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Speech by Representative Polycarp Basilius of Palau
District on July 28, 1970 relative to the Political
Status Issue.

Last week, for a number of reasons, I urged this Congress to reject on behalf of our people the commonwealth offer by the executive branch of the United States Government. I overlooked one important reason why such status will not be in the best interest of Micronesia. I do not need to remind you that this Congress in its short history has been insistent that the people of Micronesia must have the power and control over economic development, especially in the area of foreign investment. Last January, as you all know, we created the Economic Development Board for this purpose and I believe we are now in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not, and I repeat, if we do not reject this commonwealth status, we will in the end find ourselves in the same shoes as most people of Puerto Rico. Economic lifeline of Puerto Rico is remotely regulated and controlled by some rich Americans. Only a few Puerto Ricans have been able to benefit from the commonwealth status arrangement they now have with the United States. And they are the rich ones who have teamed up with the Americans in exploiting Puerto Rico's natural resources. When we finally settle this political status question, I would like to see that the ordinary people of Micronesia, the village Micronesians and outer islanders, benefit from that arrangement which we shall choose.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you the desire of my constituents. Most of all, they want self-dignity and pride after these four hundred years of humiliation under foreign rule and domination.

Secondly, they want full control over their lands and resources. Finally, they want to set up by themselves their own laws and regulations.

Mr. Speaker and fellow Congressmen, these things, as the Delegation stated it excellently, "cannot be bartered for financial and economic advantages."

Thank you.