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STATEMENT OF DANIEL T. MUNA AND JOSE R. CRUZ  
BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL  
JUNE 6, 1974

Mr. Muna:

Mr. President, I am Daniel T. Muna, a member of the Marianas Political Status Commission from Saipan. With me is Jose R. Cruz, also a member of the Marianas Political Status Commission. Mr. Cruz is from Tinian. On behalf of our Commission and the people of the Mariana Islands District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, I wish to extend to you and the members of the Trusteeship Council our appreciation for the opportunity to appear before the Council as petitioners.

As representatives of all of the people of the Mariana Islands District, we are here to speak to the Council on the subject of our future political status. I will address the position of the people of the Marianas with respect to this subject generally. Mr. Cruz will report on the progress to date in the negotiations between the Marianas Political Status Commission and the United States.

The history of the desire of the people of the Mariana Islands District for a close political association with the United States is a long one. Referenda held in the

Mariana Islands District in 1961, 1963 and 1969 demonstrate the overwhelming desire of the people for this relationship. The same desire has been expressed in a series of resolutions passed by the Mariana Islands District Legislature since its creation in 1963. And over the years the views of the people as expressed through locally elected political leaders and in public meetings has been the same--a desire for a close political relationship with the United States. Indeed, this sentiment was acknowledged by the last Visiting Mission and by other United Nations observers over the years.

As this Council is aware, the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia has rejected close relationship with the United States and appears determined to pursue free association with the United States instead. When, in April 1972, it became clear that the Joint Committee would not or could not negotiate with the United States for the kind of close political association which the people of the Marianas desired, the representatives of the Marianas on the Joint Committee requested the United States to enter into discussions with appropriate representatives of the Mariana Islands with respect to our future political status. That request was supported by the elected leaders and officials of the Marianas, who, in a letter sent to the United States Delegation, affirmed "that the desire of the people of the

Mariana Islands District to become a permanent part of the United States of America is fundamental and has existed over a number of years."

I signed that letter, Mr. President, and I can tell this Council that the views of the people are the same today as they were then.

The United States responded affirmatively to our April 1972 request for separate negotiations. Promptly thereafter, the Mariana Islands District Legislature established the Marianas Political Status Commission to discuss with the United States the close political relationship desired by the people of the Marianas.

The Marianas Political Status Commission has now held four rounds of negotiations with the United States. The Commission has reported to the District Legislature on the progress of these negotiations after each round. The Legislature has continued to support the Commission in its efforts to work out the terms under which the Mariana Island District will become a part of the American political family. Members of the Commission have also reported to the people of the Mariana Islands in public meetings on the progress of the negotiations. These public meetings, held throughout the Marianas, have shown us that the people of the Marianas are firm in their desire for a close political relationship with the United States.

The people of the Marianas wish to become a self-governing political entity in the American political family because we desire the rights, freedoms and benefits which flow from such an association with the United States. The people of the Marianas have too long a history of rule by autocratic powers not to appreciate the degree of personal and political freedom which United States administration of the Trust Territory has brought to us. The commitment to individual human rights and to democracy which lies at the heart of the American political system is a commitment shared by the people of the Mariana Islands. The experience of our neighbor Guam and other members of the American political family shows that the United States has promoted and preserved these values which we cherish so highly. Political union with the United States will ensure that we keep the freedoms which were so long denied to us.

The people of the Marianas believe that human rights and political freedom can best be assured when there is economic development which is designed to raise the standard of living and to promote economic self-sufficiency. We believe, and our negotiations with the United States confirm, that a close political relationship with the United States will assure a level of economic development which our people desire.

The people of the Marianas believe that a close polit-

ical association with the United States can take the form of a relationship that will fulfill our desires for maximum internal self-government. Such a relationship will be consistent with the United Nations' principles of self-determination for all peoples. Our negotiations show that maximum self-government can be obtained within the American political family.

These are the reasons which have led the people of the Marianas, through their freely elected representatives, to seek negotiations with the United States concerning our future political status. It is apparent from what we have said that the views of the people of the Marianas are not <sup>the same as</sup> those of the people of the remainder of the Trust Territory as represented on the Joint Committee on Future Status. | ~~The people of the Marianas and its Political Status Commission fully respect the right of the people of other parts of the Trust Territory collectively to pursue their own future political status.~~ | We recognize the right of the Joint Committee to explore political status alternatives for the Trust Territory as a whole. While respecting the rights of the Joint Committee, however, the people of the Marianas cannot allow that Committee or the Congress of Micronesia to dictate the terms of a future political status for the Marianas which is contrary to the freely expressed wishes of our people. When the Joint Committee rejected close

association with the United States as a future political status alternative for the Trust Territory, it threatened to deny the right of our people to choose that alternative. The mandate of the Marianas Political Status Commission is to give the people of the Marianas what they have long desired-- the option of a close political association with the United States, an option which the Joint Committee has rejected.

The agreement which the Marianas Political Status Commission is now negotiating with the United States will be submitted for approval to the Marianas<sup>Islands</sup> District Legislature, and then to the people of the Marianas. In accordance with the most basic principles of the United Nations, the people of the Marianas will thus have the opportunity to decide whether the agreement which is now being negotiated accurately reflects their desires.

The people of the Marianas hope that the United Nations will understand our political aspirations and will support our right to choose our own political destiny. We ask no more and no less than the rights which are assured all people by the United Nations Charter.

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Cruz will now report to the Council on the work of the Marianas Political Status Commission and the progress of its negotiations with the United States to date.

Mr. Cruz:

Mr. President, I am Jose R. Cruz, a member of the Marianas Political Status Commission from Tinian. I would like to join with Mr. Muna in expressing my gratitude for this opportunity to appear before the Council and to speak on a subject of vital concern to the people of the Mariana Islands.

