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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 3975

SUBJ: TRUST TERRITORY OF PACIFIC ISLANDS

1. PROF. JAMES DAVIDSON, CONSULTANT TO MICRONESIAN FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS DELEGATION, RETURNED CANBERRA LAST WEEKEND AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS IN SAIPAN. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF DORRANCE YESTERDAY.
2. ALTHOUGH DAVIDSON PARTICIPATED AT EARLY STAGES IN DRAFTING DELEGATION'S REPORT TO MICRONESIAN CONGRESS, EARLIER DRAFTS HAD CONTAINED NO REFERENCES TO PROPOSAL ESTABLISH FORMAL "EXECUTIVE COUNCIL" WITH MICRONESIAN CONGRESS PARTICIPATION, NOR TO SUGGESTION THERE MAY BE MERIT IN ATTEMPTING BRING MICRONESIAN CASE BEFORE COMMITTEE OF 24. ON FIRST POINT, HE HAD SUGGESTED CLOSER CONSULTATION BETWEEN LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES, PERHAPS THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT INFORMAL COMMITTEE. BUT HE BELIEVES IT A MISTAKE TO INTRODUCE WHAT AMOUNTS TO "WESTMINISTER" CONCEPT. HE CLAIMED HAVE NO IDEA WHO PROMPTED SUGGESTION ON COMMITTEE OF 24 AND SAID IT WOULD BE MISTAKE "TO BRING THOSE TROUBLE-MAKERS IN DURING NEGOTIATING STAGES." ON OTHER HAND, THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL HAVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTED AT ULTIMATE PLEBESCITE.
3. COMMENTING ON AN ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, HE SAID IT WOULD BE SERIOUS MISTAKE FOR U.S. TO ATTEMPT BY-PASS MICRONESIAN CONGRESS AND TAKE OPTIONS OF COMMONWEALTH STATUS AND INDEPENDENCE DIRECTLY TO PEOPLE. A YEAR AGO, HE SAID, U.S. WOULD HAVE HAD MASSIVE MAJORITY FOR COMMONWEALTH STATUS. NOW POPULATION IS BEING

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INFORMED OF ISSUES BY MICRONESIAN LEADERS. BY-PASSING THOSE POLITICAL LEADERS AT THIS STAGE WOULD BE SO RESENTED AND PLAYED UPON BY POLITICIANS. SUCH ACTION COULD TRIGGER MAJORITY SENTIMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE AS EMOTIONAL REACTION, AND "INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE A DISASTER FOR TERRITORY."

4. ASKED HOW SERIOUS WAS IMPLIED THREAT IN DELEGATIONS REPORT TO EFFECT INDEPENDENCE IS ONLY ALTERNATIVE. IN DELEGATION'S VIEW, TO "FREE ASSOCIATION." DAVIDSON SAID IT WAS MAINLY "BLUFF." HE DOES NOT BELIEVE MORE THAN SMALL MINORITY DELEGATION OR CONGRESS MEMBERS CONSIDER INDEPENDENCE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE, ALTHOUGH THIS COULD CHANGE. HE CLAIMED REPORT WAS DELIBERATELY "HARSHER" THAN REAL ATTITUDE OF EITHER DELEGATION OR CONGRESS AS WHOLE, ALTHOUGH HE WAS CERTAIN SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF CONGRESS WOULD SUPPORT IT. HE ALSO DID NOT THINK MICRONESIAN LEADERS' POSITIONS OR ATTITUDES HAD HARDENED MUCH IN PAST YEAR, ALTHOUGH THEIR VIEWS NOW MORE CLEARLY DEFINED. HE INSISTED, THOUGH, THAT BASIC "NON-NEGOTIABLE PRINCIPLES" ARE PRECISELY THAT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT LAND ISSUE AND RIGHT OF UNILATERAL REVOCATION OF ASSOCIATION WITH U.S.

5. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT ONE CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE (AMONG OTHERS) U.S. PROBABLY COULD NOT BUDGE ON WOULD BE APPLICATION U.S. CONSTITUTION TO TERRITORY, NO MATTER WHAT FORM OF ASSOCIATION. THIS IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE OF REQUIREMENT ASSURE BASIC RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES TO MICRONESIANS ONCE THEY BECOME U.S. NATIONALS AND CITIZENS. HE ACCEPTED THIS BUT SAID THAT, WHILE IT WAS NOT IN REPORT, MICRONESIANS ARE NOT CERTAIN THEY WANT OR REQUIRE U.S. NATIONAL OR CITIZENSHIP STATUS, ALTHOUGH THEY DO WANT FREE ACCESS TO U.S.

6. REMAINDER OF CONVERSATION PROVIDED NO SPECIFIC POINTS OF INTEREST, ALTHOUGH DAVIDSON, WHEN TOLD OF EMBOFF'S ASSIGNMENT AS HICOMTERPACIS POLAD, SAID HE WOULD DO ALL POSSIBLE TO ASSURE POLAD WOULD BE "WELL RECEIVED ON BOTH PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL BASIS" BY KEY MICRONESIAN LEADERS. EMBOFF SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE EFFORTS IN THAT DIRECTION BUT SUGGESTED DAVIDSON HOLD OFF WRITING ANY LETTERS UNTIL EARLY SEPTEMBER. (WE NOT CERTAIN WHETHER ESTABLISHMENT POLAD POSITION AND DORRANCE'S ASSIGNMENT HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED IN SAIPAN. WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY ADVICE ON THIS AS IT WOULD BE HELPFUL UTILIZE DAVIDSON'S CONTACTS IN TTPI.)

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