

Jan 16, 1976

TALKING PAPER

SUBJECT: Northern Marianas Covenant (H.J. Res 549)

- I strongly urge the Senate to approve the Covenant because it:
 - Reflects the political status so strongly desired by the people of the Northern Marianas. (supportive political environment).
 - Helps us to maintain a forward defense and early warning capability from nearby Guam (major installations already in place).
 - Provides the strong federal relationship necessary to protect our influence over such matters as radio frequency allocations, control of air traffic, and demarcation of territorial waters.
 - Authorizes long-term lease of 18,182 acres of land which is needed;
 - To support land intensive functions which are apt to become important in the years ahead (training, exercises, storage of war reserve material).
 - As a limited hedge against unforeseen changes in our base structure elsewhere in the Western Pacific (socio-environmental pressures, future consolidation or replacement of facilities, constraints on operational use).
 - To support unforeseen contingencies from U.S. soil, if necessary. (foreign political constraints in a crisis).
- We can do things from Guam and the Northern Marianas, which we cannot do elsewhere.
 - Support strategic deployments (POLARIS and SAC-B-52's).
 - Provide intelligence on PRC and USSR forces and, at the same time, support units and activities involved in these operations from U.S. soil (VQ-1 recce squadron and VP detachments at NAS).
 - Enhance our capability to use mobile forces, based in U.S., to reinforce our position in WESTPAC, without committing these forces to bases in foreign countries (POLARIS, SAC, rapid reaction forces).
 - Develop a flexible contingency stockpile which is not earmarked in advance for specific country recipients (NSD, NAVMAG).
- Most importantly, this Covenant gives us the additional flexibility we need to assure a strong Pacific defense in the uncertain years which lie ahead. Uncertainty is our biggest problem:

- Cannot predict what the Asian policy environment will be 5 or 10 years from (China, USSR, Japan, lesser nations).
- Cannot react instantly to changes in this policy environment. (Long lead times in the acquisition of land and facilities).
- Must provide a strong Pacific defense whatever the policy environment happens to be.
- Need to plan now to achieve the flexibility we will need in the 1980's and beyond.
- Deferring or delaying approval of the Covenant will, at best, drive the cost up and alienate many of its supporters; at worst, it may drive the Northern Marianas to seek a less desirable solution and make future defense arrangements impossible.
- In summary, we should not judge this Covenant on the basis of what we are doing today, but on the basis of our need to maintain a strong Pacific defense for the indefinite future, with or without allied support.

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