

Remarks for Representative Silk  
August 24, 1972

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Mr. Speaker and fellow members of the House, I would like to offer some comments at this time concerning the major issue of political status which we will soon begin considering and debating.

I think no one can deny that we all have mixed emotions concerning this question, and that there are probably 33 different shadings of opinion among the 33 members of the Congress about what kind of political status is best for us all in Micronesia.

I would like to ask, that in our consideration of this Draft Compact, we do not consider any portions of it, or any opposition to one's point of view, as the Gordian Knot of old. The problems, disagreements, and differing points of view which are bound to develop from focusing our attention on this matter, can, I believe, be solved. They are not beyond the wit of man.

There are 21 good and true men in this House, Mr. Speaker, and there are twelve equally good and true men in the Senate, and I think that we can resolve our differences by working together as we have in the past. For if it were otherwise, there would not be an august body such as the Congress of Micronesia. There is a lot that can be said about our present working relationships. Many of us have gone to school together, worked together, grown up together, and shared each other's hopes, dreams, successes, and misfortunes. Nowhere in Micronesia today does there exist a more cohesive body of leaders representing all the areas of Micronesia.

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In stressing the need for rapprochement during this session, I know I run the risk of being redundant by repeating a plea for harmony and concordance that has echoed in the chambers of both houses more and more during these past few years. But <sup>06</sup> it is a small risk to take, because it is so vitally important that it is worth repeating, and I would like to explain why it is so important.

First, I would like to ask my fellow congressmen to recall the past several hundred years of Micronesia's history and her domination by foreign powers. Then I would like to ask them why such domination began and has been continued. A partial answer to this question, I believe, is because Micronesia was not Micronesia, but a grand stretch of the Pacific inhabited by many people with different languages. These people, by virtue of their struggle for existence, settled themselves on islands according to the whims of nature and the limitations of technology—there was no vast transportation and communication network in those times, and, since those people were unaware of the larger world, just as the larger world was unaware of them, there was no need for a grouping together of those neighboring strangers of long ago. The Micronesia of long ago was easy to master. Spain and Germany did not have to divide and conquer, for there was nothing to divide, there being no associations of Pacific people.

The Micronesia of today, however, has many imperative reasons for remaining a recognizable entity with a commonality of purpose and goals. Micronesia, by virtue of geography and the machinations of international

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power politics, enjoys the distinction of occupying what is a strategically important portion of the Pacific basin, and which will undoubtedly continue to be so in the foreseeable future. There may have been a time when separation would have been practical, but that time is long past. Under the Spanish and the Germans the trend of closer association was set. History and circumstance have forced us together, and we now find once scattered areas molded into groupings, which while initially were artificial, are not impractical. Other influences, such as education, have further cemented our relationships and drawn us closer together. We have gone to school together, worked in other districts, intermarried, and exchanged our ideas, hopes and dreams. We now have Micronesia-wide professional associations, planning groups, and councils. We have also witnessed the first Micronesian Olympics, which demonstrated our competitive spirit as well as the goodwill typical of Micronesia. And now the Congress of Micronesia for the past seven years has proved beyond the shadow of doubt, as evidenced by the many major pieces of legislation of Micronesia-wide impact, that we can work together.

We can not at this time afford the ~~uncertain~~ luxury of either considering or speaking of division. Romans, in the Bible, tells us that there is no profit in disbanding a joint venture, by using the example of how a single stalk of wheat, once separated from the bunch, is easily bent and broken, but that many stalks together can resist great forces.

Let us consider, Mr. Speaker, as we enter into these days and times of

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tribulation, that there may be agreement where there is no hope, but there can be no hope where there is no agreement.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let us all also remember that what we do here is for the benefit of all Micronesians--that this is not the Congress of the Marshalls, Yap, Ponape, the Marianas, Truk and Palau, but rather the Congress of Micronesia. Let us stand together against the outside pressures and influences that would divide us, and let us not be discouraged, but firm in the face of the tremendous task we must accomplish, for, Mr. Speaker, I believe in a Micronesia where the majority is just and the minority is secure.

Thank you, ~~Mr.~~ Speaker.

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