

*Report - Hawaiian  
Congress/Statehood*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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	<u>Page</u>
Introduction.....	1
Statement of Intent.....	7
On Changing Status.....	11
A Self-Governing State In Free Association With the United States.....	17
The Standard of Living.....	20
Structure of Government.....	21
The Cost of Government.....	23
The Military.....	26
Political Education.....	28
Marianas Integration: A Particular Circumstance.....	33
Guam.....	37
Negotiations.....	40
The Wishes of the People.....	41
Other Alternatives.....	44
Independence.....	45
Integration with the United States.....	48
Integration With Japan.....	49

## INTRODUCTION

Two years have passed since the Congress of Micronesia established the Future Political Status Commission. The comprehensive mandate originally assigned the Commission has been joined by the larger mandate created by the course of events in the United States, the United Nations, and Micronesia. The experiences of the past two years, culminating in visits to the Trust Territory by United States Congressional groups, by Secretary of Interior Walter J. Hickel, and by representatives of various United States military agencies, have lent an increasing urgency to the question of political status. What might once have been undertaken as a long-term investigative exercise has now become an imperative primary issue. The study of the status question proceeds in an atmosphere of impending change, consultation and decision-making, here and abroad. With recent indications of forthcoming conferences in Washington, it seems clear that our thoughts in regard to Micronesia's future political status may soon be translated into actions and that these actions will have profound and lasting consequences. As long-standing policies and mandates begin to show signs of shift and change, as the United Nations becomes increasingly unwilling to accept the continuance of political dependency, as the United States defines and clarifies its interests in Micronesia, Micronesians themselves must decide what their own purpose and destiny should be. To this end, the Future Political Status Commission presents its final report.

In Senate Joint Resolution 25, the Congress directed the Status Commission to address itself to four areas of inquiry:

(A) to develop and recommend procedures and courses of political education and action.

(B) to present such range of possibilities and alternatives as may be open to Micronesia with respect to the political future status of Micronesia.

(C) to recommend procedures and courses whereby the wishes of the people of the Trust Territory may be ascertained with respect to the future political status of Micronesia.

(D) to undertake a comparative analysis and to select areas of study of the manners and procedures whereby the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Western Samoa, and Cook Islands, and other territories and developing nations have achieved their self-government, independence, or other status.

The Commission has observed that these four categories are closely related, that the examination of theoretical alternatives specified in (B) cannot be divorced from the study of practical examples in (D): that the investigation of the people's wishes requested in (C) is at this time necessarily linked with the development of political education mentioned in (A). Moreover, the previously mentioned external developments lend to the recommendation of a course of political action in (A) an importance that might not, at first, have been anticipated.

The following pages contain treatments of all the areas specified in Senate Joint Resolution 25. A course of political

education (A) is presented in a chapter entitled "Political Education." A course of political action (A) is introduced in The Statement of Intent, is expanded in a chapter on self-government and free association, and is further elaborated in the Commission's nine position papers.

An examination of "political possibilities and alternatives," as requested in Section B was presented at some length in the Commission's interim report last session and is now continued in two additional sections in this report: first, in the chapter on self-government and free association; second, in the section entitled "Other Alternatives." Section C, which requested investigation into methods by which "the people's wishes may be ascertained" is answered in a position paper entitled "The Wishes of the People." The comparative study of other island groups requested in Section D is not presented in this report because its publication would have been beyond our resources and, in any case, would have brought this report to an unmanageable length. However, Section D will be covered in sessions between the Commission and other members of Congress.

The following report may, therefore, be read as a series of individual responses to the requests of Senate Joint Resolution 25. But the reader is soon likely to recognize that the four separate areas of inquiry are, in fact, one and should be considered as such.

The Final Report of the Future Political Status Commission is organized as follows:

I. Introduction.

II. Statement of Intent: On April 17, 1969, just as it was about to begin public hearings in the six districts, the Political Status Commission released its "Statement of Intent." The Statement was issued to give focus to the hearings which were about to commence and to provide some indication - to Micronesians and Americans - of the Status Commission's thinking.

III. On Changing Status: A summary of the conditions which have led to the discussion of Micronesia's future political status.

IV. "A Self-Governing State In Free Association With the United States." This section describes the political status recommended in the Commission's Statement of Intent. Special emphasis is given to the two basic concepts of self-government and free association.

V. Position Papers. These nine papers concentrate on issues which dominated the more than fifty public hearings conducted by the Status Commission in April and May of this year. They present the recurrent questions and then register the Commission's response. These papers may be read, therefore, as a summary of the public hearings and as an elaboration of the Commission's current position.

VI. Other Alternatives. An examination of the advantages and disadvantages of other alternatives studied by the Commission - including its recommended second choice, independence.

Political Status Commission does not at this time solicit supporting legislation. In a situation where so much depends on discussions and negotiations with the United States and the United Nations, it would be premature for the Congress to initiate unilateral legislation on the matter of status. What the Status Commission does hope is that the members of Congress, having read this report, will endorse the two basic principles of self-government and free association with the United States, for these two principles are the essence of the Commission's recommendation.

The Commission maintains that Congressional endorsement of the concept of a self-governing Micronesia in free association with the United States will strengthen the position of the Micronesian representatives who are designated to participate in preliminary negotiations in Washington. And, so that Micronesian representatives may approach these sessions with a specific proposal bearing the seal of the Congress of Micronesia, we recommend that the Congress of Micronesia formally request U. S. Congressional passage of an enabling act for Micronesia, similar in this respect to the enabling act which authorized the writing of Puerto Rico's Constitution. Such an enabling act, if granted by the United States Congress, would indicate America's endorsement of the movement towards self-government in Micronesia. The United States' response to the Congress of Micronesia's request for an enabling act will be a basic test of future U. S. policy in the Trust Territory. The

best interests of the United States and Micronesia. A request for an enabling act will indicate whether the United States agrees that this is so.

Twenty-two years ago, when the islands of Micronesia were constituted as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and placed under American administration, the United Nations directed that the administering authority "promote the development of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory toward self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned." At that time, when the traumatic damage and dislocation of war had barely passed, when the distance between the Territory's six districts seemed so great as to call into question the area's very existence as a single administrative unit, when American plans in the Trust Territory were as vague as Micronesians' future intentions, there was little urgency about what has come to be known as the "future political status" of the Trust Territory. Yet with the passage of time, with the formation in 1961 of the Council of Micronesia, in 1964 of the Congress of Micronesia, and in 1967 of the Congress' Political Status Commission, we have reached our years of decision.

