

REMARKS BY

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The High Commissioner of the Ryukyu Islands

at the

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of the

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On June 12th last year I talked with you members of the Golden Gate Club on the topic: "Facing Reality." I asked you not only to become acquainted with and face the realities of the world situation and the situation in the Ryukyus, but to utilize your talents and influence to dispel the many myths that had gained credence among the Ryukyuan people.

Tonight, although I see many of the same faces I saw on that occasion, the men and women behind those faces are not the same. The Golden Gate Club has moved a long way forward. You need no longer to look forward to a time when you may be asked to accept some of the leadership in these Islands; you are having leadership thrust upon you. The basis for this change is your acceptance of responsibilities, and your demonstrated competence. Some perhaps are finding leadership to be a chancy business, and a lonely one. Some may have rejected leadership to stay a part of the faceless crowd. But all of you have, in the months since June 1962, faced the realities yourselves, and have made an effort to have your fellow Ryukyuans do so.

Tonight we will step from last year's theme into a short discussion of one area where a myth continues to prevail over reality; that is, into that words-befogged area misnamed "autonomy." I can find no general understanding in the Ryukyus of what autonomy means, or includes, or implies. At some point of your studies you probably have heard or have read the story of the five blind men of Indostan who were called upon to

examine and then describe an elephant. The first blind man, happened to seize the elephant's tail and said, "An elephant is much like a rope." Another touched one of the animal's massive legs, and concluded that an elephant is much like a tree. The third accidentally walked into the animal's side, and decided that an elephant is much like a wall. And so on. I have observed something of a same kind of approach to "autonomy"; any person's understanding is in terms of his own experiences.

By definition "autonomy" means self-government. Carrying this definition to its logical conclusion, the autonomists in the Ryukyus Islands are striving for self-government without any outside control. This, in turn, means they advocate sovereignty. Yet do they? If one would believe what he reads in the press, and what he hears said by the self-styled spokesmen for the people, the meaning of autonomy is grossly misunderstood; or the word is being used with the deliberate intent to deceive. Government is a practical business, not a pipe dream or the crying of slogans by pressure groups. Government is the Art of the Possible, and what is possible here is far from autonomy. For in the Ryukyu Islands, we can only have delegations of responsibility from one level of government to another.

If we are to face reality, we must conclude that autonomy for the Ryukyus, or any area that is a political subdivision, is impossible. It is no more possible with a State, or a province, or a prefectural government than it is under the United States Civil Administration as provided by Article III of the Treaty of Peace with Japan. Autonomy at the present time is a myth; it does not exist. And it won't exist unless

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you Ryukyuans determine of your own free wills that you wish once again to become an independent nation-state.

As the man on the ground who has the ultimate responsibility for these Islands, I shall limit myself to the political reality, not talk of complete freedom to act with or without commensurate responsibility and with or without a showing of capacity to act.

It is the policy of the United States "to carry on a continuous review of governmental functions in the Ryukyu Islands to determine when and under what circumstances additional functions can be delegated to the Government of the Ryukyu Islands." Such a review is continuously in progress. In considering the transfer of functions, I am impelled to consider the degree of "responsibility" and of "capability" (as measured by achievement) rather than the hue and cry after "autonomy." The Executive Order provides that in the exercise of his authority, the Secretary of Defense "shall encourage the development of an effective and responsible Ryukyuan Government." In simple terms, this means functions will be delegated to the Government of the Ryukyu Islands as that government develops responsibility and as it becomes effective.

When is a government responsible? My answer is:

1. When it accepts those duties and tasks delegated to it, not simply the prerogatives which are the unsubstantial trappings of government;
2. When it genuinely seeks to better the welfare of all of the people;
3. When it genuinely considers itself, and its various members, as the servants of the people;

4. When it is willing to take all steps which legitimately belong to it and which are necessary;
to govern properly;
to promote the development of the economy, and the society;
and,
to raise the general standard of living.

When is a government effective? My answer is: When it performs its legitimate functions efficiently, with maximum results in terms of political stability and in terms of the general welfare, at minimum cost to the taxpayer.

The Government of the Ryukyus can earn; and is earning, a greater area of responsibility by demonstrating:

its willingness to accept the responsibility for its actions and decisions; and,

its ability to perform the functions of government with competence. Functions cannot be transferred where there has been a clear demonstration that it is only the power that is wanted and not the responsibility.

Neither can functions be transferred when it is clear, on the basis of the record, that to do so would benefit some special interest group at the expense of the taxpayer or some privileged segment of society to the neglect of the general population.

Anyone who conducts an objective examination of the actions of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Government of the Ryukyu

Islands is bound to conclude that this Government has behaved responsibly and effectively in some instances, and irresponsibly and ineffectively in others. It is in those areas characterized by effective and responsible performance to which greater responsibility has accrued almost automatically and will continue to accrue.

