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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

January 2, 1973

Memorandum

To: Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams
From: J.M. Wilson, Jr.
Subject: Report of Trip to Eastern Districts TTPI -
December 15-23, 1972

1. During the period of December 15-23, 1972, after the close of our initial conversations with the Marianas Delegation in Saipan, I visited the Eastern Districts of the TTPI accompanied by our Status Liaison Officer, Mary Vance Trent. An extended itinerary with a list of appointments and events is attached. The remainder of this memorandum summarizes topics discussed at various times and places in an effort to focus attention on substantive issues.

2. Political Status.

The principal area of discussion throughout the trip was political status, with particular reference to political education. Highlights were as follows:

a. Reaction to Marianas Talks.

Questions in the several districts regarding reactions towards the opening of separate talks with the Marianas produced mixed responses. In Truk the attitude was best described by DISTAD Sablan as one of "resentment." This is attributable perhaps - as pointed out to us in the Marshalls - to the fact that the minority group in the Marianas opposing close and permanent association with the United States is Trukese. In Ponape the attitude was one of relative indifference, with the view expressed that if this really represented what the people of the Marianas wanted (and it was recognized they had been saying this for years) then it was their privilege to speak it in exercising their right of self determination. No enthusiasm was shown, however, for letting the people of Kusaie exercise a similar right if they choose to secede from the Ponape District. In Majuro the Eabuas responded to the question with one of their own: "How would the U.S. Government react to further fragmentation of the TTPI?" They indicated a receptiveness to having Kusaie join the Marshalls, but were silent on the question of making Kusaie a separate district.

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b. Independence.

No particular enthusiasm for independence was voiced by anyone to whom we spoke in Truk. Father Currin at Xavier offered the view in comparing the Uladong brothers with Salii (all Xavier graduates) that the Uladongs were taking extreme public positions only to point up the issue for decision. He indicated the whole question of status received considerable attention in internal discussions at the school. No real view pro or con on independence was expressed by the school administration other than to encourage students to dig out the basic facts - including the sad economic prospects under independence.

Father Currin made something of a point out of the fact that 30 of the school's 125 pupils come from Truk and an equal number from Palau, with the remainder divided between the remaining districts other than the Marianas, which had none. The Trukese and Palauans traditionally fought and argued with each other and had to be balanced.

At a recently concluded conference of District Magistrates and Legislators in Truk the issue of independence had arisen during a discussion of political education led by Senators Amaraich and Nakayama. Neither of these two had initially expressed a preference, but when pressed had admitted to being strongly in favor personally of independence.

According to DISTAD Sablan, Hans Williander was defeated not on the issue of independence but because he was engaged in some highly irregular business dealing with the Japanese for which he may well be prosecuted. On the other hand Andon Amaraich who is known for his pro-independence views stands a good chance of being defeated in the next election by almost any intelligent candidate who will oppose him.

In Ponape Senator Iehsi thought independence stood little chance in view of the economic realities of the TTPI. Senator Olter, however, described the traditional chiefs as being in favor of independence (This certainly does not square with the strong anti-independence views expressed to you by the Namwarki of Uh).

Local Chief Magistrates in Ponape appeared still anxious to have independence examined as an option at least in theory and felt the people wanted to look carefully at the experience of other areas where it had been tried. (I pointed out that the example of Nauru was not on point inasmuch as the TTPI lacked



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Nauru's generous natural assets and could not reasonably expect the U.S. to help to anything like the extent they would under free association).

In the Marshalls the Kabuas showed no special fondness for independence, concentrating on the economics of the situation and the need to develop a viable fishing industry and tourism before anyone could hope to stand on his own feet. In speaking of Nauru, however it was perhaps noteworthy that they pointed out -ostensibly as a joke - that Nauru had the money and people while the Marshalls had the land.

c. Political Education.

It was the virtually unanimous view of everyone we talked to that the political education program was completely inadequate so far as political status was concerned. But views differed widely on what should be done about it and how this could be accomplished.

The legislators (Congress of Micronesia and District) felt the executive branch was at fault and pointed to their own efforts to have the COM do something about it. The Chief Magistrates of Ponape blamed the COM too, saying they did nothing. Senator Nakayama, who had been named temporary chairman of the new Congressional Joint Committee on Political Education, was in no hurry to get going, said he had no intention of convening the Committee before the Congress itself met next month, and felt he had no real mandate to act.

The DISTAD's blamed the HICOM and the lack of material being made available. Sablan in particular felt the DISTAD's could do nothing on their own and implied that the U.S. Government was at fault for not providing material directly. At the same time he indicated that the U.S. Government needed to approach the whole problem with "the greatest discretion."

