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HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN

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Micronesian Spying Damaged Our Relations

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's report on CIA spying in Micronesia observes that "Responsible officials failed to differentiate between intelligence techniques appropriate for use against an armed adversary and those proper for use against a people under U.S. administration and protection."

In other words, the bugging was totally out of place.

We could not agree more. This incident was the Watergate of the Micronesian status talks and we can only hope that it will not be equally disastrous.

The Micronesian talks are not the SALT negotiations and the islanders are not the Russians. The Micronesians are no threat to the United States. They have few if any valuable secrets. As a matter of fact, the report said that the CIA's microphone surveillance produced no information.

Perhaps it is just as well that the Senate committee report has been released when it was. On May 18 federal officials and Micronesian legislative leaders are to meet here in Honolulu to discuss a wide range of problems in the Trust Territory. Now at least the Senate report is public and in that sense out of the way.

The Micronesians were outraged by the Washington Post's disclosure of CIA spying, but they have had time to simmer down. The Senate report, emphasizing that the spying has not been condoned and should not be repeated, should give them some satisfaction. Assurances to the same effect from the State and Interior Departments might also be helpful.

Nevertheless the disclosure has weakened Micronesian confidence in the good faith of the United States and thereby further complicated our relations. The Carter administration should be seeking ways to restore that confidence.