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THE UNITED STATES AND MICRONESIA IN FREE ASSOCIATION: A CHANCE --ETC(U)  
JUN 79 P W MANHARD

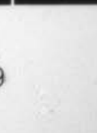
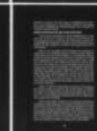
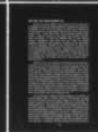
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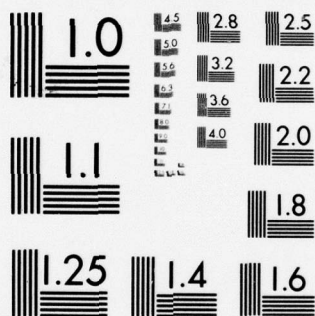


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# The United States and Micronesia in Free Association

## A chance to do better?

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**THE UNITED STATES AND MICRONESIA  
IN FREE ASSOCIATION:  
A CHANCE TO DO BETTER.**

10 by

**Ambassador/Philip W. Manhard  
Department of State**

**Senior Research Fellow  
Research Directorate**

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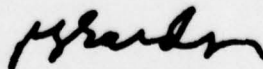
## **FOREWORD**

Aside from those relatively few Micronesian specialists in the Congress and in the Departments of Interior, State, and Defense, American perceptions of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands tend to be based entirely on the remembrances of the great battles of World War II for Guam, Saipan, Truk, and the Marshalls. What is not generally appreciated is that the United States has administered Micronesia—with its three million square miles of ocean, 2,000 islands, and 120,000 people—as a strategic trust under the United Nations Trusteeship Council since 1947, and that Guam has been an American territory since 1898.

Ambassador Philip W. Manhard traces the tortuous bureaucratic history of the American presence in Micronesia and shows how security and defense issues took precedence over political, social, and economic responsibilities. He then follows the various stages of Micronesian political development through the current negotiations between the United States and Micronesia toward eventual termination of the trusteeship. Ambassador Manhard is optimistic about the outcome, and is confident that the two parties seem to be entering the final stages of negotiations for a new relationship of "free association."

He offers some sound suggestions for the United States in meeting the challenges and grasping the opportunities for a mutually constructive relationship with Micronesia, and builds an excellent case for a central point in the executive branch for United States-Micronesian affairs.

This excellent paper on a little-known but vital foreign policy issue clearly explains the evolution of the American involvement in Micronesia, and offers coherent and thoughtful suggestions for the future.



**R. G. GARD, JR.**  
**Lieutenant General, USA**  
**President**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR . . .**

Ambassador Philip W. Manhard, now retired, completed 30 years of State Department and Government service as a Senior Research Fellow of the National Defense University in 1978. His distinguished diplomatic career has been centered in the East Asia-Western Pacific area, and was interrupted by incarceration in a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp from 1968 to 1973. Ambassador Manhard's more recent assignments include the following: US Representative, Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations, Washington, DC, 1976-1977; US Ambassador to Mauritius, 1974-1976; and Deputy Director, Regional Affairs Office, East Asia Bureau, State Department, 1964-1967. Earlier assignments took him to Hawaii, Japan, Korea, and China. Ambassador Manhard holds a degree in International Relations from the University of Southern California.



ABSTRACT

## I. INTRODUCTION

In one of the most intense military campaigns of World War II, the United States wrested control of the islands of Micronesia in the Western Pacific from the Japanese. Subsequently, in 1947, the United Nations validated continued US occupation of the islands by declaring all of Micronesia, excepting Guam, to be the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under the trusteeship of the United States. From the inception of the trusteeship, the preponderant US interest in Micronesia has been one of national security; however, under the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement the United States also assumed manifold political, social, and economic responsibilities for the people under its stewardship. Thus, for the past 31 years, the United States has been attempting to reconcile and address the myriad, often conflicting, issues involved in its administration of the trust territory—an area and a group of peoples only vaguely familiar to most Americans.

← ABSTRACT

During these three decades of US administration of the trust territory, the world has changed in ways, and at a pace, hardly expected by those who were shaped by the experience of World War II and who were responsible for coping with its aftermath. Former enemies have become friends, earlier allies have become antagonists, and new military technology has transformed strategic thinking and geopolitical values. A wave of colonial emancipation has swept the globe, producing serious political, economic, and even military challenges for many of the new nations, and Micronesia as the last and only remaining UN trusteeship has become an anachronism in the modern world. These developments have slowly and belatedly had their effects on Micronesia, so long "off limits" to the rest of the world, and on Americans and Micronesians as they have groped and stumbled their way in recent years toward a new relationship to replace trusteeship.

As time passed and World War II receded in history, two parallel paradoxes appeared in the United States and the trust territory. As postwar America became steadily less interested in, and less familiar with, Micronesia, US Government expenditures and welfare programs in the territory greatly expanded and an increasing number of books, articles, and commentaries on Micronesia appeared in the United States. Meanwhile, in Micronesia, the introduction of relatively massive US assistance programs and the



opening of serious negotiations for a new political status have been accompanied by rising Micronesian complaints about the nature of that assistance, and by heightened Micronesian anxiety and divisiveness as to their own future. Not surprisingly, the frictions and frustrations on both sides have been highlighted in the now considerable body of American commentary and studies on Micronesia. Books and articles published in the United States have tended to be long on criticism, with the US Government receiving *greater blame* than the Micronesians, but unfortunately short on practical remedies applicable to the future.

Despite the numerous problems that have afflicted US-Micronesian relations, and the many shortcomings that have characterized the US ministry of the trust territory, the United States and Micronesia seem to be, at long last, entering into the final stages of negotiations for a new relationship of free association. This relationship will present Americans and Micronesians with new challenges and new opportunities for a better understanding.

The primary purpose of this paper is not to reassess, rebut, or revalidate previous works on US-Micronesian relations. I propose instead to offer some new suggestions, in a conceptual and organizational framework, which may assist the United States in meeting the new challenges and grasping the new opportunities for a constructive and effective relationship with Micronesia. To provide an adequate frame of reference for the suggestions to follow, it will be useful first to take a retrospective glance at the path the United States and Micronesia have taken so far, and then to consider the factors which have shaped the Micronesian experience with the United States and the American experience with Micronesia. In an effort to distill realistic lessons from past experience and apply them usefully to future prospects, the following chapters are submitted. They are based on the writer's own observations and experience and are presented as objectively as human nature will allow.

## II. HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

Micronesia is basically an anthropological term applied to the inhabitants of the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall Islands in the Western Pacific.

Micronesia is composed of over 2,000 islands, but the total land area of approximately 700 square miles, less than half that of Rhode Island, is scattered over a 3 million-square-mile ocean the size of the continental United States. Its estimated population of about 120,000 is less than that of the Southwest District of Washington, DC, or Las Vegas, Nevada. The islands are remote from the rest of the world; the island groups are remote from one another; and the Micronesians are people divided by separate native hierarchies, distinctive traditional subcultures, and nine different languages. Micronesians have never been politically or economically cohesive nor socially integrated. The islands and peoples were grouped together under the term Micronesia primarily for the administrative and economic convenience of the Spanish, the Germans, and the Japanese, who were their colonial occupiers for 400 years.

Under US administration, with headquarters in Saipan, the trust territory was organized into six districts. Originally the territory comprised the Northern Marianas, Palau, Yap, Truk, Ponape and the Marshall Islands (in west to east order); currently, with the addition of Kosrae (formerly part of the Ponape District) and following the administrative separation of the Northern Mariana Islands in preparation for US commonwealth status, there are seven districts. (see map at page 36)

World War II literally caught the Micronesians in the American-Japanese crossfire. It profoundly affected US strategic thinkers who had not previously perceived Micronesia as essential to US security. In the wake of the war, the US attitude toward Micronesia was perhaps inevitably ambivalent: the United States eschewed outright annexation, but felt impelled to withhold real emancipation. Having conquered the islands from Japan at great cost in lives and materiel, the American people and government were determined to prevent Micronesia from ever again being used as a springboard for attack by any potential enemy. Still, the United States was mindful of its own strong anticolonial tradition, viewed the Micronesians themselves as victims rather than accomplices of Japanese expansionism, and did not wish to appear to be seeking for itself the sort of territorial aggrandizement against which it had just fought a successful war.

Thus the United States was genuinely reluctant to bear the onus and responsibility of taking a new and remote territory under US sovereignty. In an attempt to reconcile these conflicting attitudes, the United States proceeded to fashion and obtain UN approval of a "strategic" UN trusteeship for Micronesia to be administered by the United States.<sup>1</sup> Uniquely different from other trusteeships, this agreement explicitly entitled the United States to establish military bases and station armed forces personnel in the territory, and it implicitly allowed the United States to deny the same rights to other powers (Article 5).

Typical of other trusteeships, however, the United States as the administering authority was called upon not only to promote the economic and social advancement of the inhabitants, but also to foster their development "toward self-government or independence" (Article 6). When the Trusteeship Agreement was inaugurated in 1947, the timeclock for US administration of the territory began to run with neither a clearly defined political objective nor an agreed upon *deadline for termination*. And run it has, at an accelerating pace amid a radically changing internal and external environment.

During the first 15 years of its administration,<sup>2</sup> the United States took its security and defense interests and its military prerogatives in the territory very seriously, and its political, social, and economic responsibilities relatively lightly. Large sums were spent to conduct nuclear weapon and missile tests and to establish intelligence support facilities; none of these was directly related to Micronesian interests. During those same years the United States provided so little administrative and economic support that political development stagnated and economic productivity fell well below the level achieved under the previous Japanese administration. Meanwhile, the other UN trusteeships were successively acceding to, or actively preparing for, independence. The UN Trusteeship Council, spurred by growing Micronesian complaints, was becoming embarrassingly critical of US performance as trustee.

With the advent of the Kennedy administration and the stimulation of the President's personal concern, the United States shifted its emphasis in the territory and for the first time began to provide significant administrative, social, and economic support and to foster local political institutional progress. A multitude of Federal grant programs rapidly became available to Micronesia and have been continued and expanded under succeeding US administrations.



In 1965, with US support, a territory-wide elected legislature was established. Designed in the US image, the Senate and House of the Congress of Micronesia were expected to play significant roles in Micronesian political development and in building Micronesian unity.

Late in the Johnson administration and early in the Nixon administration, the United States finally faced up to the crucial question of the future political status of the territory and entered into formal negotiations to settle that question. Two of the three basic status options seriously considered were: *US commonwealth* similar to Guam, in which US sovereignty, citizenship, laws and the US legal system would apply; and *free association* with the United States, under which there would be full internal self-government. Under free association, the Micronesians would be able to modify or terminate the status unilaterally; US sovereignty would not apply; Micronesians would not become US citizens; US domestic law would not apply except by mutual agreement.<sup>3</sup> The third status option was *independence*.

These negotiations have gone on for almost a decade. They have been punctuated by repeated delays on either side and occasionally by acrimonious exchanges more befitting wary antagonists than partners preparing for a joint venture. Often, the course of these talks has indicated the American difficulty in reaching internal agreement on specific issues or even ultimate goals—a similar Micronesian difficulty has also been evident. The only tangible result to date has been a separate 1975 agreement for US commonwealth status for the Northern Mariana Islands; it was approved by the US Congress in 1976. This agreement, however, remains contingent on the final termination of the Trusteeship Agreement since the Northern Marianas are still technically a part of the trust territory, and it is the US intent to have the entire trusteeship terminated at one time.

The Northern Marianas agreement caused considerable controversy among other Micronesians, especially the Congress of Micronesia leaders who had supported unity and favored free association or independence as a future status. In the US Senate, views also differed sharply regarding the separation of that part of the territory and the acquisition of additional US sovereign territory.

Heavily preoccupied by the Northern Marianas negotiations, and the subsequent consideration of the resulting agreement in the US Congress, the US negotiators were temporarily distracted from the negotiations with the Congress of Micronesia on the

future status of the rest of the trust territory. The latter talks did resume in earnest in early 1976, and the parties appeared to be nearing agreement on a Compact of Free Association; it was initialled *ad referendum* in June of that year by the American and Micronesian negotiators. The agreement lacked, however, any agreed upon formula for Micronesian internal sharing of promised US financial assistance or for the extent of Micronesian jurisdiction and control over its offshore marine resources. Moreover, a great deal of uncertainty existed on both sides as to how the basic concept of free association in the draft compact could be reconciled with the draft Micronesian constitution. The draft constitution, which provided for attributes of independence and the concept of unity, was produced in the fall of 1975 under the aegis of the Congress of Micronesia. Formal talks were then again interrupted because of delays on both sides related to the 1976 US Presidential election and the transition to a new US administration.

Since late 1976, political differences, especially those relating to the future status question, have widened between the Congress of Micronesia leadership and the separatist leaders in Palau and the Marshalls. This trend reached a watershed in the territory-wide vote on the constitutional referendum in July 1978, with the four central districts of Yap, Truk, Ponape, and Kosrae approving the constitution and Palau and the Marshalls rejecting it.<sup>4</sup> The significance of these referendum votes seemed to bear more on the question of unity versus separation than on the question of full independence versus free association with the United States. This interpretation is supported by the fact that even those Micronesian leaders who have most strongly favored independence found acceptable the concept of free association as expressed in the Statement of Agreed Principles for Free Association, signed by the American and Micronesian status negotiators on 9 April 1978 (see Appendix A). Thus the prospects appear favorable for achieving a free association agreement with Micronesia (less the Northern Marianas) in the fairly near future. It will require considerable innovation and flexibility on the part of all concerned to either work out a complete agreement or a set of parallel agreements to include the separatist districts.

Before turning to the final steps that would have to be taken to transit from trusteeship to free association, other factors, which have affected the attitudes of Americans and Micronesians in their dealings with each other, should be considered. Their hopes and fears, desires and concerns, and the lessons learned, good or bad, will inevitably play a part as the United States and Micronesia evolve into a new relationship.

## CHAPTER II ENDNOTES

1. "Trusteeship Agreement for the Former Japanese Mandated Islands," 2 April 1947. For complete text of the Trusteeship Agreement and enabling legislation see *Trust Territory Code*, Volume 1.

2. The executive authority of the government of the trust territory is vested in a Presidentially appointed High Commissioner who exercises his authority under the general supervision and direction of the Secretary of the Interior. The legislative authority of the Congress of Micronesia derives from an Interior Department Secretarial Order and Micronesian congressional legislation is subject to veto by the High Commissioner, and if overridden by the Congress, to final veto or approval by the Secretary of the Interior. For the full text of the pertinent Interior Department Secretarial Order see: US, Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Washington, Order No. 2918 (as amended 24 March 1976).