Others (magistrates, educators, etc.) felt a great need not only for information about what was going on during negotiations but for more data on what options might be open at least in theory, what had happened in other comparable situations, and what the experience elsewhere had been to date. One magistrate in particular (from Sakehs) stressed the need for information on what alternative systems might be best calculated to protect fundamental individual freedoms, especially civil liberties, and expressed the need for the basic tools to make necessary

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hard decisions based on full knowledge rather than hearsay. In something as important as this, he said, the people need to be like coconuts, not papayas; i.e., strong and hard rather than soft and squashy.

Various ideas were expressed on how the flow of information might be improved and how it might be conveyed most effectively to the people. Father Currin noted the difficulty in the traditional family patterns of Micronesian society of getting any real discussion going between generations. The young may argue things among themselves but not with their elders. He suggested the possibility of taping specially prepared forum discussions for radio or putting on playlets (like Molam in Northeast Thailand) in which actors took one position or another to get ideas across to the audience indirectly where direct debate might be offensive to traditional sensibilities. Others, however - all Micronesians - felt debates would be most effective, provided the debators were well informed and the debates were staged within a strictly factual framework.

Translation was obviously a problem, but it varies between districts. Truk and the Marshalls could make do with only one language each, where Ponape requires three. Technical terms are especially difficult, but popularized versions of technical and legal subjects appear to have potentially major appeal.

Radio was the preferred vehicle for mass dissemination of information - preferably in the vernacular - but many felt this should as much as possible be followed up and implemented with face to face personal appearances and discussions. Schools should be thoroughly exploited. Another thought (my own after seeing the video taping equipment being under-utilized for the MEDEX program at the fancy, new, virtually empty \$3 million hospital on Truk) is to exploit the popularity of movies in the villages by making use of video tapes and audience viewing sets in which a variety of material could be effectively conveyed to the people in the back areas.

d. Future JFSC Talks.

A number of individuals, other than Congressmen and Senator, expressed the strongly held opinion that the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Future Status Committee did not represent the views of the people and that some means should be found to have those views more adequately represented. It was also felt by several individuals (three DISTADS and the President of the Community College of Micronesia in Ponape) that the Congress was moving too fast on the status matter and it was time to put on the brakes and move

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back to square one in order to allow the people to focus on the issues and make up their own minds on these vital questions. In this connection the idea that the Micronesians should concentrate first on their own problems of internal organization and self government had great support. The proposal to set up a constitutional convention seemed to have considerable appeal.

3. Other Related Matters.

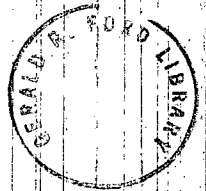
Quite a few related questions arose during the course of the visit. The most important can be summarized as follows:

a. War Claims. Ekpap Silk and Judge Kabua (an otherwise unlikely combination) asked to see me in Majuro and when they appeared wanted to know if there was any chance of reopening the Japanese war claims once more. They maintained that the people as a whole had been inadequately consulted and that the Marshallese had been given inadequate opportunity to put together all their claims. When pressed for specifics as to what claims had been overlooked they spoke generally of coconut trees damaged or unharvested by Japanese orders and specifically about one island which the Japanese had dug up looking for phosphates and left unfilled in with the product cluttering up the beaches. In the Marshalls alone, they maintained, their claims could run between \$1 and \$2 million. I said, I would put the question here and let them know the response, but offered no encouragement whatever.

b. Roi Namur. We were briefed in Majuro by DISTAD DeBrum and District Attorney Walker on the recently concluded talks in Kwajalein between the Navy and the Kabuas on Roi Namur. Colonel Fishback and Co. gave us their versions in Kwajalein later. Both felt something had been gained by having the parties talking to each other again but expressed little optimism over an amicable solution in view of the wide disparity in positions (\$1000 per acre for 50 years plus 6% interest on the first 25 years from the Navy; \$7,000 per acre for the first 25 years and an equal sum for the next 25 years from the Kabuas). Everyone agrees the thing must be sawed off one way or the other very soon, even if it goes to arbitration or the courts.

The Kabuas told Fishback they fully recognized this would set the precedent for other land negotiations in the future. Joba Kabua in a side conversation with Roy Trent in Majuro kept referring to the price paid for land for the new Majuro airport (\$4,000 per acre for 25 years) implying perhaps this was the price the Kabuas really have in mind. (NOTE: The Continental Hotel in Truk paid \$3,500 per acre for 50 years plus 6% of the total price each year; and the total price is increased in value 10% every 10 years.)

