

# Week in Review

8/6/73

## SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Prepared by Micronesian News Service

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### STATUS COMMITTEE CONTINUES TOUR

The two groups of the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status went into their third week of meetings and discussions with the people of Micronesia regarding Micronesia's future political status. The group touring the eastern districts and headed by Joint Committee Co-Chairman Ekpap Silk, recently completed a series of meetings in three of Ponape District's outer islands and in the district center and some outer islands of the Marshalls District. The group headed by Committee Chairman Lazarus Salii completed their tour of the western districts on Saipan July 25.

Each group is touring three districts in Micronesia, to obtain the opinions and feelings of the people of Micronesia regarding the present status negotiations which the Joint Committee is presently pursuing with the United States, and the people's thoughts in general about Micronesia's future political status.

The committee headed by Marshalls Representative Ekpap Silk, includes Senators Petrus Tun (Yap), Tosiwo Nakayama (Truk), and Bailey Olter (Ponape). The western group includes besides Committee Chairman Lazarus Salii (Palau), Senators John Mangefel (Yap), Andon Amaraich (Truk), Ambilos Iehsi (Ponape), Edward Pangelinan (Marianas), and Representative Ataji Balos (Marshalls). Palau Senator Roman Tmetuchl and Marianas Congressman Herman Q. Guerrero were supposed to join the group headed by Co-Chairman Silk, but circumstances prevented the two from doing so. Last week, the eastern group visited the Ponape outer islands of Mokil, Pingelap, and Kusaie, as well as the Marshalls District Center of Majuro and the Marshalls outer islands of Ebeye and Jaluit. The western group completed its last leg of the tour on Saipan July 25, after three days of hearings there.

On the way to Kusaie, the eastern committee stopped for a few hours on the Ponape outer islands of Mokil and Pingelap. In both communities, where the population numbers only a few hundred each, there was little time for the issues of Micronesia's future political status to be explored in great detail. In the Ponape subdistrict island of Kusaie, where the committee spent two days, the meetings included several expressions for Kusaie to become a separate district from Ponape district. This seemed to be the overriding concern of the Kusaieans present at the meetings.

From Kusaie, committee members continued their voyage by field trip ship to Ebeye in the Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshalls. Ebeye is the residence for many Marshallese from all atolls in the Marshalls District, who have come to work at jobs in nearby Kwajalein Missile Range. The various status alternatives were further clarified at the meetings on Ebeye, as was the case on Jaluit, a Marshalls atoll which will soon become a major subdistrict center.

In Majuro, meetings were held in the district center as well as in the outlying municipality of Laura. Some Majuro residents expressed their concern for the lack of political education, and whether people were ready to make a decision on their future status.

After two days of meetings on Rota in the Mariana Islands, the group headed by Senator Lazarus Salii proceeded on to Tinian and Saipan, where they met with the elected leaders and the general public. Most of the meetings between the Joint Committee and elected leaders of Tinian and Saipan included the sentiment that the people of Tinian and Saipan support the political aspirations of the Marianas Political Status Commission for a close, permanent association with the U.S.

In meetings with the Tinian Municipal Council, the Marianas District Legislature, and the Saipan Municipal Council, the Joint Committee was requested to sanction the separate status talks by the Marianas Political Status Commission. At the Tinian meeting, residents also indicated their support for the U.S. military presence in the Marianas District, specifically on Tinian where the U.S. has indicated that its major military requirements lie. They pointed out that the military on Tinian would be the backbone of the economic, social, and educational betterment of the island.

M It was only at the general public hearing on Saipan that committee members heard Mariana Islanders express the desirability that their district remain with the other five districts in the Micronesian negotiations with the U.S. The Saipan general public hearing was attended by a very few, who were mostly young college-educated people.

With the hearings completed in the Marianas, the committee headed by Senator Lazarus Salii has concluded its tour in the western districts. The group headed by Representative Ekpap Silk arrived in Ponape July 27 for five days of hearings in the municipalities of Ponape island itself and expects to wind up the tour of the eastern district by August 1.

#### STATUS OFFICE TEAM COMING

According to an announcement in Washington July 27, by Ambassador Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, a U.S. Government fact-finding group will visit Yap and Palau in the Trust Territory between July 30 and August 9, to discuss with local officials and other residents the possible early return of Trust Territory public land to the individual districts. A similar group is expected to visit the eastern districts upon completion of the first group's trip.

#### PLANNERS TO TINIAN

A team of military and civilian planners was scheduled to visit Tinian island in the Marianas last week. The U.S. Air Force, as the designated executive agent for Tinian Base Development, has been requested to proceed with early planning for a military presence on Tinian, "to demonstrate

U.S. willingness to honor preliminary agreements with the Marianas Political Status Commission." Those preliminary agreements are outlined in the June 4 Joint Communique, issued on Saipan at the conclusion of the second round of Marianas status talks.

The visit to Tinian last week would have been the first of a series of periodic visits which will take place over the next several months to provide a continuing liaison with the Marianas leaders and the people of the district.

The specific purpose of this first trip is "to provide Marianas representatives with information on Tinian on-site surveys which are planned for August and September of this year." Members of the team include Bernard Dove, a civilian who heads a Bases and Units Division in the Air Force, Air Force Col. James P. McCarthy, and Air Force Col. William R. Kenty, a Liaison Officer for the Commander In Chief Pacific Staff. McCarthy and Kenty were both members of the U.S. negotiating team which was on Saipan for the May-June status talks. Also on Tinian, the Tinian Municipal Council was to consider on July 27 a piece of legislation which would establish a referendum on military use of lands on the island. The bill, if passed, would, according to its title, "provide for a referendum by the people of Tinian Municipality, Mariana Islands District, on the proposition whether or not the U.S. Armed Forces should be allowed to use Tinian island or parts thereof for military and defense purposes."

The bill establishes September 14, 1973, as the date for the referendum, and indicates that voting will be open to all "qualified voters of the Municipality of Tinian eligible to vote for members of the Congress of Micronesia or of the District Legislature."

NOW, BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST WHICH MADE NEWS DURING THE WEEK:

A TT Job Corps student, 19-year old Antonio Aribuk of Koror, Palau, was killed in a traffic accident in Hawaii July 21.

The Marshalls district has a new district law requiring "Drinking Permits" of residents and visitors alike. Ponape was the first district to enact a similar law.

High Commissioner Johnston has nominated James R. Wheeler of Huntington Beach, California, to be director of Public Works for the Trust Territory. Under the advice and consent law, Wheeler's appointment is not subject to Congress of Micronesia approval or disapproval, though the appointee and his qualifications for the job have been submitted to the Joint Committee on Administrative Appointments for review. The High Commissioner has also nominated Moses Samuel of the Marshall Islands to a vacant position on the Trust Territory Environmental Protection Board. Samuel, if approved by the Congress Joint Committee, would replace Michael Konelios, who has resigned from the Board.

Procedures and regulations have been finalized to allow issuance of payments for death claims which have been certified for awards under the Micronesian Claims Act. The procedures will now allow these payments to be made within a few days from the time the Claims Commission has presented its certificate of an award to a claimant, and the claimant has signed the appropriate release.

And finally, TT Director of Personnel Arthur Akina has announced the appointment of Pedro Harris as Chief of the Training Division for the Trust Territory. A native of Ponape, Harris will be responsible for the supervision of a TT-wide program of upgrading skills of TT employees from clerks to program management personnel.