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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND TENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 13 June 1967, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Miss BROOKS (Liberia)

1. Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: annual report of the Administering Authority (continued)
2. Examination of petitions concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)
3. Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands 1967 (continued)

EXAMINATION OF CONDITIONS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS:  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY (T/1661; T/L.1121) (continued)

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS  
(T/COM.10/L.4, L.5, L.6; T/PET.10/38) (continued)

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE  
PACIFIC ISLANDS 1967 (T/1658 and Add.1) (continued)

At the invitation of the President, Mr. William Norwood, Special Representative for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under United States Administration, and Mr. Lazarus Salii and Mr. Amata Kabua, Advisers to the Special Representative, took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of New Zealand, who had reserved his right to ask more questions, would like to ask some questions of Mr. Salii, member of the Congress of Micronesia. Before continuing with the general debate, if there are no objections, I intend to accede to this request. If other members would like to ask questions, they may do so. I hear no objections.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): I thank the Council for giving me permission to ask these further questions. I do so because I think it is unfortunate that through a combination of circumstances we were not able to hear the Congressman's views on the vital issue in the Territory. I think it will be useful to direct a few questions to them.

May I start by welcoming the two Congressmen to the table and by telling them how glad we are to have them with us.

My first question is about this commission on the future status which has been set up or at least called for by a resolution of the last regular session of the Micronesian Congress. I wonder if either Senator Kabua or Congressman Salii could tell us how the Congress had envisaged the composition of this commission. For example, who would be on the commission?

Mr. SALII (Adviser to the Special Representative): Before I try to answer the question of the representative of New Zealand, I should like to thank him for his gracious words of welcome to me and to my colleague Senator Kabua.

House Joint Resolution No. 37, referred to in this question, was, as I recall, introduced in the House of Representatives of the Congress of Micronesia and passed by the unanimous vote of the membership of that body. The basic objective of the resolution is to get to the heart of the primary issue in Micronesia today, the issue which, in the opinion of the Congress, should receive the utmost consideration not only of the Administering Authority, but of the Trusteeship Council, as well as of the Micronesian people themselves.

While we recognize that we have the right to determine our own future, we also recognize that that determination will depend on many factors and on a number of other bodies, in addition to the Micronesian people themselves. I mean that the Administering Authority will have to get into the act and the Trusteeship Council will have to get into the act before a final determination is made.

In Micronesia, we all recognize that there will be a number of alternatives available to us when the day of decision comes. Some of these have been rehashed in the Congress of Micronesia with the members of the Visiting Mission. The objective of this resolution was to establish a commission composed of representatives of the three main bodies -- representatives of the Administering Authority, of the Trusteeship Council and possible other organs of the United Nations, and of the Micronesian people -- which would have to make the decision, to discuss and to explore the several alternatives and to get experts, if necessary, from universities in the United States and elsewhere in the world in order to get as much assistance as possible to give the Micronesian people the best alternatives from which they can choose their future.

We realize that the decision is really not that of the Micronesians alone. If they choose to be affiliated with a country, the exact relationship between Micronesia and that country would have to be worked out in detail and that relationship would have to be acceptable to the country with which Micronesia would be affiliated.

(Mr. Salii, Adviser to the  
Special Representative)

With those things in mind, the Congress passed this particular resolution in order to get at the problem which should be uppermost in the mind of everyone concerned with the future political status of Micronesia.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): It is very heartening indeed to hear Representative Salii say that this question of the future is the primary issue in Micronesia today. Those are good words for this Council to hear. It is also heartening to hear him say that they appreciate that there are a number of alternatives before them and that all these alternatives deserve full and authoritative examination.

I notice on page 123 of the Visiting Mission's report that the Mission spoke to a number of people in Micronesia about this question of the future, self-determination and so on, and the Mission concluded that the common reaction to any question about how the people felt about the future was, "Why is the United Nations rushing us? What is the hurry?" (T/1658, para. 317) This seems to me to be a highly unusual sort of an attitude in a Trust or colonial Territory. I wonder if either of the Congressmen from his point of view could confirm that this in fact is an accurate reflection of the people's views at the moment.

Mr. KABUA (Adviser to the Special Representative): First I should like to extend my gratitude for the warm welcoming words from the representative of the New Zealand delegation.

