

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

March 7, 1975

0.1
8

Dear Colleague:

On Monday, March 10, we will be called upon to approve a seemingly innocuous piece of legislation, S. 326, which, if approved, will have important long-term consequences.

Section 2 of S. 326 makes significant military and foreign policy determinations without a semblance of adequate review. This section authorizes \$1.5 million "to aid in the transition of the Mariana Islands to a new status as a territory of the United States." Although it provides that no money can be obligated until Congress approves a pact between the islands and the United States, it would further implement a takeover plan which Congress has yet to see.

Some might say the "transition" authorization is a bit expensive since it amounts to more than \$1,000 for every man, woman and child in the Marianas, but that is not the issue. The real question is the future status of all the islands in the Micronesia Trust Territory, of which the Marianas form just a small part. The proposal before the Senate is a step toward carving the Marianas out of the Micronesia Trust Territory and committing the United States to long-term financial and defense obligations.

The United Nations entrusted Micronesia to the United States following World War II. Since then we have largely neglected the vast territory except to the extent it has been useful for military purposes. The Department of Defense now plans to build a vast new military base complex in the islands.

The Administration quite correctly asked the legislature of Micronesia what it thought of United States plans to carve off the Marianas from the territory. The Micronesian legislature determined it should remain united and object strenuously to any policy of divide and rule. Nevertheless, the Administration continued its dismemberment plans. Indeed, such plans have progressed to a point where a special U.S. ambassador has just signed a commonwealth agreement with a commission of Mariana citizens, and presumably this pact will be submitted to the Congress at some later date.

Page 2

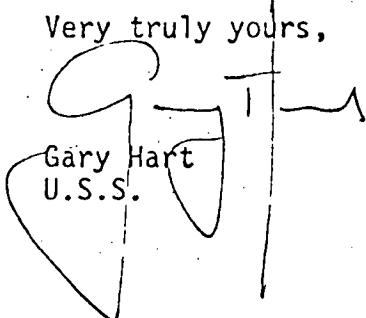
Set aside the fact that half the adult population of the major Mariana island of Tinian, where the base will be built, signed a petition repudiating the negotiators, that the commission chairman is alleged to have been speculating in land needed for the base, that the vice-chairman has been accused by the U.S. trust territory government of pocketing \$35,000 of public funds or that another commission member is a convicted felon who was pardoned upon taking public office. What we cannot forget is that we are being asked to approve a piece of legislation which tends to legitimize a doubtful agreement, and, what is more, it has a whiff of colonialism about it.

The Administration intends to hold a plebiscite and take over the Marianas before asking Congress to approve the just-signed agreement. No doubt many of the Mariana people are now going to vote "yes" because they have been promised years of lucrative subsidies. According to a forthcoming study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, this astonishing operation may eventually cost the American taxpayer as much as \$2 billion, and Congress is not going to be asked to approve these funds until it is too late to turn back.

I attach two editorial comments on this subject for your consideration.

I ask your support for an amendment which I shall offer to strike Section 2, the "transition" section, from S. 326. There will be plenty of time to make such an authorization after Congress determines if we should have a new military commonwealth.

Very truly yours,


Gary Hart
U.S.S.

Enclosure

13797

A Destiny Not So Manifest

By William Safire

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12—Any day now, a special representative of the President of the United States will sign a "compact" that will ultimately make 14,000 native residents of the Marianas Islands—Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Pagan and the rest—citizens of the United States.

The little island empire will affiliate with the U. S. as a commonwealth, like Puerto Rico, and as night follows day, we will soon be hearing angry cries for independence as well as demands for statehood.

What are we getting into, and why? Isn't the ownership of nearby Guam good enough for our aviation needs without spreading American territory all over the Far Eastern Pacific?

In 1824, Andrew Jackson described the U. S. as "a country manifestly called by the Almighty to a destiny

ESSAY

which Greece and Rome, in the days of their pride, might have envied." This was turned into the slogan, "manifest destiny," by diplomat John O'Sullivan, to rally support for the annexation of Texas in the 1840's, and was revived in 1898 by William McKinley for his takeover of Hawaii.

But "manifest destiny" doesn't have the old zing any more, which is fortunate. Under the Whetstone Doctrine, enunciated at Guam six years ago and still the basis of U. S. foreign policy, our commitments abroad are limited to the aid of those whom it is in our interest to help defend themselves.

Why, then, are we turning territory 5,000 miles from the continental United States into U. S. soil? Most of our trusteeship of Micronesia—the Carolines and the Marshalls, with familiar names like Truk and Bikini—will ultimately be given "free association" with the U. S., a form of alliance that provides us military bases without locking us in forever.

