

Marianas - US Congress 1975

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Marianas
US Congress*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
Old Executive Office Building
Room 361
Washington, D.C. 20506

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November 4, 1975

MEMORANDUM

To : Robert S. Ingersoll, Deputy Secretary of State
From : Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, The President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations
Subject : Question of Independence Option for the Marianas and Micronesia

HW

The question of an independence option for the Marianas or for the rest of Micronesia may come up tomorrow in the hearings on the Marianas Covenant. In view of the fact the negotiations with the COM are still in train and in view of my instructions from the President which limit me to offer at best a qualified independence option, I hope that whatever answers are given will keep these two factors in mind. Two sample Questions and Answers are attached.

The subject of independence for Micronesia has been discussed for a long time within the Executive Branch, and differences between Departments on this issue have gone to the President for resolution on more than one occasion. My existing instructions do not authorize me to offer an unqualified independence option to the TTPI. I have been authorized at my discretion to state that (1) the U.S. has not ruled out independence as an option and (2) to offer independence, only if tactically necessary and circumscribed by the requirement that a prior agreement will continue to deny Micronesia to the military forces of any third country and that the U.S. rights to the Kwajalein Missile Range would continue for their duration.

To date the Chairman and members of the Joint Committee on Future Status have never formally or informally requested the U.S. Government to negotiate an independence option and in fact have declined an invitation to discuss independence on a number of occasions. The official position of the Congress of Micronesia and the JCFS is that they continue to hold to Free Association as their preferred status, and Senator Salii has held to the position that a discussion of independence is "premature and diversionary".

Nevertheless I believe that we should be prepared to answer questions re U.S. policy toward independence and would suggest that we limit any

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answers on this subject to the following points:

- The Micronesians have never formally requested an independence option.
- The U.S. has not ruled out independence as an option.
- The U.S. has not refused to talk about independence as an option.
- The U.S. is willing to discuss an independence option in the future if that be the wish of the people of Micronesia.

Attachment

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- Q. Is the U.S. obligated to offer independence as an option to the TTPI?
- A. The U.S. certainly never has ruled out that option, we have never refused to talk about it, and we remain perfectly willing to discuss it if independence were the wish of the people of Micronesia. However, neither the COM nor the JCFS has brought it up for formal discussions or negotiations.
- Q. Would U.S. refusal to negotiate for Micronesian independence be a violation of the Trusteeship Agreement or other international agreements?
- A. Since that is a technical, legal question, I think that it would best be handled by our providing to the Committee our answer in writing as soon as possible after the Hearing.