

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



JUN 12 1970

Distr.
GENERAL
A COLLECTION

T/PV.1368
11 June 1970

ENGLISH

Thirty-seventh Session

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND
SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 11 June 1970, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Sir Laurence McINTYRE (Australia)

- Examination of annual reports of the Administering Authorities on the administration of Trust Territories, for the year ended 30 June 1969: [4] (continued)
 - (b) Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (T/1705; T/L.1153)
- Organization of work

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AGENDA ITEM 4

EXAMINATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITIES ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF TRUST TERRITORIES, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1969:

(b) TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1705; T/L.1153) (continued)

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Edward Johnston, the Special Representative for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Mr. Ambilos Iehsi and Mr. Benjamin Manglona, Advisers to the Special Representative, took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: Today we shall hear the final statements on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Mr. WRIGHT (United States of America): The principal concluding statements of my delegation will be made by the Special Representative and the Special Advisers for Micronesia. However, before the President calls upon them, I should like to make a few brief remarks.

The Council is now concluding a careful and thorough examination of my Government's administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Our work has been immeasurably assisted by the excellent report (T/1707) of the 1970 United Nations Visiting Mission to Micronesia. We look upon the report, particularly its suggestions and recommendations, as a valuable aid to us. We are grateful to those members of the Council and of the Secretariat who gave so generously of their time and energies to prepare the report.

During our debates here all of us in the United States delegation have done our best to be frank and forthright with the representatives on the Council. We appreciate the friendly candour which marked the questions and the statements of our colleagues on the Council. We have appreciated, Mr. President, the able and objective leadership which you have given us during our deliberations.

(Mr. Wright, United States)

The Trusteeship Council has demonstrated once more how an organ of the United Nations can contribute meaningfully to the achievement of certain very worthwhile objectives which the founders of the United Nations embodied in its Charter.

While I have the floor I should like to address myself to a statement by the representative of the Soviet Union. In his general debate statement he drew attention to a petition containing a resolution of the House of Representatives of the Congress of Micronesia. This petition clearly demonstrated the fact that the Congress of Micronesia and the elected representatives of the people of Micronesia are free to say what they wish about any aspects of the United States administration of the Territory. But the petition in question was unfounded in fact. While we can hardly agree with the interpretation placed upon the Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement by the representative of the Soviet Union, I can categorically state that no tests of biological materials or agents have taken place in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands since United States occupation of the islands during the Second World War. Furthermore, as a matter of policy, the United States has no intention of testing any such material or agents at Eniwetok or for that matter anywhere else in the Trust Territory.

I should also like to comment on the allegation of the representative of the Soviet Union that my country is failing to carry out its obligation to develop the people of the Territory toward self-determination. This is clearly not the case. Quite the contrary, we believe that due at least in part to our efforts there is a growing political awareness and maturity in the Territory. These necessary ingredients to any meaningful act of self-determination are, as our delegation stated before the Council last year, clearly shown by the increased number of thoughtful -- even if not always accurate -- petitions and communications submitted to the Council from the Territory.

(Mr. Wright, United States)

My delegation also finds it interesting that, while professing to advocate self-determination for the people of Micronesia, the representative of the Soviet Union feels compelled to dictate the choice which the people must make and the timing in which they should make it. My delegation does not believe that this is the proper role of the Council or for that matter of the United States. Rather, and as we have reported to the Council previously, the United States has been working with the elected representatives of the Micronesian people to learn their desires regarding their future political status and to try to work out a mutually suitable arrangement consistent with those wishes and our Trusteeship obligations.

In conclusion, I should like to say that in my opening remarks before this Council I referred to myself as one of the new members of the Council. I would note in this connexion that both you, Mr. President, and I have completed our apprenticeship. I look forward to returning to this Council with you and with our other colleagues next year as veterans.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States for his good wishes.

