

5/26/72

Remarks To Senator Olympio T. Berja
Trusteeship Council Meetings ⁱⁿ 1972

MR. PRESIDENT AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL:

MAY I FIRST EXPRESS MY DEEP GRATITUDE TO THE COUNCIL FOR
ALLOWING ME AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS DELEGATION,
INCLUDING SENATOR EDWARD PANGELINAN, CONGRESSMAN HERMAN Q. GUERRERO,
AND PRESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE VICENTE N. SANTOS, TO
APPEAR BEFORE THE COUNCIL TODAY AS PETITIONERS.

WE HAVE COME TO SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL TODAY ON THE IMPORTANT
SUBJECT OF THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANA
ISLANDS DISTRICT. AS YOU MAY KNOW, THE RECENT FOURTH ROUND OF
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MICRONESIA, HELD AT KOROR,
PALAU, JUST THIS PAST APRIL, SAW A PROPOSAL BY THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT FOR SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE
ISSUE OF FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS FOR THE MARIANAS TO THE UNITED
STATES. IN THAT PROPOSAL, SENATOR PANGELINAN AND CONGRESSMAN HERMAN
GUERRERO SAID THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS DESIRED A CLOSE POLITICAL
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED
STATES POLITICAL FAMILY. WITH THE COUNCIL'S KIND PERMISSION, I WOULD
LIKE TO GO INTO SOME OF OUR REASONS.

WHEN AMERICAN SOLDIERS CAME TO SAIPAN IN 1944, THEY WERE TRULY
OUR LIBERATORS. THE YOKE OF THE JAPANESE EMPIRE WELCHED HEAVILY ON
OUR SHOULDERS FOR THIRTY YEARS BEFORE THEN; THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS

WERE LITTLE BETTER THAN SLAVES, COGS IN THE JAPANESE MILITARY-
INDUSTRIAL MACHINE. WE COULD NOT SPEAK OUR OWN LANGUAGE IN MANY
PLACES; WE WERE RELEGATED TO MENIAL JOBS; WE COULD NOT RISE ABOVE
AN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. EVEN THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY WHICH THE
JAPANESE MANDATE HAD BROUGHT TO THE MARIANAS WAS A JAPANESE
PROSPERITY, NOT A SAIPANESE ONE.

AFTER THE AMERICANS CAME, SLOWLY BUT SURELY, THINGS BEGAN
TO CHANGE. THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION GUARANTEED TO US THE
FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS WHICH ARE THE RIGHT OF ALL MEN, AS THE UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SAYS. NONE OF US HAD EVER KNOWN THESE
FREEDOMS BEFORE. ALL OF US, I THINK, WANTED TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT
WE WOULD NEVER AGAIN LOSE THEM. SENTIMENT FOR JOINING THE UNITED
STATES POLITICAL FAMILY WAS BORN.

OVER THE YEARS, THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS CAME TO SEE HOW
MUCH A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES COULD BE OF GREAT
BENEFIT. WE HAD ONLY TO GO TO GUAM, OR TO WRITE TO OUR MANY
RELATIVES THERE, AND WE HAD CONSTANT REMINDERS OF HOW MUCH BETTER
THINGS COULD BE, ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND POLITICALLY.

EVEN BEFORE THE EARLY 1960'S, WHEN ADMINISTRATION OF THE
MARIANA ISLANDS WAS TURNED BACK FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, SENTIMENT HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO WAX
STRONG IN THE MARIANAS. OUR PEOPLE DIFFERED NOT IN OUR GOAL, WHICH
WAS ALWAYS UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES, BUT ONLY ON THE BEST WAY

OF ACHIEVING THAT GOAL. THE HISTORIC YEAR OF 1961 SAW THE FORMULATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT, THE FIRST POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE TRUST TERRITORY. THE POPULAR PARTY FAVORED INTEGRATION WITH THE PRESENT UNITED STATES TERRITORY OF GUAM, AND THE TERRITORIAL PARTY DESIRED DIRECT OUTRIGHT ANNEXATION BY THE UNITED STATES. SINCE THAT TIME, THESE TWO PARTIES HAVE REMAINED STRONG, DIFFERING ONLY IN THEIR EMPHASIS FROM TIME TO TIME. THEIR GOALS REMAINED THE SAME: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES POLITICAL FAMILY.

