

OFFICE FOR MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

October 22, 1975

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MEMCON

Participants: Virginia Hart, Assistant Director, Communications, Interior
Colleen Greer

Date : October 22, 1975

Subject : Column by Holmes Alexander, McNaught Syndicate

I went up to see Mrs. Hart after finding out nothing substantive from the National Press Club, except that Mr. Alexander has moved out of the Press Club Building and lists his office as his residence address: 922 25th Street, N.W. (333-7606).

Ms. Hart related that Mr. Alexander had been writing for a long while and that he was in his 70's. She classified him as a "straight-line" conservative in the same vein as J.J. Kilpatrick and presented "isolationist" or "non-involvement" theories. She found out that Mr. Alexander, during the time Goldwater was running for President, was a leading exponent of Goldwater's platform. Ms. Hart's informant made the comment that Holmes Alexander was "right of Genghis Khan".

The McNaught Syndicate is carried in small-town papers in conservative areas. Ms. Hart did say that it was, of course, up to the individual paper editors to decide whether to carry a specific column. She thought that Indianapolis and the "Phoenix Gazette" might be examples of areas in which the McNaught Syndicate columns were carried.

Holmes Alexander is a member of the press entitled to admission to the Congressional galleries.

CG/eg

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HOLMES ALEXANDER

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A WARNING ON MARIANAS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — I once had a wise friend who handed me a cartoon showing a young fellow miserably pushing a baby carriage, with the caption "The man who wouldn't take no for an answer." If I could find a clipping of the graphic warning against headlong marriage, I would try to get it posted in the U.S. Senate gym. It would say "Don't" to the foolhardy notion of union between the United States and the trust territory called Northern Marianas.

The Senate was on the verge of ratifying the agreement last July. If it hadn't been for deadlock over the New Hampshire Senate seat, there might have been wedlock with an Oriental province in the Far Pacific. The unwarranted August vacation proved an unexpected blessing, and today the Senate luckily is behaving like a prospective bridegroom with second thoughts.

Few Americans noticed during the stressful Nixon years that the White House effectively usurped control from the Interior Department of Micronesia — the huge sprinkle of islands between Hawaii and the Asian mainland. Nixon appointed "Ambassador" F. Hayda Williams, actually a CIA plant, to a trick task. Williams was to bring about the separation of the Marianas (Saipan and Tinian, just north of Guam) from the other islands which the United States has been administering for the UN Security Council since the end of World War II.

After a suspicious looking majority of 78 percent in the June plebiscite, the Northern Marianas seemed headed for commonwealth status, somewhat Puerto Rico style, with the American Union. The House of Representatives, with about 25 members on the floor, consented. The Senate committee on Insular and Interior Affairs informally agreed and was set to mark up the bill this month of October.

Fortunately, two nonmembers of the committee, Byrd of Virginia and Hart of Colorado, raised objections to the mismatch between a remote Oriental dependency and our troubled Republic.

Freshman Sen. Gary Hart, 38, took the neo-isolationist line. The justification, if any, of acquiring Saipan-Tinian was for bomb ranges and air bases. Hart is organically opposed to military expansion, and this accounted for his opposition. Sen. Harry Byrd, a Navy veteran of World War II and a stalwart for preparedness, could not see the Northern Marianas as worth the added expense and responsibility that no with commonwealth. Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), formerly in the Foreign Service, expressed strong skepticism of the venture.

These three Senators formed sufficient intervention to prevent any absent-minded passage of the unifying legislation. But if the measure is soundly defeated, it will be because philosophical demerers to the proposition found audience and agreement around the country, like this:

Commonwealth is a euphemism for colonialism, and very distasteful to Americans. Dr. José A. Cabranes, native of Puerto Rico and law professor at Rutgers, delivered a well-worded opinion, reprinted in the Congressional Record. He made the point that the American "empire" still exists in foreign minds and that there is no substitute for self-government.

Recognition of the breakaway Marianas is unpleasantly remindful of the Panama acquisition of 1903 by Theodore Roosevelt. Highly respected Edwin Canham, editor emeritus of the Christian Science Monitor, served as commissioner for the plebiscite. But he subsequently wrote in the Monitor that the U.S. should not "divide and rule," and that all districts of Micronesia should be helped to their preferred kind of government.

Disapproval of this quasi-annexation has been expressed in UN circles. Senator Pell warned against providing any excuse for "charges of colonialism and imperialism throughout the international community." Northern Marianas, USA, looked like a sure bet last summer. It has lost much political and public approval since then.

(McNaught Syndicate, Inc.)

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