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MEMORANDUM

April 27, 1973

TO: Ambassador Williams
OSN - Mr. Wilson, Admiral Crowe, Mr. Loftus
EA/RA - Mr. Dorrance
IO/UNP - Mr. Sylvester

FROM: Status LNO - Mary Vance Trent

SUBJECT: Father Francis Hezel Discusses Jesuit Political Education Program in Micronesia

REF: a. Status LNO 14; b. My memorandum of January 30, 1973;
c. My memorandum of February 2, 1973, p.4

Father Francis Hezel of the Jesuit Mission, based in Truk, came in to see me April 26 to discuss the seminar on political education which the Jesuit Mission is planning to hold in June in Ponape. As noted ref. b Father Hezel of Xavier High School, Truk, is the author of Micronesia: A Changing Society, the standard 12th grade social studies textbook used in all T.T. schools, public and parochial, and given as study reference in the suggestions put out by the Vicariate of the Carolines and Marshalls for follow-up on Bishop Neylon's Pastoral Letter of January 1, 1973 (ref. a) which urged Christians to assume responsibility in working for future political status. (Copy of these suggestions, as made available to me by the Bishop, is attached hereto.)

Father Hezel said that present plans for the seminar, which he will chair, call for a group of about 12 or 14 persons to meet for a week or so at Kolonia, Ponape, to discuss ways, means and content of political education in the broadest sense for Micronesia. Father Hezel described the session as a "think tank" for informal but intensive consideration of the subject. Father Hezel, acting under authority from Bishop Neylon, Catholic Bishop of the Caroline/Islands, and Marshall Islands, has invited Senators Mangefel and Amaraich and Congressman Resio Moses to attend, representing the Congress of Micronesia. He has also invited Carl Heine as staff director of the JCFS, and is considering inviting Lazarus Salii. From the T.T. administration will be Daiziro Nakamura, newly appointed Civic Affairs chief in charge of political education (former Public Information Officer in Palau). Others present will be the priests from the several districts who are active in the field of political education: Fathers McGarry (who will be host to the meeting) and Cavanaugh of Ponape, Curran (Principal of Xavier High School) and himself from Truk, Condon from Yap, and Hoar from Babelthuap, Palau. An additional invitee is Francisco Uludong, whose "Analysis of the Draft Compact of Free Association" is also a study reference in the Vicariate's follow-up suggestions.

Father Hezel said that his plan envisages follow-up meetings to be held in the districts by the participating priests on their return to their parishes, with the eventual movement of participating laymen who will go out into the villages in outlying areas to hold further informal discussions with the people. He said that the Mission has taken adult education as its principal field of interest for the coming year, and feels that political education is an important part of this larger subject in Micronesia. A further seminar is planned for Truk in July to deal with other aspects of adult education, including economic matters.

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Father Hezel discussed at some length his own views concerning the political future of Micronesia, but his discussion was in philosophical rather than political terms. He said one issue he was examining was the importance to the individual of the concept of sovereignty, including independence. He agreed when I noted that interdependence was perhaps the more relevant term for nations in the modern world. He said he felt that it was important to "think small" in Micronesia, being knowledgeable about and paying attention to the needs and feelings of people at the village level. He seemed also however in agreement with my rejoinder that while that was true, it was also necessary to "think big" and consider these islands in relation to the geopolitical aspects of their location and interests in the larger East Asian and Pacific area.

As our conversation progressed, Father Hezel asked me at one point if I might be able to attend the political education seminar at Ponape. I said I would be glad to look into this possibility, and he said he would follow up with a more definite communication, presumably after he has firmed up his program. I gave him copies of the transcripts of the 5th and 6th Rounds of Status Talks and the First Round of Marianas Talks. I also referred him to some United Nations material and told him the time schedule of the meeting of the Trusteeship Council with its discussion of the Trust Territory.

In the course of his conversation Father Hezel told me something of the means being used at present in the political education efforts of the Jesuit Mission. He didn't tell me much about the content, but asserted that it was strictly political, not religious. In answer to my query, he said neither the Protestants nor the government had raised any objection to the Mission's use of radio facilities. He remarked that Nick Bossy's broadcasts (anti-independence) ³⁰⁵wide attention. He remarked that radio was a very useful and far-reaching medium. Mission programs are broadcast over government radio twice a week in Truk and Ponape in the vernacular. It is in those two districts that the Mission's principal work is being done. Activity is particularly strong on Ponape, he noted, in view of the work of Fathers Costigan at PATS, McGarry at Kolonia, and Cavanaugh at Kiti. (See Status LNO 27 C reporting UNVM visit to Ponape).

Father Hezel remarked that the members of the Congress had unfortunately been out of touch with their constituents, and he said this failure to keep people informed was what brought Hans Willander down in the last election. On the other hand, Father Hezel said, Machima O'Sonis had really gotten out into the villages, not only during the campaign, but after the Congressional session he went back to report to his people. Father Hezel, who lived in the same district, Faichuk, said he questioned people and found they know O'Sonis and what he had done in Congress, including his position against independence, and his support for copra subsidy.

Father Hezel commented that the Jesuit priests in Ponape, Truk, Yap and Palau have had years of experience in Micronesia and are competent in the local languages. He seemed to feel that relaxed informal sessions with people discussing issues in the vernacular were the most effective ways of informing Micronesians of political matters. He noted that in his work along this line on the outer islands in Truk, he had been surprised to find no sentiment favoring independence for Micronesia but rather strong support for continuing close

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association. He felt this reflected to some extent a sort of mendicant attitude whereby the people wanted to be assured of their food, low cost housing and medical attention. He deplored the development of this dependence and observed that he was worried about it as a threat to the individual's integrity.

COMMENT: It seems abundantly clear, as previously noted in reports and observations from here, that by and large the only real political education being done in the TTPI is that which is being carried out by the Jesuits in the Caroline Islands. This important activity has, I believe gone by default to that private and very influential group through neglect of the TT Government to act. That failure, probably due to lack of policy, has created a vacuum now being filled by the Jesuit Mission, with an apparent predilection for an independence option.

Mary Vance Trent

Enclosure:

Follow-Up on Bishop Naylor's Pastoral Letter

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