

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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FROM: ComTwelve/ComNavBase SanFran Ca

TO: Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

SUBJ: Brief Summary of the Sixth Round of Micronesian Status Talks

1. The Barbers Point talks September 28 to October 6 ended with both sides agreeing to a temporary recess. No effort was made to complete the draft compact during the sixth round. Plenary and private exchanges centered on (1) procedural matters, (2) a review of basic assumptions in light of the Ponape congressional session, and (3) U. S. questions pertaining to the Micronesian delegation's objectives, authority and intentions.
2. The talks opened with a U. S. statement commenting on (1) the impact of the Ponape session and especially the resolution calling for negotiations for independence alternative, (2) the post-Ponape statements for Micronesia that future talks are now uncertain and that any agreement would be less definite. The U. S. stated it did not wish to proceed in an uncertain negotiating environment and requested clarification of the Micronesian position and answers to basic questions, including the intended future role of the Joint Future Status Committee and Congress of Micronesia in the negotiating and approval process. The failure of the JFSC members to support and defend the agreements reached in Washington in July were also noted.
3. The refusal of the U. S. to ignore Ponape and proceed immediately to drafting the remaining titles of compact caught the JFSC by surprise. A two-day delay followed with the Micronesian delegation holding several meetings among themselves. Their response was finally presented in the plenary session. Their statement was inconsistent, self-contradictory and the answers to the U. S. questions were only partially satisfactory. At the same time an appeal was made to put aside the issues raised at Ponape in order to proceed with the draft compact. The JFSC was especially anxious to learn the level of the U. S. financial offer.

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4. The U. S. did not respond immediately. Private meetings between the heads of the two delegations were held. The U. S. proposed meetings of sub-committees on land and background exchange between members of the finance sub-committee while the U. S. was considering a reply to the Micronesian opening statement. Such meetings were held but little was accomplished in the discussions on finance. The Micronesians, and principally their American advisers, insisted on knowing the level of the U. S. offer as a basis for any further exchange. Their approach was strictly on a quid pro quo basis. The land sub-committee meeting surfaced disagreements and problems over an approach to land negotiations. Senator Amaraich, Chairman of the JFSC Land Committee, was difficult, especially with respect to his position on exclusive JFSC public hearings on U. S. land requirements in Palau, the Marshalls and the Marianas.

5. Through the Chairman JFSC, the pro-independence advocates and the sponsors of the congressional resolution calling for such negotiations (Amaraich, Nakayama and Tmetuchl) were invited to present their views informally and to answer questions on what they meant by independence. Salii agreed to such a meeting. The invitation provoked heated exchanges within the Micronesian delegation and three days of waiting. In the end, the three pro-independence advocates out of the twelve-member Micronesian delegation refused to meet or to commit their views to writing. This issue, according to private comments from members of the JFSC, and the larger question of unity and discipline within the Micronesian delegation, was subject to long hours and days of internal debate at Barbers Point.

6. A number of private meetings between the heads of the two delegations were held throughout the sixth round. Salii was much more forthcoming than on previous occasions. He acknowledged his disappointment and his confusion over the Ponape session. He openly stated his distress over the organized anti-America and anti-Free Association campaign waged by some members of his committee. Some of the other members of the committee were aided and abetted by pro-independence minded young Micronesian activists and their American friends. He spoke of the negative influence of some Americans attending the Ponape session and their inflammatory efforts to swing Micronesian thinking away from a future association with the U. S. He urged early completion of the draft compact with terms that would be acceptable to the majority of his committee and the Congress of Micronesia as the only way to stem the tide of pro-independence sentiment.

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7. In his plenary and press statements, Salii said the pro-independence movement was growing and gaining strength. In private he said the movement was limited to a few activists in and out of the Congress with no broadly based popular support. However, he said, he worried about the ability of the pro-independence minority to win converts since they enjoyed the support of many missionaries, the lay clergy, a substantial number of school teachers, and local newspaper editors. He also said that some Americans in and outside of Micronesia are actively participating in the movement and are fanning anti-American, anti-military and anti-Free Association sentiment.

8. A private agreement was reached in advance that the talks should be recessed. The U. S. final statement repeated the need for a clear and certain negotiating environment and joint understandings as to what an agreement between the two delegations would mean. The U. S. held that the basic premise under which the talks had been proceeding had changed and that the U. S. did not wish to proceed to complete a draft compact without first reviewing and considering at the same time the independence alternative which they had called for and perhaps other solutions as well.

9. The Micronesian final statement acknowledged the Ponape special session and raised questions of procedure and implementation of any negotiated agreement. At the same time, they urged the U. S. to provide the JFSC with the details of the financial provisions of the compact and precise descriptions of the U. S. land requirements. The Micronesian final position attempted to down-play the independence issue by emphasizing that Free Association was still the primary objective of the JFSC. The tone was somewhat conciliatory and included some veiled and limited concessions on the procedures for carrying on the work of the land sub-committee. The statement closed in a spirit of "continuing cooperation and hope but also with a sense of the great urgency of reconvening soon for another and final effort to bring our work to a conclusion."

10. Conclusion: It is difficult to assess at this time the results of the Barbers Point meeting. It would appear the majority of the JFSC were disappointed in the lack of progress toward a draft compact of Free Association. The recess may be viewed in some quarters as a victory for the pro-independence advocates and their tactics to derail Free Association. On the other hand, the U. S. refusal to ignore the failure of the JFSC to support and defend the partial draft compact which they had agreed to in Washington could have a salutary effect. According to Salii, the majority of his committee now realize they must stand

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together against the strong and persistent efforts of the minority members to frustrate negotiations. However, Salii and the pro-Free Association members were not beyond using the threat of independence to exact from the U. S. as favorable and generous a compact as possible. The independence issue can no longer be ignored. It is imperative that the USG have a position on this question prior to the next round of negotiations, otherwise it will be whip-sawed back and forth on this issue. Early consideration of the timing for the next session is also important. Salii clearly wants a completed draft compact prior to the next Congress of Micronesia session in January in order to forstall further erosion of support for Free Association. The talks ended on an amicable note but clearly with some apprehension and confusion over the results of the sixth round and over the next stage in the negotiations.

Ambassador Williams originates. XGDS3

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