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INFO EA 10, RSR 01, CIAE 00, DODE 00, JPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00,  
NSC 10, P 04, RSC 01, SPI 02, SS 20, USIA 12, INT 06, /097 W  
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R 250717Z MAR 69  
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3594  
INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMCONSUL SUVA UNN  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
USCAR NAHA  
USMISSION USUN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>WHRP</u>	DATE FEB. 25 1969
RDS <input type="checkbox"/> or XDS <input type="checkbox"/> EXT. DATE _____	
TS AUTH. _____	REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS <input type="checkbox"/>	
DECLASSIFIED <input type="checkbox"/> RELEASABLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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SUBJ: MICRONESIAN STATUS COMMISSION

1. MICRONESIAN CONGRESS'S FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION ARRIVED AUSTRALIA ONE WEEK EARLY ON MARCH 18 WITH LESS THAN 24 HOURS' NOTICE. AT EMBASSY'S REQUEST, GROUP REMAINED IN SYDNEY UNTIL MARCH 20, WHEN IT CAME TO CANBERRA FOR TWO-DAY PROGRAM. GROUP RETURNED TO SYDNEY MARCH 22 AND ON MARCH 24 SPENT HALF-DAY AT AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF PACIFIC ADMINISTRATION, WHERE IT HAD TALKS WITH TEN VISITING MEMBERS OF PAPUA-NEW GUINEA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. COMMISSION DEPARTED TODAY (MARCH 25) FOR PORT MORESBY AND WILL LEAVE PORT MORESBY MARCH 27 FOR MANILA. IN PAPUA-NEW GUINEA ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR MEETINGS WITH ADMINISTRATOR DAVID HJ. N OTHER SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS, SOME MINISTERIAL MEMBERS OF HOUSE, AND OTHER INDIGENOUS POLITICAL FIGURES, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF PANGU PATI. GROUP WILL ALSO HAVE SHORT SIDE TRIP TO GOROKA IN NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS AT INVITATION (AND EXPENSE) OF GOA.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF CANBERRA PROGRAM INCLUDED TALKS WITH SENIOR OFFICERS DEPARTMENT EXTERNAL TERRITORIES AND DEPARTMENT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, WITH SUBCOMMITTEE ON PACIFIC ISLANDS OF PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS, AND WITH

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PROFESSOR JAMES DAVIDSON AT ANU. GOA PROVIDED GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT FOR COMMISSION, AND LAID ON PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON HOSTED BY MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL TERRITORIES BARNES AND PARLIAMENTARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON PACIFIC ISLANDS. EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR HOSTED RECEPTION. ALL IN ALL, GOA COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE CORDIAL OR COOPERATIVE. NO CONTACT WITH PRESS IN CANBERRA OR SYDNEY.

3. EMBASSY OFFICER ACCOMPANIED COMMISSION TO SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, PARLIAMENTARY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING, AND GOA VISIT TO SCHOOL OF PACIFIC ADMINISTRATION BUT AVOIDED MEETINGS WITH TERRITORIES AND EXTAFF OFFICERS AS COMMISSION CLEARLY PREFERRED NOT HAVE "WATCHDOG" PRESENT.

4. FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMISSION MEMBERS AND GOA OFFICIALS WITH WHOM THEY SPOKE, COMMISSION IN AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA-NEW GUINEA APPEARS BE MAINLY INTERESTED IN FOLLOWING MATTERS:

A) DEGREE OF CANBERRA'S CONTROL OVER PAPUA-NEW GUINEA AFFAIRS IN GENERAL AND PORT MORESBY ADMINISTRATION IN PARTICULAR;

B) NATURE OF GOA CONTROL OVER TERRITORY'S BUDGET PROCESS AND AUSTRALIAN GRANT;

C) AUSTRALIAN THINKING WITH REGARD NATURE AND TIMING OF ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION;

D) POLITICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN TERRITORY;

E) NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF POLITICAL PRESSURES IN TERRITORY; AND

F) LAND TENURE AND TITLE QUESTIONS.

5. FOLLOWING ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF VIEWS EXPRESSED BY COMMISSION MEMBERS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS OR OTHERS DURING STAY IN CANBERRA AND SYDNEY.

