

(NITIJELA ADOPTS ANTI-CON CON, CONGRESS MEASURES)

MAJURO, APRIL 17 (HNS)---THE MARSHALL ISLANDS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, THE NITIJELA, HAS ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS OPPOSING MARSHALLESE PARTICIPATION IN THE UPCOMING MICRONESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, AND OPPOSING FURTHER PARTICIPATION BY THE MARSHALLS IN THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA.

THE DRAMATIC ACTIONS CAME SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT MONDAY NIGHT (APRIL 15) AT THE CONCLUSION OF A ONE-DAY SPECIAL SESSION OF THE NITIJELA CALLED BY THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING THE TWO RESOLUTIONS.

BOTH MEASURES HAD BEEN INTRODUCED AND DEBATED DURING THE LEGISLATURE'S REGULAR SESSION, A 30-DAY MEETING WHICH ENDED APRIL 9. FOLLOWING THAT SESSION THE NITIJELA'S LEADERSHIP ASKED FOR AND WAS GRANTED AN ADDITIONAL FOUR-DAY SPECIAL SESSION, DURING WHICH FURTHER PUBLIC HEARINGS WERE HELD IN BOTH MAJURO AND EBWE ON THE CONTRAVERSIAL RESOLUTIONS. THAT SPECIAL SESSION ENDED LAST SATURDAY WITH THE WORK ON THE RESOLUTIONS STILL PENDING, REQUIRING ANOTHER, ONE-DAY SPECIAL SESSION MONDAY.

THE VOTE ON THE MEASURE EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO ANY FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA WAS CLOSE, WITH ELEVEN IN FAVOR OF ADOPTING AND TEN OPPOSED. THE OTHER RESOLUTION, INDICATING THAT THE NITIJELA FEELS THE MARSHALLS SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, WAS ADOPTED BY ABOUT A THREE-QUARTERS MAJORITY OF THE NITIJELA, ACCORDING TO DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER TONY DEBRUN.

THE CONVENTION MEASURE IS NITIJELA RESOLUTION 57. IT POINTS OUT THAT THE NITIJELA, IN ADOPTING RESOLUTION 18 EARLIER IN ITS 21ST REGULAR SESSION THIS YEAR, HAS "COMMITTED ITSELF TO THE PROPOSITION OF SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS," AND THAT THE OTHER DISTRICTS MIGHT "MISCONSTRUCT" THE MOTIVES OF THE MARSHALLS IN SEEKING SEPARATE STATUS TALKS IF THE MARSHALLS WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

THEREFORE THE RESOLUTION DECLARES THAT IT WOULD BE "UNWISE AND INDEED INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE MARSHALL ISLANDS DISTRICT TO SEND DELEGATES, WHETHER ELECTED OR APPOINTED, TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FOR MICRONESIA."

NITIJELA RESOLUTION 72 IS THE MEASURE WHICH EXPRESSES THE SENSE OF THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE WITH REGARD TO FURTHER MARSHALLESE PARTICIPATION IN THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. THIS MEASURE POINTS OUT THAT THE CONGRESS HAS "TURNED A DEAF EAR ON THE EXPRESSED WISHES OF THE MARSHALLESE PEOPLE WITH REGARD TO REVENUE SHARING," AND ALSO POINTS TO RESOLUTION 18, PASSED EARLIER BY THE NITIJELA, WITH THE INDICATION THAT FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN THE CONGRESS FOLLOWING THIS DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO SEEK SEPARATE STATUS TALKS WOULD "...PERMIT UNGUARDED BUT POPULAR ATTACKS ON THE SINCERITY OF THE MARSHALLS IN ITS RESOLVE TO ACHIEVE A SEPARATE STATUS."

THE RESOLUTION THEREFORE CONCLUDES: "...THAT THE NITIJELA EXPRESSES ITS UNALTERABLE RESOLVE TO EXERCISE WHATEVER INFLUENCE IT HAS IN DISASSOCIATING THE PEOPLE OF THE MARSHALLS DISTRICT FROM ANY FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA."

DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE MEASURES THERE WAS EXTENSIVE DEBATE ON BOTH SIDES, WITH SOME SPEAKERS STRONGLY URGING ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTIONS AND OTHERS EQUALLY STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THEM. FORMER CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA SENATOR ISAAC LANNI, FOR EXAMPLE, SPOKE AGAINST THE MEASURES, COMMENTING THAT THE MARSHALLS HAS "NOTHING TO LOSE" BY PARTICIPATING IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

REPRESENTATIVE EKPAF SILK, THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS, MADE WHAT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER DEBRUN DESCRIBED AS AN "EMOTIONAL, ELEVENTH-HOUR APPEAL" TO THE NITIJELA TO KILL THE MEASURES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE CONGRESS DOES MANY THINGS WHICH BENEFIT THE MARSHALLS, AND

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URGED THE DISTRICT LAWMAKERS TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE TERRITORIAL BODY.

THE STRONGEST BACKER OF THE TWO RESOLUTIONS WAS IROIJ NAMO HERMIOS, WHO SAID IN THE PUBLIC HEARING THAT THE ONLY WAY THE MARSHALLS CAN SUCCEED IN ITS SEPARATE STATUS DESIRES IS FOR THE DISTRICT TO "CEASE ALL CONNECTIONS" WITH THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA THAT MIGHT INDICATE INSINCERITY ON THE PART OF MARSHALLESE LEADERS.

LEGISLATOR HERMIOS ALSO EXPRESSED SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION LAW, SAYING THE ELECTION DISTRICTS WERE DRAWN WITHOUT REGARD TO TRADITIONAL DIVISIONS OF AUTHORITY IN THE MARSHALLS, AND THAT TWO ISLANDS IN THE MARSHALLS WERE LEFT OUT ALTOGETHER. HE ALSO SAID THE LACK OF A VOTE IN THE CONVENTION FOR THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IS AN "INSULT" TO MICRONESIA'S TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND "AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY" OF THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP.

DURING THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING OF THE NITIJELA ON MONDAY THE CHAMBERS, WHICH ARE LOCATED ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF MAJURO'S MIECO BUILDING, WERE DESCRIBED AS "JAM-PACKED" BY ONE OBSERVER (SEE FOLLOWING STORY).

AS THE MARSHALL ISLANDS PURSUE THEIR GOAL OF SEPARATE STATUS NEGOTIATIONS, THE NEXT STEP IS EXPECTED TO BE THE NAMING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NEWLY CREATING MARSHALLS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION. DEBRUN SAID AN ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THESE NAMES IS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN MAJURO BEFORE THE END OF THIS WEEK.

(SEVERAL INJURES WHEN CEILING COLLAPSES)

MAJURO, APRIL 17 (HNS)---SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE HURT TUESDAY EVENING (APRIL 17) IN MAJURO WHEN THE SECOND FLOOR CEILING IN THE MIECO HOTEL COLLAPSED DURING A RECEPTION. MOST RECEIVED ONLY MINOR INJURIES, WITH ONLY TWO REQUIRING HOSPITALIZATION, ACCORDING TO DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER TONY DEBRUN.

ABOUT 200 PEOPLE WERE IN THE HOTEL'S RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE ON THE LAGOON SIDE OF THE BUILDING, ATTENDING A RECEPTION IN HONOR OF THE MARSHALLS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, THE NITIJELA, WHEN THE INCIDENT OCCURRED. DEBRUN SAID THERE WERE SOME "PRETTY BIG CHUNKS" OF PLASTER AND CONCRETE FALLING, BUT FORTUNATELY MOST OF THE GUESTS WERE STANDING IN LINE AT THE BUFFET TABLE AT THE TIME. HAD THEY BEEN MORE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE ROOM THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE INJURIES, HE COMMENTED.