Mr. IEHSI (Special Adviser): It has been a great privilege for me to participate in the deliberations of this Council. The observations and comments made by the different members of the Council have been most constructive. They evidence to me a common interest and an abiding concern by this Council of ensuring that the governance of Micronesia follows closely the statement of fundamental obligations devolving upon the United States as an Administering Authority as set forth in the Trusteeship Agreement for the Pacific Trust Territory and in the Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories

It was of great interest to me to hear comments and observations of the various members of this Council about the present system of government in Micronesia. The views expressed regarding the future political advancement of the people of Micronesia reflected in my opinion the deep understanding of the difficulties being faced in Micronesia.

(Mr. Iehsi, Special Adviser)

I am encouraged to learn that this Council considers the approach taken by our Future Political Status Commission to seek an early resolution of the political status question to be in the right direction. The opinion expressed by the 1970 Visiting Mission to Micronesia that there should be more technical assistance to the Congress of Micronesia in the job of political education is well taken, and I concur with the view of the Visiting Mission and that of the representatives of the United Kingdom and China that the future status question should be determined "sooner rather than later".

(Mr. Iehsi)

With regard to the observations and recommendations made touching upon the need of involving more Micronesians in the decision-making processes of the Executive branch of our Government and of closer consultations between the Administering Authority and our Congress, particularly on the budget and fiscal matters, it might be of interest to this Council to note that specific steps in this direction have been most encouraging. As I stated in my opening remarks, the recommendations of our Committee on Government Organization are now at various stages of implementation by the Administration. Full implementation of this Committee's recommendations, when accomplished, would, in my opinion, bring about a system of Government in which the Micronesians themselves would be placed in a better position to make most major policy decisions. I have reason to believe that greater progress in this regard will be forthcoming in the immediate months ahead.

It is correct to say, in all fairness, that the Congress of Micronesia is increasingly being given the responsibility to determine the full dimension and total scope of budgetary and fiscal matters for the Trust Territory. Further expansion of this financial responsibility for the Congress of Micronesia is quite desirable. I appreciate the observation of this Council that ways should be found to increase substantially the locally generated revenues for the Micronesian Government. I am grateful for the suggestions made by the representative of the United Kingdom that systems of taxation presently used by certain Territories in the Western Pacific be consulted for possible models.

I share his view that both in political terms and in terms of sound fiscal development, it would be desirable to increase substantially the locally generated government revenues, thereby encouraging self-reliance and allowing for an eventual decline in the need for grant funds in administering Micronesia.

As has become quite evident from the deliberations of this Council, there remain many problems to be resolved in Micronesia if the needs and requirements of the Micronesian people are to be met. It is to be admitted readily that there are and will continue to be obstacles in the way of achieving the objectives that have been set forth for Micronesia. In this connexion, the deliberations of the Council and the report of the 1970 Visiting Mission to Micronesia have indicated the programme areas requiring more attention and how best to seek solutions to some of the more difficult problems.

(Mr. Iehsi)

In my opinion it is important, however, that the administrative structure of the Government be truly responsive to the demands and needs of the people. There is merit in the proposition that Micronesians themselves see their problems with greater degree of intensity, in their total configuration; and to allow sufficient leeway for them to try to resolve their own difficulties would in the end give them lasting satisfaction. It is in this spirit that Micronesians seek to have removed legal and policy restrictions placed upon their Government and practical constraints which adversely affect both the pace and direction of their development effort.

Finally, Mr. President, I should like to thank you and the members of this distinguished Council for the many courtesies extended to us. I appreciate your allowing us to participate in the deliberations of this august body and for making our visit to New York a memorable one.

Mr. MANGLONA (Special Adviser): It has been a real privilege for me to attend and to participate in the deliberations of this Council. The examination by the Council of the manner in which the United States as an Administering Authority has carried out its obligations to administer the islands of Micronesia has been most comprehensive and thorough, and, if I may say so, most encouraging from my standpoint.

The observations and recommendations made by the different members of the Council respecting the conditions to be found in the Micronesian islands reflect this Council's full understanding and appreciation of the complexity of problems, needs, and requirements of our people. This was further borne out by the debates of the past two days.

