Pacific.

The US is being forced to review its position in Asia based on displayed Asian nationalism. Imminent loss of base rights are being found in Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines; the Nixon Doctrine calls for a 'low-profile' in the rest of Asia. The fall-back position for these bases focusses on Micronesia. In any event, it is not in the long range interest of the US to allow other military powers to establish bases in the area.

The Micronesians do not consider themselves US citizens, and cannot be considered a domestic US audience from the standpoint of locus or political status. Therefore, the USIA must be assumed to be authorized to conduct operations in support of US Foreign Policy within the area. US policy must be assumed to retain the area, pending political status negotiations and settlement, friendly and supportive of US ideologies and objectives.

The time is opportunistic to appraise the Micronesians of the US policies and objectives, which is not now being done by the information office of the High Commissioner, TTPI. Operating on the premise that an informed electorate is the best electorate,, the US can assist the Micronesians in the determination of the political future best for them and, in so doing, guard against the selection of a course of action ultimately unsuited for them. Whatever that selection, the US could assure that the Micronesians were not swayed by ill-advised motives, and that the best principles of free elections were adhered to.

The purpose of the USIA is to submit evidence to the peoples of the world, by means of communications techniques, that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with, and advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace.

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The USIA can be envisaged as having three objectives in Micronesia: one) create and maintain a favorable US image; two) insure the continued identification of the majority of the average citizenry with the United States; three) further the development of the political process in Micronesia.

It has been as a result of American policy that the area is as undeveloped as it is today; the continuation of this policy will not lessen the danger to the US image world-wide, but will definitely serve to undermine the long-range interests of the United States. The United States presence in the area is already an issue; attempting to salvage the interests of the US at no cost in human suffering cannot possibly be construed within the official US governmental structure as counter to US policy.

The strategic strength of the United States is situated on foreign bases that are quickly turning to political quicksand. New bases must be considered. Micronesia provides a strategic oasis. However, the establishment of bases must be accompanied by forward looking, mutually beneficial, political and economic development.

The US must be willing to bear the criticism of its international adversaries to its presence in Micronesia; the economic growth and well-being of the Micronesian people would at least provide a supportive basis favorable to American actions.

American influence in the Pacific is at stake in the Micronesian dispute. Influence, be it political or economic, must

025765

be backed by military power. The military base system at the present time is being threatened by political events in Japan and the Philippines. To continue to project our military power and our economic power throughout the Pacific, a secure military basing system must be established within the western Pacific. The Micronesian Islands provide such a base. The USIA can materially assist in the attainment of such a system, at the same time prevent unnecessary world-wide public opinion to be focussed on US actions.

d. For details, see Annex A, with appropriate listed references.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

a. The Micronesians are a widely-dispersed, polyglot people occupying a strategic area of the Pacific Ocean.

b. The US administers the Islands under a strategic trust, enjoys veto power in this trust, and exercises a 'most favored' nation economic advantage which regulates entry into and association with the islanders and the area.

c. Increasing pressure is being brought to bear on the US by the world community to settle the political status (question) of the territory.

d. An impasse currently exists between the US offer of Commonwealth and the Micronesian proposal of Free Association.

e. Independence for Micronesia is economically infeasible; some political association with a major power will be required

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in some form; a trade-off in any political association will always involve consideration of the Micronesian strategic location.

f. A political accomodation is possible, but not foreseen to become a reality in the immediate future.

g. US economic policy has been to minimize active US development of the economy to avoid the stigma of colonialism or imperialism.

h. The US will be continued to be openly criticized in the UN, and hence throughout the world community, by the Soviets and by the Afro-Asian bloc of nations regardless of the action taken by the US in the area.

i. If the US does nothing to inform the Micronesian electorate of its political options, the possibilities of a plebiscite, when conducted, unfavorable to the long term US interests in the area will increase. Long term Micronesian interests might also be, at the expense of independence, be impaired.

j. A change in US policy designed to increase the economic and educational welfare of the Micronesians is indicated.

k. That the USIA, as spokesman for US foreign policy abroad, has a legal and moral cause for action in support of US foreign policy with regard to the political stalemate in Micronesia.

l. Modern communications can significantly alter the

025767

perspectives of all peoples of the world; that they can be a force for good or evil; that if constructively used in Micronesia their use can impact favorably on the future welfare of the Micronesians and on the strategic well-being of the US.

m. The strategic strength of the US is situated on foreign bases; new bases must be considered. Micronesia provides the needed area.

n. Movement to establish US military presence in Micronesia should be accompanied by forward looking, mutually beneficial political and economic development; anything less would constitute a basis for being labelled colonialist, and leave the US vulnerable to attack in the world political arena.

o. A political education problem exists among the Micronesians; that an informed electorate is in the best long-term interests of both the US and the Micronesians; that efforts should be made to politically educate the Micronesians to their alternatives.

p. The USIA by purpose and function is qualified and capable of educating the Micronesian electorate of the political issues and the alternatives open to them.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS.

a. That the Micronesian electorate be informed as to their political options and the US position and policies with regard to Micronesia be explained in sufficient depth to insure understanding.

025768

b. That a USIA action program be undertaken toward this end using standard methodology.

c. That a special attempt be made, in addition to the standard USIA programs, to assist in the education of the Micronesian young through provision of low-cost school supplies which stress , in appropriate printed messages thereon, the political alternatives open to and the political well-being of the Micronesians in simplistic terms.

d. That the Director, USIA submit these recommendations to the Washington joint committee for Micronesia for approval; upon approval, implement the recommendations contained herein as soon as practicable.

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025769