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# U.S. Reassures Micronesia on Weapons

STAR-BULLETIN  
12/7/71

By Gardiner B. Jones  
Editor, Pacific News Service

SAIPAN, Mariana Islands—For the second time within days, the United States has felt compelled to clarify the state of negotiations on the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific.

U.S. Ambassador Franklin Hadyn Williams has sent a lengthy telegram to Trust Territory High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston dealing with what has and has not been said about possible storage of nuclear weapons in Micronesia.

His telegram, intended to be a reassurance to the political leaders of Micronesia, followed closely on a public statement by John Dorrance, State Department advisor to the High Commissioner. Dorrance, like the ambassador, addressed himself to points on which he felt there was misrepresentation and misunderstanding in Micronesia.

The U.S. position on the future status of Micronesia, spelled out in talks with Micronesian negotiators at Hana, Maui, in October, has in part been misrepresented. Some elements in the Micronesian independence movement seem to have a well-developed gift for incorrectly presenting the U.S. position.

AT THE SAME time,

however, the U.S. has contributed to the confusion by its fondness for imprecise language. The argument about nuclear weapons storage is a case in point.

At Hana, the Micronesians specifically asked Ambassador Williams whether the U.S. intended to store nuclear weapons in Micronesia and, if so, whether the U.S. would agree to prior consultation with the Micronesians before so doing.

The ambassador said, in effect, that there are no current plans for such storage. Without saying so specifically, he did indicate that the U.S. would want an option for such storage. And he quite firmly rejected the idea of prior consultation.

On close reading, the Ambassador's meaning seems quite clear — but his remarks were couched in anything but simple, direct English.

A couple of weeks later, Assistant Defense Secretary David Packard, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington, was asked if the U.S. intended to move the nuclear weapons stored on Okinawa to Micronesia when Okinawa reverts to Japan.

Packard replied in much the same vein as Williams had spoken at Hana. He said there were no such plans currently but that the U.S.

was keeping its options open.

BUT PACKARD, like Williams, was less than precise in his language. The lack of precision allowed some independence advocates to conclude, or profess to have concluded, that the U.S. was planning a secret nuclear weapons storage facility in Micronesia.

Williams' telegram to the High Commissioner said in part:

"It would be wrong and misleading for anyone to conclude that the testimony on the Okinawa treaty showed any inconsistency with the U.S. government's firm and limited proposal that I outlined in Hawaii.

"The U.S. proposals there represent the decision of the highest levels of the U.S. government and I made them with full authorization. Those proposals are firm, and no U.S. official intended to imply amendment to them in any way."

The episode is significant because it tends to obscure the major shift in position made by the U.S. to accommodate Micronesian desires on future status. At Hana, the U.S. accepted in principle the Micronesian proposal for a free association with the U.S., under which Micronesia would handle its internal affairs without hindrance and the U.S. would be responsible for defense and foreign relations.

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