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(PALAU ACCEPTS LAND POLICY)

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WASHINGTON, D. C., NOV. 16 (MNS)---AN IMPORTANT KEY TO THE MICRONESIAN RESPONSE ON U.S. LAND POLICY, WHICH WAS DISCUSSED THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON, WAS THE REACTION TO THE POLICY OF A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION OF LEADERS FROM PALAU DISTRICT WHO TRAVELED TO WASHINGTON TO CONSULT WITH THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS CONCERNING THE RETURN OF MICRONESIAN PUBLIC LANDS.

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HEADED BY THE TWO HIGH CHIEFS OF PALAU, IBEDUL GIBBONS AND REKLAI LOMISANG, AND THE SPEAKER OF THE PALAU DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, ITELBANG LUII, THE DELEGATION ALSO INCLUDED TWO MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, GEORGE NGIRARSAOL

AND JOSHUA KOSHIBA.

AFTER EXAMINING THE U.S. POLICY WHICH AGREED TO THE RETURN OF PUBLIC LAND, AND AFTER TALKING WITH MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE THE DELEGATION ISSUED A FORMA STATEMENT TO AMBASSADOR F. HAYDN WILLIAMS INDICATING THEIR APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE U.S. POLICY STATEMENT. THE DELEGATION SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ITS ACCEPTANCE WAS SUBJECT TO FOUR SPECIFIC TERMS, OR CONDITIONS. THE FIRST OF THESE CONCERNS THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. "THE PALAU DISTRICT DELEGATION DOES NOT DEEM IT NECESSARY NOR PROPER FOR THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA TO BECOME INVOLVED AND ENTANGLED IN THE PROCEDURAL PROCESS OF RETURNING TITLE OF PUBLIC LANDS FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ADMINISTRATION TO THE DISTRICTS," THE STATEMENT SAID, INDICATING THAT THE DELEGATION HAS NEITHER POLITICAL NOR HISTORICAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE MATTER. THE LANDS SHOULD BE RETURNED DIRECTLY TO THE DISTRICTS BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH BYPASSING THE CONGRESS, THE DELEGATION STATEMENT SAYS.

"HOWEVER," IT CONTINUES, "NOTHING THE PROCEDURAL NATURE

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OF THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA IN EFFECTING THE RETURN OF PUBLIC LANDS TO THE DISTRICTS, AND AS A GESTURE OF GREAT RESPECT AND SUPPORT FOR THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA AND THE POLITICAL UNITY OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, THIS DELEGATION HAS DECIDED TO ACCEPT SAID ROLE OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA PROVIDED THAT IT MAKES PROVISION FOR THE ENABLING LEGISLATION IN ITS FORTHCOMING REGULAR SESSION." SHOULD THE CONGRESS FAIL TO DO SO, THE DELEGATION RECOMMENDS DIRECT ACTION, PERHAPS BY AN EXECUTIVE ORDER, TO RETURN PUBLIC LAND TO THE DISTRICTS.

THE SECOND CONCERN OF THE PALAU DELEGATION RELATES TO THE STANDING OF THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS OF PALAU TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT TITLE TO PUBLIC LANDS IN TRUST FOR THE PEOPLE. THE DELEGATION REAFFIRMS ITS POSITION THAT "THE PUBLIC LANDS IN PALAU DISTRICT BE RETURNED TO ITS TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN TRUST FOR THE PEOPLE OF PALAU". THE STATEMENT THEN POINTS OUT THAT THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS OF PALAU CONSTITUTE "THE MOST STABLE AND MOST PERMANENT BODY POLITIC IN THE PALAU DISTRICT, WHICH IS INTRINSICALLY RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS AND DESIRES OF THE MAJORITY AND WHICH ENJOYS WIDE PUBLIC SUPPORT."

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THE STATEMENT EXPRESSES THE BELIEF THAT THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS ARE IN ALL RESPECTS LEGALLY QUALIFIED TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT TITLE TO LAND, AND THAT THIS STANDING SHOULD BE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN THE ENABLING LEGISLATION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA.

CONCERNING THE LIMITATIONS AND SAFEGUARDS CONTAINED IN THE U.S. POLICY, THE PALAU DELEGATION RECOMMENDS AN AMENDMENT TO CLARIFY THE PORTION OF THE POLICY RELATING TO THE POWER OF EMINENT DOMAIN. TO INSURE THAT SUCH POWER WILL BE EXERCISED ONLY BY THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE IN WHICH THE LAND IN QUESTION IS LOCATED, IN THE EVENT SUCH POWER IS SHARED BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE DISTRICTS.

