

DRAFT Opening Planning Statement

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Mr. Chairman, we are very pleased to be back among you once again. We are always comfortable and at home in the pleasant familiarity of Saipan and in the warm memory of the generous hospitality that we have enjoyed so fully in the past.

Before beginning my remarks Mr. Chairman, as has been the custom, I would like to present the members of the American delegation, most of whom are already known to you and to the other members of the Marianas Political Status Commission.

Mr. Chairman, we commence this fourth meeting of our delegations buoyed with the considerable optimism produced by the success of our talks here last December. Those proceedings brought us a long way down the road toward the goal of an enduring political union between the Mariana Islands and the United States--a goal that the people of these islands have long espoused and which provided the basis for the opening of these negotiations.

During those three weeks in December, working together, we covered the full spectrum of questions involved in the filling in of the framework for the commonwealth arrangement that our delegations had settled on at earlier meetings. We discussed and reached agreement on the right to local self-government for the future Marianas Commonwealth. We discussed and reached agreement on a generalized approach to the application of U.S. laws in the commonwealth. We discussed and reached agreement on aspects of customs, excise and income taxation. We discussed and reached agreement on the granting of U.S. citizenship to the people of the commonwealth.

In short, many areas were taken up, examined in detail and resolved to the satisfaction of both sides.

Today, we approach the important questions of planning a transition period from the present trusteeship to the future self-governing commonwealth, and of

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making provision for the present and future land requirements of the Government of the United States in the Marianas. These questions are as complex as they are important yet we hold the belief that they will be resolved in the same spirit that has characterized our meetings for the past seventeen months.

In concluding, I would like to reiterate my conviction that we are here as brothers with common goals. Together we can resolve the remaining issues and fulfill the responsibilities that have been delegated to us by our peoples.

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