A) ALL OF THEM CLEARLY VIEW INDEPENDENCE AS BEING MORE THAN THEORETICAL CONSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVE, PROVIDED THAT CONTINUING ACCESS TO US TREASURY OR OTHER EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE COULD BE GUARANTEED. HOWEVER, MOST SEEM TO FAVOR SOME FORM OF

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"FREE ASSOCIATION" WITH US. ALTHOUGH THERE DOES NOT APPEAR BE GROUP CONSENSUS AS WHAT FORM THAT ASSOCIATION MIGHT TAKE, ALL OF THEM APPEARED BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN COOK ISLANDS' ASSOCIATION WITH NEW ZEALAND<sup>95</sup>.

B) ON TIMING ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, AGAIN NO CONSENSUS APPEARED, BUT SEVERAL EXPRESSED DOUBT WHETHER TTPI POPULATION WILL BE ADEQUATELY PREPARED BY 1972, DATE SUGGESTED IN PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S REQUEST FOR US STATUS COMMISSION.

C) SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT CONCERN TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS APPEARED TO BE NEED (IN THEIR VIEW) LIMIT US ACCESS TO TTPI LAND FOR MILITARY BASES. WHILE ACCEPTING US STRATEGIC REQUIREMENT FOR BASES, THEY ALL APPEARED STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT ANY FUTURE FORM OF ASSOCIATION WITH US MUST PROVIDE FULL INTERNAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND FULL CONTROL OVER DISPOSITION OF LAND.

D) SEVERAL MEMBERS EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE ANNOYANCE WITH SLOWNESS OF LOCALIZATION OF TTPI PUBLIC SERVICE AND INDICATED THAT, IN THEIR VIEW, MANY OF AMERICAN CIVIL SERVICE OFFICERS NOT VERY COMPETENT, QUALIFIED, OR DEDICATED. ON OTHER HAND, ALL HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR PEACE CORPS.

E) SEVERAL MEMBERS SUGGESTED THAT IN NEAR FUTURE MICRONESIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER SHOULD BE APPOINTED. THEY FELT THAT PAST HIGH COMMISSIONERS HAVE BEEN BIT TOO FREE AND EASY WITH THEIR VETO POWER.

F) THERE APPEARED TO BE CONSENSUS THAT MICRONESIAN CONGRESS SHOULD HAVE STRONGER ROLE IN FORMULATION OF BUDGET FINANCED BY US GRANT.

G) THERE ALSO APPEARED BE AGREEMENT THAT COMMISSION SHOULD VISIT WASHINGTON, PARTLY TO "EDUCATE" CERTAIN CONGRESSMEN, AND PARTLY FOR DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBLE FORMS FREE ASSOCIATION WITH US. IN THAT CONNECTION, NONE OF THEM APPEARED TO LOOK UPON STATEHOOD AS REALISTIC CONSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVE, AT LEAST IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

H) IN CONVERSATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF PAPUA-NEW GUINEA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, COMMISSION EXPRESSED RATHER STRONGLY ITS VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE FREQUENT CONTACT BETWEEN LEGISLATORS OF

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VARIOUS PACIFIC ISLANDS TERRITORIES. THEY ISSUED INFORMAL INVITATION FOR HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY TO SEND TO SAIPAN FOR VISIT THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS EXPECTED BE FORMED LATER THIS YEAR.

6. ALL IN ALL, EMBASSY OFFICERS FOUND COMMISSION MEMBERS TO BE ARTICULATE, ALERT, AND INTELLIGENT GROUP WHICH, THOUGH EASY TO PLEASE, WAS TAKING SERIOUS INTEREST IN ITS TASK. MEMBERS, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, WERE FRANK IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH AUSTRALIANS AND EMBASSY OFFICERS. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THEIR REMARKS WERE EITHER IMPLICITLY OR EXPLICITLY CRITICAL OF US ADMINISTRATION OF TTPI, NONE OF THEM APPEARED TO BE ANTI-AMERICAN, AND ALL SEEMED TO TAKE RATHER BALANCED AND OBJECTIVE VIEWPOINT WITH, OF COURSE, MICRONESIAN INTERESTS FOREMOST IN THEIR MINDS. ASIDE FROM CRITICISM, THERE ALSO WAS MUCH PRAISE, PARTICULARLY OF US EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN TTPI. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, MICRONESIA CAN BE PROUD OF ITS EMISSARIES, AND USG CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD OF PRODUCTS OF ITS ADMINISTRATION OF TTPI. ONE GOA EXSTAFF OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT "WITH A FEW PEOPLE LIKE THESE IN PAPUA-NEW GUINEA, WE COULD GIVE THE TERRITORY INDEPENDENCE TOMORROW."

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