

12
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OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR PANGELINAN (Chairman)

Ambassador Williams, members of the United States Delegation, on behalf of the Marianas Political Status Commission and the people of the Marianas, it is my pleasure to welcome you, Ambassador Williams, and your staff to our islands for this most solemn purpose of considering our future political status. As stated this morning, our Commission was formed as a result of our long desire for close political association with the United States as expressed by the people of the Marianas and their legislature. I have had many occasions in the past to work with you and most of your Delegation and I feel quite confident that with the involvement of these fine people our job, although difficult, will be pursued with diligence and integrity. I would, at this time, like to review some of the major considerations that will have to be adequately covered.

1 - Future Political Status. Although the people of the Marianas desire to establish a close political affiliation with the Government of the United States, the exact form and substance of that relationship remains to be decided. The Marianas Political Status Commission plans to undertake a thorough analysis of the various forms of political relationship which might be established between the United States and the Marianas. In particular, we intend to examine the unincorporated, incorporated territory and commonwealth alternatives to ascertain whether either of these approaches can be adopted to the political aspirations and economic goals of the Marianas. We have already begun to explore the actual experience of such territories and commonwealth to see if the political and economic development in those areas suggests any problems or difficulties which the Marianas should avoid. Based upon such an examination, our Commission might well conclude that neither the territory or commonwealth format is acceptable. It may well be necessary to develop a totally new political status for the Marianas.

We hope that the United States will collaborate in this search for the political status best suited to the needs and aspirations of the people of the Marianas. If none of the traditional approaches proves to be acceptable,

we hope that the United States will be flexible and responsive to our desire to develop a political status unique to the Marianas. After all, there was no established precedent for the Constitution of the United States in 1789.

In the early stages of these negotiations it would be most helpful if the representatives of the United States could advise the Marianas of any general constraints or problem areas with respect to political status. It would be helpful to be so advised at the earliest possible date. With this information in hand, our mutual efforts to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion to these political status negotiations can be most productive and expeditious.

2 - Land. Once a political format of close association has been developed for the Mariana Islands, it would then be appropriate for all military retention and public land to be turned over to the Government of the Marianas. This will properly recognize the sovereignty of people of the Mariana Islands over their lands. Thereafter, any negotiations regarding any desired military and public uses of this land could be conducted with the sovereign governmental body of the Marianas. This certainly would, in our view, be the best way of handling the land transitional problems. However, if the United States felt that it might need more certain guarantees with reference to particular military uses of some of the land, we believe that this subject would be an appropriate matter of discussion at these sessions. We respectfully suggest that such discussion should focus on the military's actual present land needs, dealing with such specific areas as location, size and proposed use. Additionally, future needs should be estimated so our economic planners can be fully informed. In reference to both present and future needs, the proposed use of this land is an important area of discussion because of possible environmental and economical consequences to the land itself and the adjoining property. Where land is used by the military, we believe that joint use of the developed easements and facilities is appropriate. We do not wish to create any undue problems for the military, but suggest that such an arrangement will enable us to have a good solid working relationship with the military right from the start, and avoid controversies that could otherwise develop. We should also discuss other areas of joint involvement, such as air fields, sewer lines, telephone,

033460

water, electricity and other basic utilities. Placement of roads and costs of their upkeep also should be considered. We want the people of the Mariana Islands and the military to be involved together in the use and development of our lands. We do not want a separate military establishment in the Mariana Islands that is not environmentally, economically, and socially integrated with the Mariana Islands society. In other words, we believe that the military representatives of the United States should reflect a commitment to the people of our islands and their aspirations. We are fully aware of the many barriers that exist to establishing a harmonious relationship with the military. Nevertheless, we request that our Commission and this delegation work energetically toward developing and perfecting such a relationship.

One other large problem in reference to land is whether or not eminent domain should apply and the alienability of land to non-Marianas citizens. To what extent should non-citizens of the Marianas be able to purchase or use land? The various answers to this question, along with their effect on the economic development of the islands and the rights of our people, should be thoroughly discussed. In the interim we ask that the United States join us in requesting the High Commissioner to refrain from approving any leases on public lands to non-citizens of the Marianas without prior consultation with the Marianas Political Status Commission. Land - its use, sale and development, is probably the most important and difficult problem we face in our future. Our grandchildren will one day review what we do here, and to fail to protect not only our present self interest but also their future, would indeed be a sad epilogue to the negotiations which we begin today. We are confident that the United States can assist us in solving these problems, and do so in a way which truly reveals that concern for brotherhood and human dignity that the United States is known for throughout the world.