3. This concept of free association was derived from UN General Assembly Resolution 1541 of 15 December 1960, which specified "free association with an independent State" as one method for a non-self-governing territory to reach a full measure of self-government, the other methods being "emergence as a sovereign independent State" or "integration with an independent State." Principle VII of Resolution 1541 provides the only definition of free association ever adopted in the United Nations, in the following language:

"(a) Free association should be the result of a free and voluntary choice by the peoples of the territory concerned expressed through informed and democratic processes. It should be one which respects the individuality and the cultural characteristics of the territory and its peoples, and retains for the peoples of the territory which is associated with an independent State the freedom to modify the status of that territory through the expression of their will by democratic means and through constitutional processes.

"(b) The associated territory should have the right to determine its internal constitution without outside interference in accordance with due constitutional processes and the freely expressed will of the people. This does not preclude consultations as appropriate or necessary under the terms of the free association agreed upon."



4. Yap district voted 94.8 percent for and 5.2 percent against; Truk 69.5 percent for and 30.5 percent against; Ponape 74.7 percent for and 25.3 percent against; Kosrae 61 percent for and 38.9 percent against; Palau 44.9 percent for and 55.1 percent against; and the Marshalls 38.5 percent for and 61.5 percent against. See *Micronesian Reporter*, Second Quarter 1978, p. 3.

### **III. MICRONESIAN EXPERIENCE WITH THE UNITED STATES**

#### **MICRONESIAN PERCEPTIONS**

An elderly Micronesian, whose lifetime spans three colonial occupations, once compared the Micronesian reactions toward the foreigners: "The Germans we disliked but respected and we were willing to work for them; the Japanese we feared but respected and we had to work very hard for them; the Americans we like very much, but we don't respect them and have no need to work for them."

John Mangefel, an astute and thoughtful Senator from Yap, wryly paraphrased the Lord's Prayer before his district legislature:

Our fathers who art in Washington, hallowed be thy funds,  
Thy authorization come, thy appropriations be done,  
In Yap as they are in the President's budget office.  
Give us this day our quarterly allotment,  
And forgive us our overruns, as we forgive our deficits.  
And lead us not into dependence, but deliver us from inflation.  
So ours will be the territory, and the power, and the authority  
forever.<sup>1</sup>

Another Micronesian leader conscientiously devoted to the ideal of unity and independence, refers to the United States and Micronesia as "the elephant and the flea." He worries lest American power and money be used to keep Micronesia dependent and divided. Yet another able and US-educated Micronesian faults the Americans, not as to their intentions but as to their methods and largesse which he and many others see as destructive of old social values and as demoralizing to the younger Micronesians. Many experienced and sophisticated political leaders from Palau and the Marshall Islands have turned away from the concept of unity, have denied any political or economic compatibility with the other districts of the territory, and with increasing vehemence have denounced the concept of the term "Micronesia" as being a myth with no political meaning or historical basis. They insist a single Micronesian entity is an unrealistic dream to which the Americans have clung too long—a dream which will dissolve with the end of the US administration. What has given rise to these Micronesian perceptions of themselves and the United States? Why this inner turmoil and this almost love-hate relationship with the Americans?



Woven into the Micronesian views described above are parallel threads of criticism directed at both fellow Micronesians and Americans. Many Micronesians are prone to lay the primary blame for Micronesian problems on the shoulders of the Americans. All things considered, it is the United States which has had the ultimate power and responsibility in Micronesia, and it is the United States which has established the policies and provided the money for practically everything that has happened in Micronesia for over 30 years.

At the same time many thoughtful Micronesians recognize that their compatriots have acquiesced in the changes wrought by the US administration. They realize that more and more Micronesians have either passively accepted, or actively demanded, increased American support resulting in less self-reliance, more dependence, and a rendering of their traditional communal societies and extended family system which in the past cushioned their people from social shock and economic risk. Torn between fundamentally differing cultures, losing allegiance to chieftan hierarchies and communal sharing, yet reluctant to rely on either an American-created administrative system or private enterprise, attracted by independence, but fearful of losing US financial support, Micronesians seem to be suffering from an identity crisis. In this traumatic situation, heightened by the rapidly approaching end of trusteeship, few Micronesians seem to know what they really want in the future. There is a growing feeling among Micronesians that the Americans are also less than certain about what would be the best future for Micronesia.

One thoughtful American observer, David Nevin, dismayed by what he found in Micronesia, described it as "this angry, sullen, frightened paradise."<sup>2</sup> His visit to the trust territory convinced him that "expectations in Micronesia have risen so far beyond the possibility of satisfying them as to destroy hope, and hope destroyed is the root of social misery."<sup>3</sup> He expanded on this theme, saying:

The issue is that the Micronesians have been offered a world that bears almost no relationship to their own capacities. They have acquired the tastes and expectations of a modern western technological society, but their resources remain comparable to those of the poorest Asian nations. The result is a striking and pervasive unreality which affects every aspect of life in the islands. It colors the way people think, what they expect, how they conduct themselves.

This unreality is the real trouble in Micronesia. It is at the heart of the Micronesian dilemma.<sup>4</sup>

Micronesia should not be characterized as a paradise despite the attractiveness of its people and natural setting, nor are most Micronesians angry, sullen, and frightened. Anxious about their future, yes; deeply schizophrenic about the wisdom and usefulness of American aid, yes; but not yet at least on the verge of revolt against Americans and their ways.

Lazarus Salii, a former Senator from Palau and the first chief Micronesian status negotiator, recently said:

Lots of people remember how kind the GI's were after the war. And all of us have seen how the young Americans in the Peace Corps taught about democracy.

The majority of Americans in Micronesia have been good, decent people. Our big disappointment was that all Americans were not supermen like a lot of President Kennedys. We are more realistic now.<sup>5</sup>

Salii's perception of Americans is not very different from that of many other Micronesians, and it corresponds with some impressions that a considerable reservoir of goodwill toward the United States still exists in Micronesia—bruised though that goodwill has sometimes been and eroding though it may now be. Nevertheless, Salii's remarks do not challenge Nevin's main thesis that Micronesian expectations outstrip any realistic prospect of fulfillment—a condition which has already spread disenchantment and may soon breed corrosive frustration. More than one Micronesian and more than one American have observed that Micronesians now seem unable to go forward on their own and yet cannot go backward. They seem to have reached a point of no return and now find themselves on the horns of a cruel dilemma—a dilemma which has been created by both Americans and Micronesians.

The problems that Americans and Micronesians have encountered in their dealings with each other have involved both domestic and foreign affairs, including political, economic, and military issues; all have added contention and complexity to the long merry-go-round of the US-Micronesian future status negotiations. Of all these problems the most fundamental and troublesome for both sides have been the US welfare programs and the closely related issue of education.

## **WELFARE, YES—DEVELOPMENT, NO**

Since the early 1960's, Micronesia has literally been inundated by US social welfare programs, expanding in variety and increasing in cost. One of the latest in a long line of observers of this phenomenon, Fox Butterfield, the *New York Times* Hong Kong bureau chief, termed Micronesia "the improbable welfare state" where a massive infusion of US funds "has brought problems more reminiscent of inner-city ghettos than of lush tropical islands."<sup>8</sup> Butterfield notes there are over 1,200 US Federal programs available to Micronesians—"everything from Head Start to Aid to Dependent Children to care centers for the elderly and free school breakfasts and lunches." He quotes an American economic development officer in Yap as suggesting that the only way to understand Yap's economy is to see it as a "post-industrial leisure society with a guaranteed annual income. They just skipped the industrial part. Fortunately they have a good growth sector—Federal funds."<sup>7</sup>

Robert Trusk, who heads a United Nations development program team which prepared a model 5-year economic development plan for Micronesia, informed Butterfield: "We told them you can't have both welfare and development. They clearly prefer welfare."<sup>8</sup> Yet some of the same Micronesians who have accused the United States of designing welfare programs to make Micronesia permanently dependent on the United States have also joined other Micronesians in pressing for the continuation of high levels of US financial support, and in resisting the increase of Micronesian tax rates, among the lowest in the world.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Micronesians are beginning to recognize the necessity for limiting such programs, because of the obvious difficulties in managing them, and because many programs are not expected to be available to Micronesia when the trusteeship ends.

As the Northern Mariana Islands prepared for transition to commonwealth status, a careful review of US legislation revealed that the Marianas would be legally eligible for no less than 440 Federal programs, but as the Northern Marianas representative in Washington put it, "the paperwork required to obtain and maintain so many programs would absorb the full time of practically every able-bodied Marianan, so we decided to concentrate on only 40 or 50 of the most useful programs in the future."<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile a committee of the Congress of Micronesia has taken at least some tentative steps to screen existing Federal programs in the rest of the trust territory for potential suitability after the trusteeship ends.<sup>11</sup> How seriously Micronesian officials and politicians will pursue this



endeavor, and how Micronesians will react to a potentially major reduction in American grant-in-aid programs to which they have been so long accustomed, remain open questions at this stage.

The substitution of welfare for development is evident everywhere in Micronesia. A number of Micronesians in various districts were asked whether they had ever heard of cost-benefit studies being conducted for prospective or existing welfare programs or for capital improvement (economic infrastructure) projects in their communities. After they had recovered from their obvious surprise at such a question, the answer was invariably "no," often supplemented by remarks to the effect that any such studies should be the responsibility of the Americans, since they were paying the bills. While most Micronesians seem to appreciate the extensive social services and benefits provided under US administration, a number of Micronesians responsible for the delivery of those services at the local level appeared to be chagrined by what they consider to be inadequate consultation with the local communities and inadequate consideration of the needs and sensitivities of the recipients.

An illustration of this problem can be seen in the Truk District hospital. In response to this writer's questions, the Trukese administrator of that hospital had essentially this account to tell:

For many years the people here had wanted an adequate hospital, but Saipan trust territory headquarters had not been willing or able to fund it. Finally in 1972 we were suddenly told a new hospital would be built here. The next thing we knew a team of builders from Hawaii came, built and equipped this hospital according to their own plans and specifications. Only with the greatest difficulty could we persuade the builders to make even one small change in the design: the addition of doors between the waiting room and the examination rooms to protect the privacy of the patients. The very modern dining hall and elaborate kitchen facility are never used because our people will not give up their custom of having their food prepared by their families and eaten in the privacy of their wards. An electric scooter for handling medical supplies is gathering dust in the stock room because we can walk the short distances necessary and we have no capacity to repair it if it should break down. All the fancy chrome and vinyl furniture was made somewhere in the United

States, although we have usable wood here and skilled woodworkers who need employment. We were given no choice and were told that all the equipment and furnishings were part of the hospital "package." The hospital cost \$3 million. Our budget for medical services in this district, almost all of which goes for the staffing and maintenance of this hospital and very little for dispensaries in the outer islands, now runs about \$1.5 million annually. If US financial support were greatly reduced or eliminated, we would have to close the hospital.

In Ponape some years ago a small, but expensive, sewage treatment plant was built to cope with the growing problem of contamination from raw sewage disposal into the lagoon. As of 1976 the intake was insufficient to operate the plant and no qualified technician was available to run the control system, which an experienced American considered to be more complex than those in many small towns in the United States. In any event no funds had been provided for training and paying the technical staff required. Local officials seemed to feel little responsibility for this state of affairs and tended to blame American and Micronesian authorities in the trust territory headquarters, over 1,000 miles away, for inadequate planning.

Again in Ponape, local officials have argued for years with the trust territory administration over priorities for economic development projects. Many Ponapeans have given highest priority to the construction of a peripheral road around the main island in order to provide access to fallow arable land for agricultural production, whereas the trust territory administration has given priority to the completion of other projects such as harbor improvement, the sewage plant, a new hospital.

Ponape, it should be noted, was intensively cultivated under Japanese administration and produced an exportable surplus of corn, pepper, and other foods. Nevertheless, under US administration Ponapean agricultural production has greatly diminished and Ponape has become, in common with the rest of Micronesia, heavily dependent on imported food. The production of copra, traditionally the principal export earner for Micronesians, is considerably below the levels attained under Japanese control, and is falling. Micronesians report that the trust territory interisland ships, which deliver supplies to the outer islands throughout the territory, used to return to the district centers

loaded mainly with copra, but are now returning largely empty. Some Micronesian leaders, deeply concerned over this trend, attribute it to the spreading effect of US welfare programs, which they feel are making even those living on remote islands less and less willing to carry on the arduous work of coconut harvesting.

Another form of social welfare—indirect, apparently unintended, but nonetheless real—has been the growth of an extremely large Micronesian administrative bureaucracy. In recent years the trust territory government has made laudable efforts and considerable progress in replacing expatriate American employees with Micronesians; it has been less successful in efforts to reduce the total number of employees in an administration widely recognized as overstaffed at practically every level in the headquarters and in the districts. Government is by far the largest "industry" in Micronesia and for many years job opportunities in the private sector have been stagnant or diminishing. Over 7,000 Micronesians are employed by the trust territory administration.

With the multiplier effect of the large Micronesian extended family system sharing in the government employees' incomes, it is probably safe to assume that more than half the entire population of the territory is now wholly or partially dependent directly on the US payroll of the trust territory government. It is small wonder, then, that Micronesians generally resist any significant governmental reductions in force in an economic environment where alternative employment is scarce and much lower paid. While many Micronesian bureaucrats passively accept this hardly satisfactory situation, the redundancy of their jobs does little for their self-confidence or sense of accomplishment.

### **EDUCATION FOR WHAT?**

The disincentives to economic development induced by excessive welfare programs and the surfeit of government employees are having a dismaying effect on Micronesian youth. Trained in an American-style education system oriented to the liberal arts and preparation for white-collar jobs, they are finding precious little opportunity for employment. Lacking practical vocational skills, most young Micronesians cannot qualify for technical trades which are often filled by workers brought in from Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, or elsewhere. A decade or more ago when the United States began its crash program of universal free education, the trust territory administration was also being rapidly expanded and opened to Micronesians, providing considerable opportunities for young people then graduating from Micronesian high schools and



American colleges. Now those opportunities have almost vanished and the existent positions are mostly filled by earlier graduates who are still young. Further, the expansion of government services and budgets is beginning to level off, adding to the disappointment and frustration of the more recent school graduates.

It seems undeniable that serious shortcomings plague the Micronesian educational system and that these shortcomings affect Micronesian attitudes toward the United States, if only because the schools are American creations in the American image. Nevin considers the educational system the most fundamental source of the "unreality" in Micronesia today, posing the greatest danger of future social frustration and unrest.<sup>12</sup> Butterfield sums up his view this way:

Perhaps the most telling case of do-goodism gone awry has been the trust territory's education program. . . . Faithfully modeled on the US school system . . . the education program has stressed the liberal arts, producing graduates who make good US citizens and government civil servants but little else.<sup>13</sup>

In a land where at least 50 percent of the population is estimated to be under 16 years of age, where the population growth rate is 3.5 percent and rising, and where among the unemployed youth, alcoholism and suicide are increasing, educational reform and economic opportunity are urgently needed. Serious though this situation is, it should be noted that, in contrast to many students from a number of developing countries, most if not all Micronesian students who have gone to school in the United States up until now, at least, have returned home after completing their studies. This is a significant indication of an enduring loyalty to their communities and of a strong hope that they can find useful roles to play at home. This encouraging observation may not continue much longer if adequate economic opportunities are not available for young Micronesians.

