

MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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October 14, 1977

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
FROM: MIKE ARMACOST  
SUBJECT: Micronesian Status Negotiations

Ambassador Peter Rosenblatt, who will be departing next week for the first round of formal Micronesian status negotiations in Molokai, Hawaii, needs your decision regarding one aspect of his negotiating instructions.

In the process of arranging this round of talks, Rosenblatt encountered some difficulties in securing the agreement of the Marshallese District to enter discussions focused exclusively on the free association formula we tabled at Guam in late July. The Marshallese counsel, Dick Copaken, has been arguing with Rosenblatt that sentiment in the Marshalls has shifted significantly in recent weeks toward a preference for independence. He therefore wishes to simultaneously negotiate free association and alternative status options among which the Marshallese can then pick and choose the most attractive features. This is obviously unsatisfactory from our standpoint. It would require that we lay out a smorgasbord, while leaving all the key choices to the Micronesians.

To assure Marshallese participation at Molokai, Rosenblatt has worked out a compromise with Copaken which is reflected in the attached letter at Tab A (which we expect the Marshallese will address to Rosenblatt in the next few days). Under this arrangement the Marshallese would agree to negotiate exclusively the terms of a possibly free association status. But once the free association option has been fully negotiated, we would be committed to immediately thereafter explore alternative status options, focusing on those terms of free association on which the U. S. position would differ under such other options. You will recall that PD-11 requires the U. S. negotiator to seek a free association agreement with a united

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Micronesia, and to obtain approval from the PRC, before falling back to any alternative arrangements (PD at Tab B).

The Rosenblatt-Copaken formula would not commit us to negotiate alternative status options, merely to "explore" them. Our objective in those explorations would be to demonstrate to the Micronesians that they would secure greater benefits from free association than under any alternative options (e. g. independence). This should help set the stage for a successful referendum on the free association compact. I believe this arrangement falls within the scope of the current negotiating guidelines. But I believe you should confirm this to Rosenblatt.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the attached memo to Ambassador Rosenblatt (Tab I).

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