

March 6, 1972

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TO: Ambassador Williams
FROM: John C. Dorrance
SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Senator Salii

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Regarding your meeting this week with Senator Salii, I agree with your statement this weekend to the effect that substantive status questions should be avoided, and that the focus should be on the arrangements for the Palau talks. I would suggest that the following points be raised.

Press Coverage and News Dissemination -- Although Senator Salii and I have not discussed the press and news question in depth, I do have a strong impression that he is inclined toward a more relaxed and open attitude at the Palau talks than was the case in Hana. I believe you should open the subject by asking whether he has any views on the subject, and, as the opportunity arises, discuss the following possible arrangements.

a) The talks to be private as before, but with a brief release at the end of each day indicating subject matter covered. Possibly such releases could also note any major areas of agreement reached--although I would be inclined against this. The releases could be fed to MNS on Saipan for regular MNS dissemination.

b) Although it would be a bit unusual to do the following, there may be some merit in the idea of a brief joint press conference on the opening day of the talks. Nothing would be said about substantive status questions, but this would provide an opportunity to build a MNS story on the conference arrangements, agenda, participants, etc. The purpose of this exercise would be to help dispell further criticism of the "secretiveness" of the talks.

c) At the end of the talks there should be, as previously, a joint communique. Hopefully the Palau communique will be more detailed with regard to areas of agreement than was the case in Hana. I would also strongly urge that the full transcript of the Palau talks be released under cover of the joint communique. This would forestall the kind of speculative stories that appeared after the Hana talks. Senator Salii appears to favor this approach.

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d) Consideration might be given to a joint press conference at the conclusion of the talks. However, the final decision on such a conference and its "terms of reference" should be withheld until toward the close of the talks.

e) Actual press coverage. I am reasonably certain that the only reporters likely to be present at any time will be Jon Andersen from MNS and possibly Mike Malone. The latter would be representing the Micronesia Star, Pacific Daily News, and the Honolulu newspapers. Neither are likely to be present for the entire period of the talks but probably will be there for the opening and closing days.

Conference Arrangements-- Senator Salii is informed on the tentative requirements for the U. S. Delegation as given to Carl Heine by me. You may ask him whether he has any questions or problems about those requirements. You might also confirm that one Delegation Officer (Frank Crawford?) will go to Palau several days early to assist Carl Heine with respect to arrangements for the U. S. Delegation. Finally, you might confirm that the U. S. Delegation (as he has suggested) will arrive in Palau from Guam on April 1. To the extent you presently can, you might outline to him the likely composition of the U. S. Delegation. This would be in the main to draw him out on the possible presence of their own "consultants."

Possible Use of Sub-Committees -- Per our conversation this weekend, I do believe it would be useful to suggest the establishment of sub-committees to work out the "nuts and bolts" arrangements with respect to issues where there are broad areas of agreement. This would be particularly useful with respect to land arrangements, financial arrangements, transitional steps, application and enforcement of U. S. law, U. S. services, and other key issues. I am inclined to think Senator Salii would favor such arrangements, though he would have to check back with his committee before providing any firm commitment.

Participation of Executive Branch or Other Observers-- Without pressing for such participation, you probably should ask whether there will be any observers present from the TTPI executive branch, or from the district legislatures. I doubt this will be the case, but there is no harm in asking the question.

Draft Compacts of Association-- For reasons we have already discussed, an early "tabling" of a draft compact is to be avoided. To head off such an action, I would suggest that you urge (now and again in Palau on the eve of the talks), that the compacts not be surfaced until after a full discussion of all the issues. If the opportunity arises, you might again thank him for providing to you an advance copy of his draft compact and note that it is still being studied,

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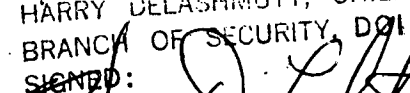
and is being taken into careful consideration in our own preparation of a suggested draft compact. Following on that statement, you might, in an offhand way, ask whether any significant changes were written into the draft compact in Palau which we should take into consideration.

Agenda-- I would think it desirable to avoid any serious discussion of the agenda at this time other than to state that you will wish to discuss this at a later date when our own thinking is more firm. In the meantime, you would appreciate having any comments or suggestions he might wish to make.

Conference Sessions and Hospitality-- You may wish to ask whether Salii thinks it would be possible to have more frequent plenary sessions than was the case in Hana (this assumes that many of our own position statements can be prepared in Washington in advance of the Palau talks). If the opportunity arises in connection with a discussion of the frequency of working sessions, you may wish to make as tactfully as possible the point that Palauan hospitality will be appreciated, but you hope that it won't be overdone. He may ask whether the U. S. Delegation would like to take any organized trips on a weekend to some other part of Palau. If he does do this, you might state that a trip to the Rock Islands, or to some part of Babeldaob Island, would be appreciated -- hopefully together with the Status Committee.

Absorption of Costs of Conference-- You may wish to mention that you understand (through me) that the Status Committee has had some budget problems but that the Committee still anticipates picking up the hotel and meal tabs for the U. S. Delegation for at least the first week of the talks. You could ask whether this arrangement still stands, or whether it might be better for the U. S. Delegation to absorb all of its own costs given the other financial commitments that will have to be met by the Committee (i.e. legal fees).

Marianas and Marshallese Separatism-- This is skating close to status substance, but you might point out that, if the aspirations of the Marianas District remain unchanged, it would be helpful to have from the Status Committee further information on Marianas sentiment, together with proposals on the mechanics for getting together with the Marianas to discuss their future. This will provide an opportunity to note that you have seen reports of Marshallese separatist sentiment at the recent Congressional session. You could ask him how serious this sentiment appears to be (he will brush it off), and note that we are concerned over the matter: "While our position remains that we cannot and will not force any district into a relationship it does not desire, we do very much hope that a common status arrangement can be worked out for at least the five districts other than the Marianas." Salii probably suspects that I, during the Congressional session in Palau, was deliberately stimulating this

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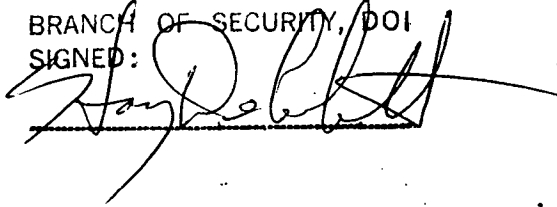
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Marshallese sentiment. In these circumstances it would be well to mention that you have had reports of the separatist sentiment from me, based on conversations initiated by various members of the Marshallese Delegation. You could state that, though Dorrance in response to questioning had to affirm the U. S. would not force any district into a status arrangement it did not favor, he also made every effort to discourage this particular separatist sentiment on the part of some of the Marshallese.

Transitional Steps to Self-Government-- Without going into details on our thinking about transitional steps, you might point out that (assuming we reach a basic agreement in principle at Palau on Micronesia's future status) we will have proposals on transitional steps to that status and hope the Status Committee also will have given some thought to the subject with a view to making suggestions and proposals of their own. You could again bring up the sub-committee idea at this point and suggest that this would be an ideal subject for the sub-committee approach.

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