

03
57

X-50127

SEP 11 1975

PART I - Major Issue Briefing Papers

Political Status Negotiations - Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (

Since 1969 the United States Government has been engaged in negotiations with the TTPI for a future political status. The negotiations are being conducted by the Ambassador Franklin Hayden Williams, the President's personal representative. Because of its responsibility for the administration of the civil government of the Trust Territory, this Department plays a significant role in providing support to the Ambassador.

Separate negotiations have been conducted with the Northern Mariana Islands District and were concluded with the execution of an agreement called a "Covenant" under which the Northern Mariana Islands District has agreed to join in political union with the United States as a Commonwealth. A referendum of the citizens was held on June 17, 1975 to determine the wishes of the people. They opted for Commonwealth status by a 70% majority. The Covenant is now before the U.S. Congress for approval. The House has approved. Hearings in the Senate have just been concluded. If Congress approves the Covenant a separate administration for the Northern Mariana Islands will have to be established. There will be extensive departmental involvement in this matter.

Political status negotiations (at the moment not too active) continue with the other five administrative districts (Yap, Truk, Palau, Ponape and the Marshalls). A referendum to informally test the views of the people of Micronesia regarding their desires for future political status was held in July. The results are confusing and inconclusive, options ranging from status quo to independence. In the meantime, a Constitutional Convention to develop a proposed constitution for Micronesia is in process (the convention presently is in recess). If and when a proposed constitution is developed, it will be submitted to the people of Micronesia for approval.

Copied from original material in the Georgetown Univ. Library

Not to be reproduced without specific permission in writing.

17-410000