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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

## NSC UNDER SECRETARIES COMMITTEE

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NSC-U/DM-98-B

October 4, 1973

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Negotiations on the Future Political Status  
of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

There is attached a study, prepared under Ambassador Haydn Williams' direction, concerning the continuing negotiations on Micronesia's future political status.

As approved by you, our objective is to achieve a political relationship of free association between the United States and Micronesia, less the Mariana Islands. (The latter district is seeking to become an integral part of the American political family.)

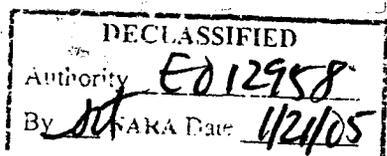
The study identifies two issues on which your decisions are now required.

Issue One: Should Ambassador Williams be authorized to offer Micronesia the option of independence during the next stage of negotiations (pages 4-5 of the summary).

-- Ambassador Williams and the Department of Interior recommend that the Ambassador be given discretionary authority to offer a qualified status of independence, as an option to be included in the plebiscite which will ultimately be required on Micronesia's future status. They believe that the flexibility to use this authority (if, in the Ambassador's judgement, required) will improve prospects for achieving a stable relationship of free association. The independence option would be qualified only by retention of US basing rights in the Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands, and by denial of access to Micronesia by third countries for military purposes.

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-- The Department of State believes that qualified independence must definitely be included as an option in a future plebiscite, if an enduring and stable relationship of free association is to be achieved and US obligations are to be discharged. State agrees that the timing and manner of initial discussion of this option should be decided by Ambassador Williams. (Alternative language in the draft instruction reflects this concept.)

-- The Department of Defense recommends that the independence option not be authorized at this time. In its view, there is a remote possibility that the Micronesian voters would choose independence, instead of a relationship of free association. Defense considers this an unacceptable risk. There has been overemphasis on the external pressures to offer independence, which tends to subordinate the underlying principle that Micronesia is strategically important to the United States in maintaining a balance among the powers in the Pacific.

-- The Attorney General concludes that Ambassador Williams should be authorized to offer the independence option at this time. If qualified independence were not offered and the free association option were rejected as a result, the US apparently would face a steadily deteriorating situation in the islands. The approach recommended by Ambassador Williams seems the best course open at this time to protect US defense and other interests.

Issue Two: Should Ambassador Williams be authorized to agree, if necessary, to a moratorium on unilateral termination of the compact of free association within the range of ten to fifteen years (pages 8-9 of the summary).

-- The Department of Defense and Ambassador Williams believe there should be no compromise on the current US position for a moratorium of no less than 15 years.

-- The Departments of State and Interior agree the Ambassador should make a determined effort to win Micro-

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nesian acceptance for a moratorium period of at least 15 years. The two departments also believe, however, that the prospects for obtaining Micronesian agreement to adequate arrangements for the survival of US defense interests (in the event the Micronesians were to exercise their right of termination of the compact) are closely tied to the length of the moratorium on unilateral termination. Thus, they recommend that the Ambassador be given the flexibility to negotiate a moratorium in the range of 10 to 15 years.

-- The Attorney General believes that a decision on the moratorium may be premature at this time. More information needs to be developed concerning the effect of the length of the moratorium on the attractiveness of the free association option, and on the prospects for achieving a long survivability period.

The study also discusses the requirement for an ultimate act of self-determination, through a plebiscite in Micronesia, prior to the termination of the trusteeship, and the appropriate elements of such an act as viewed by members of the United Nations Security Council (pages 10-11 of the summary).

The foregoing recommendations as well as the study's re-endorsement of US negotiation positions included in Ambassador Williams' current instructions, are embodied in new "Draft Instructions for the President's Personal Representative" (pages 13-16 of the summary). The Under Secretaries Committee recommends that these instructions be approved in a form consistent with your decisions on Issues One and Two above, and that they be formally issued to Ambassador Williams.

  
Kenneth Rush  
Chairman

Attachment:

Study on Micronesia's future political status

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