

MARIANAS POLITICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMINGBACKGROUND

Since the third round of status negotiations in December, 1973, the Marianas Political Status Commission has begun efforts to inform constituents of its status objectives and the progress made toward those objectives to date. MPSC Chairman Pangelinan believes that these efforts at political education must center upon explanation of the commonwealth arrangement that his commission is seeking for the district -- no other status alternative is being considered, therefore no other status alternatives are being discussed. Furthermore, Pangelinan believes that the members of the MPSC, because of their commitment to the commonwealth alternative, are best qualified to conduct a PE program. Operating on this premise, the MPSC has organized district-wide public meetings with the aim of opening a dialogue with the citizens of the district on the proposed change of status.

Several meetings of this kind have been held since January, principally on Saipan. They have thus far produced some positive results, but more than anything else, they have served to underline the low level of popular understanding of what the change of status will mean to the district. Questions from those in attendance have centered on the economic implications of the status change, e.g., the effect on local employment, the change in the tax structure, etc.

Local radio has been used to expand the audience of the public meetings held to date and broadcasting will probably become increasingly important as the status talks continue and the members of the MPSC find themselves worn down by the continuing requirements of public appearances on and off their own islands.

In making the public meeting the key element in its political education programming, the MPSC has chosen the most direct and effective way of informing its relatively small constituency of its activities and plans. This approach, however, puts a continuous strain on the members of the MPSC whose presence and active participation will be needed for some time to come. The effectiveness of the MPSC in this endeavor is directly dependent upon the interest, credibility and/or personal reputations of the commission's members. The program may have problems in all three areas as time goes on.

Despite some modest success, it is apparent that PE efforts to date have only scratched the surface of the need for information about the impact that the change of status will have on the lives of the Marianas citizenry.

FUTURE PROGRAMMING -- SHORT-TERM

Discussion: Over the next few months, as status negotiations progress toward final agreement, it is likely that the MPSC will continue to rely upon public meetings to bring the meaning of the status change to its constituents and garner support for the eventual status plebiscite. There will be a need to increase the frequency of these meetings, particularly on Rota and Tinian which have received less attention from the MPSC thus far and where there are more potential obstacles to the commonwealth agreement. Tinianese concern about the homestead moratorium and the eventual effect of the military presence on their island and Rotanese anxiety about Rota's place in a Saipan-dominated commonwealth are important questions that the MPSC must deal with in the immediate future.

With regard to U.S. Government participation in political education programming, Chairman Pangelinan has stated on several occasions his desire to establish a bilateral program over the long-term that would involve the active participation of the USG. While recognizing that the Marianas PE

program must remain firmly in the hands of the MPSC, assistance by the USG on a modest scale, especially in the areas of funding and material preparation appears desirable. There may also be occasions when the presence of a USG representative at public meetings will be beneficial but the MPSC must be relied upon to signal such occasions. It should be noted that any appearance by an official American over the next few months would probably require a detailed presentation of the USG position on the Tinian homestead moratorium, military land requirements and base plans, resettlement of the local population on Tinian and other still unresolved problems. Until agreement is reached within the framework of the status negotiations, public discussion of these questions should be avoided if at all possible.

Recommendations: The following PE activities might be usefully undertaken in the months prior to agreement on a commonwealth accord. Most require initiatives by the MPSC and the OMSN role would not go beyond discussion of these possibilities with the MPSC and other interested agencies.

1. MPSC scheduling of public meetings on a weekly basis in Saipan's communities and schools for discussion of the status change.
2. MPSC scheduling of public meetings for Tinian and Rota on at least a monthly basis.
3. TTPI Administration opening of a branch land office on Tinian to answer questions about homesteading, deed processing, etc.
4. MPSC contribution of a series of articles on status change to the Marianas Variety or I Gaseta under Pangelinan byline (in Chamorro). This might require the purchase of space considering the antipathy of those journals to separatism for the Marianas.
5. MPSC arranging for (buy) occasional five-minute television slots to discuss aspects of the commonwealth agreement, progress of the talks, economic implications of the status change, etc.

