

Talking Points on Plebiscite

- I have listened closely to your views on the form the plebiscite should take.
- I know that a majority of you hold the view that the ballot should take the form of yes or no for the Covenant.
- I understand the view of others that the ballot should offer other choices including independence or union with the rest of Micronesia.
- You know I have often stated that the termination of trusteeships in the past have followed many different paths.
- Only three trusteeships were terminated after a United Nations observed plebiscite. These were British Togoland which became a part of Ghana after a plebiscite; British Cameroons which was fragmented into two areas, one becoming part of Nigeria and the other part of the Cameroons; Western Samoa which by referendum asked the people to approve its constitution and later by plebiscite to approve the date set for accession to independence.
- Seven trusteeships terminated or will be terminated without a plebiscite. These are Tanganyika, French Cameroons, French Togoland, Nauru, Somaliland, Ruanda-Burundi and, sometime this year, Papua-New Guinea. In two of these, the United Nations supervised elections to a local national assembly in lieu of a plebiscite. These were Ruanda-Burundi, which fragmented before independence and French Togoland which refused to become associated with its mini-state neighbor, Dahomey.
- In one case, British Cameroons, the voters in the northern half turned down of joining with Northern Nigeria the choice offered/preferring to make no decision at that time. Similar choices were then offered a year later after the northern and southern parts of the Cameroon were separated from the then independent Nigeria.

The north at this time voted to join independent Nigeria and the south voted to join the now independent French Cameroons.

- These cases show that trusteeships may be terminated in various ways, with or without a plebiscite; and even after a plebiscite draws inconclusive results, the Trusteeship Agreement may be terminated by simply running the plebiscite again.
- The United States Government has the responsibility for making sure the Northern Marianas freely exercise a genuine act of self-determination.
- The U. S. Government as administering authority must maintain control over the date and content of the plebiscite. Your views on both these questions, however, will be carefully considered and forcefully presented.
- Our mission to the United Nations believes that there will be difficulty in obtaining a visiting mission to observe the plebiscite unless it is made clear in the political education process that there are other alternatives to joining the United States.
- I believe there are various kinds of formulas for the ballot which can both provide a clear choice on the ballot and satisfy any political concerns you have.
- As I have said many times, the Trusteeship Agreement can be ended in many ways. However, I would like you to recognize some of the possible limitations the United States may have in making a decision at this time. Your views on how this might be accomplished and their pros and cons would therefore be most welcome and appreciated. I can assure you that they will be given the most careful consideration in our deliberations. We have not yet made up our own minds on the subject.