

the U.N. & Micronesia

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Both the United States and the Congress of Micronesia are criticized in a new report of a United Nations visiting mission which toured the Trust Territory earlier this year.

While it will have little formal impact on the confused course of events in the area, the 130-page report is important as an outside view, one of a series made by such missions every three years to the U.N. Trusteeship Council.

IT IS GENERALLY a mild view since the three members of the mission principally involved were from France, Australia and Britain, all of which have lingering colonial interests in the Pacific Islands. A fourth member, from the Soviet Union, did not subscribe to some sections, particularly those on political matters; he is expected to speak out critically when the Trusteeship Council holds hearings on Micronesia this month.

Despite the mild tone on the report, points that emerge are worth noting. Some of them:

- The Congress of Micronesia has been unfortunately negligent in not setting up a constitutional convention and taking other steps to prepare for self-government. Congressmen are not in touch with their constituents enough.

- The U.S. could be providing more transitional steps toward self-government. It could also grant Micronesians more control of funds appropriated by the U.S. Congress.

- Both sides have failed on the question of political education for Micronesia's people who will make the ultimate choice on their future political status.

- While noting the obvious desire of the people of the Marianas District for a separate status closer to the U.S. than the Congress of Micronesia proposes, the U.N. group expresses regret the U.S. did not do more to check the trend.

And it both questions the legality

of separate talks for the Marianas and suggests efforts be made to keep the area together.

That seems unlikely to change a situation that has gone so far, although it's not envisioned the U.N. Trusteeship Agreement will be ended until one or more accords is reached covering all the districts.

SO THIS REPORT reflects the fact the Micronesia political situation is still fluid on future status, that the U.S., as well as Micronesian leaders, can take future steps to influence the outcome.

Some of the possibilities are indicated in the conclusion of the U.N. group which reads in part:

"In view of the slowness with which the talks are progressing, it is unlikely that the formalities for ending the Trusteeship Agreement can be completed for another two or three years.

"In these circumstances, as stated above, we recommend that transitional measures giving the territory a greater degree of self-government should be taken without delay and that other measures should be adopted subsequently if the negotiations are slow in coming to an end.

"Although it is for the people themselves to decide on their future form of government, we believe that, because of its geography, Micronesia needs a decentralized political structure, with the district authorities having wide powers within the framework of a 'mini-federation,' possibly with some prior revision of district boundaries.

"Although the Mariana Islanders seem determined to separate whatever happens, and they would benefit most from continued centralization, this change might help to protect the unity of the territory."

WHILE THIS may be the last such regular U.N. visiting mission report, it might at least help point the way for a solution to the increasingly complex problem of Micronesia's future.