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REVIEWED BY: *Shep* DATE: FEB. 25 1977

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

5-OCT 1973

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: September 25, 197

For DISSEMINATION: 37
AUTH. 37
ORSE EXISTING MARKINGS
CLASSIFIED RELEASABLE
BASE DENIED
FOI EXEMPTIONS B1, A

SUBJECT: Micronesian Future Political Status

PARTICIPANTS:

B1, A

Copies to:	IO/UNP - Mr. Sylvester	Interior/OMSN-Mr. Wilson
	USUN New York - Mr. Immerman	Interior/DOA-Mr. Carpenter
	L - Mr. Stowe	Amembassy Canberra
	L/EA - Mr. Johnson	Status LNO Trent, Saipan
	EA - Mr. Sneider	DOD/ISA - Capt. Whelan
	EA - Mr. Hummel	DOD/JCS - Col. Kenty

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At a luncheon hosted by

offered the following comments on Micronesian future political status and the independence issue:

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-- Asked about his position on independence, [] said that he personally favored independence, but that the position of Micronesian independence advocates is misunderstood by the USG. He said that he and most other advocates differ from those who favor free association mainly in that they desire a future relationship with the US to be based on a treaty between equal, sovereign states, rather than on a compact of free association. Under the envisaged treaty relationship, defense arrangements would be much the same as under free association. As to foreign affairs, [] spoke of consultative

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EA/ANP: JCDorrance/tfo

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arrangements under which USG would in most areas act on behalf of Micronesia (apparently along the lines of New Zealand's arrangement with Western Samoa).

-- He emphasized, however, that the current mandate of the Joint Committee on Future Status (JCFS) is to complete the free association negotiations. He said he supported that mandate, and hoped that the draft compact of free association could be completed at the next round of talks later this year. He was optimistic and felt that the financial issue was the principal remaining question to be resolved. Asked about US military land requirements, he said there appeared to be a general willingness on the part of the concerned districts to accept US defense land requirements, and only the details had to be worked out. As an aside, he remarked that he could not understand why the US felt it necessary to negotiate separately with the Mariana Islands district. "The US would have had no problem negotiating for Tinian if it continued to deal with the Congress of Micronesia." He made no other reference to the Marianas.

-- He then said that, after completing the Compact, the JCFS will, under its present Congressional mandate, turn to negotiation of an independence option. The Congress and the Micronesian people must be able to make a choice between two clearly defined and understood options: free association and independence. He pointed out that the Congress is presently on record as favoring free association over independence and that, as President of the Senate, he is obligated to support free association -- at least until such time as the Congress may change its mind.

-- Asked how many members of the Congress support independence, he said that 16 out of 33 members opposed the draft Compact at the Ponape special session and thus could be said to be in favor of independence at that time. He doubted that all 16 held the same views today, or that they were in fact all serious advocates of independence. He noted that their primary objection

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was to being asked to approve a partial draft, and to the fact that the relationship would be defined in a compact as against a treaty. He said that there was far less concern about the substance of the arrangements then under consideration.

Comment: Also present (but not participating in the above conversation) was Bethwel Henry, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Congress of Micronesia. Henry listened attentively, but made no comment. Given the circumstances, I also made no comment at any point, except to note that the USG does in fact understand [redacted] position on independence; the problem is that many other Micronesians advocating independence are far less precise in terms of what independence means to them. [redacted] in making his own points about the independence issue, seemed to assume that there is no question but that the Micronesian people will at some point be offered an independence option. The only question in his mind appears to be the definition of that option, i.e., the nature of the relationship between an independent Micronesia and the US.

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