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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

November 1, 1986

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MEMORANDUM FOR LARRY SPEAKES
FROM: RODNEY B. McDANIEL *RBm*
SUBJECT: Presidential Statement (as Press Release) to
Accompany Presidential Proclamation on Micronesia,
November 3, 1986

It is planned that the President sign a Proclamation Monday, November 3, 1986, announcing the new status of the Micronesian Islands effective that day. The Northern Mariana Islands join the United States as a new territory with Commonwealth status and the Federated States of Micronesia becomes a self-governing nation in free association with the United States.

This is big news in the Pacific. The Northern Marianas have declared a two-day national holiday, and the FSM, one day.

We think it is important that a Presidential statement, commenting on the Proclamation, be issued as a press release concurrently on November 3. The statement (at Tab A) has been cleared with State, Interior, Justice, Defense, OMB, OMSN and the NSC, and the speechwriters.

Also attached (Tab B) are Qs and As, similarly cleared.

Attachments

- Tab A Presidential Statement for Press Release
- Tab B Qs/As

cc: David Chew

NSC 8607942

STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION NO. _____

THE WHITE HOUSE

NOVEMBER 3, 1986

TODAY, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE BEGINNING OF NEW RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ISLAND GROUPS THAT HAVE EMERGED FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS TRUST TERRITORY. ONE OF THESE -- THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS -- IS NOW A UNITED STATES COMMONWEALTH AND ITS PEOPLE ARE NOW UNITED STATES CITIZENS. THE OTHER TWO -- THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS AND THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA -- ARE SOVEREIGN, SELF-GOVERNING NATIONS IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

THE FOURTH AND REMAINING ISLAND GROUP -- PALAU -- HAS NOT YET FINALLY APPROVED ITS COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION. UNTIL PALAU'S FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS IS RESOLVED, THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES THERE AS ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY UNDER THE TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT.

THE UNITED STATES LIBERATED THESE ISLANDS DURING OUR WESTWARD DRIVE ACROSS THE PACIFIC TOWARD THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND HAS ADMINISTERED THEM AS A UNITED NATIONS STRATEGIC TRUSTEESHIP SINCE 1947. IN THESE LAST FOUR DECADES, WE HAVE WORKED WITH THE ISLANDERS TO IMPROVE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND ISLANDS COMPRISING THE TRUST TERRITORY. OUR MOST VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ISLANDS, A LEGACY IN WHICH WE CAN TAKE PRIDE, ARE THE DEMOCRATIC, REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENTS CREATED AND NOW ENJOYED BY THE PEOPLES OF THE TRUST TERRITORY.



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THE UNITED STATES IS HAPPY TO COMMENCE THESE NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, AND THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA. WE DEEPLY APPRECIATE THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED SO LONG AND HARD -- IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND IN THE CONGRESS -- TO FASHION AND ENACT THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT AND THE COMPACTS OF FREE ASSOCIATION. WE ESPECIALLY WANT TO WELCOME THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS INTO THE AMERICAN ~~PEOPLE'S~~ FAMILY AS FELLOW CITIZENS. WE ARE HONORED BY THE CHOICES OF THE PEOPLES AND LEADERS OF THE TWO NEW FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES TO ASSOCIATE WITH US IN CLOSE AND LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WHICH REFLECT THE GOODWILL AND AFFECTION BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES. FOR THESE PEOPLES, THE LONG YEARS OF TRUSTEESHIP ARE OVER AND THE DIGNITY AND OPPORTUNITY OF SELF-GOVERNMENT ARE HERE. WE IN THE UNITED STATES PLEDGE OUR FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT AS THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, AND THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA NOW WALK THE PATHS THEY THEMSELVES HAVE CHOSEN.



Compact of Free Association for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia

Commonwealth Covenant for the Northern Mariana Islands

QUESTION: Why are these Trusteeship Islands important to the U.S.?

ANSWER: The United States has administered the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under a United Nations mandate since 1947. We thus have a long history with the islands and feel committed to their welfare and development. Further, as was shown during World War II and since, the islands are strategically important from a location standpoint, sitting as they do astride the central communication and sea lanes of the northwest Pacific. Finally, they lie between Hawaii, our westernmost state and Guam (population 120,000), our westernmost territory.

QUESTION: What is "free association"? Does that mean they are independent? Can they join the UN?

ANSWER: Free Association is the name of a unique international political status that has been recognized in several United Nations resolutions as a legitimate outcome from a trusteeship or colonial period. Under the free association Compact we have with the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, they are sovereign and self-governing in both internal and foreign affairs, but the United States has full authority and responsibility for defense. In classic international parlance, they will not be independent nation-states, but rather sovereign states in free association with the United States. Whether they join the UN will be a function of the rules of the UN itself and whether the island states believe it is cost-effective to join.

QUESTION: What is a "commonwealth"?

ANSWER: In American law, the term commonwealth does not have a specific meaning. Kentucky, Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico are all officially "commonwealths". In the case of the Northern Mariana Islands, commonwealth refers to the political relationship and status defined in the Commonwealth Covenant -- a status and relationship very similar to that enjoyed by Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The people of the Northern Mariana Islands will be United States citizens and the United States will be sovereign in the area.

QUESTION: What do the Micronesians get out of these new relationships?

ANSWER: In all cases, they will receive the defense and security protection of the United States. They will also receive U.S. economic assistance over a long period of time. They also receive several important tax, trade and commerce benefits.

QUESTION: How many people are we talking about?

ANSWER: 35,000 -- the Marshall Islands;
85,000 -- the Federated States of Micronesia;
17,000 -- the Northern Mariana Islands.

QUESTION: What about the fourth area, Palau?

ANSWER: Palau has voted on a Compact of Free Association similar to that for the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. However, a ruling last summer by its Supreme Court held that, in order for the Compact to be approved, it requires a 75% approval majority or better. Palau will be holding another vote on the Compact this fall to see if it can meet that test.

QUESTION: What if this new relationship does not work?

ANSWER: The Compact of Free Association is unilaterally terminable by any party at any time. The Commonwealth Covenant sets out a permanent relationship, but one that in its essential parts cannot be unilaterally altered by the U.S. or the Northern Mariana Islands.