The attitude which is reflected in the Visiting Mission's report conveys the idea that the people of Micronesia are not rushing toward the attainment of their future political status. I think many of our people have that feeling, and I conclude from my own contacts with many of them that the main reason behind that feeling is that they really do not know where to go. In many instances, when we visited their villages and posed such a question, they turned back to us who are representing them in the Congress of Micronesia and told us that we had been elected to decide that particular problem for them. That, in my opinion, was because the people of Micronesia in general are not fully aware of what kind of political status they should seek at the moment. As reflected here, a lot of people are worrying about the economy. They must have some kind of basis before they can have a good government, and they are not certain how that government would be financed. Therefore, the intention of our Congress was to explore this very question among the people in the villages, to tell them what kind of future political status might be obtainable. In that way we hoped to prevent opinions of a biased nature, where one Micronesian might like to be affiliated with the United States of America and another might want to seek independence. To prevent that situation, we want to take our time and seek other expert assistance from universities, perhaps from the Administering Authority and the United Nations. But I think the core of the matter is that our people are not really aware of what kind of political status they should seek at this time.

Congressman Lazarus Salii might elaborate on this matter and perhaps tell you about any other points I may have failed to mention. The House of Representatives of Micronesia was the sponsor of this very resolution.

Mr. SALII (Adviser to the Special Representative): The question posed by the representative of New Zealand is the validity of the assessment of the Visiting Mission concerning the feeling of some of the people in Micronesia that the United Nations is rushing us to make a decision regarding our future. I want to say that as far as the Visiting Mission's report goes, I think it is a fair assessment of the opinion of a substantial segment of the population in Micronesia.



(Mr. Sali, Adviser to the Special Representative)

They have the feeling that they are being rushed to make a decision, and that if we have the right to make a determination, we should also have the right to determine the time at which we will make the decision; that before they are prepared or have had the opportunity to explore all possible alternatives, they should not be rushed into a decision. I think there are enough Micronesians who feel this way to say that as far as the report goes it is an accurate assessment in that respect of the feeling of a substantial segment of the people in Micronesia.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): I should like to thank the two congressmen for those very comprehensive answers. My delegation for its part is not rushing the people of Micronesia to make a decision, but we are concerned to see that it is not delayed unnecessarily or unduly. The uncertainty among the people about the alternatives available and their apparent lack of awareness of those alternatives do concern the validity of the recommendation made by the Visiting Mission that programmes of political education should be entered into, and also, of course, they confirm the need for the Congress itself to set up the commission, which it has proceeded to do. I would hope that, in the interests of increasing awareness among the people of the alternatives, consideration will be given to broadcasting the proceedings of the commission when it finally meets, making the broadcasts receivable in all parts of the Territory, and giving the widest possible printed publicity to the proceedings of the commission.

I should now like to turn to another question which has been a preoccupation of my delegation for a number of years. I make no apology for going back to it. It is the question of the role of the Congress in budget formulation. Our interest derives from the fact that in the dry figures of the budget one finds the shape in fact of the future Micronesian society, and we have wondered in the past whether this is fully appreciated in the Congress of Micronesia. Representative Sali said that the full Congress did not have adequate time last year to consider the budget, and he explained that the consideration of the question had to be co-ordinated with the requirements of the time-table of the United States Congress.

When I asked a question in this connexion of the Special Representative the other day, he pointed out that in fact the Congressmen are very heavily engaged in other questions. But my delegation feels that that is one of the primary functions of the Congress of Micronesia, and we should like to return to it.

Congressman Salii said that "somehow or other" further time should be obtained to give further consideration to the budget. I was somewhat surprised to hear that, because, as I said the other day when he was indisposed, the executive order which set up the Congress, as I understand it, provides for special sessions to be called under certain circumstances, and what is more, the last regular session of the Congress of Micronesia made an appropriation for holding special sessions. Therefore, it seems to me that the situation calls for a special session to consider the budget early in the year, that is, in February, March, April. My question is this: Has the floor leader of the House, who is with us, given any consideration to the question of calling for a special session early in 1968 to consider the 1968 budget in good time?

Mr. SALII (Adviser to the Special Representative): As far as the 1968 budget proposal is concerned, if I am not mistaken, that was the budget which we considered during the last session of the Congress; it was at the 1966 session that we considered the 1968 budget. In other words, the budget cycle and the timing of the session of the Congress of Micronesia are such that we have to consider the budget two years in advance. This has presented some difficulty to the Congress as far as each review of the budget is concerned.

