

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

1848

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ACTION

April 6, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: THOMAS J. BARNES *TJB*

SUBJECT: Replacement for Ambassador F. Haydn Williams

In his conversation with you on March 26, Ambassador Williams informed you that he would like to be relieved of his responsibilities as the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations this coming July. Bureaucratic maneuvering over a replacement for the Ambassador has already begun.

For one, there has been constant rivalry between the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations (OMSN) and Interior's Office of the Director Of Territorial Affairs (DOTA). The split in responsibility between those concerned with administration of the Trust Territory, and those negotiating its future political status, has created some problems. For example, OMSN believes that the administrative decentralization policy that Fred Zeder, who heads DOTA, is now pushing in the Trust Territory may stimulate separatist tendencies among the remaining five districts.

Zeder wrote you a letter (Tab III), following up a telephone conversation with you on March 26. In this letter, he suggests that the most effective way to resolve the future status issue for the rest of Micronesia would be through direct contact between his office and the Micronesian political leadership. He also submitted to you a copy of a February 12 letter to the President by members of the Micronesian Status Negotiations Commission. In their letter, which we had not previously seen, the Micronesians call upon the President to provide Mr. Zeder the additional title of "Territorial Manager in Micronesia" with responsibility for overseeing economic development. I believe Zeder's proposal is bureaucratically impossible. DOTA should not simultaneously manage Micronesia and negotiate for its independence.

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As a counterploy, but also as an item that should stand on its own merits, Ambassador Williams has indicated he would appreciate receiving a letter from the President commending the OMSN for its good work, and expressing the hope that the OMSN will resume negotiations with the other districts as soon as new instructions emerge. (A draft letter is at Tab A.) Williams apparently is seeking a Presidential reaffirmation of the role of the OMSN.

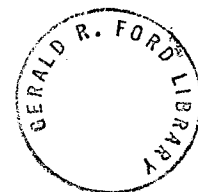
Further complicating the succession issue, the Department of State believes that since the possibility of Micronesian independence has increased, it is important that a State Department officer head up the negotiations. State has "paneled" the appointment of Philip Manhard, former U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius, as Ambassador Williams' deputy. It is the Department's expectation that Ambassador Manhard will replace Ambassador Williams.

Some sources in State believe that Ambassador Manhard, who was a prisoner of the North Vietnamese for over five years, does not have the appropriate personality to handle negotiations with the Micronesians. State brought Manhard back from his post in Mauritius prior to completion of his two year assignment, reportedly because of recurrent difficulty with his own staff.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fred Fox, a Houston inventor and petroleum figure, has received several Congressional endorsements for the job, and you have also received personal recommendations on his behalf. Fox has a gregarious personality and apparently has many close friends among the Micronesian leaders. Jay Taylor talked with Fox last summer, and at that time he seemed hell-bent on bringing all of the Micronesians into the United States. Given his Congressional backing, I recommend that we at least talk to Fox one more time to get a better feel for his views and attitudes, but at least three of the remaining five districts of Micronesia are tending toward independence.

At present I would favor another outsider as a replacement for Ambassador Williams. I have in mind someone like Erwin D. Canham, Editor Emeritus of the Christian Science Monitor. The President appointed Canham to supervise the plebiscite in the Northern Marianas last year, and he is familiar with the issues and the area. Canham was also an extremely effective spokesman on behalf of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Covenant before the Congress.

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I will make further queries about these several candidates.

Mr. Douglas Smith, of Mr. Robert Hartmann's office, has cleared the text of the proposed letter.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the interim and non-committal reply to Fred Zeder (Tab II).

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I transmitting to the President for his signature a letter of thanks (Tab A) to Ambassador Williams, which calls for an early resumption of negotiations with the other districts of Micronesia but avoids the bureaucratic question of the further organization of the talks on our side.

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