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6. DOD preparation, translation and distribution (thru the MPSC) of a detailed fact sheet on its plans for Tinian, including proposals for construction of a new village (or rehabilitation of the present one), projection of new employment opportunities, job training programs, etc. It would also be useful if a mock-up of the future village could be fabricated and displayed in the proposed Tinian land office and eventually in any MPSC future status information office.
7. Preparation for a long-term political education program should begin during this period and might include the following:
 - a. selection of a name for the program.
 - b. designation of a central theme for the program.
 - c. recruitment of a full-time PE officer (Marianas citizen).
 - d. draft and translation of a political primer.

Detailed discussion of these activities follows in the section on long-term program recommendations.

FUTURE PROGRAMMING -- LONG-TERM

At the time a commonwealth agreement has been reached (January 1975, est.), a more comprehensive and full-time political education program involving TTPI and other official USG program input and financial support should be ready to begin functioning.

While the public meeting should continue to be the principal component of the program, there should be greater use of written materials and an increase in the use of radio and television -- eventually to hit a saturation level as the district nears the date of the status plebiscite. The program will need a response-provoking theme and an institutional name distinguishable from that of the PE program operating in the other districts.

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Recommendations: In planning for the second, or long-term phase of the PE program, we can probably assume a period of duration of at least two years, culminating in the status plebiscite. The second phase of the PE program should continue to be under MPSC direction, but USG assistance in the form of funding, policy and technical counseling and technical services should also be substantially increased. This would include input by the TTPI administration but also involve material and personnel support from OMSN, DOD and other agencies. In this context, the following recommendations are of course subject to discussion with and approval by the MPSC.

1. The MPSC long-term program might be operated under the name
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Marianas Status Information Program.
2. The MPSC should open information branches in the DISTAD's office on Saipan and in the DISTADREP's Offices on Tinian and Rota. One local resident should be hired to run the offices on at least a three-day-a-week basis.
3. A full-time employee (Marianas citizen) should be hired to direct the program. He would be Saipan-based but travel frequently to the other islands of the district. The job will require an articulate individual with an outgoing personality who would appear regularly at public meetings, on radio and television, etc., as future status spokesman.

* Or alternatively: *Marianas Political Development Program*
Marianas Civic Development Program
Marianas Status Education Program
Marianas Commonwealth Education Program
Commonwealth Information Program
Commonwealth Civic Development Program
Commonwealth Education Program

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4. The program should initially adopt for its written publications and broadcast programs the theme "Why we are joining the American family". This is a positive reiteration of the direction of the status talks and leads into a discussion of the advantages of becoming part of the United States. Once the level of popular understanding and acceptance of commonwealth has been raised substantially, the program's theme might be shifted to "What it means to be an American citizen", which would entail discussion of not only the citizen's rights and privileges, but also his responsibilities.
5. A commonwealth primer should be drafted, printed, and distributed in English, Chamorro and Carolinian covering explanation of the commonwealth covenant, the basic working of American government, descriptions of other U.S. territories and how they fit into the American political family, the difference between U.S. nationality and U.S. citizenship and examples of practical effects of the status change on everyday life in the Marianas. This can be done by the TIPI public affairs office.
6. USG/OMSN participation in the PE program should revolve around a Saipan-based American who would be available to travel frequently in the district and devote substantial time to collaboration on program planning with the Marianas director of the program. An American member of the proposed Joint Secretariat would probably be the best choice for this assignment which could be carried out in conjunction with other Secretariat responsibilities. Visits to the Marianas by OMSN principals, military officials, etc. might also be occasion for public

appearance, newspaper or live media interviews, but should be coordinated by the Marianas Status Information Program director. Other participation by the Status LNO and/or his deputy will probably also be required. Responsibility for coordination and backup assistance in Washington would belong to the OMSN Public Affairs Officer.

7. USIA resources, which include printed matter, tapes, films and exhibits on U.S. government, political life and general Americana, should be tapped to the extent English language materials can be useful in approaching Marianas' audiences.