

8-28-72

12  
72

STATEMENT FOR DELEGATION FROM PALAU LEGISLATURE

The Palau District Legislature is represented by seven of the ten members of its Executive Committee, including the Vice-Speaker, Floor Leader, and the Chairmen of three of its four standing committees. In addition, the Mayor of Koror Municipality, which has about half the people of the Palau District, is with us today.

We have reviewed the entire Draft Compact, and at this time we are unable to express our approval of those three titles upon which the Joint Committee on Future Status and the United States Delegation have agreed. The Compact, of course, is at this time in a very incomplete state. And before we can give our assent to all or to any of its contents we must know exactly to what extent the proposed Micronesia Government, in general, and the people of the Palau District, in particular, are surrendering their inalienable right to totally govern their entire affairs, both external and internal.

It is possible, however, for us to make several comments on details within the areas upon which an accord has been agreed. We will restrict our remarks to those areas. The most important of the three provisions for the Palau Legislature Delegation is that relating to defense, and the land requirements sought by the United States for its military capabilities.

The most disconcerting aspect of Title III is the large quantity of land sought by the United States for its military use. At this point, the amount of acreage requested is far too large in relation to any compensation that could be paid to the Palau District.

03 - 031461

The Palau District has been engaged in a running battle with the Administering Authority almost since the inception of the Trusteeship Agreement over the ownership of our land, fully 60% of which is claimed by the Trust Territory Government. We have great hopes that the resolution of the status question will resolve this ownership dispute; I can assure you that we will not approve any compact which does not, as a minimum, conclude the question of the ownership of land in our district to the satisfaction of the people of Palau.

With regard to military requirements, we are obligated, further, to call to your attention that the Palau Legislature passed a resolution in October, 1969, expressing its sense that no military facilities of any kind, or troops of any government, be stationed in the Palau District. No change has been made in those sentiments; the sense of that resolution remains valid today.

We also note that the United States has requested for more land from Palau than it has from any of the other districts. Of course, the Joint Status Committee cannot assume responsibility for ascertaining U.S. military requirements in Micronesia. But we wonder if any attempt was made by the Committee to negotiate a reduction in these land requirements. The record does not indicate this, but we would hope that such negotiations are included within the next round of talks.

We are fearful, too, of the "unknown" military use to which the U.S. might put on our land. The Peleliu Drydock Affair, for example, raises a

great number of questions in our mind. Here, inspite of Administration assurances that this facility is solely for the repair and maintenance of Trust Territory vessels, we continue to receive information indicating that the United States does, indeed, have plans to use that facility for military purposes.

So we must ask, "Does the U.S. plan to store nuclear material or weapons on any of those 2,000 acres it designates in Annex B for its exclusive use?" We must have more definite knowledge of the kind of military activities contemplated on our land, and we want these uses detailed in the Compact, or in the Annex itself.

In summary, then, without further answers to the questions we have raised, we are required to reject the terms of Title III of the Compact and the Annex B thereto.

Two sections of Title II have serious deficiencies, whose wording can only work to the detriment of a new Micronesian Government. First, Section 201 (a), giving the United States "full responsibility for and authority over" foreign affairs provides the United States with an unnecessarily large amount of power in this area. Indeed, the majority of the Legislature's Executive Committee disagrees that the proposed Government should relinquish its total rights in dealing with the sovereign nations of the world. Can we not, for example, retain the right to make ~~non~~commercial, cultural or financial agreements with those nations with whom we wish without obtaining the prior consent of the U.S. Government, as Annex A, Section I (d) requires?

The severe restrictions imposed upon us in the area of foreign affairs would truly give us the status in appearance, if not in fact, of continuing as a ward of the United States, and would severely derogate from the free association relationship we seek.

The language of Section 201 (c), in which the United States commits itself to "avoid to the greatest extent possible any interference in internal affairs (of Micronesia) pursuant to its foreign affairs authority" presents grave dangers to an infant Micronesian Government. Surely, if the United States deems it necessary to utilize Guam to wage war in an area of the world many thousands of miles away from its shores, it can also, pursuant to Title III, utilize additional land in Palau, or elsewhere in Micronesia, to do battle anywhere in Southeast Asia or the Far East. Such additional use of land would likely be accompanied by restrictions regulating Micronesian travel and use of such land. While such regulations and use would undoubtedly interfere with Micronesia's internal affairs, the United States could validly claim it had, and I quote Section 201(c) again, "avoided to the greatest extent possible any interference in the internal affairs" of Micronesia.

Our remarks could continue, but we desire to learn what our sister district legislatures feel about the Draft Compact. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Committee.