

SAIPAN ARRIVAL STATEMENT

I am very pleased to be back on Saipan. This is my fourth visit to your island this year and as you know I am here with other members of the United States delegation for the third round of talks with the Marianas Political Status Commission to determine the future political relationship of the United States and the Marianas.

In light of the success of two previous rounds of negotiations, our delegation is hopeful that substantial progress will be made in the upcoming session which begins tomorrow with an open plenary meeting. During those earlier talks, the United States and the Marianas Political Status Commission reached tentative agreement on a commonwealth status which would give the Marianas internal self-government within the American political family. Agreement on the commonwealth principle brings us a long way down the road toward successful completion of the status negotiations and provides a strong framework within which the remaining issues can be worked out.

The third round of status discussions was scheduled after several months of preparation culminating in an informal meeting between Senator Edward Pangelinan, Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission and myself last October in San Francisco. After reviewing the progress made by the Marianas and U.S. working groups in economics, legal and land matters tentative agreement was reached on an agenda for the new round which is about to convene.

That agenda will include discussion of the future U.S.-Marianas financial relationship; the disposition of Marianas public land now held in trust

by the Trust Territory Administration; future United States land requirements; and other unresolved legal and constitutional questions.

We are looking forward to an enjoyable and fruitful stay on Saipan and we are optimistic that this round of status negotiations will see us closer to a final agreement which will satisfy the aspirations and needs of the people of the Marianas.