

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

December 10, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: THOMAS J. BARNES

SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Ambassador Haydn Williams at  
5:00 p. m. , Thursday, December 11

Ambassador Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Political Status Negotiations with Micronesia, asked to see you. He will want to discuss the problems that the Covenant to Establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has encountered in the Senate. In addition, the Ambassador will most likely want to take up his recent recommendation to the President for a full U. S. policy review to update the NSC and Under Secretaries' Committee Micronesian Policy Paper of November 14, 1973 (Tab B).

Background

The Marianas' Commonwealth Covenant passed the House of Representatives on July 21. The Senate Interior Committee approved it in October. The bill has since run into opposition in the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees. Senator Percy, in a proposed amendment, has recently called for a deferral of approval of the bill until the future political status of the remainder of the territory is determined.

In a recent letter to the President (Tab A), Ambassador Williams reports that members of the three Senate committees concerned and their staffs believe that passage of the Covenant is in jeopardy and that, in absence of strong support from the Administration, the Senate is likely to defeat the legislation. He requests the President's assistance in obtaining early Senate approval of the Covenant.

In the same letter to the President, Ambassador Williams recommends that we review our policy paper on Micronesia and our basic objectives in the negotiations in the context of larger American interests and the Pacific Doctrine, which the President enunciated in Honolulu.

PHOTOCOPY FROM GERALD FORD LIBRARY

Several developments in the past few months indicate that the other Micronesians are growing less amenable to a permanent-association arrangement that would meet the terms of Ambassador Williams' present negotiating instructions.

-- The Micronesian Congress held a territory-wide informal status referendum last July. The results of this referendum were confusing due to public misunderstanding of the issues and the possibility of voting for more than one option. In any event, the two most populous districts, Truk and Ponape, voted overwhelmingly for independence.

-- Micronesian observers have attended the Law of the Sea Conferences where they have espoused an extensive archipelago principle that even goes beyond what Indonesia and the Philippines have claimed. The Micronesians wish to sign the Law of the Sea Convention whenever it is completed.

-- The Congress of Micronesia passed a draft constitution last month. Ambassador Williams' office is currently analyzing the implications of the draft for the status negotiations. We have not yet received the report, but the constitution calls for establishment of a sovereign state that would simply delegate certain responsibilities in foreign affairs and defense to the United States. The Constitution prescribes that Micronesia's future relationship with the United States should be based on a treaty.

-- In addition, the Micronesians want more favorable financial commitments from the United States.

#### Our Position

Although Ambassador Williams believes in running scared, there is a good possibility that the Percy amendment will pass in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and then on the floor. However, in the subsequent House-Senate Conference, Congressman Burton will very likely work to exclude the amendment or to render it harmless. The principal problem in the Senate is that there is no strong advocate for the bill as there is in the House in the person of Burton. The two Senate committees now concerned have extended final action on the bill to January 27, 1976. We should encourage continuing efforts to influence positions in the two committees and in particular to change Senator Percy's amendment. Subsequently, if necessary, we should recommend that the President telephone a few key Senators.

We fully support Ambassador Williams' recommendation for a new policy review of our objectives in Micronesia in the forthcoming negotiations. A less than permanent association with the rest of Micronesia may well be not only acceptable but desirable in terms of U. S. interests.

Talking Points

-- I agree that we should try to turn Senator Percy around on the Covenant. If you like, I will telephone Secretary Rumsfeld, who I understand is a close friend of the Senator, and suggest that he talk to him about the issue.

-- Our objective would seem to be to persuade Percy to amend his draft.

-- If in January the situation still looks close, we can consider asking the President to make a few phone calls.

-- I have seen your recent letter to the President. We support your proposal for a new policy review.

-- The other Micronesians seem to be moving farther away from the idea of permanent association. What do you think are the reasons for this?

-- As you suggest, the new review should reconsider U. S. basic objectives in the rest of Micronesia. How do you see these objectives?

-- What would be the consequences in the Northern Marianas, if the Percy amendment passed and in effect Congress did not approve the Covenant at this time?

Concurrence:

Les Janka 