The Political Status Commission was created to study the alternatives before Micronesia and to make its recommendations to the Congress and to the people of Micronesia. We have not taken this task lightly nor have we accomplished our work quickly. Two years of study have gone into the recommendations we now make. We have consulted amongst ourselves. We have consulted scholars and administrators. We have weighed the interests of America and of our own people. Members of the Commission have travelled to the Virgin Islands, a territory of the United States, to Puerto Rico, a commonwealth of the United States, as well as to Washington.

Most recently, in order to learn what these islands could reasonably expect or hope for the future, the whole Commission visited island groups throughout the Pacific. We saw American Samoa, a territory of the United States, and Western Samoa, a former territory which has chosen independence. In Fiji we visited a crown colony of Britain. In Papua-New Guinea we toured the only other surviving Trust Territory in the world. Also, in our travels, we talked with leaders of Nauru, an independent island-nation, and the Cook Islands, a state in free association with New Zealand. We believe that we have acquainted ourselves with every alternative we might possibly face; that we have studied and contemplated every reasonable political arrangement for Micronesia. After all our study and travel, after candid discussion with each other and deep personal thought, after having considered as many as a dozen political possibilities, we have reduced the desirable alternatives to two, and from among those two, we have chosen one.

To the Congress of Micronesia, to the district legislatures and municipal governments of Micronesia, to the Trust Territory administration and the Government of the United States, the Political



Status Commission makes the following recommendation: that the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands be constituted as a self-governing state and that this Micronesian state--internally self-governing and with Micronesian control of all its branches, including the executive--negotiate entry into free association with the United States.

In recommending that the Trust Territory become a free associated state, the Political Status Commission recognizes two inescapable realities: the need for Micronesian self-government and the fact of long-standing American interest in this area.

We choose a free state because the continuation of a quasi-colonial status would prove degrading to Micronesia and unworthy of America. Difficulties and problems will surely arise, but the administering authority in these islands must become an authority administered by Micronesians. At the same time, we choose an associated state because we recognize the historically unique partnership between Micronesia and the United States. In recommending free association with the United States, we seek not an end but a re-definition, renewal and improvement of this partnership.

Whatever our particular evaluations of the American administration in Micronesia may be, we feel that one contribution has been indelible, one achievement almost unqualified: the idea of democratic, representative, constitutional government. Our recommendation of a free associated state is indissolubly linked to our desire for such a democratic, representative, constitutional government. We endorse this system--which was brought to us by America and which we have come to know as an essentially American system.

Yet our partnership with the United States and our endorsement of the American democratic system must be joined by our wish to live as Micronesians, to maintain our Micronesian identity, to create a Micronesian state. Such a state, we believe, would be a credit to America and to ourselves. As a self-governing state in free association with the United States, our past twenty years of partnership would be raised to a new level in a compact, not between guardian and ward, but between more nearly equal friends.

Now we must ask, as others will ask, what can a self-governing Micronesian state hope for from its free association with the United States? And what can the United States expect from Micronesia? As a self-governing state, Micronesia will continue to look to America: for representation and protection in international affairs, for material and human assistance in the affairs of government, both in times of crisis and in day-to-day operations. As a self-governing state, Micronesia's needs will be as great or greater than as a Territory. We do not underestimate the problems we will face. We do not wish for any lessening of American concern for Micronesia or of American presence in Micronesia.

Now, the ( ) will America benefit by entering into association with Micronesia? How can Micronesia hope to reward continued American contributions to its development? We would point out--without the slightest suggestion of self-righteousness--that there was an element of trust, of moral obligation, involved when the United States undertook responsibility for these islands, and that such an obligation, which was begun when these islands were in ruins, should not be ended when they are reaching for political maturity.

Yet there is one item of material value which Micronesians can offer the United States--an item which is most precious in Micronesia and to Micronesians: the use of their land. Micronesians recognize that their islands are of strategic value, that the United States may require the use of some areas for purposes of military training and defense. We have seen the strategic value of these islands, have seen them conquered in historic battles, have seen them used for nuclear experiments and missile testing. Our experience with the military has not always been encouraging. But as a self-governing state in free association with the United States, we would accept the necessity of such military needs and we would feel confident that we could enter into responsible negotiations with the military, endeavoring to meet American requirements while protecting our own interests.

Relinquishing use of land, accepting the presence of large numbers of military personnel, accepting the risk of treatment as a target area by a hostile power in war are not conditions to be lightly undertaken. But as a self-governing state we would be far more prepared to face these prospects than as a Trust Territory.

Thus, with a sense of the profound responsibilities upon all concerned, the Political Status Commission repeats its recommendation that Micronesia be constituted as a self-governing state in free association with the United States.

✓ To turn this recommendation into reality, we must face long and complex negotiations. The United States may be called upon to make unprecedented provisions and accommodations, but we are confident that they will meet with us openly and in good faith. From the time it acquired territories in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, through the settlement of the continental United States, the acquisition of Alaska and Hawaii, Puerto Rico and other island areas, the United States has dealt flexibly and imaginatively with its territories. It has shown a willingness to evaluate each territory as a separate case--and Micronesia surely is that.

For ourselves, we look forward to the success of future negotiations with the United States. But if these negotiations should fail, if it should not be possible to achieve the alternative we recommend, then we have only one remaining course. It is the second alternative mentioned in the Trusteeship Agreement, an alternative which might bring economic hardship and administrative difficulties. That alternative is independence.

Independence is not the alternative we now recommend, but if it should prove impossible to renew our partnership with the United States as an associated free state, the Political Status Commission feels that independence would be the only road left open to us.

In the times to come, we will look to the United States for friendship and aid; but, whatever our relationship with the United States, whether as an independent nation or an associated free state, we must also look to Micronesians, look to ourselves. We maintain that the basic ownership of these islands rests with Micronesians and so does the basic responsibility for governing them.

-ON CHANGING STATUS

The aspiration to self-government is part of the love of freedom. A people, brought together by similarities of culture and a shared experience, inevitably seeks to control its own affairs. This is the position in Micronesia. Despite the physical distances and cultural differences between the districts comprising the present Trust Territory, our people have always had many things in common; and, from these similarities of background and the shared history of more recent times, they have evolved a sense of commonweal. But a people, like an individual, does not, and cannot, achieve its destiny alone. It is for these basic reasons that the Commission recommends, for Micronesia, full internal self-government, in free association with the United States.

