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(Mr. Sacksteder, United States)

As Ambassador Phillips pointed out to the Council last year in his opening statement, we have encouraged the leadership in the Marianas to work within the system and have urged them to participate in Territory-wide activities such as the Congress of Micronesia and its Joint Status Committee and to seek accommodation of their views within those forums. They have now done so for another year and two additional sessions of status talks, at Hana and Palau.

They have had ample opportunity to observe the kind of solution to the status question desired by the other five districts of the Territory. Their hopes for a different solution have been confirmed and noted by the representatives of the other districts, who have agreed to the approach made by the Marianas at the last session of the negotiations.

Thus, we believe not only that we have ample grounds to consider that the decision transmitted to us by the Marianas leaders represented the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned but also that they have done so with the full understanding of the people of the other districts. Had the United States responded other than positively to the Marianas initiative, that could have led ultimately to an imposition upon the people of that District of a political status they had made abundantly clear they did not want. Although we have made the decision to enter into talks with the new Marianas Status Committee we have reaffirmed our policy that the trusteeship is to be terminated simultaneously in all the Districts of the Territory.

I have discussed the outcome of the talks at Hana and at Palau and our recent response to the initiative taken by the Marianas leaders at some length feeling that these events of the last year are of the greatest interest to the Council and of the most importance ultimately to the people of the Territory. In addition, the United States Special Representative, High Commissioner [Name] will, of course, be in a far better position to describe other developments in our administration of the Territory during the past year and will discuss in some detail some of the plans for the future in key areas of our responsibility. We will describe our efforts since the last session of the Council to promote the economic welfare of the Territory and to advance the people of Micronesia toward self-government. As he will point out, we have achieved progress in several areas of long-standing interest to the Council: new efforts to improve

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Representatives of both delegations will probably meet later this summer to begin the difficult task of translating agreement in principle into a formal compact of free association.

These have not been easy negotiations for either side. The United States has unusual requirements and responsibilities in the Micronesian area that were recognized by the Security Council when the strategic trust was established and that are not easily reconciled with a new status for the Territory. The Micronesian side has had problems of a different sort stemming from the dissimilar views of peoples living on scores of islands scattered over thousands of miles of ocean. Their efforts to achieve a consensus in the status talks constitute ample evidence of the growing political maturity of the people of Micronesia and their freely elected leaders.

I should point out, however, that although five of the six districts of the Territory have reached some agreement on a common position in the negotiations, the sixth, the Mariana Islands, has chosen a different path. The Marianas representatives at the Palau talks, and subsequently at Saipan, approached the United States delegation and requested separate negotiations leading towards a close and permanent union with the United States. In their approach they had both a mandate from the Marianas District Legislature and the permission of the other members of the Micronesian Joint Status Committee. The United States delegation informed the Micronesian and Marianas representatives that it would respond affirmatively.

While it has been United States policy to develop all of Micronesia towards a common future status, events in the Marianas over the past ten years have demonstrated that the full implementation of that policy is not feasible. As the Council is well aware, the people and leaders of the Marianas have shown through referenda, petitions to this Council and to my Government, and through repeated resolutions of their District legislature, that they preferred much closer ties to the United States than did the other Districts.

The Council will, we understand, once again be hearing from representatives of the Mariana District during the current session. I am sure that they can explain more fully than I the reasons why they desire a separate solution to the question of future relationship with the United States best suits the peoples of the Mariana. However, I believe that the Council may find it useful if I describe the present United States position in regard to the opening of separate talks with the Status

Committee that has recently been established by the Marianas District Legislature.