ALL THREE REFERENDA IN THE DISTRICT, HELD IN 1961, 1963, AND 1969, SHOWED THAT AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF OUR VOTERS WANTED CLOSE POLITICAL TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DISTRICT CONTINUED TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA ON THE CRUCIAL ISSUE OF THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF OUR TRUST TERRITORY. IN 1970, HOWEVER, THE IDEOLOGICAL SCHISM WHICH SEPARATES OUR PEOPLE FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE OTHER DISTRICTS BECAME ALL TOO APPARENT --- AND TOO PRONOUNCED TO IGNORE ANY LONGER. THE HISTORIC SUMMER OF 1970 SAW THE PROPOSAL BY THE UNITED STATES OF A NEW POLITICAL STATUS FOR MICRONESIA, ONE WHICH VERY NEARLY REFLECTED ALL THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS. OUR PEOPLE, OUR ELECTED LEADERS BELIEVED THAT THE SO-CALLED COMMONWEALTH OFFER SHOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED. WE WERE EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED WHEN IT WAS NOT. DURING THAT SAME HISTORIC SESSION OF THE CONGRESS, MICRONESIAN LAWMAKERS GAVE A NEW AND DIFFERENT DIRECTION TO THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS

COMMITTEE: THE FOUR PRINCIPLES AND LEGAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE PROPOSAL THAT THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MICRONESIA SHOULD BE A "FREE ASSOCIATION", THE DETAILS OF WHICH WOULD BE SPELLED OUT BY A COMPACT, A RELATIONSHIP WHICH COULD BE TERMINABLE UNILATERALLY BY EITHER PARTY. THIS PRINCIPLE WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO OUR DELEGATION, AND TO OUR PEOPLE, INCONSISTENT WITH ALL OUR GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS, WITH ALL WE HAD COME TO KNOW, TO VALUE, AND TO CHERISH, WITH ALL OUR HOPES AND DREAMS.

THE DIE WAS THEN CAST; THE SCHISM GREW UNAVOIDABLY AND INEVITABLY WIDER. THE 1970 ELECTIONS SAW THE DEFEAT OF ALL CONGRESSIONAL INCUMBENTS IN THE MARIANAS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAD FAVORED CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF THE IDEA OF FREE ASSOCIATION AND REMAINING IN UNITY WITH THE REST OF THE TRUST TERRITORY. IT ALSO SAW THE PASSAGE BY THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE OF A RESOLUTION WHICH STATED THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS WOULD RESIST THE STRIPPING OF THEIR DESIRES FOR CLOSE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES "BY FORCE OF ARMS, IF NECESSARY."

I ONCE ACCEPTED THE CONCEPT OF FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. I FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF FREE ASSOCIATION, AS I SAW THEM, WERE WRITTEN INTO THE 1970 COMMONWEALTH OFFER. I SPOKE MANY TIMES IN THE CONGRESS THAT SUMMER, STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF ACCEPTING THAT OFFER. BUT THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA REJECTED IT COMPLETELY, AND PROCEEDED TO REDEFINE THE CONCEPT OF "FREE ASSOCIATION" BY THEIR FOUR PRINCIPLES AND LEGAL

RIGHTS, TO THE POINT AT WHICH WHAT WAS LEFT WAS NOT FREE ASSOCIATION
AT ALL, BUT INDEPENDENCE DISGUISED AS FREE ASSOCIATION, TO THE POINT
AT WHICH MY PEOPLE COULD NO LONGER ACCEPT THE POSITION OF THE CONGRESS,
AND TODAY, ARE UNABLE TO FORESEE A FUTURE IN POLITICAL UNION WITH
THE OTHER FIVE DISTRICTS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY.

