

WELCOMING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN FOR THE 1973 UNITED NATIONS VISITING COMMISSION:

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Mr. Chairman, members of the 1973 United Nations Visiting Mission, on behalf of the members of the Marianas Political Status Commission, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the beautiful island of Saipan in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and we are appreciative of the opportunity to meet with you.

Our Commission was established during the First Special Session of the Third Mariana Islands District Legislature in 1972 for the purpose of negotiating for a close political relationship with the United States. To that end, we have had our first plenary session with the United States in December of last year. I have, for the benefit of the Mission, a summary of that first session of status negotiations. This summary has also been submitted to the Congress of Micronesia for their enlightenment and use. In recent days, I have had occasion to notice much comment in the newspapers and otherwise of opinions voiced by the people of the other districts in the Trust Territory. There appears to be a certain feeling among these people that our efforts to arrive at an association that is the desires of our people is a method of "divided and conquer" for ^{the U.S.} us. I would like to state that at no time ^{has} ~~does~~ this thought ^{had} ~~have~~ any bearing on the true reasons for our entering into separate political talks with the United States. In the recent past, the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia has moved toward a position of an association with the United States that is not conducive to the desires of the people of the Marianas. We desire a close association with the United States, and as stated in our Statement of Purposes, "the Mariana Islands District Legislature finds that the people of the Mariana Islands District desire a close political relationship with the United States of America, a future political status different from that which has been chosen by the remainder of the people of the other districts of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands..." and further, "...the Mariana Islands

District Legislature views it imperative that the people of the Marianas take appropriate and necessary steps toward their own resolution of this important question". This is the purpose of our Commission. We do not view our ~~association~~ request and the present negotiations with the United States as an attempt to fractionalize the Trust Territory, but rather we view this as a mandate of the people of our district to inquire into an alternative that so far has not been an area of endeavor by the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia. The potential results of this negotiation ~~can do nothing but benefit the remainder of the Trust Territory in giving them~~ the capability of viewing an alternative other than those presently under consideration. To this extent, we feel our negotiations very deeply, not only for the people of the Marianas, but also for the possible external effects that results of these negotiations may have.

In support of our continuing effort to gain knowledge in all areas of potential future political status for the Marianas, we have a few questions that we would like to have put forth to the Mission in hopes that certain areas of possible ambiguity might be clarified. Various members of our Commission will ask these questions. In turn, if we can be of any assistance in answering any questions your Mission might have, we will do our best to comply.

Thank you very much.