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MR. DAWSON

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DONALD S. DAWSON

~~Interior file~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE DONALD S. DAWSON:

Bill BATT

The history of our arrangements for the administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific - the former Japanese Mandated Islands - is long and involved. Only their current status is of immediate concern.

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# At the present time, the Islands are under direct Navy control. However, there is in existence a memorandum of agreement between the Interior Department and the Navy Department, of which I am enclosing a copy. This agreement has been approved by the President (letter of June 6, 1950) and is the basis of present planning in both Departments, unless there has been some change in thinking because of the Korean situation.

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In substance, this agreement provides that Interior will choose, Navy will nominate, and the President will designate a civilian High Commissioner of the Trust Territory. It was originally planned that he would assume office about July 1, 1950, and would be responsible to the Secretary of the Navy from that date until July 1, 1951, the target date for the transfer of responsibility for the Territory from the Navy Department to the Interior Department. The plan provides for the civilian High Commissioner to recruit civilians to replace Naval personnel and proposes that the Naval personnel will be detached from duty with the Government of the Trust Territory on July 1, 1951, except as agreed on in individual cases.

The last paragraph of the agreement provides that the transfer is contingent on the organization of regular air and sea transportation services other than those now being provided by the Navy. Under the terms of this paragraph, a survey was made, plans were worked out and they have been approved by the President. It has been agreed that the possibilities of civilian transportation will be re-examined on November 1, 1950.



Because of the uncertainties after June 25, 1950, this agreement was not put into effect and was not pressed by the Interior Department.

By way of further explanation, I would add that the present High Commissioner is Admiral Radford. The actual administration of the Territory is carried out by the Deputy High Commissioner, Admiral Fiske. The Deputy High Commissioner formerly had his offices in Guam, but they were removed about a year ago to Pearl Harbor. A small liaison staff is maintained in Guam, and another small headquarters staff at Truk.

The Islands are small, and the distances are vast - three million square miles with 390 inhabited islands, containing 51,000 people. For this reason, the day-to-day administration is highly decentralized. The Islands have been divided into four districts, and the necessary administrative services are provided by the District Headquarters.

One of the important duties of the High Commissioner will be to make an annual report to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. In the past, the Council has questioned Admiral Fiske very closely concerning measures taken for the welfare of the native population and the development of self-government. Queries have also been raised as to the slow transfer from Naval to civilian administration, and strong representations have been made that we should provide a seat of government within the bounds of the Trust Territory.

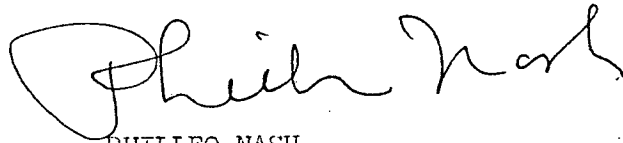
The native population is the most primitive under American jurisdiction. Their cultural advancement approximates that of American Indians 100 years ago.

The problems the civilian High Commissioner will face the first year and which would affect any recommendation you will be making to the President are:

1. To maintain harmonious relationships with the Navy and Interior officials. Both Departments are deeply interested in the administration of the Islands.
2. To arrange for an orderly transfer to civilian authority. The target date is closer than was originally planned.



3. To replace the existing Naval transport and other facilities in accordance with the plan worked out by the Interior-Navy Survey Team. This will be more difficult than before Korea.
4. To make a report to the United Nations Trusteeship Council on this Government's administration of its Trust that will quiet the critical attitude of some of the members of the Council and will demonstrate in the Forum of the United Nations our sincere interest in the development of self-government and human rights among dependent peoples.



PHILLO NASH



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Memorandum of Understanding Between the Navy Department and the  
Department of the Interior Regarding the Transfer of Administrative  
Responsibility for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

1. The President should designate the future civilian High Commissioner of the Trust Territory. Interior's selection for civilian High Commissioner should be nominated by the Secretary of the Navy through the Secretary of Defense.
2. The civilian High Commissioner should assume office on or about July 1, 1950, and should be responsible to the Secretary of the Navy from the date he assumes office until the transfer date.
3. Responsibility for the Government of the Trust Territory should be transferred from Navy to Interior on July 1, 1951, and from that date forward the High Commissioner should be responsible to the Secretary of the Interior.
4. The civilian High Commissioner, with Interior's assistance, should immediately after his designation commence recruiting civilians to replace naval personnel. The Navy Department will process the appointments and arrange for the transportation of civilian replacements until the transfer date.
5. The Navy Department will, after consultation with the Department of the Interior, include in its 1951 budget estimates the amounts required to cover costs incidental to the transfer, including the salaries and transportation of civilian replacements.
6. Naval military personnel on duty with the Government of the Trust Territory on July 1, 1951, will, except as otherwise agreed upon in individual cases, be detached from that duty on the transfer date, or earlier if requested by the High Commissioner, provided that the foregoing shall not affect normal rotation of duty in individual cases. If any services are required to be performed by naval units to the Government of the Trust Territory after July 1, 1951, such services will be the subject of separate agreements.
7. Naval civilian personnel whom the High Commissioner does not wish to retain will, by July 1, 1951, be reassigned to other duty or dismissed, as the Navy determines.
8. Specific arrangements with respect to the transfer of property now owned by the United States and used by the Government of the Trust Territory will be the subject of separate agreements. These arrangements will be consistent with policies relating to property transfer set forth in the draft organic acts for Guam and American Samoa recommended by the Interior and Navy Departments to the 81st Congress.



9. The two Departments will cooperate closely with each other at each stage of the transfer process, making available to one another information, facilities, and personal and other services to the fullest extent practicable in order to ensure an orderly transfer.
10. The transfer date referred to in paragraph 3 above has been selected on the assumption that regular air and sea transportation services, other than naval, will be available after the transfer date to meet essential civilian and governmental requirements in the Trust Territory. The Navy and Interior Departments will commence immediately to work out, in cooperation with other interested agencies, arrangements for such services and will submit plans by May 1, 1950, for carrying out these arrangements to the President for approval.

August 31, 1949

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