

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS

CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA

Saipan, Mariana Islands, 96950

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February 11, 1972

Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman
Joint Committee on Future Status
Congress of Micronesia

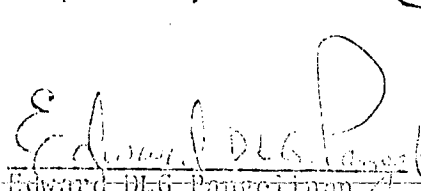
Dear Mr. Chairman:

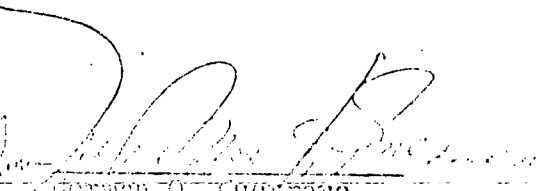
We wish to transmit to you and to our colleagues our Statement of Position on the issue of future political status. We hope this Statement of Position will set forth adequately our position on this vital issue and will serve as an important guidepost in the future relationships of the Marianas Delegation to the other members of the Congress.

Regretfully, we find ourselves no longer able to concur in the actions of the majority of the members of the Joint Committee on Future Status. We feel that the views contained in the attached Statement represent the majority views of the people of the Marianas and the members of the Marianas Congressional Delegation.

We wish to thank you and our colleagues for your favorable consideration.

Respectfully submitted:


Edward D.L.G. Pangelinan
Senator


Herman Q. Guerrero
Representative

03-035739

SEPARATE STATEMENT OF POSITION
ON THE ISSUE OF
FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS

The people of the Marianas District ~~desire a close political relationship with the United States of America,~~ much closer than that presently ~~being considered by the Congress~~ and the Joint Committee. For this reason, it is the position of the Mariana Islands Delegation on the Committee that a separate Statement of Position on the issue of future political status is necessary. We further feel that if the Congress continues its present course, we must regretfully, but inevitably, seek our own way in line with our own political aspirations.

Consequently, we have prepared this separate Statement of Position on the issue of future political status because, in our opinion, the actions of the Congress of Micronesia and, by its mandate, the Joint Committee on Future Political Status, have moved further and further away from a position of close political affiliation with the Government of the United States of America. The majority of the people of the Mariana Islands District, as expressed through our representatives in Congress, and through them, the District Representatives on the Joint Committee, feel that the direction endorsed by the Joint Committee is not in the best interests of the people of the Mariana Islands District.

It must be stated at the outset that mere separation for separation's sake is not and has not been our aim. We advocate our present position for the sole reason that we desire a close political union with the

United States of America -- a membership in the United States political family, and a future political status which will be decided by our predecessors, and the Congress as a whole. We are of the opinion that a future political

~~status should lead to implementation of the~~
~~which we seek so avidly, and which we prize so highly.~~

More than any other nation with which we have had contact, the United States has brought to Micronesia the values which we cherish, and the economic goals which we desire. A close political affiliation with the United States -- closer than that of "Free Association" -- holds a promise for our future of preserving those values and implementing those goals.

We have traveled extensively throughout our District with other members of our Delegation. We have visited Rota, Tinian and the northern islands, and have met with the people of Saipan, and we find that the vast majority of our people share the views presented to you in this statement.

What, then, are these values and goals? The values are human rights. Micronesia has for too long been dominated by autocratic powers, with little regard for the rights of their own subjects, let alone of Micronesians. The coming of the United States, on the other hand, changed all this. The spirit of two hundred years of democracy of a society which practiced the theory that a government should

"of the people, by the people, and for the people," of the Bill of Rights, ensuring that every man is created equal under the law and guaranteeing his human rights, of a country which has historically been a refuge for the oppressed and a land of opportunity for all people, was brought to Micronesia by the United States. Thanks to this great country, ~~Micronesians now live as free men~~ for the first time in three and a half centuries.

