

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS

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COMMERCIAL
CABLE ADDRESS
HICOTT SAIPAN

March 22, 1967

The Hon. Stewart L. Udall
Secretary of the Interior
Interior Building
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The purpose of this letter is to report on the meeting which the delegation from Micronesia had yesterday on Guam with President Johnson. In addition to myself and the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Mangan, our group was composed of seven Micronesians. They were Kaleb Udai, Legislative Counsel from the Congress of Micronesia; Mayor Vicente Sablan of Saipan; Thomas Remengesau of Palau; Luke Tuan, a member of the Congress of Micronesia representing Yap; Gideon Doene from Truk; Dr. Jack Halkena from the Marshalls; and Strik Yema from Ponape. In selecting this committee, we succeeded in obtaining representation for each district. If we had had more lead time, we would have made arrangements for several of the leaders of the Congress of Micronesia to be in attendance. Notice was so short, however, that this was not feasible although we did succeed in flying Remengesau from Palau for the meeting so someone with fresh, first-hand knowledge of the typhoon damage on Koror could be in attendance.

Our appointment for the meeting had been set for 3:30 at the President's quarters on Nimitz Hill on Guam. We entered the living room, were seated by members of his staff, and within a very few minutes he appeared. He was most cordial and gracious and appeared to enjoy meeting the Micronesian representatives as well as ourselves. We opened the meeting by thanking him for arranging to see us despite the demanding schedule and heavy pressures to which he had been subjected during the crowded two days on Guam. Reference was made to our hope that, should his

future travels bring him to this part of the Pacific, arrangements could be made for him to visit the Trust Territory. It was acknowledged that, because of the uncertainty of the weather at this time, including the recent typhoon in the Palau area plus the threat of a typhoon in the Marianas area at the time of his visit, it was perhaps just as well that our invitation for him to visit Saipan could not be fitted into his schedule.

When reference to the typhoon was made, he asked how often we were subject to typhoon conditions and was told that the threat was almost a constant factor in our environment. At that point, he said he was signing the Disaster Declaration for Palau and did so in our presence. We thanked him and commented that this should enable us to proceed with reconstruction plans. He asked about the extent of the damage in Palau and wanted to know what type of structures were hit the hardest. He appeared to have been briefed on several matters affecting the Trust Territory and expressed interest in the Nathan Report. He was advised that we had recently taken delivery of this report and were now in the process of identifying those recommendations which could and should be implemented on a priority basis and other recommendations which would have to be deferred until they had been subjected to further study and until we had additional funds to implement them.

At this point, he made reference to our ceiling legislation and said that he understood that a new ceiling bill had been passed by the Senate and that similar legislation was under consideration in the House. I commented that we seem to have very fine support in both houses and that both the Senate and House Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs probably would be sending committees to the Trust Territory next fall not only to assess our needs but also to evaluate our administrative capabilities. He said he assumed that Senator Jackson was heading up our legislative effort in the Senate and we acknowledged that was the case and that Congressman Aspinall was looked upon as principally concerned with our legislation on the House side. He indicated sympathetic interest in this legislation. Earlier when we had introduced members of the delegation, he wanted to know how we had brought them all together in view of the fact that they had come from districts so widely dispersed. We described our transportation pattern and explained that, if we had had more planning time, we would have had several others in attendance, particularly some

of the leaders from the Congress of Micronesia. He asked a number of questions about the economy, what crops were grown, what food resources were available to the people in the various districts. At this point, we asked representatives from the various districts to describe briefly the economic conditions in their respective areas.

Mayor Sablan was identified as the senior member of our party and as a resident of Micronesia who had lived for some period of time under the Japanese administration. The President asked the Mayor how the Japanese administration compared with U.S. administration. The Mayor answered this question adroitly by expressing the opinion that the residents of his district were strongly loyal to the U.S. and seem to be much more in favor of our democratic process of government than the political system to which they had been subjected during Japanese times. Other members of the delegation were invited to express their views and supported the opinion expressed by the Mayor.

We acknowledged the valuable assistance we had received from military organizations in this area, including the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, and noted that without their help in emergencies such as the recent typhoon in the Palau, we would have been hard pressed indeed to meet some of our more critical problems.

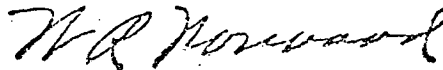
The President commented that Governor Jack Burns of Hawaii had flown from Washington to Honolulu with him on Air Force One and expressed his warm friendship for the Governor. I acknowledged that I was indebted to Jack Burns for his continuing interest in the Trust Territory and that we were benefiting from a cordial relationship with the State of Hawaii including, of course, services from the University and the East West Center. Reference was made to the fact that the United Nations Visiting Mission had just completed its tour of the territory and had returned to the United States. The President showed no particular interest in this information nor did he comment on it.

After approximately 15 minutes, the President indicated that it was time for him to depart to catch his plane for the flight back to Washington. He again shook hands all around and indicated

that he was pleased to have had this meeting with us. At the close of the meeting, the Mayor presented him with a full-size flag of Micronesia which the delegation had brought with them as a gift for the President.

Although the meeting was brief, it was, in my opinion, well worth the time, cost and effort required to assemble our group and the several days of preparation while awaiting confirmation of our appointment. It is my impression that, if at some future time, a piece of legislation or information pertaining to the Trust Territory passes across the President's desk and comes to his attention, the brief meeting we had with him will serve to spark more interest than might otherwise have been the case. For our part, of course, it was a privilege and an unusually rewarding experience which I am sure the Micronesian members of our group regard as particularly meaningful to them.

Sincerely yours,



W. R. Norwood
High Commissioner

CC: ✓ Dir., Ofc. of Territories

OFFICE OF TERRITORIES

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