#### **DIFFERENCES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

In the field of foreign affairs, differences have arisen between Americans and Micronesians which have led some Micronesian representatives to question whether the US Government can be depended on to adequately, or effectively, represent their interests and desires in relation to other countries. Two particularly important examples involved Micronesian war claims against Japan and the Law of the Sea Conference.

### ***Micronesian War Claims***

In the case of Micronesian war claims, the United States negotiated an agreement with Japan in 1971 whereby Japan would provide \$5 million in Japanese goods and the United States would match that sum in cash payments to Micronesian claimants. Micronesians resent the fact that the United States did not consult them during the negotiations. More important, Micronesians complain that the US willingness to settle for a far lower sum than the total of Micronesian claims was the result of a US concern for its relations with Japan being greater than concern for its responsibilities toward the people of the trust territory. Subsequent to the conclusion of that agreement, a special US commission reviewed all such claims and validated individual claims totaling over \$19 million, about \$12 million of which have been paid to date by US congressional authorization. Meanwhile, the UN Trusteeship Council has repeatedly urged the United States to settle this long-standing problem as expeditiously as possible, either by full payment of validated claims or by a final pro rata payment of all remaining claims. Unfortunately, whenever the United States has satisfied outstanding claims, the recipients have promptly dissipated most of their money on luxury goods, such as Japanese automobiles, without any benefits accruing to the basic economy of their communities.

### ***Law of the Sea and Marine Resources***

In the case of the marathon Law of the Sea Conference, Micronesian leaders concluded that the United States could not properly represent Micronesia because of what they considered as a conflict of interest between the United States and Micronesia, mainly over the question of the extent of Micronesian jurisdiction over its marine resources. This issue arose primarily in regard to tuna in the trust territory area; the United States is unwilling to change its policy opposing any national jurisdiction and control over highly migratory species of fish. The Micronesians insist that the allegedly abundant tuna, now caught by foreign fishing fleets in the vicinity of Micronesian islands, represent the largest potential economic resource for Micronesians if they could control and license such catches. This classic disagreement between a distant fishing nation and a developing territory anxious to gain maximum financial benefit from a closely accessible asset resulted in the withdrawal of the Micronesian representatives from the US Law of the Sea delegation in 1975. Thereafter, Micronesian representation was separate and nonvoting at the conference. This



issue also became a serious obstacle to progress in the US-Micronesian status negotiations in 1976 and 1977.

The US-Micronesian differences over war claims and the Law of the Sea are but two key examples indicative of a growing Micronesian impression that the United States has been, and inevitably will be, prone to slight or override Micronesian interests when they conflict with those of the United States, particularly in relation to countries of greater importance to the United States. There are now increased efforts by Micronesian status negotiators to first limit the scope of US control over Micronesian foreign affairs, and then to exempt foreign affairs from US control in a free association agreement.

## **PROS AND CONS IN MILITARY RELATIONS**

### ***Acceptance of US Strategic Interest***

In contrast to their push for autonomy in foreign affairs, the Micronesians have shown no real inclination to challenge the US strategic interest in Micronesia or to dispense with the US military presence and protection. To the contrary, Micronesians generally assume that the Micronesian area is of logical strategic value to the United States and do not object to the concept of US denial of Micronesia to military exploitation by other powers which might pose a threat to the United States. Even those Micronesian leaders who appear to prefer eventual independence have indicated a willingness to accept a treaty for a special military security relationship to accommodate essential US security interests. This is not to say that problems have not arisen between Micronesia and the United States in the military field, but they have been intrinsically different in nature and effect from those in the field of foreign affairs.

### ***Concerns with US Military Presence***

The military related issues of greatest concern to Micronesians have been the alienation of scarce land for military facilities, adequate compensation for these lands, relocation of local inhabitants from nuclear and missile test sites, and the physical harm suffered by Marshall Islanders from the US nuclear tests at Eniwetok and Bikini in the late 1950's.

The nuclear test issue is no longer current due to the cessation of nuclear tests in the territory and the payment of compensation to and continuing medical care for the victims of nuclear fallout. The Marshallese, however, are pressing for major increases

in the land rents for the Kwajalein Missile Range (KMR). The question of rental payments for additional US military facilities could become important in the future if the United States should exercise its military land option in the Northern Mariana Islands,<sup>14</sup> and if the United States should pursue its earlier interest in obtaining some facilities in Palau.<sup>15</sup> In the absence of any indication of US intention to seek additional onshore military facilities elsewhere in Micronesia, this financial question does not now seem likely to arise in the other districts of Micronesia.

Another troublesome problem related to the US military presence in Micronesia involves the Marshallese workers at the KMR facility and the unsalutary conditions on the island of Ebeye adjacent to the KMR headquarters. Apparently attracted by the relatively high wages paid to the approximately 400 Marshallese workers at the missile range, the workers' relatives and others have moved to Ebeye. This less than 1 square mile of dry land now supports a population of over 7,000 people living in badly overcrowded and unhealthy conditions. Despite strenuous efforts by the trust territory administration to provide additional housing and public services and to limit migration to the island, the conditions of the people there remain poor. The problem has been further compounded by continuing complaints by the workers themselves about alleged job and pay discrimination at the missile range and demands for access to American commissaries and stores on the base. The starkly contrasting higher standard of living for American military and civilian personnel on Kwajalein has clearly created envy and dissatisfaction among the people of Ebeye. Ironically, the \$3 million annual payroll for local workers at the missile range has produced a higher per capita income in Ebeye than in most places in Micronesia.

### **THE RISE OF SEPARATISM**

Probably the most intractable issue which has complicated the relations between Micronesia and the United States in recent years has been the widening divisions among Micronesians themselves. No single leader has appeared in Micronesia with sufficient charisma or broad support to claim the allegiance of all parts of the territory. Interdistrict and even interisland rivalries and mutual distrust have persisted despite the broadening of a common educational system, despite the spread of English as a *lingua franca*, despite the creation of a territory-wide legislature, and despite greatly increased contact and communication among the island groups of the territory.

### ***Pressure for Separate Agreements***

The issue of political separation first impacted on the US-Micronesian status negotiations several years ago. At that time, leaders in the Northern Mariana Islands adamantly refused to accept the Congress of Micronesia objective of free association, and insisted instead on a closer relationship with the United States in the form of a US commonwealth. After the conclusion of that separate agreement, pressure rapidly increased in Palau and the Marshalls for separate agreements with the United States, although their status objectives have never been clearly defined. Are these moves for separation, and the incipient fragmentation of Micronesia, simply or entirely the inevitable consequences of geographic distance, age-old rivalries, and traditional cultural and linguistic differences? Some think not.

While geographical and historical factors have undoubtedly contributed to the problem, they appear to be currently less important than they were in earlier times. The real reasons for the current tendency toward separatism can be found in more modern and pragmatic factors: competition for political power as full self-government approaches, a fight for financial gain and economic autonomy, and differences over the optimum relationship with the United States and foreign countries after trusteeship.

### ***Pragmatic Rivalry***

The struggle for power between the leaders of Truk and Ponape, supported by the less ambitious leaders of Yap and Kosrae on one side, and the leadership of Palau and the Marshalls on the other, has been waged for years in the Congress of Micronesia. The operative idea has been that the side which gained control of the Congress would dominate the government of Micronesia either in free association with the United States or as an independent state. The Palauan and Marshallese leaders, apparently convinced that they have lost that contest, clearly prefer to avoid future domination by the central districts by attempting to make separate arrangements directly with the United States. This struggle is not simply a contest involving political pride and prestige—Micronesian leaders also have a great concern for financial considerations.

The Congress of Micronesia, dominated by the more populous but relatively poor and unproductive districts of Truk and Ponape, collects the largest share of domestic taxes from the Marshalls and Palau and dispenses it mainly for support of the



Congress itself and the central districts. The annual US appropriations for financial support of the trust territory are negotiated among the Micronesian Congress and the trust territory administration and the US legislature. The Micronesian status negotiators, who are appointed by the Congress, have proposed that after termination of the trusteeship, all future US financial support for Micronesia be funneled through the Congress to the districts. These policies and apparent intentions of the Congress of Micronesia have long been resented by the Marshallese and Palauan leaders, who are becoming less and less willing to share their revenues with their less affluent neighbors. Thus, the existence of the Kwajalein Missile Test Range facility in the Marshalls, with its potential for greatly increased revenues should the United States agree to increase significantly the land rentals, is strengthening the Marshallese push for separation. Also, in Palau the potential for major foreign investment has further motivated local leaders to seek a separate status with the United States.

In early 1976, the trust territory administration approved a preliminary study contract with a Japanese construction firm for a proposed \$300 million oil storage and trans-shipment terminal in Palau for Iranian oil supplies enroute to Japan.<sup>16</sup> Not long thereafter, Palauan leaders began preparations for the first local referendum on separate status talks with the United States; this was approved in September 1976 by a large vote. Although the Japanese have deferred a decision on the proposed oil terminal project, most Palauan leaders seem as reluctant as the Marshallese to share potential local revenues with the other districts of Micronesia and continue to seek a separate status with the United States.

This mutually uncompromising internal political impasse has obviously been reinforced by the financial stakes. The basic mismatch between the central districts' preponderance of power in the Congress of Micronesia and the greater capacity and initiative for economic progress in Palau and the Marshalls, has driven this three-way division close to the point of no return. Perhaps the greatest irony in Micronesian political life today is that the Congress itself has been the focal point of the breakdown of Micronesian unity—a legislature which the United States, with the best intentions but not with the wisest foresight, created completely in the American image to promote unity and democracy. Recently discussing the growing problem of separatism, a thoughtful and experienced Ponapean leader ruefully commented:

When the Congress of Micronesia was established more than a decade ago, I thought it was a good idea and would really help to foster unity and democracy in Micronesia. But now looking back on our experience with the benefit of hindsight, I think both we Micronesians and the Americans made a mistake. We should have started from the bottom up instead of from the top down. If we had laid stronger foundations at the district level first, the prospects for long-term unity might have been better served.

While the Micronesians have certainly had their share of trials and tribulations in dealing with each other and the United States, so has the United States in its relations with Micronesia. It is equally important to examine the other side of the same coin.

### CHAPTER III ENDNOTES

1. Fox Butterfield, "The Improbable Welfare State," *New York Times Magazine*, 27 November 1977, p. 56.
2. David Nevin, *The American Touch in Micronesia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), p. 28.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
5. "US Plays Midwife to a Sprawling Island Nation," *US News and World Report*, 7 August 1978, p. 37.
6. Butterfield, "The Improbable Welfare State," p. 54.
7. Ibid., p. 56.
8. Ibid., p. 74.
9. Tax rates: 3 percent personal income; 2 percent business income.
10. The adult population of the Northern Mariana Islands is estimated to be 6,000, in a total population of approximately 15,000.
11. Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Congress of Micronesia, Commission on Future Political Status and Transition, Misc. Comm. No. 7-221 (Senate), 6 February 1978.
12. Nevin, *The American Touch in Micronesia*, p. 26.
13. Butterfield, "The Improbable Welfare State," p. 64.

14. "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America," Article VIII, in US, Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on H.J. Res. 549, to Approve the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, and for Other Purposes*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 5 November 1975 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 10.

15. US, Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on H.J. Res. 549*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., p. 188.

16. US, Congress, Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, *Hearing on the Location of a Superport in the Palau District of the Trust Territory*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 24 March 1977 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977), pp. 184-185.



## **IV. THE US EXPERIENCE WITH MICRONESIA**

### **AMBIVALENCE OF PURPOSE: SELF-INTEREST VERSUS ALTRUISM**

Reference has been made to the fundamental ambivalence underlying the original assumption of responsibility for the trust territory by the United States after World War II, that is, the long-term security interests versus the anticolonial convictions of the United States. Donald McHenry has defined the American dilemma in Micronesia as one of altruism versus self-interest.<sup>1</sup> At times it has seemed as if the United States were torn between self-interest and disinterest in the trust territory. Speaking to the House of Representatives on 3 February 1947, Mike Mansfield, then a Representative from Montana, said:

I would prefer to have the United States assume complete and undisputed control of the Mandates [Trust Territory]. We need these islands for our future defense, and they should be fortified wherever we deem it necessary. We have no concealed motives because we want these islands for one purpose only and that is national security. . . . No other nation has any kind of claim to the Mandates. No other nation has paid the price we have.<sup>2</sup>

Anticipating the problems which continue to confound US officials, Mansfield remarked in the same speech: "Economically they will be a liability, socially they will present problems, and politically we will have to work out a policy of administration." But in contrast to Mansfield's views, which were certainly shared by American leaders and the general public in the post-World War II years, Henry Kissinger, when he was Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs in 1971, could say to the then Interior Secretary Walter Hickel, "there are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?"<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Dr. Kissinger felt that Micronesia and its problems were by then of little or no interest to the American public. Perhaps it was just his diplomatic way of indicating that the White House at that time was preoccupied with more important matters. Whatever his reasons, it is clear that Micronesia has ceased to be of keen interest or deep concern to the American public or to most of the US Congress. Certainly, Presidents and their key White House staff members have had precious little time to devote to the multiple complexities of Micronesia, amid the much higher priorities of major domestic and foreign issues.

## **PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT**

There have been moments, rather few and far between, when Presidents have become directly involved, have made certain decisions, and have set specific policies regarding Micronesia. In 1951 President Truman, because of his belief that civil governments should replace military governments, transferred the administration of the territory from the Navy to the Interior Department. In rendering this decision, he expressed his intention "to try to get as near to self-government as we could wherever we had the responsibility. . . . I had always been opposed to colonialism."<sup>4</sup>

In 1962 and 1963 President Kennedy, disturbed by UN Trusteeship Council criticisms of US administration in the territory, and of an apparently preventable polio epidemic in the Marshalls, personally set in motion a series of efforts to improve US administration, including the trust territory government, instituting a crash educational development program and encouraging a major expansion of social welfare programs. President Kennedy also commissioned a field study which resulted in the Solomon report to the President.<sup>5</sup> The report recommended an "integrated master plan of action" to carry out the previously approved Presidential policy calling for "the movement of Micronesia into a permanent relationship with the United States within our political framework."<sup>6</sup>

In 1970, President Nixon approved recommendations for a concerted effort to resolve the long-mooted future status issue and in 1971 appointed the first "personal representative of the President" for Micronesian status negotiations, who was to be supported by a separate interagency group under the aegis of the National Security Council.<sup>7</sup>

Early in 1977, President Carter reviewed and approved interagency recommendations for US policy concerning Micronesia which included active pursuit of negotiations for free association, a US willingness to accept independence if that should be the freely expressed will of the Micronesian people, and a goal of terminating the trusteeship by 1981.

