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May 31, 1974

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

From May 15 to May 31, 1974, the Marianas Political Status Commission and the U.S. Delegation met for the fourth session of negotiations aimed at achieving the long held desire of the people of the Mariana Islands for political union between the present Mariana Islands District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the United States.

The session consisted of several working meetings held on Saipan and public meetings held on Rota and Tinian. These entailed a continued and progressive discussion of matters raised in earlier rounds, including questions concerning the basic political nature of the proposed commonwealth relationship, land, economic and financial assistance, transition and the nature of the formal Status Agreement to be entered into. The public meetings offered an opportunity to discuss with many of the people of the Mariana Islands District the progress which had been achieved and the issues which remain to be resolved.

During these discussions the delegations affirmed the basic decisions reached in earlier sessions with respect to the future political relationship between the Northern Marianas and the United States which include the establishment of a Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas under U.S. sovereignty with maximum internal self-government, including the right of the people to draft and adopt their own constitution and to establish local courts to administer local laws.