

U.S. Department of the Interior

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Internal Use

To: Director, U.S. Geological Survey
 Assistant Secretary for Public Land Management

From: Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Territorial Affairs

Subject: Mariana Separatism

This is in response to your memorandum of August 27, 1971, requesting a discussion paper on a Mariana District fragmented from the rest of the Trust Territory, as envisaged under Article III. This issue has, to our knowledge, not been discussed before in any depth, particularly with respect to a possible U.S. position. We believe this is primarily due to the highly contingent nature of the problem until the past few months; all parties concerned--except perhaps the people of the islands--have for various reasons thought of a future Micronesia primarily in terms of its present boundaries and component districts.

Even in this memorandum, we attempt to consider the effects and desirability of the fragmentation of only the Mariana Islands District, and do not try to resolve the question of what would be desirable if, under Position III, other districts (Yap, for example) voted for close association with the U.S. Under certain circumstances we would want to encourage such a result in other districts than the Marianas, but it is also conceivable (as, perhaps, in the Yap-Marianas case above) that we might wish to discourage close association of some districts other than the Marianas, in favor of possibly greater stability which might be achieved in the area as a result of other solutions.

1. What are the U.S. preferences for the Marianas, and why?

If the Mariana Islands District should be separated from the remainder of the Trust Territory through implementation of Position III, we believe that, from the U.S. point of view, the optimum form of association for the Marianas is full political integration with Guam. This assessment involves a number of political and practical considerations which are spelled out below.

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 separate and distinct entity, and its relationship with
 the United States is defined by the Guam Rehabilitation Act
 of 1960. The Government of the Marianas would be a
 separate and distinct entity, and its relationship with
 the United States would be defined by a separate
 agreement.

b. Level of Federal Responsibility. The Federal responsibility
 would be much less if the Marianas and Guam were
 integrated, although we would foresee continuing Federal
 financial support in some form as being necessary for a
 few years, at least. We expect, however, that Federal
 financial assistance would probably be less in the case of
 integration due to greater likelihood of economic self-
 sufficiency in the Marianas over the long term. Moreover,
 grants would tend to be for specific purposes and for limited
 periods or amounts (as with the Guam Rehabilitation Act),
 rather than the open-end annual grants now made to Micronesia.

c. Military Land Requirements. The Government of Guam is a
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e. Military Land Requirements. The Marianas would pre-
 sumably assume the general identity of Guam in the latter's
 relationship with the United States; certainly we believe
 this to be an attainable and desirable goal. Thus, the
 United States would have in the Marianas the same power and
 rights of eminent domain as in Guam itself. This would be
 preferable to the U.S. negotiating for specific powers with
 a separate Marianas Commonwealth.

As a result of the... the... full;... status as a... would... no... general... and...

It is... to a... entity... for several... of unincorporated... First, to do not wish... by giving the Marianas an... greater rights and fewer respon-... "Commonwealth" is justifiable... but not for the Marianas... that the U.S. Congress would... status to the Marianas... that the U.S. Congress would... or, under favorable... a separate territorial status for the Marianas.

3/4. The majority of the people of the Marianas, at this time, would probably prefer to come into the United States as a Commonwealth, with or without the rest of the Trust Territory. The Marianas District Legislature, with its support primarily from the Island of Saipan, has repeatedly passed resolutions calling for integration with Guam. The Saipan Municipal Legislature (now Council) has also been vocal. Resolutions going as far back as Resolution No. 7 in September 1959 by the Twelfth Saipan Legislature called for integration. Past UN Visiting Missions have also commented on the desire of the Saipanese to have a reunified Mariana Islands government to include Guam. This desire to integrate with Guam appears to have evolved, understandably, into a desire to be a separate commonwealth after local political leaders had a chance to review the U.S. commonwealth proposal of May 1970.

Guam, or at least its legislative leaders, has also repeatedly worked for a reunification of the Marianas Islands. The enclosed copy of an August 1967 speech by then Speaker Arriola of the Guam Legislature speaks to this persistent desire of these leaders to reunify the Mariana Islands. Undoubtedly,

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Guam, which passed such a reunification since as late as 1977, by the passage of resolution No. 154. This resolution relative to the creation of a select committee to study and explore the possibility of reintegrating the Northern Mariana Islands within the governmental framework of the Government of Guam and for the purpose of determining the feasibility of such a move for bringing about such re-integration, the Guam Legislature created a select committee to study and explore the possibility of integration. In fact, the Guam Legislature and the Mariana District Legislature were seated together informally, at the Pacific Conference of Legislators, to lobby for integration of the two entities.

In November of 1969 there were held plebiscites in both the Marianas District and in Guam--there was a time difference of a week between the two plebiscites. The earlier vote in Guam resulted in a rejection of the proposed reintegration by 3,720 to 2,688 in a light turnout of only 32 percent of the eligible electors. Apparently, the Guam Legislature did a poor job in not only getting out the vote but in selling it to constituents the reintegration idea. Surprisingly enough, the Mariana District, a week later, expressed by an almost 2-1 margin its desire for reunification with Guam, with second choice being to become an unincorporated territory of Micronesia in free association with the United States.

While the Saipan vote was quite heavy in favor for re-unification, we note that the Saipan Chamber of Commerce publicly opposed reunification--apparently concerned with the threat of overwhelming competition from Guam and other American entrepreneurs, and possible concern with the advent of the Federal income tax in Saipan. In addition, there was public concern that the development needs of Saipan would draw limited Guam capital improvement funds away from badly needed projects on Guam.

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Enclosure

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