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April 7, 1972

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Time and Place: 1030, April 7, in Party Room

Participants: Ambassador Williams  
Captain Crowe  
Senator Salii  
Rep. Silk

1. The conversation started with Salii asking about the forthcoming boat ride and whether we preferred Saturday or Sunday. After some small talk, it was agreed that Sunday would be best.

2. It was also mentioned that the Micronesians would have a boat at 1400 today (M dock) to run around the immediate waters. All the U.S. delegation is invited. It was made clear that work would probably prevent a large attendance.

3. Ambassador Williams then launched the substantive conversation. He said that our reading of yesterday's presentation suggested that the problems were very real ones, rather than just apparent ones. Our Foreign Affairs and Defense positions had been carefully worked out and, based on past exchanges of letters, conversations, etc., we thought that they were fairly acceptable. On one hand we have attempted to meet your areas of concern -- internal affairs, control of land, eminent domain, etc., - and now were presenting our basic interests. He went on in a very serious tone to say that our flexibility in foreign affairs and defense was severely limited. In other areas we have latitude, even some regarding termination, but in these two areas we cannot give. We now see serious differences developing, since the Micronesians have exceeded our limits.

4. Salii, in a very conciliatory tone, then began to talk about Foreign Affairs and Defense. First, he said that the Micronesians are not very hung up on defense and thought that yesterday's presentation made that point. In foreign affairs, he said that the Micronesians need more information. There is confusion and some hangups as to why the U.S. authority has to be unbounded. He felt there was a need for a better exchange of views and more actual examples.

5. A short discussion followed on means for achieving a better dialogue. Salii obviously would prefer to make an effort to clear up points of misunderstanding on foreign affairs before having another plenary session. He suggested a written exchange of questions and answers. With some prodding, he said that the Micronesians would like to have informal discussions, perhaps between his subcommittee and some of our people. He remarked that he and Silk did not always convey the Ambassador's views accurately, and that talking face to face with other members might be helpful. He said that they would be able to set up such a meeting anytime.

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6. Salii then returned to foreign affairs and in a remarkable burst of candor began to talk about some of his internal problems. He needed good reasons for giving the United States full authority in foreign affairs -- both his Committee and the Congress of Micronesia has to be convinced before giving away such broad powers. He did not consider our present case very persuasive. Also, he admitted that he might not fully understand the foreign affairs problem, but, if he did, our case appeared to be weak. He then made a personal commitment to Ambassador Williams (after specifically divorcing Silk from the commitment) that if the U.S. could give him a really compelling argument for this authority, he would personally advocate it in his Committee and the Congress of Micronesia. At this point his speech was deliberate, slow, and appeared to be sincere. The whole tone was conciliatory. He was reminded that the U.S. side also had problems satisfying all its members and interests of the government. Salii then said that perhaps there was something in this area that the American delegation cannot say, he just didn't know. He felt the Micronesian position was clear and that the confusion was in the U.S. case. Crowe took exception and said their argument was not altogether clear.

7. Ambassador Williams emphasized that we would try to clarify our position where needed and that we also needed to know a great deal more about what they expected from us, particularly in the areas of finance and transition.

8. The discussion drifted into a brief discussion of the nature of the relationship. Ambassador Williams quickly described how the U.S. visualized both parties' powers and responsibilities flowing from the Compact and not by arrangement from one party to another. No response was forthcoming.

9. It was agreed that we might desire a plenary session tonight or tomorrow morning and that Amb. Williams would be in touch with Salii. It was also agreed, that before such a meeting, Amb. Williams would wish to meet again with Salii and Silk. Also, there might be some other exchange of information, but Salii would be kept informed.

10. Amb. Williams brought up the Peace Corps memo and explained that he had not received a copy of the original document. Salii said that Amb. Williams was a "copy to" on the original, and that was the only reason he got a copy of the reply. Silk said that he would get a copy for Amb. Williams. It seemed to be accepted that the U.S. delegation was in no way involved in this problem.

11. The subject of press releases was covered quickly. Sali believed that perhaps we should be more forthcoming, but confirmed that he did not want to negotiate through the press. Frankly, he did not appear to be too interested, and resolved the problem by suggesting that Roy Johnson write the original version of releases.

12. The meeting then closed with some pleasantries.