

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 674

THE NATION
25 December 1976

EDITORIALS

Micronia, Macro Malinowski

Micronesia and Macronesia are in a difficult negotiation. It has been going on for a long time and is approaching confrontation. One is going to take over the other, unless outside forces intervene—or unless war breaks out. The two "states" are the same geographic size; they both have an area of about 3 million square miles. Relations between them become extremely tense when it is revealed that the intelligence agency of one of them has managed to tap the phones and "bug" the negotiating headquarters of the other. An international crisis of the first order? Will the U.N. intervene to preserve the peace?

We raise the gauze curtain on the melodrama at this point and reveal the true cast of characters and the real nature of this struggle. The character "Macronesia" is the United States of America. The character Micronesia is in fact that collection of Pacific islands scattered over an area the size of the United States (and in that sense only of "the same size"). Micro's population is about 110,000, thinly sprinkled on such atolls, famous from the 1940s war against Japan, as Saipan and Kwajalein. Macro's population, not to say wealth and power, is greater by a factor of about 2,000. If it came to war, either of Macro's Vichitas could wipe out the whole population of those Melanesian Malinowskivillas.

This situation was revealed in the December 12th *Washington Post*, in a story full of wrinkles, by Bob Woodward (who has been known to uncover other "intelligence" operations). He reports that the CIA, in its habitual way, has been spying on the negotiators for the residents of the Mariana, Caroline and Marshall Islands, among the 200 other strategic specks. It then revealed the fruit of its electronic surveillance—the bargaining position of these wards of ours—to the State Department, which was handling "our side." Some State Department workers, long with their Department of Justice colleagues, were apparently bothered enough by this tilted game to spill the beans to the *Post's* Woodward.

Enter the heavies. The Pentagon already has one base out in those Western Pacific outposts, and it wants at least two more in case things start going wrong "base-wise" in Japan, the Philippines and Korea. The trouble is that we administer Micronesia as trustee for the United Nations, having solemnly promised to promote its future "self-government and independence." There is no sign that Macro wants to give up its strategic position in Micronesia just for the sake of the bubble independence. The Macro intent is to give its presence there a twist currently called "free association," and go on running the sprawling Pacific show at an annual pittance of \$30 million. (See Clifford Johnson's first-hand report, p. 677.)

Already the Micro front of unity, if it can be called that, has been split. The Marianas broke off from the rest and in March of this year made a separate deal with Washington whereby those islands will become a U.S. territory in 1981, like Guam. If the CIA's electronic snooping works well enough and is combined with a little judicious bribery, the rest of Micronesia might go that

convenient way and the whole independence bubble would finally burst.

President Ford was told about all this skulduggery several months ago when the State Department, or parts of it, protested the CIA's loading of the dice. His magisterial decision was to back the moral and practical problem of the tapings and buggings to the Attorney General for his ruling on the proprieties. No decision yet. Ford then named that grim old hard-liner Graham A. Martin, our bitter-end Ambassador to Saigon, to handle the Micronesian negotiations, but the Senate has delayed his confirmation after a moment of reflection.

A final intriguing note is that Micronesia has as its legal counsel and Washington representative one Paul C. Warnke, a nazi who has been on every short list for a high place in President-elect Carter's defense-intelligence hierarchy, even as director of the CIA. Warnke told Woodward that the alleged CIA snooping on his clients was "completely immoral, overreaching and taking advantage of the other side"—an odd diminuendo on the scale of civilized values.

The morality of this tale of Macro and Micro is obvious. Promises about sovereignty weigh nothing in the scales that measure "national security" and "world order." And it is A-O.K. to spy on your wards and undermine their negotiating positions if they dare to ask you to live up to your side of a bargain you agreed to in a more innocent age. But how long can the United States go on living comfortably in a world in which countries large and small have no ground for trusting its word on anything?