The first reason given for the first territorial aggrandizement of this nation since we purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark is military necessity. Think of what we went through, in lives and naval vessels, to wrest control of Saipan from the Japanese in World War II.

Certainly, if our defense establishment wants to be ready for a future conventional war against Japan, it would make sense to secure our hold on Saipan; but in remembering Pearl Harbor, perhaps we are forgetting strategic concepts and weapons that have been developed since that time. The same argument holds for those who might like another resolutely point for a land war with China.

Another reason advanced by Special Envoy F. Hayden Williams, head of the Asia Foundation who is avidly waiting to sign on behalf of the U. S., is that the people of this portion of our trusteeship have "freely chosen" this political status.

That's nice; the people of the Marianas, who have become totally dependent on the U. S. defense establishment already, show good taste in their selection of a patron country.

But under this theory, the people of Bangladesh would deserve to become part of America, if they freely so chose, and Adm. John McCain would probably then make a military case for a foothold on the Indian subcontinent.

Readers whose emotions are easily stirred by demagogic essayists are demanding to know, "Why wasn't I told about this?" You were; this latest conquest was engineered with the full participation of our Imperial Congress, especially Senator Scoop Jackson and Representative Phil Burton. Ironically, this round-the-world thrust is under the supervision of our "Interior" committees. The Congress will have to ratify the agreement soon to be signed, but that is a formality.

Complaisant Congressmen will recall the precedent of Hawaii; and since we already have Guam, why not the rest of the islands in that group? At today's prices, weren't Alaska and the Virgin Islands worth the pittance we paid for them?

That misses the point. The destiny of a nation which is manifest to one generation is not so manifest to another. It is no mark of neo-isolationism to pause in our automatic peek-a-boo of more territory to ask if this really fits into our idea of what and where our nation should be.

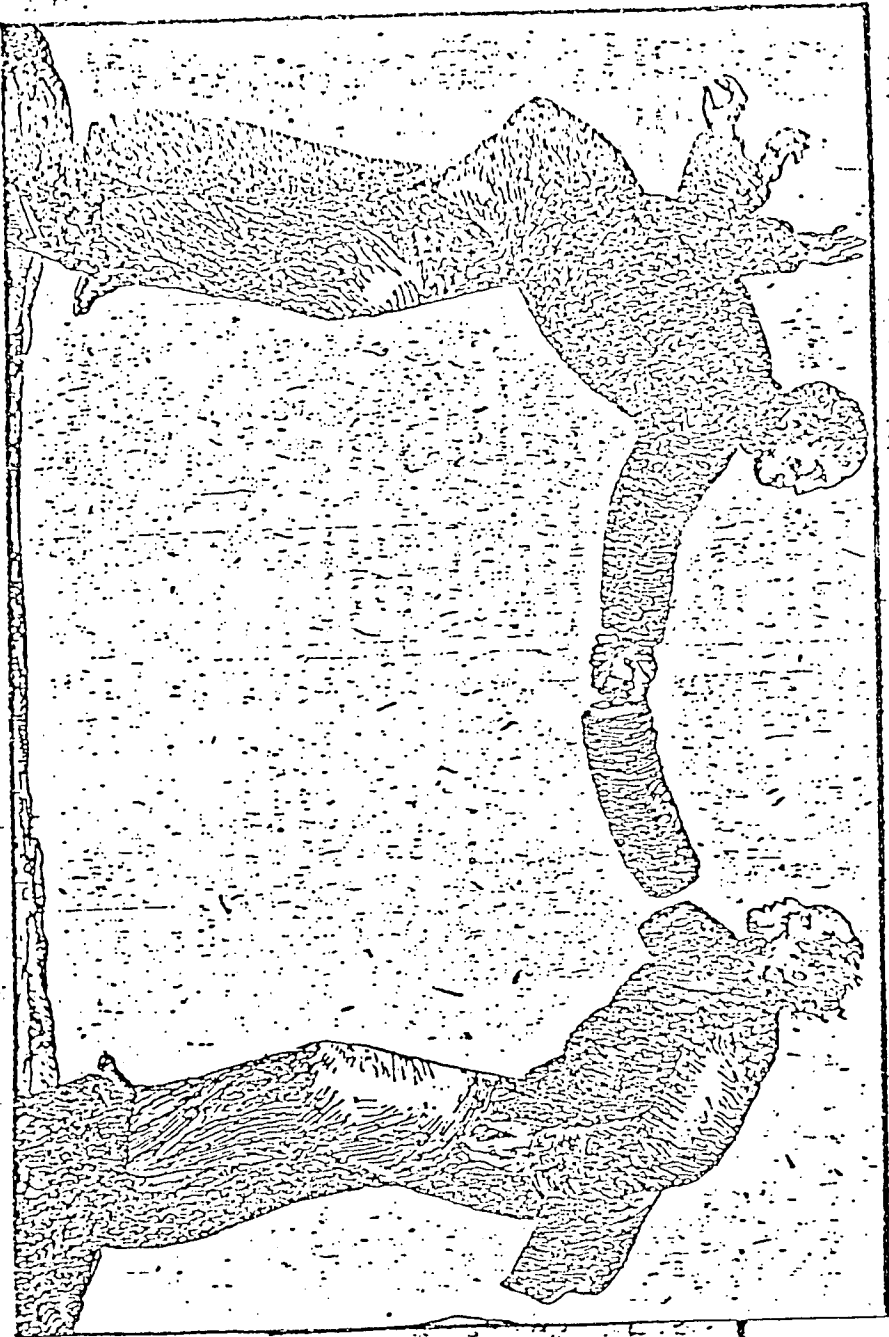
We ought to be considering the principle of the acquisition of any new territory, even these islands that make up less than half the land area of Rhode Island. Where we firmly plant the flag, we lose the option to decide what to defend. An attack on the island of Rota would be the equivalent of an attack on New York or Peoria; there could be no flexibility to our response.