The Trusteeship Agreement of 1947, which conferred responsibility for Micronesia upon the United States, instructed the administering authority to "promote the development of the inhabitants of the trust territory towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned." This instruction was accepted without question by the United States--as it was bound to be, since that country has espoused the cause of freedom ever since it obtained its own independence nearly 200 years ago. But it also reflected the general will of the United Nations. Each country that has assumed responsibility for a Trust Territory undertook

to prepare it for self-government or independence. Subsequent action by the United Nations and the various administering authorities has confirmed the common commitment to this objective. All but two of the eleven territories placed under trusteeship a little over 20 years ago have already attained self-government or independence. In the context of world politics and of world opinion the recommendation of self-government for Micronesia requires no defense.

Yet there are specific reasons, of course, for the Commission's conclusion that a new political status is necessary for Micronesia. Some derive from deficiencies inherent in any form of political dependency, others from the character of particular policies adopted by the administering authority.

✓ The United States has not lacked goodwill, but it has lacked a clearly defined objective in Micronesia. Our scattered islands have occupied a well-recognized place in American military and strategic thinking; but they have presented problems of social, economic and political development that Americans have found novel and perplexing. Till recent years American officials commonly believed it was best that the Micronesian people should continue to follow the way of life of their ancestors. This point of view had a sad irony for the large number of Micronesians who had to maintain such a way of life on islands strewn with unexploded bombs and other debris of the Second World War or in places to which they had been moved to permit the testing of nuclear weapons in the vicinity of their traditional homes. It produced a sense of frustration in those to whom it meant denial of the opportunity

to rise to positions of responsibility in the modern world.

The United States was slow in taking effective action to bring the Micronesians "towards self-government or independence." The Trust Territory did not possess a popularly elected legislature till the Congress of Micronesia first met in 1955. And, even now, the powers of Congress are severely restricted. In respect of legislation, the High Commissioner has a power of veto, which he frequently exercises. In respect of finance, the expenditure of Federal funds is withheld from Congressional control.

Executive power still remains wholly outside Micronesian control. The High Commissioner is responsible to the Secretary of the Interior and, through him, to the President of the United States. This line of responsibility is derived from the American principle of the separation of powers. In the United States, however, both the Chief Executive and Congress are ultimately responsible to the American people. In Micronesia, on the other hand, while Congress is responsible to the people, the Executive is not.

The resultant lack of contact between executive and legislature detrimentally affects the work of government at every level. At the top the High Commissioner and Congress are unable to reach or maintain the mutual understanding of methods and objectives that is desirable. At the district level, relations between the District Administrator and District Legislature are similarly inhibited.

The consequences of this division between the legislative and executive branches are apparent in every aspect of policy.

The recurrent and unresolved dispute on the control of land and about the administering authority's power of eminent domain reflects the division with stark clarity. Similarly, it is evident in attitudes towards the Micronesianization of the Civil Service. Though a few Micronesians have been appointed to very senior positions during the last few years, there has been no comprehensive program - involving training and the broadening of the individual's experience - aimed at replacing Americans by Micronesians as rapidly as possible. In the absence of such a policy, it is not surprising perhaps that points of friction within the service - in regard to salary scales and conditions of employment - have been permitted to fester and expand.

Only recently - in Secretary Michel's statement at Saipan on May 4, 1969 - has there been a clear indication that these problems have been recognized; but, even now, a nagging doubt remains as to whether their social and political complexity has been understood.

The Administration's ineffectiveness in respect of economic development derives only in part from these defects of structure. Again, the United States Government has not been lacking in goodwill. It has, indeed, been generous in sponsoring surveys of Micronesia's needs and prospects. But it - and the Trust Territory Administration - has lacked the sense of urgency to ensure that action followed the presentation of reports. As a result, the opportunities for development for bringing Micronesia nearer to the point at which it might become an economically viable unit, have not been realized. It is perhaps easier for the United

States to increase the Federal appropriation year by year than to promote an active policy of economic development. For the Micronesians, on the other hand, such a trend is socially damaging and politically disastrous. No people, proud and conscious of the quality of its inheritance, can acquiesce in the proposition that it should become the pensioner of another.

It is for reasons such as these that the Commission has reached the conclusion that the early attainment of full self-government is essential. Only a government of Micronesians, by Micronesians, and for Micronesians can bring justice and content and national self-confidence to our people.

Only a Micronesian government can preserve, for the future, those values and traditions that we have inherited from our ancestors and maintained through long years of war and foreign rule.

When the United States created the Congress of Micronesia, it took its first important step towards promoting the political advancement of the Trust Territory. Before that step was taken, most of the other countries that had formerly been administered under Trusteeship Agreements had already assumed the responsibilities of self-government or independence. To recommend self-government for Micronesia at this late stage is thus in no way a radical proposal. It is the second part of our recommendation - that self-government should be exercised in free association with the United States - that is unusual, in the context of current world opinion. As we have explained more fully elsewhere in this Report,



of Micronesia. We shall need massive assistance for many years to come; and we believe that the United States, moved both by its sincere desire to help us, as well as by its strategic interest in the area, will listen sympathetically to our requests. We value, too, our association with Americans and with the American way of life. Our differences, in the past, have been a consequence of the system under which we have been governed, not of incompatibility between us as peoples or as individuals. Under self-government, in free association with the United States, we therefore believe that Micronesia can most fittingly take its permanent place in the world.

## A SELF-GOVERNING STATE IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

The Status Commission recommends a self-governing Micronesian state in free association with the United States.

To create a "self-governing Micronesian state in free association with the United States" will require consultation among Micronesians, negotiations with Americans, and discussions in the United Nations. It would, therefore, be premature for the Commission to present a detailed description of its proposed political status for Micronesia - for it is in the nature of the Commission's proposal that the structuring of the new Micronesian government will be the task of a delegated Micronesian group, duly enabled by the United States and selected by their fellow Micronesians for this purpose. Although it is leaving the ultimate design of the Micronesian government to a Micronesian Constitutional Convention, the Status Commission maintains that there are two important principles which should constitute the basis of any future political status. These two concepts are (1) self government and (2) free association.

### Self Government

The Status Commission maintains that self-government should involve the direct and unconstrained involvement of the Micronesian people in the foundation of their government and, specifically, in the preparation, adoption, and subsequent amendment of the basic documents of government. Beyond the foundation of government, self-government means Micronesian control of all branches of government, of funds, policies, programs and personnel. The Commission has repeatedly emphasized its hope for continued

American interest and presence in Micronesia. The best way to accommodate such interest and presence, however, would be through the creation of a Micronesian government, a government, both responsive and responsible, which would be founded on the recognition in the United Nations, the United States, and Micronesia that "the basic ownership of these islands rests with Micronesians and so does the basic responsibility for governing them."

