

②

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION FOR THE FILE

EXECUTIVE

DATE 3/28/75

ST 51
PE 2-1
FG 11
FG 6-6
Canham, Erwin
Williams, Amb. F. Haydn
FG 1-2

~~LETTER, MEMO, ETC.~~

TO: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: JOHN A. FROEBE, JR.

SUBJECT: Proposed Appointment of a Commissioner to Conduct
the Plebiscite in the Northern Marianas

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

CORRESPONDENCE FILED CENTRAL FILES - CONFIDENTIAL FILE

SPECIAL FILES

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

FYI:
1972 Mr. Walker
C.F.
ST 51

CONFIDENTIAL GDS

ACTION

March 28, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM:

JOHN A. FROEBE, JR. *CAF*

SUBJECT:

Proposed Appointment of a
Commissioner to Conduct the
Plebiscite in the Northern Marianas

At Tab I is a draft memorandum from you to the President which attaches a letter to him from his Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams. Williams recommends that the President establish a position of Plebiscite Commissioner to conduct a plebiscite in the Northern Marianas on the Covenant we signed recently giving commonwealth status to the islands. Ambassador Williams recommends that the President appoint Mr. Erwin D. Canham, the former editor of the Christian Science Monitor, to fill this position.

The Commissioner would supervise all aspects of the plebiscite, which is being planned for late June and which will ask the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to approve the Covenant we have recently signed with their representatives giving commonwealth status to the islands. The Commissioner will also supervise an education program for the people of the Northern Marianas to inform them fully of the nature and implications of the proposed commonwealth arrangement, and of the possible alternatives if they reject the Covenant in favor of remaining with the other five districts of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Thus, the Commissioner must be a person who will assure complete U.S. objectivity in the plebiscite, and free it as much as possible from allegations that the U.S. Government is imposing a commonwealth arrangement on the Northern Marianas.

The need for such a person has been foreseen throughout the course of the negotiations. The need has increased more recently as a result of emerging criticism of our Covenant from liberal Democrats

CONFIDENTIAL GDS

KBH 5/31/90

4/21/75

RECEIVED
APR 3 1975
CENTRAL FILES

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

in Congress, and from a small but vocal minority in the Northern Marianas who are supported by Micronesian leaders in the other five districts not yet reconciled to a separate status for the Northern Marianas.

I agree with Ambassador Williams that Mr. Canham would fill this need admirably. He was a Rhodes Scholar, and he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Christian Science Monitor from 1964 to 1974 following a distinguished career in journalism. He has also served on the U. S. delegation to the U. N. General Assembly, and is a former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. (A biographic sketch is attached to Ambassador Williams' letter to the President.) He has indicated informally his availability for this task. In the event that his appointment is not feasible, alternative candidates would be Mr. Barry Bingham, publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal, or Dr. Nathan Pusey, former President of Harvard University. Their availability is not known.

If the plebiscite results in a favorable vote, we would then present the Covenant to the Congress. We have throughout the negotiations consulted closely with the leadership of the Interior Committees in both Houses, and now are broadening our consultations with other members of Congress.

The Departments of State, Defense, and Interior have concurred in the recommendation to establish this position and to appoint Mr. Canham to it.

Mr. William Walker, because of the need to get a Plebiscite Commissioner on the job by mid-April, has already raised the matter informally with the President. The President has approved an approach to Mr. Canham by Mr. Walker.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the draft memorandum to the President at Tab I.

Concurrence:

Mr. Janka *WJ/OK*

Mr. Walker *WW/OK*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

GDS

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: Proposed Appointment of a
Commissioner to Conduct the
Plebiscite in the Northern Marianas

At Tab A is a letter to you from your Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, which recommends that you establish a position of Plebiscite Commissioner to conduct a plebiscite in the Northern Marianas on the Covenant we signed recently giving commonwealth status to the islands. Ambassador Williams recommends that you appoint Mr. Erwin D. Canham, the former editor of the Christian Science Monitor, to fill this position.

As you will recall, you recently gave public support to the Covenant and expressed your hope for a favorable outcome in the plebiscite when you received two Northern Marianas political leaders on March 19.