3 - Economics and Finance. Another broad area of important issues to be considered during these negotiations relates to economics and finance. We in the Marianas are keenly aware of the importance of these matters. Indeed,

our desire for the political stability inherent in a close relationship with the United States is premised upon our conviction that such stability will enhance our capability to develop our resources and to improve the economic well-being of our citizens. Without attempting to list all the issues in this area, let me identify a few of the key questions involving economics and finance which should be on our agenda during these discussions.

a. First, there is the question of providing funds for supporting the institution of self-government in the Marianas. In time, as the nature of these institutions becomes clearer, it will be necessary to estimate their cost and arrive at some mutually acceptable source of funds for these essential purposes.

b. The Marianas recognizes that the public monies made available by the United States during the period of its trusteeship have been provided through various grant programs authorized under United States laws. We will want to explore the continuation of such programs at the same time that we strive to make them more responsive to the needs of the People of the Marianas as expressed through their elected representatives.

c. Third, additional funds are clearly needed for the economic development of the Marianas. As numerous studies have made clear, it would be desirable to develop small industries in the Marianas which will further the rational exploitation of our resources consistent with the protection of the environment and economic sovereignty of its people. We want to take advantage of the planning which has already been completed under United States auspices and move forward to implement, in gradual steps, those projects which appear both feasible and most promising.

d. In like fashion, we also need to discuss the capabilities of the Marianas to raise money through taxation and the extent to which additional funds could be provided by the United States on an unrestricted basis. It would be, obviously, desirable from a planning standpoint to have the amount of these funds calculated annually upon some objective basis. Once this principle is established, many different means of implementing such an approach could be readily reviewed and evaluated. The matching of tax

revenues raised by the Marianas is only one such approach. Another might be to base the United States contribution on the value of the land which it uses, or plans to use, in the Marianas. In addition, a grant of funds to bring the Marianas' infrastructure up to par during the early years after the end of the trusteeship may be appropriate.

e. A last important item in this general area relates to the opportunities for foreign investors in the Marianas under a new political status. Considerable interest has been expressed by foreign business concerns in business opportunities in the Marianas. We welcome this interest, so long as it remains perfectly clear that any foreign investment must be subject to control by the Government of the Mariana Islands. We want to be able to explore and profit from these investment possibilities as soon as possible, always keeping in mind the environmental and sociological impact on the Marianas.

4 - Transition. Once the political status format is chosen, the land and economic problems have been adequately provided for, we then have a final problem of smooth transition from the present political entity to the new one. If we mutually arrive at a new political status for the Marianas before the remainder of the Trust Territory resolves its status, we believe that our new status should be initiated without delay. We recognize that numerous procedural problems may be raised by such a possibility, involving such delicate matters as securing the necessary approvals of the Government of the United States, and deciding how to allocate the assets presently belonging to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The principle involved, however, should be clearly recognized. If these discussions are being undertaken in good faith by both parties - as I am sure is the case - then we must be prepared to implement any new political status for the Marianas as promptly as possible.

Mr. Ambassador, I have not attempted here to cover all the potential problems that will arise in these negotiations, but only to highlight what we presently think are some of the important points which we must consider. Let me say again, we are glad you are here today to open these discussions and we look forward to a productive and mutually satisfactory outcome to our efforts. Thank you very much.

033463

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Marianas Political Status Commission, I open my remarks at this initial plenary session by reiterating what I said this morning at the ceremonies marking the beginning of these important talks. We are honored that you and your people, acting in a free and democratic fashion^{in the} exercise of your right of self-determination, have chosen the path leading toward a close and permanent political association with the United States. We are sincerely grateful for the trust you have shown us, and are fully cognizant of our obligations to measure up to the important challenge before us of framing relationships which will justify the faith you have placed in my country.

We have travelled to your islands in response to your initiative and your invitation. The events leading up to our presence here this afternoon began more than ten years ago. Today marks the end of a long campaign on your part for recognition of your long held desires. But the end is also the beginning for all of us as we commence the formal process of negotiations to obtain your stated objectives. Speaking for myself, and the American Delegation, we wish to pledge to you, our full cooperation in proceeding deliberately and without delay toward a satisfactory agreement. We represent the Executive Branch of the United States Government. While I cannot, of course, speak for the American Congress, I can assure you that we will be in close consultation with the leadership before our House and our Senate upon our return and during the course of these talks. Their understanding and support is of course essential since any solution we reach would be subject to Presidential and Congressional approval.

