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PROCEDURAL AGENDA FOR UNDER SECRETARIES MEETING
ON MICRONESIAN POLITICAL STATUS

I. Introduction. The purpose of the interdepartmental meeting is to review and take action on the recommendations of the Interagency Group on Micronesian Political Status relating to the meetings with the Micronesian Status Delegation scheduled to commence May 4 in Saipan. The Interagency Group recommendations deal with both the United States strategy for the meetings and the substance of the U.S. proposal.

II. Present Situation. The Interagency Group has scheduled a meeting with the Micronesian Status Delegation to begin on Monday, May 4, 1970 and anticipated to last approximately one week. The U.S. Delegation is expected to be composed of about seven members, representing the Departments of Interior, State and Defense (including Joint Chiefs of Staff).

Both the Interagency Group and the Micronesian Delegation view the May meetings as the most important thus far, and indeed as the consummation of the first stage in the status process. The groundwork has been laid through an exchange of views, formally last October and informally and by correspondence since that time.

The Micronesian Delegation will report its findings and recommendations to the Congress of Micronesia in July. It is imperative to the U.S.

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position that this report be favorable or neutral, i.e., that the Delegation views the U.S. position as either acceptable or worthy of further discussion. The last draft bill tabled by the U.S. meets neither of these two criteria, in the view of the Micronesian Delegation, making it essential that the U.S. come forward with a proposal which will do so.

III. Constitutional Convention Draft Bill. The Constitutional Convention Draft developed by the Interagency Group is a revision of the draft briefly considered by the Secretaries and a previous draft developed last summer and fall. It establishes procedures for a referendum or plebescite, a Constitutional Convention, and the formation of a Constitutional government for Micronesia. It further sets the parameters for the Constitution of Micronesia and the basis of a political relationship between the U.S. and Micronesia.

In this revision, the draft is greatly changed in three areas. The first is to refer, primarily for reasons of appearances, to Micronesia as a "Commonwealth of the United States". The second is to provide for an elected executive, as necessitated by the commonwealth status. Finally, the process of approval by the voters of Micronesia requires two referenda, vice only one in the earlier draft, a procedure which should protect the United States from any political embarrassment in the formation of a constitution, and also work to determine Micronesian future political status several years earlier than under the single referendum procedure.

IV. Recommendations of the Interagency Group. The Interagency Group recommends that the United States Delegation be authorized to discuss and offer the Constitutional Convention Draft Bill in its May meetings with the Micronesian Delegation.

It is recommended that the U.S. position be made clear, in the May negotiating session, through the use of a two-step presentation. First is a detailed, oral statement of the principles which we consider basic to a political association of this sort, as well as a full explanation of the powers and responsibilities of each party in the relationship to be established by the proposed draft legislation.

(See Tab ____.) This is a positive statement of the parameters of our position, and an explanation of the Constitutional limitations involved. It is expected that there would be discussion of this statement with the Micronesians, lasting perhaps one or two days, and a transcript of the oral presentation would be provided.

Once it is clear that our position is understood, we propose that the Constitutional Convention Draft Bill be given to the Micronesian Delegation for its consideration in the context of our explanatory position statement. These two statements (position statement and draft bill) will then form the basis for the report by the Delegation to the July session of the Congress of Micronesia.

V. Authority of U.S. Delegation. In view of the limited communications between Saipan and Washington and the fact that no further meetings with the Micronesians are anticipated for some time, the Under Secretaries will probably wish to provide the U.S. Delegation with instructions which are both as comprehensive as possible and as flexible as practicable.

As noted above, the Interagency Group recommends that the best U.S. offer be tabled at this time, and takes the position that no substantive deviations should be made from this offer in the May negotiations in Saipan. The U.S. Delegation will, however, if the discussions reach specifics, require authority to make editorial changes and amendments on non-vital issues. Indeed, in view of the fact that the Interagency Group has little foreknowledge of how the May discussions will progress, it seems appropriate that the U.S. Delegation, chaired by Assistant Secretary Harrison Loesch be assured of substantial discretion in dealing with unforeseen events.