The Commissioner would supervise all aspects of the plebiscite, which is being planned for late June and which will ask the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to approve the Covenant we have recently signed with their representatives giving commonwealth status to the islands. The Commissioner will also supervise an education program for the people of the Northern Marianas to inform them fully of the nature and implications of the proposed commonwealth arrangement, and of the possible alternatives if they reject the Covenant in favor of remaining with the other five districts of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Thus, the Commissioner must be a person who will assure complete U. S. objectivity in the plebiscite, and free it as much as possible from allegations that the U. S. Government is imposing a commonwealth arrangement on the Northern Marianas.

CONFIDENTIAL

GDS

KBA 5/31/60

The need for such a person has been foreseen throughout the course of the negotiations. The need has increased more recently as a result of emerging criticism of our Covenant from liberal Democrats in Congress, and from a small but vocal minority in the Northern Marianas who are supported by Micronesian leaders in the other five districts not yet reconciled to a separate status for the Northern Marianas.

Mr. Canham would fill this need admirably. He was a Rhodes Scholar, and he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Christian Science Monitor from 1964 to 1974 following a distinguished career in journalism. He has also served on the U.S. delegation to the U.N. General Assembly, and is a former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. (A biographic sketch is attached to Ambassador Williams' letter to you.) He has indicated informally his availability for this task. In the event that his appointment is not feasible, alternative candidates would be Mr. Barry Bingham, publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal, or Dr. Nathan Pusey, former President of Harvard University. Their availability is not known.

If the plebiscite results in a favorable vote, we would then present the Covenant to the Congress. We have throughout the negotiations consulted closely with the leadership of the Interior Committees in both Houses, and now are broadening our consultations with other members of Congress.

The Departments of State, Defense, and Interior have concurred in the recommendation to establish this position and to appoint Mr. Canham to it.

I understand that Mr. Walker has already raised this matter informally with you, and that you have approved an approach by him to Mr. Canham.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve establishment of the position of Plebiscite Commissioner for the Northern Marianas.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

That you appoint Mr. Erwin D. Canham to the position of Plebiscite Commissioner for the Northern Marianas.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building
Room 361
Washington, D.C. 20506

March 27, 1975

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Dear Mr. President:

The "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America" was signed in Saipan on February 15. It was subsequently unanimously approved by the Marianas District Legislature. Two important actions must still be taken, however, before it is finally approved.

The first is for the United States as Administering Authority under the United Nations Trusteeship to arrange a plebiscite wherein the people of the Northern Mariana Islands can exercise their right to self-determination freely and fairly by accepting or rejecting the Covenant. The second is the approval of the Covenant by both houses of the U.S. Congress.

On the former score the Secretary of the Interior, with the concurrence of State, Defense and Justice, will issue a proclamation and accompanying Secretarial Order in the near future, which will set a date in June for the plebiscite and prescribe the form of the ballot. The proclamation will also welcome the presence of observers from the United Nations and the United States Congress to witness the registration of voters and the actual voting.

Some criticism of the United States for our action in the Marianas is expected both from the other Districts of Micronesia and within the Marianas itself. Already charges have been unfairly made in the U.S. Senate that the Administration is trying to railroad the Covenant through both the plebiscite and the Congress.

In order to assure a posture of complete U.S. objectivity in the conduct of the plebiscite, free from any suspicion of official interference, it is recommended that you name a distinguished American citizen from outside the Government

CLASSIFIED BY Ambassador Williams
the President's Personal Representative

EXEMPT FROM G.D.S. OF E.O.

11352

EXEMPT CATEGORY

DECLAS ON 31 DEC 1985

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

103H 5/31/90

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

with national and international stature to serve as Plebiscite Commissioner. Mr. Erwin D. Canham, editor (emeritus) of the Christian Science Monitor would be a most appropriate choice for this position.

A biographical summary of Mr. Canham is attached. Informal soundings indicate that he would be available to serve from approximately April 15, 1975 through the plebiscite. In the event the appointment of Mr. Canham is not feasible Mr. Barry Bingham, publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal, or Dr. Nathan Pusey, former President of Harvard University, are considered to be suitable alternates; but their availability is unknown at this time.

