

Micronesia's independence advocates

By JERRY BURRIS

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Despite all the encouraging words emanating from those talks on the future of Micronesia at Hana Maui recently, some fundamental problems remain.

There are those among the Micronesians—notably the so-called "Independence Coalition"—who feel the U.S. is not ready to deal with Micronesians as equals. It is still a case of Uncle Sam setting terms and the Micronesians accepting—whether they want to or not—they say.

A LEADING ADVOCATE of independence is Sen. Toshiwo Nakayama of Truk. Nakayama feels the Micronesians are being forced into some kind of permanent relationship with the U.S., rather than being allowed to choose their own future.

"To me," Nakayama says, "what we are doing is buying our freedom and self-government with land."

Nakayama is willing to concede the United States has certain interests to protect within the Trust Territory. But he argues it should be on a basis of Micronesians inviting the U.S. in—rather than as a precondition for ending the trusteeship agreement.

"The trusteeship agreement must be terminated before we go any further," Nakayama insists. "Then we can negotiate."

PART OF THE PROBLEM is that if the U.S. Congress grants Micronesia some form of political free-

dom, it will remain Congress' job to determine exactly what the new status means, and to resolve differences of opinions.

A treaty, on the other hand, would have the force of international law.

"Some people have suggested we declare independence, then sign an agreement right away—before the

Pacific view

collected notes and comment
on the islands and Asia

ink was dry. Then the status of that agreement would be a treaty," Nakayama said.

Essential to gaining such self-government, Nakayama says, is educating the people of Micronesia that independence does not mean turning their backs on the United States.

Nakayama sees continued close ties with the U.S., and he thinks Micronesia is more than willing to grant the Americans the concessions they want in those islands.

But he wants it to be a matter of Micronesia choosing such a relationship—rather than being forced.

'Smell of Scandal' in Micronesia

By Jack Anderson

WASHINGTON — The smell of scandal is blowing in from Micronesia far out in the Pacific. The ugly odor could forebode serious trouble on islands where Americans fought some of the bloodiest battles of World War II.

More than 10,000 islands are scattered like dust specks throughout the Pacific. Exactly 2,141 of them, known collectively as Micronesia, are ruled by the United States under a trusteeship granted by the United Nations.

These islands, like idle volcanoes, have been quiet since World War II. But now that the United States is pulling back from Asia, military leaders are quietly eyeing the Pacific islands as a forward line of defense. Secret proposals are under study to establish new bases in the Pacific.

But the United States, tragically, has botched its trusteeship of Micronesia. A succession of political hacks from the states have governed the islands, often in the manner that Northern

carpetbaggers ruled the South after the Civil War.

TODAY, many islanders who hailed their liberation from the Japanese nearly three decades ago would prefer to have the Japanese back.

The Interior Department, which administers Micronesia, has gotten wind of the distant scandal and has sent investigator Ivan Kestner to find out what's brewing. He has received an earful of charges. Here are just a few:

—Since the end of World War II, the United States has spent hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the Trust Territory. However, the money has been largely squandered, and the Micronesians have received only minimum benefits. "Gross irregularities" have been alleged in the administration of government contracts. These include illegal change orders that have benefitted favored contractors. There has also been too little monitoring of construction contracts.

—High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston, formerly a Republican hanger-on in

Hawaii, allegedly "has used his office to support his various business interests and the business interests of his friends and associates." He has also been accused of neglecting his duties and lording it over the natives.

—BOTH THE high commissioner and his top law officer, Richard Miyamoto, have been charged with violating the basic principles of contracting. One contract inspector, Robert Meyer, reported several serious contract violations, but he was ignored or overruled so often that last month he resigned in disgust. Cited as "typical" of what's going on in the islands is the case of a procurement official who three years ago was a low-paid clerk but now allegedly owns three expensive houses on Guam.

These are just a few of the charges Kestner is investigating—charges of course, that haven't been proven and that Johnston and Miyamoto have denied. Yet something evidently is amiss in Micronesia. The natives, once passive, are becoming restive, and the islands no longer seem as remote from the world's hurly-burly.

Commissioner Calls Anderson a 'Mudslinger'

Edward E. Johnston, high commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific, said today of the allegations in the Jack Anderson report:

"The fairness of the Star-Bulletin in allowing us to reply simultaneously to Jack Anderson's false allegations is much appreciated.

"Unfortunately, it is an opportunity too frequently denied to honest, sincere individuals who are maligned by professional mud-slingers, specializing in defamatory sensationalism rather than accuracy.

"Mr. Anderson's wild charges of being political hacks against my predecessors—all dedicated and sincere public servants—are too ridiculous even to merit comment.

"Three of the six high commissioners have been long-time residents of Hawaii. Frank Midkiff, William Norwood and I can hardly be termed carpetbaggers among Pacific islanders.

"The completely erroneous charges concerning my alleged business interest have already been repudiat-

ed in both the Hawaii and Guam newspapers.

"MY ANNUAL conflict of interest statement is on file with the United States government. The individuals who made these charges have been informed by letter that if they were ever repeated, other than on the floor of a legislative body, they would result in prosecution under Micronesia's criminal libel law.

"They have not been repeated.

"As for the investigation now under way in Micronesia by Ivan Kestner of the Interior Department, Jack Anderson overlooks one very important fact:

"I requested the investigation, and our administration is cooperating fully with Mr. Kestner.

"Our books and records are open to anyone.

"Since the investigation is

still in progress, I shall not comment on the charges which prompted it.

"But since the charges were of such a serious nature, it should be made very clear that if persons in our government are found guilty of malfeasance, they will be dealt with promptly and firmly.

"On the other hand, if the charges prove to be false and libelous, those who made them will be dealt with equally promptly and firmly.

"THE ONLY TRUTH in Jack Anderson's column at this point is his frank admission that the charges have been denied and have not been proven.

"One wonders why he hastens, then, to repeat possibly false and libelous allegations, and attempts to defame probably innocent persons without even bothering to investigate or to contact the accused."

The answer, of course, is that those who earn their living by disseminating unfounded rumors seldom really seek the truth.