

*AB*  
*My guess, as of now, is that Mr Wilson*  
*independence issue won't even be raised at this time,*  
*(Solit has said he'll take it up only if plebiscite or free*  
*association fails) except to extent we raise it in our brief*  
*if JCFS*  
*insists on*  
*respecting titles*  
*III & III*  
*God*

INFORMAL TALKS - MONTEREY - APRIL 1974 - CONSIDERATION  
OF INDEPENDENCE FOR MICRONESIA - BACKGROUND AND TALKING POINTS

We lack current information on the extent and depth of sentiment favoring independence in Micronesia. Several points, however, might be noted:

- At Hana the Micronesia' opening remarks noted they came to discuss "independence";
- The Mandate for JCFS at Barbers Point was unchanged - JCFS wants full range of options against which to compare various status opportunities;
- The Joint Committee has usually portrayed "free association" as a stepping stone to independence, not as a period during which U.S.-Micronesian ties might become closer;
- In its public hearings last summer (July 1973) JCFS subcommittee members in answering questions invariably talked about independence in favorable terms - "it would be great if..." - and the objections to independence were not spelled out;
- The example of Papua, New Guinea (due for independence December 1, 1974) will, it can be anticipated, have considerable impact on Micronesian thinking, at least along the line of "if they can do it, why not we?"
- The Micronesians may well view independence as the only sure way to protect their land against the exercise of eminent domain in one guise or another and to control foreign investment.
- The reluctance (or rather lack of authority) for U.S. status negotiators to deal with independence for Micronesia may well have whetted Micronesian appetites;
- The Micronesians probably believe that investments would flow into the area much more freely from non-U.S. sources and from international

organizations if Micronesia were independent. (Japanese business sources <sup>Source?</sup> have so indicated to JCFS.)

Putting to one side the question of whether there is, or will be, a groundswell in Micronesian public opinion favoring independence, the factors noted above argue for some action on our part to deal with the independence issue. In the near future it may arise in several ways:

- The Joint Committee will point -again- to its charter and insist on a full discussion of independence in the status negotiations.

- The political education program <sup>is already</sup> ~~will presumably have to discuss it~~ <sup>ing</sup> ~~in some form.~~ <sub>Whately 13</sub>

- The U.N. is unlikely to abandon its assumption, now widely regarded as a principle, that independence is the only valid sequel to trusteeship.

- The U.S. side might wish, on order to clear the air, to meet the anticipated challenge head on, before its supporters are really organized.

The assumption of this paper is that the independence issue will soon be raised in some form. It is suggested that the following arguments be advanced, language and sequence to be determined by circumstances, in the Monterey talks or other forums.

(1) We should reiterate, and clearly, that independence would mean a major decrease in the U.S. subsidy (to a level below \$15 million?). At Washington talks (VII) <sup>mentioned independence "with us U.S. financial</sup> ~~we said U.S. assistance would go to 0.~~ <sub>obligations</sub>

(2) The idea that there are freely available sources of alternative funding on a similar scale, e.g., for government operations, is a myth. (But the JCFS is convinced the U.S. will still pay for military rights and land areas even if Micronesia independent as U.S. reiterates "security" nature of the area in which U.S. has rights and interests.)

(3) The U.S. Congress is unlikely to (would not?) approve independence for Micronesia, (primarily because of security considerations).

(4) It is common practice under international law for a new government to assume the obligations and responsibilities of the previous government. Thus, it would not be within the prerogatives of an independent Micronesian government to terminate unilaterally already-existing arrangements, e.g., the Kwajalein Missile Range leases. (Note - this argument is unlikely to be persuasive as the Micronesians don't take legal precedents too seriously and believe they were flim-flammed on the Kwajalein leases.)

(6) As a matter of practical politics, and in view of the many issues seriously dividing Micronesia, the continued exercise by the U.S. Government of ultimate sovereignty provides Micronesian political leaders with a convenient excuse for inability to concert on common policies. (The upcoming constitutional convention can be expected to provide examples.)

(7) Put another way, there are too many divisive geopolitical factors and fissiparous tendencies in what is called Micronesia to make independence - the creations of a nation state - practicable.