## **BUREAUCRATIC CONTENTION**

Nevertheless, in the long intervals between these brief interludes of Presidential attention, the White House staff has tended to try to delegate the responsibility for working out policy and program questions affecting Micronesia to departmental and agency levels. This tendency on the part of the White House staff



is hardly surprising in view of the multitude of complex issues involved in US-Micronesian relations; however, the results have seldom been happy. As this delegation of responsibility has devolved downward in the executive branch, often to the third and fourth bureaucratic levels, the built-in special interests and natural protective instincts of each department or agency represented have frequently transformed interagency meetings on Micronesian questions into seemingly interminable and indecisive debates. Although these debates have ranged over a wide spectrum of military, political, economic, and legal topics, they have been rooted in the original and still unresolved dichotomy in the US concept of its role and interest in Micronesia. This dichotomy has been reflected in the attitudes of the three Departments which have always been most concerned with the trust territory: State, Defense, and Interior.

#### ***Departmental Perspectives***

World War II had hardly ended when the Departments of State and War found themselves in disagreement—the War Department proposed outright annexation of the territory on national security grounds and the Department of State insisted on a UN trusteeship on anticolonial grounds. Setting a pattern that was to be repeated by his successors, President Truman settled for a compromise whereby the United States did not annex the territory but obtained UN approval of a “strategic” trusteeship which safeguarded exclusive US military interests in the territory.

The State Department has consistently endeavored to ensure that all US activities in Micronesia—whether political, military, or economic—are consistent with the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement. As the status negotiations developed in recent years, the Department of State has been most concerned lest the Micronesians not be given an equal and fair chance to choose independence, which most State Department officers have come to consider as inevitable, and the opportunity to opt for a special and close relationship with the United States. These policy views and political perceptions, so deeply felt in the State Department, anxious to minimize criticisms in the United Nations and the world of US performance and intentions in Micronesia, often brought the State Department into conflict with the Defense Department. The military departments have long believed that encouragement of independence for Micronesia would unnecessarily and unwisely jeopardize long-term US strategic interests and military prerogatives in the territory. These same State Department con-

cerns also caused occasional friction with the Interior Department's Office of Territorial Affairs, which is responsible for staff support, planning, and budgeting for the trust territory administration. This situation has been described by Ruth Van Cleve, a former and again current Director of that Office, in the following terms:

The State Department's principal and continuing responsibility in the territories and the trust territory area is to report on the state of territorial affairs to the United Nations. Because State's purpose is best advanced when the United States is free of criticism in the United Nations on this subject, and because Interior is also most comfortable when it is not being condemned, the interests of the two departments tend in a general way to coincide. But when the territories become an issue, the situation changes. When those who are unfriendly to the United States use the territories, and most particularly the trust territory, as a subject upon which to embarrass the United States internationally, then the interests of the two departments may diverge. . . . Interagency relationships then can decay rapidly. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Van Cleve specifically cites UN criticism of US administration of the territories in the mid-1960's as an issue which created departmental disharmony. Writing in 1974, Van Cleve also expressed the optimistic belief that, with the subsequent appearance of new faces in the two Departments, harmony had returned. Later experience would indicate that such problems did not entirely disappear.

In addition to the disagreements the State Department has had with other Departments, State has also been afflicted with internal differences over Micronesia. Moreover, the difficulties encountered in reconciling disparate views among the various State Department Bureaus involved with Micronesian affairs have troubled officials outside the Department of State. For example, in 1975 and 1976 at interagency meetings called to resolve the US status negotiating position on the vexing question of Micronesian jurisdiction over marine resources, the State Department was usually represented by officers from no less than six bureaus supporting differing positions. Defense Department representatives let it be known that they would prefer not to attend subsequent meetings until, and unless, the State Department could speak with one voice!

### ***Bureaucratic Competition***

During the years in which Presidential involvement and White House staff interest waned, the US status negotiators and the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations found it increasingly difficult to obtain interagency agreement on positions which offered any chance of reasonable compromise with the Micronesian negotiators.

In these circumstances interagency differences on substantive issues persisted and bureaucratic jurisdictional competition increased. In 1976, the then Director of Interior's Office of Territorial Affairs tried unsuccessfully to persuade the White House to abolish the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations and to transfer the status negotiating function to his office. At the outset of the Carter administration the State Department wanted to have the status negotiating function placed directly under its supervision, but this proposal was opposed by the other Departments concerned, and the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations remained as before.

A further illustration of the difficulty the US Government has experienced in reconciling its security interests with its political responsibility in the trust territory goes back 20 years. In April 1958, when the Defense Department was planning high altitude nuclear tests at Eniwetok Island in the Marshalls, the late Lewis L. Strauss, then Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, insisted that unless the natives could be evacuated, or some other means could be found for giving them complete protection, he would consider the conduct of such tests to be a violation of the trust the United States held for the territory and of its moral obligations to the local inhabitants. Strauss recommended that the tests be shifted to Johnson Island where there was no local population to be exposed to risk, but the Defense Department objected on the ground of additional costs estimated at 8 to 20 million dollars. Only after Strauss held a meeting with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the President's Science Advisor was agreement reached to move the tests to Johnson Island.<sup>9</sup>

That agreement was obviously later modified to carry out the tests at Eniwetok after evacuation of the local inhabitants. The United States is still paying compensation to the Marshallese evacuees for this move. When combined with the expensive and still unsuccessful efforts to restore the other test site, Bikini Island, to



habitable condition, the total costs of compensation for evacuation, atoll rehabilitation, and radiation injuries to local people have now far exceeded the original estimated cost of transferring the tests to Johnson Island.

### **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES AND CROSS-PURPOSES**

The foregoing examples of internal disagreements, at both high and low levels, illustrate how the US Government has handicapped itself in dealing with Micronesia. Despite the considerable effort expended, the 9-year record of the status negotiations has been marked by a series of lost opportunities for the United States.

When in the mid-1960's the Micronesians were pressing for negotiations, and appeared willing to accept a close, long-term relationship with the United States, on a unified basis offering maximum accommodation to US security interests, the United States apparently was not ready for serious talks. Later, in 1969 and 1970 when the United States did enter into formal negotiations, it first offered only a US commonwealth option to the Micronesians, who (with the exception of the Northern Marianans) rejected such a status, by then preferring to seek the looser free-association relationship. When in 1975, or even in 1976, the United States might have reached agreement with the rest of Micronesia on free association for a minimum of 15 years, with US authority over foreign affairs as well as defense, the United States was unwilling to accommodate the Micronesian request for jurisdiction over marine resources.

Finally, in 1978 the United States conceded to the peoples of Micronesia virtually full authority over foreign affairs, compatible with retained US responsibility for security and defense, as well as the option of unilaterally terminating free association status at any time. It is on this considerably modified basis that the negotiations have entered their final stage.

There is yet another dimension to the American ambivalence of purpose in Micronesia and the internal differences which have emanated from that ambivalence: the seeming compulsion to act at times in Micronesia at cross-purposes with objectives on which there actually has been agreement within the US Government. This discomfiting paradox applies essentially to two interacting issues, both of which may well be of even greater import for the future. One is the political problem of unity versus fragmentation; the other is the economic problem of development versus welfare.

### ***Unity versus Separation***

The United States has long espoused the principle of unity for Micronesia, and not only for the sake of the obvious administrative convenience and efficiency; but also because, with few exceptions, American officials dealing with Micronesia have genuinely believed that sparsely populated Micronesia would be better off in any future status, if it could develop and maintain at least some reasonable degree of cohesion. Moreover, the United States has respected and supported the UN policy opposing the fragmentation of colonies or territories by their metropolitan powers. Yet the record indicates that the United States failed to pursue status negotiations at an earlier stage, when most knowledgeable observers believe agreement preserving some form of unity could have been reached, if not including the Northern Marianas, at least for the rest of the territory. The record also shows that the United States did proceed, albeit with some initial hesitation, to negotiate separately with the Northern Marianas and to conclude an agreement which converted that district of the trust territory into a separately administered entity, awaiting accession to US commonwealth status at the end of the trusteeship.

Undeniably the example of the Northern Marianas encouraged leaders in Palau and the Marshalls to pursue their separatist movement more vigorously. Some years ago, the trust territory government decided to implement a policy of administrative decentralization from the territorial headquarters to the districts. Simultaneously it was decided to progressively "Micronize" the trust territory administration by replacing expatriate Americans with Micronesians and by staffing each district headquarters largely with local personnel. Such administrative changes could hardly be expected to strengthen a sense of cohesion among the districts. Additionally, in late 1977, during the Micronesian status negotiations, the United States began to treat the political status commissions of Palau and the Marshalls on a par with the representatives of the Congress of Micronesia. None of these developments, however, demonstrates that the United States has been less than genuine in its preference for Micronesian unity. These US actions have occurred because of other countervailing factors to which the United States has felt compelled to respond.

In the first instance, the failure of the United States to push for a status solution, when the prospects for unity were apparently good, cannot be attributed to any Machiavellian scheme to thwart Micronesian desires until separatist tendencies grew too strong to

be resisted. It was mainly due to an insufficient understanding of the pace and nature of internal Micronesian political developments. After President Kennedy's death, the US authorities with the power to make decisions in the executive branch and in the Congress were too preoccupied with other major issues, particularly the growing war in Vietnam, to focus on the previously quiescent trust territory and to realize the urgency of early action to resolve the status question.

In the case of the breakaway of the Northern Mariana Islands, critics have ascribed the US decision to negotiate and sign a separate agreement to undue military influence over US policy, in the interest of obtaining future base rights and to the detriment of Micronesian unity.<sup>10</sup> The Defense Department clearly had a strong interest in assuring the availability of some areas in the Northern Marianas for potential military facilities, and a close and lasting relationship between the United States and the Northern Marianas would presumably provide an optimum political basis for such rights. However, some believe that the strong and persistent demand of the Marianas themselves for such a relationship was the more important factor in the US decision to agree to separate arrangements with the Northern Mariana Islands. The bottom line for the United States in this case was unwillingness to force the Marianan people to accept another status in combination with the rest of Micronesia. Here the United States bowed to what it considered an example of self-determination, and tried to treat the Northern Marianas settlement as an exception rather than as a precedent for the rest of the trust territory.

Penultimately, in promoting administrative decentralization and "Micronization" of governmental staff, the primary US consideration has been to facilitate further progress in self-government and to enhance responsiveness to local needs.

Finally, the acceptance of Palauan and Marshallese representatives separately, but in a joint negotiating process with the Congress of Micronesia, was predicated on the US necessity to overcome the obstacle of these representatives' earlier withdrawal from the Congress of Micronesia negotiating team. In order to make any practical and effective progress in the status talks, all the districts had to be involved. As subsequent events revealed, the US decision to deal coequally with the Palauan and Marshallese negotiators and the Congress of Micronesia representatives was probably an inevitable one. In a popular referendum in July 1978, both Palau and the Marshalls rejected the draft Micronesian



constitution based on the concept of unity, while the other four districts, who have given their proxies for status negotiations to the Congress, approved it.

### ***Economic Development and Social Welfare***

The twin problems of economic development and social welfare in Micronesia have vexed the United States as much as any political or military issue. For many years responsible US officials have sought to overcome economic stagnation in the territory, to stimulate Micronesian productivity, and to increase local revenues, in the hope of easing the financial burden on the United States taxpayer and making Micronesia less economically dependent on the United States, as the end of trusteeship approaches. At the same time, the United States has been sensitive to its obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement to promote the economic advancement and the social and educational growth of the inhabitants of the territory.

In its attempts to achieve both purposes—economic development sufficient to at least lessen the financial burden on the United States and social welfare adequate to honor the US obligation to Micronesia—the United States has been caught in a vicious circle. As the United States failed to find ways to stimulate the Micronesian economy, it devoted more and more resources to social welfare and educational programs, which as they spread have created disincentives to economic development and progress toward self-sufficiency. This has been the effect of the massive Federal programs initiated by the Kennedy administration and expanded by succeeding administrations.

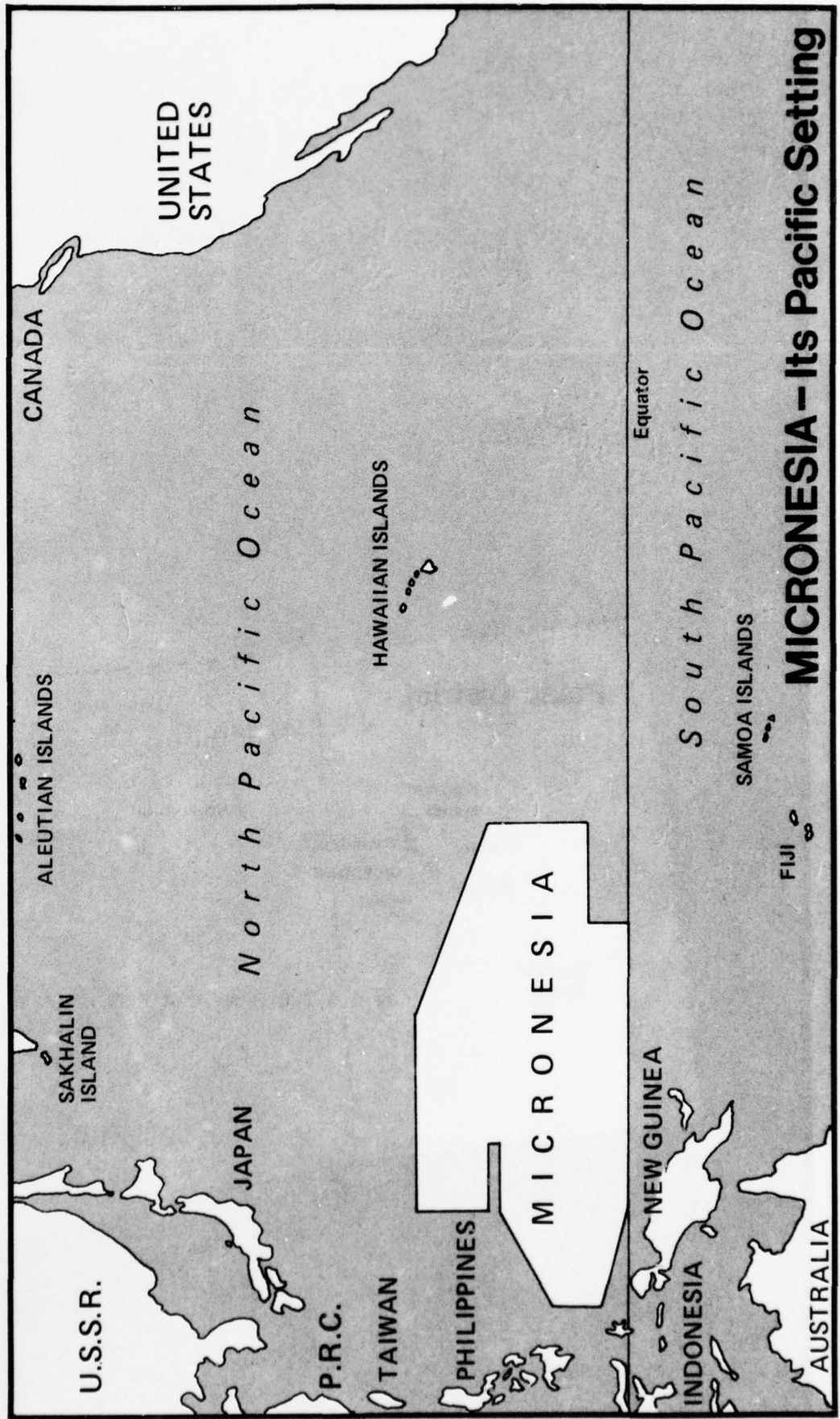
Even in inflationary times, the figures for US financial support for Micronesia are remarkable when one considers that, until recently, its total population has been less than 100,000. According to the best, but not necessarily complete, information available, from 1947 to 1979 the United States had expended over one-and-a-quarter billion dollars in the trust territory. (See Appendix B.) While the total expenditure in the first 15 years of that period amounted to slightly less than \$62 million, the remaining \$1.197 billion has been appropriated in the last 18 years.

