

BACKGROUND ON  
MICRONESIAN POLITICAL STATUS NEGOTIATIONS  
FOR SECRETARY CECIL D. ANDRUS

February 1, 1979

In April 1978 at Hilo, Hawaii, three Micronesian negotiating commissions and a U.S. delegation headed by Ambassador Peter R. Rosenblatt, the President's Personal Representative to the Micronesian status negotiations, signed a statement setting forth eight principles which are to govern our relations with Micronesia upon termination of the current United Nations Trusteeship. One of the commissions represents a federation, now in formation, of the four districts of Yap, Truk, Ponape, and Kosrae. The other two commissions represent Palau and the Marshall Islands, respectively; districts whose separation from the federation was confirmed by their rejection of the federation's constitution in a popular referendum last July.

The Hilo principles envision a unique U.S.-Micronesian relationship of Free Association under which the peoples of Micronesia will enjoy full internal self-government and will conduct their own foreign relations. For an assured period of 15 years and thereafter as mutually agreed, the United States will have full authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia, including the establishment of necessary military facilities and the exercise of appropriate operating rights. The United States will provide the three emerging Micronesian states with an agreed level of economic assistance over an initial period of 15 years.

Thus, we will be creating an unprecedented new status for these small, new Micronesian states. They will be self-governing but will be neither independent or integrated into the U.S. Free Association will, however, secure the vital interests of each party.

U.S.-Micronesian negotiating sessions since the Hilo meeting have been concerned with drawing up a Compact of Free Association embodying the Hilo principles. Drafting of most sections of the Compact is far advanced. At the January 1979 negotiating round in Saipan, the delegations reviewed the draft Compact section by section, narrowing the gap on those provisions which still require further negotiating efforts. Important substantive differences remain, notably on the amounts of economic assistance the United States should provide the Micronesian states after the United Nations Trusteeship is terminated. These will require further consideration and work during the months ahead. The Saipan session was nonetheless marked by an atmosphere of good will and mutual determination to move the negotiations forward.

The Administration continues to look toward terminating the Trusteeship no later than 1981.

## STATEMENT OF AGREED PRINCIPLES FOR FREE ASSOCIATION

1. An agreement of free association will be concluded on a government-to-government basis and executed prior to termination of the United Nations trusteeship. During the life of the agreement the political status of the peoples of Micronesia shall remain that of free association as distinguished from independence. The agreement will be subject to the implementing authority of the United States Congress.
2. The agreement of free association will be put to a United Nations observed plebiscite.
3. Constitutional arrangements for the governance of Micronesia shall be in accord with the political status of free association as set forth in these principles.
4. The peoples of Micronesia will enjoy full internal self-government.
5. The United States will have full authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia, including the establishment of necessary military facilities and the exercise of appropriate operating rights. The peoples of Micronesia will refrain from actions which the United States determines after appropriate consultations to be incompatible with its authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia. This authority and responsibility will be assured for 15 years, and thereafter as mutually agreed. Specific land arrangements will remain in effect according to their terms which shall be negotiated prior to the end of the Trusteeship Agreement.
6. The peoples of Micronesia will have authority and responsibility for their foreign affairs including marine resources. They will consult with the United States in the exercise of this authority and will refrain from actions which the United States determines to be incompatible with its authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia. The United States may act on behalf of the peoples of Micronesia in the area of foreign affairs as mutually agreed from time to time.

7. The agreement will permit unilateral termination of the free association political status by the processes through which it was entered and set forth in the agreement and subject to the continuation of the United States defense authority and responsibility as set forth in Principle 5, but any plebiscite terminating the free association political status will not require United Nations observation.

8. Should the free association political status be mutually terminated the United States' economic assistance shall continue as mutually agreed. Should the United States terminate the free association relationship, its economic assistance to Micronesia shall continue at the levels and for the term initially agreed. If the agreement is otherwise terminated the United States shall no longer be obligated to provide the same amounts of economic assistance for the remainder of the term initially agreed.

An early free association agreement based on the foregoing eight principles shall be pursued by the parties.

Hilo, Hawaii

April 9, 1978

COMMITTEE ON FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF THE COMMISSION ON  
FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS AND TRANSITION

By

  
Chairman

MARSHALL ISLANDS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION

By

  
Chairman


PALAU POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION

By

  
Chairman

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

By

  
President's Personal Representative to the  
Negotiations on the Future Political Status  
of Micronesia