POLICE IMMEDIATELY ORDERED THE EVACUATION OF THE THREE-STORY BUILDING, WHICH IS MAJURO'S LARGEST. WEDNESDAY DISTRICT OFFICIALS WERE INSPECTING THE STRUCTURE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE BUILDING WILL HAVE TO BE CONDEMNED. THE MIECO BUILDING HOUSES A 10-ROOM HOTEL, BAR, RESTAURANT AND NIGHTCLUB, AS WELL AS A RETAIL STORE, SEVERAL BUSINESS OFFICES, A WAREHOUSE AND, ON THE THIRD FLOOR, THE MEETING CHAMBERS AND OFFICES OF THE NITIJELA, WHICH HAD JUST COMPLETED A SPECIAL SESSION THE NIGHT BEFORE.

(MIECO TRADITIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRESS)

PONAPE, APRIL 17 (HNS)---THE SECOND WEEK OF THE MICRONESIAN TRADITIONAL LEADERS CONFERENCE GOT UNDERWAY IN KOLONIA, PONAPE, MONDAY (APRIL 15) WITH THE ADDITION OF TWO HIGH CHIEFS FROM YAP DISTRICT, ANDREW ROBOMAN FROM TONIL AND ALFONSO RANGANBAY OF RUUL MUNICIPALITY. IN SHORT REMARKS TO THE CONFEREES, CHIEF ROBOMAN SAID HE HOPED THE CONFERENCE WOULD HELP TO LEAD THEIR CHILDREN TO A BETTER LIFE. HE ADDED THAT THE MEETINGS WOULD FIND WHAT WOULD BE BEST FOR ALL LEADERS AND THEIR PEOPLE.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR LEO A. FALCAN BRIEFLY WELCOMED THE YAPSESE LEADERS AND ASKED IF THE CONFEREES WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. INFORMED THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS OF HIS DESIRE TO MEET WITH THEM IN A DISPATCH TO PONAPE FRIDAY (APRIL 12), THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WILL MEET WITH THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS WHEN HIS PLANE GOES THROUGH PONAPE.

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HALVORSON JOHNNY, PONAPE RADIO STATION MANAGER INDICATED.

THE SESSION RESUMED WITH FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. DISCUSSIONS OF THIS ISSUE WERE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC THURSDAY AND FRIDAY OF LAST WEEK. A SECOND COMMITTEE WAS FORMED TO FURTHER ANALYZE THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION LAW AND TO PRESENT PROPOSAL IN THE EVALUATION SESSIONS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY AND FRIDAY (APRIL 18 & 19) RESPECTIVELY. MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE INCLUDED THREE DELEGATES, ONE FROM EACH DISTRICT'S TRADITIONAL LEADERS.

DURING MONDAY MORNING'S SESSION, KINDOKY JOSEPH, WHO CHAIRED THE MEETING, SUMMED UP SEVERAL MOTIONS. AMONG THEM ARE: THAT THE CUTTING AGE AND THE AGE OF POTENTIAL CANDIDATES, BOTH 18 YEARS, SHOULD BE NO LESS THAN THIRTY YEARS OF AGE; THAT THE LENGTH OF THE CONVENTION (NINETY-DAYS) SHOULD BE EXTENDED UNTIL A DRAFT CONSTITUTION IS COMPLETED; THAT THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS, TWO FROM EACH DISTRICT, SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE WHICH THEY DO NOT PRESENTLY HAVE IN THE CONVENTION; THAT THE DATE FOR THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES, CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 4, 1974, SHOULD BE POSTPONED IN ORDER TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC TO VOTE INTELLIGENTLY; AND FINALLY THAT THE STEPS FOR ADOPTION OF A DRAFT CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER: THE CONVENTION, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, AND A POPULAR REFERENDUM. THE LAW NOW PROVIDES THAT THE REFERENDUM PRECEDE THE APPROVAL OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. AND THE FINAL ELEMENT WAS THAT THE CONSTITUTION BE DRAFTED INDEPENDENTLY OF THE DRAFT COMPACT CURRENTLY UNDER NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS AND THE UNITED STATES.