On a number of occasions responsibility delegated to the Government of the Ryukyu Islands has not been accepted by that Government, although the Government seized without hesitation the power offered. Let me provide one or two examples:

1. The Government of the Ryukyu Islands was made the custodian of the unemployment insurance fund at the time enabling legislation was enacted. This fund does not belong to the Government of the Ryukyu Islands. The money came from employees and employers, and it belongs to the workers who will receive benefits from it. The Government of the Ryukyu Islands merely holds the fund in trust for the workers. Yet, there have been numerous attempts to divert this fund to purposes other than for the benefit of the workers. The threat to the integrity of this fund persisted until legislation providing minimum necessary protection finally was enacted.

2. The Government of the Ryukyu Islands has consistently refused to differentiate between actions that may result in a modicum of violence that are a part of a labor dispute, and acts of violence which are not a part of that dispute but are in fact criminal acts. The Government has tended to regard all actions during a labor dispute as part of a dispute.

This contention is untenable from a legal point of view; it is a fraud perpetrated upon the entire community by the authorities who are responsible to the community for its peace and tranquillity; and, it constitutes a refusal on the part of the Government to take responsibility.

3. The case of the two competing sugar mills in Nishihara area is an example of an evasion of responsibility. It was known that there was no economic justification for establishment of two sugar mills across the street from each other, to compete with the same farmers for sugar cane. Yet the Government of the Ryukyu Islands licensed the two mills. In this act there was no consideration of the effect on the people of the area or on the Ryukyuan economy as a whole. Today, the farmers, the mill owners, and the Government of the Ryukyu Islands, which was recklessly irresponsible in this matter and in at least one other of a similar nature, are frantically trying to rationalize the sugar industry, while at the same time seeking to avoid the decision to have bigger and therefore fewer mills to meet the competition from elsewhere.

4. For many years the banks of the Ryukyu Islands were permitted to operate with almost complete license. I say license rather than freedom, for here again, we find a gross abuse of trust by the banks and the government. As only one example of malpractice in this area, directors were permitted to make unsecured loans to the commercial corporations which they headed. The source of these funds was the money of the hundreds of depositors, large and small, who entrusted their

savings to the banks. Such behavior would constitute a felony almost anywhere else. The Government of the Ryukyu Islands refused to act, and instead weakly sought to evade its responsibilities and shift the blame to the United States Administration.

I have given only a few examples, among other possible examples, of situations wherein the Executive Branch of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands failed to meet its responsibility and was ineffective. At the same time it had all of the responsibility and freedom to act it needed to fulfill the trust reposed in it by its own people.

The Legislature of the Ryukyu Islands, similarly, has at times failed to live up to its responsibility. One does not have to go back into history; the 1962 session provides pertinent examples:

1. The Medical Service Bill failed to provide necessary annual inspections to insure that hospitals, clinics, and midwifery homes meet minimum standards for the protection of the public. The penalty for violations of law was wholly inadequate to maintain professional standards, and would not have eliminated or even seriously impeded illegal practices.
2. The Legislature attempted to authorize an unjustified use of taxpayers' money when, in its draft of the "Workmen's Accident Compensation Bill," it so worded the bill as to place on the taxpayers the normal and proper liability of the employer for on-the-job injuries suffered by workers.

The Legislature, like the Executive Branch, has been delegated sufficient authority to enact all of the legislation that is needed for the benefit of the Ryukyuan people. Its failures to do so cannot be laid at

the door of the High Commissioner for failing to delegate to it authority to act and to charge it with responsibility for its actions.

The Judicial Branch, by the nature of its duties and responsibilities, has the best record of accepting responsibilities, and of accomplishments in meeting them. It therefore has probably the widest responsibilities. Yet, there are examples here of procrastination where there should be speedy justice before the law, of countenancing professional standards in attorneys which are lower than one would wish.

Where does this lead us? Why this dwelling on mistakes and failures? My intent has been for it to lead us to look deeply into the heart of a myth and see it for what it is. If you young men and women, who are destined to be the leaders of your community, who, in fact, are already the leaders, can recognize this myth for the rabble-rousing, excusing, alibi for failures, then you have indeed taken another long step forward.

The Ryukyu Islands today have the freedom of choice and action; your government has had all necessary power delegated to it to meet the needs of the Ryukyuan community. None of the sectors of this community, political, economic or social, are in a position of being tutored; or of being in political vassalage, or of not being allowed to make its own mistakes.

In the Ryukyus, as elsewhere, men must earn the right to wield power, political, or economic, or social; it is not to be bestowed

carelessly upon the adolescent, the weakling, or the incompetent, no matter how loudly he may shout for it. Acceptance of responsibility begets yet greater responsibilities; demonstrated competence draws to itself greater and greater trust and wider areas for action.

The cry for "autonomy", for complete freedom from all restraints, for power to rule without responsibility or demonstrated competence is a false "aspiration of the people." It is, unwittingly or wantonly, a screen to hide incompetence; irresponsibility; disloyalty to the community which vested authority in it; or it is a shield for Special Interest and Special Privilege battenning on the remainder of the community.

See it for what it is and reject it.

It is, in fact, almost the last myth left to the political hacks and economic quacks.