AS I NOTED DURING THAT 1970 SESSION OF THE CONGRESS, THE
PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS CONSIDERED A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
UNITED STATES TO BE A DETOUR AROUND THE ROADBLOCK OF POLITICAL
STATUS, WHICH WILL RELEASE THE ENERGIES OF OUR PEOPLE AND TURN THEM
UPON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DEEP, IF LESS DRAMATIC FREEDOMS GAINED
BY SELF RELIANCE, EDUCATION, SECURITY, ECONOMIC FAIRNESS, ADMINISTRATIVE
SKILL, AND PRODUCTIVITY. EVENTUALLY, IT WILL BRING FORTH THE POLITICAL
STATUS SIRENED BY THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE WORLD. I BELIEVED
THAN, AS I DO NOW, THAT UNDER A RELATIONSHIP OF CLOSE AFFILIATION WITH
THE UNITED STATES, THERE IS A GREAT HOPE AND A GREAT FUTURE FOR THE
MARIANAS. THERE IS HOPE FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPERITY;
THERE IS THE HOPE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE UNDER A DEMOCRATIC
SYSTEM AS FREE MEN WHERE OUR GOVERNMENT IS TRULY THE SERVANT OF THE
PEOPLE AND RESPONSIVE TO THEIR NEEDS.

WITH THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT KOROR, IT IS APPARENT THAT
WHEN OUR REMAINING TIES WITH THE OTHER FIVE DISTRICTS ARE FINALLY
DISSOLVED, WE WILL INDEED BE COMPLETELY SEPARATE. THERE ARE MANY---
INCLUDING, I WOULD PRESUME, SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL---
WHO WOULD HAVE WISHED OTHERWISE. BUT WE HAVE COME BEFORE THIS

DISTINGUISHED BODY THIS DAY IN THE HOPE THAT YOU WILL SEE THAT THE CONTINUATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REMAINDER OF MICRONESIA WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL.

ALL THE DOCUMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE GREATEST RIGHT WHICH MEN POSSESS IS THE RIGHT TO CONTROL THEIR OWN POLITICAL DESTINY. ALL OF THE GREAT WORK OF THIS COUNCIL HAS BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD ASSURING AND PROTECTING THAT RIGHT.

THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER MAKES FREQUENT REFERENCE TO THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION AS A CORNERSTONE OF ITS PRECEPTS. ARTICLE 73 (B) STATES THAT IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF UNITED NATIONS MEMBERS WHO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR NON-SELF-GOVERNING STATES:

"TO DEVELOP SELF-GOVERNMENT, TO TAKE DUE ACCOUNT OF THE POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLES, AND TO ASSIST THEM IN THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR FREE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, ACCORDING TO THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH TERRITORY AND ITS PEOPLES . . ."

ARTICLE 76 (B) REITERATES THIS OBLIGATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITIES OF TRUST TERRITORIES SUCH AS OURS; ARTICLE 6 (1) OF OUR TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT FURTHER REAFFIRMS IT. THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES, MAKES IT PERFECTLY CLEAR.

WE HAVE ASKED THE UNITED STATES FOR SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS
ON OUR POLITICAL FUTURE SO THAT WE, TOO, MAY EXERCISE OUR FUNDAMENTAL
RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. WE WANT A GOVERNMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE
WHICH WILL REFLECT OUR DESIRES. WE WANT A MARIANA ISLANDS IN
POLITICAL UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. WE EARNESTLY
HOPE THAT THIS COUNCIL FULLY UNDERSTANDS OUR SITUATION AND WILL GIVE
ITS BLESSINGS TO OUR EFFORTS IN ATTAINMENT OF THESE POLITICAL GOALS
AND ASPIRATIONS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.