From 1963 when they began in earnest, social welfare and education programs have been repeatedly expanded by congressional action to the point where by 1977 the trust territory had become eligible for no less than 482 Federal programs. According to an Interior Department report to the Congress, the terri-

tory was participating in 166 such programs.<sup>11</sup> The administration of these programs now involves 14 departments and agencies. In Fiscal Year 1978, these agencies (excepting Interior) provided assistance totaling \$31 million. Additionally, the main Interior Department budget was \$101.6 million. In FY 1979, appropriations for the Interior Department and other Federal agencies for the trust territory are estimated to total over \$138 million.

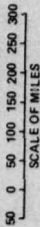
While the Micronesian economy has continued to stagnate, the massive infusions of US funds into Micronesia for federal assistance programs have apparently created on the part of the responsible agencies a bureaucratic vested interest in the programs' continuation. These programs, originally conceived to support US political objectives as well as territorial economic needs, have now taken on a virtual life of their own, seemingly independent of broader US goals and actual Micronesian requirements. The problem of effective coordination of so many programs and the need to screen them for suitability in Micronesia have caused unending headaches for US officials in the Department of Interior and the trust territorial government. Even Office of Management and Budget (OMB) officials familiar with Micronesian affairs, and responsible for Interior Department budgets, have experienced difficulty in coordinating within OMB the Federal programs in the territory—the problem being that these programs have been scattered in the budgets of many large departments and agencies which normally deal with elements of OMB and congressional committees other than those most familiar with Micronesia. The Office of Territorial Affairs in Washington and the trust territorial administration in Saipan have expended considerable effort in coordinating and sensibly screening such programs, but they have had only limited success in coping with autonomous departments and agencies armed with their own congressional appropriations and legislative acts specifying the territory as eligible for specific programs.

Stories abound in Micronesia concerning the stream of American visitors from the west coast regional offices of the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Labor, and still other agencies, who zealously promote their respective programs directly with Micronesian officials and local communities, with or without prior consultation with responsible trust territory officials.<sup>12</sup> With such temptations constantly laid before them by US bureaucrats consciously desirous of raising the standard of living of a relatively





# Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands



North Pacific Ocean

## Mariana Islands District

Farallon de Pajaros  
Maug Islands  
Agrihan  
Pagan  
Anatohan  
Tinian  
Saipan  
Rota  
Guam

Philippine Sea

## M I C R O N E S I A

## Marshall Islands District

Taongi Atoll  
Bikini Atoll  
Eniwetok Atoll  
Rongerik Atoll  
Rongelap Atoll  
Kwajalein Atoll  
Ujae Atoll  
Majuro Atoll  
Ailinglaplap Atoll  
Jaluit Atoll  
Ebon Atoll  
Mili Atoll  
Wotho Atoll  
Makodap Atoll  
Arad Atoll

## Truk District

Magur Islands  
Hull Islands  
Nanconato Atoll  
Puluwat Atoll  
Pulauk  
Truk Islands

## Yap District

Ulithi Atoll  
Faa  
Sorol Atoll  
Woleai Atoll  
Elato Atoll  
West Fiyu Atoll  
Lamotrek Atoll

## Palau District

Kayangel Islands  
Koror  
Babelthap  
Urukthapel  
Peleliu  
Angaur

## WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS

Sonsorol Islands

## EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS

## Ponape District

## Kosrae District

Ponape  
Pingelap Atoll  
Natik Atoll  
Mortlock Islands

Kosrae

poor society, and at least subconsciously interested in enhancing their own positions, it is small wonder that most Micronesians prefer to accept free and usually gratuitous welfare, thus avoiding the work and sacrifice required for real economic progress. Under such circumstances it would probably be asking too much of human nature to expect the Micronesians to react otherwise. But has this extraordinary outpouring of funds for social welfare and education really helped Micronesia to become better prepared for the future? Has it given Micronesians a sense of responsibility and confidence in themselves? Has it given the Americans a feeling of pride and accomplishment? Most would say emphatically "No" to all these questions. In this regard, the forthright assessment of Ruth Van Cleve is as pertinent now as when it was written several years ago:

It is possible that the trust territory of the Pacific Islands, as a political entity, is ungovernable. . . . If there were available to the Government of the trust territory limitless funds, as well as an unending supply of selfless and skilled personnel, the results would doubtless be different. But funds will always be limited, . . . and inevitably the ranks of trust territory Government personnel, both American and Micronesian, will in the future as in the past include some who are not paragons. The United States has in fact appropriated quite generously for the trust territory . . . and the trust territory has in fact had many selfless and skilled administrators and employees—both American and Micronesian. But it is the rare American and the rare Micronesian who views the results with great satisfaction.<sup>13</sup>

There is no gainsaying the fact that the United States has met with considerable frustration in Micronesia. There is no doubt that Americans have been deeply disappointed that their generous financial support and considerable administrative efforts have not produced the hoped for results. Thinking they had created an embryo for Micronesian unity in the Congress of Micronesia, Americans have watched it metamorphose into a forum for political rivalry where confrontation has become more prominent than compromise. Thinking that universal free education, health care, and social services would foster social and economic progress, Americans have seen productivity decline, unemployment rise, and Micronesian dependence on the United States grow. Regardless of

whether Micronesia eventually melds together or fragments into separate entities, such heavy financial dependence is not a situation the United States wishes to perpetuate indefinitely. For some years now, the US status negotiating position on future financial support has been based on the assumption that there will be gradually declining levels of aid over a limited period of time after the trusteeship ends.

### **CONGRESSIONAL INFLUENCE AND ATTITUDES**

The US Congress holds a considerable share of responsibility for whatever the United States has done, right or wrong, in Micronesia. Congressional influence on US policy has been strong and its willingness for some time now to pass large appropriations for the trust territory has made US support and assistance programs possible. Serious congressional interest in Micronesian matters has generally been limited to the Senate and House Interior Committees and members of their staffs, although when major policy questions arise, the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees in both Houses have also become actively involved. The American ambivalence of purpose in Micronesia—the concern for US security and the recognition of US obligations to the Micronesian people—has affected the Congress as much as it has the executive branch. This seems to be the essential explanation, though hardly a sufficient justification, for the attitude and behavior of the Congress toward the trust territory.

#### ***Independence versus Charity***

Ever since the trusteeship began, most members of Congress have considered US military security to be the paramount interest of the United States in Micronesia, and have exhibited a persistent aversion to Micronesian independence—independence has been viewed by most members as incompatible with the protection of the US security interest. Moreover, those members most familiar with the territory have considered Micronesia neither prepared for, nor really desirous of, independence. Conversely, since the mid-1960's, Congress has been only too willing to appropriate generous sums for administrative support and social welfare. While the Congress has provided full funding for practically every executive branch budget proposal in recent years, and has legislated trust territory eligibility for even more Federal programs than the Interior Department and the trust territory administration has thought wise, Congress has never responded to administration requests to remove the few import duties on Micronesian goods.



The Congress thus treats Micronesia, for commercial purposes, like a foreign country, but for welfare purposes, like an Indian reservation or a city slum. Perhaps most members of Congress are convinced that the territory is hopelessly incapable of meaningful economic development. Certainly congressional charity has served better the American desire to be altruistic than the Micronesian need to be more self-reliant.

The parallel currents of self-interest and altruism in the Congress were bluntly expressed by Wayne Aspinall, the Chairman of the House Interior Committee until 1970, in these words: "I don't object to spending money over there, but what I object to is the hypocrisy which this country has . . . in its relationship to Micronesia, making these people expect something which they can't have—independence."<sup>14</sup> Aspinall, well informed about Micronesia and a man of strong personality, dominated the House, and much of the executive branch, in territorial matters for more than a decade. In recent years Representative Philip Burton, Chairman of the House Territorial and Insular Affairs Subcommittee, has played a similar role.

### ***Winds of Change***

Some winds of change have begun to be felt in the Congress. In the last few years the congressional perception of the US security interest in Micronesia has gradually become more moderate, and congressional ideas of how to preserve that interest have grown more flexible. In both the House and Senate the record shows that annexation of Micronesia was initially favored; later, proposals appeared for statehood, for incorporation into Hawaii, and then for US territorial or commonwealth status similar to that of Guam.

For many years it appeared that any status solution acceptable to the US Congress would probably meet serious objections in the United Nations and vice versa. More recently, however, key members of Congress have seemed to be amenable to the concept of free association, in which the United States would retain control over defense and security matters. Since a free association agreement, by definition, would have to be unilaterally terminable, thus leaving the Micronesians ultimately free to choose another status, including independence, difficulties in the United Nations might be avoided or at least be manageable.

Even in regard to financial support for Micronesia, indications are beginning to appear that congressional generosity

may diminish in the future. Representative Burton, who in the past has championed large appropriations for the territory and full settlement of Micronesian war claims, is alleged to be concerned about the disappointing results of previous financial support and to be inclined toward scrutinizing more carefully the levels and nature of future appropriations.

When the Northern Mariana Covenant for US commonwealth status was presented to the US Congress for its approval in late 1975 and early 1976, the differing reactions in the House and Senate were instructive. In the House, notwithstanding reported pressure from fellow liberal Democrats in the Senate to oppose the covenant, Representative Burton quickly shepherded approval of the agreement through the legislature without any serious floor discussion or debate. This was a remarkable parliamentary performance, inasmuch as this agreement would result in the first acquisition of territory by the United States since the purchase of the Virgin Islands from Denmark in 1917.

In the Senate, however, considerable controversy attended the consideration of the covenant, particularly in hearings before the Foreign Relations Committee.<sup>15</sup> There, Senators of liberal political persuasion challenged the agreement on several grounds: opposition in principle to acquisition of additional US territory, reluctance to assume additional military and economic commitments far from the US mainland, and deep concern about the fragmentation of the trust territory. Some conservative Senators also opposed the covenant on grounds that the United States should not acquire additional territory remote from the United States which they felt could not be readily assimilated into US society and the body politic. Furthermore, at least one conservative Senator challenged the need for additional military facilities in the area; provisions for which are an important feature of the covenant. Despite this coincidence of opposition on the part of certain liberal and conservative members, the committee voted to support the covenant by the narrow margin of 5 to 4. The majority was apparently swayed by the strength of popular support for the agreement in the Marianas.<sup>16</sup> With the further support of a majority of the Interior and Armed Services Committees, the Senate voted to approve the covenant.

Two impressions stand out from those Senate hearings: a more limited perception than heretofore of the extent of the US security interest in Micronesia on the part of some influential Senators, and a general reluctance to see the territory further frag-

mented. The latter consideration could prove to be an obstacle to congressional approval of a free association agreement unless some practical way can be found to deal with the causes of separatism in the rest of the trust territory.

While congressional approval has always been of crucial importance for the United States in its efforts to settle the question of the future status of Micronesia, it is but one of a number of steps which will have to be carefully planned and coordinated before a new agreement can be consummated. A review of what can be anticipated in the transitional process is in order.

#### CHAPTER IV ENDNOTES

1. Donald F. McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1975), chapter I.
2. As quoted in David Nevin, *The American Touch in Micronesia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), p. 71.
3. *Who Owns America?*, p. 208, quoted in McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed*, p. 98.
4. *Memoirs*, Vol. I: *Year of Decisions*, pp. 274-275, quoted in Nevin, *The American Touch in Micronesia*, p. 76.
5. Named for the head of the study mission, Anthony N. Solomon, then an economics professor at Harvard, later an Assistant Secretary of State for Economics Affairs, and in 1977 appointed to be an Undersecretary of the Treasury.
6. McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed*, pp. 16-17.
7. The Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations, housed in the Department of Interior, funded equally by the Departments of State and Defense, and staffed by personnel from each of these departments.
8. Ruth G. Van Cleve, *The Office of Territorial Affairs* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 176-178.
9. Based on an account recorded in the files of Admiral Lewis L. Strauss.
10. McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed*, pp. 136-137.
11. US, Department of the Interior, Office of Territorial Affairs,



*Federal Programs Available to the Territories of the United States*, 1 January 1978.

12. Often these officials seem unaware of, and unconcerned with, overall US policies in Micronesia or the nature of the status negotiations.

13. Van Cleve, *The Office of Territorial Affairs*, p. 123.

14. Quoted in McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed*, p. 197.

15. See US, Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on H.J. Res. 549, to Approve the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, and for Other Purposes*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 5 November 1975 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976).

16. In a 17 June 1975 popular referendum on the draft covenant, the Marianan people voted 78.8 percent in favor of the covenant, with 95 percent of the eligible voters participating.

## **V. TRANSITION TO FREE ASSOCIATION**

Before the new status of free association can be legally consummated, and effectively implemented, a series of important steps will have to be taken by both the United States and Micronesia.

### **COMPLETION OF STATUS NEGOTIATIONS**

The US negotiators will have to complete and sign a detailed agreement with one Micronesian entity or a set of agreements with several Micronesian entities, for example, with a federation of the existing four central districts of the trust territory, with Palau and with the Marshall Islands. The latter arrangement would now appear more realistic in the light of the results of the 12 July 1978, Micronesian constitutional referendum, whereby Palau and the Marshalls rejected the draft constitution and the four central districts approved it.<sup>1</sup>

To ensure the smoothest possible transition and to minimize ambiguities which could cause subsequent misunderstandings and difficulties, the final agreement or agreements should logically include provisions for the following: levels and nature of future US economic support; extent of applicability of US domestic laws and legislation to Micronesia; respective jurisdictions of US and Micronesian courts, for governmental dispute settlement; US military rights and responsibilities in Micronesia (perhaps by separate but related protocols); a principle or formula of compatibility between free association and local constitutions; and reciprocal official representation in Micronesia and the United States.

