

OPENING STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS  
Working Session, Thursday, Dec. 14, 1972

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Senator Pangelinan, Members of the Marianas Delegation:

This morning I am happy to return in greater detail and with greater precision to the themes which were introduced yesterday at our opening plenary session. I certainly agree with the suggestion of your Chairman that we must have a closer look at a number of substantive matters. Specifically, I would hope that today we could do three things:

1. Reach agreement on the procedures to be followed in arranging and conducting the future meetings of these two delegations,
2. Identify jointly with you the major issues which will be raised in future sessions, and
3. Prepare with you a joint statement that we can give to the public at the close of this meeting which will record these proceedings and the major points on which we have been able to reach agreement.

PROCEDURES

Without further introduction, let me turn at once to the question of the procedures which we might adopt in our future discussions. This may be the most important achievement of this working session. Experience with the JFSC has amply demonstrated the merit of arriving early at some common guidelines and understandings governing our work. Not only will such agreements expedite the process of talking but they will also insure that we fully understand each other's operating rules in order to avoid future confusion and misunderstandings over substance matters.

We believe strongly that both delegations should clearly set forth their role and authority at the outset. The authority of the U.S. Delegation derives from the President and I speak for the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government. We

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will, as the discussions proceed, agree to individual points on an ad referendum basis but I can assure you that once my delegation does agree that it will wholeheartedly support these agreements within the U.S. Government. I do not speak for the U.S. Congress, which will, of course, have to approve any final action taken, but I can assure you again that the U.S. Delegation once it endorses an agreement will act as advocate for that agreement before the U.S. Congress. You can rest assured that my delegation speaks with one voice here and will speak with one voice when defending our efforts before the Congress.

In turn, we will be very interested in having how you view the role and authority of your own delgation. I cannot over emphasize how important it is that we clearly understand each other's role and authority.

In a similar vein, a word should be said about how we envision the course of negotiations. As we strive for agreement, the U.S. Delegation will be continually reporting to the President and the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government and act as agent for them in approving any final agreement. Once we have reached final agreement, it will have to be submitted to the U.S. Congress for approval. On your side, I would envision that it would be submitted to the Marianas District Legislature for its approval and, in turn, to the people of the Marianas in a plebiscite. This is only an outline of a complex scenario and the details will have to be filled in as we proceed. Still, we would like your thinking here as we should have some kind of meeting of the minds on a general approach before going too far.

Next, I propose that, in our discussions today, we agree on some procedural arrangements which will facilitate the mechanics of negotiating sessions and eliminate some possible misunderstandings.

(1) As to the place of meetings, I have consulted with your Chairman and for convenience sake the U.S. Delegation is prepared to hold all meetings in the Marianas, if that meets your wishes. In that event, I would suggest that the two delegations

alternate as host and with their respective heads acting as chairman during host sessions. Our initial session has already set this recommendation in motion.

(2) Our opening plenary session was open to the public and I would recommend that we continue this practice. Similarly, it seems advisable, just as we are doing now, to limit working sessions to delegation members and advisers. As to records, we would be happy to continue the process set up for this session of releasing the verbatim transcripts of plenary sessions to the public and holding any records of working sessions only for the use of the two delegations.

(3) My next suggestion is that we agree to issue a final joint communique at the close of each session to summarize the achievements of the meeting and for immediate release to the press. )w

(4) We have noted the committee organization of your Status Commission and are interested to learn whether you believe it would be helpful for the U.S. Delegation to form similar committees for the purpose of assisting the negotiations. I understand that your committees have been formed to expedite your efforts to do research and to formulate positions. But there may also be some merit in having these committees work on joint problems hand-in-hand with U.S. counterparts. For example, we could form a sub-committee on finance and economics and perhaps the problem of resolving certain issues could be delegated to these two sub-committees rather than deal with them in full sessions of the two delegations. We are prepared to do this, if you believe it would be profitable.

(5) I have one further suggestion regarding sub-committees. There are two important facets of the overall negotiating picture which are both complex and require considerable implementing action outside of the negotiating room. These are (1) transitional actions, and (2) the public information effort which must precede any plebiscite. These two subjects particularly lend themselves to a joint approach. My recommendation is that we form two joint sub-committees to deal with

these issues. I would envision that the joint sub-committees would develop proposals for the consideration of the two delegations and once a proposal is approved, then the appropriate sub-committee would be responsible for implementing it. These two sub-committees would have to be prepared to meet between negotiating sessions and to carry on their work in a truly joint atmosphere, but I believe that the effort would pay substantial dividends in easing both the acceptance and implementation of a final agreement.

This is the last of my procedural and organizational suggestions. We are extremely interested in your views on these proposals. Moreover, you will no doubt have some recommendations of your own which we will be happy to consider. Hopefully, we will reach accord this afternoon on the bulk of these procedural details and can in the future devote our full attention to substantive matters.

#### ISSUES TO BE EXPLORED

Going on from the procedures, let me devote a few minutes to some of the issues which we believe need to be further explored in depth during our future meetings. I would like to treat these as factual questions and not debate them at any length during today's proceedings. I hope we can agree among ourselves what issues should be set aside for special treatment. We hope also to be able to answer at least your preliminary questions here but will expect to provide more definitive answers in our future sessions.

Your Chairman has indicated that you have not yet had an opportunity to complete your study of major issues. For our own part we have not yet been able to develop firm positions on a number of questions and would hope to profit by this preliminary exchange of views in readying our own material. As you know, we are obliged to consult with our own Congress before we can speak definitively, and this we have not been able to do because of complications stemming from our elections and the need of the Congress itself to complete its own internal organization.