THOSE MOTIONS WERE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CONFEREES. THE MOTION WHICH SEEKS A LATER ELECTION DATE FOR THE CONVENTION DELEGATES WAS PARTLY THE RESULT OF A LETTER SENT TO THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, AND THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA PRESIDENT BY A GROUP IN THE KITTI MUNICIPALITY CALLED "PWIN EM PALIER" (ORGANIZATION OF THE SOUTH SIDE). THE KITTI GROUP SPECIFICALLY COMPLAINED THAT THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION ABOUT THE CONVENTION AND REQUESTED THAT AN ATTEMPT BE MADE TO DELAY THE ELECTION ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT ISSUE. THAT PARTICULAR GROUP IS COMPOSED OF APPROXIMATELY EIGHT HUNDRED KITTI RESIDENTS WHO BELONG TO VARIOUS CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

SAMUEL HADLEY, NANMWARKI OF METELANIKMW MUNICIPALITY, NOTHING THAT CHRISTIANITY ARRIVED LONG AGO AND THAT THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC RELIGIONS ARE THE STRONGEST IN MICRONESIA. EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUED INFUX OF MISSIONARIES OF VARIOUS SECTS OF CHRISTIANITY. CITING RECENT DISRUPTIONS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS DUE TO CONVERSIONS, HE ASKED THE OTHER TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO REQUEST THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION CONSIDER THIS MATTER IN THEIR PROCEEDINGS. THIS MOTION ALSO PASSED.

DURING THE AFTERNOON SESSION, DISCUSSION SHIFTED TO THE QUESTION OF FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS WITH YAP CHIEF ROBOMAN PRESIDING. TAKESY YU HADLEY CRITICIZED THE CURRENT EDUCATION FOR SELF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR WHAT HE CALLED "LIMITED ACTIVITIES." " TO DATE," HE SAID, " THE EDUCATION FOR SELF GOVERNMENT PROGRAM HAS BEEN PRINCIPALLY THE RADIO IN SHORT BROADCASTS WHICH PROVIDE DESIRES. THOUGH MANY PEOPLE HAVE RADIOS I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT THEY HAD AMPLE EXPOSURE TO THE ISSUES."

PENSILE LAURENCE, A MEMBER OF THE PONAPE DISTRICT TASK FORCE MEMBERS ON PONAPE, THEY HAVE FEW MATERIALS WITH WHICH TO WORK. HE HAD RECEIVED ONLY 150 BOOKS ON ESG AND HAS ASKED FOR

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ANOTHER THOUSAND COPIES. HE MENTIONED THAT TWO MEETINGS HAD BEEN CONDUCTED ON PONAPE AND MORE WERE PLANNED IN ADDITION TO FIELD TRIPS TO THE OUTER ISLANDS AND MUNICIPALITIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GROUP WOULD BE OPENED TO THEIR MATERIALS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS AS NECESSARY. HE STATED THAT THE WORK WOULD BE CARRIED OUT NOT ONLY BY RADIO BROADCASTS BUT ALSO BY DISCUSSIONS, WRITTEN INFORMATION, AND PERSONAL CONTACTS OF MEMBERS OF THE ESG TASK FORCE IN PONAPE. HE ADDED THAT THE ESG INFORMATION COMES FROM THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, THE U.S. DELEGATION TO THE MICRONESIAN STATUS TALKS, AND THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS. THE ESG PROGRAM BEGAN

AFTER THE RECENT SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. IT REACHED PONAPE JUST BEFORE THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS CONFERENCE BEGAN.