#### Free Association with the United States

The United Nations has defined free association as follows:

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- "(a) Free association should be the result of a free and voluntary choice by the peoples of the territory concerned expressed by informed and democratic processes. It should be one which respects the individuality and the cultural characteristics of the territory and its peoples, and retains for the peoples of the territory, which is associated with an Independent State, the freedom to modify its status through the expression of their will by democratic means through constitutional processes.
  - (b) The associated territory should have the right to determine its internal constitution without outside interference, in accordance with due constitutional processes and the freely expressed wishes of the people. This does not preclude consultations as appropriate or necessary under the terms of the free association agreed upon."

The Commission recognizes the wide spectrum of interests which have linked the United States and Micronesia in a "strategic trusteeship." That very term - strategic trusteeship - implies the variety of interests, ranging from pragmatic military considerations to idealistic stewardship, which have mingled and sometimes clashed in the history of the administering authority. Yet, despite past difficulty with United States' purposes and cross-purposes

here, the Status Commission acknowledges the validity of these interests and feels that they can be accommodated on reasonable terms in a self-governing Micronesia. Therefore, the Status Commission's request for free association with the United States is based on a recognition of American interest - or interests - in Micronesia.

However, the request for free association is likewise founded on a straightforward recognition of Micronesian need for continued aid from America, "for representation and protection in international affairs, for material and human assistance in the affairs of government, both in times of crisis and in day-to-day operations." This free association rests upon more than legal mandates and mutual needs, however. Additionally, it derives from the feeling that association, partnership between the United States and Micronesia is a good thing - apart from the individual benefits received by either partner. The Status Commission considers that this free association is far more than a mutually advantageous bargain; rather, it is a relationship of continuing friendship and respect. Though the negotiation of free association must necessarily contend with such hard issues as land and money, the Political Status Commission maintains that the element of friendship and mutual regard should not be forgotten. If this free association has about it the elements of a bargain, it is a bargain, a compact, among friends, with all the latitude, esteem, and concern that friendship implies.

In virtually every hearing conducted by the Political Status Commission, speakers inquired what effect a change in status would have on current standards of living. This concern expressed itself in numerous specific questions about taxes, wages, prices, and budgets in the proposed self-governing Micronesian state. Underlying these various queries was one basic question: how will the quality of life in the proposed state compare with the quality of life Micronesians know today?

The Status Commission recognizes that Micronesians today live in a variety of styles, ranging from a classic communal subsistence situation to a highly competitive job-oriented cash economy. Lifestyles in Micronesia vary accordingly. The Commission likewise recognizes that the disparate nature of Micronesian life, the vast gap between outer island and district center environments, and the contrast between the districts themselves all combine to forbid generalizations about today's Micronesian economy or tomorrow's.

The Status Commission maintains, however, that future economic policy should reflect Micronesian interests and - where these interests vary - the policy should so far as possible, reflect these contrasting interests. No group should be forced to move backward, to return to a style of life or a standard of living it has left behind. Likewise, no group should be pressed towards a transition which is not of its own choosing.

Thus, the answer to inquiries about standards of living is that current options in Micronesia must be left open. Micronesians

must be free to retain at least as wide a spectrum of life-styles as they have today. The Status Commission concludes that among those Micronesians who live in semi-American district center economies, there is little feeling for austerity. It is likely that the future Micronesian government will be obliged to maintain and increase the services and opportunities such citizens know today. Any change of political status which involved a substantial possibility of regression would be unacceptable: unacceptable to the Status Commission and to the majority of Micronesians affected.

But while the standard of living in district centers - and the essential government services necessary to support that standard - must be maintained, the Status Commission suggests that the Micronesian government also accommodate the desires of those Micronesian citizens who choose to continue in more traditional economic and cultural patterns.

Future economic policy must, therefore, reflect a careful consideration of the needs and hopes, strength and weaknesses of interest groups in Micronesia today. The Status Commission will not endorse a political status which imperils current living standards or threatens Micronesians' chosen style of life.

#### STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

During public hearings with the Status Commission, many persons inquired about the nature and structure of a self-governing Micronesia in free association with the United States. How would the Executive power be handled? How - and by whom - would the Constitution be written? What would be the distribution of authority

between "headquarters," district, and municipal governments? And how would the separate identities and life-styles of the six districts be dealt with in a united Micronesia?

Beyond its broad endorsement of democratic, representative, constitutional government, and beyond the thrust for self-government which dominated its Statement of Intent, the Status Commission feels that the structure of the future Micronesian government should be determined by a broadly-representative Constitutional Convention (See: "The Wishes of the People"). Ultimately it will be for the elected and recognized leaders of Micronesia to devise a workable, responsive government, and it will be for the people of Micronesia to accept or reject such a government.

However, statements made in hearings do offer some preliminary indications of the sort of government Micronesians seem to favor. Therefore, the Commission reports some of these indications now, only so that they may serve as a basis for future consideration.

(1) There appears to be a general consensus that the particular interests - economic, political, cultural - of each district must be respected in any future arrangement. In the choice of the government's leadership, the expenditure of its funds, the making of policy, no district or group of districts must be permitted to dominate, even though this district or group of districts may claim numerical superiority. In this regard, Commission members have suggested that chief executive power might initially, at least, be vested in an executive council representing all districts, rather than in a single individual from one district.

(2) The particular sentiments of each district - especially as relating to land problems - must be reckoned with. So far as possible, no uniform standards should be imposed from above if it is possible to settle issues on a district by district basis.

(3) A maximum feasible decentralization of government is desirable. The need for delegation of authority from headquarters to responsible district and municipal level governments seems to be one of the generally accepted lessons of the past twenty years.

(4) In general, the idea of Micronesian unity must be complemented with a continuing respect for the diversity of cultures which constitute Micronesia. "Micronesian unity" is a fit basis for government only insofar as the Micronesian government recognizes the diversity and heterogeneity of the six districts.

#### THE COST OF GOVERNMENT

In its Statement of Intent, the Status Commission emphasized its desire for continued and improved partnership between the United States and Micronesia. The Commission further declared: "As a self-governing state, Micronesia will continue to look to America: for representation and protection in international affairs, for material and human assistance in the affairs of government, both in times of crisis and in day-to-day operations...We do not wish for any lessening of American concern for Micronesia or of American presence in Micronesia."



Many Micronesians, while endorsing the principle of self-government, have questioned what the cost of such government would be and how responsive the United States would be to such a self-governing Micronesia. These Micronesians recognize, as does the Status Commission, that no political alternative should be recommended if its adoption would result in hardship and suffering for the citizens of Micronesia.