On your side of the table we note, with satisfaction, the composition of your Delegation. is broadly representative of the people of the Marianas as your Commission of both private and public members and representatives^{is} drawn from all the principal islands and municipalities of the district. We've also noted, and wish to congratulate the Marianas District Legislature on, the manner of appointment that was followed in naming the members of the Commission. This democratic process should assure the wishes and the voices of your people will be considered and heard during

these talks, through the representatives of the Commission.

I would like to repeat, for emphasis, one more thing which I said this morning. In the end, the product of our efforts will be presented to the people of this district for their approval. Meanwhile, we are proceeding for our part on the understanding that your Commission represents the people of the Marianas, and speaks under its authority.

Let me turn now to the question of what we hope to accomplish in this initial meeting of our two delegations. First, we hope that our very presence here this afternoon demonstrates the serious intent of my Government to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples of the Marianas and their desire to become a permanent part of the American family. Second, we hope that in this organizational meeting we can set forth basic procedures for the conduct of these talks, and discuss a timetable for future meetings. And finally, we hope to identify major areas for further study in preparation for our subsequent meeting through open exchange and listening to you as we have.

We have been informed that you prefer not to go deeply into substance or into details and specifics in advance of your having adequate time to conduct your own studies and your own internal consultations. We therefore have not brought with us any concrete proposals to lay before you. After hearing your preliminary views we will be in a better position to concentrate our efforts on answering your questions and on preparing for presentation to you at our next formal session, precise proposals to serve as basic departure points for our negotiations.

We are aware of your understandable interest in the nature and the form of the political relationship which will emerge from our talks and in particular the terms under which you will govern your own internal affairs within the framework of the larger American system.

We also recognize the importance of the financial considerations and future arrangements that relate to your economic needs and your orderly future growth and development. Further, we understand your desire to explore

your eligibility and your access to the U. S. federal system with its wide range of programs and services. These will be important items on our future agenda as well as such other issues as trade and foreign investment and the provision of adequate protection and support to your new government and people as the Marianas enters into a new relationship with us.

Your land is of particular importance to you. We recognize this. Special consideration should and will be given to the disposition of the public lands of the Marianas now held in public trust. We will also be discussing with you our requirements for land for defense purposes and arrangements for meeting them on a fair and equitable basis. Finally, we wish to discuss and share with you the problem of land alienation.

You have already, this afternoon, outlined a number of questions in each of these important and basic areas. Some of them can be addressed in a preliminary way at our working session tomorrow. Others will require more time and study and exchange in advance of our next formal round of talks. All of your questions are helpful to us and we will be prepared to provide you with our position on each of them prior to or at our next meeting of the two delegations.

For the present I would like to limit my remaining remarks this afternoon to the following broad and general statements touching on the areas of future status, finance and land.

As you know, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands all vary to a greater or lesser extent in terms of their relationship with the Federal Government and their internal governmental structure. Their differing characteristics stem from certain historical factors, the stage of their development, and other considerations and circumstances which are peculiar to the territory concerned. Different names describe their particular political organization and relationship to the United States. These range from possessions and unincorporated and unorganized territories to commonwealth. As models, they are interesting, but the important thing to remember is that their political status has not remained static. This

evolution reflecting changing conditions has modified the legal and political relationships between these members of the American family and the Federal Government with the result that progressively they have enjoyed greater self-government and increasing participation in the political life of the Republic.

Leaving political labels aside, let me point out that all of the political entities under the American flag, different although they may be, still enjoy certain things in common: 1 - certain basic rights as provided by our Constitution, 2 - certain basic guarantees as American citizens or nationals, 3 - certain basic obligations, and 4 - certain basic benefits.

These areas, the ones that I have mentioned, have profited from the association and from the material as well as the intangible benefits which have been the fruit of our national political life and our progress and our prosperity. As part of a larger democratic system, the resources of the American Government have been brought to bear on the problems and needs of its territories just as with the states of the union. This same sharing, in both obligations and benefits, would apply in the case of the Marianas once the new relationship which we are contemplating has been consummated.

