

The President: Mr. President, I would like to request the Senate to give us a few minutes to say a few words.

Mr. President, members of the Senate.

I speak to you today about the future of Micronesia -- our nation, to be sure, but not yet fully ours. Last Monday our distinguished colleagues from the Marshall Islands spoke about economic development, about our urgent and long-frustrated desire for economic self-reliance.

I will talk today about our future political status. I speak from my experience gained over the years as Chairman of our Joint Committee on Future Status, but I do not necessarily speak for the Committee, not all of whose members may agree with my personal conclusions and recommendations.

We have had six years of negotiations with the United States, six years which have cost all of us much time, energy, and concern, and close to half a million dollars of our funds. The Americans have probably spent even more. What have we accomplished?

In spite of the progress we seemed to be making at the beginning, we are accomplishing less and less now. We are still a long way from any agreement satisfactory to both sides. Why is this so? Perhaps it is because the two sides want different things which are actually contradictory. We have been guided from the beginning by the four principles given to us by this Congress as our mandate, although we have always been willing slowly to recognize the security interests of the United States in Micronesia. The United States, on the other hand, puts its security interests first. Specifically, they found continued access to our islands for their military facilities and for enlisting others from our islands, although they, too, acknowledge their obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement.

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If the problem were as simple as I have just stated it, we were then a difference in jurisdiction, it would be hard to understand why we have not been able to reach agreement. But we have met, and it is therefore necessary to look through for an explanation, to try to understand what lies behind the two positions; what lies behind the failure to reach agreement today. In my opinion, we must look in not only at the negotiators themselves, but at the case this at the record of American administrations of our islands. And we must look back not merely to the year 1968 when we started negotiations, but all the way back to the year 1963, the year when the Salomon Mission defined the military priority which apparently has become the impetus of the American negotiators.

In particular, I suggest we should look at the record of the Administering Authority in the area of economic development. Our colleagues from the Marshalla spoke eloquently and also diplomatically about that record. I will be more blunt. It is my suspicion that the Americans do not want us to become self-reliant. This is because they do not trust us. They do not want to rely only on our promises, signed in a compact, that we will negotiate in good faith to secure them the facilities and the access they may need in the future. The only way they feel they can be absolutely sure of getting what they want is to keep us forever dependent upon them for our very livelihood.

The result has been the dismal record of inadequate economic development which my colleagues so well described and which so many of us have complained about so often in these halls. The record is there too in the legislation we have passed which was never really implemented, the means we have appropriated in vain for development, and the increasingly critical conclusions of our various committees on every aspect of our economic progress. Looking at this record, and at the record of our negotiations, I can only conclude that the United States has been deliberately sabotaging our economic development from the beginning, our struggle for self-sufficiency, in order to insure our compliance with their demands in the future. They hope, in other words, to be able to call us that if we do not give them the leads they may someday need, we will starve.

This attitude -- this underlying goal of keeping Micronesia forever dependent -- is also manifested in the levels of financial compensation that the United States will be willing to give any future Government of Micronesia after termination of the Trusteeship Agreement.

If my suspicion is correct, the United States is not only violating its promise under the Trusteeship Agreement, a matter for which it has long been criticized in the United Nations; it is also demonstrating serious bad faith. While America is offering promises and concessions with one hand, the other hand continues to hold a club. Under these circumstances I do not see how we can responsibly continue the negotiations.

I do not recommend that we terminate negotiations permanently, not now at least. But I do recommend that we suspend them indefinitely. We must then ask the Administering Authority for the last time to hear our requests and to hear their obligations, and to take full and positive action upon the economic development of Micronesia, upon the economic legislation we have passed, or will pass in this and future sessions of this Congress. We can offer the United States one last chance to start and carry through the kind of full economic development we have demanded and legislated during these past ten years. Then, when we are no longer entirely dependent upon the American taxpayer, upon the American Treasury, and can see ourselves well on the road to self-reliance, even though with some sacrifices, then we can resume negotiations here as equals. More important, we can negotiate in an atmosphere of trust we once had, but have now lost.

My conclusion is therefore simple. If the Administering Authority does not make a radical change in its economic development policies very soon, then that will be a signal to us of the continued lack of faith and therefore we must then start over and look into completely different alternatives for the future of our nation.

Thank you very much.

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