As I pointed out the other day, during the past two sessions the Congress had to go into several days of special session in order to review the budget more meaningfully. I would call the attention of the members of this Council to the remark I made in that connexion, that the Congress had requested more time.

One resolution was passed during the last session requesting that Secretarial Order 2882 be amended to provide for two sessions of the Congress, one a regular session considering general legislation matters, in September; and the other a budget session, in March, which would be devoted primarily to the budget and to other matters, with the approval of the High Commissioner or at the request of the majority of both Houses of the Congress.

It was the thought of the Congress in passing that resolution that if the Congress was to assist the Executive Branch in assessing the needs of the Micronesian people, assigning priorities to our problems and appropriating the funds accordingly, the Congress should have more time to deal with the budget.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): I was interested to hear that reply and to hear that in fact there are proposals that budget sessions should be held earlier in the year. We are interested in seeing what happens early next year.

I made a comment the other day which I might repeat for the Congressmen, and that is that the men in the United States Congress are reputedly very hard-headed men, that until in fact the Congress in Micronesia asserts itself in this field of financial and budgetary control and until in fact it exercises the full powers which are available to it in the budgetary field, it seems to me that it would be difficult for the Congress of Micronesia to expect the United States Congress to devolve further financial powers upon them. I shall leave that thought with them.



(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

I should now like to turn to a new issue which has come before us, and that is the Nathan report on economic development. By and large, it seems to us to be a fairly sound document. I wonder if the Congressmen would be good enough to tell us whether they have yet examined this in detail themselves, what their opinions are on it and whether they have plans to debate it at the forthcoming session of the Micronesian Congress.

Mr. SALII (Adviser to the Special Representative): In February of this year the interim committees of the Senate and the House of the Congress of Micronesia, after having travelled throughout the six districts of the Territory, met in Saipan. It was fortunate that, while they were meeting in Saipan, the Nathan report was released and the Administration made the report available to the interim committees, which did take some time to review that report. The committees made recommendations for the consideration of the forthcoming session of the Congress. They recommended that the Congress devote as much time as was available to it to a serious evaluation of the Nathan report. There was not enough time during the review by the interim committees to study the report thoroughly. No consensus was arrived at at that time, except that they stated that the report deserved the most serious consideration that both the Congress and the Administration could give to it. The committees recognized that there were some very worth-while recommendations in the report, such as the need to seek more outside capital to help in the development of the islands of Micronesia. On the other hand, there were a number of recommendations which were not explained to the satisfaction of the members of the committees and there was a reluctance at the time to accept those recommendations at their face value without further study and evaluation.

(Mr. Salii)

One such recommendation called for bringing in Micronesians from the outlying islands and concentrating them in a few selected central areas. This may have very valuable economic implications, but most of the members of the Committee were reluctant to accept such a recommendation. One comment made at the time was that we should go out to the people and take them the necessary services, if that is possible, rather than bringing in the people, uprooting them from their traditional homes and replanting them in a new environment, because we could not extend the necessary services to them. This may not be an economic argument, but it was the feeling of a number of the members of the Interim Committee at the time.

Another recommendation in the Nathan report called for the importation of large numbers of labourers from other countries into Micronesia. This recommendation, I believe, was based on the fact that Micronesia at the moment does not have the required numbers of skilled labourers to sustain a massive economic development programme. While this statement may be true, some of us in the Committee felt that the importation of large numbers of foreign labourers may in the short run have some value to Micronesia's development, but in the long run it may have some negative and dangerous repercussions and implications. So, to answer the question of the New Zealand representative shortly, the Congress of Micronesia at its forthcoming session next month definitely will take a very serious look at the Nathan report and will consult very closely with the Administration before a decision is made as to what part of the report should be adopted and what part should not be adopted.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): By his very full statements on the question of outside capital and the importation of labour and so on, Mr. Salii has pre-empted some questions which I was going to ask, so I will just conclude by saying how reassured and encouraged my delegation is by the evidence which we have had in the statements made today of the earnestness and seriousness with which the congressmen in the Congress of Micronesia are grappling with the very real problems which they face.

The PRESIDENT: Since there are no more questions, the questioning period is concluded. We shall now proceed with the general debate.