The exact nature and terms of our future association remain to be worked out. You have, in the past at various times, expressed an interest in more than one type of association, including separate territorial status and reintegration with your cousins to the south. You have most recently indicated your approval of the basic principles underlying the American Commonwealth Proposal of May 1970, which was offered to all of Micronesia. Such a structural framework tailored specifically to the Marianas would afford you internal autonomy with regard to local affairs and certain guarantees and privileges stemming from your membership in the American system including basic benefits of a financial nature.

In looking ahead to our fuller and more detailed discussion of finance, I would simply like to say at this time that we are not thinking in terms of a quid pro quo but rather in terms of a joint exploration of needs on the

033467

one hand and resources to meet them on the other. While financial arrangements and budgetary support from federal sources would be subject to Congressional approval and the annual budgetary process, we foresee, on the basis of past practice, continuing assistance being provided to the Marianas along the following lines: Federal grants to your government matching the revenues collected locally, additional budgetary support as may be required until such time as the Marianas would have developed an adequate tax base, and the provision of the full range of federal programs and services which are available to all the states and territories of the United States for such things as public works, health and education, housing and other programs of an economic and social nature designed to improve the quality of life of the American people and the American nation.

In brief, I can assure you that the future financial needs of the Marianas and your concern for the kind of economic progress that will benefit your people will be given every consideration during these talks since I envisage your islands becoming ultimately a part of the larger American system. You should thereby derive those benefits which accrue from such a status just as other parts of the American nation do.

Let me turn now to the question of land. As I have said, we recognize full well how deeply the people of the Marianas feel about their land, and how important it is to their future.

As you know, a large percentage of Marianas land is public trust land and we are well aware of your concern about the disposition of this land upon a change in your political status. We hope as part of these negotiations to arrive at agreements which will provide for the Federal Government's future land requirements in the Marianas. With those minimal needs met, we expect that all remaining public lands in the Marianas would be transferred to the new government of the Marianas. At that point the responsibility for use or disposition of these large land holdings would reside in the people of this District and your own political and legislative processes.

In a similar vein, we share your concern about the threat of land alienation under a new status. We are determined to work with you to find ways to protect against the alienation of your land. It is our expectation that under any form of close association, the people of the Marianas would become U. S. citizens, if that is their desire. Accordingly, any land safeguards must take into consideration the United States Constitution. We are studying this problem carefully and are confident that in our forthcoming discussions we can work out, jointly with you, a plan that will meet your particular needs while remaining consistent with the United States Constitution.

Now a few brief remarks about U. S. military land needs. The general statement which I made at Hana, Maui, in October 1971 regarding the Marianas remains valid, but will, of course, require considerable elaboration as the negotiations proceed.

The Department of Defense is currently making a series of studies aimed toward specifically identifying future military land needs in the Marianas. Moreover, cultural and socio-economic considerations will be very much a part of this review. As the negotiations move to detailed discussions, the United States Delegation will be prepared to present specific proposals designed to satisfy the United States military needs while taking into account the basic interests of the people of the Marianas.

As stated at Hana, the United States current thinking is to consolidate its military activities as much as possible on the Island of Tinian in order to avoid as much disruption as possible of normal civilian activities throughout the rest of the Marianas. Current plans call for the development of a joint service - Air Force, Navy, Marine Airfield/Logistic Facility - on the Island of Tinian and to rehabilitate the harbor.

It is also possible that limited activities such as maintenance, communications and logistics support facilities might be developed on Saipan at Isley Field and Tanapag Harbor, but these will not - repeat, not - constitute major requirements.

We anticipate that the Marianas will derive side benefits as well as direct payments for lands used as a result of a U. S. military presence. To begin with, we will attempt to structure any base planning so as to provide maximum employment opportunities for the local people.

In addition to the monies paid for land and improvements, the tangible fringe benefits of civilian employment, local purchases and military payrolls will contribute to your economy. Moreover, the associated infrastructure will likewise benefit local residents - that is, roads, docks, dredging, etc.

In closing this very preliminary discussion of military land requirements, I should stress that my government is fully conscious of the need to work hand-in-hand with you to work out ways for achieving our objectives with maximum harmony and a minimum of trouble to the people of the Marianas.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Marianas Status Commission, this concludes my opening plenary remarks. We look forward to meeting with you again tomorrow in a working session. Thank you.