

Japan Times
May 15, 1973

Readers in Council

Micronesia

To the Editor:

In a recent article (Feb. 7, 1973) Dr. Henry H. Albers suggested some directions which Japan's future development in Micronesia, the United States Trust Territory in the Pacific may follow. The essay asserted that: (a) because of the area's strategic value the level of U.S. military involvement will increase, and (b) Japan, commensurate with her role as a great world power will be expected to carry a greater share of the burden in defending the Pacific Basin area. Japan will therefore be asked to play an important military, economic and political role in the future of the Trust Territory by assuming control over certain Micronesian bases and "some political control over Micronesia." As an afterthought, Dr. Albers' article blithely grants the advisability of allowing the Micronesians some form of participation in the divestment of their land to serve as bases, and their political sovereignty to serve the "individual and collective needs" of the big powers. This line of reasoning ignores the realities of the Trusteeship relationship and is characteristic of a Pax-Americana mentality wedded to a blatant colonial outlook. It is so patently absurd and pernicious that a critical evaluation of the article and its conclusions are indeed warranted.

To talk about future Japanese political control over parts of Micronesia is absurdity in light of present U.S.-Micronesian future political status negotiations. The negotiations have narrowed the political options open to Micronesians to some form of "free associations" with the U.S.A., of full independence, which a sizable number of Micronesians decidedly favor. Neither of the two options provides a basis for Japanese political control. The independence option would obviously preclude it. Even under some form of free association with the U.S., and the U.S. willing to cede Japan bases, it is almost certain that a Micronesian government would insist upon veto powers over plans to transfer the military authority over potential bases. Furthermore, in such an unlikely event it is not certain, as the Albers article suggests, that Micronesians would welcome a Japanese military presence in return for adequate financial compensation. In land-scarce Micronesia, only the Marianas, the one place in the islands where land is relatively plentiful, have expressed any desire to welcome the military's presence.

To contemplate future Japanese political control is to ignore the possibility that Micronesia may choose independence in the soon-to-be-held plebiscite, demand U.S. military withdrawal from their country, or limit U.S. bases to Rota and Tinian. In fact, a free associated status with the U.S., whereby less than complete sovereignty is granted the people of the trust may be considered in violation of U.N. Resolution 1514 that envisions full independence for colonial areas. Since Micronesia is a strategic U.N. Trusteeship, it will require Security Council approval to terminate the present status. The Soviets have always maintained

that the Trust Territory should receive full independence and may use their veto power to prevent a new status that would perpetuate U.S. military control over the area under a different guise. Of course, the U.S. could unilaterally terminate the trust and present the U.N. with a fait accompli. There are indications that the U.S. is prepared to disregard expected howls from anticolonial forces in the U.N. if Micronesia joins the U.S. and the metropolitan power secures its Pacific bases. If Japan were to become associated with this high-handed action by assuming some control over parts of the area, it would impede Japanese cultivation of goodwill in third world areas which she apparently is anxious to promote.

In any case, Japanese bases in the present T.T. seem a remote possibility. If the Nixon Doctrine signals any change in the U.S. conception of its world role, it is the slowly dawning realization that it is not an Asian, but rather a Pacific power. The "fallback" position considerably increases the strategic military value of the T.T. and to cede any bases in the area would certainly reduce the U.S. role as a Pacific Power. In the near future, that is not a likely event.

REINHOLD A. SCHULZ
Washington, D.C.