Mr. GASCHIGNARD (France)(interpretation from French): When the Administering Power submitted for the consideration of the Council detailed information regarding recent developments in the Trust Territory, it displayed a laudable desire for frankness since in both its declaration of 8 June and in the replies given to the questions subsequently asked, the High Commissioner of the Territory, Mr. Norwood, did not seek to disguise the fact that in certain areas the development of Micronesia showed gaps and certain marked delays. Nevertheless, it appeared to the French delegation that if we draw up a balance sheet in this way the net balance is definitely on the credit side.

We note with satisfaction that the Administering Power, far from relaxing its efforts, has considerably increased the amount of financial assistance which it is devoting to equipping and developing the Territory. We are very pleased with the decision taken by the Congress of the United States, which means that the budget appropriations for the Trust Territory will be increased from \$17.5 million in 1966 to \$25 million for 1967 and \$35 million in 1968 and 1969. Therefore, what we have to determine now is in what way and in what order of priorities will the increases that have been effected be used. My delegation was interested to note that the Nathan Committee has recently published the economic plan which it was instructed to prepare. We believe that it would be desirable for the Micronesian population to be closely associated with its implementation.

The plan, for example, could be made known to the municipal councils and the district assemblies and, of course, to the Congress of Micronesia, so that these bodies could discuss this plan and, if necessary, produce certain criticisms and suggestions for the benefit of the Administering Power. Furthermore, it appears to us that the elected representatives of the population should be continuously informed of the measures which are undertaken to implement the plan and the results which have been obtained. This would strengthen the co-operation which already exists between the Administration and the population through the intermediary of the elected bodies.

In the same field, the French delegation is pleased to note in particular that in accordance with the grievances which were voiced by the population during the visit of the last Visiting Mission of the Council, the Administration has since striven progressively to remedy the inadequacy of sea and air transport between the islands.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

In the same way, the French delegation is very pleased that the Administration is now seeking ways and means of diversifying as much as possible the economy of the Territory by encouraging the planting of new crops and by developing tourism and fisheries. Fishing and the creation of fish canneries, in particular, should be encouraged, whether in the form of private enterprises or of co-operatives. In view of the very small amount of private investment originating from outside the country, the co-operatives, which the Administration is quite rightly supporting, could play an important part in the economy of the islands. It would be desirable for them to be able to benefit from the financial assistance which they need.

Regarding the specific question of credits, my delegation notes, together with the Visiting Mission, that the Loan Fund which exists at the present time, while it is giving precious services by helping small businesses, could be improved, and plans should be made for the creation of a real development bank which, through its loan policy, could orientate, encourage and stimulate the economy of the Territory in accordance with the directives laid down by the plan.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

It is obvious that the administering Power fully understands that the rate of economic development depends to a great extent upon the progress which has been made in other areas. Our delegation is thinking particularly here of educational and vocational training. If the progress which has been made in respect of primary and secondary education particularly appears to be slow, it is encouraging to note that approximately 300 indigenous students are pursuing higher studies abroad and that at least half of them are enjoying fellowships. The efforts which have been made in this field should, nevertheless, be pursued relentlessly in order to fill certain gaps and to ensure the prompt dispatch of Micronesian doctors into the Territory.

With regard to technical and professional education, my delegation has carefully noted the statements which have been made by Mr. Norwood that the administering Power plans to create a higher polytechnic school and intends to restrain, in so far as possible, the importation of qualified personnel from abroad until the training of the local labour force has been assured.

Regarding public health, we are pleased to note that the United States has taken into account the observations which appeared in the last report of the World Health Organization. We have no doubt that it will succeed in overcoming the difficulties which presently have to be faced. It is not only a question of creating new hospitals and dispensaries, but a question of offsetting the shortage of medical personnel. In the field of public health, as in the area of education, the Peace Corps volunteers are undoubtedly capable of giving precious assistance. In view of the responsibility which has been assumed by these young people and the impact that their mere presence will undoubtedly have, particularly in the more isolated regions, we cannot overstress the importance of not only their technical training, but their sociological studies.

We believe that it is important that the Peace Corps volunteers should be made aware of their responsibilities and that they should familiarize themselves, as far as possible, with the media with which they will be involved for the time being.