The report of the 1970 United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory contains sweeping recommendations in specific programme areas of the Trust Territory Government which will bring about more improvement and greater progress if implemented.

The shortcomings in the general economic development area observed by the Visiting Mission would seem to demonstrate to me at least the urgent need at this time of having a carefully drawn-out plan of development for Micronesia. The limited availability of basic economic resources and infrastructure in

Micronesia makes it almost mandatory that the scarce resources be applied to meet the demands for goods and services in terms of priority and that the direction of development be towards developing a self-generating and self-sustaining level of economic growth.

Of special interest to me were the misgivings expressed by the Visiting Mission regarding the desirability of promoting the development of the tourist industry in Micronesia. The adverse consequences resulting from a greatly expanded tourist industry in Micronesia would seem to be far outweighed by the benefits to be derived in the creation of new jobs, income, and training opportunities. It would seem most desirable that Micronesia should make every effort to create favourable conditions for a viable tourist industry and to this end seek to build and foster the necessary infrastructure to support it. At the same time, Micronesia should take measures to prevent a major part of the profits from leaving the Trust Territory, to ensure that Micronesian traditions are appropriately preserved and to see to it that quick profits from tourism do not unnecessarily detract attention from the other sectors of the economy.

A suggestion was made both by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Australia that consideration be given at the earliest possible time to generate more local revenues within the private Micronesian sector of the economy. I can assure the Council that our Congress will give serious consideration to this matter during its regular session next month, and the Council will be advised accordingly about the disposition of the income tax legislation present pending in our Congress.

During the debate of the Council I was glad to note that there is a general consensus among the members of the Council that the system of education in Micronesia should relate to the practical educational needs of the people and that education in Micronesia should be improved qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

In the area of public health and services, our Congress agrees with the Visiting Mission that the people of the outlying islands be encouraged to construct and furnish their dispensaries by means of self-help and grants-in-aid.

(Mr. Manglona)

Finally, our Congress will take note of the two subject-matters that have been of special interest to this Council, namely, the matters of firearms control and of the pay-equalization plan of our government. This Council will be glad to know that there is presently pending before our Congress a legislative proposal to regulate the use and sale of firearms in the Trust Territory, and I am advised that that particular legislation stands a very good chance of enactment by our Congress during the upcoming regular session next month.

With respect to the pay-equalization plan, our High Commissioner has indicated to this Council that the new pay plan will be submitted to the Congress of Micronesia this July for consideration and concurrence after the present study of the whole pay system has been completed. I am quite confident that our Congress will take a close look at the new pay scale and classification plan to ensure that any wage increases resulting from such plan shall in some measure bear relationship to the productivity of the employees and to the earning capacity of the Micronesian economy.

In closing, Mr. President, may I express my sincere appreciation for the real honour you have accorded me in allowing me to speak before this Council. I am most grateful for the many courtesies the distinguished members of the Council have extended to us during the past two weeks. I thank you very much.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Special Representative): First of all, on behalf of our Special Advisers, Senator Iehsi and Representative Manglona, and the others who have accompanied me from Micronesia, may I most sincerely thank the members of this distinguished Council for the warm reception which we have been accorded at this year's meeting.

We have listened attentively to your suggestions and have been overwhelmed by your hospitality during this visit to the United Nations.

We are also deeply appreciative of the excellent report submitted by the 1970 Visiting Mission, and wish to assure the members of the Mission and of the Trusteeship Council that we will submit our reactions to various recommendations contained in the report prior to the next session of the Council. We also wish to thank the representatives of UNESCO and WHO for their remarks and suggestions and to assure them that we look forward to continued co-operation between Micronesia and their organizations.

(Mr. Johnston, Special Representative)

In making our closing statement to the Council, we would like to touch briefly on those suggestions which seemed to evoke the greatest amount of discussion and perhaps to answer some questions which to this point may have remained unanswered.

