



United States Department of the Interior

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATIONS - AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS AND SENATOR SALII -
12 DECEMBER 1972 ON GUAM AND 21 DECEMBER 1972 ENROUTE KOROR-GUAM

Subject: State of the Negotiations and future plans

I met with Lazarus at the Hilton Hotel. The conversation lasted approximately two and a half hours. He was friendly but he was also serious and somewhat depressed as a result of the election and the Palauan situation.

We talked about the election and its impact on the status question. In the Marshalls he thought the status issue was secondary to Kabua's effort to unseat those who he could not control. He said Kabua indirectly had been encouraging the pro-independence group but Salii thought that his real motive was to frustrate the negotiations thus improving his own bargaining position, especially as it related to land renegotiations in the Marshalls. Salii predicted that Kabua would hold out his full support for Free Association as a trade off for satisfying his demands re land payments for Kwajalein and Roi Namur.

In Ponape Salii said that he understood that the two new Congressmen were pro-Free Association. He said that Paul had been defeated as a result in large part to the active campaign of the Catholic Clergy to unseat him. Paul had openly criticized the church for becoming actively involved in the status question. He said Paul was one of the strongest pro-Free Association advocates and that he would miss his support.

In Truk Salii said that Williander's loss could be attributed to the anti-independence campaign of Bossy and members of the TPPI District Administration. He said Amaraich had tried to help Williander and that Nakayama had also thrown his support behind the defeated candidate. Salii went on to say that we shouldn't however read too much into Williander's loss and that Truk remained the strongest of the independence movement.

Salii had no comments on the Yap election. His comments on the Palau election centered on his fight with John Ngiraket. He said that while he had won, his 1968 margin had been severely reduced due to the defection of large numbers of the progressive party, especially members of the Mgodegnii religious movement. In talking about Palau, Salii seemed particularly depressed. He mentioned that Tmetchul had not come to his defense and he expressed some bitterness toward Remengescau and the District Administration for not having used the radio to give the people the facts regarding the status of the negotiations.

In conclusion in reviewing all the results he said that the defeat of Williander, Samuel and Irate represented a net loss to the independence movement. He said this in part was offset by the defeat of Paul and Ianwi and possibly Silk. He acknowledged that John Heine's and Luke Tuman's election was a plus.

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He then talked about the organization of the new congress. He said that Kabua might face a stiff fight for reelection as President of the Senate. He said there would be some new committee chairmen and that some of the younger and new members might put up a fight to unseat some of the current leaders.

With respect to the JFSC Salii said that Kabua might want to replace Lanwi and Iieshi might be named to fill Paul's place on the committee. (At the same time Salii was also worried about Silk and said if he loses the recount I would expect that Dominick would be his successor).

He went on to say that he had considered resigning the Chairmanship. He said that he was afraid that some of the opposition to the Compact was now personal and that there might be a growing resentment to his continuing leadership. He said this could affect the negotiations. However, he said he would not turn over the Chairmanship to any pro-independence advocate. He said Nakayama and Amaraich would like the position but I will not step aside for either of them.

Salii next turned to the question of the JFSC. He said given the Ponape Session, the clear divisions within his committee, and the growing discontent with the progress that had been made, perhaps the time has come for us to reconsider our whole approach. He went on to say that he had been giving thought to three new ideas.

1. Put the status questions aside until we have a new constitution. New constitution will create executive branch which can then carry on negotiations. Congress of Micronesia would then be in same position as U.S. Congress regarding approval of any agreement.

2. Newly constituted JFSC would limit itself to the Compact, leaving all land negotiations to the Districts concerned.

3. Dissolve the JFSC and substitute for it a new Commission made up of representatives from the COM, the TTPI Administration, the Districts and the traditional leaders.

He said that early in the January session of the COM he expected to raise these alternatives with the JFSC. At this point in the conversation I suggested that he might wish to consult with Paul Warnke in advance and that it might be useful if his legal counsel were present when he met with the JFSC in Saipan in January.

He told me that he was going to be in Washington during the first week in January to testify before the CAB and that he planned to see Warnke at that time. He asked "do you think Paul would be willing to come to Saipan later in January" I said I thought that he would be, given his interest in the negotiations but that Salii should be in early touch with him since Warnke was a very busy man. Salii said he would extend an invitation to Warnke without delay.

The rest of our conversation on 12 December 1972 concerned the Palau Declaration and my suggestion that I visit Koror following the opening Marianas talks.

ENROUTE KOROR-GUAM. 21 DECEMBER 1972

Salii talked again about his intentions to review with the JFSC in early January the whole question of how they should proceed. He said my visit to Koror had raised further doubts in his mind about the ability of the COM and the JFSC to speak for the Districts especially when it came to land questions. He said I will face a fight on this matter with the Truk Delegation.

He said that he expected to reintroduce a modified Constitutional Convention Bill but that he was considering having it jointly sponsored by friends in both the House and Senate. He said it might have a better chance "if my name is not associated with it initially".

He then surprised me by saying, "You know Unity remains our number one problem at present. There is no such thing as Micronesia. We will have to create Micronesia and this may be an impossibility".

I then told him about my conversation with Father Felix and his view that the first step was to resolve internal problems of the government, district by district before thinking about a central government and its external relations. Salii said this should have been done years ago but that it was now too late to go back to this more logical approach to self-government. He said that he recognized now that the future central government should have limited powers and that no future constitution would have a chance of approval unless it provided for District Autonomy in all matters of major local concern.

We next talked about timing. I have reported his views on the Palauan Land Survey. With respect to the next round of negotiations he said maybe we shouldn't hurry things along. I said I agreed and that we should make sure that both sides were adequately prepared before proceeding, otherwise, we would just be wasting time. He suggested April or May and I said why don't we tentatively agree on May. He said this was fine. I added that much would depend on our resolving the Palauan land matter and also the outcome of the next session of the COM and his meetings in January with the JFSC. He agreed and said that perhaps by the time we meet again his Committee might be drastically changed in terms of its composition and its position with respect to land negotiations.