### **RATIFICATION BY MICRONESIA AND THE UNITED STATES**

#### ***Micronesian Approval***

The inhabitants of the trust territory will have to approve the negotiated agreement or agreements by the freely expressed will of the people.<sup>2</sup> This could be accomplished either through approval by the Congress of Micronesia and/or each district legislature followed by approval in a plebiscite, or by Micronesian legislative referral directly to a popular vote.

The ascertainment of the popular will might have to be arranged through separate, but more or less simultaneous, plebiscites in the central districts, Palau, and the Marshalls, on the specific agreement pertaining to each, if a set of agreements proved necessary in view of the separatist tendency in the latter districts.

### ***Congressional Approval***

Both Houses of the US Congress will have to approve the free association agreement or agreements, primarily for these reasons:

- The agreement or agreements can be expected to include fairly long term and significant US financial support, which will require approval by the House of Representatives as well as the Senate,
- The agreement or agreements will presumably be presented to the Congress in the form of a "compact" or executive agreement rather than a treaty, since the status of free association does not provide for the full sovereignty of an independent state. Thus the Senate would not be expected to have full or exclusive congressional jurisdiction over the consideration of such an agreement or set of agreements. Furthermore, a practical legislative precedent has apparently been established by the way in which the Marianas Covenant for commonwealth status was handled, that is, separately by both Houses of Congress.

While some believe that the most rational and practical way to proceed would be to seek Micronesian popular approval prior to final consideration by the US Congress, it must be acknowledged that any agreement or set of agreements mutually agreeable to the US and Micronesian negotiators may not fully satisfy all of the varying and sometimes conflicting views on Micronesia represented in the US Congress. Therefore, the potential problem inevitably exists that either the House or Senate, or even both, might insist on one or more significant revisions in an agreement already approved by the Micronesians, as the price for congressional acceptance.

While such a demand by the US Congress could complicate US-Micronesian relations at a crucial stage and perhaps unduly delay the implementation of a free association status, it would appear to be much more impractical, and politically undesirable, for the executive branch to reverse the sequence used in the case of the Marianas Covenant and ask for congressional approval before receiving the assurance of Micronesian popular acceptance of arrangements for the new status. If US congressional consideration is to follow Micronesian ratification, it will certainly behoove the executive branch to conduct the closest possible consultations



with all interested House and Senate members during the final stages of negotiations, in order to maximize congressional understanding of, and support for, the prospective agreement or agreements.

### ***Presidential Approval***

After congressional approval, the President will have to indicate his approval and proclaim a date for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement and the inauguration of free association. Before he can take the latter step, however, it will be necessary to seek UN approval for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for the whole territory, including the Northern Mariana Islands.

## **TERMINATION OF THE TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT**

The process of UN approval of, or acquiescence in, termination of the Trusteeship Agreement will involve two UN bodies—review first by the Trusteeship Council, which has oversight and advisory functions for the United Nations in relation to the administering power of any UN trusteeship, and then consideration and action by the Security Council. The Security Council holds the ultimate UN authority for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) in view of its designation as a "strategic" trusteeship (as distinguished from other UN trusteeships, none of which were so designated, and for all of which the UN General Assembly holds the ultimate UN authority).

### ***Trusteeship Council Consideration***

Procedurally, it can be expected that the United States will invite the Trusteeship Council to observe all aspects of the plebiscite on the free association agreement, or set of agreements, throughout the six districts of the territory, just as was done in the case of the commonwealth covenant plebiscite in the Northern Mariana Islands. The Trusteeship Council would then presumably present a report to the Security Council not only in regard to the adequacy and validity of the plebiscite, but also in regard to the suitability of terminating the Trusteeship Agreement on the basis of the new status of free association. Substantively, a free association agreement embodying the principles agreed upon by the US and Micronesian negotiators in July 1978 would appear to satisfy most, if not all, of the positions recommended to date by the Trusteeship Council. These are summarized as follows:

- UN trusteeship is not intended to continue indefinitely, and the TTPI as the last existing UN trusteeship should be terminated as early as possible.
- Unilaterally terminable free association is compatible with the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement in that it provides the opportunity for full self-government and preserves the option for eventual independence, if the people concerned so choose.
- Any future status consistent with the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement and the UN Charter should be in accordance with the freely expressed will of the inhabitants of the territory.
- While the United States as administering power should make every reasonable effort to preserve the unity of the territory in preparation for a new status, the United States should not try to impose a status which is not acceptable to the peoples concerned.
- The United States should continue to support the economic and social development of the territory.

#### ***Security Council Consideration***

Procedurally, as the final definitive step in the United Nations, the United States can be expected to seek the approval of the Security Council for termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, which would be replaced by the new status of US Commonwealth for the Northern Mariana Islands, and free association for the rest of the trust territory.<sup>3</sup> No specific procedures have ever been established for the termination of this Trusteeship Agreement by the Security Council, and, therefore, its normal procedures, including the veto power held by each of its members, would presumably apply in this case. Thus, it is conceivable that one or possibly more than one country might veto a US request in the Security Council for termination of the agreement.

Although such a veto is only hypothetical, it is worthwhile to consider what country or countries might do so, the reasons for doing so, and how the United States and the Micronesians themselves might deal with it. The only plausible candidates to veto a US request for termination would be the Soviet Union and possibly one of its close supporters and/or a nonaligned Third World country prone to distrust the intentions of any major power. The former might object more for strategic than ideological reasons, and the latter more on ideological than strategic grounds.

Potential objections might be related to such allegations as: independence is now the only proper or politically acceptable future status for trusteeship, and the United States created disincentives and offered insufficient opportunity for the Micronesians to choose independence; the United States failed to abide by the UN policy of preserving the territorial integrity of a trusteeship by unnecessarily permitting and condoning the fragmentation of the TTPI; and the United States intends to terminate the trusteeship in such a way as to perpetuate and expand its military position in Micronesia after termination, for the exclusive strategic advantage of the United States. If such distorted and negative arguments were raised in the Security Council, they could be adequately answered by the facts of life in Micronesia and by the nature of the US-Micronesian agreements, supported by the approval of the Micronesians themselves and the US Congress.

It is obvious that no US request for termination of the trusteeship would be presented to the Security Council until, and unless, the new status agreements had been completed and had received the endorsement of the inhabitants of the territory and of the US Congress. Notwithstanding these premises, it is conceivable that the Soviet Union might still attempt to block termination by casting a veto. If that should occur, it might be influenced more by the general state of US-Soviet relations at the time than by considerations bearing solely on Micronesia. To many it might appear that such Soviet action would reflect a Soviet view that the trust territory was only a relatively worthless pawn on a chessboard and other pieces were actually of greater interest to the Soviet Union. Such a Soviet posture on Micronesia would seem ill calculated to win friends and influence people—either in the United Nations, in the United States, or among Micronesians.

Should the USSR veto a request to terminate the trusteeship, resulting in less than the unanimous approval of the Security Council, the conclusion seems inescapable that the United States, much as it would prefer for legal and political reasons to obtain the approval of the Security Council, would choose to proceed, promptly, with the consummation of the new relationship with the Northern Mariana Islands and the rest of the trust territory. Furthermore, the Micronesians themselves, after so many years of negotiation and the efforts required for popular scrutiny and approval of the new status, would surely expect of the United States more than a paralysis of effort. They would be dismayed at the prospect of being relegated to political limbo through failure to terminate the trusteeship, when they had expected, and were prepared for, a



new and better status. Suffice it to note that the Mariana Islanders are already becoming restive about the end of the Trusteeship Agreement for their part of the trust territory; once free association arrangements are established for the rest of the territory, their colleagues elsewhere in Micronesia will surely join them in pressing for prompt termination of the trusteeship.

### **INSTALLATION OF FULL SELF-GOVERNMENT**

Finally, in the interim between US ratification of a free association agreement and the inauguration of the new status in Micronesia, it will be essential for the United States to take prompt steps in close consultation with the Micronesians to establish the structure of full internal self-government. This will involve early planning for the formation of a complete Micronesian executive branch ready to replace the present US executive function and administrative organization.

Important as it will be for American and Micronesian officials to plan and coordinate the steps each will be called upon to take for efficient transition from trusteeship to free association, it is of equal importance for the US Government to prepare to organize itself effectively and realistically for the new relationship. It is not too soon to initiate this organizational planning. The time is not far off when Micronesian officials will need to know how the US Government expects to interface with them in the future, and US legislators will want to know how the US executive branch expects to deal with both Micronesia and the US Congress under free association.

### **CHAPTER V ENDNOTES**

1. "US Plays Midwife to a Sprawling Island Nation," *US News and World Report*, 7 August 1978, p. 33.
2. United Nations, General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Resolution 1514, 947th plenary meeting, 14 December 1960.
3. The Security Council's action on termination of the Trusteeship Agreement would presumably follow consideration by the Trusteeship Council and the reporting of the latter's findings and its explicit or implicit recommendations to the Security Council.

## **VI. HOW CAN, HOW SHOULD, THE UNITED STATES RESPOND TO FREE ASSOCIATION?**

Faced with the fundamentally new relationship of free association—however long or short its duration may be—the US Government will be obliged to cope with legal, political, military, and economic considerations unprecedented in US experience. Old methods and organizational arrangements will no longer be adequate or appropriate. The executive branch will inevitably have to devise a new organizational mechanism to provide for effective management within the executive domain, practical coordination with the US Congress, and constructive interface with Micronesia, whether the latter is to be composed of one, or more than one, political entity.

Within the executive branch there would appear to be only three possible basic approaches to the question of managing relations with Micronesia: multidepartment division of responsibility, single department leadership, or direct supervision by the White House. Each approach should be considered in the light of its relative advantages and disadvantages.

### **MULTIDEPARTMENT CONCEPT**

In a *multidepartment arrangement* each department and agency with interests and programs in Micronesia would be relatively free to do what it does best, subject only to the terms of the Free Association Agreement, its own policy and budgetary restraints, and congressional acceptance. Under such decentralized authority and division of responsibilities, each executive element would presumably utilize its existing structure, deal with its normal congressional committees, and work with Micronesian officials directly on specific subjects and programs. In cases of interdepartmental differences involving policy, budget, or program impact, resolution of such differences would presumably be sought first directly between the departments or agencies concerned. If necessary, appeal could be made through the White House to the Policy Review Committee or to the Policy Coordinating Committee of the National Security Council (NSC). The participation of the Office of Management and Budget in financial questions would be required, in the absence of any other appropriate coordinating element in the Office of the President.

The advantages of the multidepartment approach would be that it would involve the least disruption of existing executive branch functions and methods, require no changes in executive

branch relations with congressional committees, and leave experienced personnel in each concerned agency free to deal with Micronesian matters as heretofore.

Potential drawbacks to the multidepartment plan would be serious enough to exacerbate frictions between departments, and confound Micronesian officials already hard pressed to cope with the numerous programs sponsored by so many US agencies. (Both of these factors would be likely to arouse criticism in the Congress.) The main disadvantages of this plan are: consistent and coherent policy, and cost-effective budgets, would be almost impossible to achieve and monitor; settlement of interdepartmental differences would be time-consuming and piecemeal on an ad hoc basis; needed restraints would be difficult to apply to the welfare programs; cohesive planning for realistic economic development would suffer; and intolerable burdens would be placed on the limited number of experienced Micronesian officials.

#### **SINGLE DEPARTMENT CONCEPT**

An approach based on *leadership and control by a single department* would require two basic decisions by the White House, preferably by the President himself: first, that one department actually has a predominant vested interest, and superior qualifications for managing Federal relations with Micronesia in free association with the United States; and second, that such a department is to be specifically authorized by the President to administer all aspects of US policy toward Micronesia, and to coordinate the roles and functions of all executive agencies concerned with Micronesia. The department so designated could be expected to establish and chair an interagency coordinating committee to handle policy and program implementation, including the selection of US representatives in Micronesia and their functions there. Any departmental differences not resolved by such an interagency group would be referred to the White House for settlement. Adjudication would be effected by the National Security Council's Policy Review Committee or Policy Coordinating Committee.

The single department concept would preserve some of the advantages inherent in the multidepartment approach outlined above, while eliminating most of the disadvantages. Leadership and control by one department, utilizing the forum of an interagency group, could continue to draw on the support of experienced personnel in each agency. This arrangement could



also provide an effective and vital coordinating function for policy and programs, serve as a screening mechanism to insure that only essential and cost-effective programs are implemented, and establish simplified, responsible channels to interface with Micronesian officials.

However, two other, partly interrelated problems could hamper the effectiveness of this approach. Any single Cabinet department might have difficulty in claiming that it has an overriding stake or an exclusive competence in the many-faceted complex of US-Micronesian relations—if any department should make such a claim, it could expect a serious challenge from other departments. Moreover, a single department concept would encounter skepticism and resistance in the Congress, particularly from those members and committees which have traditionally presided over Micronesian affairs, if the department selected for leadership were not the one normally dealt with on Micronesian matters. One could anticipate that despite the single department designated, there would be pro and con reactions in the Congress, depending on which committee perceived encroachment on its traditional jurisdiction.

Notwithstanding the current plethora of programs in Micronesia, conducted by various Federal agencies, there are only three departments whose roles and responsibilities relating to Micronesia have been, and probably will continue to be, of major importance: the Departments of Defense, State, and Interior.

#### ***Department of Defense***

While the Micronesian area will remain important from a US security point of view, the Defense Department has not sought, and is not likely to seek, a leading role in institutional arrangements with Micronesia. Neither does it appear that the Department of Defense legally can nor should assume any financial responsibility in Micronesia, except in relation to the acquisition or use of military facilities there and for the necessary support of the Kwajalein Missile Testing Facility in the Marshall Islands. Thus, there is no reason to assume that the Defense Department would object to either State Department or Interior Department leadership, provided that military and security considerations are adequately considered and protected through Defense Department participation in the interagency coordinating group. To select the Defense Department for such a leading role at the Cabinet level might, however, unintentionally project a misleading symbolic

image of increased US military interest, and decreased US political and economic interest, in Micronesia—just at a time when US military interest is somewhat more circumscribed than heretofore and US political and economic relations are becoming more important. As a practical matter, the choice for leadership by a single department should lie between the State Department and the Department of the Interior.

### ***Department of State***

The choice of the State Department for the leadership role could be supported on the assumption that the foreign affairs aspects will prove to be the most important element in the new US-Micronesian relationship; certainly the State Department would have major and complex tasks to perform.