Throughout the discussions of the past few days, the various members of the Council have frequently pointed to the necessity for the development of more locally-generated revenue to support the government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Although our Special Advisers have already commented on this point, I would further pledge that the Administration will do everything in its power to assist in developing a viable tax programme and to build the economy of Micronesia to the point where it can produce far more than at present in the way of local revenue.

Another frequent topic for comment has been the necessity for a much greater development of the agricultural potential of our area. We certainly agree with the comments of the various members of the Council and assure you again that we are moving as rapidly as possible to reverse the trend of past years so that agriculture will no longer, as was pointed out during the discussions, "be treated like a poor relative". No longer will the expenditures for agricultural development remain constant while all others are increased.

In our discussions during the past few days, reference was made on several occasions to the "most-favoured-nation clause" of the Trusteeship Agreement and it was indicated by some that the Administering Authorities' interpretation of that clause may have hampered Micronesian development. I can assure you that this subject will be given much serious study in the near future by the Administering Authority, particularly in connexion with the Foreign Investors Business Permit Act recently adopted by the Congress of Micronesia.

As has been true of past discussions, the subject of land in Micronesia has again occupied a major position among the many subjects discussed by the members of the Council. With reference to paragraphs 150 and 151 of the report of the 1970 Visiting Mission, may I at this point clarify the record to indicate that at last year's meeting the date of 30 June 1970 was given as an optimistic goal. Obviously, it was considerably optimistic, but our Administration on the basis of one year's experience, and having already started to issue certificates

(Mr. Johnston, Special Representative)

of title, still feels that the project can be completed within a five-year period rather, than accepting the pessimistic prediction of fifteen years. We wish the record to be absolutely clear that our programme is one of land registration and not of land reform, and that it will accommodate the various forms of land tenure in the six districts of the Trust Territory. The Administering Authority is not specifically opposed to land reform as such, but any progress in this field must come from the Micronesians themselves. It will not be imposed upon them or even suggested by the Administering Authority.

Before leaving the subject of land in Micronesia, we would again point out that the Administering Authority holds no land title on its own behalf in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Those lands which are designated "public lands" are held by the Administering Authority in trust for the people of Micronesia, and we thank the representative of France for his suggestion that we must obviously work harder to assure that the citizens of Micronesia truly understand this important point.

In the report of the 1970 Visiting Mission and during the general debate, reference was made several times to the possibility of elected legislators serving in the Cabinet of the High Commissioner. Although we have responded to questions and comments on this subject during the past few days, we would like the record further to indicate that although members of the executive branch could formerly serve in the Congress of Micronesia, the Congress itself decided against this practice as being a conflict of interests and therefore, since the 1968 elections, an individual must make a choice between serving in the administration or serving in the legislative branch.

Let me quickly indicate, however, that this by no means indicates a lack of co-operation and co-ordination between the two branches of government. During each regular or special session of the Congress, the High Commissioner and top members of his staff hold regular breakfast and luncheon conferences with the leadership of the Congress, often adding Cabinet members and chairmen of key committees of the Congress to the discussions. During the interim periods between sessions, we maintain an almost constant contact with the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the chairmen of such continuing committees as the Joint Committee on Program and Budget, and the Committee on Government Organization.

(Mr. Johnston, Special Representative)

In the field of education, it was alleged during the general debate by the representative of the Soviet Union that the fact that our total number of school teachers dropped by thirty-seven from 1968 to 1969 indicated in some way a decline in the quality of education in Micronesia. In this connexion we would point out that, during that same period of time, the number of fully certified teachers was increased from 711 to 1,174, a very decided improvement in the quality of teaching. The average grade level of education of the teachers themselves also went up by one year during the period from 1968 to 1969. The education of our teachers will continue to be upgraded through the facilities of the new Community College of Micronesia.

It was also alleged by the representative of the Soviet Union that the record of our administration in regard to increased involvement of Micronesians in the decision-making processes of government was one of "broken and unfulfilled promises".

Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact that five of our six district administrators are of Micronesian ancestry and that they possess far greater authority for decision-making than ever before certainly tends to refute this allegation. We might also point out that the 1970 Visiting Mission commended the Administering Authority for the much greater extent to which we have involved the district legislators and the Congress of Micronesia in the budgeting and planning processes during the past year. We again assure the members of this Council that our administration will continue to be one of fulfilled promises.

Before leaving this subject we might again respectfully call the attention of all members of the Council to document T/COM.10/L.50, which contains the text of a resolution recently adopted by the Palau legislature commending our administration for accomplishing what we set out to do one year ago.

Before concluding our brief remarks today we might comment just briefly on some of the remarks of the two petitioners who appeared before the Trusteeship Council.

(Mr. Johnston, Special Representative)

In his appearance before the Council Mr. Villanueva alleged:

"Even now there is evidence that the United States military is requiring the relocation of a radio station and school building on Saipan and has sought the development of a hotel in the same area."

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We should like the record to indicate that this allegation is absolutely false and is the type of carelessly inaccurate rumour which should not be allowed to stand unrefuted on the records of this body.

Petitioner Freeman, in his remarks to the Council, alleged that the Administering Authority did nothing to train Micronesians for self-government until recently. The record certainly does not indicate that such is the case. We would call the attention of members of the Trusteeship Council to the fact that the first district legislature in Micronesia was established as long ago as 1949 and that steady progress in training for self-government has been maintained since that date. We would also point out that the Administering Authority chartered some fifty-seven municipalities throughout the six administrative districts in the early 1950s and, as the representative of the United Kingdom pointed out during the general debate, our advances in this area have even been ahead of those of some developing independent countries.

Petitioner Freeman also alleged that documents pertaining to land leases were in English only and were never translated into any of the various local languages. Particularly in the Marshalls, where many such leases exist, they are signed by all parties concerned both in English and in the local language, and I have personally witnessed the signing of such documents on several occasions.

In closing, may I again thank my two distinguished and capable Special Advisers and the members of my staff for their assistance during this session of Trusteeship Council. I thank also the members of the Council for their consideration of and attention to the problems of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the staff of the Secretariat for its assistance during this year's visit. We shall look forward to meeting with you again next year.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation has taken note of the statement of the representative of the United States to the effect that in the Trust Territory of Micronesia no tests of biological weapons have taken place and that the United States does not intend to carry out such tests on the territory of Micronesia.

We would resolutely object to the statement of the representative of the United States concerning the Soviet delegation's alleged intention to dictate to the people of Micronesia with regard to the solution by them of the question of their future development. The Soviet delegation repeats once more -- as indeed we did earlier in our main statement on this matter -- that the Soviet Union supports the lawful demands of the people of Micronesia, who are trying to take into their own hands the solution of the question of the fate of their country. We believe that measures ought to be taken rapidly to satisfy those demands in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement.

I should like to conclude these brief comments by quoting from the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of which resolution is to be observed this year. Paragraph 5 of the Declaration reads:

"Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom." (Resolution 1514 (XV))

That is precisely what the Soviet delegation desires for the people of Micronesia.

The PRESIDENT: As the Council is aware, we now have to appoint a drafting committee whose task it will be to propose, on the basis of the discussions that have taken place in the Council, conclusions and recommendations on conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and to make recommendations concerning the chapter on conditions in that Territory for inclusion in the next report of the Trusteeship Council to the Security Council.

(The President)

I should like to nominate the representatives of China and Australia as members of the Drafting Committee on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to that.

It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning the meeting I should like to say a few words about our future programme. I would suggest that we allow the Drafting Committees to complete their work over the next few days and that we hold our next plenary meeting on Tuesday, 16 June, at 3 p.m. At that meeting we could take up the report of the Drafting Committee on New Guinea as well as the items relating to co-operation with the Special Committee of Twenty-Four, attainment of self-government or independence by the Trust Territories, co-operation with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is so decided.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.