YASAUO YAMADA, FROM NETT MUNICIPALITY CRITICIZED THE ESG PROGRAM AS MERELY DEFINING TERMS SUCH AS FREE ASSOCIATION, INDEPENDENCE, AND COMMONWEALTH. TRUK MAYOR FUJITA BOSSY ASKED IF THE TASK FORCE CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS AND NOTED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS DID NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS FULLY WHEN THEY TRAVELLED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICTS EXPLAINING THE CARIOUS ALTERNATIVES OF MICRONESIA'S FUTURE. PENSILE LAWRENCE ANSWERED BY SAYING THE TASK FORCE IS LIMITED TO PROVIDING INFORMATION WHICH EXISTED IN THEIR MATERIALS. ISKIA SONI, LEGISLATIVE LIAISON OFFICER FOR TRUK WHO IS AN INTERPRETER FOR TRUK'S TRADITIONAL LEADERS, SAID THAT A FIELD STAFF EXISTS IN TRUK TO ANSWER QUESTIONS IN DETAIL BUT NOTED THAT IT COULD ONLY SUCCEED WITH ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

NICK BOSSY, ADVISOR TO MAYOR FUJITA BOSSY, CRITICIZED THE ESG PROGRAM FOR BEING LIMITED TO DEFINITIONS WHICH IN ENGLISH ARE TOO COMPLICATED FOR EVEN EDUCATED ADULTS TO UNDERSTAND. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EACH FORM OF POLITICAL STATUS SHOULD BE INCLUDED SO THAT THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA WOULD UNDERSTAND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN EACH CIRCUMSTANCE.

SUSUNU AIZAWA, MAGISTRATE OF TOL, EXPLAINED THAT POLITICAL EDUCATION IS ALWAYS APPROACHED FROM A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW. THE ESG PROGRAM COMING FROM THE GOVERNMENT USES THE GOVERNMENT'S APPRAISAL OF THE JAPANESE ADMINISTRATIONS WHICH NOW CAUSES HIM TO FAVOR INDEPENDENCE FOR MICRONESIA. ALL LEADERS, WHETHER CONGRESSMEN, LEGISLATORS, OR TRADITIONAL LEADERS, HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA IN ALL DECISION MAKING, AIZAWA SAID.

JOHNNY MOSES, NANWARKI OF UN MUNICIPALITY, STATED THAT WHEN HE VISITED THE UNITED STATES, SOME AMERICANS WARNED HIM NOT TO ACCEPT ANY POLITICAL STATUS UNDER THE UNITED STATES. HE POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION, MICRONESIANS CANNOT DO WHAT THEY WISH AT PRESENT.

SAMUEL HADLEY, NANWARKI OF NETELANUW, DESCRIBED HOW TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY HAS DECREASED STEADILY SINCE THE EARLIEST CONTACTS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND UNDER FOUR PERIODS OF SPANISH, GERMAN, JAPANESE, AND AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION. HE ADDED THAT THE ONLY IMPROVEMENT HE HAS SEEN UNDER THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION WAS IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION. HE NOTED THAT THE JAPANESE DID BETTER IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

BENITO PETER, NANWARKI OF KITTI MUNICIPALITY POINTED OUT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS ALREADY DIVIDED MICRONESIA BY CONDUCTING SEPARATE STATUS NEGOTIATION WITH THE MARIANAS DISTRICT. HE URGED THE CONFEREEES TO FIND OTHER ALTERNATIVES WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT YET PROPOSED.

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- JOHNNY HADLEY NOTED THAT MICRONESIA IS ONE OF THE LAST PLACES IN THE PACIFIC MOVING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. "WITHOUT ECONOMIC POWER, MICRONESIA CANNOT BE INDEPENDENT," HADLEY SAID. HE CHARGED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT FOSTERED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD TAKE THE POWER OF MONEY FROM THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT. THAT POWER HAS ONLY BEEN SHIFTED TO THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA IN SMALL PART. HE URGED THAT THE CONGRESS DIRECT MORE FUNDS TOWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE CONTINUES THROUGH THE END OF THE WEEK.

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