

## LETTERS to the Editor

## Security Takes Precedence

SIR: The authors of "America's Un-kept Promise" seem to take exception to the United States position of security as far as the islands of Micronesia are concerned. Perhaps the authors could advance a better reason why the United States should be interested in keeping these islands under U.S. control.

With the exception of the Marianas, which were once an agriculture center for the Japanese, the islands of Micronesia yield nothing. Their only value is their strategic geographical location. This is the only reason any country would be interested in them.

As an American who has lived in this area for the past 20 years I would object vigorously if the United States placed any consideration above security. Americans are not colonialists, as history will bear out. We asked for and received the U.N. authority to administer these islands for the sole purpose of protecting ourselves and our friends — and our friends include the Micronesians.

The authors seem to place a great deal of significance on the burning of the buildings of the Congress of Micronesia. First of all, there was only one building destroyed, not two. One was damaged. Second, but I believe most important, the prime suspect in the arson case was not a Saipanese as the authors suggest.

Actually, as long as the authors are advancing theories, the suspected motive for the arson was said to be one that would give other districts a reason to ask for a change in the site of the Congress of Micronesia headquarters. Such a move would take away from the Americanized and vocal Marianas the prestige of being the seat of the Congress of Micronesia and one that would be an economic blow to Saipan.

The last session of the Congress of Micronesia was held in Truk and there has since been an official suggestion that the site of the Congress be permanently relocated.

While it's true that the Congress of

Micronesia rejected the commonwealth proposal from the United States, they cannot claim an "official" rejection. The Congress of Micronesia had no business entertaining the commonwealth proposal in the first place. And the U.S. officials were remiss in even giving it to the members to read.

The proposal calls for a Micronesia-wide referendum for the people to vote simply yes or no on the proposal. If the people voted yes, then the Congress of Micronesia would be charged with forming a Constitutional Convention, whether they liked it or not. If the people voted no, the Congress of Micronesia would not even have known what happened.

The only time the Congress of Micronesia would have entered the picture, is if the people voted yes. Why should the Congress of Micronesia be asked for a decision, when the proposal clearly calls for a referendum? It's like the Congress of Micronesia saying, "never mind the people, we'll decide for them."

But, as it is, the proposal in the first place is completely unofficial from the United States, because it is in the form of a draft of a U.S. administration bill that has never been presented to the U.S. Congress for consideration. There is absolutely nothing official about it. So, how can the Congress of Micronesia take an official position for or against anything that doesn't even exist?

The authors state they interviewed scores of officials in the Trust Territory and Washington. But, how many of the man on the street type were interviewed? How many members of the Marianas District Legislature were interviewed — the body that is not apt to say much favorable to High Commissioner Edward Johnston — or the Congress of Micronesia? And how many non-Micronesians who have lived in the area for many years were interviewed?

The series was a summary of what has been written by American and foreign journalists over the past ten years. The series was published much too soon — the research was not complete.

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