

7/24/69

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Guam: Your Meeting with Micronesian Leaders

1. You will have a 15-minute meeting with Micronesian leaders and the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific, at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 26, in Guam. A list of the suggested participants is at Tab A.

2. The Setting: You approved an action program in early May, intended to improve the administration of the Trust Territory and to persuade the Micronesians that their interests lie in coming into a permanent association with the United States.

An inter-agency committee led by Interior got the program underway very quickly.

- It has organized a special task force of experts in health, education, engineering, resources development and administration, to make recommendations on programs for the Trust Territory.
- Arrangements have been made for Defense to provide several small construction teams and small vessels, to be assigned to projects which the Micronesians themselves want.
- It has assigned surveyors from Interior to clear up the confusion of Micronesian land titles.
- Work is proceeding on legislation which will permit freer Micronesian travel to the US and will bring Micronesia within the US customs area.

Most important, a schedule has been set for the development of a statute governing the future relationship between Micronesia and the United States. About September 1, six Micronesian leaders will come to Washington to consult with the coordinating committee and with

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Congress. (They have yet to be selected by the Congress of Micronesia, but will probably include most or all of the Micronesians you will see on Saturday.) A proposed statute should be ready by mid-autumn for the Micronesian leaders to take back to Micronesia.

A referendum is planned for 1970. It will offer the Micronesians an opportunity to express their views on the statute but it would not offer the option of voting for free association or independence.

If approved, the proposed statute would be submitted to Congress. Secretary Hickel has obtained promises of cooperation from Senators Jackson and Allott and Congressman Aspinall.

The action program has already begun to show results. A Micronesian district legislator in June asked that the Trusteeship Council of the UN defer its consideration of Micronesian land problems, because he believed that Washington's new attitude will enable the Micronesians to settle the problems.

The problem presently before us is to persuade the Micronesians that they themselves should seek a permanent association with the United States -- and to do so without offering the Micronesians a plebiscite involving any options other than a permanent relationship with the US. Our action program started almost too late, and the Micronesian Future Political Status Commission (which the Congress of Micronesia established in the absence of any action by the US Government) was ready last spring to recommend that Micronesia seek "free association" with the US -- a concept too loose and vague for practical execution.

After intensive politicking by Interior, the Commission is beginning to recognize the difficulties this formula will pose. However, it will not make its formal recommendation to the Congress of Micronesia until this week, and we do not yet know precisely what its language will be. We expect the Congress of Micronesia to accept the report and to pass a resolution calling upon the US Government to "consider the future political status of the Trust Territory." If it works out this way, we shall have a formal invitation to go ahead with consideration of an Organic Act governing our future relations with Micronesia. We think it will work out this way, but we have no guarantee that the Micronesians will not begin to chafe at the limits being placed on their freedom of choice, either now or in a few months when the discussion of their future status gets down to the unpleasant particulars.



3. They Will Raise:

- The Micronesian leaders will wish to tell you of the recent decision of the Congress of Micronesia -- if in fact it has addressed the problem by Saturday.
- They will probably seek assurances that the new interest of the US in Micronesia is real and continuing.
- They will be interested in a continuing political relationship with the US, but they may hope for an arrangement which would give the Micronesians all the advantages (special tax status, control of their own affairs, US subsidy, etc.).
- They may raise specific issues on which they seek redress.

I expect, however, that they will be rather tongue-tied in making the presentation.

4. What You Want: Your visit to Guam is a heaven-sent opportunity to underline for the Micronesians that the American President really is aware of them and interested in their well-being. Your purpose will be:

- to further their conviction that a permanent relationship with the US is in their best interest.
- to reassure them that the recent burst of US interest is not a momentary thing.
- to convey to them your belief that the process of working out a statute governing our future relations should be a two-way affair, in which Micronesia's interests will be well represented.

5. Points to Stress:

- You are delighted that your travel plans permitted a stop in Guam, where you could see the Micronesians. You are sorry that time did not permit you to visit the Trust Territory itself.
- After taking office, you found that the affairs of Micronesia had been allowed to take a back seat to other problems in Washington for too long.

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- You hope that the new economic and administrative improvements undertaken in the Trust Territory will further the well-being of the people. You know that the work has just begun. You are sure that Mr. Johnston has consulted with the Micronesian leaders in formulating these plans, and you hope that the Micronesians will continue to give their advice as to what is needed.
- The program which has been undertaken in Micronesia should be paralleled by changes in the US law to provide for closer relations between the US and Micronesia.
- You understand that the Micronesian Political Status Commission (Note: its Chairman, Mr. Salii is one of the participants in the meeting) has given much thought to Micronesia's future. (Note: Check with me or Mr. Holdridge as to developments this week. If the Political Status Commission made a recommendation favorable to our desires, and particularly if the Congress of Micronesia accepted the report and called for the US Government to consider the future status of the Trust Territory, this would provide a graceful point at which to congratulate the leaders and promise that the US Government will take its trust seriously.)
- This Micronesian interest underlines the need to proceed with our own thinking as to the Trust Territories' future, and you attach great importance to having Micronesian participation in our planning.
- You understand that several Micronesian leaders have been invited by Secretary Hickel to come to Washington to participate in the framing of the statute which will give effect to this resolution by the Congress of Micronesia. You wish to add your invitation to that of Secretary Hickel and to welcome the visitors to Washington. (Note: Refer to the "resolution" only if it has been passed.)
- Setting up a new political compact is not an exercise to be undertaken lightly. You know that there will be much difficult work in arranging for a mutually desirable relationship. You are confident that the work will be done in the spirit of cooperation, and you hope that they will look upon the completed document as their own.
- Your meeting today has necessarily been brief, but you look upon it as the beginnings of an exchange which will result in a beneficial and long term relationship.

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6. Brief biographies of the Micronesian leaders whom you will be meeting are at Tab B.
7. A brief background paper on the current political relationship between Micronesia and the US is at Tab C.

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