

OFFICE FOR MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Subject: The Tarnished Image of the MPSC

This memo is to point up a potential public and/or congressional relations problem that has become considerably more serious in the past few months. The continuing involvement of members of the Marianas Political Status Commission in criminal investigations, civil scandals and outright arrests for criminal activity could become a public embarrassment for OMSN and indeed taint, or at least complicate, any future status agreement that may be reached with the MPSC.

The names of several MPSC members have long been associated with questionable business ventures, land speculation and other wheeling and dealing. But these peccadillos are minor compared to the illegal acts committed by MPSC members over the past few months that have put the collective reputation of the commission under a dark cloud. In this period, one member has been convicted of the embezzlement of public funds (Taimanao), another member who also happens to be President of the District Legislature has been charged with the embezzlement of public funds (Santos), another member who is also a Congress of Micronesia Senator appears close to indictment for misappropriation of public funds (Borja), still another member has a criminal record dating back to student days in the United States and is well-known for his immoral and unethical conduct (Cruz). Finally, no less than ten present or former members of the MPSC have been implicated in one way or another in the CAB investigation of the Pan Am/Air Micronesia Tokyo air route scandal (Borja, Pangelinan, Santos, Muna, Cruz, Manglona (Herman), Manglona (Ben), Atalig, Hocog).

To date, there has been no known newspaper or other public commentary in the Marianas or Guam that draws conclusions from this spate of investigations and arrests involving MPSC members. However, criticism of the MPSC is becoming a real possibility and could irreparably damage the credibility of the commission and have a strongly detrimental effect on the course of the negotiations themselves.

On this side of the Pacific, there is at least one member of the Burton Subcommittee who already has serious doubts about the moral character and motivations of the members of the JCFS. Full knowledge of what has occurred recently in the Marianas would only reinforce this Congressman's reservations about the status negotiations with both the JCFS and the MPSC and complicate OMSN's job in selling the eventual agreements to the U.S. Congress.

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