~~Political union with the United States will ensure that we keep this freedom so long denied to us.~~ With this freedom, of course, comes obligations. We ~~recognize the United States position that political stability in Micronesia is key to the United States' effort to maintain peace and security in the Pacific.~~ As members of the Pacific Community, as a people which have been ravaged by war within the memory of every single member of this Congress, we cannot say too strongly that ~~peace must reign in the Pacific, and that war must never again destroy our islands.~~ For this reason, we desire to make our contribution to the United States, which promises to keep the peace, as our share in the maintenance of peace and security in the Pacific.

The ~~goal is economic development.~~ Simply stated, we are of the opinion that the United States has more to offer Micronesia in this area than any other nation. It seems to be the general conclusion that ~~some form of association is necessary to ensure the continuation of the process of economic development.~~ A brief glance at the

possessions, territories, and other members of the United States political family makes it clear that a close political relationship can ensure that degree of economic development which our people desire. ~~American Samoa~~, an unincorporated U.S. territory, as compared with independent Western Samoa, is one example. The Commonwealth of ~~Monte Rico~~, with by far the highest per capita income and standard of living in the Carribean, is another. And, closer to home, one has only to compare economic development on ~~Guam~~, an unincorporated U.S. territory, with that of her sister islands of Micronesia.

Further, a brief examination of world political and economic conditions shows ~~a great correlation between political stability and economic development~~. We remain uncertain about a future for Micronesia when the relationship under which that future will take place is itself intentionally and specifically made uncertain. We are prepared to become a permanent member of the United States political family for the sake of political stability, without which there can be no economic stability.

We are ~~not afraid of possible abuse under such an arrangement~~ with the United States. We feel that the ~~United States Constitution~~ offers ~~us enough latitude to be able to protect our people from loss of their lands or wholesale economic domination by outsiders, and also to control the rate and nature of this development at a satisfactory~~

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~~level. Neither do we abrogate our rights to negotiate with the United States toward the most favorable resolution of our own position on such specific issues as may arise.~~

It has been noted that close affiliation with the United States will have the effect of assimilation of our culture into that of the United States. We recognize this. Our culture in the Marianas, however, has been already considerably affected by foreign cultures, Spanish and Japanese as well as American. We view this phenomenon as a necessary adjunct to the process of economic development. Further, we find that this amalgamation has worked toward the strengthening of our people, and has reinforced our desire for social advancement.

In short, we believe that close political ties with the United States, such as were embodied in the Commonwealth Offer, represent the ideal goal for the people of the Marianas. The Congress of Micronesia, and through it the Joint Committee, has rejected this proposal. We believe further that the concept of Free Association, as mandated by the Congress and interpreted by the Joint Committee, does not and cannot meet the needs or satisfy the desires and aspirations of the people of the Marianas District.

The recent Third Round of Negotiations, held at Hana, Maui, has indicated to us that the Congress, through the Joint Committee, seeks goals other than those goals which we of the Marianas desire. While we respect and defend the right of all of the people of Micronesia to the free choice of political status, we are of the opinion that the direction taken within the past year toward free association or independence differs so considerably from our own desired direction that we question whether we can be of further value in the formulation or execution of such policy. For this reason, and for the reasons stated in this Separate Statement, we are unable to join with our distinguished colleagues on the Joint Committee in signing the Report, and make the following separate conclusions and recommendations:

1. That legislation be enacted authorizing the creation of a separate Future Status Commission for the Marianas District, empowered to enter into and conduct separate negotiations with the United States regarding a future political status for the Mariana Islands;

2. That the representatives from the Mariana Islands District maintain their memberships on the Joint Committee, participating only in matters affecting the District and acting as liaison between the Joint Committee and a Mariana Islands District Future Status Commission.

3. That the Marianas Delegation pledges its full, complete and unequivocal support to the Congress and to the Joint Committee toward the attainment of whatever future political status they choose to seek, and respectfully requests that other delegations reciprocate with regard to the position of the people of the Marianas; and

4. That the Congress agrees that the separate solutions with regard to the issue of future political status which may be reached by the Marianas District shall not bind the other five Districts, and those reached by the other five Districts shall not bind the Marianas District.

We ask that the distinguished members of this Congress of Micronesia favorably consider the views expressed by this Statement.