Pacific Islands Development Program

EIGHTH ROUND OF U.S.
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According to Ambassador Ed Wolfe, Department of State's, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries Affairs and lead negotiator for the U.S. at the multilateral tuna treaty talks, negotiations hit the bottom line at the recent round of talks in Honolulu. Wolfe said that two issues remained unresolved. These were the issues of access fee payments and areas that Pacific island countries might close off to licensed U.S. tuna vessels operating in the Pacific Islands region.

The 8th round of negotiations in Honolulu were held at the East-West Center from May 5 to 9. Sixteen Pacific island countries met with the United States. Although being optimistic that treaty guidelines would be finalized within the next few months, Wolfe stated at a public lecture at the University of Hawaii following the negotiations that progress at this round of negotiations and at the previous round in Canberra had slowed down. As in previous rounds Councillor Ed Derwinski, the U.S. Secretary of State's right hand man, participated in the negotiations.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that the U.S. delegation presented its financial proposal covering access for the U.S. purse seine fleet. It is understood that US$2 million was offered as an annual lump sum payment industry and that the U.S. Government was prepared to offer an aid package of approximately the same amount as an incentive. However, the offer by industry
reportedly falls far short of what Pacific island countries want from U.S. industry in return for fisheries access to the region. Despite the lump sum offer, it is believed that U.S. fishermen are more favorably disposed to a per trip method of calculating access fees rather than a lump sum contribution.

Pacific Island country representatives were guarded in their comments concerning the latest round of negotiations. There seems to be a sense of frustration and creeping apathy towards the talks as a result of the slow progress being made. Furthermore, it is understood that some countries were extremely dissatisfied with the initial financial offer proposed by U.S. industry. Given the level of fees being currently paid in the region by the U.S. fleet, industry's initial cash offer appears unacceptable.

Wolfe spoke candidly in his lecture about the role of his Office and the extreme importance that the United States attaches to the speedy conclusion of a tuna treaty with Pacific island countries. He indicated that factors other than tuna—such as strategic issues in the region—impinged on the need to conclude a treaty. He added that this fisheries treaty was the most complicated that the State Department had ever embarked upon and that in fact an attempt to conclude a multilateral fisheries treaty with such a large number of countries had not previously been attempted. The U.S. Secretary of State was being kept constantly informed about developments with the tuna treaty and progress being made.

Wolfe acknowledged that the Danica affair in Papua New Guinea in 1982 and subsequently the Jeanette Diana incident in Solomon Islands in 1984 had impaired relations between these Pacific island countries and the United States. He said that the United States government would in future accept responsibility for U.S. vessels operating in the region under the treaty. He also stated that contentious issues such as reporting requirements by vessels,
the placing of scientific observers on vessels and the supply of catch data had been satisfactorily ironed out with Pacific island governments. Wolfe added that U.S. industry had been heavily involved in the treaty talks—and indeed in all similar fisheries negotiations with other countries—as a means of trying to insure that there was no industry opposition to the treaty when it was finally sent to the U.S. Congress for ratification.

Although the treaty talks had been slow and at times tedious, Wolfe stated that the U.S. team had developed a great deal of respect and trust for Pacific Island country delegations participating in the negotiations. He added that he felt a similar respect and trust existed on the part of Pacific island countries towards the U.S. delegation. Wolfe believed that this mutual respect and understanding provided a firm basis for cooperation.

The next round of talks are scheduled for early July in Raratonga. Wolfe is optimistic that the two outstanding issues will be resolved at this round. However, in the event that agreement to finalize a treaty in Raratonga is not reached, Wolfe hinted that an interim fisheries arrangement for U.S. vessels might be concluded with Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati.
VAN CAMP'S IDLE CANNERY IN SAN DIEGO (photo credit David J Doulman).

TIED UP U.S. TUNA SEINERS IN SAN DIEGO (photo credit David J Doulman).
PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) at the East-West Center helps meet the special development needs of the Pacific islands region through cooperative research, education, and training. PIDP also serves as the Secretariat for the Pacific Islands Conference, a heads of government organization involving leaders from throughout the Pacific region, and for the Pacific Islands Conference Standing Committee, which was established to ensure follow-up on development problems discussed at the 1980 Conference.

PIDP's research, education, and training activities are developed as a direct response to requests from the Standing Committee. PIDP’s projects are planned in close cooperation with the Committee to ensure that the focus and the organization of each project address the needs identified by the heads of government on the Committee, a process which is unique within the East-West Center and in other research and educational organizations serving the Pacific.

A major objective of the program has been to provide quality in-depth analytical studies on specific priority issues as identified by the Pacific island leaders and people. The aim is to provide leaders with detailed information and alternative strategies on policy issues. Each island country will make its own decision based on national goals and objectives. Since 1980, PIDP has been given the task of research in eight project areas: energy, disaster preparedness, aquaculture, government and administrative systems, nuclear waste disposal, business ventures development and management, roles of multinational corporations, and regional cooperation.
THE EAST-WEST CENTER is a public, nonprofit educational institution with an international board of governors. Some 2,000 research fellows, graduate students, and professionals in business and government each year work with the Center’s international staff in cooperative study, training, and research. They examine major issues related to population, resources and development, the environment, culture, and communication in Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The Center was established in 1960 by the United States Congress, which provides principal funding. Support also comes from more than 20 Asian and Pacific governments, as well as private agencies and corporations.

Situated on 21 acres adjacent to the University of Hawaii’s Manoa Campus, the Center’s facilities include a 300-room office building housing research and administrative offices for an international staff of 250, three residence halls for participants, and a conference center with meeting rooms equipped to provide simultaneous translation and a complete range of audiovisual services.