The Status Commission's recommendation rests upon the assumption that America's interest in and sense of obligation towards Micronesia will not end with the creation of a self-governing Micronesia. The Commission recognizes that, for the foreseeable future, any Micronesian government would rely on at least as much outside aid as is today being received. Although the Micronesian government would likely achieve some economies by shifting priorities and policies, the demands to complete capital improvements and develop agriculture, fisheries, and tourism would keep the minimum cost of government at today's level. Although budgetary and other reforms in the current government are properly a concern of the Committees on Government Organization and on the Budget, the Status Commission is of the opinion that basic government services might be provided at less cost than is the case today. The Status Commission welcomes study and reform of the current administration, for the greater the improvements achieved before a change in status, the smoother the transition to Micronesian administration.

Thus, for any Micronesian government to meet its responsibilities, substantial aid will be necessary. The Political Status Commission recommends that Micronesia look to the United States as a first source of aid. Should the United States be unable or unwilling to underwrite the support of a Micronesian self-government, the Status Commission and/or the Congress of Micronesia would be obliged to review remaining alternatives at that point.

It is recognized that Independence, the second alternative listed in the Commission's Statement of Intent, would be a long-range goal involving indefinite prolongation of the Trusteeship System and of the United States' stewardship as administering authority. The Status Commission emphasizes that failure to negotiate a self-governing Micronesia in free association with the United States would NOT then cause an abrupt and immediate plunge into the hardships and uncertainties of independence. Any change in political status of the Trust Territory will require a thorough, carefully-organized period of transition and, no political status would require a longer period of transition than that of independence.

While recognizing the formidable obstacles currently connected with the status of independence, the Commission maintains that, as a recognized long-range goal, independence is far more satisfactory than an indefinite maintenance of the territorial status quo. The Commission holds that a trusteeship oriented towards the eventual goal of independence would be far sounder than a trusteeship whose goal was a mere maintenance and ad-hoc improvement of current norms.

## THE MILITARY

The Status Commission's public hearings revealed that, after twenty-five years during which American military activity in the Trust Territory was largely confined to the Marshall Islands district, Micronesians are gradually becoming aware of the implications of a strategic trusteeship - of the fact that under current legal authority, the United States may locate military bases on any Micronesian real estate at any time. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Commission's hearings was the degree of anxiety at the prospect of the location of U. S. military bases in Micronesia. This concern expressed itself in three different ways.

(1) USE OF LAND - In any island environment, under even the best of circumstances, one would expect the acquisition of land by an outside power to be difficult. In Micronesia this basic difficulty is compounded by the fact that four foreign powers have had control of Micronesian land and have affected land records and patterns; by the fact that each of the first three powers left abruptly as a result of war, leaving a new stratum of legal conflict and confusion behind; by the fact that such military land acquisitions as the United States has already made (in the Marshalls) have set distinctly unfortunate precedents; by the fact that, given the uncertainties of the current trusteeship system, the government's legal power of eminent domain and the very concept of public land are subject to challenge. In such

a context, talk of land acquisition by any outside interest - let alone the military - aggravates long-standing land problems and appears to create new ones.

(2) SOCIAL/CULTURAL IMPACT - Numerous speakers, young and old, confessed their concern that, if large military bases were located in Micronesia, the integrity of the Micronesian government and of Micronesian culture would be compromised. They suspected that the impact of numerous foreigners on vulnerable, conservative, numerically-insignificant Micronesian communities would be more than the islands' society could sustain.

(3) RISK OF WAR - Some speakers also declared that by accepting location of U. S. military bases on Micronesian land, Micronesians would be involving themselves in the United States' global posture, associating themselves with a foreign policy they would have little or no hope of influencing, and exposing themselves to the risk of treatment as a target area by a belligerent power in the event of war. To outsiders, this fear of immediate wholesale destruction on Micronesia's small islands may seem inflated - but the Status Commission is aware that many Micronesians can recall some indelible precedents in this regard.

In its hearings, as in its Statement of Intent, the Status Commission has maintained that Micronesians would be wise to recognize, for so long as it continues, the evident strategic importance of their islands - the location of these islands

between the great land masses and the great powers of Asia and America. What Micronesians need not accept, however, is a posture of total passivity. Having recognized the realities of geography and history, it is left to Micronesians to make the best of their time and their place. A Micronesian government will be far more responsive to Micronesian needs than an administering authority (particularly an administering authority with military interests) ever could be. If the United States should request use of land for strategic purposes, it would be the task of the Micronesian government to negotiate in the best interests of Micronesia as a whole, as well as the individual districts and landowners affected. It would be the obligation of this Micronesian government to negotiate where, on what terms, and with what compensation the U. S. military might be received. In military as in other matters, this Micronesian government will be responsible for the sound management of Micronesian land. It will be expected to comprehend and contain whatever social/cultural impact the military might bring. And, if the Micronesian government cannot eliminate the risk of war, it can at least achieve for its constituents the maximum benefits of peace.

#### POLITICAL EDUCATION

The Status Commission acknowledges that its public hearings in all six districts involved, in large part, an element of political education; indeed, it can probably be claimed that these hearings in themselves constituted one of the most ambitious efforts ever

undertaken in the area of Micronesian political education - and this was despite the limitations of scheduling and transportation which the Commission encountered. Because anyone who holds hearings on territory-wide public matters in Micronesia necessarily becomes involved in political education, because political education itself was a frequent topic of discussion in these hearings, and because the Commission was directed to make recommendations in the area of political education, we register the following general comments with regard to political education.

(1) The Commission acknowledges that, to make a wise choice of political status and to participate in self-government, the citizens of Micronesia must be brought to a higher level of political awareness. In public hearings, many speakers who were confronted with the issue of status for the first time and who quickly recognized the importance of the issue, requested more information, more meetings, more pamphlets, more programs, more time. The Commission recognizes the validity of these requests.

(2) The Commission acknowledges that there are special difficulties in bringing the Micronesian public's level of political education to even the minimum desirable level. In addition to the recognized barriers of language, culture, distance, money and personnel which complicate any Trust Territory-wide enterprise, the following obstacles block ready progress in political education:

(a) the fact that past efforts in this area have been slight; what political sophistication Micronesians do possess has been acquired piecemeal through experience, not through instruction; in general this experience has been with local and district governments rather than territorial administrations; since such experience has been of a local nature, discussions of status turn upon comparisons of past administrations which have come and gone in Micronesia: comparisons which, however perceptive, do not directly relate to the complexities of the territorial status question as it exists today.

(b) the fact that information media used in other parts of the world are inadequate, unsuitable, or unavailable in Micronesia today; the fact that the most effective means of communication in Micronesia - personal appearances before small groups - is also the most expensive and time consuming.

