



OFFICE OF MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

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October 16, 1973

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Subject: Micronesian Future Political Status:
Meetings of Heads of Delegation

Participants:

Senator Lazarus Salii Ambassador Haydn Williams
Congressman Ekpap Silk James M. Wilson, Jr.

Time and Place: CINCPAC Guest House, Makalapa, Oahu
October 11, 1973

Ambassador Williams opened the meeting by giving Senator Salii and Congressman Silk copies of the OMSN team's summary of its land survey in the Eastern Districts of the TTPI, noting that this now fleshed out the brief resume provided the Senator in August in Guam.

The Ambassador went on to say the United States as a result of its efforts in this regard was now almost ready to present a plan for the handling of public land. As he had said six months ago in the conversations in Honolulu, the U.S. was not in principle opposed to the early transfer of public land to the districts if that is what the people so decide. This had been reiterated in the May 9 memorandum to Senator Salii which followed those conversations.

The United States had been studying the matter since the February and March communications from the JCFS and had formulated a list of preliminary questions for its own use which had also been put to the JCFS in the May 9 memo. The JCFS reply had been received only day before yesterday. This reply would have to be considered before the U.S. would be ready to present its full plan, but the plan should be ready in the very near future.

Ambassador Williams proposed that the U.S. plan be made available to the JCFS as soon as it was ready and that the two delegations meet shortly thereafter to discuss it in detail. He noted that both sides had stated in the past and still held the view that land questions, including both the disposition of public land and U.S. needs, should be settled before agreement could be finally reached on a compact. It might be appropriate therefore after land matters were taken care of to proceed immediately to consider the remaining provisions to be included in the compact.

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The Ambassador observed that word had just been received regarding the scheduling of the CAB hearings on the Saipan-Tokyo route case in Washington on November 8 and 9. About half the JCFS would be there. He suggested it might save both time and money for them to stay on and meet with the U.S. delegation to pursue details of the public land question and then proceed if possible to work out the remaining articles of the draft compact. He noted that the JCFS counsel was also located in Washington.

Senator Salii responded that all of this seemed logical to him personally. He said the Micronesian position on Palau land was urgent and authoritative. The JCFS tour had shown other districts also wanted public land returned to them; but this did not have the same urgency and the JCFS had not acted on it officially as yet. Regarding the next session he would have to consult people in Micronesia before giving his final concurrence. Before leaving Saipan and before hearing of the CAB schedule he had been going to propose November 20 in Ponape for the meeting. But at least half of the JCFS would be in Washington for the CAB hearings (Salii, Silk, Nakayama, Amaraik, Iehsi, Mangefel and possibly Pangelinan) and it would save travel money to meet in Washington inasmuch as the airlines were paying the COM participants' fare in any event. Senator Salii said he would agree tentatively now and confirm later in the day after he had made a couple of phone calls.

It was agreed that a brief joint statement for the press would be drafted and issued to the press the next day, which would also include reference to the discussions of the previous day with the High Commissioner and Carpenter on political education.

Later in the conversation Ambassador Williams told Senator Salii that as a result of the U.S. study it had been determined that a special effort was going to be needed to complete the cadastral program for public land if it was not going to drag out forever. Mr. Wilson observed that at the present rate it would take 28 years to finish. The problem was particularly acute in Palau and the Marianas. The United States was therefore planning to ask immediately for special funds to accomplish this in a period of three years using outside contractors. Senator Salii asked if this would be taken out of on-going programs and was assured this was not the case in that supplemental funds would be sought for this purpose.

UNCLASSIFIED

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Ambassador Williams also noted that the U.S. plan would necessarily have to include certain reservations or safeguards to protect among other things land needed for government use and arrangements entered into by the government for the use of public lands by individuals. Senator Salii said he had spoken previously about the return of unused public land only and felt that outstanding leases of public land must be respected.

With regard to the remaining provisions of the draft compact the Ambassador said the principal points appeared to be finance, transition and termination. He suggested primary attention be devoted to drafting rather than spending time in a series of long sessions for the record. The new constitutional convention should help provide some of the answers to outstanding questions on transition. Upon questioning Senator Salii said he also felt particular attention would have to be paid to the question of moving the capital from Saipan. Ambassador Williams agreed this would have to be treated under the heading of transition.

Senator Salii felt termination might be the easiest of the remaining topics. Ambassador Williams said no one seemed to realize the United States had come around to agreeing to the idea of unilateral termination after a waiting period. The U.S. position otherwise was clear on the negotiating record and he would stand on what was there regarding the survival of defense rights. On this his position was just as firm as Senator Salii's on the return of public land in Palau. Senator Salii acknowledged this and suggested consideration be given to a defense pact which would survive termination of the compact.

With regard to the timetable for finishing the compact, Ambassador Williams described the views of Senate President Nakayama expressed in Washington favoring early completion. He asked if it was still Senator Salii's view that the compact once completed would go to the Congress and then to the people in a plebescite; and if the Congress or the people rejected it, then it would be necessary to return to the drawing board and work on other possible alternatives. Senator Salii did not disagree.

Ambassador Williams said he hoped it would be possible to maintain close communication between the two delegations. He noted that the U.S. and Russia maintain a "hot line" for this purpose and to avoid misunderstandings. He felt recent misunderstandings on such things as the Heine script might have been avoided if there had been direct communications on the subject when the problem first arose.

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033370