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THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION
26-5 Higashi Machi
Naha, Okinawa

4 May 1972

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TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE HELD BY THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION
IN NAHA, OKINAWA
4 MAY 1972

Participants

HIGH COMMISSIONER JAMES B. LAMPERT, REPRESENTATIVE
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

AMBASSADOR JIRO TAKASE, REPRESENTATIVE, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE CHOBYO YARA, ADVISER, GOVERNMENT OF THE
RYUKYU ISLANDS

SANKEY: This will be a 30-minute press conference. Please
confine your questions to matters concerning PrepCom and please indicate to
whom you are addressing your question.

MEKARU, RBC (translated): My question is addressed to all three. I would
like to ask your assessment of your work as members of PrepCom, which was es-
tablished to carry out a smooth transition at reversion.

LAMPERT: I will be glad to answer from my point of view and will
then ask my colleagues to answer from their points of view. The significant
work of PrepCom has been great, but it has not been done by me. It has been
done by the staffs provided by the three Governments and by the large number
of members who have served on subcommittees, special panels, and ad hoc work
groups. Their work has brought us to the eve of reversion with the essential
pieces of business accomplished in a workmanlike way and with great understand-
ing. On the U S side we do believe the work has been done satisfactorily, and
we take personal satisfaction in having participated.

TAKASE (translated): In the wake of the statement made by the High Com-
missioner I would like to state that PrepCom and its predecessor, AdCom, were
unprecedented internationally and were given difficult tasks over a four year
period. Even the PrepCom life has exceeded two years. PrepCom has accomplished
its tasks rather successfully, and I am impressed individually. Recently we
have not made too many announcements in our name, but if you look at the press
release you can see we have accomplished enormous tasks. I look with pride,

honor, and nostalgia on our work as we greet the arrival of reversion on the
15th of May.

YARA (translated): This Preparatory Commission was established locally to
take up matters pertaining to reversion. It was destined to be established
here to serve the people of Okinawa. I served with PrepCom as an Adviser.
I served primarily because of the interest shown by the Okinawa Prefectural
people because the results would be of great interest to them. Thanks to the
understanding and support of the two Representatives, I served on an equal
basis with them. I have made proposals and numerous requests to have PrepCom
take up matters of interest to us. I would like to state that as of now PrepCom
has completed many difficult problems and that, in addition, with the approval
of the High Commissioner and the Ambassador, matters which should have been
taken up at higher levels were proposed by me and submitted to higher diplomatic
levels. I realize some matters were beyond the purview of PrepCom. In spite
of this PrepCom was willing to forward these matters. Of these, some have
been concluded and others are pending. Matters for which local solutions were
feasible were taken up here. I have done my best but matters were complicated.
My best was not sufficient at times.

MIYAZAWA, NHK (translated): The press handout includes items you have agreed
upon. Can Ambassador Takase give examples of things not agreed upon?

TAKASE (translated): I don't have any specific examples of this nature. Virtual-
ly all problems have been agreed upon or will be agreed upon. PrepCom will
exist until 14 May. Virtually all problems will have been agreed on. We
expect to have only two or three matters remaining on which there will have
to be agreement by 14 May.

MIYAZAWA, NHK (translated): What are these matters?

TAKASE (translated): They are under discussion, and I cannot comment on them.

MIYAZAWA, NHK (translated): May I understand that substantially all functions
have been completed?

TAKASE (translated): No. There are still some small things to take care of.

KRISHER, NEWSWEEK: Ambassador Takase, what was your most difficult problem
and how long did it take you to solve it?

TAKASE: The most difficult problem was the handling of PrepCom
itself just after its birth. As you have heard, we succeeded in executing our

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duties. How to handle matters was difficult because of the uniqueness of our situation in the diplomatic history of the world. Of course the directives by the three Governments were vivid, but how to handle the situation was difficult. Because of the cooperation given, PrepCom established a unique history of understanding. That was our most difficult question.

YAMAGUCHI, KYŌDŌ TSŪSHIN, (translated): My question is for the High Commissioner and the Ambassador. During the course of discussing reversion matters, Foreign Minister Fukuda mentioned the matter of "prior coordination." Was this mentioned in connection with discussions of SOFA at PrepCom, or wasn't it a PrepCom matter?

TAKASE:(translated): This is a matter for diplomatic channels, and PrepCom did not take it up.

LAMPERT: My answer is the same.

KANDA, MAINICHI, (translated): This is for the High Commissioner and the Ambassador. My understanding is that on 14 May PrepCom will cease to exist. Is there thinking on the part of the American and Japanese Governments to take up matters of this nature after reversion?

TAKASE:(translated): I would like to state that after reversion matters of a political nature will be handled by the American Embassy in Tokyo and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There will be a U. S. Consulate General here and a liaison office within the Okinawa Prefectural Office.

LAMPERT: I agree with the Ambassador's response and would only add that matters relating to the U S military forces will be handled within the framework which already exists, because the American military forces here will, of course, become part of the American military forces in Japan.

(END)

The Press Conference was adjourned at 1515 hours.