(c) the fact that the tendency - in some areas - to rely upon traditional and elected leaders often ruffles the individual citizen's role in political decisions; in some - though by no means all - areas, there is an inclination to accept the judgment of recognized leaders even when those leaders themselves have expressly solicited the participation of all citizens.

(3) The Status Commission also recognizes that a third and perhaps decisive factor impinges on the matter of political education: the possibility that it may be in the best interests of Micronesia to select a status before the course of political education has reached a satisfactory completion. Events outside of Micronesia may overtake our aims in the field of political education, rendering it unsatisfactory or dangerous to delay. It is incumbent upon the leadership of Micronesia to weigh the need for political education against the imperative desire for the most satisfactory future political status. Although it is clear that in the long range the interests of political education and self-government are complementary, it is possible that in the immediate future this might not be the case and that, by delaying action until political education has been completed, initiatives and options on the larger question of status may be lost.

Having noted the above obligations and constraints, the Political Status Commission registers the following recommendations with regard to political education.

(1) That there must be a full and accelerated use of existing media, however limited these may be. This includes such recognized media as radio and newspapers.

(2) Political education - now - should also involve a heightened scrutiny by Micronesians of the nature of the Trust Territory government today; an increased attention to the policies and operations of all branches of the current



government. The current Trust Territory government is a specimen attempt at administering the Trust Territory - and Micronesians should study it as such, continually evaluating what elements should remain, what elements might be altered after a change in political status.

(3) Such facilities as village meetings, informal discussions, public occasions, visits to districts, must also be utilized. In particular, it is incumbent upon the members of Congress to make use of their residence in home districts and their travel in other districts to generate a continuing discussion and heightened awareness of the status question. The whole existing political (and social) infrastructure from the Congress of Micronesia to municipal councils must be turned to consideration of this important question. It is the members of Congress who must take the lead in such a movement - whatever their individual opinions may be in regard to specific political alternatives.

(4) The Commission recognized that even the maximum use of existing facilities may not meet the requirements of the situation. The Commission therefore recommends exploration of cooperation between the Departments of Education and Public Affairs so that the joint resources of these agencies, combined with the efforts of a designated Congressional group, might result in a satisfactory mutual effort in political education. While it is beyond the current power of the Status Commission or the Congress itself to fund,

staff, and operate a Department of Political Education, the Commission feels that the prospects of a combined political education effort should be investigated.

In conclusion, the Commission recognizes the need for political education and recommends the use of all available facilities and opportunities to advance the cause of political education. However, it also acknowledges that such education will progress in a rapidly changing political context; and that in view of the exigencies and realities of the overall political situation, the Congress may not and should not be solely governed by the progress or lack of progress in this area.

#### MARIANAS INTEGRATION: A PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCE

The Trusteeship Agreement directed the United States to "promote the development of the inhabitants of the trust territory toward self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned." In its hearings in the Marianas District (May 29-June 16) the Political Status Commission encountered many of the concerns common to all districts: a concern for economic development and personal betterment, increased political education and responsive locally-oriented government. But, in the Marianas, the Political Status Commission also encountered one "particular circumstance" which it feels obliged to report: the freely-expressed wish of many Marianas residents to immediately unite (or "reintegrate") with the United States Territory of Guam.

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Advocates of Marianas union presented a variety of arguments on behalf of their cause:

(1) Large number of Marianas residents report a sense of ethnic kinship with residents of Guam and feel that these ties of language, religion, culture and blood should be reflected in any future political organization.

(2) Marianas residents feel that union with Guam would quickly provide such benefits of U. S. Citizenship as residents of Guam now enjoy.

(3) Marianas residents contend that they have constituted a minority district in the Trust Territory and that they would continue to constitute a minority in any future political arrangement which included the current districts of the Trust Territory but excluded Guam.

(4) Marianas residents contend that, as a minority district, they have not exerted appropriate power in the Congress of Micronesia and, more specifically, that the amount of legislative appropriations expended in the Marianas does not approach the fiscal contribution generated in the district. This disproportion between revenues generated and appropriations returned might be accelerated if the Marianas became the site of military bases while other districts did not accept or were not chosen for such installations.

(5) Advocates of union with Guam also declare that such union would end travel restrictions between Guam and the Northern Marianas and would permit residents of the Northern

Marianas to seek employment on Guam. Such employment would be controlled by U. S. minimum wage laws and would therefore be more remunerative than most current opportunities in the Trust Territory. In addition to citing economic opportunities, advocates of union with Guam also mention the island's medical, educational, and other facilities.

These are some of the reasons presented to the Political Status Commission by advocates of Marianas reintegration. It was difficult to determine whether a political arrangement which included all of the Trust Territory and Guam would accommodate these demands, but it was clear that the integration of the Marianas with Guam was an immediate goal - apart from whatever arrangement would involve the other five districts.

The Political Status Commission recognizes that the call for Marianas integration includes a powerful emotional component as well as some specific practical motives. Anyone who contemplates the political future of the Trust Territory must take such a movement into account.

It must be noted, however, that this movement is not without qualification or opposition. For one thing, a significant ethnic minority in the Marianas does not look to Guam as "a mother island." Also, some witnesses before the Commission opposed reintegration for other reasons:

- (1) that the grant of U. S. Citizenship would open the Marianas to land ownership by highly-capitalized non-Micronesian U. S. citizens and that the indigenous population might become landless as a result.

(2) that union with Guam would relegate the Northern Marianas to secondary political and economic status and, more specifically, that Saipan, losing its status as a headquarters location, would have slight voice and slight budgetary power in a political union dominated by Guam.

(3) that the immediate imposition of stateside standards prevailing on Guam would dislocate numbers of employees now at work in education, medicine, and other fields.

These are some of the arguments the Commission heard for and against Marianas integration. In three weeks of hearings the Commission did not, of course, conduct a plebiscite, nor did it pass on the validity of prior plebiscites. It did not assess whether the cause of integration was becoming more or less powerful. Its sessions were limited by time and scheduling difficulties. But the Commission was impressed by the emotional content, legal complexity, and moral difficulties of the integration question.

The Commission feels that the United States and the United Nations, as well as Micronesians, must consider this issue and arrive at an accommodation which respects the interests of Micronesia at large, the interests of the Marianas district, and the interests of minorities within the Marianas district. The Commission also hopes that people of the Marianas District will have a chance to hear all sides of the status question; that speakers will be able to present their views in a reasonable atmosphere and that - after calm discourse and careful study -

residents of the district will be given a chance to register their will in an organized, statistically sound fashion.

Ultimately, the question of reintegration must be resolved by the United States and the United Nations for it was they, not the Political Status Commission, which brought the districts of Micronesia together.

