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rch 8, 1972

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TO: Ambassador Williams  
FROM: John C. Dorrance  
SUBJECT: Micronesian Tactics at the Palau Talks

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You requested a memorandum on likely Micronesian tactics at the Palau talks. This will be a "once-over lightly" memo as I need more time to do the job properly, and to spell out in detail the positions likely to be taken on all issues. However, the following thoughts are perhaps of primary importance.

a) Generally speaking I believe the Status Committee will, as in Hana, speak with one voice, i.e. through Senator Salii. An exception may be that of the Marianas representatives speaking out on their district's aspirations.

b) As in Hana, we will probably wind up doing most of the talking, and the Micronesians will be doing most of the listening (a true "give and take" posture -- we give, they take). Nevertheless, there will be more true negotiation, and we can expect compromises on some of the positions taken at Hana.

c) Though we hope it will be possible to "dispose" of the Marianas question early in the talks -- in the sense of having a formal expression of their aspirations and Committee endorsement of separate talks, I doubt that this will be possible. I am inclined to believe that the Status Committee, including the Marianas representatives, will maintain that the broader question of the future of the other districts must be handled first.

d) It seems likely that, as in Hana, the Micronesians will attempt to speak first on the first day and set the tone for the talks. Their initial remarks may include a statement to the effect that there is no point in discussing other issues until the U. S. accepts the Micronesian principles on termination and sovereignty. The statement could be tough, but in some degree will also be designed to set up bargaining positions, and could offer some concessions on secondary issues.

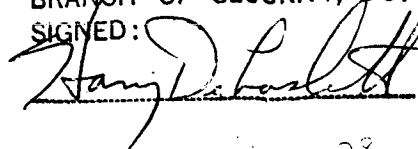
e) There is also the risk that the Micronesians will attempt to table at the outset their draft compact with a view to utilizing the draft as a framework for the talks.

The above actions could create enormous problems for us. As an example, our requirement to settle foreign affairs and defense issues prior to consideration of termination could become an impossible goal. Too, for reasons of pride and face, any early surfacing of a draft compact would make difficult later changes of language. These are the only two of our problems.

These circumstances strongly argue for settling outside of the conference room as many of the issues as possible through private talks between Ambassador Williams, Salii, and Silk. As an example, it seems clear that a tradeoff on the

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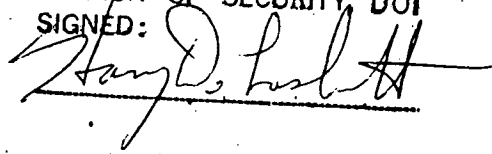
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foreign affairs/defense and termination questions will be necessary -- but the sequential discussion of these issues in the conference room will make that difficult. In other words, settle out of court in advance, and then go through the motions of making statements for the record in the conference room. Equally, it is to convince Salli and his Committee, in advance of the plenary sessions, of the importance of settling all the major outstanding issues before formally surfacing a draft compact. I am reasonably confident this can be done. On the Marianas question we can only hope that pressure on the Marianas representatives in advance of the Palau talks will convince them of the importance of an early statement of their position -- perhaps in the opening statement of the Status Committee. But I am not among those who believe this is essential. I see no risk whatsoever that concessions granted to the other districts will weaken the Marianas' resolve to have separate and close association with the United States.

Aside from the above suggestions for attempting to forestall various problems, there is also the possibility of seeking to speak first to set the tone for the talks. We could argue that it is our turn -- the Micronesians spoke first at Hana. But in the main, I am inclined to think it is in our interests to let the Micronesian speak first -- in order to have a better reading of their order of priorities, and of the areas of potential compromise and potential disagreement. They may have some surprises in store for us with respect to possible compromises. I have sensed that the Micronesians feel that it is their turn to make a few concessions. Perhaps we should be careful to give them the opportunity of doing this before we concede anything else.

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