

GIST

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BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC

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1. Background: The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) encompasses a land area of less than 700 square miles, scattered over some 3 million square miles of ocean and more than 2,000 islands lying in three major archipelagoes: the Carolines, the Marshalls, and the Marianas. Guam, the largest island in the Marianas, is not part of the Trust Territory. It is an unincorporated territory of the U.S.

These strategically-located islands were governed by the Japanese between the two World Wars under a League of Nations mandate. Converted into military bases by the Japanese in World War II, they were captured by allied forces. In July 1947 the UN placed the area under US trusteeship, initially administered by the Navy Department, then transferred in 1951 to the Department of the Interior.

2. Government: Executive and administrative authority for the government is vested in a High Commissioner appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Government is structured on the theory of a separation of powers. Since 1965 territory-wide legislative authority has resided in the Congress of Micronesia, elected by the people of the various districts. The judicial authority is independent of the executive and legislative branches and is vested in the High Court and district and community courts.
3. Negotiations looking toward agreement on a new status for Micronesia which serves the long-term welfare and needs of Micronesians have been intensified since 1971 when President Nixon appointed Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams to act as his Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations.

The Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia (JCFS), on behalf of five of the six districts of the Trust Territory, has reached agreement with the United States on a partial draft compact. The sixth district, the Mariana Islands, has requested, and the U.S. has agreed to, separate negotiations leading toward a close and permanent union with the U.S. under a Commonwealth arrangement. In a joint communique at Palau in April, 1972, the U.S. and the JCFS agreed, in principle, that the future relationship between Micronesia and the U.S. will be determined by a Compact of Free Association based on the sovereign right of the Micronesians to choose their own future in free association with the U.S. In July, 1972, the Congress of Micronesia directed its negotiators to explore an independence option also.

4. U.S. policy: Since 1969, the U.S. has expanded economic, social and educational development programs in Micronesia and promoted an increasing measure of self-government. The U.S. favors an

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orderly transition to self-government and termination of the trusteeship on a timetable acceptable to both parties. It is the U.S. position that the trusteeship must be terminated for all parts of Micronesia simultaneously. The U.S. will retain responsibility for Micronesian foreign affairs and defense under the proposed Compact of Free Association. U.S. authority in these fields is necessary to carry out our responsibilities in the Western Pacific and the world for the maintenance of peace and security.

5. Draft compact: In defense matters under the partial draft Compact of Free Association agreed to thus far by both parties, the U.S. would have:

- responsibility for Micronesia's defense,
- the right to deny the use of Micronesia by third powers for military-related purposes,
- the right to continue to utilize Kwajalein Atoll testing facilities and an option to establish a supply and logistics base in the Palau District, should contingencies require, in order to support U.S. security responsibilities in the Pacific Ocean area.

On other matters under the draft Compact:

- The people of Micronesia have the right to adopt their own constitution and form of government, provided they remain consistent with the provisions of the Compact.
- The Government of Micronesia shall have full responsibility for and authority over the internal affairs of Micronesia.
- Future land acquisition by the U.S. shall be in accordance with Micronesian laws and through mutually agreed procedures. The Micronesian Government will guarantee speedy negotiation for the temporary use of land in emergency situations.
- The U.S. shall have responsibility for Micronesia's foreign affairs, including negotiation of treaties, but it shall negotiate and conclude international treaties or agreements relating exclusively or predominantly to Micronesia only on the request and with the consent of the Government of Micronesia.
- The Government of Micronesia and Micronesian citizens will be free to negotiate and sign contracts which do not involve direct inter-governmental obligations and responsibilities, and Micronesian participation in regional and international organizations shall be permitted.
- Unilateral termination of the Compact by either party would be possible after a specified period.
- Upon termination of the Compact, current land leases to the U.S. would continue in effect for their originally designated term and arrangements would be made to protect larger U.S. security interests in the area.