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Authority E.O. 12958
By AB NARA Date 1/19/05

May 9, 1969

Memorandum

To : The President
From : Secretary of the Interior
Subject : Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

Our trip May 1 through May 6 to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) met with complete success. We have developed through consultation with the Micronesian leadership and contact with the Micronesian people the foundation for a mutually beneficial, long-lasting political relationship.

It now becomes essential that we follow up our visit with rapid, well coordinated action to implement our promises which were outlined in my earlier memorandum to you dated April 15, and in the report to you from the Under Secretary's committee of the National Security Council.

The Micronesian leaders and, indeed, all of the people which I met are strongly pro-American despite years of having little to say in their own affairs, despite programs in the Territory which have not satisfied many of their needs, and despite a high ratio of inept American administrators. They reacted to our program extremely favorably and committed themselves to full cooperation in implementing each aspect of the program.

To make this possible, a number of changes will be necessary not only in the philosophy of American administrators, but also in the American staff itself. Toward this end I have instructed High Commissioner Edward Johnston to replace staff members who consider their positions merely as a job with dedicated, effective men and women who really accept the challenge. Also, Commissioner Johnston is planning, at my instruction, to place as many qualified Micronesians as possible in top administrative positions.

Yesterday I met with Senators Jackson and Allott, and then with Congressman Aspinall. After hearing in some detail the highlights

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of our trip and the reaction of the Micronesians, they pledged themselves to full cooperation in implementing the legislation needed to carry out the program and to bring the TTPI into full political partnership. The Senators and Representative strongly urged us to move rapidly to fulfill our promises.

To carry out your mandate, the guidance from Capitol Hill, and the wishes of the Micronesian leaders, I already have taken the following steps:

1. I have begun organizing a special task force which will be sent from Washington early in June to assist the High Commissioner. The task force will consist of one member of the TTPI working group. It also will include experts in the various fields such as health, education, engineering, resources development, and administration. The task force probably will be in the Trust Territory a total of about three months to assure that the Micronesians will continue to be consulted and that the program receives the highest priority from American personnel in the TTPI.
2. I have requested the Secretary of Defense to assist in our effort by providing a small number of men and a small amount of materiel for a maximum impact program. These men and materiel will be used to develop small, high priority projects which the Micronesians, themselves, feel are important. The request includes: (a) military construction units consisting of teams of about one officer and twelve enlisted men to go into each district under guidance of the Micronesians. We need two such teams in action by mid-June, and four additional teams within several months thereafter; (b) underwater demolition teams to help blast openings in reefs, which will permit access to some of the out islands for Micronesian fishing boats and emergency visits; (c) six small sea-going Navy vessels which will be put under control of each of the six District Administrators as a means of transportation to out islands in the District for emergency assistance; (d) the assignment of a high priority to the TTPI in the disposal of surplus material from South Vietnam, including radio equipment and associated motor generators.
3. I am removing teams of surveyors from other Interior Department projects to shift them in early June to the TTPI to help establish land boundaries. Construction in the Islands at present is extremely difficult and land titles

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cannot be settled because to date most boundary lines existing before World War II have been impossible to reconstruct.

4. Simultaneously with dispatch of the task force to TTPI, and with a membership including a couple of the task force members, I am organizing an Interdepartmental Team to help develop implementing legislation for an Organic Act which will be the basis for termination of the U. N. trusteeship and will bring the TTPI under United States sovereignty. About September 1, six Micronesian leaders will come to Washington to help write the Organic Act. They will be assisted by members of this team. Micronesians understand that the resultant Organic Act must be good for both of us and have committed themselves in this direction. Ideally, with the help that has been pledged from both sides of Capitol Hill, we will be able to complete the Organic Act by mid-October. The Organic Act then would be taken by the six Micronesians back to the Islands for a referendum (for which we could invite international observers). We anticipate that the referendum can be held in early 1970. Immediately after the Organic Act is approved by the referendum, I will suggest to you that the Organic Act becomes an Administration proposal to Congress. Based on conversations with the Hill, as I mentioned, and if there are no major problems in our discussions with the Micronesian leaders, the Organic Act should win quick acceptance by the House and the Senate. As previously agreed, it is not our intention to offer free association or independence as an option in the referendum.

I wish to assure you that not only I but my entire staff realizes the importance of this mission and will work tirelessly to see that it is performed in a manner that will reflect favorably on you, as our President, and on the entire United States. We welcome this opportunity to fulfill what is one of the most important projects facing us today.

(sgd) Walter J. Hickel

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