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(Classification and Control Markings)

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15. SUMMARY:

1. Shortly before 0900 20 February 1971, the Senate and House chambers of the Congress of Micronesia were burned to the ground. The fire, which destroyed all records of the Congress, was evidently the work of arsonists. The fire followed in the wake of a resolution on 19 February 1971 by the Marianas District Legislature advising the Security and Franchise Councils of the United Nations that the Marianas District intended to secede from the Trust Territory of the Pacific (TTPI) by force of arms if necessary. Also, in a possibly related event, the Marianas delegation to the Congress of Micronesia has recently been voicing considerable opposition to the implementation of a trust territory-wide income tax which they felt inequitable. Reportedly, mass demonstrations and a blockade of the Saipan airport had been planned to dissuade the High Commissioner (HICOM) from signing the tax bill which had been passed by both houses of the Congress. As a result of the fire the Congress of Micronesia prematurely adjourned, extending the deadline for signing the tax measure from 23 Feb 1971 to 15 March 1971. The HICOM has not indicated whether he will or will not sign the measure but has indicated a desire to review the objections if they are put in writing. Immediately following adjournment several members of the congress of Micronesia left for their home districts for fear of harm. The American Community of Saipan has been assigned additional guards and there is apprehension that violence and further arson may ensue. These events are the culmination of 20 years of frustrated efforts by the Marianas District to break away from the TTPI and a desire to become American citizens under the framework of the Government of Guam.

2. The threat by the Marianas District to secede by force of arms if necessary has been made more realistic by reports that they have in their possession a number of grenades, small arms and ammunition allegedly lost by the Naval Technical Training Units in the 1950's. In addition the Marianas District Legislature passed a bill on 19 February 1971 appropriating \$3,000 for the purchase of arms and ammunition and another bill is pending asking for \$300,000 to establish and arm a militia.

3. It is unclear exactly what political course the Marianas District would follow in the unlikely event that they were successful in their secession attempt.

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DEPARTMENT OF DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

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Alexandria, Va.

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very inception of the Congress, there has been friction between the Marianas District and the five other districts. This antagonism is due in part to ethnic, economic and political differences and came to a head last year when the Congress of Micronesia voted not to accept an offer of Commonwealth status with the U.S. The Marianas District has repeatedly made known its desire to become a part of the American system but has been frustrated in every effort. A year ago, the people of Guam rejected in a plebiscite the idea of a merger between the two. Unlike the rest of the TIFI, the people of the Marianas District (Saipan, Rota, Tinian) and Guam have a common Chamorro ancestry.

COMMENT:

1. Due to the fire, additional cries about moving the Congress of Micronesia to another district can be anticipated. Such a move would place the Congress in a less pro-American environment since American policy has its strongest support in the Marianas District. Present indications are that the likelihood of an armed uprising and further arson or violence have been greatly exaggerated. Continuing opposition to the income tax bill possibly involving demonstrations and increasingly outspoken opinion in the Marianas District in favor of disassociation with the rest of the TIFI can be anticipated.

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