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# Micro(phone)nesia

By Stuart Jay Beck

This week the people of Micronesia, through their representatives, will meet with the United States Government in Honolulu for four days of negotiations. If these negotiations are successful, Micronesia may become a nation with limited sovereignty instead of remaining United States dependency.

What newspaper readers know about Micronesia these days is that the Central Intelligence Agency conducted electronic eavesdropping and surveillance there, and that President Carter tried unsuccessfully to delete certain details of that clandestine operation from a report by the Senate Select Intelligence Committee.

What few people understand are the reasons for C.I.A. activities in Micronesia. The bugging was part (a small part) of a broad defense establishment strategy designed to preserve Micronesia as a secure military outpost at the gateway to the Asian mainland. Among those bugged were Micronesian citizens with such names as Sadang Silmai, Ekpap Silk and Luke Tman.

At United States behest, these men have spent ten years hammering out a Compact with United States negotiators that will determine the shape of Micronesia's political future. To the Micronesians (silly as it may seem to the C.I.A.), these negotiations are the equivalent of the Convention that produced our Constitution.

The United States administers Micronesia under a trusteeship agreement with the United Nations that guarantees "progress" toward Micronesian self-government. This progress has been very slow indeed. Up to now, the United States has been more interested in the results of nuclear test-in and missile recovery at Bikini and Eniwetok than in building local political institutions.

Significantly, of the 11 trusteeships granted by the United Nations after World War II, only the Micronesian trusteeship persists. Every other quasi-empire has been returned to its inhabitants, and some have become nations.

World opinion has made it necessary for the United States to negotiate with the Micronesians toward a termination of the trusteeship and a new political status, lest America be regarded as a colonial power by the powerful third-world bloc at the United Nations.

While world opinion may have precipitated Micronesian negotiations, it has not set ground rules. Enter the C.I.A. Apparently seeking to complement predictable United States dominance at the bargaining table with hard advance information about

Micronesian negotiating position, the C.I.A. invaded the Micronesian delegation's privacy. One needn't negotiate for a living to understand the value of the advance receipt of an adversary's bargaining position.

When the Micronesians again sit down with their American counterparts this week, both sides may try to make the Compact final. It is already decided that the Compact will permit the United States to control the foreign affairs and defense policies of the new Micronesian nation. Yet to be decided is the ownership of the plentiful oceans and their beds that surround that nation-to-be.

Once that problem is ironed out, the Micronesian people will conduct a "yes-no" vote on the Compact. A "yes" vote will lead to the implementation of it. A "no" vote will result in many more years of trusteeship. The Micronesians, eager to chart their own course at long last, thus find themselves between the rock and the hard place.

What the C.I.A. did in Micronesia compromised the process by which Micronesians will attain their nationhood. Were these negotiations a criminal trial, and had the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Justice Department been caught invading the counsels of the defense, the unlawful prosecution would be dismissed. This is what happened to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, for example, when in the Pentagon papers trial Federal judge William Matthew Byrne Jr. was confronted with the White House "plumbers" break-in at the office of Dr. Ellsberg's former psychiatrist. But when a new generation of C.I.A. "plumbers" confounds the legitimate political aspirations of men with such names as Sadang Silmai, Ekpap Silk and Luke Tman, the result appears to be different.

It is clear that President Carter, in his first 100 days, had not had the opportunity to analyze just what process the C.I.A. had been toying with in Micronesia. A man so sensitive to human rights could not so lightly have allowed a Federal agency to trample on the political rights of an emerging nation. It is now time for the responsible agencies of the Government to move vigorously to determine the extent to which the C.I.A. has tainted the negotiations and compromised the fledgling Micronesian political process.

What is happening out there is not K.G.B. agents versus Soviet dissidents—it is our agents against foreign people under a solemn promise of United States protection. We owe them more.

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