The duties of the special Plebiscite Commissioner will be set out in the Secretarial Order which will accompany Secretary Morton's proclamation. These will include supervision of all aspects of the plebiscite and the institution of an objective plebiscite education program for the people to inform them fully of the nature and implications of the proposed Commonwealth arrangement and the alternatives available to them if they reject the Covenant in favor of remaining with the rest of Micronesia.

The educational material put out under the Plebiscite Commissioner's supervision must be impartial, factual and fully informative. The Marianas Political Status Commission, however, will be free to espouse the Covenant in any proper fashion, just as opponents will be able to express their contrary views.

The Plebiscite Commissioner will be advised by a special committee of Marianas citizens and will be assisted by a Voter Registration Board. The High Commissioner of the Trust Territory and the headquarters of the Trust Territory and Marianas District will be expected to provide all necessary administrative support for the Plebiscite Commissioner and the activities he will supervise.

If the plebiscite results in a favorable vote of 55% or more the next step will be to present the Covenant to both houses of the U.S. Congress, where we have been maintaining

CONFIDENTIAL

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3-

close contact with the leaders in the Interior Committees in particular. We are proceeding now to broaden materially the number of members of the U.S. Congress who are to be informed in detail concerning the proposed new Commonwealth arrangement. I will be making a further report to you in this regard in the near future.

Very respectfully yours,

F. Haydn Williams
F. Haydn Williams

FHW:kkc

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY EXTRACTED FROM WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA 1972-73

CANHAM, ERWIN DAIN, newspaper editor, radio and TV commentator; b. Auburn, Me., Feb. 13, 1904; s. Vincent Walter and Elizabeth May (Gowell) C.; B.A., Bates Coll., 1925, Litt. D., 1946; B.A., M.A. (Rhodes scholar), Oxford U. (Eng); recipient numerous honorary degrees, including L.H.D., Boston U., 1948, Yale, 1949; L.L.D., Principia Coll., 1951, Tufts U., 1958, Temple U., 1959; Litt. D., Brigham Young U., 1962; L.L.D., Lafayette Coll., Bowdoin Coll., 1967; m. Thelma Whitman Hart, May 10, 1930 (dec.); children - Carolyn (Mrs. R. Shale Paul), Elizabeth (Mrs. Lyle Davis); m. 2d, Patience M. Daltry. Reporter, Christian Sci. Monitor, 1925, covered annual sessions of League of Nat., 1926, 27, 28. Chief corr. Christian Sci. Monitor at Lon. Naval Conf., 1930; corr. Geneva, Switzerland, 1930-32; head of Wash. Bur., Christian Sci. Monitor, 1932-39 gen. news editor, 1939-41, mng. editor, 1941-44, editor, 1945-64, editor in chief, 1964-; nation wide polit. surveys and covered trips of Am. Presidents; attended inauguration Philippine Commonwealth Govt. and wrote on Far East, 1935; dep. chmn. U.S. delegation U.N. Conf. on Freedom of Information, 1948; U.S. alternate del. U.N. Gen. Assembly, 1949; mem. U.S. Commn. for Information, U.S. Nat. Commn. for UNESCO, 1948-51; mem. Pres.'s Commn. on Campus Unrest, 1970. dir. John Hancock Mut. Life Ins. Co., Keystone Custodian Funds, Inc.; chmn. Fed. Reserve Bank of Boston, 1962-67. Bd. dirs. Nat. Safety Council, v.p. religious leaders, 1964-68; dir. Resources for Future. Trustee, Boston Pub. Library (pres. 1968-), Robert A. Taft Inst. of Govt., 20th Century Fund, Bates Coll., Simmons Coll., Wellesley Coll.; mem. corp. Northeastern U. Radio commentator, 1938-39, 45-. Decorated hon. comdr. Order Brit. Empire; officer French Legion Honor; Order of George I (Greece); grand distinguished service cross Order of Merit (German Federal Republic); Grand Silver Badge of Honor (Austria); recipient John Peter Zenger award U. Ariz., 1970. Fellow Am. Acad. Arts and Scis.; mem. U.S.C. of C. (chmn. bd. 1960, dir.), Am. Soc. Newspaper Editors (pres. 1948-49), Assn. Am. Rhodes Scholars, Phi Beta Kappa, Delta Sigma Rho.