



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUL 6 1970

Dear Lazarus:

I was in the process of replying to your very kind letter of June 22, when I received your letters of June 25 and 26, so I shall respond here to all three.

Your letter of June 22 refers to our Executive Session on status with the two Interior Committees, and inquires about the transcript. Unfortunately, no transcript is presently available for distribution outside the Committees, due to the nature of an Executive Session. Although a reporter was present in each hearing, we are advised by both Committees that Committee Rules (and in the case of the House, House Rules) allow release of an Executive Session transcript only upon approval of the full committee, which evidently is very rarely done.

I'm sorry I can't be of more help in this; at the same time a brief resume of the meetings might help you. At both meetings, attendance was good and interest was great. I made a rather lengthy initial statement, which, like your planned report to the Congress of Micronesia, was basically a summary of events and a statement of the positions taken by both our Delegations in the May discussions. It was primarily a factual presentation, with analysis used mostly to explain the background of our Executive Branch proposal. We also gave each Committee copies of the position papers of both Delegations in the May talks.

The Committee's reaction seemed to be generally favorable in both meetings to the substance of the Executive Branch proposal. There were, however, numerous questions on the specifics of our proposal, as well as on your positions, particularly on the constitution procedure, restrictions on land ownership, eminent domain, and the elected executive provision, to name a few. There was also some concern that specific provisions might be difficult, at least at this time, to get through Congress, such as the non-voting delegate provision; also that the Administration should exercise care to ensure that your Delegation and the Congress of Micronesia understand that it is an Executive Branch proposal, and not a proposal endorsed by the U.S. Congress at this point in time.

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In summary, the sessions reinforced my belief that Micronesian support added to ours would give the proposal a good chance of being enacted, although it was clear that some specific provisions would have a less certain chance of passage than others. I might add that I am planning to meet again on July 14 with members of the House Interior Committee to answer any questions they may have after studying the position papers of our May discussions.

Your letter of June 25 concerned the absence of U.S. Congressional participation in the May talks. I am aware that a Senate Committee staff member was interested in accompanying our group to Saipan, but I was not aware of any particular concern on the House side. In any case, the decision was made not to invite representatives from the Hill. If questions do arise in the Congress of Micronesia regarding this, you might indicate that this was simply the manner in which the U.S. Executive Branch, with whom you were dealing, chose to proceed.

Next, I appreciate very much your letter of June 26, discussing your report and the possibility of our presence, as observers or witnesses, during the discussion of status in the session.

I will keep my schedule open for mid-to late August pending the advice of the Presiding Officers on how we should proceed. In any event, I am tentatively planning a trip to Micronesia after your summer session, in part to spend some time in Majuro, which I slighted in January, and also to keep up to date on program and other developments in the Trust Territory.

With best personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Harrison Loesch

Harrison Loesch
~~Assistant Secretary~~

Honorable Lazarus Salii
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