FINALLY, THE DELEGATION FROM PALAU COMMENTED ON THE SECTION OF THE U.S. POLICY WHICH COMMITS THE TITLE HOLDERS OF PUBLIC LAND NEEDED FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES BY THE UNITED STATES TO AGREE TO "ACCOMMODATE" THOSE NEEDS. THE DELEGATION, SAYS THE STATEMENT, DOES NOT DISPUTE THE THRUST OF THIS LIMITATION, BUT BECAUSE OF ITS BROAD IMPLICATIONS EMPHASIZES THE POSITION THE "THE PALAU DISTRICT LEGISLATURE SHALL REPRESENT ALL TITLE HOLDERS WHOSE LAND SHALL BE NEEDED BY

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THE UNITED STATES FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES, AND THE UNITED STATES SHALL HAVE TO NEGOTIATE WITH SUCH TITLE HOLDERS THROUGH THE PALAU LEGISLATURE. "FURTHERMORE," THE STATEMENT CONTINUES, "IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THIS DELEGATION CANNOT AND WILL NOT ACCEPT THE SUGGESTION THAT TITLE WILL BE PASSED TO THE NEW TITLEHOLDERS WHEN THEY HAVE FORMALLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO ACCOMMODATE THE LAND REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES: THIS DELEGATION BELIEVES THAT THE SUBJECT OF THE RETURN OF PUBLIC LANDS SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM AND NOT BE CONDITIONED UPON THE MAKING OF SUCH FORMAL COMMITMENTS.

HOWEVER, THIS DELEGATION, ON BEHALF OF THE LEGISLATURE AND THE PEOPLE OF PALAU, DOES HEREBY MAKE A FORMAL COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH WITH THE UNITED STATES IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE UNITED STATES' DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS IN THE PALAU DISTRICT."

IN ADDITION TO THE SIGNATURES OF THE FIVE DELEGATION MEMBERS, THE STATEMENT ALSO CARRIES THE SIGNATURES OF THE THREE WITNESSES FROM PALAU. THEY ARE THE ATTORNEY AND LEGAL ADVISOR TO THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, JOHNSON TORIBIONG, AND THE DISTRICT'S TWO SENATORS IN THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, LAZARUS SALII AND ROMAN TMETUHL. THE PALAU DELEGATION EXPECTS TO RETURN TO MICRONESIA WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

(SALII'S STATEMENT)

WASHINGTON, D.C., NOV. 16 (MNS)---HERE IS THE STATEMENT

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OF SENATOR LAZARUS SALII, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON
FUTURE STATUS, RELEASED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. NOV. 14.

"THANK YOU MR. AMBASSADOR. I HAVE FOUND FROM PAST
EXPERIENCE THAT THESE FORMAL SESSIONS NEVER RESULT IN ANY
ACTUAL DRAFTING LANGUAGE AND, THEREFORE, I WILL NOT DWELL
AT LENGTH ON MY REMARKS THIS MORNING. WE ARE TRULY PLEASED
THAT THIS SEVENTH ROUND IS FINALLY UNDERWAY. IT HAS BEEN
MORE THAN A YEAR SINCE WE BEGAN PUTTING TOGETHER THE ACTUAL
LANGUAGE OF A DRAFT COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN
MICRONESIA AND THE UNITED STATES.

"THE REASON FOR THIS DELAY IS A MATTER OF RECORD. OUR
DELEGATION PRE-CONDITIONED THE RESUMPTION OF THESE TALKS
UPON THE RETURN OF SO-CALLED PUBLIC LANDS IN MICRONESIA TO
THEIR RIGHTFUL OWNERS. ON THE EVE OF OUR DEPARTURE FROM
MICRONESIA TO WASHINGTON, WE RECEIVED FROM YOU A RESPONSE
TO OUR REQUEST. IT CAME AS THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA HAD
LONG ASKED IN THE FORM OF AN OFFICIAL UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT POLICY. IN ITS ESSENCE, THIS POLICY IS AN
AGREEMENT--A COMMITMENT--ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES
THAT IT WILL RETURN THE SO-CALLED PUBLIC LANDS TO THE

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DISTRICTS IN MICRONESIA IMMEDIATELY.

"THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY WILL, OUT
OF NECESSITY, HAVE TO BE HELD IN ABEYANCE FOR A FEW MONTHS
PENDING CERTAIN ACTIONS ON THE PART OF THE CONGRESS OF
MICRONESIA AND THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURES.

