

OFFICE FOR MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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February 10, 1977

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MEMORANDUM

To: Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

From: Acting U.S. Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations

Subject: Proposed meeting with Micronesian leaders on Micronesia's future

For over eight months now the Executive Branch has been unable to resolve policy questions on Micronesia's future status sufficiently to enable meaningful, realistic negotiations to proceed. In the meantime Micronesian uncertainties have grown as to U.S. attitudes and intentions, and leaders in Palau and the Marshalls have stepped up their respective campaigns for separation from Micronesia and separate talks with the U.S.--to the point where leaders of those two districts have now threatened to secede from the Congress of Micronesia as early as next week. Those leaders apparently intend to appear in Washington soon to pressure the Executive Branch directly and through the U.S. Congress to accept their separatist demands. It has been U.S. policy to try to preserve Micronesian (Carolines and Marshalls) unity, and both the U.S. Congress and the U.N. Trusteeship Council have consistently urged us to do so.

Meanwhile the new Micronesian Policy Review is presumably scheduled for completion by March 11, and it would seem highly undesirable to allow that review and the badly needed decisions stemming therefrom to be preempted or compromised by premature and conflicting Micronesian initiatives. Therefore to try to cope with what appears to be a rapidly deteriorating situation in Micronesia and yet allow the PRM mechanism to serve its function, the following steps are recommended:

1. A U.S. representative closely acquainted with the Micronesian leaders and the negotiating problems be sent as soon as possible to Saipan before the current Congress of Micronesia session possibly breaks up in disarray. His purpose would be to sound out the willingness of key leaders from each Micronesian district to come to Washington about the end of March or early

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April at the latest to discuss informally with key people in the new Administration the future course and direction of status negotiations as well as the nature of our relationships with all six Micronesian districts during the transition to a new status.

2. If the U.S. emissary receives a positive response to the foregoing proposal from key leaders from all the districts, he would then provide to them a written invitation from the President, Vice President or Secretary of State, a proposed draft of which is attached. An invitation from the President or Vice President would most effectively impress upon the Micronesians the seriousness with which the new Administration views Micronesia and would make clear to them that all elements of the Executive Branch properly concerned with Micronesia would be involved. It is the State Department's recommendation that, in order to protect the President's or Vice President's prestige should the Micronesians decline, the following options should be considered in this order with regard to issuance of the invitation: (1) Secretary of State; (2) Secretaries of State and Interior jointly; or (3) President or Vice President.

3. The policy review would proceed meanwhile and necessary policy decisions would presumably be made prior to the arrival of such Micronesian leaders, who might as a result of the invitation be deflected in the interim from further complicating our problems.

4. In the meeting in Washington we could forthrightly discuss the main issues, including fragmentation vs. unity, with all districts represented together at the same time, and could avail ourselves of the best opportunity in a long time to seek agreement on the modalities, venue and timing of the next formal negotiating round.


Philip W. Manhard

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DRAFT LETTER

addressed to:

The President of the Senate of the Congress of Micronesia;

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Congress
of Micronesia; and

The Speaker of each District Legislature

For nearly eight years your representatives and ours have been trying to resolve the vital question of your future status after the end of the present Trusteeship. We are keenly aware of the importance of this question to your people and to ours. We realize the complexities involved in reaching a solution which will be fair and beneficial to all concerned. The problems that have concerned us both have not lessened with the passage of time. But they should never obscure the firm principle which is the basis of our political status negotiations--the principle of self-determination. That principle was the foundation stone of our nation. We honor it also in the forum of the United Nations and we are equally determined to be faithful to the responsibility we assumed 30 years ago to assure to Micronesia, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, a full and free opportunity to determine its own political future. We, as Americans with our own experience with diversity and respect for the rights of all, are not insensitive to the understandably strong and distinct interests of each of the districts of Micronesia and we wish to find means of giving due and fair consideration to such vital interests.

It is our desire, and we believe in our mutual best interest, that our negotiations should come soon to a fruitful conclusion,

the results to be laid before the people of Micronesia and the Congress of the United States respectively for their decision. To that end the Administration here in Washington, would welcome your support and cooperation in resuming our negotiations expeditiously.

To prepare the way for the resumption of formal talks in a meaningful and effective way, I hereby invite duly selected Micronesian leaders from each of the districts to come to Washington in late March or early April for informal discussions with our representatives to consult as to the future course and direction of our negotiations as well as the nature of our relationships with all the districts during the transition to a new status.

I very much hope you will find it possible to make arrangements among your colleagues for a positive response to this invitation.