The Marianas are tempting. Great bases could be built there, with officers' clubs pitched to catch the gentle trade winds that used to blow the Spanish galleons from Acapulco to Manila. High-rise condominiums could be built to attract the tired Japanese businessmen to a tourist paradise via the new American-Iranian Airline (Fly Swan Am).

And there is history on the islands. From Tinian, a B-29 named the Enola Gay took off with a 14-foot explosive device to drop on Hiroshima, opening a new age of man.

But let us pause a moment to ask: Where do we want the United States of America to end?

Nov 27, 1974



Brad Holland

By Donald F. McHenry and Ernest C. Downs

WASHINGTON—Sometimes a little prodding makes a large issue. This is the case in current Administration requests to increase authorized spending in Micronesia from \$60 million to \$75 million in 1975 and \$80 million in 1976. These requests amount to a back-door attempt to force Congress's hand ahead of time on the larger, sensitive issue of the United States' formal relationship to Micronesia, the western Pacific Island group the United States has administered as a United Nations trust since 1947.

Few people are aware that after five years of negotiations the United States is close to its first territorial acquisition since 1900. The result will be new long-term financial and de-

Such major steps should involve public debate, but the Administration's strategy seeks to avoid controversy by asking Congress to approve the major implementing provisions of the negotiated agreement before Congress considers the agreement itself.

The sums requested, small now, will lead to major United States investments of as much as \$2 billion.

Under the final agreements, the people of the new Mariana Islands commonwealth would become United States citizens, and Tinian, the second largest island in the group, would be the site of the base. On these points the current budget requests attempt to anticipate future Congressional approval by calling for \$1.5 million to aid in the transition of the Marianas to a new United States-owned territory with commonwealth status. The rest of Micronesia, the Marshall

control internal affairs but delegating to the United States complete control of defense and virtually complete control of foreign affairs. Fifteen years later, after signing a mutual security pact with the United States, the Micronesians could declare independence.

But for the request on the Marianas, Congress might be justified in not focusing on Administration plans until asked to approve the agreements. Whatever the area's future political status, the capital-improvement funds are desperately needed. The United States has a long-overdue obligation as trustee to provide basic improvements, and their provision now would in no way prejudice future status.

But Congress cannot provide transition funds for the Marianas without taking a position on the major issues facing the area. One is whether the Marshall Islands, which already exist in the Pacific, would give the United States Co. in direct conflict with the United States' general policy which that of Micronesia and liberalize separate relations to a United States per divide and rule.

By far the major hurdle in the United States security law. This premise is advanced as justification for new long-term economic and military commitments even if the area is essential to follow that America needs to construct, particularly in a time of economic stringency, a major \$100-million military base? If it did the House Appropriations Committee express doubt that could be justified given the United States defense posture.

Finally, Congress needs to set the stakes for the Micronesians; location seems to be the only modify on which they can finance plans for economic development. The proposed agreement best reconcile conflicting Micronesian and American interests. But Congress ought to insure that that is not the Micronesians' trustee has its own interests overriding.

A resolution of Micronesia's political status is long overdue. United States trusteeship, anarchism and would be as the United States record of trust had not been dismal. It would result in approval of the detailed Congressional executive agreements. But the Administration's approach would result in a situation. If the Micronesians passed without debate, Congress had itself in the embarrassing of being asked to approve agreements whose implementation it has approved.

Donald F. McHenry directs a project on Micronesia in the foreign policy studies program Carnegie Endowment for Int.

68231