

JCS

Pipe Dreams



By Joe Murphy

I suppose it's these hot summer afternoons, with the air conditioner on the fritz that get my feeble brain to pondering. Why doesn't this place, a tropical island, and especially a place with a Spanish heritage, take advantage of the siesta syndrome?

Like everything closes down in the afternoon in Spain, and many Latin American countries, opening up again in the late afternoon, after everybody has had a good nap. Maybe this just doesn't jive with the American, Japanese hard-working ethic, but it sounds sort of fun to me, conking out under a coconut tree in the middle of the day.

Don't anticipate any lessening of continuing antagonism between the U.S. negotiators and the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status. Former Congress of Micronesia Senate President Amata Kabua, a fairly conservative man, has stepped down after four years, resigning from the committee. The group selected Marshalls Islands delegate Ataji Balos as his replacement.

Balos should have had his cover on the Micronesian Reporter, Palau's Sen. Roman Tmetuchl believes, as "Outstanding Member of the Congress of Micronesia." The senator listed the following achievements by Congressman Balos:

- * He stopped cold the US Air Force on Eniwetok.
- * Thrown the Defense Department into a tizzy over a fair land lease agreement for the islands of Roi and Namur;
- * Had the whole TF administration running scared over the Bikini Rehabilitation project.
- * Brought the U.S. Government to its knees over the issue of the care of Rongelapese and Utirikese, and
- * Introduced a missile tax which, said Sen. Tmetuchl, "while an audacious move, is entirely logical, legally reasonable, and profitable." The tax would have been an import tax on all missiles the U.S. ballistic missile people fire into Micronesia from Vandenburg.

He just doesn't strike me as being the All-American boy, somehow

Who controls the mineral and oil rights of Micronesia? Presumably, the people of the islands should, if there are such minerals or oil, either on land, or beneath the sea. The question, though, is the definition of how far out the land and rights extend. In Truk, the land owners contend that their land extends out to the sea, while the U.S. has always contended that high tide mark was the spot.

Too, the U.S. will attend the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference next year, to push for a narrow concept of what is included in a nation's territorial sea. The U.S. is in favor of what it calls "internationalism" or opening of the resources of the sea to all nations. The waters adjacent to Micronesia outside the three mile limit would be open to fishing, or mining vessels of all nations. The Micronesians, however, have a different concept, and think all waters within straight lines drawn between the outer-most islands and reefs should be territorial waters and therefore off-limits, belonging to Micronesians.

Micronesia, they contend, could wind up losing control of their precious resources, which could make them a wealthy nation, and also could wind up in the middle of a violent international conflict. The danger is real, they say, and already CONOCO, one of the Rockefeller controlled oil companies, has a representative in Palau, Paul Cheney, exploring the mineral wealth there. Dillingham, the large Hawaiian based firm, already has a firm foot in Micronesia's door, and has been mining aragonite off the Bahamas for some time.

03-028212