

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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EXCISE

Memorandum CONFIDENTIAL

THRU: EA - Mr. Sneider
EA/ANP - Leo J. Moser
EA/ANP - John C. Dorrance
SUBJECT: Micronesian Status Options

DATE: May 23, 1974

On the attached you asked what could be done to head off Micronesian political education efforts advertising more than one status option -- options other than free association.

As a practical matter, there is little that can be done at this point. In the first instance, political education is primarily a Micronesian function; we do not have U.S. personnel in Micronesia who could conduct any kind of political education effort. More importantly, the TPI administration has from the outset educated Micronesians to assume that someday they must choose between a new relationship with the US and independence. This has been done for a generation now through speeches by US officials, informally in discussions with Micronesians at all levels, and through the classroom in schools -- including textbooks.

Most who have served in Micronesia are convinced that for the US to announce at this late date that there will be no independence option could lead to political disaster. Most Micronesians do not want independence, but do assume they have the right to consider and reject it. (In two years in Micronesia I never met a Micronesian who did not assume an independence option -- although there is and was considerable debate on the character of independence.) Any announcement that Micronesians will not have this opportunity will assuredly result in increased sentiment for independence; Micronesians are just as contrary as anyone else when it comes to being told that you can't have something.

My own fear is that, should there not be an independence option, the issues in Micronesia will no longer be the character of Micronesia's external relationship with the US, and of internal relationships -- but rather Micronesia's basic "right" to independence..

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Ambassador Williams is fully aware of the content of the political education program, and of the concerns expressed above.]

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The surprising element in all of this is that no one (even in DOD) believes that an independence option would be exercised by the Micronesians. Many of us familiar with Micronesia are convinced that the vote for free association would be higher in a plebiscite including an independence option than it would be in a "yes-no" referendum.

Ambassador Williams is presently going forward with the "yes-no" business on the basis of that is what Senator Salii has suggested. I have strong suspicions of Salii's motives in this area and smell trouble. In any event, our decisions on this sort of issue should be based on what is right and in our own best interest -- not on what Salii wants.

To sum up, any way you cut the present situation we are in trouble -- and mainly for reasons which appear to be very short-sighted.

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5/14/74

TO: EA - Mr. Snieder
THRU: EA/ANP - Leo J. Moser
FROM: EA/ANP - John C. Dorrance
SUBJECT: Micronesian Status Options

Attached is a beautiful illustration of the TTPI way of doing business, i.e. as usual the left hand knoweth not what the right hand is up to. While Ambassador Williams presses forward with the concept of a "yes-no" plebiscite on free association, our political education program in Micronesia is going all-out to explain that there are four options to choose between and consider: status quo, commonwealth, free association, and independence. See attached radio transcripts. A stream of leader grantees from Micronesia this past week confirmed that the Micronesian public at a minimum anticipates a choice between free association and independence.

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