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REMARKS OF SENATOR EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN
72 UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL HEARINGS - TIPI

Mr. President and distinguished members of the United Nations
Trusteeship Council:

I appear before you today as a petitioner, an elected representative of all of the people of the Mariana Islands District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and a special delegate of those people. I have come here today to speak on but one issue, yet perhaps it is this issue which concerns all of us in Micronesia most. It is the issue of our 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 of Micronesia and its Joint Committee on Future Status. For this reason, it is the position of the Mariana Islands Delegation to the Congress that a separate Statement of Position on the issue of future political status is necessary.

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

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Representatives on the Joint Committee, feel that the direction endorsed by the Joint Committee is not in the best interests^e 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 the Joint Committee, its predecessors, and the Congress of Micronesia as a whole has rejected.

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

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of democracy, of a society which practiced the theory that a government should be "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 four and a half centuries.

Political union with the United States will ensure that we keep this freedom so long denied us. With this freedom, of course, comes obligations. We recognize the United States position that political stability in Micronesia is key to the 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 Council, 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 in Micronesia that some form of association is necessary to ensure the continuation of the process of economic development. A thorough study of the possessions, territories, and other members of the

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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 Puerto Rico, with by far the highest per capita income and standard of living in the Caribbean, 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 high 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 know that the United States is not a perfect country; in today's world, we doubt whether any country so large and complex could be. But, we are satisfied 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 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

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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/^{German} 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 1970 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, and the Fourth Round of Negotiations held at Koror, Palau, has indicated to us that the Congress, through the Joint Committee, seeks goals other than those 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 two years toward free association or independence differs so considerably from our own desired direction that we feel we cannot be parties to the

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achievement of that choice. Accordingly, at the close of the Fourth Round of Negotiations in Koror, the Mariana Islands District Representatives on the Joint Committee transmitted a request to the United States Delegation asking whether the United States would be willing to consider separate negotiations with a Mariana Islands District Future Political Status Commission. The United States Delegation responded affirmatively to this proposal. The only choice open to us is a separate political destiny.

I am, therefore, privileged to report to you today that legislation has been introduced in the Mariana Islands District Legislature authorizing the creation of a separate Future Political 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.

Members of the Council should be assured, however, that the Marianas Delegation pledges its full, complete and unequivocal support/ of the right of the Congress of Micronesia and of the Joint Committee to seek the attainment of whatever future political status they aspire to, and respectfully requests that other delegations reciprocate with regard to the position of the people of the Marianas.

The people of the Mariana Islands District have asked me to express their hope to this Council today that the Council will look favorably upon the political aspirations of the people of the District, and upon separate negotiations with the United States devoted toward the achievement of that status. We believe that we, like all of the

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People of Micronesia and of the world, have the right to choose
our own political destiny; and in making such choice, to assure
for ourselves the freedoms guaranteed to us by the United Nations
Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement.

Thank you very much.