First, before a free association agreement can be legally implemented, the State Department will have to take whatever steps may be necessary in the United Nations to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement. Subsequently, the Department of State could logically be expected to collaborate with, and assist, Micronesian officials as they gradually assume responsibility for their own foreign affairs as anticipated in the free association relationship. (See Appendix A.) The Department of State would presumably bear an ongoing responsibility for negotiating international questions on behalf of Micronesia, when mutually desired, and for seeking resolution of any US-Micronesian differences that might occur in the international field.

Anticipating a continuing US responsibility for the economic progress of Micronesia, if the United States should decide to provide support through the Agency for International Development (AID) or certain international assistance organizations, or a combination of both, the State Department would be the logical department to lead and coordinate such efforts. However, it should be noted that such a shift of aid funding is likely to encounter potentially serious obstacles: by the expected terms of the free association agreement, Micronesia would lack the full attributes of a sovereign nation and probably would not be recognized as such internationally. In that situation, AID presumably would be obliged to seek an exception to its governing Foreign Assistance Act for programs in Micronesia which might not be forthcoming from the Congress. Even if the Congress should grant such an exception, Micronesia would then face stiffer competition for the possibly diminishing US foreign aid dollar than it would for assistance from

US domestic agencies. Such a prospect could well induce Micronesian officials to oppose any such shift in funding of US economic support. Other factors which could hamper State Department effectiveness as the lead agency include:

- The unprecedented necessity for the State Department to coordinate and monitor assistance programs funded and executed by other domestic agencies, assuming they are not replaced in such functions by AID or international assistance institutions.
- The paucity of State Department and Foreign Service personnel with first-hand experience in Micronesia and a thorough knowledge of the complexities of Micronesian affairs.
- The historical difficulties of the Department of State in resolving internal policy and legal differences involving Micronesia.

The designation of the State Department to lead the new relationship with Micronesia also poses a question relative to the image the United States would want to project. The choice of the State Department could be interpreted as an institutional symbol that the United States is expecting and is preparing, in whole or in part, for the accession of Micronesia to full independence in the relatively near future. If that should be the conscious, considered US assumption, then the Department of State could be considered the most logical choice.

#### ***Department of the Interior***

The choice of the Department of the Interior to play the lead role would presuppose a different sort of judgment from that involved in the choice of the State Department, namely, that for the duration of the free association relationship, Federal relations with Micronesia through US domestic agencies will outweigh in importance the foreign affairs aspects of that relationship. Such a judgment would be based on these premises:

- It would be neither desirable nor feasible to channel economic support through AID or, to a significant extent, through international assistance institutions.
- A domestic-oriented department familiar with Micronesia could best coordinate and control economic and technical support from US domestic agencies.



- In the interest of efficiency, changes in the present channels between the executive branch and the Congress in regard to Micronesian matters would be avoided.
- The bulk of US-Micronesian legal relationships will continue to fall within the scope of domestic US law and legislation.

The Interior Department's greatest assets for service are its long experience with, and thorough first-hand knowledge of, Micronesia and Micronesians; its established, closeworking relationship with Congressmen and Senators concerned with Micronesian affairs; and, through its Office of Territorial Affairs, its extensive experience in dealing with the numerous other executive agencies conducting programs in Micronesia. The Interior Department should not bear the complete onus for past shortcomings of US administration in Micronesia or for past failures to exert adequate control over excessive and wasteful welfare programs there. The Department of Interior neither had direct supervisory authority over US administrative personnel in the trust territory, nor more than limited influence over the selection of any of the US High Commissioners there.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Interior Department has never had the cognizant authority to exert effective control over the budgets and programs of other executive agencies operating in the trust territory.

Given a specific mandate by the White House to review and approve Federal programs through an interagency group, and given its uniquely broad bureaucratic experience with Micronesian matters in Washington, the Interior Department reasonably could be expected to have the best capability of control of programs and coordination of policy. The selection of the Department of Interior, however, also raises the potentially troublesome problem of projecting an unintended or inappropriate image. To choose the Interior Department to quarterback the US team for the Micronesian game could be interpreted by the Micronesians, by the US Congress, by the media, and even by other countries, as an institutional symbol indicating the United States is expecting, and preparing for, eventual Micronesian accession to US territorial status, rather than full-fledged independence. Such symbolism, if taken seriously, could be highly premature and perhaps prove to be misleading.

#### **DIRECT WHITE HOUSE SUPERVISION**

The choice of direct supervision and leadership by the White House of the US-Micronesian relationship during free association

is a third option. It would reflect a judgment that neither the foreign affairs aspects nor the domestic management aspects will be of decisively greater concern during a period when considerable governmental innovation and experimentation may be required. Accordingly, direct White House leadership could provide a better aegis than either the Departments of State or Interior. This concept could take one of several forms:

- A Presidential or Vice Presidential Commission on Micronesia could be established, chaired by a senior White House official with direct access to the President or Vice President respectively. It could be composed of senior representatives of the Departments of State, Defense, Interior, and Justice, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB), with other agency representatives participating as necessary on an ad hoc basis. Staff work could be performed within each department or agency as appropriate.
- A senior White House official as a Special Assistant to the President or Vice President for Micronesian Affairs could chair an interagency coordinating group composed and supported as in the case of a Presidential or Vice Presidential commission.
- A Micronesian function could be added to the functions of the National Security Council, with the National Security Advisor or his deputy chairing an interagency group as indicated above.

The location of overall responsibility and supervision of US-Micronesian relations in the White House offers considerable advantages. Assuming that the chairman of such a commission or interagency group were armed with specific authority from the President to coordinate and approve policies and programs relating to Micronesia, more effective coordination and cohesion could be achieved within the executive branch. While Cabinet officers would obviously continue to have the right of appeal to the President, direct White House involvement in the formative stages might work to limit any such appeals to only the most serious questions.

In dealing with the Congress on Micronesian matters, direct White House leadership could help to avoid some of the drawbacks inherent in a multidepartment or single department approach. With the assistance of OMB and the White House

Congressional Liaison Office, budgetary support for Micronesia, for example, could be presented to the Congress as a White House program with its financial components attributed to the departments and considered by relevant congressional committees. The advantage of this method would lie in a greater capacity to present an integrated program and budget package, while preserving considerable flexibility for the Congress in deciding which committees should deal with which parts of the executive proposals.

Furthermore, direct White House involvement and leadership would impress, and hence be effective with, Micronesian leaders. The only serious drawback which might be anticipated would be the possible reluctance of the President or his senior staff to take on such an additional function in the White House. White House staff personnel are, presumably, fully occupied with other duties and the addition of personnel and responsibility might not be desirable or politically acceptable. Nevertheless, it is probably axiomatic that some of the time and attention of various elements of the Office of the President will have to be devoted to some aspects of future Micronesian relations.

Even optimum organizational arrangements within the executive branch might not serve their intended purposes, unless adequate attention is also given to practical ways in which the United States can interface constructively with Micronesia in free association.

#### **US-MICRONESIAN INTERACTION IN FREE ASSOCIATION**

Now that the status negotiations are apparently reaching their final stages, the long-dormant Micronesian Transition Committee of the Congress of Micronesia Commission on Future Political Status and Transition is becoming active; the committee is preparing to enter into serious joint planning with the United States on moving from trusteeship status to one of free association. That committee could, therefore, become the nucleus of a Micronesian organization to deal with the United States on most subjects of mutual interest in the free association period. Whether there will be one or more parallel Micronesian organizations of this type will depend on the nature of the relations, yet to be finally determined by the Micronesians, among the existing six Districts in the Carolines and Marshalls. Whatever the Micronesian decision, there are several ways, singly or in combination, for the United States to interface with Micronesian agencies.



- A joint US-Micronesian commission, as a senior level forum for discussing and settling questions of mutual concern.
- A US commission on Micronesia, which would meet periodically with one or more similar, but separate, Micronesian commissions.
- A permanent US representation in Micronesia, and a reciprocal permanent Micronesian representation in Washington, to serve as parallel channels of communication and negotiation on all matters affecting US-Micronesian relations.

To assure the fullest and most effective interface, it would be preferable to supplement the functions of the US and Micronesian field representatives by the establishment of either separate and parallel high-level commissions, or a joint commission which would be expected to review policies and programs and resolve any major problems that may arise. The US members of a separate US commission or a joint US-Micronesian commission could be drawn entirely from the principal US agencies concerned with Micronesia, or be a combination of such Federal officials and private citizens knowledgeable about Micronesia.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the foregoing range of organizational possibilities, certain judgments and choices can be suggested as being in the best interests of the United States and as being conducive to constructive and effective US-Micronesian relations in the future.

### ***Washington Structure***

A multidepartment choice would undoubtedly be the worst approach. By fostering or accepting bureaucratic independence and division of responsibilities, interdepartmental misunderstandings and conflicts are likely to multiply, and the development of coherent, integrated policies and cost-effective programs would be almost impossible to accomplish. This could compound one of the most acute weaknesses which has historically characterized US dealings with Micronesia.

A single department concept would be clearly superior to a multidepartment approach, in that it would provide a specific focus of responsibility and coordination among the executive agencies concerned. Of the two logical candidates for the lead role, the choice of the Interior Department, at least at the outset of a free

association relationship, makes sense. If and when it should appear that a broad consensus in favor of full independence had developed in Micronesia, and Micronesian leaders were prepared to accept that responsibility, leadership in the executive branch could and should be promptly transferred to the State Department, even if close ties were to be maintained in the military and economic fields between the United States and Micronesia. In the interim, pending such a development, leadership by the Interior Department need not conflict or interfere with the State Department's prerogative of dealing with all the foreign affairs aspects of the US-Micronesian relationship. At the same time, the Interior Department would be in a better position to put to best use its expertise on Micronesia, its established channels to the Congress, and its experience with other domestic agencies in coordinating policy and controlling economic and technical programs in Micronesia.<sup>2</sup>

Direct White House leadership and supervision, however, would appear to offer even more advantages. The most important considerations supporting this judgment include:

First, it should organizationally provide the most effective and influential focus of responsibility and coordination among the executive agencies, with the US Congress, and in the eyes of Micronesian officials.

Second, it could most impressively demonstrate Presidential interest in, and concern for, Micronesia at a crucial and innovative stage in US-Micronesian relations.

Third, it could preclude the immediate Solomon-like choice between State and Interior, with the questionable symbolism entailed in either outcome. Assuming that a free association relationship will commence in the fairly near future, it does not now appear likely that there will have developed a broad consensus among Micronesians for full sovereignty and independence, much less its potential timing. There might even be an increase in the widespread concern that essential US economic support would be jeopardized. Under such circumstances, it would seem premature for the United States to project a symbol of anticipation of either full independence or US territorial status, especially when it might not be necessary to do so at the outset of a free association relationship.

If the concept of White House leadership were to be adopted, it could be implemented specifically along the following lines:

rather than designate an already fully occupied senior official of the NSC or OMB to chair a coordinating body, a Special Assistant to the President or Vice President for Micronesian Affairs could be named. This individual would chair a Presidential or Vice Presidential Commission on Micronesia, or a special interagency coordinating group on Micronesia. The regular members would be senior representatives of the Departments of State, Defense, Interior, Justice, and of the OMB—those agencies whose responsibilities will continue to be of greatest importance in Micronesia—with participation by representatives of other agencies as required. Qualified public members from business, academic, or political circles could be added to a Presidential or Vice Presidential commission, although their potentially useful contribution might be more appropriate on an advisory basis.

To minimize administrative costs to the Office of the President, the special assistant would presumably rely primarily on staff support from the departments most concerned, for example, State, Defense, and Interior. Such a commission or interagency group should be specifically authorized, perhaps by an executive order, to review and approve any program or function proposed by the executive agency for Micronesia. The commission or interagency group should determine the nature of the US representation in Micronesia and select the personnel to staff that office.

### ***Field Structure***

The head of the Micronesian field office, perhaps selected from qualified State Department or Interior Department areas, could bear a title such as US Liaison Officer or US Permanent Representative to Micronesia. A Justice Department official might also be considered, since questions involving the applicability of US law and Federal regulations are certain to have an important bearing on many aspects of the new relationship. To match the principal anticipated functions of such a field office, it should be staffed with a Deputy for Foreign Affairs (from the Department of State), a Deputy for Economic and Financial Affairs (from Interior Department, or AID by secondment to the Interior Department), a Deputy for Security Affairs (from the Department of Defense, or possibly the Pacific Command), plus a legal advisor (from the Departments of Justice or Interior), all supported by the smallest possible American clerical staff.



Personnel assigned to the field office should be seconded from, and financially supported by, their parent agencies to minimize expense to the Office of the President, but all should be directed by, and report directly to, the Chairman of the White House Commission or interagency group. This internal relationship, which has been successfully applied to the NSC staff, should serve to minimize or eliminate the agency-oriented frictions and misunderstandings. The establishment of a US field office with a lean staff, qualified to handle all important aspects of Micronesian relations and communicate directly with the White House, could promote efficient and effective working relations with the relatively small Micronesian offices charged with parallel responsibilities.

If free association commences with more than one Micronesian political entity and governmental structure in being, the location of a US field office could pose problems, but the establishment of more than one US office in Micronesia would be difficult to justify on either an administrative or financial basis. A single US office somewhere in Micronesia should be capable of conducting all required business with more than one Micronesian governmental organization. Since the Congress of Micronesia transferred its offices from Saipan to Ponape in 1978, it seems probable that the executive branch of a new Micronesian government, at least for the four central districts, would also eventually be located there. Thus Ponape appears to be a logical site for a permanent US representation to all parts of Micronesia.

#### ***A Joint US-Micronesian Commission***

Decisions regarding the establishment of separate, senior level US and Micronesian commissions or a joint US-Micronesian commission, and the specific authority and responsibilities which would attach to either arrangement, will presumably be made in the framework of the final negotiations for a free association agreement. A strong case can be made for the thesis that a joint commission would be conducive to a closer working relationship, both psychologically and substantively. Either arrangement, however, would be worth implementing to provide an additional dimension to the relationship, and to offer a forum for periodic review and assessment of progress and problems as that relationship develops.

The US membership in either type of commission could be the same as that of the recommended White House commission or

interagency group. In a joint commission, however, it would seem highly desirable to include a few members of the US Senate and/or House from committees which deal with Micronesia. Their direct and continuing participation in the work of such a commission could facilitate better understanding and coordination between the US executive branch and the Congress regarding Micronesia, and enhance the overall relations between the United States and Micronesia as well.

### ***Congressional Oversight***

No matter how the executive branch might organize itself to deal efficiently and realistically with Micronesia in free association, the US Government as a whole could manage that relationship better if the US Congress were also willing to deal with Micronesia in a more cohesive way than it has in the past. The legislative aspects of US-Micronesian relations have always been of major importance and could well be even more crucial in the formative stages of a free association relationship.