But, in reporting this "particular circumstance" in the Marianas, the Commission urges the Congress to assist in a resolution which will be generally satisfactory. The Political Status Commission hereby indicates that, unless the projected harm to minorities in the Marianas or to Micronesia at large is intolerable, it will not oppose a political union which reflects the freely-expressed desire of a majority of the residents of the district. The Political Status Commission also registers its hope that the course of separation will not be taken until all possibilities for partnership have been explored.

#### GUAM

The Status Commission's public hearings revealed widespread interest in the relationship between any future Micronesian state and the United States Territory of Guam. This interest was not confined to those residents of the Northern Marianas who advocate reintegration of their islands with Guam. On the contrary, many residents of all districts have come to look upon Guam as a source of education, transportation, employment and medical aid. Guam's degree of economic development as well as its very size and location

render it difficult to ignore - particularly difficult for those who contemplate the political future of Micronesia. It is likely that the current ad hoc, random partnership between Guam and the Trust Territory will be increased and improved in the future. It is also not impossible that the current United States Territory of Guam and the current Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands might eventually comprise a single political unit.

Past concentration on the specific issue of Marianas integration has tended to obscure the greater possibilities of partnership between Guam and all of the Trust Territory. There has been insufficient consideration given the common future of the two territories, and there has been insufficient communication between them in this regard. But the Status Commission feels that the time has come for citizens in both territories to evaluate their positions in regard to each other. The islands' geographical location and their mutual administration by the United States render such thought and communication imperative. Despite existing legal, economic and cultural differences, an effort must be made to define what will be the best long-range political relationship between Guam and the Trust Territory.

The Status Commission maintains that to effect an improved relationship and possible union between the two territories, certain accommodations would be necessary on both sides - as well as from the United States. Unlike Guam, the Trust Territory is currently under the aegis of the United Nations. And, until the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement is terminated, it is unlikely that the United

Trust Territory, and Guam. The Status Commission points out, however, that one of the goals of its present proposal is the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. The self-governing Micronesia that would be thus created would then be able to make its decision with regard to Guam and to act in accordance with the best interests of its people.

The issue of union with Guam is a complicated one and it is not for the Status Commission to commit the future Micronesian government to any course of action in this regard. But the Status Commission observes that a self-governing Micronesia would be in a far better position than a Trust Territory to alter its relationship with Guam.

Therefore, as it registers its recommendation that the Trust Territory become a self-governing Micronesian state in free association with the United States, the Status Commission also looks forward to a continuing dialogue between the six districts and Guam, so that each area will define its common interests and hopes. One of the basic interests of the Trust Territory is for self-government, as was promised in the Trusteeship Agreement. We believe self-government should involve the power to adopt and amend the basic document of government. The Status Commission maintains that this document should be the work of the Micronesian people and not the legislation of another group, however benevolent. The Status Commission concludes that if the residents of Guam, through appeal or amendment of the current Organic Act, join the residents of



the Trust Territory in a movement towards full internal self-government, then the possibilities of future partnership will be as self-evident as the need for careful discussions of that partnership.

#### NEGOTIATIONS

Any change of political status in Micronesia must be approved by the United States Congress, as well as by the United Nations. This basic fact - clearly enunciated in the Trusteeship Agreement - conditions all thought of what is possible, what is desirable, what is inevitable in Micronesia's future. Yet, fortunately, the United States and Micronesia are linked by more than an imposed legal mandate. They are also linked by the experience of the past 25 years and by the prospect of improved partnership in the decades ahead.

Despite the immense legal authority granted the United States by the Trusteeship Agreement - the unchallengeable powers of veto and denial thus conferred - the Status Commission feels that representatives of this small island Territory can approach negotiations with representatives of a great power in an attitude of confidence.

The current proposal for a self-governing Micronesian state in free association with the United States envisions "not an end but a redefinition, renewal, and improvement" of the relationship between the United States and Micronesia. It is designed to accommodate the interest of the United States and of Micronesia - interests which the Status Commission feels are now, and should continue to be, in harmony. At the same time, the

current proposal fulfills the mandate of the Trusteeship Agreement, which directed that the inhabitants of the Trust Territory be guided "towards self-government or independence."

For these reasons, the Status Commission looks forward to productive preliminary negotiations with the United States. The President and Speaker of the Congress of Micronesia have designated members of the Commission to participate in sessions with United States representatives later this year. For this important task, other members of Congress may also be designated. Yet it must be emphasized that these negotiations will be of a preliminary nature and that the outcome of these negotiations will be subject to approval by the Congress of Micronesia and the people of Micronesia. In the meantime, the Commission pledges to fully inform the Congress and the public of the progress of these complex and important negotiations.

#### THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE

The Congress of Micronesia directed the Status Commission "to recommend procedures and courses whereby the wishes of the people of the Trust Territory may be ascertained with respect to the political future status of Micronesia." The Commission maintains that efforts should be made to achieve public involvement in all stages of the status question. The Commission's public hearings in the six districts constituted an attempt to ascertain the wishes of the people. But, just as the Commission's Statement of Intent was a preliminary document, so too, these hearings were preliminary sessions, to be continued, broadened and refined.

While recognizing that certain phases of the status question have been and will continue to be the responsibility of delegated representative groups, the Commission recommends that the effort to ascertain the wishes of the people be organized as follows:

(1) CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION - The Commission maintains that it is the essence of self-government that the people governed be empowered to adopt and to amend the basic document of government. A Constitutional Convention including leaders from throughout the territory, representatives of all the disparate cultural, ethnic, social and commercial interests which comprise today's Micronesia, will be the basic measure in ascertaining the wishes of the people and assuring that these wishes are reflected in the very foundation of Micronesian government. Although non-Micronesian personnel may assist the Convention in specialized technical matters, the basic work of the Convention (i.e., development and approval of a Constitution) must be the duty of Micronesians. The Status Commission maintains that the Micronesian government's Constitution must be derived from the Micronesian people: that they must have the power of originating and amending this document. Any governing document conferred upon Micronesia by an outside body and subsequently actionable by that body would deprive Micronesians of the initial fundamental exercise of self-government and would therefore be unsatisfactory, failing to meet the mandates of the United Nations or the desire of Micronesians.

(2) PLEBISCITE - The greatest involvement of the Micronesian people in the status question will come in a plebiscite, in which Micronesian voters accept or reject (a) the Constitution prepared by the Constitutional Convention and (b) the political status which would accompany such a constitution. Most other United Nations Trusteeships have been terminated without the exercise of such a plebiscite, but the Commission maintains that in Micronesia such a plebiscite is essential. Micronesia's prevailing heterogeneity requires that a firm initial consensus be established on the matter of status. Such a plebiscite will be the foundation of the Micronesian government, the assurance that the establishment of such a government is the wish of the people.

