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Memorandum of Conversation

From: Ambassador Williams

Subj: Conversation with Senator Salii and Professor Mihaly

Ambassador Williams and Senator Salii had lunch together in San Francisco on 11 November. Also present were Professor Mihaly and Captain Crowe.

While awaiting the arrival of Senator Salii, a short conversation with Mihaly ensued. He volunteered that one of his graduate students was the author of the recent "Friends of Micronesia" article which was published in the Micronesia Newsletter and gave the impression it was based on statements made by Salii. He said that he planned to rake his graduate student over the coals. Mihaly estimated that the Berkeley chapter had about 10 to 12 members. According to him the better members favored independence and the more unscrupulous ones were more interested in annoying the United States than in promoting the welfare of the Micronesians. Overall, however, he appeared unusually tolerant of the Friends of Micronesian. During the conversation he took a few swipes at Frances McReynolds Smith; at one point claiming she was a member of the Friends of Micronesia. He characterized her as dangerous and unreliable. He also told Crowe that he had been in Washington in the last few days and had met with Mr. Tom Finney (of the Clark Clifford law firm).

After Salii arrived and the party was seated, Ambassador Williams opened the substantive conversation by posing a general question -- What did Salii think of the post-Hana, Maui, developments, and the way the talks were being interpreted? Salii responded by asking if Ambassador Williams was aware that Representative Burton had extended an invitation for the Joint Status Committee to meet with the Burton Subcommittee in Truk in early December. Salii indicated that he planned to attend. Ambassador Williams replied that he was aware of this and planned to meet with the Subcommittee next week.

Ambassador Williams then asked about the news stories, distortions, and statements attributed to Salii. Salii acknowledged that they were somewhat warped and insisted that the Friend of Micronesia article had

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falsely attributed to him the statements reported in the article. He went on to say that he planned to ignore these articles. Mihaly intervened and said that the articles would have very little influence in Micronesia and that Micronesian policy was not made by newspapers. The Uudong article, which allegedly issued from Hana, was also discussed. Salii said that the article was not authorized by the Status Committee, although he knew about the release ahead of time and did not wish to stop it. Again, he said that he had no intention of issuing a denial or correcting the record. It is hard to determine whether Salii felt it was not important to clear the air or whether he believed the articles to be useful to the Status Committee. In any event, he plans no personal action to set the record straight, although he did say that he would not make any more statements.

Ambassador Williams went on to note that it was very important for the people of Micronesia to know the true story and what was actually said at Hana. The U.S. side particularly appreciated the statement of John Mangefel and Petrus Tun refuting some of the erroneous charges. It was clear that manuscripts of the proceedings had been made available to some people and it would be a good idea to distribute the full record to a wide audience. Ambassador Williams then moved on to say that he would be reporting to the President shortly and sending the President a record of the proceedings. Moreover, the record would be printed and distributed to all interested parties, and this could help clear the record. Salii said that they had already printed up the transcript and distributed it to members of the Congress of Micronesia. Both Salii and Mihaly while dismissing the importance of the publicity to date did get the message from Ambassador Williams that the U.S. was not happy about the warped public statements.

The subject of Ambassador Hummel's visit to Micronesia was then raised and Ambassador Williams mentioned that Ambassador Hummel would like to call on Salii on his way west. Salii welcomed his call and said he would look forward to the visit.

Ambassador Williams then asked Salii how he saw us moving forward at this point and mentioned the talks the two of them had had at Hana about the possibility of forming small committees to consider specific problem areas. Salii immediately said that the Joint Committee was preparing a report to the Congress of Micronesia to be submitted in January. This report is going to say that the United States has again refused to agree to "free association" and that it is recommending the Congress of Micronesia opt for independence. Ambassador Williams expressed some surprise at this statement. He further said that it was difficult to understand this development in view of Salii's previous comments on progress, the success of the Hana talks, optimism for the future, etc. At this point Salii began to get very agitated and nervous. He charged that the U.S. side had refused to discuss termination at Hana and to answer Micronesian questions on the U.S. negotiating mandate. Moreover, he had concluded that, since the U.S. had not responded to the invitation to a December meeting, there would be no

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change in the U.S. position and there would be no agreement on the Micronesians' fourth principle. Salii went on to say that unless the U.S. was prepared to talk about unilateral termination, there was no point in meeting in December. In his mind the one important issue remaining was termination and that it had not been fully discussed at Hana. On being questioned he confirmed that the position of the Micronesian delegation had not changed and would not change; therefore, the coming meeting would not be worthwhile unless the U.S. side was prepared to move to unilateral termination. If the U.S. was not forthcoming it would be necessary for the Joint Status Committee to report to the Congress of Micronesia that working out an arrangement of free association was impossible and to recommend that Micronesia seek independence.

