

Truk Congressman Fights 'No Compromise'

KOROR, Palau—Representative Hans Wiliander (Truk) called on the Congress of Micronesia not to compromise in its negotiations with the United States and advocated independence "as a real alternative which Micronesians have the right to choose and should consider."

Speaking in the House of Representatives Friday, Wiliander said, "I am advocating a state in which Micronesians would possess without question, full legal control over their land; full power to promulgate its laws without outside hindrance and influence; and full legal authority over its own affairs, both internally and externally."

Wiliander's speech was the first on the subject of future status, since the congress began its 30-day session three weeks ago. Last Monday the Joint Committee on Future Status officially submitted its report to the congress concerning the last round of talks with the United States concluded last October in Hawaii.

"The people of Micronesia have as much right to choose independence as did the people of the other territories, none of whom, so far, have chosen any status other than independence," said the Truk congressman. He said the fact that other powers have strategic interests in the area cannot permit a compromise or dilution of Micronesia's basic right to determine its own destiny.

Wiliander is co-chairman of the independence coalition which claims over one-third of the congress as members.

In its report of May 1970 to the congress, the Micronesian

Future Status Delegation set down four basic points and legal rights "essential and non-negotiable" guidelines for negotiating with the United States. Regarding these he said: We are told by Joint Committee that there was no full accommodation by the US on the first three legal rights."

"In response to our asserting that sovereignty in Micronesia resides in the people of Micronesia and their duly constituted government, the US insists that it will not give up its power of eminent domain unless, first, Micronesian government would guarantee that the US would have indefinite use of certain specified land in Micronesia, and that the new Micronesian government would provide speedy and efficient means to negotiate temporary use of lands by the US in emergency situations."

Insistence that the people of Micronesia possess the right of self-determination received a "head-bowing nod" said Wiliander. He called it a superficial gesture because the US continues to assert its position that any status must be acceptable to the US.

Regarding the right of the people to adopt their own constitution the US indicated that Micronesia would have to protect certain individual rights considered to be 'fundamental' then the constitution would be subservient to the agreement and the compact of association would be the supreme law.

On the fourth and major point of disagreement he said, "the US refuses to let us insist

that "free association should be in the form of a revocable compact, terminable unilaterally by either party," and insists on mutual termination as the only way to safeguard the interests of both sides. He said this would be a denial of a protection against the "most powerful and sometimes aggressive nation in the world."

Wiliander told the congress to obtain anything less than these four principles would be going back on their word. He said the US was now waiting for the Congress of Micronesia to make further concessions at the negotiating table.

"We have been generous enough to sacrifice inherent rights to accommodate interests of our administering authority and yet we are still being asked to further compromise our future. Can this congress, in good conscience, further violate rights of the people of Micronesia?"

"The Americans can be excused if they lied to our people but we are Micronesians and we are their leaders and cannot be excused for covering up lies to our people," he said.

Wiliander concluded his speech with an analogy. He compared sacrificing basic rights of the Micronesian people to the US at the negotiating table to adopting an unborn baby.

"That baby may be deformed or altogether dead when it is finally born. When I cast my vote two years ago in support of free association, I thought we were going to adopt a live baby."

Wiliander said he would support the congress if it sticks to the proposition of adopting a live baby."