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c. Micronesian Legal Services and the OEO

Nobody had anything good to say anywhere about the Micronesian Legal Services and the OEO lawyers who staff it. In Truk the Mayor of Moen, Chief Bossy, was having special difficulties with them over a project to lay a sewer down the main coastal road. According to Bossy he had arranged in the traditional fashion for the landowners to grant him the right of way gratis, but the OEO lawyers appeared on the scene, said this would mean taking the land away and furthermore having a sewer on the street would pollute each plot with raw sewage. Money from the city (and Uncle Sam) was therefore required. The whole thing had delayed the project for months.

According to Tony DeBrum, Public Affairs Officer in Majuro who along with another Herman Guerrero started Micronesian Legal Services originally in Saipan in 1969, it was originally intended as a simple legal aid society for the underprivileged with an annual budget of \$250,000 borrowed from the Puerto Rican OEO program. It now has 16 lawyers plus three headquarters administrators and asked for \$1 million in the current fiscal year. It got only \$700,000 but allegedly borrows from San Francisco District OEO funds under which it falls.

According to DISTAD Sablan, Ted Mitchell, the head of Micronesian Legal Services, was previously the OEO lawyer on the principal Navajo Indian Reservation but was thrown out by the Navajo's and forbidden to enter the reservation again. He was then transferred to OEO Micronesia!

d. Peace Corps.

Everyone had nice things to say about the Peace Corps under the new regime.

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EXTENDED ITINERARY

Friday, December 15

P.M. - Transited Guam en route Truk. Conversation at airport with Father Costigan (PATS).

Saturday, December 16

A.M. - Arrived Truk. Met at airport by Deputy DISTAD Mitaro Danis and DISTAD Assistant for Mortlock Islands Erhart. Chatted at airport with Congressmen Endy Dois and Susauo Haruo.
- Lunch with Danis and Erhart

P.M. - Tour of port area and inter-island boats
Trip to Xavier High School and meeting with Father Currin.

Monday, December 18

A.M. - Breakfast discussion with DISTAD Juan Sablan
- Tour of Moen Island, Hospital and DISTAD Headquarters. Conversations with DISTAD Staff and selected magistrates.
- Lunch with Mayor (traditional chief) Bossy, DISTAD and Deputy DISTAD.

P.M. - Call on Truk District Legislature Speaker Hermes Katsura.
- Discussion with Senator Tosiwo Nakayama

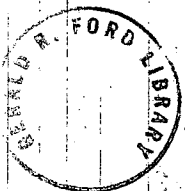
Tuesday, December 19

A.M. - Breakfast given by Speaker Katsura including, Deputy DISTAD, Senator Nakayama, District Legislature, Public and local Magistrates Petrus Mailo and Iuneichi Nakamura.
- Departed Truk for Ponape.

P.M. - Arrived Ponape. Met at airport by DISTAD Leo Falcam.
- Meeting with Ponape Congressional Delegation: Senators Bailey Oltor and Ambilos Iehsi and House Speaker Bethwel Henry.

Wednesday, December 20

A.M. - Meeting with District Legislature Interim Committee (7 members, including Joanes Edmund newly appointed member of the Congress of Micronesia Joint Political Education Committee.



- Lunch given by Ponape District Legislature Speaker Itor Harris, including Interim Committee, Senator Oler, Speaker Henry and DISTAD. Further discussion with Joanes Edmund.
- P.M. - Meeting with Chief Magistrates of Kolonia, Sokehs, Kiti, Metalanim, Uh and Net.
- Meeting with DISTAD staff and heads of U.S. Government activities on Ponape.

Thursday, December 21

- A.M. - Unaccompanied tour of Kolonia
- Departed Ponape for Majuro
- P.M. - Arrived Majuro. Met by DISTAD Oscar de Brum and Congressman Ekpap Silk. Remarks for radio Majuro.
- Cocktails with DISTAD, Deputy DISTAD Charles and Public Affairs Officer Tony DeBrum. Met Congressman Ataji Balos, Senator Elect Kendal and Congressman Elect John Heine.
- Dinner given by DISTAD and Congressman Silk, including Judge Kabua Kabua, Senate President Amata Kabua, Joba Kabua, Marshalls District Legislature Speaker Atlan Aniem, District Legislator and Tony DeBrum.

Friday, December 22

- A.M. - Tour of Majuro and new Majuro airport with DISTAD.
- Meeting with Congressman Silk and Judge Kabua on war claims.
- Meeting with District Engineer on Majuro port development.
- Meeting with District Attorney Walker on Roi Namur claims.
- P.M. - Meeting with Chief Magistrates of Majuro and Laura.

Saturday, December 23

- A.M. - Unaccompanied trip to Laura
- P.M. - Departed Majuro for Kwajalein
- Arrived Kwajalein (Friday). Met by Colonel Fishback, base commander.

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- Meeting with Colonel Fishback, Executive Officer, Real Estate Officer, and Legal Officer.
- Departed Kwajalein for Honolulu.

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