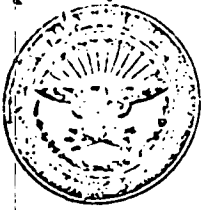


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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

JCSM-477-72
13 November 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Micronesian Status Negotiations--Position
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Independence
Option for Future Status Negotiations (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to the record of the sixth round of Micronesian Status Negotiations held in Hawaii from 28 September to 6 October 1972, at which time the Micronesian delegation advised that it desired to consider an Independence Option along with Free Association during the negotiation process. Since the US delegation did not have the authority to discuss independence, a recess was called in order to develop a US position on this subject.

2. (U) It is expected that the Department of Defense will soon be requested by the Under Secretaries Committee of the National Security Council to comment on an Independence Option. Therefore, it is considered timely to forward the views and position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on this important issue.

3. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff continue to believe that the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) is an area of high strategic interest and importance to the United States. Therefore, in considering an Independence Option, the strategic value of the area should be the primary consideration. Because of its strategic location, under any future status arrangement, the United States requires unequivocal guarantees of denial of military presence to all other nations, US military basing rights, free access and use, and termination procedures as specified below:

a. Denial of a foreign military presence is the foremost requirement for the indefinite future and must be absolutely guaranteed. A third nation military presence without US approval cannot be tolerated.

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TAB C

Classified by Director
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED AT 100
YEAR INTERVALS
EXEMPT FROM DECLASSIFICATION ON DECEMBER 31, 1980

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b. The rights and powers agreed to in Title III of the Draft Compact of Free Association with respect to military land requirements and their uninhibited use are mandatory. These include such provisions as free access to Micronesian lands, airfields, and harbors and freedom of navigation and overflight throughout all areas in order to meet minimum US military requirements.

c. The Micronesians must be prohibited from specifying or implying any preconditions of type, quantity, or category of weapon systems or weapons carried, used, or stored in or on aircraft, ships, or facilities in the area. In addition, there must be no limitations on the numbers or mix of US personnel or the tactical employment of weapon systems or personnel.

d. Termination procedures that would protect US interests and insure that defense interests and military basing rights would survive any future changes in the relationship between the United States and the Micronesians must be assured.

Maintaining the status quo or establishing a concept of Free Association as envisioned in the titles of the draft compact would guarantee and insure that the basic US interests outlined above are protected. In itself, the concept of Free Association achieves the purpose of establishing a compromise between independence and commonwealth status, while insuring that US responsibilities for foreign affairs and defense so important for this strategic area are preserved.

4. (S) Independence for Micronesia would be inconsistent with maintaining any meaningful agreement on basing options. The very nature of Micronesia with its sparse, separated population enclaves leads to areas of localized opinion and development of self-serving concepts. Micronesia is economically underdeveloped and politically immature. A premature granting of independence may result in international criticism of the United States for lack of wisdom in administering the TTPI. A newly independent nation can easily resort to early abrogation of treaties and agreements for near-term gains. US agreements with the Micronesians not supported by a US presence protecting its prerogatives are unlikely to survive the commercial and military exploitation by nations and organizations whose interests may not coincide with those of Micronesia and the United States. Events in Cuba, Panama, and the Philippines demonstrate that agreements made after these nations were established as independent by the United States are often modified to the detriment of the United States.

5. (S) Micronesia now provides an area for defense in depth for the United States and would continue to do so under Free Association. Creation of an independent nation would imply a US withdrawal, with a resultant power vacuum. The following adverse impacts could occur from a strategic point of view:

a. The strategic posture of the United States would be significantly degraded in a large portion of the Western Pacific. Defense in depth of the United States would be degraded.

b. Nations with interests divergent from those of the United States are likely to encroach on Micronesian territory and commercially and militarily exploit Micronesian vulnerability.

c. In spite of treaty arrangements, the United States might be denied access to and use of military facilities, land areas, ocean areas, and the airspace above. The planned and projected establishment of US military bases would be jeopardized. If base rights were denied, an important area for relocation of some US facilities and forces would be eliminated should US Forces be compelled to leave Japan and the Philippines.

d. Defense of Guam and Tinian would be more difficult. Bases for unfriendly forces could be established near Guam and Tinian. The sea lines of communication between Australia and Japan would become more vulnerable.

e. Micronesia may follow the lead of other island nations, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, and adopt the Archipelago Concept, claiming that vast areas of the Pacific comprise territorial or inland waters of Micronesia.

6. (C) It is the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that, for the present, independence for Micronesia is an unsatisfactory option. In order to preserve US strategic interests in the TTPI, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the Department of Defense take a strong position that the Micronesians not be offered an Independence Option and that negotiations toward Free Association be pursued.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



MARTIN G. COLLADAY
Major General, USAF
Vice Director, Joint Staff