YESTERDAY OUR TWO DELEGATIONS MET TO DISCUSS THIS NEW
AMERICAN POLICY. I NOW PLACE THE MINUTES OF YESTERDAY'S
DISCUSSIONS INTO THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THIS SEVENTH ROUND.

I WILL ONLY STATE HERE THAT YOUR DELEGATION AND OURS
ARE ABLE TO OPEN THE TALKS THIS MORNING BECAUSE OUR DELEGATION
FINDS THE AMERICAN POLICY ACCEPTABLE WITH THE CLARIFICATIONS
AND MODIFICATIONS AGREED UPON YESTERDAY.

"AND NOW THAT THE LAND QUESTION IS OUT OF THE WAY, THE
TASK BEFORE US IS TO COMPLETE DRAFTING THE COMPACT OF FREE
ASSOCIATION. THERE IS NO REASON THAT THIS TASK CANNOT BE
COMPLETED IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. BOTH SIDES HAVE HAD
MORE THAN ONE YEAR TO FORMULATE THEIR POSITIONS ON THE
REMAINING ISSUES OF FINANCE AND TERMINATION. OUR DRAFTING
COMMITTEE IS PREPARED TO MEET WITH YOURS IMMEDIATELY AFTER
THIS MORNING'S SESSION TO BEGIN THAT TASK.

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I DO NOT FIND THIS GREAT CAPITAL CITY OBJECTIONABLE IN ANY GREAT RESPECT, BUT YOUR WEATHER IS A BIT TOO COLD FOR OUR WARM BLOOD. YOU CAN THEREFORE BE ASSURED THAT OUR DELEGATION IS PREPARED TO WIND UP THESE SESSIONS IN THE SHORTEST AMOUNT OF TIME POSSIBLE FOR SEVERAL REASONS."

(KAPILEO RELEASED)

SAIPAN, NOV. 16 (MNS)---A YOUNG SAIPANESE CREWMAN OF THE M/V GUNNERS KNOT CHARGED BY PHILIPPINE AUTHORITIES WITH "HOMICIDE THROUGH RECKLESS IMPRUDENCE" IN THE ACCIDENTAL SHOOTING DEATH OF A FELLOW CREWMAN FROM PONAPE DISTRICT HAS BEEN RELEASED THIS WEEK TO THE CUSTODY OF THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT. WORD ON THE RELEASE OF LUIS KAPILEO, 19, OF TANAPAG VILLAGE, SAIPAN WAS RECEIVED THIS WEEK BY BOYD MCKENZIE, SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR DISTRICT AFFAIRS WHO HAS BEEN WORKING ON KAPILEO'S CASE THROUGH THE U.S. CONSULATE IN CEBU CITY, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

ACCORDING TO MCKENZIE, MINOR POUNDS, A DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR PONAPE DISTRICT WAS SENT LAST WEEK TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF KAPILEO WHO HAS BEEN IN JAIL FOR MORE THAN A MONTH. THE ACCIDENTAL SHOOTING OF JOHN LEKKA OF PONAPE OCCURED ON BOARD

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THE M/V GUNNERS KNOT WHILE THE SHIP WAS LOADING CEMENT AT ILLIGAN, A SMALL TOWN ON THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO. KAPILEO AND POUNDS ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO SAIPAN NEXT WEEK ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22.

(DENTAL TRAINING)

SAIPAN, NOV. 16 (MNS)---DR. HELKENA, CHIEF OF DENTAL HEALTH DIVISION, REPORTS THAT TWO DENTAL LABORATORY TECHNICIANS FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY ARE NOW TAKING COURSES AT THE U.S. NAVAL DENTAL CLINIC IN GUAM. SOROS PHILLIPO FROM THE MARSHALL ISLANDS AND PETER VILLAGOMEZ OF MARIANAS ARE LEARNING NEW TECHNIQUES IN DENTAL-PROSTHETICS, AS WELL AS FAMILIARIZING THEMSELVES WITH MODERN EQUIPMENT AT THE CLINIC. THE TRAINING IS FOR SIX MONTHS UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

ACCORDING TO DR. HELKENA, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT TRUST TERRITORY TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AT THE NAVAL DENTAL CLINIC. HE CREDITS THIS EFFORT TO CAPTAIN THOMAS L. WHATLEY, THE STAFF OF GUAM NAVAL DENTAL CLINIC, AND THE TRUST TERRITORY HEALTH SERVICES.

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