Economic and social development in the Territory is proceeding at a pace and under circumstances which appear to be satisfactory. In so far as the relations between the indigenous population and the administering Power, they appear to be cordial and confident. However, it should be noted in this connexion that, as the Visiting Mission pointed out, for almost twenty years since the war the damages which were caused by the Japanese troops have not as yet been settled. This situation has given rise to a feeling of unfairness -- a feeling which is very widely felt. This delegation has carefully noted the assurances which were made by the representative of the United States regarding negotiations that are now under way in Tokyo. We hope that these negotiations will be successful and that the administering Power will do everything of which it is capable in order to settle this thorny question.

In the political field, the French delegation has noted with satisfaction the desire of the administering Power to support the progress which has been made in the preparation of the Micronesians for participation more closely in the management of their own affairs. Something still has to be done in this field, and we are particularly thinking about the powers of the Congress of Micronesia and the exercise of executive power.

There is room for satisfaction once again with the steadily growing volume of American financial aid. We wish to indicate, however, that we regret that the elected representatives of the people of Micronesia do not participate in decisions dealing with the utilization and distribution of that aid. At the present time the Congress is able to take decisions only with respect to local resources, the extent of which has remained minimal.

In order to increase these resources, as suggested in the report of the Visiting Mission, it might be possible to set up a form of income tax. This would have the further advantage of giving the Micronesians the feeling that they are participating genuinely in public life. As a matter of fact, a part of these resources could be paid to the municipalities and district assemblies. This would make their usefulness more tangible in the eyes of the population. In reading the report of the Visiting Mission, one could judge that tax reform would be useful because it would not only recover taxes, but would tax more uniformly, according to their capacity, foreign residents.

In the case of the Micronesian Congress, it seems to us, generally speaking, that a change should be made in order to increase its powers, and an attempt should be made to reduce the powers of the Administration, which is retaining an important role in the legislative field. And in this respect I am speaking of the veto power and also the fact that the High Commissioner, who is not elected, has the power to legislate in cases of emergency.

The functioning of the Congress likewise could be improved. Its sessions at present are short. They should be lengthened, and one of them should be particularly devoted to the consideration of budget estimates, which Mr. Salii has just suggested.

On the other hand, it appears that Micronesians do not take part in the executive branch of Government and that this is left entirely in the hands of the Administration, as proposed in the report of the Visiting Mission. It would seem to us that whatever the difficulties are that might beset a small developing country, the recruitment of legislative and executive personnel on a fairly large scale should be made at present so as to establish a ministerial cabinet composed only of Micronesians. And in this regard, we have noted with satisfaction that the Administration has decided to introduce the participation by Micronesian officers into the cabinet councils in order to give them experience in public affairs and at the same time make it possible for them to participate in the exercise of executive power.

Thus, the Congress of the Territory, under trusteeship, should be able to vote on the budget as a whole and to control the various sectors of an Administration that would be placed under the authority of a ministerial cabinet composed initially and then entirely of indigenous personnel.

This is a quite normal evolution, logically to be expected at the present time. It should be designed, in our opinion, in the first place and above all to develop among the Micronesians the feeling of belonging to the same community and for getting them to participate more and more in the conduct of their own affairs. They are, as a matter of fact, convinced that these are the intentions of the Administering Authority. In this connexion, we heard Mr. Norwood state on 8 June last that "the time should now be approaching for the citizens of Micronesia to decide ... what future political and governmental structure they prefer". (1305th meeting, p. 47) The Congress of Micronesia, which is dealing with these problems, on 9 August 1966 adopted a resolution calling upon the President of the United States to set up a commission for the purpose of consulting the population on its views and its wishes with respect to its future status. The High Commissioner was good enough to tell us, in reply to a question that I addressed to him, that this matter was being given very careful study. It seems to us, indeed, that such a commission could play a very useful role in achieving constitutional and political progress. As a matter of fact, whatever the methods employed, the French delegation has no doubt that the Administering Authority, which has already done a great deal in the Territory, is eager to continue the work it has begun by bringing the people -- whose representatives have, as a matter of fact, described to us their hesitancy -- to a full awareness of their possibilities and their responsibilities through increased participation in the exercise of power, and by making them fully conscious of the importance of the choice they will have to make, so that they may, in complete knowledge of the facts and without unnecessary delay, exercise their right to self-determination. We are confident that the Government of the United States will thus fulfil the obligation it assumed in signing the Trusteeship Agreement.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes the list of speakers for this afternoon. I should like to appeal to the members of the Council to be prepared to speak tomorrow. We must conclude the general debate on this item tomorrow and then take up the report of the Secretary-General on offers of training facilities and the dissemination of information.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.