



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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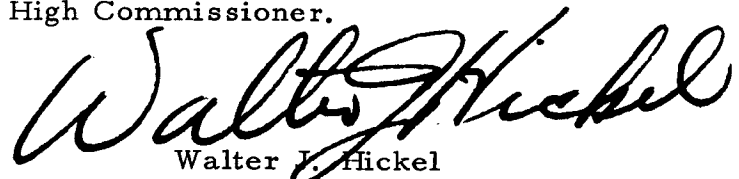
MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE

Knowing your concern about the rapidly-evolving situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, I have developed a positive program of action which can be taken in the near future. Some aspects, as indicated in the attached outline, require legislation but the majority can be implemented by the Administration unilaterally.

The Trust Territory has been poorly administered for the 22 years during which it has been under American jurisdiction. Despite this, no Secretary of the Interior has even visited the islands for seven years.

Because of the importance and immediacy of our efforts in the Trust Territory, I plan a trip to Guam and Saipan May 1 through May 6, if you concur. Purpose of the trip is to establish close rapport quickly with the Micronesians, to seek their counsel, and to announce actions the Administration is taking in their behalf. Following those stops, with your approval, I then plan to spend one day in Japan and one day in Alaska visiting Interior Department offices, returning to the Capital May 9.

With departure dates so near and with the difficulty of finding other suitable dates, I respectfully request to meet with you on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning at the latest to discuss the recommended programs and the trip. This timing would give you an opportunity to announce the trip at your scheduled press conference Friday, and, at the same time, to announce the new High Commissioner.


Walter J. Hickel
Secretary

Attachment

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PROPOSED PROGRAMS FOR THE TRUST TERRITORY

Unilateral Actions by the Administration

1. Permit the Micronesian legislature to form a budget committee to develop annual budgets within our \$40-million ceiling imposed by Congress. The Legislature would vote the budget as a recommendation to the High Commissioner. At present the High Commissioner merely presents the budget to the Legislature for their recommendations on priorities.
2. Obtain either an Army Engineer Construction Battalion or a Navy Construction Battalion from Southeast Asia for duty in Micronesia. The unit, under civilian control of the High Commissioner, would construct and repair needed projects such as roads, water and sanitation facilities, and airports. This action should be requested by the Micronesians and our indications are that it would be welcomed. We understand that a unit might be available on request from the Army or Navy. If you wish, the movement of the Unit from Southeast Asia could be announced as a "withdrawal" for a "plowshare" operation to help the Micronesians. If you do not wish to announce the repositioning as a withdrawal, it could be announced strictly as a "plowshare" operation.
3. Bring more Micronesians into key government positions, thereby helping to train them for local government.
4. Develop a formula which permits them to be paid the same as Americans for comparable jobs.
5. Develop a land acquisition procedure which is compatible with the interests of the Micronesians by giving them a voice.
6. Accelerate use of funds already allocated and appropriated for specific projects.
7. Announce mechanics for rapid handling of war claims, giving the Micronesians a voice in the procedure.

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8. Request the Micronesians to establish an economic development committee.

Actions Requiring Legislation

1. Referendum on becoming an unincorporated territory.
2. Elimination of import duty on Micronesian products entering the United States.
3. Tax incentives for development of needed industries in the islands.
4. Open access to travel to and from the United States.