



Congress of Micronesia

CAPITOL HILL

SAIPAN

MARIANA ISLANDS

96950

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEAKER

Bethwel Henry

December 19, 1973

VICE SPEAKER

Endy Dois

FLOOR LEADER

Ekpap Silk

MARIANAS DISTRICT

Felipe Atalig

Herman Guerrero

Pedro Tenorio

MARSHALLS DISTRICT

Ataji Balos

Charles Domnick

John Heine

Ekpap Silk

PALAU DISTRICT

Polycarp Basillus

Tarkong Pedro

Timothy Olkerill

PONAPE DISTRICT

Bethwel Henry

Resio Moses

Sungiwo Hadley

Joab Sigrah

TRUK DISTRICT

Endy Dois

Sasauo Haruo

Masao Nakayama

Raymond Setik

Machime O'Sonls

YAP DISTRICT

Luke Tman

John Rugulimar

Mr. James Wilson
Office of Micronesian Status Negotiation
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wilson:

While the trauma of last night's experience is still fresh in my mind, I wish to take this opportunity to record my reactions to our confrontation at the Royal Taga Hotel. It was with complete surprise and considerable concern that I found your attitude and understanding of events in Micronesia to be dramatically and diametrically opposed to what most of my colleagues in the Marianas District and in the Congress of Micronesia have held as the bases upon which the United States Government and the people of Micronesia have engaged in the future political status talks for these islands. You will, I am sure, understand my dismay when as an invited guest to the reception hosted by the Marianas Future Status Commission I am subjected to your verbal attack on my people based on dubious factual information and specious arguments.

Moreover, as a Micronesian citizen of the Marianas, and as an elected public servant in the Congress of Micronesia, to represent people of the island of Tinian, I am compelled to take an exception to your understanding that some 83 homestead applicants on Tinian were being denied public lands because they had failed to improve their homestead lots.

Indeed, if our confrontation and verbal exchanges are any indication of what factual data your Delegation have received and used as basis upon to formulate is negotiation position, I dare say it is no wonder very little progress in the negotiation talks both as between your Delegation and the Congress of Micronesia Committee on Future Status and between your Delegation and the Marianas Status



Mr. James Wilson
Office of Micronesian Status Negotiation
December 19, 1973



Page 2.

Commission. I retired home after the reception last night fully appalled by the extent of your misinformation and attitude as to the status of things in Micronesia, particularly here in the Marianas District.

Our discussion, as you will recall in a moment of sober contemplation, reached an impasse at the point at which you asserted that the aforementioned applicants were being denied.

I indicated to you that if this were so, letters of non-compliance would have been sent to the applicants. Such is not the case. In fact, the Honorable Antonio S. Borja, Speaker of the Tinian Municipal Council stated that these 83 applications were new and thus there was yet no need to prove compliance.

You replied that this information came from the headquarters Administration. I denied, and still deny that this is true.

You then questioned whether I agreed with the present manner in which the Marianas Status Talks were being carried out.

I replied that I did not, if your attitude was any kind of example of the approach by the United States.

Then you made the unconscionable and in sufferable statement that if I did not like it, then I should move out--that I had no business here.

I strongly took exception to your remark and indicated that you in no way and under no situation had the authority to tell me where to go on my own island.

You then further responded that I should move away from the table, forgetting that it was you, who invited yourself to our table and that I did not ask you to join us.

Your behavior at that time indicated to me that you might soon transverse the realm of verbal communication into the realm of more physical expression a probability that was decreased only by the intervention of Mr. DeGraffenreid of your group.

Mr. Wilson, I am not Anti-American, but I am against any person who is disrespectful of the feelings and opinions of another person or other people. Furthermore, I am not against the goals and objectives of the current Marianas talks, but rather against the frequently high-handed

Mr. James Wilson
Office of Micronesian Status Negotiation
December 19, 1973

Page 3.

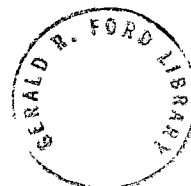
approaches and arrogance displayed in the attitudes of certain people on the U.S. delegate. Surely we all realize that America is a powerful nation, but that recognition should never lead one to a belligerent and overbearing attitude when dealing with the citizens of another smaller country. The United States does not own Micronesia or the Marianas. America does not rule the Marianas by fiat, but rather administers it under a sacred United Nations trust. Often American military personnel speak in a proprietary manner with regard to our islands because of the "blood spilled coming over the reef", but without regard to the fact that these are our islands, have always been, and that our blood, too, was shed on our own land as innocent bystanders in a global conflict.

It is fortunate for the United States, Mr. Wilson, that in your capacity, as a subaltern in Mr. William's coterie you do not epitomize the approach of the U.S. delegation. If this were to be true, then I can foresee a troubled future for the status negotiations. However, if my impression that you do not represent the approach of the U.S. is false and you do indeed, then it would behoove the Administering Authority to confer upon you titular as well as de facto representation of this authority. In this way the United States could clearly and in no uncertain terms express its attitudes and policies--at least if this occurred, then we in the Marianas would know how to react in a manner commensurate with the U.S.'s real position.

It is my hope, Mr. Wilson, that this will not be so. It is, however, my hope that the behavior which you displayed last night--and which was observed by others--will be absent from future meetings with the U.S. delegation and its members. It is also my further hope that the United States Government will see fit to elevate you to a position within another area of the government which is more suited to your experience, your attitude, and your sensibilities.

While redundant, I feel constrained to repeat for the sake of clarifying my position, that I had nothing whatever to do with my being invited to the reception, yesterday. I also regret the events that transpired and the attitude that surfaced that evening. I say this because it would be unfortunate if any misunderstanding stemming from this incident were allowed to mar in any way I believe to be the

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library



Mr. James Wilson
Office of Micronesian Status Negotiation
December 19, 1973

Page 4.

pleasant and useful relations between the United States and Micronesia--
especially the Marianas District. I look forward to their continuation
for the mutual benefit of our respective countries.

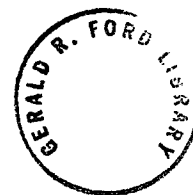
Sincerely yours,

Felipe Q. Atalig

FELIPE Q. ATALIG
Representative, Mariana Island District
Congress of Micronesia

cc: Ambassador Williams
President, Marianas Status Commission
Speaker Antonio Borja
Status LNO Trent
Secretary of the Interior
Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library



Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

Congressman Felipe Q. Ataiig
House of Representatives
Congress of Micronesia
Saipan, Mariana Islands

Mr. Jim Wilson
Office of Micronesian Status Negotiation
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C.

HANDCARRIED TO HAFU DAI