If a majority of Micronesian voters reject the proposed government and constitution, it will mean that the wishes of the people have yet to be determined and it would then be necessary to prolong the current Trusteeship Agreement until a more satisfactory proposal could be presented.

If the voters of a single district reject the proposed government and constitution, the Congress should take this into careful consideration and attempt to resolve it.

## OTHER ALTERNATIVES

In recommending self-government in free association with the United States, the Commission does so after a careful evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement and comparing these with those of other alternatives. In this process of evaluation and comparison, idealism and pragmatism have had to be reconciled. Considerations of human dignity and political freedom, of moral obligations and legal justice, have all had to be considered together. Micronesian needs and desires have had to be weighed against Micronesian ability to satisfy those needs and desires.

Micronesia will not decide its future alone. It will do so in consultation with the United States and the United Nations. The advantages and disadvantages of any political alternative for Micronesia have to be evaluated in light of this situation. Early in its studies, the Commission identified as many as a dozen status alternatives. Two examples are expansion to include Nauru and the Gilberts or the creation of a Pacific State including American Samoa and Guam. Most of them have had to be discarded as impractical at this point in time. The Commission's Interim Report discusses several alternatives other than free associated state, and from these, the Commission has chosen the three most practical -- independence and integration with the United States or other major power -- for discussion in this report.

Advantages

(1) In practice, the differences between independence and some forms of self-government might be rather less than would at first appear. An independent Micronesia would be likely to have close treaty relations with a major power - presumably the United States - and to remain dependent on foreign funds, both by way of grant and of rental for areas leased for military purposes. These ties might be almost as close as those existing under self-government in free association with a major power. However, the differences, or similarities, cannot be considered only in formal terms. It is likely that the major power would, from time to time, seek to bring pressure upon Micronesia in order to obtain an interpretation, or a modification, of the relationship favorable to its own interests. If Micronesia was merely self-governing, pressure could be exerted without attracting much publicity. If Micronesia were independent, however, it could, if it wished, ensure that the issue received the full glare of world publicity. In this important respect, therefore, independence would possess a clear advantage.

(2) One advantage of prime importance affects both Micronesia and the United States. If the two decided on independence, it would be easiest to persuade the United Nations to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement on this basis. A strong case would have to be made to the United Nations for any other alternative short of full independence.

(3) As an independent state, Micronesia would possess, without question, full legal control of its own affairs - of the form of its constitution, of the content of its laws, of its domestic policies. It would have the right to participate directly, insofar as it wished, in international organizations. Above all, any right it may grant with respect to military activities would be clearly defined in an international treaty.

(4) There is another, though less tangible, advantage. Independence would assist the growth of a sense of Micronesian identity. At a down-to-earth level, it would mean that, for good or ill, all Micronesians had embarked in the same boat and had therefore committed themselves to a future as one people. There would be pride in having taken so bold a decision and this would strengthen loyalty, and a sense of service, to the national cause.

#### Disadvantages

The disadvantages of independence however, are substantial. They derive from inescapable conditions in Micronesia - conditions of limited resources, small population, geographical dispersion, cultural diversity, and almost insuperable communication and transportation difficulties.

(1) The most serious of these disadvantages is financial. Micronesia seems certain to need assistance in meeting the costs of government for a long time to come, and further aid will be required for carrying out a program of economic development. As

As an independent state, Micronesia should be able to obtain aid -  
and to augment this by the rental of some areas for military  
purposes. But the United States, or any other nation, would not  
consider itself to be under the same obligation to assist an  
independent Micronesia, as it would if Micronesia was associated  
with it through a constitutional tie. And, in the case of the  
United States, the government of Micronesia would most likely  
face an unsympathetic Congress. In addition, an independent  
Micronesia would have to meet the costs of its own external relations,  
including membership of, and representation in, such international  
organizations as it chose to join.

(2) Other disadvantages are probably less serious. Micronesia  
could not expect entry of its exports to the United States under  
privileged conditions. While an independent Micronesia would be  
free to make the best arrangements it could with any other country,  
it might have greater difficulty in obtaining the services of  
American experts. However, by no means have all those who have  
been sent to Micronesia in the past been of the highest caliber.  
As an independent state, Micronesia would be free to seek expert  
assistance throughout the world. It might thus obtain better  
qualified men, or men whose experience was more appropriate to  
Micronesian conditions, at a lower cost. However, independence  
would probably result in some drop in the standards of living,  
particularly for salary and wage earners; and the willingness of  
the Micronesian people to accept this drop is clearly an important  
matter for consideration.



Since the single most important disadvantage of independence is financial, it is quite conceivable that, over the years to come, improved economic conditions in Micronesia might lessen this difficulty. Hence, independence for Micronesia, sometime in the future, cannot be ruled out as an absolute impossibility. Based on this consideration, several persons in Micronesia expressed a preference for independence during the hearings held by the Commission. In view of this, but also of the grim realities of conditions in Micronesia today, the Status Commission has recommended independence only as a second alternative to be considered if self-government in free association with the United States should not be possible.

#### INTEGRATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

##### Advantages

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of integration with the United States would apply equally in the case of integration with a country such as Japan. Others might differ only in degree.

- (1) Integration would place a definite obligation on the United States for the well-being of Micronesia.
- (2) Micronesians would obtain United States citizenship and there would be no barriers of movement between the two areas.
- (3) Integration would provide for Micronesians maximum opportunity to enjoy a standard of living approximating, if not similar to, the American standard.

(4) Micronesia can expect entry for its exports into the United States under privileged conditions.

#### Disadvantages

The disadvantages of integration are greater than the advantages.

(1) Other United States citizens would have an equal right to acquire land and conduct business activities in Micronesia.

(2) Micronesia would lose control of its own affairs.

(3) The Micronesians would be subject to United States taxes.

(4) There would be fewer opportunities in Micronesia to hold key positions in the government.

(5) With integration, and intensified Americanization, the prospect of preserving Micronesian cultures would diminish.

#### INTEGRATION WITH JAPAN

If Micronesia ever contemplates integration, or association, with a country other than the United States, that country, under present circumstances, would logically be Japan. The advantages are primarily economic. Memories of better days under Japan before World War II still linger in the minds of many Micronesians.

However advantageous integration or association with Japan may be, it does not appear that this would be any more advantageous than integration with the United States. Furthermore, the strategic importance of Micronesia to the United States cannot be ignored entirely. For this reason alone, the United States can be expected to veto a Micronesian decision to join Japan.