

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

March 24, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Visit of Saipan Delegation

As part of this Administration's efforts to encourage self-government in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, we created a Territorial Legislature last year. Three members of that legislature from Saipan and the Mayor of Saipan comprise this delegation.

Mayor Vicente D. Sablan heads the delegation. The other members are: Francisco T. Palacios, Speaker, Saipan Municipal Legislature; Vicente N. Santos, President, Mariana District Legislature; and Olympio T. Borja, Member, House of Delegates. All speak English but Mr. Borja has the greatest faculty with the language.

Some of the problems which brought the delegation to Washington are:

1. War damage claims -- State Department has been negotiating with Japanese, so far without success.
2. Claims against U. S. -- these grew out of losses following the end of hostilities. Navy purportedly settled such claims through land exchanges.
3. Enlistment in the U. S. Armed Forces -- as residents of a U.N. Trusteeship, this desire by the Micronesians could conflict with the Trusteeship agreement.

Ambassador Goldberg and I are in agreement that all our efforts must now point to a U.N. supervised plebiscite in the Trust Territory within 2 or 3 years. This will be a most crucial step -- and all signs now point to a decision to seek political association with the U. S. If we discuss this topic at all, naturally it must be handled in gingerly fashion.

Stewart L. Udall
Secretary of the Interior

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Visit of Saipan Delegation to
President Johnson March 24, 1966

The Saipan delegation is composed of four important local leaders:

Vicente D. Sablan (head of delegation)
Mayor of Saipan

Francisco T. Palacios
Speaker, Saipan Municipal Legislature

Vicente N. Santos
President, Mariana District Legislature

Olympio T. Borja
Member, House of Delegates (upper house)
Congress of Micronesia (territorial legislature)

The group wishes to have a brief visit with the President and to present him with a gift from the Saipan people, a carved model of a bullock drawing a traditional cart. The four members of the delegation readily understand English but speak it with fairly heavy accents. Mr. Borja has the greatest facility with the English language.

The delegation (accompanied by a non-Micronesian lawyer who will not go to the White House with them) has come to Washington to discuss the following major items:

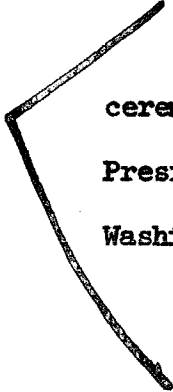
- (1) War damage claims (These are claims for damages suffered by the Micronesians during World War II. The Department

of State has been negotiating, to date without success, with the Japanese government looking toward compensation to the Micronesians for such damages.)

- (2) Claims against the United States. (These are claims for losses and damages following the end of hostilities on Saipan. These claims will require examination since, during the 1950's the Navy, then administering the Saipan area, purportedly settled such claims through a land exchange program.)
- (3) Enlistment in the United States armed forces. (The Saipan Legislature has adopted a resolution asking for authority for Micronesians, who are not United States citizens, to enlist in the American armed forces. Legislation has been introduced in the Congress to accomplish this. A problem is a possible conflict with the trusteeship agreement which can be read to limit any such Micronesian military service to service within the Trust Territory or service in connection with a UN-approved peace-keeping mission.)
- (4) Reintegration with Guam. (Guam, an American territory since the Spanish-American war, is the southernmost of

the Mariana islands.

The Mariana islands to the north of Guam, of which Saipan is the largest with the largest population, are inhabited by people who are ethnically, linguistically, and culturally related to the United States citizens of Guam. The Saipanese feel a much greater affinity with their Guamanian cousins than with the remainder of the Trust Territory. They wish to join Guam as an American territory. They regard the remainder of the Trust Territory as backward and do not wish to wait for the rest to "catch up." The UN view is that the Trust Territory should not be "fragmented" at least until such time as all of the islanders can decide what their respective political futures shall be.)



The delegation understands, however, that their visit is ceremonial and that they should not expect to discuss with the President the substantive matters which they have brought to Washington.

Background information:

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands is the former Japanese League of Nations Mandate of World War II fame. After the area was captured from Japanese armed forces (Kwajalein, Pelelieu, Saipan) the islands were administered by Navy military government until July 18, 1947 when they were made a strategic trust territory under a trusteeship agreement between the United States and the UN Security Council.