Ambassador Williams came back and said that in his eyes the Hana talks had been very fruitful and that considerable progress had been made in bringing the two sides together. Salii conceded that the talks had gone a long way in satisfying Micronesian desires, but argued that partial agreement was no agreement. Unless consensus is reached on termination, Salii said, everything else would be useless. By this time Salii appeared to be rather angry and was extremely fidgety.

Ambassador Williams assured Salii that it was not the U.S. intention to stop at Hana and reminded him that the U.S. delegation had specifically offered to listen to further views on termination and to discuss the subject at future meetings. Salii refused to acknowledge that the U.S. had said this. Ambassador Williams then referred to his conversation at Hana with Salii where the latter had mentioned the divisions in the Micronesian delegation. Salii had said that some members of the Joint Status Committee wanted to talk alternatives at Hana, and some wanted to go home to talk to the Congress and other elements about the possibility of changing their views on termination. It seemed at this point as if Salii was at the peak of his agitation. He denied remembering this conversation had taken place and insisted that Ambassador Williams had misconstrued the attitudes of the Micronesian delegation. In any event, he said, the Micronesian delegation had no intention of changing its mind. Salii didn't deny that there was more than one view on this subject in Micronesia, but he was obviously convinced that the majority was with him on the issue of unilateral termination.

Ambassador Williams then asked Salii if termination was the only issue separating us. Salii said yes it was. Then he backtraced slightly. He admitted there were some other problems yet to be solved, but, in his opinion, these could be worked out on a "staff level." The first three principles had been satisfied and this is what they were interested in at Hana -- basic principles. The only one remaining, and hence the important issue now, was termination. He admitted that the two delegations could meet in December and perhaps make some progress on these lesser issues, but he didn't see any point in this. If we couldn't address termination (in other words, if the U.S. couldn't meet the demand for unilateral termination) there was no point in convening in December.

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On the other hand, he warned that action must be taken soon; particularly if those who advocated free association were to go into the Congress in any kind of position of strength vis-a-vis independence elements. Salii was still rather exercised and jumpy.

Salii admitted that some people would profit by delay. The Marianas Delegation would have an opportunity to take their case before the January Congress and those other elements in Micronesia which were for commonwealth or a real close association with the United States would likewise benefit. Although, according to Salii, these groups are in the small minority. A short discussion ensued about the various shades of opinion in Micronesia on the general status question. Both Salii and Mihaly seemed to be somewhat disturbed when Ambassador Williams said that he ran into a spectrum of differing opinions on these subjects during his trip to Micronesia. They said this might be true but the people in Micronesia were going to follow the Congress and that the independence movement is on the rise in Congress (and elsewhere). During this portion of the discussion, the question of District options was broached. Ambassador Williams asked Salii directly, if his delegation had considered such a scheme. He replied that they had.

An extended dialogue followed between Ambassador Williams and Mihaly on the philosophy behind the demand for unilateral termination. Salii did not initially participate and appeared to use the time to get his emotions back under control. Mihaly's argument stressed that the two parties were unequal and the Micronesian's only ace was the threat of termination. He insisted that Micronesia cannot be sure of the future and must have some built-in escape hatches. When Salii did enter the conversation he did not seem to be as concerned about the United States' trustworthiness and said as a matter of fact that his children would probably be more Americanized than he was and that in twenty years the right of unilateral termination would very likely not be exercised and would become merely an academic matter. During this discussion Salii said that if the U.S. had good reasons for not meeting in December it would help the free association element to know them. The implication was that the meeting could be put off if the U.S. would come up with a plausible rationale for delay. He was clearly talking about mechanical reasons, not inability to move on the substantive matter of termination. As this phase of the conversation drew to a close, Mihaly offered to describe his personal view of some ways to resolve the termination issue. He then said that perhaps Salii would prefer him not to discuss this until they had talked about it between them. Salii sort of stammered, but didn't encourage Mihaly to proceed. Both Ambassador Williams and Crowe said that they would be pleased to hear these ideas -- perhaps at a future luncheon.

Before the luncheon broke up, Salii mentioned that the U.S. emphasis on land problems at Hana was, in his opinion, over done. Ambassador Williams explained some of the reasons for this. Salii then said that

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land is no longer a real issue. The U.S. land requirements were extremely modest and as a matter of fact he was sure that the U.S. could get even more land for defense purposes if needed. Ambassador Williams explained that at least at the present time no more land is required. The luncheon then concluded with some pleasant banter.

Miscellaneous

Salii was in no sense relaxed and appeared to be tight as a piano wire throughout the luncheon in marked contrast to his demeanor at Hana, and in subsequent phone conversations.

It was curious that he never mentioned the recent phone calls to Ambassador Williams where he apologized for the adverse and distorted newspaper reports.

There is no way of knowing how many of the delegation or what elements of the population he is truly speaking for.

His conduct at the luncheon supports the thesis that his frequent exposure to radical elements since Hana has dramatically influenced his view of the talks and has perhaps sown some seeds of doubt about his leadership during the Hana talks.

F. Haydn Williams

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