

October 17, 1974

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION FILE

Subject: Conversation with Senate Staff Members

1. I called James Bierne today and learned the following:

A. He and other members of the Senate Interior Committee staff are leaving for the Trust Territory tomorrow. He expects to return about the third week in November.

B. Bierne is interested in land problems in the Trust Territory. He plans to speak to a person named William Carter at the University of Guam who has done studies of land in the Trust Territory for the Micronesian Claims Commission.

C. I spoke to Bierne about the military retention land problem. He was familiar with it. I explained our views about the rights which the United States could properly obtain consistent with the Trusteeship Agreement. Bierne said that he understood that the State Department's position to be that, as at Guantanamo, the United States, while it held control of a territory, could cause agreements to be executed which would grant its rights even after the territory became independent. I pointed out to him that there was no trusteeship agreement in effect with respect to Cuba when the United States obtained such rights. [Indeed, my recollection is that the agreements granting the United States permanent use rights at Guantanamo were entered into after Cuban independence.]

2. Jack Weiss called me to talk about a letter Senator Johnston received from Micronesian Legal Services. I asked Jack to send me a copy. Micronesian Legal Services has been hired to represent the Tinian Council in connection with the Council's opposition to the status agreement provisions relating to land. The letter makes the claim that the people of Tinian were promised the land when they came from Yap; and it recites that 178 of the 300 voters oppose the present military plans. After discussing this matter, I brought up military retention lands with Jack and explained our position to him.

Michael S. Helfer

cc: H. P. Willens