

Telling it like it is....

by FRANCISCO ULUDONG

For many years and on numerous occasions, the people of Micronesia have met a wall of resistance from the Administering Authority and the Trust Territory Administration when our leaders in the Congress of Micronesia and the District Legislature make an attempt at gaining more self-government over our internal affairs. The refusal by the United States and the Trust Territory Administration to allow us more say in the conduct of our affairs only makes us feel more frustrated and bitter towards the United States. It is my strong belief that it is for our mutual interest to maintain good relations and that such overriding interest can only be sustained if the United States and its servants here in Micronesia will show a more flexible and adapting attitude toward the governance of these islands.

Many a time we are told that this or that cannot be done because it is against certain Presidential or Secretarial orders; or that it is in conflict with some policies of the Administering Authority; or it usurps the power and authority of the High Commissioner; or simply that it is not done in the United States; Hawaii, Guam, or American Samoa. This rigidity to stick to established orders, policies, powers, or practices completely ignores the fact that Micronesia is not American and moreover, such rigidity and inflexibility on the part of the United States and the Trust Territory Administration does not recognize the political change that is occurring in Micronesia. It is time for the Administering Authority and especially its citizens serving in Micronesia to re-assess the American role and place in Micronesia. Micronesia is not a small American town. It is not Hawaii, or Guam, or American Samoa.

In fact, in most instances it may not be the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior, nor the High Commissioner who causes much ill feelings and irritation among the members of the Congress and the people of Micronesia. Rather it is the low-echelon staff of the Trust Territory Administration who speak on their behalf. In doing so they manifest a negative, often times paternalistic, disposition to the desires and wishes of our people as expressed by the Congress and the district legislatures. When they parade in front of the committees of the Congress and the legislatures, saying that we cannot do this or that because of some orders, policies, or practices, I presume that for the most part they are actually speaking for themselves and not necessarily for the High Commissioner, the Secretary, or the President. This is all the more important why the High Commissioner must make sure that his staff do not presume to speak on his behalf when they are not. For example, the Office of the Attorney General, through its representatives, has expressed before various committees of the Congress that

tion by the Congress or the entire Trust Territory Government in economic development. To me, this position represents the personal views of the Attorney General himself, not necessarily the High Commissioner. On the contrary, if this position is actually the position of the High Commissioner, it is time that this policy be modified for the people of Micronesia have expressed through their leaders that the direct involvement by the government in economic development is desirable.

I would like to emphasize again that the maintenance of good, working relations between the United States and the people of Micronesia is to me of not only a mutual but overriding interest to both parties, and as such it dictates that the Administering Authority and its servants in Micronesia adopt a more flexible and positive attitude towards our efforts to achieve more self-government in Micronesia.

In the recently concluded session of the Congress of Micronesia, I observed the government lawyers paired off with the lawyers from the Micronesian Legal Service Corporation. I am not a lawyer but seeing their representatives testified on the same subject, one cannot help but feel pitiful about mediocre show by the Attorney General's staff. The Congress opinion on both a resolution securing the Attorney General and another commending the Legal Robinhoods for providing "important and valuable services to the people of Micronesia who would not otherwise be able to obtain justice." The MLSC may be in for trouble if President Nixon goes through with his dismantling of OEO and the U.S. Congress does not come through with the money to keep the services alive. In that event, I think it behooves the Congress of Micronesia along with the district legislatures to provide the monetary support for the legal services program.
