

Calvo Predicts Problems

Naming his goal "The Spirit of '76 for the Marianas, Senator



SEN. PAUL CALVO

Paul Calvo has pledged himself helping open the way to commonwealth status for either unified or federation of the Marianas.

In an interview following his return from Washington, Calvo said that unless a united effort is begun, both Guam and the Northern Marianas can expect difficulties and opposition in any bid for commonwealth status.

"The recent offer by Ambassador Williams to give the northern Marianas commonwealth status is subject to ratification by Congress and from the talks I had in Washington I got the distinct impression that a lot of Congressmen aren't ready to accept this proposition," Calvo said. To begin with, there has apparently been a lack of coordination or liaison with the Congress and many of the members are not aware that creation of a new commonwealth is even being considered, let alone being talked about in the status meetings in Saipan as an 'offer,' he said.

"The Congressional leaders I talked with were unanimously sympathetic about the people of Guam and the northern Marianas having a voice in determining their future political status. But when I told them that commonwealth status was under consideration they were generally uninformed. We're going to have to do a selling job in Washington, both with the Administration and the Congress, and the only way to be effective is to work together," said Calvo.

"The whole crux of the Congressmen's objections to the idea of the creation of another commonwealth seem to be caused by Puerto Rico's reluctance to move up the statehood ladder. The commonwealth status is merely

a layover step to the goal of statehood, Puerto Rico's decision to stay fast in the first step is putting the Senators off," said Calvo. "They simply don't want to create another Puerto Rico."

Calvo said, "Even with those Congressmen who are receptive

to the idea of re-examining the political status question there is a realization that any change should be coupled with the matter of reunification of the Mariana Islands. They said it was unrealistic to consider creation of two separate American

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political entities out of one chain of islands, particularly given the limited size of our population. The attitude is that America's presence in the western Pacific should be represented by a community including all the Marianas."

"Certainly," he said, "I applaud the leaders of the northern Marianas who have brought this issue of political status to the fore. Ambassador Williams made his offer because of the continuing and insistent efforts of the people of those islands. Guam should do no less, even to the extent of petitioning the President and the Congress. I'd certainly lend my endorsement to any such petition movement but it has got to be a bipartisan effort, one supported totally by the people of Guam."

Calvo said that a silent, timid and wait-and-see attitude does not fit in with Guam's history. He used as examples men like B. J. Bordallo and Francisco B. Leon Guerrero who worked for twenty years to get Congress to grant Guam its present status of unincorporated territory.

"In the past 20 years there have been two significant changes in our political status - we have been granted the right to elect our own governor and to seat a non-voting delegate in the Congress," Calvo said.

"I don't want another 20 years of waiting before we take another step forward," he said. "If we are going to see this issue resolved it will be because we

start working now and continue until we achieve our goal," he said.

That goal is the one he predicts can be reached by the year 1976, the goal that he has named the 'spirit of '76.

During his stay in Washington Senator Calvo met with:

--House Minority Leader Gerald Ford, Republican-Michigan; Senator J. Bennett Johnson Jr., Democrat-Louisiana, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs; Representative John P. Saylor, Republican-Pennsylvania, ranking minority member of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Representative Phillip Burton, Democrat-California, Chairman, Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs; Representative Don H. Clausen, Republican-California, ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs.

Senator Calvo was accompanied on most of his visits by Representative A. B. Won Pat, Democrat-Guam.

Other matters discussed with Congressional leaders in Washington:

--Aid to nonpublic schools.

--Reversion of federal lands on Guam to former private owners and Government of Guam.

--Re-examination of the matter of compensation paid for lands taken by federal government after World War II

--Sella Bay and related issues