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Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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CONGRESS SETS LEADERSHIP MEETING

The Congress of Micronesia laid plans for a meeting of its top leadership last week, to discuss among other things the location of the next regular session of the Congress, in January and February of next year. The meeting was to be held beginning June 25 in Truk. A Congress spokesman said Senate President Tosiwo Nakayama of Truk and House Speaker Bethel Henry of Ponape would host the meeting with the other four members of the leadership, and several staff members, also in attendance. In addition to the session location, the possibility of a special session this year and about two dozen other administrative matters of various kinds were on the agenda, the spokesman said.

The Congress of Micronesia is already on record as favoring Majuro as the site of the 1974 regular session. However there has lately been some concern expressed that the district center, with only 30 hotel rooms, will not have sufficient accommodations for the people from outside the Marshalls who would be required to attend the session. Last week Senate Clerk F. Sabo Uluchorg and House Clerk Asterio Takesy flew to Majuro from Saipan to assess the district's capability of handling the session. They will make a report and recommendations to the leadership at the Truk meeting.

GOVGUAM AND THE STUDENTS

For the past several weeks, the Government of the Territory of Guam has been involved in a controversy with several hundred Trust Territory students attending public schools on Guam over a new governmental policy regarding the so-called I-20, or student visa. In making it more difficult to get such a visa, the government apparently was attempting to bring home to the TT and U.S. administrations the high cost to Guam of educating nearly 500 Micronesians at the University and secondary levels. The effect of the policy, however, hit hardest at those students already on Guam.

Then last week, an opinion of the Attorney General of Guam ruled that portions of the government's new policy were unconstitutional, and had the effect of denying some alien students a public education. The Guam Organic Act, coupled with the U.S. Constitution, permits aliens living legally on Guam to send their children, or children for whom they are responsible as guardians, to Guam public schools, the Attorney General's opinion said.

Following issuance of this memorandum of opinion on the legal questions involved, GovGuam put out a revision of its policy. The most far-reaching change in the new policy was removal of the policy that would have required all alien students already on Guam, but without a valid F-1 visa, from obtaining the I-20 student form without first returning to their home country and applying. Under the new policy, however, students at the University of Guam will have to maintain a certain grade point average in order to keep their I-20s.

All of the questions and problems have not been resolved by the new policy, and GovGuam officials are known to still be concerned at the cost to the taxpayers of Guam of educating so many alien students, but at least under the new policy no student already on Guam will be arbitrarily forced to leave without at least a chance to maintain his student status.

The status of alien students in grades one through nine was still in limbo last week, with the board of education of Guam required to change its previous policy to conform to the new government policy if such students are to be permitted to continue.

DISTAD VETOES PALAU CONSTITUTION BILL

A District Legislature Bill which would have set up a constitutional Convention for the "State of Palau" was disapproved by Palau District Administrator Thomas O. Remengesau. The bill was one of nine which failed to receive the DistAd's approval from the April session of the District Legislature.

In vetoing the constitution measure, the DistAd said the Legislature had apparently envisioned a constitution that would have become the Organic and fundamental law of the sovereign nation state of Palau. He said there is no enabling Trust Territory law that allows for the formation of a separate government in this way. He also pointed out that the bill was defective in several respects. To form a nation state of Palau, as was apparently contemplated in the bill, would, said the DistAd, be amending or altering the Trusteeship Agreement without the consent of the Administering Authority and the Security Council of the United Nations, and the Legislature does not have the power to do that.

CEILING LEGISLATION APPROVED

In news from the U.S. Congress in Washington last week, it was announced that the House of Representatives has passed legislation which would authorize budgets of up to 60 million dollars for fiscal years 1974, 1975, and 1976 for the Trust Territory. The Senate has authorized similar ceiling, but only for the fiscal year 1974 budget. A compromise will be necessary. It was pointed out that the legislation is only a ceiling authorization, and does not constitute actual appropriation of funds in those amounts. That requires separate legislation.

The Trust Territory Program and Budget Office was also notified last week that several requests for re-allocation of funds from one area to another

within this year's budget have been approved. These include putting more money into such major projects as the Palau-Babelthuap bridge, Isley Field rehabilitation on Saipan, and funds for Kusaie Hospital, among others.

JAPANESE GRAVES MISSION SET

Another major mission to the Trust Territory to recover the remains of Japanese war dead is expected to be undertaken soon by the government of Japan. Negotiations were taking place last week to finalize plans for the mission, which is tentatively scheduled to travel to the Marianas, and for additional missions to Truk and the Marshalls, all of them to take place this summer. The Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry sponsors these trips, several of which have already been made to various parts of the Trust Territory. It was also reported last week that negotiations are in progress to build a Japanese government-sponsored monument to war dead at a location on Saipan yet to be chosen. Completion of the monument is to be sometime in December of this year. Saipan already has several monuments of various kinds dedicated to the memory of those who lost their lives on both sides during World War two, when the island was a major battleground.

PERSONNEL DIRECTOR AMONG THOSE ADRIFT FOR THREE DAYS

Trust Territory Personnel Director Arthur Akina was one of three men who were lost at sea off Saipan for three days last week. Akina and Jim Dudley, who manages the Whispering Palms Golf Course on Saipan, went out for a Saturday morning of fishing aboard a 19-foot outboard boat owned by Bob Coddington, manager of Dillingham construction for Micronesia. A shark that hit the engine broke the propeller shaft, and set the hapless trio adrift that afternoon...and it wasn't until the following Monday afternoon that they were finally brought back, following two days of aerial searching by a Navy plane from Guam. The boat had drifted to some 40 miles away from Saipan...heading west, before the men were finally located and taken in tow. All three men were in good condition despite their harrowing experience.

BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS THAT MADE NEWS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY LAST WEEK:

The annual planning conference for Trust Territory District Planning Officers and their Deputies was held last week on Saipan.

A \$123,000 Federal Grant for Maternal and Child Health Care Programs in all six districts has been received by the Trust Territory Department of Health Services.

The Congress of Micronesia will hold public hearings beginning July 3 on the nominations of Eusebio Rechucher to become Director of Resources and Development, and William Allen to be the member-at-large and temporary Chairman of the new Territorial Housing Commission. The public is invited to submit testimony or appear in person at the hearings.

Two education employees from Truk, Net Sangair and Rerat Robert, have completed a workshop in adult basic education development in San Francisco.

July 12 has been officially proclaimed Micronesia Day, and a legal holiday throughout the Trust Territory.

A Korean fishing vessel which went aground near Kuttu, in the Mortlock Islands of Truk District, earlier this month was freed with only minor damage.

And finally, Jack Hanson, a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Truk, has joined the Yap District Administration as District Business Advisor.