Congressional oversight, advice, and consent could be managed much more efficiently and effectively if a small ad hoc committee were established in each House, or perhaps, more preferably, if a small joint Senate-House committee were established to handle Micronesian questions. The membership of such a committee or committees, in all probability, would be comprised of the members of those existing committees which have traditionally dealt with Micronesia: the Interior, Foreign Relations, and Armed Services Committees in the House, and the Energy and Natural Resources, Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees in the Senate. A recommendation to modify existing congressional committee jurisdictions might have resistance. Nevertheless, in the case of Micronesia such a change is needed. McHenry reached a similar conclusion from his study of congressional performance on Micronesia, which he summed up in the following terms:

The "problem" of Micronesia involves substantial foreign affairs issues and international agreements, multi-million dollar defense investments, and annual appropriations for the development of an impoverished area, as well as the civil administration of an Interior Department ward. The problems could have been handled by the Foreign Relations, Armed Services, Appropriations, or Interior Committees equally ineffectively. But they should have been dealt with by

all of them. It is a flaw of Congress that issues and jurisdiction are particularized rather than coordinated.

The assignment of jurisdiction to the Interior committees may not have been worse than assignment to any other particular committee. . . .

But Congress has had difficulty producing satisfactory relationships with any of the United States possessions since the statehood of Hawaii and Alaska. . . .

Assuming that somehow Micronesia's status could be handled in the traditional pattern by the traditional subcommittees has proved to be unrealistic, and one can still ask if the United States has truly met its high commitment to Micronesia.<sup>3</sup>

Though relatively few in number and often differing widely in outlook, there are some members of Congress who have accumulated considerable knowledge of Micronesia and have more extensive experience with it than most senior officials in the executive branch. Only with the support and collaboration of those genuinely concerned members will the United States be able to do its part to make free association work and to grasp this chance to do better in Micronesia.

## CHAPTER VI ENDNOTES

1. See Ruth G. Van Cleve, *The Office of Territorial Affairs* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 144-149; 171.
2. This recommendation assumes that it will prove neither practical nor desirable to seek a shift of economic development funding from US domestic agencies to AID and/or international assistance institutions, although the Interior Department could usefully enhance its economic development planning capability by utilizing experts seconded from AID on detail, an arrangement which should be feasible.
3. Donald F. McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1975), pp. 219-220.



## **VII. EPILOGUE—SOME LESSONS WORTH LEARNING**

As the end of the trusteeship approaches, what are the vital long-term interests of the United States in Micronesia? How can those interests be effectively and properly served after trusteeship, in a world and in an area which has greatly changed over the last 30 years? Are the basic interests of the United States compatible with the future best interests of the Micronesians?

### **EVERYTHING HAS ITS LIMITS—EVEN THE US SECURITY INTEREST**

The most vital interest of the United States in Micronesia will undoubtedly continue to be its strategic value to US national security. That value, however, is likely to lessen from the one given in past perceptions. While the indefinite denial of Micronesia to military exploitation by potential enemies can be expected to be of vital concern to the United States, the likelihood of installing additional military facilities in Micronesia seems to be decreasing. The use of Micronesian sites for US nuclear tests is clearly a thing of the past. Although the existing Kwajalein Missile Test Range facility will obviously continue to be needed by the United States for some time to come, even its value may eventually diminish as military technology advances, with more sophisticated remote monitoring techniques and longer range missiles. Despite serious talk in the United States after World War II about "fortifying" the trust territory, the fact is that the United States has never seen fit to establish any military bases or station combat forces in Micronesia since the beginning of the trusteeship. Even the land options for potential US military facilities provided for in the Northern Marinas Covenant<sup>1</sup> have not been exercised by the Defense Department, and there is no indication of change.

#### ***Micronesia and Forward Deployment***

In recent years American strategists have given considerable attention to the trust territory as a possible "fallback" to maintain the forward deployment concept in the Pacific, should bases in the Philippines or elsewhere no longer be available. But US motivation to pursue such a course now appears seriously lessened by its preference for maintaining existing bases elsewhere in the area, the lack of comparable sites and local infrastructure in Micronesia, and the availability of at least partial substitutes in the US territory of Guam, and if necessary, in the Northern Marianas where US sovereignty would apply.<sup>2</sup>

### ***An Enduring Relationship***

Quite intangible, but nonetheless real in a political and psychological sense, is the US interest in maintaining a decent and enduring relationship with the Micronesian people for whom the United States has been so long responsible. Americans who have dealt with Micronesia—civilian and military alike—want to feel that the US self-interest, its natural concern for national security, has not negated the American instinct for altruism; that American support and generosity have helped Micronesia to progress; and that despite mistakes and disappointments the United States has honored its trustee obligations as well as could be expected.

### ***The Advantages of Free Association***

At the present stage of Micronesia's evolution in its relations with the United States, the status of free association offers the best hope of serving both US and Micronesian interests as effectively and fairly as possible. As presently conceived in the current negotiations, free association would provide adequate assurances for the preservation of essential US defense and security interests; it would allow the Micronesians to achieve full internal self-government and practical autonomy in the field of foreign affairs; it would assure continued US financial support to essential needs; and it would preserve the option of independence for the Micronesians if and when they should so choose. United States defense interests in Micronesia, including the Kwajalein Missile Test Range, would be further protected for at least 15 years even should the free association status be replaced by independence in the interim.

Free association, whatever its duration might be, could also serve another Micronesian need of great importance—additional time and experience to resolve their own deep uncertainty about the status they would ultimately prefer. Most Micronesians today seem to recognize the need to end the trusteeship, yet they are unwilling to fully accept the responsibilities and problems of independence.

No matter how carefully a free association agreement is negotiated and no matter how complete such an agreement may be, the implementation of such a status will require considerable innovation and flexibility on both sides, for it will have legal, political, and financial ramifications with which the United States and Micronesia have had no previous experience. For such a relationship to succeed for any length of time, the United States, even more than the Micronesians, will need to apply some lessons which should be learned from the past.

## **ONE HEAD IS BETTER THAN TWO—OR MORE**

The division of responsibility for Micronesia within the executive branch, and the difficulty of resolving internal bureaucratic differences, have been the United States greatest handicaps in dealing consistently or effectively with Micronesia. If this basic weakness is to be overcome, there will have to be a single focus of overall responsibility within the executive branch and, for the most effect, focus for the needed supervision and leadership should be in the White House itself. Without a clear and direct channel within the White House to the President or Vice President, timely decisions, effective coordination, and adequate monitoring of the new US-Micronesian relations may well be impossible to accomplish.

## **AN OUNCE OF DEVELOPMENT IS WORTH A POUND OF WELFARE**

When social welfare programs become so pervasive that they vitiate motivation for economic development, the result hurts both donor and recipient. In the case of Micronesia, the financial burden on the United States becomes onerous and the wastefulness evident in many programs becomes harder to justify, as a "taxpayer's revolt" spreads in the United States; for the Micronesians, unrealistic expectations rise and confidence in their economic capability and future erodes. Systemic dole is demeaning to any people. By removing the need to work and to be useful in any society, the will is sapped and self-respect undermined. When widespread dole is combined with an educational system ill-suited to the needs of a society, and based on a culture foreign to that society, the result is demeaning as well as demoralizing. It is neither fair to the American taxpayer nor genuinely helpful to the Micronesians for the United States to allow social welfare programs to replace or usurp economic development much longer. The time has come for the United States to heed an old Micronesian motto: "Give a man a fish and he will ask for more, teach a man how to fish and he will feed himself."

If the US-Micronesian relationship is to develop on a healthier basis after trusteeship, the United States will have to find the courage and determination to change its policies in ways that may not be popular with some Micronesians or Americans. For example, the United States would be wise to begin early to take the necessary steps to gradually, but drastically, reduce social welfare programs; to give strong encouragement through subsidy of community cooperatives; to give positive support for Micronesian efforts to exploit their marine resources; to remove restrictions on imports of Micronesian products; and to make serious efforts to shift the educational system toward vocational training.



## **UNITY CANNOT BE IMPOSED**

There may have been a time when the United States could have imposed at least a superficial unity on Micronesia and could have ended the trusteeship on such a basis. But the political evolution of Micronesia has now reached a stage where actual political unity can no longer be imposed from outside—either by the United States itself or by a fiat of the United Nations reflecting the ideological anticolonialism of the majority of its members. Though a considerable minority in the separatist districts of Palau and the Marshalls support at least loose ties with the rest of the territory, the majority holds otherwise, for very real economic and political reasons. Even if the United States could succeed in dictating a completely integrated basis for the future status of Micronesia, such imposed unity could hardly be expected to survive beyond the inception of Micronesian self-government.

As UN oversight expires with the trusteeship, it will be the United States which will have to live with whatever follows in Micronesia. Under these circumstances the only practical course for the United States would seem to be to recognize political realities in Micronesia and to reach some accommodation with the separatist districts, while working as constructively as possible to encourage practical and useful links between all parts of Micronesia. The American motto of *e pluribus unum* remains a worthy goal, but only the Micronesians themselves can make it possible and real.

## **A CHANCE TO DO BETTER?**

That wry humorist and great American iconoclast, Will Rogers, once said: "If there is one thing that we do worse than any other nation, it is try and manage somebody else's affairs." Of course, Rogers passed to his reward well before the United States became responsible for the trust territory, but his observation comes close to the mark when one looks back over the American stewardship of Micronesia, with all its frustrations, disappointments, self-criticisms, and good intentions.

Perhaps the fundamental flaw in the American behavior toward Micronesia has not been so much the US ambivalence of purpose, as it has been its blithe assumptions that American concepts and methods could be transferred wholesale to Micronesia, that American social, political, and economic values could be applicable and beneficial to Micronesia; and that American altruism and generosity could solve any problem there. In some ways it is

possible to imagine a subconscious parallel between the American approach to the trust territory and the approach to Vietnam. For a time in Vietnam Americans adopted the attitude that if the Vietnamese couldn't or wouldn't fight for themselves, the Americans could and would do it for them. A ranking US official in Vietnam once told the writer that winning the war was basically a matter of management and economic power, predicting that "in the end we will overwhelm the VC with money."

Of course the United States is not trying to fight a war in Micronesia, and Micronesia can hardly be compared to Vietnam. But neither is Micronesia a little America. It has its own distinctive culture, its own social values and customs. And despite many problems, under US administration Micronesians have achieved a higher standard of living, gained a broader knowledge of the world, and accumulated greater experience in government. Most important of all, they are now on the verge of full self-government and much greater control over their own affairs.

The advent of free association will offer both Micronesia and the United States an opportunity to evolve into a healthier, more constructive relationship. If lessons learned from past experience are put to good use, the trials and tribulations of trusteeship will not have been in vain. In free association the United States may well find a mutually satisfactory political relationship which can be a dependable basis for the essential US security interest in Micronesia. In free association the United States and Micronesia—no longer as trustee and ward, but as partners—should have a chance to do better. Given courage, wisdom, and patience Americans and Micronesians can make this new beginning a success.

## CHAPTER VII ENDNOTES

1. US, Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on H.J. Res. 549, to Approve the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, and for Other Purposes*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 5 November 1975 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 10.
2. For an analysis of the strategic value of Micronesia, see James H. Webb, Jr., *Micronesia and US Pacific Strategy—A Blueprint for the 1980's* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974).

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **A STATEMENT OF AGREED PRINCIPLES FOR FREE ASSOCIATION**

1. An agreement of free association will be concluded on a government-to-government basis and executed prior to termination of the United Nations trusteeship. During the life of the agreement the political status of the peoples of Micronesia shall remain that of free association as distinguished from independence. The agreement will be subject to the implementing authority of the United States Congress.
2. The agreement of free association will be put to a United Nations observed plebiscite.
3. Constitutional arrangements for the governance of Micronesia shall be in accord with the political status of free association as set forth in these principles.
4. The peoples of Micronesia will enjoy full internal self-government.
5. The United States will have full authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia, including the establishment of necessary military facilities and the exercise of appropriate operating rights. The peoples of Micronesia will refrain from actions which the United States determines after appropriate consultations to be incompatible with its authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia. This authority and responsibility will be assured for 15 years, and thereafter as mutually agreed. Specific land arrangements will remain in effect according to their terms which shall be negotiated prior to the end of the Trusteeship Agreement.
6. The peoples of Micronesia will have authority and responsibility for their foreign affairs including marine resources. They will consult with the United States in the exercise of this authority and will refrain from actions which the United States determines to be incompatible with its authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in or relating to Micronesia. The United States may act on behalf of the peoples of Micronesia in the area of foreign affairs as mutually agreed from time to time.
7. The agreement will permit unilateral termination of the free association political status by the processes through which it was entered and set forth in the agreement and subject to the continuation of the United States defense authority and

responsibility as set forth in Principle 5, but any plebiscite terminating the free association political status will not require United Nations observation.

8. Should the free association political status be mutually terminated the United States' economic assistance shall continue as mutually agreed. Should the United States terminate the free association relationship, its economic assistance to Micronesia shall continue at the levels and for the term initially agreed. If the agreement is otherwise terminated the United States shall no longer be obligated to provide the same amounts of economic assistance for the remainder of the term initially agreed.

An early free association agreement based on the foregoing eight principles shall be pursued by the parties.

Hilo, Hawaii

April 9, 1978

*Signed by members of the Committee on Future Political Status of the Commission on Future Political Status and Transition.*



**APPENDIX B****TRUST TERRITORY APPROPRIATIONS (millions of US dollars)**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Interior Department Appropriations</b>	<b>Other Federal Agency Appropriations</b>	<b>Total</b>
1947	\$ 1.0	\$ 0	\$ 1.0
1948	1.0	0	1.0
1949	1.1	0	1.1
1950	0.8	0	0.8
1951	1.0	0	1.0
1952	4.3	0	4.3
1953	5.2	0	5.2
1954	4.3	0	4.3
1955	5.0	0	5.0
1956	5.0	0	5.0
1957	4.8	0	4.8
1958	6.2	0	6.2
1959	4.9	0	4.9
1960	5.2	0	5.2
1961	5.9	0	5.9
1962	6.1	0	6.1
1963	15.0	2.0	17.0
1964	15.0	3.0	18.0
1965	17.5	4.0	21.5
1966	17.4	4.5	21.9
1967	19.2	6.0	25.2
1968	30.2	6.1	36.3
1969	30.0	6.2	36.2
1970	48.1	6.5	54.6
1971	59.9	7.4	67.3
1972	60.0	8.1	68.1
1973	60.0	9.4	69.4
1974	58.4	11.1	69.5
1975	69.8	11.9	81.7
1976	89.4	11.5	100.9
1977	89.1	25.1	114.2
1978	101.6	31.0	132.6
1979	114.6*	24.1*	138.7*
1980	99.0**	25.5**	124.5**
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,056.0</b>	<b>\$203.4</b>	<b>\$1,259.4</b>

\*Estimated.      \*\*Congressional appropriation request.

SOURCE: US Department of the Interior, Office of Territorial Affairs

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