The trust territory covers a total area of 3,000,000 square miles, has a total land area of 687 square miles, and is composed of more than 2,000 islands, of which some 97 are inhabited. There are about 90,000 Micronesians inhabiting the area divided into several cultural groups having nine different languages. Politically the area is divided into six districts (which roughly conform to geographic cultural, and linguistic groupings). The Mariana Islands with a population of about 10,000 comprise one. Saipan, in the Mariana group has a population of about 8,500 and is also the "provisional capital" of the Trust Territory, the headquarters of the High Commissioner having been moved there from Guam on July 1, 1962. The remaining five districts have approximately the following populations:

Marshall Islands	10,000
Palau District	11,000
Ponape District	19,000
Truk District	25,000
Yap District	7,000

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Mr. President:

The Texas member is Dick White.

Marvin

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1966

FOR MARVIN WATSON

John Carver says the Texas Congressman, who told the Saipan-Trust Territories delegation he would try to get them a White House appointment, was Dick White. Carver does not know how he got in the picture; White is on the Interior Committee and may have been visited by the delegation.

I told Carver to have his Interior protocol people get in touch with you.

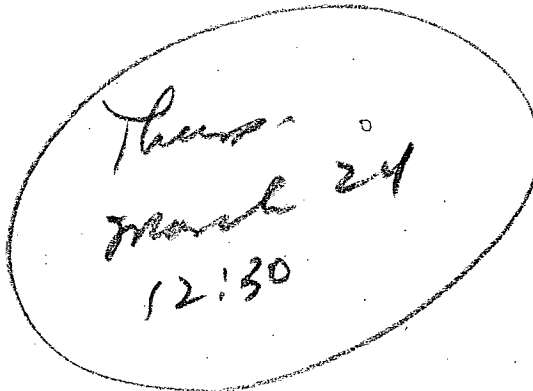


Harry C. McPherson, Jr.

Attachment

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 21, 1966

FOR MARVIN WATSON

Delegates from the Trust Territories in the Pacific, in town for two weeks to see Interior, would like to present a gift to the President. They will grind no axes; it will be purely ceremonial.

I sent their request back to Interior, which seemed willing to accept the gift in the President's behalf; now they've had second thoughts, and recommend a brief meeting with the President.

I concur. We are trying to keep the good will of these people, trying to improve living conditions for them, and above all trying to keep somebody from taking the trust territory question to the UN as a "colonialism" issue. Five minutes with this group should be very helpful.

Harry

Harry C. McPherson, Jr.

Attachment

MR. PRESIDENT:

Do you want to see this group? Yes No

Get name of the member - Marvin Watson

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 18, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR

MR. HARRY C. McPHERSON, JR.

Harry --

Interior has changed its mind about requesting an appointment for the Saipan delegation. Originally, as Udall told you in his March 9 note, they did not favor such an appointment, but two things have happened since then that have a bearing on the decision. First, in very recent days a number of newsarticles have given the Trust Territory new prominence, and it would be useful both within and outside the Trust Territory if the President were to indicate his awareness of the area. Secondly, the delegation has been told by a Congressman from Texas that if Interior is unable or unwilling to arrange an appointment, he will be glad to attempt to do so.

Interior raised the matter with me and I offered to reopen the question and to add my personal endorsement. In my opinion we are facing some rather serious issues with respect to the Trust Territory and will have to assiduously cultivate the native leadership to make sure that public opinion in the Territory supports the U. S. policy objectives.

The Saipan delegation consists of four important local leaders:

Vicente D. Sablan
Mayor of Saipan

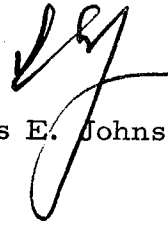
Francisco T. Palacios
Speaker, Saipan Municipal Legislature

Vicente N. Santos
President, Mariana District Legislature

Olympio T. Borja
Delegate, Congress of Micronesia

They are accompanied by a non-Micronesian lawyer but he would not be included in the visit, which is to be wholly ceremonial. The four Saipanese will be instructed to refrain from discussing any of the substantive issues which have brought them to Washington. They are carrying a gift to the President from the people of the Marianas. The Interior Department would provide an escort officer for them and no more than 10 minutes would be required for the visit.

I strongly recommend an appointment be arranged if the President's calendar would permit it. The Saipanese expect to be in Washington until March 30, 1966



Charles E. Johnson