As you know, the people of the Marianas, freely and through their elected representatives, have created the Marianas Political Status Commission in order to pursue our goal of a close political association between the Marianas and the United States of America. When the Mariana Islands District Legislature established the Commission, it made a legislative finding "that the people of the Mariana Islands District desire a close political relationship with the United States of America." Accordingly the Mariana Islands District Legislature empowered the Commission "[t]o make such studies as it may deem necessary concerning the issue of the future political status of the Mariana Islands District leading toward a close political relationship with the United States of America" and "[t]o establish contacts and discuss the issue of future political status of the Mariana Islands District with appropriate persons and organizations within the United States, and in the United Nations, and solicit understanding support of the position of the people of the Mariana Islands District."

Pursuant to its mandate, the Marianas Political Status Commission has been guided by the expressed wishes of the people regarding their choice of future political status.

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The Commission has continued its dialogue with the people of the Marianas so that it will be better able to represent their views in the ongoing negotiations.

The Commission itself is broadly representative of the people of the Marianas. Its 15 members include representatives from the different islands in the Marianas chain, from the Congress of Micronesia, from the District Legislature, from the municipal councils, from both local political parties in the Marianas, from the local business community and from the major ethnic and cultural groups in the islands.

The Commission has had four negotiating rounds with the United States. The first, in December 1972, was a



ceremonial opening session. In the three working sessions since then -- in May 1973, December 1973, and May 1974 -- a number of important tentative agreements have been reached between the United States Delegation and the Marianas Political Status Commission.

In the area of future political status, the parties reached tentative agreement that the future political relationship between the Marianas and the United States would take the form of a commonwealth arrangement, as defined by a formal political status agreement. The Marianas government would exercise maximum self-government with respect to internal affairs, while the United States would have sovereignty over the Marianas and would exercise authority in the fields of defense and foreign affairs. The new government of the Marianas will be established under a locally drafted and locally approved constitution which would provide for the institutions of local government. The fundamental terms of this relationship, as spelled out in the political status agreement, would be subject to modification only by mutual consent. Provisions of the Constitution of the United States will apply in the Marianas so as to protect individual rights. Persons in the Marianas will become United States citizens, or, if they prefer, United States nationals.

In the area of economics and finance, the parties have reached tentative agreement on a program of studies and events to take place between the time of the signing of a political status agreement and the establishment of a

new Government of the Northern Marianas under its own constitution. ~~These studies will include those related to government organization and planning, and to economic and social development planning. The events anticipated to take place include a political status education program and status plebiscite, a constitutional convention, a constitutional education program and constitutional referendum, and finally the election of a new government.~~ The United States will provide funding for these activities.

In addition, the United States has agreed to provide financial assistance to the new Government over a seven year period. This assistance is designed to move the Marianas progressively toward economic self-sufficiency, and to assure higher personal income and living standards for the people, capital improvements for economic and social growth, and improved public services. We believe that economic self-sufficiency is consistent not only with political stability and freedom but with true self-government. We intend to strive toward control of our own economy as well as of our institutions of government. The total direct annual assistance from the United States for each of the seven years is estimated \$16.5 million, including the value of programs and services to be provided by the United States in addition to cash payments.

As the Council knows, land is our most precious resource because of its relative scarcity and because of its cultural significance to our people. A great deal of progress with respect to the return of public land to the Marianas and to the other districts of the Trust Territory has been made

since representatives of the Commission last appeared before this Council. Under the policy announced by the United States as the Administering Authority last fall, public lands in the Trust Territory will be transferred to the districts so that each district can determine for itself what is to be done with its public land for the benefit of its people. This is extremely important for the Marianas, since it is estimated that 90% of the total land area in our District is now public land. Unfortunately, the Congress of Micronesia failed to enact the necessary enabling legislation at its last session, so the land has not yet been transferred from the central government to the districts. However, we are hopeful that the Congress at its special session next month will enact the necessary legislation so that we can regain control of our public lands promptly.

As our representatives told the Council last year, we recognize that the United States has certain responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security in the western Pacific. We recognize further that, as a member of the American political family, the Marianas will have certain obligations to assist the United States in meeting its defense requirements. The people throughout the Marianas well understand these points. We have consulted with the people often and widely concerning United States land requirements. And we have often discussed the matter with the United States Delegation to our negotiations. At the recently completed

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round of negotiations, tentative agreement was reached to meet the revised United States land requirements in the Marianas, though the terms of the arrangement and the compensation which will be provided to the people of the Marianas for the land which will be used, still remain to be settled.

Our people recognize that there are very significant benefits to a close relationship with the United States, and that these benefits entail certain obligations as well. As a member of the Pacific community, as a people which have been ravaged by war within the memory of every person here, we cannot say too strongly that peace must reign in the Pacific and that war must never again destroy our islands. For this reason we desire to make our contribution to the United States, which promises to keep the peace, as our share in the maintenance of peace and security in the Pacific. Only if there is peace can the political freedom and economic development which our people desire be secured.

In view of the progress which has been made so far, the Commission is hopeful that by the end of this year our negotiations can be concluded, and a formal status agreement prepared. After the formal agreement is approved by the Commission and by the United States Delegation to our negotiations, it will be submitted to the District Legislature and, if approved, to the people of the Mariana Islands District. The people will then have the opportunity freely to choose their political destiny.

For many years the people of the Marianas have expressed their desire for a close association with the United States. The Marianas Political Status Commission is the vehicle which the freely chosen representatives of the people have selected to negotiate the terms of our close association with the United States. Our work is subject to the approval of the people themselves. We ask this body to support the right of our people to determine for themselves their own future. ~~We know you will not deny that right.~~

Thank you.